

INTERVIEW WITH MISS ELVA ROSSI  
 INTERVIEWER SHIRLEY TANZER  
 TRANSCRIBER ROSALIE WAKEFIELD (5/22/83)

Beaverton Oral History Project/October 26, 1982

→ TANZER (QUESTION LOST)  
 my father

ELVA: ...When ~~he~~ came here, ~~and~~ he was 12 years old. ~~well then~~ He helped my grandfather on the farm and my grandfather's brother Reynaldo, was in with him, ~~and then~~ they were having difficulties, so my father <sup>who</sup> was ~~then~~ about 16 years old ~~then~~, ~~and he~~ said to his father, to (my grandfather), "Well, we'll buy him out." So they bought him out and he went to LaCenter, ~~but~~ My father worked for a number of years on the farm. ~~He~~ would get up right after midnight when they were selling the produce, like the truck gardening -- they raised carrots and oh, lots of asparagus -- they had a big asparagus planting, ~~and I could~~ remember my grandmother and my mother washing the asparagus in big tubs and bunching them, as much as they could hold in one hand, ~~and then~~ My grandfather had gone out and gotten these reeds and they would soak them, twist them around, tie up the bunches of asparagus with ~~it~~ and tie them up, ~~but~~ It was usually a good handful. ~~And~~ At that time asparagus was blanched. It was white. <sup>where</sup> ~~and~~ it was raised, ~~where~~ the soil was mounded up and they'd have a long knife that they would reach down underground and cut the asparagus off. ~~And~~ Of course, all the asparagus that wasn't marketable, the small ones, the little ones, I don't think they ever put one as big as your little finger in the bunches. ~~That~~ <sup>was</sup> beautiful, big asparagus. ~~and they~~ would cut them off so you didn't have a lot of waste on the bottom of them and they'd pack them up that way, <sup>then</sup> ~~and~~ my father would take the vegetables down in the wagon, go down the canyon road with the horses and get down into Portland early in the morning, because that was when they would come in at the Farmers' Market ~~and~~ buy up the vegetables for the day.

TANZER: You said they were blanched?

ELVA: Well, they were blanched in the soil before they were cut. Just the very tip end would be pale green. ~~and~~ Many <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ truck farmers <sup>took</sup> ~~would take~~ their vegetables in ~~and take them~~ to the big hotels and restaurants in Portland and ~~sell~~ <sup>sold</sup> them right off the wagons.

TANZER: Did you ever go with your dad to Portland? Or

ELVA: ~~No, and say -- no, not that.~~

TANZER: → Did the boys go?

ELVA: No. We used to go down with my father in later days, ~~and~~ when we'd get up to <sup>just</sup> ~~well~~, before you get to Sylvan. ~~(It was such a steep road.)~~, he would make us get off and walk until we got up to Sylvan and were going down the hill. Then we could get back and ride in the wagon. There was too much of a load for the horses. They would

struggle. He would stop and let them rest, you know. <sup>H</sup> And then coming home, quite often we would go up the Green Hills; that's on Portland Heights. ~~and~~ <sup>we'd</sup> take the trolley car up there and ~~we would~~ meet him, ~~and~~ <sup>He'd</sup> come home with a ~~load~~ <sup>a</sup> load of manure or a load of other things, and we would get on and then ride back down with him, ~~and~~ <sup>There</sup> was what they call the Horseshoe Bend, ~~and~~ <sup>It's</sup> just about where you turn off, part of the Horseshoe Bend was where you turn off the road to go into Beaverton -- you know ~~where~~ when you go in there by the ~~corner~~, West Hills Cemetery, ~~and~~ <sup>we</sup> would walk across because it was a big circle, and then we went down the old canyon road and from then on into Beaverton it wasn't bad.

TANZER How long did it take you to get into Portland from Beaverton?

ELVA Well, it must have been two and a half hours, I think, with the horses.

TANZER Did you go into Portland to shop at all?

ELVA Oh, yes, we always went into Portland. ~~and~~ <sup>When</sup> I was very small, in 1905, my father's sister ~~who married~~ <sup>Rocellina</sup> who married George ~~Mazzei~~ <sup>Mazzei</sup> -- They sold their place ~~which is~~ <sup>over</sup> on Center Street, ~~and~~ <sup>they</sup> owned quite a bit of the Beaverton beaverdam, too, ~~and~~ <sup>she</sup> bought a big house on ~~Franklin~~ <sup>Franklin</sup> Third Street where the fountain is now, across from the auditorium, ~~and that~~ <sup>in</sup> the early days where the auditorium stands, was a big farmers' market. ~~and the~~ <sup>farmers</sup> used to come in there ~~every~~ <sup>week</sup> days ~~during~~ <sup>during</sup> the week, bring<sup>ing</sup> their produce.

TANZER: Did you go in to visit them?

ELVA Well, I would go down. My mother ~~was~~ allowed us to do about anything we wanted. ~~and~~ <sup>We'd</sup> get on the train in Beaverton and get off up there close to where my aunt ~~lived~~ <sup>lived</sup> and we'd go over to her house. And we'd come home on the train, my brother and I.

TANZER How old were you?

ELVA ~~Let's~~ <sup>About</sup> ten years old, I guess; ~~maybe~~ <sup>maybe</sup> not that old.

TANZER Did your mother go into Portland to shop?

ELVA Oh, yes. ~~She knew~~. She and this Mrs. Wanner who had a sister <sup>who</sup> ~~that~~ was head of the Art & Needlework department at Meier & Frank's for many years, they knew personally, all the original ~~Meiers~~ <sup>Meiers</sup> and the original Franks when they were down on First Street, ~~and~~ <sup>they</sup> also knew all the <sup>more</sup> Wolf's, you know, that had the Lippman-Wolf Store. They knew all those ~~older~~ <sup>older</sup> people.

