

Transcript

00:06 FitzGibbon: This is the life history of Denise Lehrkind Black. If you could start off by saying your full name and date of birth.

00:12 Black: My name is Denise Lehrkind Black and I was born in 1936.

00:18 FitzGibbon: Where were you born?

00:21 Black: Bozeman, Montana.

00:23 FitzGibbon: What were your parent's names?

00:24 Black: My father's name was Herman Lehrkind and my mother's name was Jean Squires Lehrkind.

00:34 FitzGibbon: And what did they do?

00:35 Black: My mother was a homemaker. My father owned an ice cream store.

00:42 FitzGibbon: Did your dad ever mention the business being affected by the depression?

00:46 Black: No, his business was not affected by the depression because he was in a different business at that time. He was in the brewery business that his father had started and then when Prohibition came they lost the brewery and after Prohibition they were not able to get it restarted so he bought an ice cream store.

01:11 FitzGibbon: And how old were you when the War started?

01:15 Black: Well I was born in 1936 so I would have been four years old I believe when the War started in 1940.

01:27 FitzGibbon: And do you remember hearing about Pearl Harbor or...?

01:31 Black: Actually, well actually we didn't get into the War until Pearl Harbor so I was eight, and I do remember about hearing about Pearl Harbor.

01:42 FitzGibbon: Was it through the radio or...?

01:43 Black: We heard it on the radio and it was pretty hard to comprehend at my age what was happening but as time went on we would see the movie shorts at the news theater. They would show action about the War and the war effort and you know push for everyone to buy savings bonds and there was so much patriotism and everyone was so much in support of the War effort. I had several friends who's fathers were in the War but my father was too old.

02:18 FitzGibbon: How old was he?

02:19 Black: He would have been 42.

02:23 FitzGibbon: Was there... so what was the cut off?

02:25 Black: I don't know how that worked in those days. Friend's fathers who were in their mid-thirties... some of them were drafted.

02:39 FitzGibbon: And you said you saw movie clips I guess of...

02:42 Black: When we would go to the theater they would have previews before the movie started of live action, of action in Europe, and it was very um... it was upsetting to think that my friend's fathers may be having to fight in those situations, but we were so removed from it. It was not like today where you are actually almost living it and the only thing that would remind us was the flags flying everywhere, the rationing...butter, sugar, gasoline. We would save the bacon fat to turn in. I believe they made soap with it. Uh... my husband's mother worked at the Air Base in Great Falls... I'm not sure what she did but it was for the War effort. Um... savings bond drives were held at the schools. We would stand in line to deposit money in our savings banks even. You know we were saving more and doing more and also the freedom train was traveling the country and I'm not sure if that was after the War or at the end of the War. It probably was after the War, but they had the original documents and the Constitution and the Preamble and the Declaration of

Independence and many many famous historical documents and several families traveled by car a hundred miles to Helena Montana, the capital, to view all of those documents. It was just so impressive. It made us so proud to be Americans. My family um probably had it a little easier then most as far as the rationing because my father had an ice cream store. He sold ice cream to restaurants and to the University and we were able to have gasoline and sugar and butter more then the average person because he would deliver ice cream up the (unrecognizable) canyon where the camp boys were building bridges. So that was kind of exciting to be able to travel 30 miles or 35 miles up the canyon and daddy would deliver his ice cream and we'd see all these young men vigorously working to build lovely new bridges.

04:59 FitzGibbon: Was it... were the bridges part of like post New Deal...?

05:05 Black: Well it was this... I believe after the War to get everything going again.

05:10 FitzGibbon: Okay.

05:11 Black: But, um... and it may have been during the War. That I'm not real sure about. We did have...it was probably during the War. We did have the butter and the sugar and the gasoline to do that.

05:26 FitzGibbon: Do you remember what the average... or what the normal person would get when it came to rations?

05:31 Black: I don't have any idea.

05:32 FitzGibbon: Do you know how... um... how much more you guys received?

