

Interview with Susanne Rutschman Duvall Crocker

Conducted by Dean Bones on May 24, 2004

Susanne: Susanne Crocker

Dean: And today's date...

Susanne: Uh, today, I think, is May 24th, 2004.

Dean: You are right, and it's set just right for your voice, so you can sit any way you want in your chair. So, Susanne, what do you know of the ancestry of your father? Let's start there. Maybe where they came from originally and how they ended up wherever you were born.

Susanne: My... on my father's side the ancestry that we know, my brother did a search in Switzerland. And in the... so many of the churches they keep a record of all the children... the babies that are born, and so you can way, way back... and it was in the 1300's that my father's family came from Germany into Switzerland and they settled in Rufz, and that's R U F Z... Switzerland, and that's about forty miles northeast of Zurich. And they lived in that area and then in the 1860's my grandfather was born, and I'm not... well, it just seems like it was in the 1860's that he came to America... and going back to Rufz... when we visited there we went to the state church where his birth was recorded, and they have a little baptistry, really, that looked like a birdbath, and that's where they did their child baptism. And during the Reformation... that's when some of the people split away from the state church and one of the reasons was this child baptism, and so they started their own church or churches, and the government didn't like it, because then they had no way to keep track of the babies when they were born, and that was the way they counted the population. And a lot of the churches... well, most of them... went underground... they'd meet in caves... we were going up in the mountains, driving up, and one of my cousins... Swiss cousins with us... she pointed out a canyon where there were caves and she said that's where a lot of the people during the Reformation hid...

And then another thing they did... they... three or four families would go to some farm and they would meet in the barn, and the... and this is in the west area, close to France, and that's where my mother's came from... and she lived in one of these houses that... the house and the barn were all one building, and there would be a wide hallway between the house and the barn... but the house/barn that she was born in was built in the 1500's and after family... well, her father died and none of the sons, I guess, wanted to buy it, so they put it up for sale and a doctor bought it... first was gonna' make a museum out of it, but he never got it done, so he sold it again, and then these people wanted to tear it down and build something new, but the city told them they couldn't do it because it was an historic building, so they decided to remodel, and on the ground floor where the house and barn were... oh, incidentally, the hayloft was above all that, and some of the children would even sleep there... but going back to this first floor, when they were remodeling it, they found a section that had... that they didn't know was there, and there they found a round room with a bench built all around the wall, and that's... they found out were some of the Christians during the Reformation would meet... would have their church... it didn't have any windows... and I don't know how many others they found that way... but anyway, that's what happened there... but going back to my grandfather...

Dean: What was his name?

Susanne: Henry Rutschman (spells out last name)... was his name... and he... when they came from different countries in those days, they always seemed to settle all together... like there was a Swiss settlement in Iowa, and that's where he went... and then... I have to stop and think... okay... then, my grandmother's family came from the French part of Switzerland and settled in the same settlement in Iowa, and my great-grandfather on my grandmother's side was the minister of the church...

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Dean: Oooooh....

Susanne: Now my grandfather Rutschman... he belonged to the state church in Switzerland, but when he came to Iowa then he joined with the Mennonites... from there a lot of them went to Missouri, and that's where my father was born, and somewhere along the line... and this was in the 1890's... they heard about the mountains in Colorado, and so they started for Colorado... well, when they got to western Kansas, there was a Mennonite... uh... yes... well, no, I'll say a Swiss settlement there, and the people from Missouri stopped to visit before going on, and they were told how they could take up a homestead, and that sounded good to them so they stayed there. And they started the Mennonite church, and that's the one where I have visited on my trip...

Dean: And the name of the town now?

Susanne: Oh, Ramson... R A M S O N (spells out name)... it's about two hundred miles west of Wichita... and my grandparents had ten children and I think it was quite evenly divided, five girls and five boys, and I don't know where my grandmother heard the news, but she heard there was a Swiss settlement in Whitewater, Kansas... that's about forty miles northeast of Wichita, and for some reason she thought that her girls would have a better chance at getting married, or find better husbands in Whitewater than at Ramson... so the family... and I think they were probably the only ones... left and moved near Whitewater, and that's where I was born.

Dean: Hmmmmm...

Susanne: And my father, by that time, was in his upper twenties, he wasn't married, but he started buying a farm and then my mother in Switzerland... one of her sisters and husband moved to Illinois, and after being there about a couple of years, they went back to Switzerland for a visit, and my aunt's husband wanted to go back to Illinois, but my aunt wouldn't go unless my mother went with her, and my mother didn't want to go, but her parents didn't like her boyfriend and they just insisted... they said, "GO!"... they bought her ticket and bought a trunk and she said that she just kept telling 'em that they were packing her coffin... but she did go and another brother... yes... another brother and his wife went, so there were three couples... and they were in Illinois for a while, then heard about Kansas... the settlement at Whitewater, so that's when they moved there, and that's where my mother and dad met.

Dad's... oh, I might just say this... when my dad proposed, my mother said she would only marry him if he promised that they could go back to Switzerland for a visit... he said, well, as soon as the farm is paid for we'll go... well, let's see... about seven years and two children later they did get to go, and we spent about three months there one summer... came back and... as my brother was going by and now a few more years went by... he was twelve, and he was getting old enough to help on the farm, my dad felt the farm was too small, so he put it up for sale and he started looking for larger farms, and about that time, my grandmother... my father's mother... fell down the basement stairs and... she'd been scrubbing the kitchen floor, and then when she was through she was takin' a the bucket and mop down in the basement... the steps were steep and no railing... and she fell and died as a result of the fall...

Dean: Hmmmmm....

Susanne: Well, after the funeral, some friends of my mother's came to visit Kansas from Oregon and when they had... when the friends found out that dad had sold the farm, he says, "Well, come to Oregon! It looks a lot like Switzerland." And my mother was having a hard time with the weather in Kansas... summer was so

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hot... the doctor recommended that they move further west, like even Colorado... and the folks were thinking of Colorado... but when the Roths came and told 'em about Oregon, they decided that they'd come out here, and the friends lived in Salem... and we lived there for two years, and my dad got a job in town... oh (chuckling)... I might say this right along that... when we moved to Salem, my folks rented an apartment, and it was a three room apartment... had one bedroom and all four of us slept there... and a kitchen and then a living room... and my brother and I had been raised on the farm and had the run of the place, and here all of a sudden we were cooped up in a little three bedroom place... (laughing)... we were upstairs... there was no carpeting on the floor, and the people that lived below us were always banging on the walls because my brother and I were making too much noise!

So... my dad bought a lot and had a house built and we lived in Salem two years and he was getting itchy feet to get back on a farm, and they had started looking at the farms in the Salem area and decided to go back to Kansas for a visit to see if they really wanted to stay in Oregon. So in June of 1929 we went back to Kansas to visit, and they didn't have to stay there very long to know that they preferred Oregon.

Dean: Hmmmmm.....

Susanne: They hated to leave all the relatives, but they decided they still liked Oregon better. And so we did... dad did buy the farm, and that was in August, and my dad sold the farm... that paid the people that bought it... paid him for the farm... anyway, he came to Oregon... these friends advised him to invest the money... I think it was the Portland Electric Company... and he did, and he got good interest... then of course, in August when he bought the farm, he had to draw out his money, and it was a good thing because it was the following October that the Crash came.

Dean: Hmmmm...

Susanne: And he would have lost all his money, because the company went bankrupt. So the Lord was really with him there. But the farm was ten miles east of Salem on the Silverton/Salem Highway, and my brother still owns the farm.

Dean: So, Susanne, what was your dad's name?

Susanne: William.

Dean: William Rutschman.

Susanne: Yes.