TANZER ~~So they would go in shopping.~~ <sup>Were</sup> they able to do much shopping in Beaverton?

ELVA Well, yes. There were some stores, and ~~usually~~ <sup>usually</sup> they had a little dry goods. ~~and~~ <sup>you</sup> could get thread and needles, ~~and~~ <sup>pins</sup> pins and essentials like that and some yardage ~~and~~ <sup>like</sup> like gingham and ~~maybe~~ <sup>maybe</sup> outing flannel.

TANZER What did your mother do for the better yardage?

ELVA Well, we went in Portland. And she was a great one to shop at Roberts' Brothers, because they had a wonderful yardage department and they used to be just a little bit cheaper than Meier & Franks and Lippman-Wolf's.

TANZER When did your father leave the farming, <sup>?</sup> because he abandoned the farming?

ELVA Well, that was ~~About 1900, and he was --~~ He had gout, and suffered a lot from ~~it~~, and it was hard for him to do the farming.

TANZER ~~So~~ What did he do after that?

ELVA Well, ~~That's~~ that's when he opened up the 1900 Saloon. ~~and it ran.~~ He kept that until Prohibition.

TANZER What do you remember about the saloon?

ELVA: Oh, ~~My~~ My brother Albert has a big clock that was in there. ~~and he got that from Belding Brothers,~~ My father bought that from ~~there~~.

TANZER It was a very famous place in Beaverton, as you know. People refer to the saloon all the time as a meeting place.

ELVA Well, I guess it was. Of course, my father was very law abiding and he tried to run everything according to the law.

TANZER Were you allowed to go into the saloon. <sup>?</sup>

ELVA Oh! I used to go in once in a while. We'd go in the back and then alongside of ~~that~~ where the building is now, in back of it, my father bought that property from the Fishers. ~~He sold part~~ ~~part~~ of that property ~~it~~ ran clear back to where the highway is now) and then he sold that to the Stipes, the back part. ~~But~~ There were beautiful Bartlett pear trees on that place -- I don't know how many of them. There used to be lots of pears there.

TANZER Is that in the Fisher ~~part~~ property?

ELVA Part of the ~~Fisher~~ property. ~~Original Fisher property.~~ ~~That~~ where the pharmacy is, that was the Fisher home -- not the original Fisher home, because the ~~original~~ Fisher home was where I said the saloon was, but ~~then~~ the Fishers owned that property. I don't remember what year ~~Albert~~ bought that from them. He built a building for the Safeway Store there. Did ~~he~~ tell you that?

TANZER No, he alluded to it, but he didn't.

ELVA ~~And then~~ Afterwards, Safeway left there and moved down to where the old schoolhouse was, you know where the parking lot is now for the Safeway, and they bought that property from us, and then ~~Albert~~ I think ~~I don't think~~ - I don't remember what was in there. You'll have to ask ~~him~~, but I do know then ~~he~~ <sup>Albert</sup> converted it into the pharmacy and rented it to Mr. Bill Leyden (???) (Who??) and what was the other man's name. Well, he could probably tell you.

TANZER

Well, <sup>and Prohibition,</sup> After 1915 ~~the~~ what did your father do? after ~~because Prohibition came...~~

ELVA

~~Well, that was~~ Then we went into the chicken business, and we had quite a few cows, and ~~when I was telling you~~  
~~about the onion house, next to the -- I'll have to go back to that~~ Next to the onion house was a lean-to where  
they kept the wagons and <sup>other</sup> a lot of storage. ~~in there and that's where they did a lot of cleaning~~ of the  
vegetables and <sup>got</sup> getting them ready for market, and that wagon shed as we called it. The other which was connected  
with the barn, where we had the <sup>small</sup> ~~man~~ and the <sup>small</sup> ~~boys~~, we called the buggy shed. So the other was the wagon shed.

TANZER

~~And then~~ Your brother told me that he had delivered milk.

ELVA

Yes, and ~~so then~~ About that time ~~was when~~ we had some very fine cows -- Guernsey and Jerseys and the boys, <sup>Albert</sup>  
and my brother Raymond were quite small and they delivered quite a bit of milk around Beaverton.

TANZER

Where did you go to school?

ELVA:

I ~~went to school at Beaverton and~~ finished grade school in Beaverton and then I went to ~~Lincoln High School in~~  
~~Portland and finished~~ graduated from Lincoln High School <sup>in Pkld.</sup> and I taught let see on the Coast at ~~Bay View,~~  
across from Waldport, ~~and I taught there~~ two years and then I taught on the McKenzie up at WALTERVILLE and then  
I taught in Beaverton, ~~and then when the war came along,~~ First World War, <sup>came along,</sup> I went to work for the Standard Oil Co.  
~~and then~~ after I worked at the Standard Oil Company here in Beaverton ~~I worked there~~ about a year or two, ~~and~~  
~~when~~ I was transferred to the Portland office, ~~and I didn't work there very long, and then~~ I went to the Bank of  
California and, all together, the time that I worked there -- I worked <sup>was</sup> there 22 years.

TANZER

For the bank of California?

ELVA

Yes.

TANZER

Did you ever go back to teaching?

ELVA

No. I didn't like it. But I did go one year to -- after I had taught on the Coast, I went for a year to Oregon  
Normal School at Monmouth.

TANZER

Now, what was your family's Church affiliation?

ELVA (\*)

Well, the Rossi's, of course, were Catholic. And on the Wolf side, ~~xxxxxx~~ they were Catholic and I think the first  
six children were baptized by a traveling priest, a missionary in Nebraska. But when they came west, why apparently  
they gave up the religion and my Grandfather Wolf was a free thinker and he was a great student and a great reader  
and he was a great admirer of <sup>Ingersoll</sup> Ingersoll (?sp) and some of those

TANZER

Other freethinkers?