05:38 Black:: Mmm mmm but daddy needed the sugar for the ice cream and the gasoline to deliver it up the canyon. Nobody took any long trips during that time. They would travel around the state, take drives um entertainment was going to the movies and fishing, picnics. As I say we were far removed, other then seeing those War previews and reading about it in the newspaper. It was um... it was upsetting to think of countries being at war but we were not involved in it, and so I don't know if it's good to be... it's not good to be that removed but it's also I think not good to be as involved as we are in every little incident that goes on nowadays. We're too much involved, too much there. I don't think a family should ever see their son wounded or maybe dying before they know about it and that has happened on occasion.

06:42 FitzGibbon: Do you remember how much it cost to go to the movies back then?

06:45 Black: I believe it was maybe a quarter and we got a great big bag of popcorn, a tall skinny bag of popcorn for ten cents. It might have been twenty cents even for the movie, at the most twenty-five. Usually we would go to see Roy Rogers... um... we liked the cowboy movies. Roy Rogers and The Lone Ranger and The Durango Kid, and then Danny K was really big when I was growing up too. His movies were funny, and we could walk to the movie. It would take maybe half an hour to walk from my house to downtown.

07:25 FitzGibbon: What was your house like? Was it...

07:27 Black: Well we lived in two homes that remember...actually three homes that I remember. The first one when I was pretty little because I could sit on the curb of the street and it was a perfect little seat for me, and I remember that I had a bluebird outfit that probably wasn't mine because I don't think I was in tap dancing then. It was a beautiful bluebird outfit that had a cap like a bird and I had a cute little bicycle. I would put my bluebird outfit on and ride up and down the street in my costume. (laughs) Then they bought another that was quite nice. It was a two story house with a fenced backyard um that was really great because was I was in fifth grade my parents bought me a Welch pony. He was brown and black and white and his name was Pal and I could keep him in the backyard in the summer rather than take him out to the pasture every night, but the way that happened was kind of unique. We had friends, the Maclhattens that owned a Shetland pony farm and Bobby Maclhatten was my age, Jimmy Maclhatten was a year older. They decided that it would be really neat to do square dances on Shetland ponies. So they recruited however many families it took to make up the two squares of ponies and there were a boy and girl on each and we traveled the state for two years doing square dances on Shetland ponies, and that was so much fun. We were quite famous. The pictures are darling. So in knowing the Maclhattens, and horses were my first love, I would go out there on a Sunday evening, have dinner with them and often times it would be a rabbit that they had just shot which was kind of upsetting to me, but fried rabbit if you don't know it's rabbit is really good. It tastes just like chicken. Then after dinner we would go get my pony that was still out there, Pal, we bought Pal from them, and they would pick out their two ponies and ride bareback down the road quite a ways and back. It was really cold. It was wintertime but it was so warm to be riding bareback, and that's one of my fond memories growing up. Then I went... then I got another horse that I dearly loved but that's another story. (laughs) I had an enchanted childhood really in Bozeman, Montana. We were very safe. I would take off on my pony for all day and mother and daddy would have an idea

where I was but they never thought I wouldn't come home and that pony could be really ornery. If I was riding him bareback and had been down at the playground galloping him around pretending I was... lord knows what, um... he would get the biggest teeth and run away with me and run under all the trees on the parkway going home trying to rub me off, and I would cling for dear life til we got to my house. He never rubbed me off but boy he was sometimes precarious... What else would you like to know my dear?

10:53 FitzGibbon: Tell me about... so you have one sister?

10:58 Black: I have one sister who's two years younger. Her name is Valerie.

11:01 FitzGibbon: And were you guys close?

11:04 Black: We were close but we were also very different. I was quite a tomboy and she liked to play with her dolls. We're extremely close now.

11:16 FitzGibbon: So tell me about growing in Bozeman. Like what do you remember about early childhood memories or school memories? What was school like?