Dean: Tell me about your dad. What was he like, or what are some stories you remember about him?

Susanne: He was a quiet person... he never had much to say... but when he said something, you listened, because it was really worthwhile. He did like to tease some, but he was a very sincere man, and just to show you how sincere he was... after I'd moved to the coast, and he and mom came out to see me and... I can't remember if it was before I was married or after... but, anyway, they were on their way back to Salem... the school bus had stopped ahead of them, and my dad didn't stop, he just went around the bus and kept going, and then it dawned on him... he was supposed to have stopped because the school bus was stopped, and it bothered him so much that as soon as they got to Salem he went to the police station and told them what he had done. They thanked him for telling them, and just told him, "Well, be sure next time you stop."

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But he just could not rest in peace until he had confessed what he did wrong. He... we attended the Mennonite church at Pratum... he was on the church board, and I'll never forget one time... he was chairman... he had to conduct a meeting, and poor dad... he had an awful time (chuckling)... and... but everybody... forgot what I was doing there... but everybody knew him, so they understood... but he... and he was a real hard worker... get up early in the morning... he'd come in... he and my brother would come in and eat, then they'd stretch out on the living room floor, on the carpet and tell my mother to wake them in ten minutes... and that's what she'd do, then they'd go out and work 'til dark.

Dean: Hmmmm... what do you think you've learned from your father? What are some lessons maybe you've learned from him?

Susanne: Well, to do what's right... like in that incident of a...

Dean: Uh, huh (yes)...

Susanne: ... of the school bus... and to serve the Lord... I know it's kind of hard for me to really say what all I learned, but I know whenever I would start doing... when I was young and start doing something that would be questionable, I could always see my dad's face...

Dean: Hmmmmm...

Susanne: ... and I'd think, "Well, now is that something that he'd want me to do?"

Dean: Okay, what was your mother's name?

Susanne: Martha.

Dean: And what was her maiden name?

Susanne: Schirmer... and that's S C H I R M E R...

Dean: Okay, and what do you remember about your mother, or what are some stories you can tell about her?

Susanne: Uh... she was a real good singer... she had a high soprano voice... you could hear her sing above everybody else... she just couldn't seem to sing soft... my brother inherited her singing voice... my dad sang bass and I sang alto, but we were just average... we weren't outstanding like those two were... and she also liked to play jokes on people... I wish I could think of it... she told us about one she played on a man that came calling in Switzerland and she didn't like him, but I can't remember it. (chuckling) I'll probably think of it later.

But, earlier I said that when it came to leaving Switzerland, she didn't want to at all, and really that changed, I think, a lot of her... overall outlook on life. In Kansas, whenever a letter would come from Switzerland, if my brother or I or dad would get the mail and we'd see there was a letter from Switzerland, we'd take it in and give her the letter, and then we'd all go out, because we knew that she was going to cry and cry... that kept on for years, even when we moved here to Oregon... she'd get letters from Switzerland and she'd cry...

Dean: Hmmmm....

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Susanne: Then after... well, I said it affected her life, it was hard for her to see the bright side of life... it was easier for her always to see the dark side...

Dean: Hmmmm...

Susanne: And then after my dad died... he died in 1971... and she was in her 80's... well, we wanted her... the year following his death, I wanted her to go back to Switzerland and stay just as long as she'd like... if she didn't want to come back, fine... but just to stay... and my brother and sister-in-law were going... so the three of 'em went, but my mother'd only been there a short time, and she decided that Switzerland wasn't for her anymore...

Dean: Hmmmm...

Susanne: Even in the early '70's not too many had refrigerators, so if there was any food left over, they'd leave it sitting on the counters, or put it in the cupboard, and mom was so fussy about putting everything in the refrigerator, and she just couldn't stand to think about eating that food that hadn't been refrigerated... and the aunt she stayed with... her sister... was in an apartment, but they didn't have their own bathroom, so they had to share it with three or four other apartments, and of course she didn't like that... but she ended up staying about a month...

Dean: Hmmmm...

Susanne: ... and decided that this was the place for her (chuckling)... after all those years... and she was a strong Christian, too...

Dean: So what lessons, if you can think of some, do you think you learned from your mom, or what do you remember about her the most?

Susanne: Well, I said she always looked on the dark side, and to me... yes, she had happy moments, but I could see so much... how miserable this made her feel... and it just colored her life so much that I made sure that when anything happens, I look on the bright side, or praise the Lord for... I try to start looking for something good about it, even though, maybe, it could be bad... but I just have learned not to let anything get me down, take it to the Lord, of course, but... my dad was sort of happy-go-lucky in some ways, so that's more the way I've wanted to be.

Dean: So, Susanne, as your family sat around, maybe, in the evenings, were there any stories that you used to hear a lot about ancestors, grandparents, or when they grew up that you remember?

Susanne: Well, in western Kansas, the family... the Rutschman... well, all the families built sod houses...

Dean: Hmmmm...

Susanne: ... and my dad liked to talk some about the sod houses, and he said, you never knew when... you'd go into a room, and they never had too many rooms, but you'd see a hole, and snake sticking his head out... because a snake would someday live in the walls... one day, he says, mother went in the bedroom where there was a crib... the baby was in the crib, and here was this snake... and a time or two they'd even be curled up on the bed or furniture... (chuckling)...

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And sugar was very expensive there, so they'd buy molasses for sweetening, and they'd buy a barrel of molasses, and they'd somehow remove the top of the barrel... then my brother or my grandmother would stretch a cloth across the top of it, and for some reason they had a goat, and one day the goat leaped on top of that barrel of molasses with the cloth on it, and he sank... or she sank into that molasses (laughing)...

Dean: (laughing)...

Susanne: ... and they had a very sticky goat... and it had... it startled it so that it had a BM... a bowel movement in that molasses, and they couldn't afford to throw that molasses away, and they tried to clean it out as good as it could, but my dad said that every once in a while they'd find those little round deals... (both Dean and Susanne laughing heartily)...

Susanne: ... but even in spite of all that, my dad's favorite cake was molasses cake...

Dean: That's a great story! So, if you don't mind saying... when were you born?

Susanne: No, I don't mind saying... I was born November 26th, 1916.

Dean: And your brother?

Susanne: May 23rd... yesterday was his birthday... 1914.

Dean: And there were just the two of you children, right?

Susanne: Yes, just the two.

Dean: So, tell us about your brother... what he's like or any stories as you grew up with him... and what's his name...

Susanne: His name is Roy, and my mother had the perfect family, as far as she was concerned... she didn't want a large family because she also came from a large family... there were nine children in her family and ten in my dad's... and she wanted the boy first and the girl second, and that's exactly what she got... but the reason she wanted the boy first was so that he could look out for his sister when they went places... well, I had different ideas about that... I didn't want to be looked out after by my brother, so we used to really clash a lot... he'd try to tell me what to do, and a lot of the times, I didn't agree with that... (chuckling)... but he was good to take me places as we were growing up and he was driving... he'd even take me on dates...

And as he grew up and as we grew up, Christian Endeavor was the thing in all the churches, and he was just real active in Christian Endeavor... I don't mean our church, but in the county, they would meet, and statewide... and he did work in the county and some in the state, too... in fact, they even would have their national conventions, and I can remember a couple times when they went to... seems like one was in Detroit, and another was in Florida, but they'd drive to it... I worked in Christian Endeavor, too, but just locally...

Dean: Hmmmm.... so let's...

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Susanne: Oh, and he was a singer... in fact, he has sung in church choirs... well, for a while he was the director at the Mennonite Church, but mostly he just sang, and he sang in church choirs up until about two or three years ago, and the only reason he quit was because of hearing... he had to wear a hearing aid, and it was hard for him to sing with a hearing aid...