ELVA:

Yes. But I think some of my aunts went to the Congregational Church here, the younger ones.

TANZER So there was no pressure on you to go to the Catholic school?

ELVA Well, I did. I went to St. Mary's when I was in grade school. One time my mother thought I should go. And of course I had to walk from Beaverton up to St. Mary's, and I walked up with several other girls who were older. And they made life miserable for me. They'd tease me and everything. I think I went about two weeks or a month.

TANZER Why did they tease you?

ELVA Oh, I don't know. You know how kids are. I don't think there's anyone more cruel than children. And if they know they can get you upset, way they will. So I didn't like the Sisters' school at all, so I just quit.

TANZER Why did you go to Lincoln High School?

ELVA ~~Well, it was like~~ there was no high school here in Beaverton, and ~~so I~~ there were only two high schools in Portland - Lincoln and Washington, I think.

TANZER ~~How did you get there?~~

ELVA ~~Oh,~~ I rode on the trains, every day

TANZER ~~Every day, on the trains?~~

ELVA ~~Every day, yes.~~

TANZER ~~And did you feel that at Lincoln you received an adequate education?~~

ELVA Oh, I got ~~a~~ a marvelous education. I don't want to boast, but in many ways I was better educated than some of the teachers that we had <sup>who</sup> were college graduates, the teachers that we had at the house. And I attended night school over the years, on and off, business college, and other classes, extension classes you know, and things.

TANZER Let me ask you about your own teaching. You went to Normal School so that you could teach.

ELVA ~~Well,~~ I took the examinations after I got out of high school and got a teachers' certificate.

TANZER Was it difficult to find a teaching job?

ELVA Yes, it was. But Mrs. Stipe and her sister <sup>Iva</sup> had vacationed on the beach <sup>at</sup> Alsea Bay, and they knew they were looking for teachers down there because they were approached <sup>since</sup> because they were teachers here in Beaverton at the time, and ~~so~~ they suggested I put in my application. And ~~so~~ I did and got the job.

TANZER ~~What grades did you teach?~~

ELVA I taught all the grades, you know - it was a one-room schoolhouse.

TANZER So what was it, one to eight?

ELVA Yes, but of course, I didn't always have all the classes;

TANZER When you returned to ~~Portland, you~~ Portland, you taught at Beaverton. And is that when you became friendly with Merle Davies?

*Handwritten notes:*  
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ELVA Oh, I'd known Merle Davies all my life. Of course, she was older than I was, but ~~she was~~ we knew the ~~family~~.  
~~the~~ Davies family, a long, long time.

TANZER She was principal of that school.

ELVA Not at the time that I taught there.

TANZER Oh, what did she teach?

ELVA ~~W~~ She taught the upper grades, I think

TANZER And you taught what grades?

ELVA Third and Fourth.

TANZER I'm curious about why you left teaching.

ELVA Well, this job as a bookkeeper came up at Standard Oil, ~~and~~ Mrs. Wilson, ~~who was~~ principal of the grade school here, her husband was working for the Standard Oil, ~~and~~ she told me, ~~she says~~, "If you're interested, it pays good money. It pays a lot more than you're making teaching." So she says, "I'll tell Lloyd about it and you go in and interview Mr. Johnston," so that's how I got it.

TANZER And what did you do at the Bank of California?

ELVA Well, ~~at~~ the Bank of California ~~when I first went there~~ <sup>to</sup> I was a file clerk, ~~and~~ then they put me in, well they called it the analysis department which was charges against customers for service and things like that and that's what I did all the time I was there, so then I was married in 1935, and of course, I had to give up my job. ~~and~~ I was married for seven years, ~~and after I was divorced, why I~~ <sup>had been</sup> called in occasionally when I was married to do temporary work, but I was divorced while I was doing some temporary work. ~~So~~ I told them about it and one of the men in the credit department ~~that~~ <sup>who</sup> had a desk near where I was working went right down to the man in charge of personnel and said, "You'd better hire Elva," he said, ~~and~~ "If you can get her, you better get her." So I worked there for I don't know how many years after that. ~~and~~ <sup>if</sup> then, ~~I~~ well, my mother wasn't well, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> I had gone home to live, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> so I ~~heard~~ of a job at Portland Trust where I would only work in analysis for about ten days a month at the first of the month, ~~and~~ so I took that job and there were two of us in the department, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> then my brother Raymond died in ~~1958~~, ~~was it, was it~~ <sup>1958</sup>, January ~~18~~, 1958 (that would be 25 years now, wouldn't it), ~~why~~ then I quit Portland Trust because it ~~was~~ getting for one thing, my mother was ill, and it was getting so that I was working all month long. I had worked nearly two months steady before then and ~~with~~ with my mother sick it just didn't work right. ~~But~~ then when he died, I had to quit.

TANZER Was he living at home with your mother?

ELVA Yes.

TANZER Now, was he the only one who was at home. The others married?

ELVA Yes. Frank and Albert were married and away from home.

TANZER I see. And so you were living back in the family home at that time. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Were schoolteachers still living with you?

ELVA No. We had some of these men that either worked at Safeway or someplace around Beaverton. One of them was a butcher and I don't remember where he worked, but there were different ones. ~~Some time, when the Columbus Day Storm came, I was living in the house then alone. My mother had died in '61. And the telephone company, Alice~~ ~~Albert's wife, was working for the telephone company and she said, "Well, Elva," she said, "Of course I was building this house at the time -- the house was almost completed; because I didn't move in until November of '62, because the carpenter that was working on it had some finishing work to do and he said, "There's so many people that need work done, roofs repaired, and houses repaired and windows put in and everything," he said, "Would you allow me ~~to~~ an extra month or so," and I said, "Yes" I would, because it was just about a month after the Columbus Day storm when I moved in here, and -- I've lost my train of thought.~~

~~TANZER You were talking about living in the home.~~

~~ELVA Oh, oh, yes. And Alice worked at the telephone company, and the people there were just begging her -- different ones to find a place to put these men that they were bringing in from Everett and I don't know where all. So I had I put two double beds in one big bedroom we had and I put beds everywhere. I could take care of all these men (laughter). Of course, they just had a room and they had to eat out. But anyway, it was quite a thing.~~

TANZER I remember that very well.