11:25 Black: Going to school was really very pleasant. We went to Irving Grade School and I had life long friends there. We would walk to school and do normal things that school children do and you know, come home- play. We would... in the summertime we would go to Langer's Pond and build rafts and catch frogs and pretend we were, probably pretend we were female Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Fin and we would go ice skating on that pond in the winter when it was frozen over and every once in a while someone would get on thin ice and fall and we'd have to pull them out. It wasn't a really deep pond but it was a lot of fun. We did a lot of- I was a campfire girl and my girlfriends, my best friends, were campfire girls and it was fun to go camping. My- one of my best friends, Sue Keller's father had lovely cabins up the canyon and it was so much fun to go up there in the summer, and also in the winter. But as I said we felt very safe. We could ride our bicycles anywhere. After the war, when I was in the fifth grade, um we had a gentlemen that was exposing himself, which was terribly disturbing, and I was walking home from school with three of my girlfriends and we were walking by the skating rink which was two blocks down from my house and I was skipping backwards and oh my goodness this guy was with another guy and all of a sudden... Oh my god. So I told my girlfriends and of course they- we were just horrified. We ran and told one of the girl's fathers- or mothers. We wouldn't tell her father who was out on the porch. So

it took us a month to catch the man and we would have to ride around in the police car, the black maria, to see if we could recognize the gentleman and he was a veteran that was back going to school on the GI Bill, and that was very unfortunate. I will have to say that's when things kind of changed, when the veterans started coming back to school. We had a few more problems in the small town.

13:42 FitzGibbon: What were...

13:42 Black: Because of strangers in, well that type of thing... um. Just...you know then you couldn't leave your house unlocked necessarily.

13:50 FitzGibbon: So you felt unsafe with the veterans coming back?

13:52 Black: Not just- it wasn't just the veterans. It just- things just kind of changed. Strangers coming into town that maybe didn't have the values that you'd ...

14:06 FitzGibbon: Do you know what maybe sparked that change in people coming?

14:08 Black: No, but even throughout my life it's been a wonderful place to be, to grow up in, but that was the first incident where anything was frightening and then people... well they don't want their daughters out by themselves and...

14:28 FitzGibbon: So were there a lot of veterans that came back that...

14:29 Black: There were a lot, and many of them came back married and lived in college housing and a friend and I used to babysit for them. I think we got a quarter an hour... if there were several children. (laughs) Sometimes we ended up doing it for nothing because they were... they didn't have much money.

14:49 FitzGibbon: Was there...

14:49 Black: They also added a lot to the town too. You know you revere them and honor them because of what they'd been through.

14:59 FitzGibbon: So there was a sense of kind of giving back to them?

15:00 Black: Yeah.

15:05 FitzGibbon: And what about um...during the War did you...how did you keep up with what was going on besides the movies? Was it newspapers...

15:13 Black: Newspapers and on the radio, and we always listened to the radio.

15:18 FitzGibbon: Was it like a specific time of day that you listened to it?

15:21 Black: Well it would be when my father was home because he worked- you know he worked until... he probably got home at 6 o'clock, and he worked Saturdays and Sundays also. He had college students work part-time for him, which did give him a little bit of time off, but he worked hard.

15:39 FitzGibbon: So he owned his own ice cream shop?

15:39 Black: Uh huh and made the most wonderful ice cream. His vanilla would win first at the state fair and his sherbets were made with milk not water and they were wonderful and he made licorice ice cream for Halloween and had wonderful lead molds...um he had a black witch on a broom and a black cat mold that he put licorice ice cream in and that was always fun. Then ladies bridge club parties would order peppermint hearts in the heart molds and flower molds and it was kind of neat. The other benefit to him having an ice cream store was once every two weeks or every ten days we would go to one of the restaurants or hotels that buys his ice cream and have dinner because we're giving back. They're buying his products and we're giving back by going to dinner there. So that was kind of special, and we had one Chinese restaurant in Bozeman and it was a darling little hole in the wall. The only Chinese family that was in town and they weren't there for a very long time but... Daddy would always tease us and tell us the soy sauce was bug juice. (laughs)

16:55 FitzGibbon: (laughs)

16:56 Black: He was a big tease. So...um...

