

This Is Your Life Susanne RUTSCHMAN Duvall Crocker

Written November 15, 2006

born: 26 November 1916; died: 3 August 2016

finally typed January 2023 from an email previously sent from Doris Sorensen to Dean Bones

Susanne was born in Whitewater, Kansas, on November 26, 1916, to William and Martha Rutschman. Whitewater is about 40 miles northeast of Wichita. Her father was born in Missouri of a native-born Swiss couple. Her mother was born in Switzerland. Susanne's brother, Roy, was a couple of years older than she. Her parents had a farm, so she grew up in the country on a farm. In their community there was only 1 family called "American". Susanne's family was Swiss, and the other families were Prussians.

Susanne started to school when she was 5 years old and went to a one-room school. She walked about a half-mile to school. When the cold north wind blew her dad would hold out his arms holding a blanket in front of the children. Roy and Susanne would walk to school behind the blanket. Then their father would wrap himself in the blanket and walk home. There were about 16 students in the school grades 1 - 8.

Susanne's family were Mennonites. Her dad served on the church board and always had an active part in the church. Her mother was involved in the music, Ladies Aid, and working in the kitchen. She had a reputation of being 1 of the best cooks. Her father built a wooden sleigh which was pulled by 2 horses. The sleigh was used to go to church, town, or school when the snows came. Everyone else in their church had a car, but Mr. Rutschman was the last man in their church to buy a car. That was about in 1922. When driving once in a while he would say, "Giddap" as if he were driving the horses.

At school Susanne remembers a long bench in the front of all the desks facing the teacher. The next class to recite would come sit on that bench until their recitation time was finished. Susanne attended this school for her first 4 years. There were 3 girls and 1 boy in her class. Some classes only had 1 or 2 children, and some had no children. Note that the teacher in the one-room schools started the fire, did the custodial work, planned programs and taught school. The assignments were written on the blackboard.

During recess the children played games together such as Ante-over throwing the ball over the schoolhouse. If you caught the ball and touched someone that person was on your side. The side that had the most children was the winner of the game.

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On their Kansas farm they raised wheat, oats, and corn. The 8 - 10 cows had to be milked by hand. There were also 4,000 - 5,000 chickens. There were 6 incubators in the basement of their house, and her dad hatched and raised his own chicks. The incubators had to be kept at a certain temperature, and there was a little kerosene lamp to keep the incubators the right temperature. They also sold eggs.

They raised pigs. When pigs were butchered all of the relatives came and helped with the work. The bacon and hams were cured, some of the meat was salted down in a crock, and the lard had to be rendered.

In 1926 the Rutschman family moved to Salem, Oregon. Here Susanne went from a one-room school to a much bigger school that had 6 grades. Each grade had its own classroom. She went to junior high in Salem. There was no school bus service if you lived within a mile of school. In 1929 her father bought the farm near Silverton, and she went back to a small school that had 2 rooms with each having about 24 students.

In 9th grade she rode the bus to Salem Jr. High which was a really large class. Her 4 years of high school were at Salem High School. The old high school was located where the Meier and Frank Store is now. Her 1934 graduating class of 365 students was the last one in that building.

Susanne could never participate in extra-curricular activities because she lived too far from school. During those years of schooling Susanne and her brother, Roy, were very active in the Pratum Mennonite Church. Roy sang and was choir director, and Susanne was the pianist.

Susanne attended Oregon College of Education in Monmouth for 2 years. That is what was required to get a teaching certificate. The following years she took night school classes, and attended summer school until she received her Bachelor of Arts degree. Her first school that she taught at was at Orenco, Oregon, near Hillsboro for a salary of \$75 for 9 months. This was a two-room school, and she taught grades 1 - 4 for 3 years. She took a year off and attended Biola in Los Angeles. And then in 1940 she was offered a teaching position of teaching grades 1 - 4 in Hebo which was also a two-room school at the time. And Susanne always taught music wherever she taught school.

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In 1941 Susanne married Glenn Duvall. In 1942 they moved to the Lincoln City area, and she taught at several different schools, but again, music was part of her career wherever she went. When teaching at Taft she received \$90 a month for 12 months, quite a raise in salary.

It was back to the Hebo/Beaver area in 1950. She taught 3rd grade for 2 years at Liberty School in Tillamook, and then she taught music in Beaver, Hebo and Cloverdale schools. At Hebo 1 year some boys were stealing gasoline from a school bus. They lit a match to see how much gas they had, and a big explosion was the result. The Hebo gym burned. it was a separate building from the school. During these years Susanne also gave private piano lessons.

Glenn died in 1961, and Susanne went back to college 2 summers and became a Special Education teacher. She taught Special Ed. at Tillamook High School for 4 years and then transferred to Nestucca High School where she taught Special Ed. until she retired the first time in 1981.

In 1963 Susanne married Fritz Crocker and became wife, mother and grandmother in a 6 week span of time. And after the children graduated from high school Fritz and Susanne had a total of 6 foster girls and 1 boy live with them at various times. Susanne has a close relationship with her "ready-made" family. She has 19 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren, and 1 great-great-grandchild.

Susanne could not stay away from teaching and was offered the position of teaching kindergarten at Bethel Baptist south of Tillamook. They later closed that school, and then she taught kindergarten and music at Hebo Grade School. She retired the 2nd time in 1993.

At a very young age Susanne realized her need of a Savior, and she remembers praying and giving her heart to the Lord. She has always been active in church work wherever she lived. She was the pianist in a number of churches. She attended the Presbyterian Church in Cloverdale, and there was a need for a pianist. She played at the Lincoln City United Brethren Church. In 1950 Enoch Zimmerman became the pastor at Beaver Evangelical United Brethren Church. When her parents heard that he was in Beaver Susanne began to attend the Beaver church as her parents, Susanne, and Enoch Zimmerman had been members of the same Mennonite church previously. It wasn't long after this that

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the pianist moved, and Susanne was playing piano for Beaver Evangelical United Brethren Church.

Fritz and Susanne joined the Gideons in 1976 and became active in the local camp. They were asked to take state appointed positions, and then they were elected to offices - Fritz as state treasurer and later chaplain and Susanne was elected as the state secretary-treasurer and later chaplain. Susanne is still active in the Gideon work. Fritz died in 1985 while on a hunting trip in northeastern Oregon.

When the grandchildren were younger Susanne and Fritz always hosted the family Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. Susanne continued this tradition for many years. Now she is open for invitations but usually gets together with the family.

Susanne gives praises to God for having been born into such a wonderful Christian family. She also gives praise to God for her "ready-made" family as well as her church family. She is thankful that she is still able to do many things and to continue to serve the Lord in various ways.