~~ELVA Oh, dear.~~

TANZER So you built this house and you moved here. Had you retired then?

ELVA Oh, I had been home since Raymond died in '58 ~~and~~ hadn't done any work at all. I had I think seven housekeepers. I could have written a book that would have sold better than "The Egg and I" on the experiences I had with those women. You just try. None of them that I had were very good nurses but I had a friend who took care of my mother. I met her when my mother had her first stroke and was in the hospital; and her name was Rowena Gibbons. When we brought my mother home from the hospital the first time, she came out and stayed and stayed at the house and took care of Mother until we were able to do it. And she ~~oh~~ She was such a capable woman and such a good friend, and She always ~~said~~ said, "Elva, I'm going to put a pin on you. You do anything that an RN can do. You should have gone into nursing." Well, I was very frail. I only weighed about ~~102~~ 102 when I was 18 years old and I don't think any hospital would have accepted me. And I doubt if my father would have let me go into nurses' training, because nurses had kind of an oh, strange reputation.

TANZER I wonder why that was?

ELVA: I don't know.

~~TANZER Well, particularly European men, I think. (lost a line here)~~

~~ELVA I think maybe that was it, and I have a very dear friend who's in <sup>the</sup> nursing home now who helped take care of my mother when she died and so my friend Rowena did, too. But she, Mrs. Hunter, trained at Bellevue in New York. And you really -- now I doubt if she could tell you, but she told some wonderful things about her experiences in New York and the people they would bring in off the streets, charity cases, and you didn't work an 8-hour shift. You worked 12 hours a day.~~

TANZER Did your parents encourage you to go on to school?

ELVA Well, my father wasn't very anxious about me going to high school, but my mother was, and I was ambitious. I was going to get an education if I possibly could.

~~TANZER What were your father's expectations?~~

ELVA Oh, well, he said <sup>my</sup> a girl would get married, or ~~and~~ what does she want to have an education for. But he didn't object too much. I went to school. I had to pay tuition, you know.

TANZER And he helped you out with that?

ELVA Yes. And I had to have train tickets.

TANZER ~~and~~ your mother, though, did encourage you.

ELVA Oh, yes. She was all for it.

TANZER Did she ever talk about her own expectations?

ELVA Oh, I don't know in those days. I ~~think~~ <sup>I think</sup> when my mother was young, about all they had to look forward to was marriage.

TANZER What was your family life like, Elva, as you grew up? How close ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> you with your brothers and parents?

ELVA Oh, ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> were all pretty close as far as that's concerned. We did things together. We used to go on picnics ~~and~~ <sup>my</sup> father bought a Mitchell -- I've forgotten what year it was, but I've got a letter upstairs that ~~maybe~~ I should dig out and read to you ~~because it told about when my father~~, ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> had our own water system, ~~joined~~ <sup>joined</sup> a little house ~~I'll~~ ~~show you the picture~~ of that we called the pump house, next to our big house. ~~and~~ <sup>we</sup> had a tank in the basement and it worked by gravity. When the pressure would get so low, it would start the electric pump in the pumphouse and fill up the water tank. ~~Well,~~ <sup>then</sup> Beaverton put in city water and so my father, ~~I think that's now it happened,~~ ~~I think my father had gotten the tank~~ ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> the water tank and the pump, I believe, at Mitchell & Co. in Portland, and Mitchell Staver & Co. <sup>in Portland</sup> ~~it was,~~ and he traded in the pump. ~~I mean the~~ ~~Co.~~ No, we used the pump ~~then~~ <sup>then</sup> later ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> watering the yard and had connections so we put a hose on to water. But he got a Mitchell Touring Car and <sup>she said</sup> ~~this~~ letter my mother wrote me was when I was teach<sup>ing</sup> at Waltherville on the McKenzie, ~~that she walked~~ <sup>that she walked</sup> from our home up to West Slope or beyond because my father had gone in on the train ~~to~~ to get the car and he was going to drive



it out. ~~I had gone ahead~~ Frank and Albert, and then she and Raymond ~~walked~~ walked up and they all met him up there near West Slope somewhere and rode home with him in the new car. ~~and~~ It was one of the first automobiles that was in the city of Beaverton. ~~I've forgotten there were~~ Others ~~who~~ had automobiles but my father had one of the first ones, ~~and~~ he had a garage built for it ~~which was~~ back of the house and he had <sup>a</sup> gasoline pump put in so ~~that~~ he would have the tank filled every so often. ~~There~~ -- There weren't any really service stations around.

TANZER (laughter) So you had your own car and your own gasoline pump. And where did you go in the car?

ELVA Ooooh! We used to go up the Columbia River Highway, oh so much, and take picnic lunches and take people with us. ~~My~~ My mother and father used to go lots of times. ~~and~~ They invited friends and neighbors to go with them and EVERY evening in the summertime when we'd eat dinner which we usually did fairly early, before 6:00 maybe, my father used to say, "Hurry up and wash the dishes now and we'll go for a ride." ~~and~~ Of course, there were dirt roads and all and we'd ride all out toward West Union and Bethany and ALL around Beaverton here all over northeast & south and west and my father, as we'd drive along, would say, "Mr. So and So lives here, this is where this family lives." I think he knew everyone in Washington County.

TANZER Did he ever run for political office?