16:59 FitzGibbon: So you only had one Chinese family in the whole town?

17:00 Black: Mmm hmm and one black family.

17:03 FitzGibbon: And one black family.

17:06 Black: There was no discrimination. Everyone was treated so very well. It was a college community. Montana State College was there and a farming community. We were in the Galdan Valley. A beautiful, beautiful place.

17:27 FitzGibbon: Was there...Did you talk about in school, I know you were young. Maybe like...what were you...maybe like kindergarten to third or fourth grade when the War was going on but did you and your classmates talk about the War all the time...

17:39 Black: Oh we did because some of our classmates had fathers in the War or really older brothers that were in the War. We did- and the teachers- we would have a map and we would know where things were happening.

17:55 FitzGibbon: So the teachers would talk about it during class?

17:56 Black: Yeah. A little bit. Not too much because we were really busy learning the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic and we had wonderful, good teachers that really cared and so our basic instruction was very sound. They were nice teachers. They would... they cared about their students a lot. They didn't put up with anything. We had no nonsense going on in our classes.

18:27 FitzGibbon: So tell me more about the drives and the War bonds and did everyone participate in these?

18:33 Black: I think that everybody. Yeah it was just you know, no matter what you could do- even if it took you a while to get enough money get a bond that's what you did.

18:43 FitzGibbon: So what was the process of getting a bond? Do you remember?

18:44 Black: You would save up your money and I don't recall what the bonds were going for at that time but you would maybe spend ten dollars for a bond that would mature in ten years and...

18:59 FitzGibbon: and that money went to the War?

19:02 Black: I think a lot of that money went to the War effort.

19:03 FitzGibbon: Okay. Were there blood drives or did you... were there blackouts?

19:10 Black: We had um...we did have some- we would have to prepare for... we would have a few blackouts- just preparation but we were so in land that it wasn't as much of a concern. Not like California or the east coast where they had them routinely but we had to get under our desks and prepare, which was kind of frightening.

19:36 FitzGibbon: I can imagine.

19:37 Black: But having that Air Force base in Montana that came during the War also brought it a little more home.

19:48 FitzGibbon: When did they... did that happen when the War started they... all of a sudden there was an Air Force base?

19:51 Black: I think maybe... oh my goodness maybe second grade because one of my best friends was a year older. They also made friends with some of the officers and their wives that came in, and they built a barracks at the college to house them, and then when my husband and I married when we were in college we lived in those barracks in college housing, which was you know, kind of unique.

20:28 FitzGibbon: So did you or anyone in your classes write to soldiers or send care packages or...

20:37 Black: No. Oh wait there were care packages yes but it's not like- it's so different now with the e-mail and the... you know our friends wrote to their daddies and if we knew them we said, "tell your dad hi" or you know "tell him to be safe."

20:57 FitzGibbon: What were your thoughts growing up about the different- you were young so I'm sure you probably didn't have like the greatest idea of what was going on but was there a general thing that you were brought up hearing about the War from your parents... their ideas about it? How they...

21:13 Black: Well, we knew that Germany was invading all those countries and killing people and then of course when the awful thing happened with the Jews it was terribly, terribly upsetting. My father is all German but he... I don't think he ever had an unkind word said to him. His father shot off his little toe to avoid inscription into the German Army and with the younger brother they stowed away and came to America.

21:49 FitzGibbon: When was that?

21:50 Black: Well I don't know.

21:50 FitzGibbon: Was it during World War I?

21:53 Black: That was World War I and I'm not sure what year that would have been, but um... my father was a son by a second marriage and his father died my father was nineteen, but anyway he wanted to avoid the conflict in Germany and he went to Ohio and started a chain of breweries and then ended up in Bozeman, Montana and built a big brewery right across from the railroad station and then owned several bars in outlying areas. I do feel that they felt possibly some instances of people not being happy that they were German, but it didn't carry on to my father, who grew up in Bozeman and...

22:40 FitzGibbon: What makes you think that they felt um that they were maybe...