Dean: So, let's go back to when you were younger... what are some chores that you used to have as you grew up at home? What was expected of you?

Susanne: Keep my room clean, and then as I got a little older, then I had to dust... I dusted all the furniture... and then... yeah, we had a vacuum cleaner, and then finally my mother had me do that... and she had never really had me cook much... she liked to be alone in the kitchen, so she'd have me clean house, and she'd do the cooking... except cakes... she didn't like to bake the cakes, so gradually had me do that, except for one kind, and that was angel food... almost all her married life she was known for her angel food cakes... she'd make them from scratch... beat the egg whites and the sugar, and then after... well, after she got the egg whites beaten, then it was my job to gradually add the sugar and flour, and... but her... they would raise real high... and she liked to bake 'em in a wood stove... and she just felt as... electric stoves started taking place of the wood ones, she didn't think they baked as well, so it was a long time before she finally gave up her wood stove.

Dean: What about family life at home... what... um.... what was a typical day like for you, or what were your evenings like as a family... or weekends... what were they like, also?

Susanne: Evenings we... I can always remember that's when mom and dad read the newspaper, and then when we were small... just before my brother and I'd go to bed, they had Hurlbut's Books of the Bible... it was a good deal like the Living Bible... but anyway, the stories in the Bible were written in versions that children could understand, so they always read one of the stories for us. And then also my brother... as my mother and dad would read, I'd play with dolls and Roy would play with... he liked erector sets, and he was always building things... mechanical things... and as we got older, weekends we'd play checkers... the four of us... or Rook... and then it seems like... yeah, there were two other games... Authors and Old Maid.

Dean: What were weekends like at your home?

Susanne: Saturdays was getting ready for Sunday. My brother and dad, they'd... you know... do their regular farm work... but Saturdays my mother and I cleaned house and my mother would bake and get everything so that on Sunday she didn't have a lot of work to do as far as cooking.

Dean: And then Sunday...

Susanne: Oh, I might say this... in Kansas, also on Saturdays, we'd go to town then and do our weekly shopping and dad would have several cans of cream that he'd take to the creamery and a lot of eggs. In Kansas he raised... had at least a thousand chickens... so we always had to haul those to market... Sundays... it was all... just got up and went to church, and I can remember the horse... my dad was the last one in church to finally give in and buy a car... (chuckling)... and I can remember we'd be driving down the road and dad would say, "Gettap!" He'd forget he was in the car! And he'd say, "Gettap!"

But Sunday after church... in those days, you always had company... whether it was... it could be friends, it could be relatives... and if a Sunday came and you didn't have any company and you weren't invited out,

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that was just devastating... and that again was in Kansas... when we moved out here, they did it some... that is, invited company, but not as much as they did in Kansas.

Dean: So, when you were a child... you mentioned traveling to Switzerland at one point... are there any other trips that your family ever took, or could they go with a farm?

Susanne: It was hard to go with the farm... the only trips that I remember that we made is we'd go to western Kansas to Ransom to visit relatives and friends... one of my dad's brothers had a girlfriend in Ransom, so he ended up going back there and marrying her and just staying there.

Dean: Hmmmm....

Susanne: ... but we had cousins, and dad, especially, had friends... and I can remember going to funerals... in fact, this Gertrude... this cousin of mine that just died... I can remember going to her father's funeral...

Dean: How was she related to you?

Susanne: Her father and my grandmother... my paternal grandmother... were brother and sister.

Dean: Ooooh... what about events that you might remember that happened during your growing-up years? Could be national events, or maybe some tragedy or exciting thing in your family... or the community...

Susanne: We really didn't have much excitement... I can tell you what happened when my finger got cut off...

Dean: Okay...

Susanne: I was twelve years old... we were living in Salem, and I was staying in a girlfriend out in the country for a few days, and when my folks and brother came to pick me up, my brother was all excited... while I was gone, the folks had bought a vacuum cleaner... a salesman had come and demonstrated it and they ended up buying it... and he says, "You can even dry your hair with it!" Well, that's when I perked up my ears.

Well, as soon as we got home, I washed my hair. And then I went in the room where the vacuum cleaner was and... oh, they had showed me... on the front... it was a Hoover upright... in the front was the place where you... there was a little cover that you moved over, and a hole you hooked the hose on it, and that's where the suction was so that you could clean furniture, around the edge of the rug and so on... and they had shown me that, so I decided, well, that must be where I'd dry my hair... so I attached the hose and it was sucking in my hair! And my mother came in and she wasn't very happy about me washing my hair and trying to dry it without talking to her first... and she says, "That isn't where you put it!" Well, I was supposed to have taken off the bag where the dirt goes, 'cause that's where the blower would be... but anyway... she didn't turn off the vacuum cleaner... oh, when I was letting the... using the suction on my hair, I also let it... put my hand in front of the hole and had fun, you know, with it sucking my hand in... well, my mother came in and she said that wasn't the place to have it... she didn't turn off the vacuum cleaner, but she took off the hose, and she started off the bag... well, I'd had so much fun letting my hand get sucked in, so I did it down below on the machine...

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Well, unbeknownst to me there was a fan wheel there with nothing in front of it, so I put in my hand like that, and it cut my finger even... well, the end of the fingernail... and it happened so fast, I really couldn't say... I didn't feel it, but when I pulled it out, there was blood squirting out all over and I screamed, and the whole family came running... but anyway, they took me to the hospital, and I got to spend the night there... (laughing)....

Dean: Do you remember that as a particularly traumatic time at all for you, or...

Susanne: Well, I guess the one thing I learned was if I didn't know about something, always ask somebody who did know about it! (laughing)...

Dean: What about holiday celebrations, Susanne? What were they like for your family? Which holidays did you really celebrate and what were the celebrations like?

Susanne: Oh, when we were in Kansas, Thanksgiving was the big, big one... my grandmother was living... she was the one that died about a month before we moved to Oregon... and here she'd have ten children, and eight of 'em were married... in fact, when she fell down the stairs, she was cleaning the house because the next day her youngest son was going to get married. And she and the youngest daughter was still home... not married... but anyway... they were all the rest... eight of 'em were married and all had children, and on Thanksgiving we would... she would have everybody come, and there were so many that the kids were... well, and even... yeah... well, the older ones more... I can't remember the uncles doing it... but the older cousins would go jack rabbit hunting... and my dad was quite a camera fiend for those days, and he was the only one in the family, really, that had a camera... it was an Oak Hill Kodak, and he had a tripod... but he always got everybody together for a family picture at Thanksgiving... and I can remember the kids would be in front with the taller ones in back, and some of 'em standing on a fence, but in front of the kids in front were maybe a dozen jack rabbits that had been shot that day. I can't remember when... if it was stormy, ever, but I just remember everybody running... kids running all over the place... and Thanksgiving was always a big day... and after grandmother died...

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Susanne: ... they meet now in the church basement... the Mennonite church that I attended when I was a child. I've been to a couple of 'em... I go back... went back twice at Thanksgiving... and Christmas... we really didn't... I can't remember too much going to any of the relatives, or having company... I remember more that my mother would cook something special, and my brother and I would play with the toys... I always got a doll... I was... that's the only thing I ever wanted to play with was my dolls, so at Christmas I'd always have a new doll, and my brother would have something with wheels on or another erector set or something... so we always wanted to play with our toys. Birthdays were remembered, but mostly with a cake...

Dean: Easter, or Fourth of July... anything?

Susanne: Mmmm... no... when I was home, Easter was a big day as far as choir singing, and maybe Easter sunrise... then it just seemed like we all wanted to go home and rest. Fourth of July, generally, was a big church picnic.