ELVA ~~When~~ he was on the Beaverton City Council.

TANZER But he never ran for anything ~~political~~ larger than that?

ELVA No, he didn't feel that he was well enough educated to do that sort of thing. I think he could have ~~run~~

10/26/82

INTERVIEWER: SHIRLEY TANZER

## TAPE 2, SIDE 2

TANZER ~~When you~~ Were you the center of attraction when you drove around in your Mitchell?

ELVA Oh, I don't know, maybe we were. ~~==~~ Albert and Raymond were small and we had rented out old home. It was after we built the big house where the Safeway now stands. I have ~~some~~ pictures somewhere and I'll try and find them for you. ~~They~~ They would put the seats down in front of the back seat, you know, so the little boys could sit there, ~~and~~ then we'd have three people in the front seat and ~~three~~ <sup>three</sup> people in the back seat. My ~~grandmother~~ <sup>Grandmother Rossi</sup> lived with us, ~~and~~ ~~Grandmother Rossi~~. She lived to be 81. And she ~~lived~~ lived with us after we moved into the big house, the new house. She came to live with us ~~when~~ <sup>when</sup> she was about 75, ~~around there~~, when we lived in the little house.

TANZER Were your grandparents an influence in your life?

ELVA Well, yes, I think so. My grandmother, <sup>was</sup> of course. ~~When~~ <sup>When</sup> I was 3 years old I could speak German, Italian and English. But I can't today (laughter). ~~But~~ <sup>My</sup> grandmother would tell me all kinds of stories in Italian and all about her life in Italy and how beautiful Italy was. ~~and~~ <sup>She</sup> was always homesick for Italy and she'd say "Oh, my Bella Italia." It was such a beautiful country compared to coming out here to this type of living -- you know.

TANZER What family occasions did you observe?

ELVA ~~Oh,~~ <sup>Oh,</sup> we always observed all the holidays and ~~Oh!~~ <sup>Oh!</sup> my father was great for Fourth of July. On the Fourth of July there was always a celebration in Hillsboro. ~~And~~ <sup>And</sup> no matter how dusty the roads were, because they were all dirt roads ~~on~~ <sup>on</sup> Broadway there in Beaverton, the dust would be up to your ankles and themud, too, in the wintertime. ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> we'd go up to Hillsboro to the band ~~concerts~~ <sup>speeches</sup> and everything up there. ~~all the speeches...~~

TANZER Did you decorate your house?

ELVA OH, yes, we'd have flags out and bunting and all that sort of thing.

TANZER ~~Were~~ Were family occasions always observed in your mother's house?

ELVA Yes. Even though my Grandfather Wolf was ~~well,~~ <sup>what</sup> ~~was~~ you'd call ~~him~~ an agnostic or a freethinker, they always had a beautiful Christmas tree. ~~and~~ <sup>They</sup> were great ones to sing and they had a great big old square piano. ~~and~~ <sup>My</sup> Aunt Kate and my younger Aunt Gretchen were pretty good musicians and they would play and my grandfather and all the grandchildren and all the aunts and uncles would stand around the Christmas tree and the piano and sing all the Christmas hymns. ~~and~~ <sup>They</sup> always sang the German songs there, and when we went to my grandfather's, you couldn't

speak English, you had to speak German.

TANZER Well, it was probably very intelligent. So everybody kept the language.

ELVA Yes. ~~And~~ <sup>My</sup> mother could speak and write German beautifully. Of course, she had gone to that German school, too, and then ~~my~~ my grandfather had <sup>also</sup> taught them.

TANZER Did your mother do all the cooking for the family occasions?

ELVA Oh, yes. ~~And~~ I used to help her as soon as I was able to. ~~And we had every~~ <sup>Every</sup> Christmas, every New Year, every Easter, every holiday, we would have hoards of relatives, ~~and~~ they expected to come whether they were invited or not and my mother and I would work until after midnight ~~the~~ the day before getting food ready, baking, preparing turkeys and chickens and hams and everything. ~~They~~ <sup>They</sup> always set two tables, ~~6~~ <sup>6</sup> one in the dining room for the grown ups, ~~and~~ <sup>that</sup> a big long ~~table~~ table for ~~this was the table we had, and I don't know how many leaves, but I think~~ ~~it~~ <sup>is</sup> seated about 12. ~~And~~ then we had a big table in the kitchen that we used every day; ~~and~~ <sup>6</sup> we'd put leaves in that and all the children were fed there.

TANZER Did your grandmother cook Italian food?

ELVA Yes, she did. ~~And~~ <sup>For</sup> many years my grandmother did the ~~main~~ <sup>main</sup> cooking; ~~so~~ <sup>but</sup> then as she got older, ~~then~~ my mother did.

TANZER Now, was religion important to your grandmother?

ELVA Yes, Grandma Rossi, she used to take us when we were little to Catholic church.

TANZER How far did your ~~the~~ neighborhood extend?

ELVA Oh, ~~see~~.

TANZER You know, people talk about Deaverton as if the whole city was their neighborhood.

ELVA Well, it was, really. ~~Sometime maybe I can... I had time the other night when I couldn't sleep. I was thinking~~ about the different families <sup>who</sup> lived on Broadway. ~~You see, where~~ <sup>where</sup> the Bakery is, that was Dr. Robinson's old home. ~~and where~~ <sup>where</sup> the bakery building is, there was a wooden building, ~~there and I have a picture of that, too,~~ ~~of~~ the old drug store that Dr. Robinson had. ~~and~~ Dr. Robinson, I understand, was a German. <sup>But</sup> I think someone that you should talk to is Amy Domigalli, who lives in Portland.