22:45 Black: Well I asked my daddy and he said he did not ever experience it but his older brothers, his half brothers, they would have been because they had different mothers um... I think experienced that and must have discussed that with him. And they thought the War was necessary of course, you can't... you know...

23:14 FitzGibbon: Yeah. Tell me more about like your middle school, and were you involved in activities or...

23:20 Black: Oh I was always involved in everything. I loved to sing so I was in choir and um... I'm trying to think what else would have happened in middle school... Oh my goodness. Well we started skiing at a very young age so I was always very busy training for skiing and working on my skiing because in high school I was on the ski team, but middle school was a separate seventh and eighth grade and um... what did we? Other than choir and... oh I'm not sure there were activities all the time we were involved in but then we became more involved in high school, more specialized. I joined the rifle club in high school my father liked to shoot but he did not like to kill animals and I was very happy about that because I love animals. So it was fun to go to the shooting range with him, and I was on the ski team for four years, was in the choir again, was in the pep club, and also the key club which was sort of like a sorority, which looking back I think was not a nice thing because if you weren't asked to be in the key club it was so heartbreaking and it was kind of an elite...

24:43 FitzGibbon: Clickish?

24:44 Black: And uh... I don't think those things are right, but high school was fun, lots of dances. Oh and I was in the rainbow. So we would have rainbow dances and then go to the (unrecognizeable) dances...

24:59 FitzGibbon: What is rainbow?

25:01 Black: It is more of a religious organization, the opposite of the Dimalay, which was the guys. I don't know if they even still have those. I'm so out of touch.

25:10 FitzGibbon: I haven't heard of them... nowadays it's like Fellowship of Christian Athletes or things like that.

25:16 Black: Oh, okay.

25:21 FitzGibbon: So it was a religious...

25:21 Black: Well... well it was not any one religion but it was... like we had a chaplain that was one of the officers so it was really trying to instill I think good morals and ethics in young women. So um...

25:48 FitzGibbon: Did you help out at your dad's ice cream shop? (phone rings)

25:48 Black: Oh I did work for him summers. It was fun.

25:51 FitzGibbon: And you made your own ice cream or...

25:53 Denise: He made his own ice cream. It was a lot of fun. Also I got to meet more boys working there too. They'd come in... I probably slipped them too many free ice cream cones.

26:06 FitzGibbon: Dad went out of business because of you. (laughs)

26:06 Black: (laughs) Yeah, and really my summers revolved around my pony and then my horse. I just so enjoyed them. When I was a sophomore in high school I worked at a dude ranch that good friends of my parent's family owned, the Diamond J Ranch out in Venice, Montana and oh my that was just heaven. Dudes came over from all over the country and had been coming there for years and I worked in the dining room, my roommate was one of the cousins of the family that owned the dude ranch and we had such a good time and I had a big crush on the wrangler who was a college boy and that was kind of fun because he let me ride all the best horses. (laughs) So that was a good summer. We would take the dudes up into the mountains, set up camp, Pete would shoot a mouse or two and we would cook it over the campfire and then they would fish and catch lots of fish. I learned to clean fish. Oh my, I didn't like it but I got real good at it.

27:15 FitzGibbon: So you went fishing a lot but you didn't go hunting because you didn't like killing animals?

27:19 Black: After... I think it was after the seventh grade I didn't go... my dad and I didn't go hunting anymore, but I had a - in fact I just recently sold my little shotgun I had for forever. It was a little 20 gage shotgun that my dad gave me, but nobody in our family hunts so I thought there was no point in keeping it, but we would go hunting but we would always miss.

27:44 FitzGibbon: On purpose?

27:44 Black: Yup

27:45 FitzGibbon: (laughs)

27:49 Black: And our friends would give us pheasant or duck or whatever, sometimes deer and elk.

27:58 FitzGibbon: So...and then what did you... you went to college?

28:02 Black: I went to college in Bozeman, Montana also.

28:06 FitzGibbon: Did you know what you wanted to do when you...

