

Name of person interviewed: Jean Edwards Muir

Interviewed by: Juliane Schudek and Samual Shogren

Date of interview: August 27, 2010

Location of interview: Farm on 30350 NW Scotch Church Road Hillsboro, OR 97124

Special Conditions: Interview's voice is not picked up by the microphone well, and is difficult to hear. Noise from planes overhead paused interview a number of times (7:35, 10:05, 13:30, 17:23, 31:10, 35:35)

General Description of contents: blueberry farming and farm management, urban growth boundary issues, community and neighbors, Save Helvetia

Interview #1

**Tape 1 of 1**

Biographical Information

2:15 – 3:17 “How did you come to Oregon and Washington County? Did you live anywhere else before?”

She met her husband, Phil Muir, in California. He's a fifth generation Portland native. Jean was born and raised in northern California, was attending UC Davis studying marine biology. When she graduated, she moved to Oregon and married Phil. They lived in the city. Phil decided he wanted to try farming. They bought a farm and moved to Washington County in 1979.

3:37 – 4:45 “What do you do for a living now?”

Semi-retired marine biologist, salmon biologist, worked on Columbia River for Indian tribes. Now a consulting fisheries biologist, works with Native American tribes on natural resources issues. Does all the blueberry farm business, marketing meetings, purchasing, paperwork for the farm, general farm labor too (husband does tractor work, she does the other work).

Working and Managing the Farm

4:50 – 7:35 Interviewer comments that they are trying to gather information on women in agriculture today, and asks Jean to talk more about her role in managing the Blueberry farm.

Many federal and state regulations to comply with: pesticides, herbicides, reporting requirements etc. Mentions soil preservation and runoff concerns. Being good stewards. Keeps records of all chemical applications, marketing meetings, meetings and conferences at OSU on pests. She helps many local farmers who ask her to translate all that information for them to help them with GAP certification.

8:00 – 10:05 “What is involved in managing the farm? How big is the farm?”

48 acres. Tried various crops. Became friends with blueberry families who helped them set up farm and taught them how to farm blueberries. Didn't expect such accommodation from the community. Most have been here for generations and don't move away. Nice, stable, elderly population.

10:40 -12:40 Talks about the traditional role of women in farming. Women have been traditionally involved in farming more than recognized. Women are very knowledgeable. People very receptive to women in farming. Most farmers still men.

12:50 – 13:30 “You mentioned you do paperwork at home, and all the putting documents together. Is this something a lot of women do at home, but just don’t talk about it?”

Quite a few women maintain all the books for the house and farm.

14:15 – 16:23 “Can you talk about your farm in more detail?”

48 acres total, 6 acres blueberry , 11 acres wheat and timber, a general pasture. Talks about the role of contract farming on small farms.

16:30 – 18:25 Discuss blueberry market and threats to small Northwest blueberry farmer from larger farms in states like California.

19:00 – 21:25 “Talk more about the export of blueberries”

Talks about export, marketing of crops, coops, and u-pick.

### The Community

21:50 – 24:15 “What was the neighborhood like in 1979? What did it look like here in the rural community?”

Community relatively static in Jean’s view. Talks about aging population, children moving away and not staying to take over family farms, low crime, and the history of dairy farms in the county that ended in the 1980s. Many farmers have second jobs to supplement income.

24:20 – 28:30 “how do you manage having a second job, some people can only handle one”

Talks about the relatively easy process of growing blueberries.

### Urban Growth Boundary Issues

28:45 – 42:45 “Let’s talk about UGB and the issues around the Urban Growth Boundary and your experience. I read an article that you were interviewed for. Living in the (reserve?) land now, can you talk about that.”

Talks about her support for land use planning in Oregon. In total support of land use planning in Oregon, it keeps urban sprawl down. Likes that urban and rural are demarcated very clearly. Compares urban growth in California to the Portland area. Talks about recent urban growth discussion in Portland area, urban reserves, urban zones, rural zones. She also discusses Save Hevetia and her work with them. Also talks about water quality and runoff problems. She also talks about how urban growth may affect their farm in the future.

44:31 – 46:20 “In the zoning decisions and looking at taking over small farms and putting them in urban reserve, is productivity value of the soil itself taken into consideration where soils are ranked by

agricultural quality and if there is a particularly high level of agricultural quality then land will continue to operate as farmland and rural reserve and won't be included in the urban reserve?"

Talks about difference between old system of designating urban growth based on soil quality and the new system based on urban reserves.

#### Personal connection to the land

47:38 – 50:55 Jean talks about her personal connection to her farm and the land

#### Back to UGB and Save Helvetia

52:10 – 55:35 Jean talks more about her community role and work with Save Helvetia in the recent urban growth planning meetings.

55:40 – 58:05 "Do you have any story you would like to tell or share in regard to the area or the UGB process?"

Jean emphasizes the importance of keeping rural and urban clearly defined. Part of beauty of land use planning process is awareness and sensibility to keep urban and rural clearly defined. She discusses what she thinks is the physical dividing line between rural and urban in the west Portland area.

#### Tags

Activism, Agricultural laborers, Agriculture, Agriculture—History, Blueberry farms, California, City planning, Communities—Oregon—History, Community organizing, Dairying, Davis, California, Delivery of goods, Education, Families, Farms, Floods—Oregon, Western, Helvetia, Oregon, Hillsboro, Oregon, Indians of North America, Land use planning, Local history, Marine biology, Native Americans, Oregon—History, Rural, Soil, Soil quality, Tanasbourne, Urban, Urban Growth Boundary, Washington County, Women, Women agricultural laborers, Women—Employment, Work