Dean: Hmmm... what about community gatherings? Do you remember any of those times as you grew up for some reason, or was it mostly church gatherings?

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Susanne: Well, most of it was church gatherings, and my folks, especially my mother, didn't think we should have too much to do with the community gatherings because they weren't church related... but, when we moved on the farm, the little country school was in one corner of our farm, and I attended eighth grade there... and they had a community club that met once a month, and they'd have some kind of a program and then refreshments, and so my brother and I would try to go as often as we could, but at one of the meetings... we were four miles from Silverton... and there was some... a dance class from Silverton came out... it was tap dancing... and my mother was shocked... really shocked! She almost got up... she wanted to get up and walk out, but we talked her into staying... and after that, she rarely would let us go to it.

Dean: Hmmmm... let's talk about your schooling years... what do you remember about going to school... from the earliest memories...

Susanne: My earliest memories was of a little one-room school house, and if we had fifteen or sixteen, that was a large amount, and in the back of the room there were four big double desks where the special eighth graders... or sometimes the seventh and eighth graders sat...

Dean: Hmmmm....

Susanne: and it generally always would be two and then there were two girls... but if the teacher wanted to punish one of the older kids, he'd make a girl sit with a... he or she would make a girl sit with a boy, and that would embarrass them to death... and in front of this... on the front it was raised, just one step, and that's where the teacher's desk was, and in front of all the desks... one on each side was a long bench, and when it was your class's turn to recite, then you'd come up and sit on this long bench...

Dean: Hmmmm...

Susanne: In Kansas we had the outside toilets, and had a big stove in the middle of the room and they burned coal, and everyone who sat near the stove would roast, and the ones on the edge would freeze (chuckling)... then we moved to Oregon to Salem, and all of a sudden I was in a classroom of around twenty-five kids... I was in the fifth grade... they were all fifth graders... and here were all these other rooms with all the children, and here I was used to just fifteen or sixteen... my brother was seventh grade, so he went to junior high... in fact, the junior high in Salem is still... they still use it... Parrish Junior High School... but, imagine for him... going from a one-room school to one where every class, he had to go find another room, and it took him quite a while to get used to that. I don't think I... I know I wasn't the best student... I was quite hyper, and always liked to watch what everybody else was doing instead of doing my own thing.

Dean: Okay, keep going through years... as you went through grade school age and then through high school... what do you remember?

Susanne: Well, I went to Salem in fifth... grade one... grade school... I was ??? school... then we... dad had built the house and I had to move to Inglewood... then I went to the Parrish Junior High in the seventh grade... I really can't remember... Oh, I remember one field trip in the sixth grade... we went to Champoeg Park, and we didn't... the school didn't have any school busses, and so I don't know whose truck it was or anything... but it was a covered one... you know, the back was all covered... but we... no windows... the sixth grade all got into that truck and went to Champoeg... and eighth grade I went to the country school... I don't remember anything in particular about that... except the teacher did finally convince my mother and dad that I needed glasses...

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In Kansas one of my teachers was my aunt... my dad's youngest sisters, and she wore glasses and whenever she put her glasses down, I'd get 'em and put 'em on, and then as I got older I'd tell my mother and dad that I couldn't see very well, but they figured it was just because I wanted to wear glasses 'cause Aunt Elma did... and I couldn't convince 'em that I needed 'em... but by the time I was in eighth grade I was nearsighted, and I was... the teacher had given me the front seat... I couldn't read the blackboard, so that I'd have to get a chair and move clear up to the blackboard...

Dean: Hmmmm...

Susanne: That's the only thing I really remember about the eighth grade... ninth, I had to... where we lived, I could either go back to Salem to the school, or to Silverton, and for some reason I thought the bigger school was better than the small one, and so I went back to Salem. And Salem High... the junior high was large enough... oh, by that time they did have school busses, of course... and it was... Salem High School was so large, and there was the... we always called 'em the "rich ones" ... the kids that came from the homes where their parents were wealthy... they really ran the school... the rest of us, we just followed whatever they said to do...

Dean: Hmmmm...

Susanne: ... and it really was, in a way, hard to get acquainted... you had your own little core of friends, and those of us that went home on the bus... I mean... yes, rode the bus... it was unheard of to come back... or to be in sports, you know, and have your parents come and get you, because this was right in the middle of the Depression... but I didn't feel deprived or anything... my mother made all my clothes, and... we had plenty to eat, and I always say I didn't know any better... so I was perfectly happy, and my favorite class in high school was German, and I took three years of it... the reason I... it was easy and I liked it... my mother coming from Switzerland, she spoke very broken English, and in fact, when my brother and I were born, she spoke very little English and we all spoke German/Swiss at home, and neither my brother nor I could speak much English when we went to school...

Dean: Hmmmmm...

Susanne: So picking up German was easy... and we had a German and I was real active in it... and also, sewing... I took three years of sewing, and we had a sewing club and would have the fashion shows, I guess you might call 'em, where we would model what we'd made... but all these activities were during the school time... in other words, we rarely had to come home in the evening... and I look back at my school life, and it was a happy time.

And in my graduating class there were 350 people, and the graduation ceremony was in the morning... oh, I can't remember what we did about eating at noon, but in the afternoon one of the theaters in town always had a movie for the graduating seniors, and my parents let me actually go to the theater... my very first time to go to a theater to see a movie, and I was so excited... but when I got to the theater I was disappointed, because it was one of the wild life... hunting or catching wild animals in Africa and taking them to the zoo... (chuckling)... and I thought they sure could have shown us something else... they let me actually come home with one of the senior boys that they knew, so that was a big event...

Dean: And than after high school... what about schooling then?

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Susanne: Okay... I wanted to go to... well, in my senior... well, it started before my high school years... beauty shops become... started being a big thing, and there was a beauty college in Salem, and I really wanted to go to beauty school, but so many of my cousins that weren't farmers, or didn't get married right away, became teachers, so my dad thought that... well, that... teaching was really the first thing I always thought I'd want to be, but when the beauty shops came along, I thought I wanted to be a beautician... but when it came to actually going to college, my dad said he'd help me if I'd go to Monmouth, but he wouldn't help me if I wanted to be a beautician (chuckling)...

And as far as earning money, when I got in my early teens, they... a lot of the farm places around had hop farms... and you had to wear gloves and put masking tape around your fingers, and then you stripped the hops off the vines, and the vines were very sticky and they'd cut your hands, you know, if you didn't use... well, then the hops went out and then it was green beans... so, I picked green beans and earned some money... but it just so happened when I decided to go to Monmouth, one of my neighbors and a cousin of mine decided to go, too, so there were the three of us, and in those days you didn't have to stay in the dorm, you could stay in private homes, so we stayed together... and it... it seemed like we had one room upstairs, and that room cost us \$15 for the three of us, so it actually just cost us \$5, and then we'd bring our food from home for cooking... and tuition was \$25 or... maybe \$45 a semester... and three semesters in a year... so that didn't take long... and we just had to go two years... and I was in the last... we were in the last graduating class that only had to go two years... starting that fall they were adding one semester a year, so they had to go the four years, and now of course it's five... but what I did, then, was almost ever summer I'd go back...

Dean: Hmmm...

Susanne: ... and then when I moved here, they started having night school classes...

Dean: Soooo.... did you get your first teaching job right out of college?

Susanne: Uh, huh (yes)...

Dean: And where was that?

Susanne: It was at Orenco...

Dean: Ooooh...