28:07 Black: Well I kind of changed. I took college prep and secretary courses in high school. I really loved doing the short-hand typing so I got a job my senior year in high school and then when I was ready to go to college I was recruited to become part-time secretary for the dean of the division of science. They always have a gal just out of high school come in and do secretarial work part-time and I loved that job. I worked twenty hours a week and went to school twenty hours a week so that I was not able to participate in chorus because of that but I joined the Pi Phi sorority. I lived at home because we were just half a block off campus and worked the part-time and went to school full-time.

28:59 FitzGibbon: What did you do in your sorority? What were some of the activities?

29:02 Black: Well just sorority activities but with working and going to school I just dated and oh I was a cheerleader so that took a lot of time also. So I was pretty busy. I started out in the basic college courses but I decided I wanted to go into elementary education so I had a few of those courses but basically the first two years were just general.

29:34 FitzGibbon: Did you come to college with a boyfriend or did you...

29:36 Black: Yeah I was with the boyfriend I'd had off and on since the fifth grade who just didn't... I outgrew him and it became a real problem and we broke up I think it was December of my freshmen year. I didn't join the sorority that he wanted me to join that his sisters belonged to and I think he didn't like me being a cheerleader and I think he worried about losing me. So we split up, which was good because he liked to drink and party too much and he also liked to smoke and he tried to get me to smoke, and I didn't want to smoke.

30:21 FitzGibbon: Cigarettes?

30:22 Black: Cigarettes. (laughs) nobody...

30:25 FitzGibbon: Nowadays you have to clarify.

30:25 Black: No, the worst thing we ever did was drink beer in high school there was no dope available. Nobody was doing pills. It's hard to fathom how all that has come about and it's really sad, and we couldn't, we didn't even drink much beer. We would split a bottle and think it was really exciting but...

30:50 FitzGibbon: So did you date a lot in college?

30:55 Black: I broke up with him in December, had a blind date Christmas Eve with a gorgeous Mormon boy, basketball player who was visiting his friends across the street. The people across the street, he was the dean of engineering department and his two boys had known this young man. So I went out with him on Christmas Eve and we fell madly in love and then he had to go back home, like you have your wild crushes when you're young. So um... I dated him oh I think it must have been for a month long distance. He would drive up every... Friday night he would drive up from Logan, Utah and he would leave Sunday and drive back, the eight-hour drive one-way and we'd talk on the telephone every night. Oh my, it was so exciting, and he wanted me to um... he would take me to the Mormon Church when he came up and I'm an Episcopalian so that kind of came into question as time went on too and he talked about wanting to marry me.

32:04 FitzGibbon: How long did you guys date for?

32:06 Black: Probably six weeks, but during the week I started going out with a basketball player named Bob Black who a good friend of mine who I had gone to

high school with- he was sort of a blind date too, but he was a big football, baseball, basketball and track man and I thought he was probably a big Romeo. So I was very wary of him but I would go- we would double date and go on coffee dates during the week but he knew that I wouldn't go out with him on the weekend because the other gentleman was coming up and that became a real problem over time so... I was at work in the dean's office one afternoon. I worked from one to five and the phone rang and it was my future husband, Bob, saying "Denise please come to the Sub right after work we have to talk about something." I said, "oh ok." So I go over there and there's Bob and all of these jocks behind him. I'm sure they're the ones that told him, "Hey you gotta get her to knock this off because you're looking so foolish. You're only good during the week and she won't go out with you on the weekend." So I go over and talk to him and say "Hi!" We weren't serious. I mean I wasn't serious, he was just a fun date, a good dancer, and he said, "okay, this guy that comes up every weekend" and this was on a Friday, and I said yes well he's coming up tonight, and he said "well it's him or me and I need to know tonight." I said, "What?!" He said, "Yup, it's either him or me. You make your decision tonight." Well I just felt terrible. So there was a game and I was cheering and I had to go home after the game and this nice young man was across the street waiting for me and I went over there and basically told him I really couldn't see him anymore. I felt terrible, and then I know he saw a car come and pick me up right across the street so he knew...