TANZER <sup>A</sup> You mentioned that <sup>My</sup> your uncle had married one of the

ELVA ~~the~~ Tuckers. ~~They~~ <sup>They</sup> had a homestead up here on Allen Avenue just a little bit, ~~maybe it was probably just at~~ ~~the~~ end here, Menlo, and then down toward Watson Street. They owned a big lot of property up there, ~~and when~~ <sup>when</sup> my mother was a girl here in Deaverton, the Tuckers used to have big dances at their place, you know ~~and~~ they'd go and stay all night because it was so dark and the ~~streets~~ streets were so bad that they couldn't get home at night without

so they'd stay all night and have breakfast and come home when it was daylight, <sup>after</sup> and dancing all night.

~~TANZER Oh, speaking of dancing all night... the dance hall in Beaverton.~~

~~ELVA I think I have a picture of that.~~

TANZER Did you go to the dance hall?

ELVA Oh, sure. We used to go to dances there all the time.

TANZER What type of thing did you do for recreation when you were a girl?

ELVA Oh, well, we'd have parties and get together and when I was in high school, I used to go to the dances.

~~TANZER You went to the high school dances?~~

~~ELVA They were public dances at the Moore's Hall.~~

TANZER Did girls go with girls?

ELVA Sometimes. Sometimes they'd have a boy escort, you know.

TANZER What about movies?

ELVA Well, we had movies. We had a movie down here on Farmington Road and it was let me see, I think it was east of where the Dairy Queen is, either in that block or the next block east. and we used to be able to go for I think a nickel. ~~and oh~~ My father used to just love to go to the movies. I can't remember the name of the man that ran the movies. ~~I~~ I'm sure that Alice or Albert would remember. ~~But~~ then someone from Salem (and I've been trying to think of their name since I knew I was going to talk to you) built that theater building - the Beaver Theater building there. ~~and of~~ course, we were only a block from it, so we would always patronize. My mother was a great fan of the movies and so was my father. We all used to go to the movies whenever there was a change of program, we went there.

TANZER Did your parents permit you to go to the dances freely?

ELVA Oh! They never seemed to care. I guess they thought I was safe. I don't know.

TANZER Who were some of your close girlhood friends?

ELVA Well, I have ~~oh~~ There was Omma Emmons, ~~and~~ Vera ~~Hendricks~~ Hendricks (who is now Vera Hardy) and she lives in Aberdeen, ~~and I~~ talk to her frequently. She's older than I am. And let's see. Hazel Squires who lived next door. She was older. And I had quite a few friends in high school. A lot of them are ~~gone~~ gone now. Katherine Desinger -- I suppose you've heard of her -- and let's see, ~~Martha~~ Martha Matsky. ~~well~~ well so many of them are gone that it's hard for me to remember all of them. But we used to do things together. ~~we~~ we were great ones on Sundays if the weather was nice to go for walks. ~~and~~ we'd walk down the Oregon Electric tracks over to Walker Road on a Sunday and go over to the Walkers -- You know where Laura Walker and Bill Walker and Mrs. Walker <sup>lived.</sup>

TANZER\* You knew them?

ELVA Oh, yes. I should say. We were very good friends.

TANZER Were any of them particularly your friends?

ELVA They were all quite a bit older. But we used to go over there because we used to enjoy them, and Laura would tell so many things about the pioneer days here in Beaverton. They had one of the first post offices out here in this region, you know.

TANZER I did hear that. Yes.

ELVA And they were a very hospitable family, and if you ever went over there you'd have to stay for a meal. ~~and then~~ I have a picture of the Oregon Electric depot and there's a woman in a buggy there and I'm sure that it was Laura. She used to come over and pick up people and the family.

TANZER Oh, I would very much like to have that picture. As I understand it, one brother and one sister had tuberculosis.

ELVA Yes, they died quite young. ~~She~~ Laura died in her 90's. I used to talk to her on the phone when she lived in the old house there by herself. I just don't know how she did it. Albert and I had gone over to see her a number of times. But ~~she~~ <sup>Billie</sup> ~~she~~ <sup>who</sup> Millie was the one ~~that~~ died. He was a very charming person. They were all charming people. ~~And~~ I think the original family came from Virginia but her mother's family, ~~her~~ name was Coffey. <sup>They</sup> came from Missouri and Coffey County in Missouri is named for ~~the~~ Laura's mother's family. ~~So she used to ... and one~~ One of her grandfathers or someone in Virginia ~~that~~ had was a ~~minister~~ minister and she had <sup>all</sup> just boxes ~~of~~ of his written sermons. And she had boxes of letters dated way back. Some of them I think she gave to the Oregon Historical Society. ~~and she gave some of her things to the Oregon Historical Society but she in the hallway where you came into the house.~~ It was quite a nice big house -- I don't know whether it's still standing. Is it?

TANZER It is.

ELVA Well, she had a collection of Indian baskets that she had hung on the wall one next to the other clear up to the ceiling on two sides of the hallway. But after she got to living there alone and it was difficult for her to get around, many of the baskets were stolen.

TANZER By whom?

ELVA By people who had come in. They'd pick them up and take them out as they went out.

TANZER How awful!

ELVA ~~and~~ She had a very good friend by the name of Richardson, and I think the first name was Rose. She was an attorney in Portland. And I knew her. ~~and~~ She got Laura to give a lot of historical things that she had to the Oregon Historical Society. She influenced her to give it to them and I think it was a very fine thing.

TANZER It was a fine thing but it would have been wonderful if some things could have gone to the Washington County.

WIVA Well, she may have given some to Washington County. I'm not sure.  
TANBER How did ~~people~~ get along with one another? people who lived in Beaverton  
WIVA Oh, well, I think there were feuds. Some people didn't like certain people. Maybe they didn't like them over a dispute over property lines or on account of religion or something like that, but people as a rule were very friendly.