Susanne: Do you know where that is? Have you heard of it? Yes... I really didn't have any problem getting a job... I graduated in 1936, and the Depression was just beginning to lift a little... and the way I got the job at Orenco... my parents knew some people that lived there... they owned a large nursery, and they were related to some friends of ours in the Salem area... and I don't remember how we learned that they needed a teacher there, but anyway we did, and I got that job, and then I also got a job near home and I had to choose between the two... but both of 'em were the same... teaching the first four grades and the grade school music.

Dean: Now you haven't said a word about music... I mean, as far as you doing piano or anything... can you tell us about how that came about?

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Susanne: Yeah... well, in the Mennonite Church that I went to as I was growing up all the girls, and even some of the boys, took piano lessons...

Dean: Hmmm....

Susanne: So they were pianists ??? on there... once in a while I'd get to play for Christian Endeavor, but generally there were so many others that could play and could play better, so I really didn't do much playing at home... in college I took all the music... well, the music was my minor... I took all the music that I could, and I did some of my practice teaching... oh, our practice teaching there was most of our second year... half of the day was practice teaching... either in Independence or Monmouth, and we didn't have to, you know, do it other places... but this first school I taught the music and had programs and really enjoyed it... as far as church was concerned, they had their own organist and pianist, and I did sing in the choir... but I never got to play there.

But as soon as I moved to the coast and got my first job at Hebo, I attended the Presbyterian Church in Cloverdale, and they didn't have a pianist, so I started playing then... and I think I told you the other day, it seemed like every church I went to afterward... well, there were three of 'em, I can't say there were a lot of 'em... one here, the one in Lincoln City, the Cloverdale Church, then the one in Lincoln City, and then Beaver... just after I started attending, their pianist moved, so then I started playing.

Dean: So when did you have your first lessons... your first piano lessons?

Susanne: I had my first lessons when I was eight years old in Kansas.

Dean: Oooooh....

Susanne: My mother played, and she wanted me to learn... and we just had the pump organs and the first summer... oh, and I just took summer lessons, because the weather would get so bad in winter... but sometime after I started taking lessons, then they bought a piano... so I took two summers before we moved to Oregon... and after we moved to Salem and dad built the house, they bought a piano right away... both my brother and I took lessons... this woman we took lessons from... a lot of the people... now that will sound good... (chuckling)... from our church took lessons from her... she lived in Salem... she was Mrs. Thomas... so then I took winters... oh, I said I didn't play much at church... my brother formed a male quartet...

Dean: Hmmm...

Susanne: ... and I did play for them... they would practice at our house...

Dean: Okay.... so, you got a job at Orenco... how long did you teach at Orenco?

Susanne: I taught there three years.

Dean: And then after that...

Susanne: I couldn't make up my mind, whether I wanted to go on teaching or go into something else... and I resigned after my third year and came home, and the folks knew that I didn't really know what I wanted to do, so my dad suggested I take a year off and go to the Bible Institute of Los Angeles... again, a lot of... several of my cousins attended there from Kansas, and my dad had never been there but he'd heard such

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good things about it, and he said he'd help me, so I decided, "Well, why not?" So, I did go, and I came back after my first year... I enjoyed it... and had every intention of going back, but in August, one of my friends at the Mennonite Church who was a teacher, had a letter from a friend that she had gone to college with, who was on the school board at Hebo and they needed a teacher... so they wrote to Alma to see if she was interested... Alma taught in Salem, and she didn't want to go... so, she showed me the letter... well, it just so happened that every summer my family would come to Neskowin for a week or two vacation, and when we first started coming, it was quite a trip, because at Rickreall, you had to go through McMinnville... this other road hadn't been built yet... but anyway, you went through McMinnville and Sheridan and Willamina, and then at Valley Junction you had to go to Hebo... and I'd always liked the little town of Hebo... it... the Forest Service was there, and... I don't know... there was something about it that I always liked... so, when this letter came we were scheduled for our vacation in about two weeks, so I talked it over with my folks and we decided, well, to go ahead and apply... if I got it, fine... if not, I'd go back to Los Angeles... well, I applied and got it and haven't left the coast... (laughing)

Dean: So what did you teach?

Susanne: Again it was four grades and music. Now, when I taught first at Hebo, they just had the three classrooms upstairs in the main building... they had the basement, but I don't remember that they used... they had the furnace down there... but I don't remember... well, the library... I guess they did have the library... well, they just used two rooms, and one room was empty... and the gym was outside in a separate building... and a few years later... the school bus... they had a lean-to where... a carport, you might say... where the school bus was parked... and one New Year's Eve three of the high school boys needed gas, and they decided to swipe some from the school bus... and they didn't have a flashlight, and they were draining the gas into a can... and someone struck a match to see how much gas they had, and of course, there was a big explosion and the student under the bus got burned quite badly... but the whole gym went up in flames, and... but... now I was teaching there then... I taught there two years, and... but that must have happened... I taught there two years, was married, then during the war years we moved to Lincoln City, and I taught in the schools... it wasn't Lincoln City then, it was all these little towns, and I taught in Taft, and I taught in DeLake and that was my first time of teaching where I just had one grade, and that was second grade, and music. And I got the big salary of \$90 a month... and I believe... yes... and that was for twelve months... up until then...

Dean: Hmmmm...

Susanne: ... I had been... I only was paid for nine months... so I felt like it was a big promotion going there (chuckling)... but for a while I did... I always had one room... and the music... and then, my last two years there, they had me teach just music and it was at Taft... grade school at Taft, DeLake and Rose Lodge.

Dean: Hmmmm... Okay, and then after that...

Susanne: Then in 1950 my husband's brother started logging... he and his brother-in-law... and my husband was a logging truck driver, and they wanted him to come and buy a small... short logging truck and haul logs for them, so we decided to do that... and I applied at Cloverdale and Hebo and Beaver, but there was no vacancies... so then I applied in Tillamook and I got a job teaching fifth grade in Tillamook... one year I taught fifth and one sixth, but no music... but I had checked with the county superintendent when I was looking for my jobs originally, and he knew I'd taught a lot of music and he knew I lived at Hebo, so after three years in town, he suggested that I go see the school board and see about teaching music in the

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schools in the south end, so I did, and I ended up teaching grade school music at Beaver, and Hebo and Cloverdale. And I think at first I was at Cloverdale three days a week and then Beaver was smaller... yes... Beaver just had four rooms and Hebo Three, so I'd be a half a day at Beaver and the other half at Hebo, and I did that for two rooms... then Beaver took in Rose Lodge and Blaine schools and they built the larger school...

Dean: You mean Hemlock and...

Susanne: Hemlock... Rose Lodge, Hemlock... yes... and Blaine... maybe Blaine had been coming down already by then... I think they had... but anyway... they were too big of a school for me just to be there half a year, so they offered me a job teaching fifth grade and music. So that's what I did. And I'm trying to figure out... I did that for either one or two years... then I was always interested in the slow learners... so I went back to college and took up Special Ed. I can't remember whether it was called Special Ed... but, anyway, that's what we called it... and by then Tillamook County had a supervisor of Special Education, and I really worked for them, and after I got my degree in that, my first job was at Hebo and they had all the children at the south end of the county in grade school come there to Hebo... and I can't remember whether or not music was involved... but that was one year... then they started a Special Ed class in Tillamook at the high school, so my supervisor moved me there, and they bussed all the kids from the south end into Tillamook... but I taught Special Ed in Tillamook four years, but there was a man that worked with me... the two of us... full time... we just had one room... and at the end of four years... Nestucca... the south end of the county... had enough high school students so they could start a class at Nestucca, so in 1970 I started teaching Special Ed at Nestucca, and did until 1981, when I retired. And the next year... or... during the summer I heard about Bethel Baptist having an ACE Christian School, and they needed a kindergarten teacher... and I can't remember if it was Cheryl... it was somebody from the south end... they were taking one of their children to the school, and I told 'em to tell the principal that I'd be glad to teach until they could find a kindergarten teacher... well, it ended up I taught there then... they said that if I'd teach 'em, I might as well keep on... so I taught there for two years... that was after my retirement... then they closed the school... for some reason... I can't remember the details... and the following year I tutored one of the students that... I'd taught kindergarten and first grade and helped with the music... but then the next year one of the students that I'd had, I tutored him, and the following summer Walt Budd from Hebo came to see me to see if I'd teach kindergarten at Hebo. So I ended up teaching kindergarten for... until '92.

