

4-28-2005

## Interview no. 1668

Dorothy Vale Roberts

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Dorothy Vale Roberts

Interviewer: William Messerschmitt

Project: Veteran's History Project

Location: Santa Teresa, NM

Date of Interview: April 28, 2005

Terms of Use: Unrestricted

Transcript No.: 1668

Transcriber / Summary: Patrick Driscoll

Dorothy Vale Roberts was born near Pittsburgh, PA, in 1920; she graduated from Pennsylvania College for Women (now Chatham University); she describes applying for a job with the Civil Aeronautics Administration (now Federal Aviation Administration) in 1943 when Pittsburgh was building a new airport; she recalls her training in Flushing, Queens, NY, and later being assigned to Niagara Falls, NY with Bell Aircraft; she mentions she was transferred each time she was promoted, worked primarily as an airport traffic controller until she got married in 1949. Mrs. Roberts details her experiences at Niagara Falls, explains it was a small airport; she covers the things she saw with Bell Aircraft including P-39 testing during World War II by pilots such as Chuck Yeager, and early helicopter development; she then recounts her time working in Boston, MA, and remembers wounded being brought in from Europe. Next she goes over her time in Augusta, ME before her return to Pittsburgh as an air way traffic controller; she recalls being nervous having to mount the arrival information for Air Force One once and explains how she met her husband who was working as a chauffeur for her aunt. She says she didn't want to leave her job, but her husband wanted her to and men were taking jobs back from women after the war; she mentions the employment opportunities available to women during the war, and wartime precautions in Boston against German submarines. She recalls some of her husband's stories from his time in the U.S. Coast Guard during the war; she explains why people didn't trust banks and lawyers from her generation after living through the Great Depression; she describes some of the men who returned from the war to work for the CAA; she recounts her marriage and move to Ohio, including the birth of her children; she talks about her husband working for Anchor Hocking Glass and his retirement and explains why they moved to El Paso. In closing she notes the multi-ethnic nature of El Paso and her husband's death; she goes over her struggle with pulmonary disease from asbestos exposure, possibly from working at Mesita Elementary School near ASARCO.

Length of interview 62 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a