34:31 FitzGibbon: Why did you tell him you couldn't see him anymore?

34:32 Black: I just said I could never become a Mormon and be a good wife to you and I just think it's best we end it now and I wish I had known sooner to save you the trip but it just... it was terrible. I felt terrible for a while after that.

34:55 FitzGibbon: And how long did you date Bob before...

34:58 Black: Before we were married?

34:58 FitzGibbon: Mhmm.

35:00 Black: Well let's see. That was January of 1955 and we married in December of 1955. So January to December.

35:11 FitzGibbon: Wow. How old were you when you got married?

35:17 Black: I was twenty and he was twenty-one. No. I was nineteen and he was twenty. (laughs) We were very young. All of our friends were young. You know that all of our friends are still married to each other just like we are. Had I... could I do it over again I think I would have said "no I want to graduate" because I quit school and worked full-time because we did not want to ask our parents for any help. Bob was on scholarship and I was working and we managed just fine. We also knew that he would be commissioned in the Marine Corps when he graduated. So we knew we had a life ahead of us, but it is too young to get married. Although we were very mature for our age and knew where we were going. So, yeah in fact he had to get permission when we went to sign the marriage license. He was- they wouldn't let him at nineteen and a half sign the marriage license. So he had to get permission from his folks who already knew. (laughs) It was kind of embarrassing.

36:29 FitzGibbon: What was the age limit for that?

36:30 Black: I think you had to be twenty-one.

36:31 FitzGibbon: Oh.

36:34 Black: (laughs) So.

36:37 FitzGibbon: And where did you live after that?

36:38 Black: We lived in college housing in the barracks that had been built for the Army Air Corp and we didn't even have a car when we got married. We could walk everywhere, and then we did buy a car I think maybe three months after we were married. We bought a 52' Ford Plymouth. It was a neat little car, and we had a lot of fun. We would- before that if we wanted to go ice skating we'd just- you know we could get up to my folks house, have dinner with them and then go walk to the ice skating rink and go skating. We'd maybe do that on a Sunday night. Also we did not have television in Bozeman, Montana. I think mother and daddy might have gotten it the year before we got married which would have been 54'. So it was really fun to go to their house and watch t.v. The Ed Sullivan Show, Elvis... everyone thought Elvis was just so crazy...um times were just so different. Then when he graduated in 1957 he went off into the Marine Corps. We had a beautiful little daughter a year and a half after we were married so we left for Virginia in a new car and had a new baby and headed off for our new life of thirty years in the Marine Corps, which was a very good life. Jeanie had two younger brothers. So there were three children.

38:17 FitzGibbon: How long did you live in Virginia for?

38:18 Black: The first time?

38:21 FitzGibbon: Yeah when you first moved back.

38:21 Black: The first time Bob was going to basic school so we went in June right after he graduated and he graduated from basic school in I think the end of February so we waited one more month to do a little of basic artillery training and then we headed, in a horrible snowstorm in March, we headed for California. We went by Montana. We wanted to go home and show of you know the baby was almost a year old, Elizabeth Jean, and I stayed there for a week while Bob drove on down to California and got an apartment in Incinitas, Oceanside. He was stationed at Camp Pendleton. So we had a lot of duty stations. I moved almost twenty-five times in our marriage, and Bob was gone a lot. Marines don't take their families very many places, but it was a good life. I wouldn't trade it for anything.

39:35 FitzGibbon: Where... So you moved twenty-five times. What were the different places that you lived?

39:38 Black: We moved from Oceanside to Coronado, California. Bob was on sea duty for two years and that was before the bridge was built in Coronado so we had to use the ferry boat to come and go, which was a lot of fun. Bob... then when we came back -No-that was after. I'm getting confused. Before we moved to Coronado Bob went to artillery school. That was before Rob was born and I went home and had Rob and then we came back and had another year at Camp Pendleton. Then we went to Coronado for two years, and after two years of sea duty we moved to Portland, Oregon where he was the Officer's Selection Officer for the Platoon Officer's Program, which was the program he had used during college. You had to be in college. So we were in Portland, Oregon for three and a half years, and that was a fun place to live. We had an aunt and uncle that were very close to us and we saw a lot of them and our parents were able to visit, and from Oregon Bob was ordered to Vietnam so we moved back to Oceanside, California and stayed there for thirteen months. Then went back to Virginia again for two years. Bob was in the education branch and then went back to Bozeman, Montana to get his master's degree in financial management. Then after that the best tour of all, four years in Hawaii.