Dean: So.... how many years did you teach all together?

Susanne: At least 52... (laughing)... *(Note . . . Susanne actually taught for 54 years!db)*

Dean: And when you taught in Tillamook for the elementary... what school was that at?

Susanne: Liberty.

Dean: Ooooh... and... let's see... you didn't mention about teaching music outside of school... when did you...

Susanne: Oh....

Dean: When did you start doing that and... tell us about that...

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Susanne: I have to think back... it was the middle '50's... and my husband had a stroke and couldn't work, and we were used to two salaries... well, about then, Clarence Wanger was a piano teacher that lived in Pacific City...

Dean: Hmmm....

Susanne: ... and he never was very strong physically... his health got so bad that he couldn't give piano lessons any more... and in those days not too many people could afford to take their kids into Tillamook to take piano lessons, so people started asking me if I'd give piano lessons... so, I decided that I would, and I did it after school and kept getting more, so I'd do a couple... and it was just a half hour... do a couple before school and after school and Saturdays... before I knew, I had 36 students that I was giving lessons to. And I kept on... '56 kinda' sticks in my mind... I think that's probably when I started... and I kept... and then my husband died in '61... in 1963 is when I married Fritz and I had a ready-made family, so I gradually got out of giving piano lessons then.

Dean: Did you also give voice lessons?

Susanne: No.

Dean: No.

Susanne: No...

Dean: Susanne, when you first came to Hebo to teach, where did you live?

Susanne: I lived where Baumgartners live now.

Dean: Oooh...

Susanne: My future sister-in-law and family lived there... Margaret Duvall... Margaret and Wally Duvall... they had a dairy... and she was the one that was on the school board, and she was the one that wrote to my friend in Salem, 'cause they'd gone to college together... she was... had been a school teacher... she taught at Cloverdale...

Dean: So, let's talk then, about your first marriage. How did you meet your husband, and what was his name?

Susanne: His name was Glenn Duvall, and I met him there where I was staying... he... a few months earlier had just gotten out of the hospital... he'd been in the hospital in Salem for a year with rheumatoid arthritis...

Dean: Hmmm...

Susanne: ... and I don't remember what he did... oh, he stayed with an aunt of his in Salem... but he had... he didn't like it in Salem, and... I really can't remember the circumstances completely of how it came... but right at first he stayed with Margaret and Wally, too. So that's the way we got acquainted.

Dean: And when did you get married?

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Susanne: We were married a year... a little over a year later in 1941... we met in '40 and were married in '41...

Dean: So tell us about Glenn...

Susanne: Really don't know what to say... (chuckling)... he was quite short and was very self-conscious about it... and always seemed to think he had to prove himself, that he was as big and as good as everybody else... and that sort of colored his life... he never had gone to church much, but he did at the start... when we went to together, and he did make a profession of faith, but... and really... now, I was thinking of when we moved... well, even in Lincoln City, and then here at Beaver... he never was asked to do anything, and I always felt... well, probably one reason was we didn't join either one of the churches... and I don't know if they had a policy that church members worked... but I always felt badly that here I was playing the piano and was involved, and he was never asked to do anything.

Dean: Hmm... did he work in the woods, then?

Susanne: He always was a truck driver... he was a good truck driver... he had a good reputation as far as being a driver...

Dean: And you mentioned he had a stroke...

Susanne: Yes... he had a stroke when he was 46 years old, and he lived six years after that... but he always had to take so much medication... I'm gonna' open...

Dean: Yeah, you can do that...

Susanne: He had to take so much medication for pain, that it finally started affecting all of his organs...

Dean: Hmm...

Susanne: And all of his organs just started failing...

Dean: How was that time for you, Susanne? What was that like for you?

Susanne: It was very traumatic... it really was... and the last few months I know... I was teaching at Hebo then... and every recess I'd rush to the office and call to see how he was at home, and then... I'll never forget the Christmas in 1960... he was in the hospital, and this was a week before Christmas, and the doctor left word that he wanted to talk to me... and then he said that Glenn's time was limited... he could go any time, or he could live for a couple years... and I'll never forget that Christmas... you know, what do you buy somebody when you've been told they're not gonna' live? And I didn't tell my family, but I did tell his family... but then eventually, after Christmas I told my family... but we just lived each day, you know... and he ended up living six months...

Dean: Hmm...

Susanne: And the one thing that hit me was July... when he died... the one thing that helped me... I was taking a couple college courses at... in Tillamook... that they were offering, so that helped... and those were

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the days yet of the records, and the one song that I played over and over was "What A Friend We Have In Jesus", and I'd start every day playing that...

(end of first tape)

Susanne: ... but anyway, I'd start almost every day playing "What A Friend We Have In Jesus", and that really helped me get through...

Dean: Hmmm...

Susanne: But that first summer was very hard.

Dean: And then, how long was it before you married Fritz?

Susanne: Two years.

Dean: And tell us.. so, when did you marry Fritz, then?

Susanne: I married Fritz in September of 1963.

Dean: Okay, and it's Fritz Crocker...

Susanne: Yes.

Dean: And.... tell us about Fritz.

Susanne: Well, I'd known Fritz a long time, and had all of his children in school... and it was in 196... oh, and teaching music, I also taught square dancing... and then they started having square dance classes... well, it was at the Rose Lodge Grange Hall... they had square dancing.... dances... and Margaret, my sister-in-law... and Gary her son, went there a lot... I don't believe Wally did too much... I think... he was a good dancer, but I think his hearing was bad, so he didn't square dance as much... but Gary and Margaret did and they started asking me... so I started going, and Fritz was there, also... and his wife had left him... had taken off with another man... and he started square dancing... so that's the way we started getting acquainted... and so you might say our courtship was mostly square dancing...

But he knew I was a Christian and that the Lord meant a lot to me and that I went to church every Sunday... I didn't invite him, but he asked me if he could start going to church with me... so that was great, and so he did... and we kept square dancing... so, but... you know, the kids... we'd be going to games and everything... we gradually got out of it that way... and then when he joined... we joined the Gideons... 'course, we didn't have time for any of that after that... but he liked to be involved in things, and when he was... I can remember the night when he received a phone call asking... telling him about the Gideons... and asking him if he'd like to come to a dinner... and he talked to me about it... well, all I could really remember... I knew basically what they did... but I remember at the Mennonite Church it was more the older men... but I thought it would be good... and then he went to the meeting, and came home and said he'd joined and I felt that was fine... well, then the following Saturday he told me he had to get up early... he was going to a prayer breakfast in Tillamook... I thought, "Well, that's okay..." we always had a bunch of stuff we were going to do on Saturday... but lo and behold, it was going to be every Saturday, and I didn't like that at all... thought that we'd never get anything done, because after the breakfast he'd go shopping and it'd be almost noon before

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he got home... but right away I could start seeing a change... how he was drawing closer to the Lord, so then I was glad that he was going to the prayer breakfasts and of course I joined the auxiliary... and then they started having... after a few years in the Gideons, then they started... the women started joining the men at the breakfasts... we have our own prayer meetings, and I still go to it almost every Saturday...