TANBER Do you remember any of those particular disagreements? ~~Because it was a small town.~~

WIVA No. The only disagreement that I know of was that our east property line ~~on our house, or our property~~ down there where the Safeway is ~~is~~ on both sides was off I've forgotten how much. It wasn't very much, but ~~it~~ every survey seemed to be different. ~~and~~ We had difficulty with the Pursers because there were two pear trees ~~in the~~ ~~back~~ on the back line, and sometimes the pear trees would be in our property and sometimes the pear trees would be in the Pursers' property. ~~and~~ I It seems that at Hillsboro there had been a fire where many of the old records at the Courthouse, ~~many of the old records~~ were burned. ~~and~~ I It has been hard to trace back ~~I think~~ some of the property lines. But I think we finally got it agreed. ~~and~~ Then the Squires ~~on the Squire side --~~ if it would move over to the east, then the Squires property line would come over into our west side and then if our property line would move back to the west, then we were back in the Squires' lines.

TANBER ~~So they were for the most part property disputes.~~

WIVA ~~But~~ we were friendly with the Squires. Mrs. Squires was the blacksmith. He was uncle to this Mrs. Domigalli. ~~and~~ They lived next door to us for many years.

TANBER Well, the reason I asked you that is I had heard about the Ku Klux Klan in Beaverton.

WIVA I think it was fairly strong at one time. ~~But~~ There were two Catholic girls; ~~and~~ one of them was a postmistress here in Beaverton and at that time the Post Office was in the building across the street from the where the pharmacy is now. ~~and~~ They were the Fitzpatrick girls, Mary and Jenny. Mary was the postmistress. ~~and~~ She died here a few years ago. But Jenny ~~is~~ still alive and lives up at Kent, Washington. ~~But~~ They had quite a bit of difficulty. ~~and~~ Some people accused them, ~~What was the name of that paper -- I guess it was the Klan paper, or~~ ~~that~~ that wouldn't put ~~X~~ the Klan paper in their post office boxes, that they'd hold them out. ~~and~~ Sometimes they'd go in and demand that the paper be there and I'm told they would pull it out from under the counter or something. But the Fitzpatrick family and I have been friends for years and years. ~~They used to live~~ Their home was up on Sorrento Road, ~~and~~ and big square house, ~~that they had up there~~ and the Catholic church used to have many card parties up there in the summertime, ~~and~~ They had a great big porch that ran around the house on two sides and they'd have the card ~~with~~ tables out there. ~~and~~ they'd have -- I think they played Wisk. I'm not sure. I used to go up there but I don't think bridge was as fashionable in those days.

TANZER Probably not for that kind of a card party. I am trying to find out as much as I can about that Klan because it was almost like a businessmen's club in Beaverton. A lot of people belonged to it. ~~and~~

ELVA ~~and~~ I think a lot of them were Masons. I'm not sure.

TANZER Well your brother said that your dad may have been involved in it until he found out what it was, ~~and then~~ ~~he~~ did remember that your father discovered ~~that~~ one of the shopkeepers was very active in it and then he didn't patronize him. But the Klan was particularly anti-Catholic.

ELVA Oh, yes.

TANZER And they would have been anti-Italian and anti-Catholic. Did your father retain any kind of relationship with the other Italian families?

ELVA Oh, yes! ~~We~~ were very friendly and ~~we~~ had lots of <sup>Italian</sup> people come out from Portland. ~~Italian people, and~~ when young men ~~would~~ come from Italy, especially if they came from Tuscany, or near Florence where my father came from (and some of his ~~relatives~~ cousins came out), they always came to my Grandmother and Grandfather Rossi's place. ~~and~~ They would stay there until they found work or Grandpa or my father would give them work on the farm. ~~and~~ In the wintertime when there wasn't any truck gardening, ~~or anything like that~~, they just stayed for the board and room and they helped take care of the horse. ~~and~~ We always had a cow or two and we had chickens and that was a separate building ~~that was~~ behind the onion house. ~~and~~ We kept the cow (Grandpa and my father wouldn't think of having a cow in with the horses) ~~in a~~ <sup>ina</sup> shed where we had the cow and it was next to the chicken shed. ~~And~~ then, of course, we had a chicken yard ~~that~~ that was all fenced in with chicken wire.

TANZER Has the family business and particularly your father's real estate investment been of great benefit to your family?

ELVA Well, it has in recent years. ~~About the time, of course, when~~ we had the building <sup>in</sup> downtown Beaverton there where the Resale Shop is, we never got very much rent. ~~And~~ <sup>One thing</sup> my father told my mother before he died, ~~he said~~ <sup>was,</sup> "If anything happens to me (he hadn't been very well), Mattie, see that the taxes are paid. If you don't pay anything else, pay the taxes. Hang on to the property." ~~and~~ <sup>\$M</sup> My brother Frank was working for the Southern Pacific Company when Pappa died, and I had been working too, ~~and~~ <sup>of</sup> course, we had to help my mother pay off the ~~the~~ building, but Frank was the one that really did the most. ~~and~~ We always feel that the ones who sacrifice the most for the property never get to enjoy the high prices that the real estate brought later on, in recent years. ~~and~~ <sup>like</sup> My brother Raymond died 25 years ago -- he never got to enjoy it. My father, my grandfather and my grandparents, my mother never got to enjoy much of it.

TANZER But they were really investing in your future.

ELVA Well, yes, but ~~there~~ ~~are~~ no decent ~~investments~~ after Albert ~~and~~ I ~~are~~ gone.

TANZER

Albert has no children?

ELVA

Has no children, and I have no children. ~~Neither~~ <sup>M</sup> brother Raymond didn't marry and Frank never had any children.

TANZER

Well, I hope you're living it up.

ELVA

(laughter) Well, if I had better health probably I could.

TANZER

You did know Merle Davies, so I would be curious unless I asked you a bit about her -- about your personal reminiscences about her and what she told you about her ~~own~~ family.