41:18 FitzGibbon: What was that like?

41:19 Black: That was heaven and Bob was comptroller for the Marine Corp Air Station and I never wanted to leave. I just loved Hawaii, and the kids loved it. After that it was back to headquarters in the Marine Corps again. Then Bob... well Bob did have an Okinowa tour. He was gone- when I say gone- he was stationed in Okinowa the fourth year in Hawaii but he came home six times and I visited him and so that was fun. Then back to Washington D.C. and we bought a townhouse in Vienna, Virginia that we were in for ten years before he retired and he did go overseas again his last tour and I went to Okinowa and spent six weeks with him. It was really fascinating. We traveled the island and it was a good life.

42:22 FitzGibbon: And what about now?

42:23 Black: Now we've had twenty-six years in Richland, Washington and that's been good. We're both in very good health. We play golf and I play tennis and climb our local mountain once a week, weather permitting. We have a beautiful all red Airdale named Brandy that weighs eighty-two pounds that also keeps us very healthy. My husband is an avid golfer. He- I always know where he is. He's either chipping or putting or playing golf and we have really nice friends and when our parents were still alive we were able to visit them several times a year. We hate having our daughter and her family in Virginia and our youngest son's three daughters there, but try to visit them frequently. Our middle child- oldest son- is in Palm Desert, California so we spent last February there, and that was delightful and we hope to do that again this winter, but everybody's healthy and happy and just hoping the world can get straightened out... there won't be any more wars. I would not want my sons in the Marine Corps now. If they wanted to go I would certainly have supported them.

43:42 FitzGibbon: Is there anything else that you wanted to add about anything you can remember from your life or from the War time?

43:48 Black: Well it's always been hard for us to understand racial discrimination growing up in Montana where there were very few blacks, and really no Hispanics that I can remember. We did not grow up with those feelings and we made friends of other races when we were in the military and one of our favorite doctors for the children was an Afro-American and it's just really hard to understand why there still are so many racial feelings in the country, but then we did not experience things on either side so.

44:32 FitzGibbon: Do you think it had to do with where you lived...because it was so rural?

44:34 Black: Oh probably because it was so cold. Montana winters were just frigid. I can remember... oh heavens... you know, twenty degrees below zero. You know we couldn't walk to school. It was too cold and the cars wouldn't start. Then as - well the base in Great Falls, which is where Bob is from, Great Falls, Montana. There were Afro- Americans that came into Great Falls. We had a lot of American Indians living in that area, but Montana has seven Indian reservations. So there were always Indian students at the college, but not too many. When Bob went back to graduate school I worked for the Indian man that headed up the American Indian Studies Program, Dr. Barney Oldcoyte and that was fascinating because I learned so much about the American Indians and also the struggles they had to go through, and I still feel very badly that all of these other races get top priority and American I feel still are neglected... Anything else you would like to know darling?

45:55 FitzGibbon: No, I think that's about it. Is there anything else that you think you wanted to talk about?

46:00 Black: Just that I love my beautiful granddaughter. She was my first grandchild, Kelly FitzGibbon, who's doing this interview, and I don't get to see her often and she's turned into an absolutely beautiful, marvelous young woman and I'm so proud of her.

46:18 FitzGibbon: Thank you... I'm going to go ahead and say thank you and turn this off...

46:23 Black: (laughs)

****Mrs. Black would like to add the following comments to her interview****

I was on the Honor Roll and a member of the National Honor Society in high school and a Spur in college. -- And I have been married to the Colonel for almost 57 years (December 19th).