Dean: Hmm... anything else about Fritz that would help us to know him?

Susanne: Hmm... he liked to do things... help people out... especially mechanically... oh, he was a man of hobbies... and he always felt that if somebody made something, or did something, he could do it, too... and he was going to take an early retirement... he was gonna' retire at 62... and he'd started saving the... see, he was the millwright at the plug mill... and every once in a while they'd get some logs in that had a burl or an attractive knot, and he would cut that off and bring it home... he had a whole pile of those... in those days that was quite a popular art... he was a welder, and he wanted to go into welding... the welding art...

The first hobby he took up after we were married, though, was rock hunting, and I'd forgotten how that started... but I can remember getting... at that time he worked graveyard... he'd get off work at 12... I'd sleep 'til 12... he'd come home, shower and shave and change clothes... we'd take off... I'd drive him... he'd sleep, and we'd go to eastern Oregon... different places and hunt for rocks... and then he bought a rock saw and he had a... this machine that he put the rocks in and it turns... you put water in... I've forgotten what it's called... but anyway, he bought all kinds of rock equipment... he made jewelry... I still have jewelry that he made... and I have a few rocks in the yard that he had found, and I brought from the other place... but he liked to be busy, and he never would be bored with all his hobbies...

Dean: And you got a ready-made family, you said.

Susanne: Yes.

Dean: Tell us about the family...

Susanne: Well, three of 'em lived with us... the youngest went with her mother, but the three older ones... well, Ken... the oldest one, was married... and so, like I said before... six weeks after we were married, I was a grandmother... but all I knew to be was a teacher, and I came home and I was a teacher... and also where their mother was living, I didn't want the kids to feel that I was trying to push their mother out of their lives, even though she'd left 'em... and so we really had difficult times... well, when we were married, Linda, who was in the eighth grade was the only one staying... to be staying with us... but two weeks after we were married, Jimmy, who was a senior in high school... oh, and he had a job on a dairy and he stayed with the people and was only going to be home every other Sunday, but he wasn't going to be sleeping at our place... and I just had a small two bedroom house... but two weeks after we were married, Jimmy was in a bad wreck... somebody had pulled in front of him and Jimmy hit him... and he received a bad head injury... had a big cut in his forehead...

Dean: Hmm...

Susanne: ... so after he got out of the hospital... course he lost his job... he moved in with us... so Fritz started building on when he could... now that was September... and Ken, like I said, was married... the following January... the sixth of January... he and his wife were going to Salem to a movie one evening, and they met a car, and a deer ran in front of the other car, and the car swerved to miss the deer and hit Ken head on... his wife was killed and he received a bad hip injury... and he was in the hospital for a month...

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then he moved in with us... then Fritz's mother... now, then, this goes to summertime... Fritz's mother was taking care of Frank Owens... he was bedridden... and he died in July... and she moved in with us... and (chuckling)... Fritz kept building on to the house, and Ken was getting along much better, and I think he was back at work, and... but Fritz got an extra bedroom built up above our carport, and things... we were all speaking, but, you know, (chuckling) things could have been better... but gradually, one by one, they left... Jimmy joined the... he graduated in July... or June, and the following January he joined the Air Force, and sometime in through then his mother got a job as a nanny, and then the following May or so Ken remarried, so then it was just the one. But we were all determined that we gonna' get along, and today we're the best of friends, but we still shake our heads when we think of... well, they said they gave me a bad time, and I always say, well, I gave them a bad time (laughing)... but, we are... we're really a fairly close family...

Dean: Soooo... tell us about Fritz and his death and those circumstances, if you can do that...

Susanne: Yes. I don't know if you want to call it a hobby or not, but aside from his hobby in working with the Gideons, he loved to go elk hunting, and every fall he and Ken and Ken's son and Linda's husband, Don, always planned an elk trip... they really always depended on Fritz... relied on Fritz to figure out the place... and they found this one place about forty miles north of Enterprise in eastern Oregon, and... oh, and we'd bought... and this was in 1985 in November... in that fall we'd bought a small motor home and he wanted me to go with them, so I arranged to take a week off of school to go there, and so we got all set up in camp... Ken's wife went along, too...

And one thing Fritz always did when we went camping, he did all the cooking... never cooked at home, but he always cooked... and this particular day he and Ken were still in the camp... Fritz wanted to do some rearranging of his food supplies, and I don't know... different things... and then his grandson came... grandson and Don... it seems like there was another person... a friend... because it seemed like there were three... anyway one of 'em came back to camp and said Ken Jr. had shot his first elk... it was way down in the bottom of a canyon, and they needed Fritz and Ken to come and help quarter it and then carry it out... so they got ready to take off, and I told Fritz, "Now, you be careful." ... oh, that fall, I had a feeling that his heart was giving him problems, because going back to 1963... it was in '64... no, it wasn't it was two years after we were married... he had his first heart attack...

Dean: Hmmmm....

Susanne: ... and after that, he always had a physical at least every... if not every six months at least once a year, and that fall he kept putting off his check up, but I had a feeling his heart was bothering him... when he was gonna' leave, I said, "Now, you be careful." And I grabbed Ken and I says, "Now, you watch your dad." And so they both said, "Okay." And they took off... and they were gone about a couple hours, and Ken came back and he talked to his wife and she came in and said that Fritz had just died of a heart attack...

But what had happened... he started down the canyon with 'em, and he told 'em that his left arm was bothering him, so he thought he'd better go back to camp... and they wanted him to wait there 'til they got back, and he says, "No, I'll be okay,"... oh, he wasn't gonna' go back to camp, he was just gonna' go back to the pickup, and they went down... the rest of 'em quartered the elk and came up... they found him alongside of the trail where he'd had his last heart attack... and then after we'd got back here, Vern and Jerry Powers came to see me, and Vern said that the previous May he and Fritz had been... well, I, you know, told you about it... but one day they had been cleaning the cemetery and that's when he had said that when it was his time, he hoped he was doing something that he liked, like serving the Lord or the elk hunting... and this was... he died on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, and on Thanksgiving day, he and I had planned to leave

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for Baker City... he was state chaplain of the Gideons then, and the state cabinet had asked him to go to Baker City to meet with the Gideons there, and he had scheduled a meeting for Friday... so on this trip, he was elk hunting and he was gonna' be serving the Lord... and that just... when Vern told me that... it just... I just couldn't be sad and weepy, because it was just the way he wanted... God had answered his prayer... so I never did grieve for him like I did Glen, because all I can see on Fritz was he was where he wanted... he had been doing what he wanted...

Dean: And what year was that again?

Susanne: That was in '85...

Dean: And since then, Susanne, you've just sat around in your home and done nothing, right?

Susanne: Yes... (laughing)... right...

Dean: Yeah... what other thing... what have you been involved in since then?

Susanne: Well, outside of the church, of course, it's been Gideons... he and I were both on the state cabinet when he died, and I was... about 1983 I was elected state secretary-treasurer, and he was elected treasurer... no, it was '82, because you can hold an office for three years in the Gideons, and then at our state convention in September of '85, he was elected state chaplain... and I didn't have an elective office, but I did have the state appointed office... and then after he died, the following September, I think it was, I was elected state chaplain, and I always felt where he had been, they just felt maybe I should carry on... but I had been... I really was active in the state until... oh, it's just been the last few years... but I still help in our area... and then as well as meeting here... and then involved with the church... music... and...

Dean: So, let's talk about the church... starting out, you worked as piano player...

Susanne: Yes...

Dean: Okay, then what other... and you've done that forever...

Susanne: Since 1951...

Dean: Okay... what else have you done in the church? What have your activities been?