ELVA

Well, of course, I told you earlier about her father coming out.

TANZER

Tell me again. I didn't ~~type~~ that.

ELVA

Oh, you didn't? ~~Well,~~ ~~He~~ came to Oregon, ~~I think~~ in the early '50's or late '40's. ~~and~~ ~~He~~ was 12 years old and he walked across the plains ~~with~~ with a wagon train, ~~and~~ ~~when~~ they came to Oregon, they settled in Scholls district, along Scholls Road. ~~and then~~ there was so much timber around here <sup>so</sup> he and his brother ~~(and I don't know whether his father~~ was connected with it) ~~they~~ built sawmills here around Beaverton, ~~and~~ there was one sawmill up somewhere around Sorrento Road, I think, ~~and they used to~~ ~~process it there?~~ ~~No,~~ it was probably closer to Beaverton, maybe about Allen Avenue, ~~of that,~~ I'm not sure. ~~of.~~ ~~But~~ they would haul the logs out of the woods down a gully this side of -- oh, it's west of Albertson's store -- in there with oxen -- down to the sawmill. They had two different sawmills. I think, one in Scholls and one here near Beaverton, and then they had the sawmill down ~~in~~ on Beaverdam Road, and Merle Davies told me that until recent years, you could locate where that mill was because of the sawdust in the soil. ~~He~~ ~~built~~ two ~~He~~ and his brother (I've forgotten what his brother's name was, Mr. Davies, Merle's father was named Alfred -- they called him Al Davies) ~~they~~ built two beautiful houses on Watson Street. One was at Allen and Watson, ~~and I don't remember whether that was the house.~~ It seems to me that was the house that Merle's uncle built, ~~and~~ then they built one further down on Watson Street on the west side of the street ~~that~~ later the Stipe family lived in, ~~and~~ they were HUGE big two-story houses with bay windows, beautiful houses! ~~and then~~ during the Depression, I guess it must have been -- was there a Depression in the ~~the~~ 90's?

TANZER

Yes.

ELVA:

They lost everything. ~~and~~ ~~He~~ took what little ~~(she said)~~ <sup>it</sup> was very poor grade) lumber <sup>there was</sup> and built this house on Farmington Road, ~~and~~ it was a two-story house, where Merle lived at the time I knew her. ~~and~~ ~~She~~ always said the house was so poorly built because her father just took what lumber they had left from the sawmill or something and built this house.

~~He~~ ~~well~~ then, in 1962 ~~(the year that I moved over here)~~ Merle Davies sold her home and bought a house on Murray Road off of Farmington, ~~and~~ that's where she lived until her death. And she had attended Normal School and graduated, I believe from Normal. ~~and~~ ~~She~~ had taught as a younger woman at Banks and I think ~~put~~ at Scholls or Kinton, I'm not sure about that -- and then she taught in the Beaverton School and was finally principal. She



taught in the old Beaverton Grade School, and then when the new one on Farmington Road was built, she was principal there and ~~later~~, in later years the school was named for her.

TANZER Do you remember Earl Fisher?

ELVA Yes, I remember Earl Fisher. He was the first teacher I ever had. He taught me in first grade.

TANZER Oh! Everybody tells me he was a very tough man.

ELVA Oh, he ~~used~~ used to just frighten me so. He would just beat up the older boys. It was just terrible.

TANZER Your brother told me a story about that, too. ~~He~~ Everybody - There's just uniform agreement that he was a terror.

ELVA Yes, he was.

TANZER But everyone said that Merle Davies was a very exceptional teacher.

ELVA Oh, she was. One of the outstanding teachers I think in the state of Oregon. And she was a great disciplinarian and she was very thorough in giving them a good background in the fundamentals and many of the high school teachers have told me that they always knew when the freshmen class came in from Beaverton, they were so well-disciplined, they knew that they were Merle Davies' pupils.

TANZER To what do you attribute this special facility she had?

ELVA Well, I think she was a very serious, dedicated person. She was an extremely large woman and was always very conscious of her size and her height.

TANZER How tall was she?

ELVA I think she was all of 6 feet, probably.

TANZER And heavy?

ELVA Yes, husky. She was a twin. ~~Her~~ Her sister Mildred, who married ~~Wila~~ Wila (sp) Sheppard here in Beaverton. ~~The~~ Sheppards had the store on Farmington and Watson street where the beauty shop is now, ~~but~~ It was a frame building, ~~of~~ and ~~her~~ her sister married Wila Sheppard, ~~he was~~ one of the sons. Her sister died of tuberculosis and she had a little girl. The girl was, oh, I doubt if she was two years old when Mildred died. And Merle was always very fond of the little niece. I think her name was Wilene. And she had other nieces and nephews.

TANZER How many children were there in the family?

ELVA Well that I couldn't tell you just off hand. ~~See~~ Merle and her sister ~~Merle~~ were the youngest. They were twins, ~~and~~ She had older brothers and most of them were away from Beaverton and some of them lived out toward Banks, ~~and one of them~~ Davies Road ~~let's see that was that~~ was named for one of her brothers. His name was George. George Davies, yes. And he had two children, ~~Wila~~ <sup>Vernona</sup> and Lester.

TANZER Now are they still in this area?

ELVA ~~Well Vernona~~ <sup>Vernona</sup> lives somewhere out there with one of her daughters, I think probably on the Eld home <sup>place on</sup> ~~place on~~ <sup>daughter</sup> ~~place on~~ <sup>Nobie</sup> They called her ~~Nobie~~ <sup>Nobie</sup>.

Davidson Road, ~~the house was built by the family~~ (they called her/John)

and she was a Norton, ~~the~~ her family, the pioneers = Reverend, and they had a greenhouse on the corner of Farmington and I think Washington Street.

THEY WERE ABSENT.