Susanne: Uh...

Dean: And this is Beaver Community Church, mostly...

Susanne: Yes... I was teacher of the... I can't remember... was it high school, or junior high... hmm... it was high school... 'cause... well, there were about eight... well, you know, we didn't have a lot... oh, and we did plan... we did go on field... you might say, field trips... we did this... and once they... somehow, we... they were interested in different religions, and I checked with the church board and they gave us permission... and one Sunday we went to the Catholic church... and I talked to the priest and told him I was going to bring my class...

Dean: Sunday School class?

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Susanne: Uh, huh (yes)... Sunday School class... and then he talked to us afterwards, and then one Saturday we went to the Seventh Day Adventist church... well, those were the only two... you know, different religions... so... and I served on the missions committee... those were the days when we used to have a mission conferences for the weekend... I was talking about that at Lifeliners the other day, and there were two or three times where we had... we served the Indian fry bread... we had missionaries from... well, it might have been when Doris came back from Honduras... but that wouldn't be Indian bread... no, when she came back from Southwest Indian School... but anyway... they're talking about maybe doing something where we can have Indian fry bread through the Lifeliners... or maybe when the house comes in September... I've served on the social committee for umpteen years...

Dean: Did you start Fun, Food and Fellowship?

Susanne: I started Fun, Food and Fellowship...

Dean: And the purpose of that was what?

Susanne: Genevieve King and Carolyn Merchant both liked to play games, and they were both somewhat handicapped, so I talked it over with some women and wondered if we couldn't meet about once a week here at my house and we'd play games, and so we did... oh, Esther Richwine... that was really centered around her... and... because then Carolyn and Genevieve weren't quite so handicapped. Then we just kept it up. But now... Well, once every three months we meet at the church, but otherwise we go in the homes.

Dean: Okay... what was the thing you started with taking trips... what was that... Seniors and Friends, or something?

Susanne: Oh, that was Senior and Friends...

Dean: Didn't you start that one, too?

Susanne: Yes... I started that... I was trying to think who... oh, Jerry... uh... oh, there in Portland...

Dean: Urbach...

Susanne: Urbach... it was when Urbachs were here...

Dean: And what was the purpose of that?

Susanne: We might have even started, basically, before that... that was after Jerry Kennedy moved to Washington... we planned a trip up to there one weekend... and as far as a purpose behind a trip was... just another way to have fellowship and have a good time... see an interesting spot here in Oregon...

Dean: Didn't you organize them all, too, just about?

Susanne: We talked about going... going shopping... and this was over Veterans' Day... and I don't remember if I did the first one, but I can remember I did it for several years... and we always went on Veterans' Day, then Laurie, I think, took it over...

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Dean: What about Lifeliners... is that another one of your ideas?

Susanne: No... no

Dean: Okay...

Susanne: No... Lifeliners... and it's only been... the name Lifeliners has only been the last few years... I can't remember what it was called first... but it was when Dean & Lita Strong were here... and when they left... they felt called to the mission field... and they became involved with World Gospel Mission... and World Gospel Mission had a women's organization...

Dean: Oh, the prayer band, you mean that used to meet...

Susanne: It was a prayer band... but it seems like it was even called something else before that...

Dean: Hmmm....

Susanne: ... but, the women did... even before that, the women of the church did meet and make quilts or did, you know, missionary type things... but when the Strongs joined World Gospel Missions, that's when the women organized into the prayer band... and I didn't start going until after I retired, and I was teaching at Bethel Baptist at the school... because from the school, then I'd stop... I'd go to where ever the prayer band was meeting that month...

Dean: Did you also go to the Southwest Indian School?

Susanne: Yes... I went one year by myself... one work team... and then was talking to Barb Yates about it one time and that was after her husband died... it sounded good to her, so then she joined... we went three years... and we talk about it... we don't know why we stopped going... because we really enjoyed it...

Dean: And what did you do there?

Susanne: Whatever had to be done at the school. We did spring housecleaning, you might say, in the school rooms, you know... cleaned it from top to bottom... we worked some in the kitchen... cleaned dormitory rooms... rearranged and reclassified some of the books in the library... and we did other things with the books... I can remember the books, but I can't remember what we did... and then they'd always take us... one day we'd go out on the reservation somewhere, you know, and show us the sights... and Sunday... one Sunday we would go to... we would visit an Indian... a church that was basically just the Indians attending...

Dean: What do you... what lessons do you hope your students learn from you the most?

Susanne: Be kind and respectful to each other.

Dean: And Susanne, when we go into the cemeteries... mainly what we see is we see a person's name and we see a year and a dash and a year. What do you want people to remember of you in that dash... what do you hope that Susanne Rutschman Duvall Crocker is remembered for?

Susanne: Oh, maybe that she liked to help people... liked to do things for people...

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Dean: And that she loved her Lord, for sure...

Susanne: Yes... I'm sure that if I didn't love the Lord, then I wouldn't want to do things for people...

Dean: Right...

Susanne: And I know I constantly... by constantly I mean almost daily... thank the Lord that he put me in a Christian home...

Dean: Um, hum (yes)...

Susanne: ... where I was taught from the very first that the Lord was important, because I can remember... well, Sunday mornings I was very hyper, and I'd never sit still, and I can remember being taken out several times and given a swat because I wouldn't sit still... so I didn't get much out of Sunday mornings, but Sunday nights... and we always went Sunday nights... and I'd put my head in my mother's lap, and supposedly go to sleep, but that's when I listened to what was... the sermon...

Dean: Hmmm...

Susanne: ... we would be first in Christian Endeavor and then there'd be a session where we'd be all together... but that's when I can remember that... that's where I learned I needed to love the Lord and serve Him...

Dean: Hmmm... that's wonderful...

Susanne: ... from back just as far as I can remember...

Dean: Susanne, there's one thing you forgot to mention... you forgot to mention your fav... your most favorite piano student... (giggle)...

Susanne: (Laughing out loud...)... the one who has the mind... had a mind of his own!

Dean: Uh... yeah! (more laughing)... do you . . . just as an add on... is there anything else you'd like to add?

Susanne: Well, I was going to say... I was telling you how from my earliest days I knew that I need to love the Lord and accept Him, but when I first started teaching, and was on my own, I can't say I strayed away, but where I was on my own, I had to try things...

Dean: Uh, huh (yes)...

Susanne: ... and I never was perfect... there was a lot of things that I did that I wished that I wouldn't have... but it seems like I wanted to try it, but I knew right away when I did try it that wasn't anything that I wanted. Okay, now what was it, again?

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Dean: Well, is there anything else that you'd like to mention at all? Anything that maybe we've forgotten... skipped over? And Susanne, just as an add on... do you have any memories of Lucia... your sister-in-law... that you might just add? Since... you know, Lucia was my aunt as well...

Susanne: Yes... oh, she was a kind person... I haven't thought about her for so many years...

Dean: It's just an add on...

Susanne: They never had very much, but even though she didn't, she always did all she could for her children... I can always remember... well, she made... she must have made the clothes... but she wouldn't get things for herself... make sure that Marilyn, Lorraine and Nolan had nice clothes for school... and take them whenever it was possible... and I can remember her really taking good care of Lionel... did he have a heart attack or something... seems like he wasn't very well, either... she was a good wife, because I can never remember ever hearing her say a cross word to him, and where ever he wanted to go... move to, it was all right with her... she was never a practicing Christian, but to me, she was a Biblical wife...

Dean: Hmm... we've sat here a long time, so I'm not gonna' keep you with any more, but you did wonderful! You just did... you had wonderful stories... this will be great...

(end of tape)

Transcribed by Darleen Cole
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