

Interview with Joyce Richards
December 6, 1998
Interviewed by, Kaylee Laakso

Me: This is Kaylee Laakso

What is your full name? And why were you named that?

Mrs. R.: my full name is Joyce Richards and I was named after one of my aunts.

Me: When and where were you born?

Mrs. R.: I was born in Hunnersville township, Wadina County, Minnisota.

Me: Did you ever have a nickname growing up?

Mrs. R.: My nickname was sis when I was growing up.

Me: Where you called that because you had lots of brothers and sisters?

Mrs. R.: Yes I had, brothers and sisters. My older brother was called son. I was the second oldest and I was called sis.

Me: Does anyone still call you sis?

Mrs. R.: Yes, my brothers and sisters still call me sis.

Me: Do you remember your grandparents?

Mrs. R.: Yes I do, I remember both sets of my grandparents.

Me: Do you remember any certain thing about them?

Mrs. R.: I can remember my mother's parents lived on a farm. They had a lot of sheep. I can remember going to their house as a little girl, and they had a bear rug in the middle of the floor (laughs) and we were deathly afraid of it. I can remember my grandma having to take me into that room. Because, I was so afraid of there bear rug.

Me: Do you remember your great grandparents at all?

Mrs. R.: No, I do not remember my great grandparents.

Me: Who was the oldest of all the children in your family?

Her: I have one older brother.

Me: How many brothers and sisters do you have all together?

Her: I have five brothers and two sisters.

Me: Do you remember your family talking about world events and politics?

Her: I can remember some world events, not much about politics.

Me: What chores did you have growing up?

Her: When I was growing up we lived on a farm and didn't have electricity. So we had to carry our water. I had to carry water. Since I was the second oldest from a family of eight, so I had to do a lot of babysitting, help with cooking, and help with washing dishes and clothes. I had to do a little bit of everything.

Me: What one of the chores did you hate doing the most?

Her: Dishes (laugh)

Me: What kind of clothes would you wear to school?

Her: We had to walk quite a ways to school, so we always had to wear, when I was a little girl, we had to wear long underwear, long legged underwear and stockings over them, and we had some, probably home-made snow pants to wear.

Me: What school did you attend, and where was it?

Her: I attended grade school in a country school in Hunnersville Minnesota. Then later I went to Sebeka high school in Sebeka Minnesota.

Me: What kind of grades did you get in school?

Her: I always was a fairly good student, I would say I had A's and B's.

Me: What did you dislike about school?

Her: Probably riding the bus, we always had to ride on the bus many miles to get to school.

Me: Is there a certain teacher that you remember?

Her: I can remember when I was in country school, I was in first grade, I don't remember his name but, I was deathly afraid of him. I was so afraid of him in fact when I was learning to read, I didn't know the word, remember and I learned how

to spell it and went home and asked my mother what it was. And I can remember a high school teacher my general business and book keeper teacher.

Me: What was your school like?

Her: the country school that I went to was heated by a wood stove. And it was grades one through eight. And the desks where all in the same room, the little kids sat on one side of the room, the fourth and fifth graders were in the middle of the room and sixth, seventh, and eighth graders were on the other side of the room.

Me: So it was quite different than it is today?

Her: (laughs) Yes it was, it was very different.

Me: What was your favorite subject?

Her: I think reading probably was.

Me: How do you think your fellow classmates remember you?

Her: They probably remember me as being very quiet, very shy. I would participate in sports at recess but, that's about it.

Me: What activities did you participate in at school?

Her: In high school, we lived on a farm and I never had a ride into high school to do any extra things, I did help with the yearbook on my senior year.

Me: How many years of school did you complete?

Her: I went the twelve years, I just finished high school, no college.

Me: What were the styles of clothing that people wore?

Her: We wore saddle shoes and bobby socks, poodle skirts and that type of thing when I was in high school.

Me: where and when did you first get married?

Her: I first got married in 1955 to Duane Dobson.

Me: Did you's have a honeymoon?

Her: Yes we did.

Me: Where did yous go?

Her: We went to South Dakota.

Me: What do you think were the most important inventions made during your lifetime?

Her: Probably the most important invention would be the computer. I used it where I worked. It saved a lot of time, and now it's just mind boggling what they can do with computers and the Internet and all that.

Me: How is the world different today from when you were a child?

Her: The world is different that, there is drugs and more violence. It seems like children grow up faster today than we did when we were kids.

Me: Are there any fads that you remember from when you were younger?

Her: The only fads that I remember are the clothes which were the poodle skirts and things like that.

Me: How old were you when you started dating?

Her: I was 17.

Me: Do you remember going on your first date?

Her: Yes, we went with a group of boys and girls. We went to a movie. After the movie we had to go directly home because we had one of the girls' fathers cars. And we could only be out until ten o'clock. (laughs) That didn't give us much time to do anything, we went to the movie and then right home.

Me: Do you have a great friend that you have known for a long period-of-time?

Her: A girl that I have known since second grade, and her name is Enella Sweeny.

Me: How did you meet your husband?

Her: My husband had got out of the service out of the Korean War and when he came home, he came to the place I was working to visit another girl. (laughs)

Me: How many children did you have?

Her: I have three children, two boys and one girl.

Me: Where do they all live now?

Her: My son Larry lives in Littleshoot Wisconsin, my son Terry lives in Alcarte Lake, Wisconsin. My daughter Connie lives in Kingsford Michigan.

Me: Do you have any grand children?

Her: Yes I do, I have eight grand children.

Me: What is the age range of your grandchildren?

Her: The grandchildren are from age three to thirteen.

Me: Do you spoil any of your grandkids?

Her: All of them. (laughs)

Me: What advise would you give to a younger person on their wedding day?

Her: Just to make sure that they are really serious about making a commitment to that person and to be faithful and loving.

Me: how did you meet your second husband, my grandpa?

Her: I met my second husband at the American Legion in Greenwood Michigan.

Me: when was that?

Her: Actually I first met him when we moved to Michigan from Minnesota. Around probably 1971, when I was married to Duane Dobson. Duane passed away in 1989.

Me: When and where did you get married to Sam Richards my grandpa?

Her: Got married on August 13, 1995. In Marquette County.

Me: How old were you when you got your first job?

Her: I was 18.

Me: Where did you work?

Her: I worked at a creamery in Sebeka Minnesota.

Me: What is a creamery?

Her: it's where the farmers milked their cows, put their milk in cans or they separated their cream and they haled it to this creamery and then they dumped

it, and processed it, and they had big butter churns that they made butter from the cream that the farms brought.

I did clerical work and bookkeeping there.

Me: How much did you get paid when you first started working there?

Her: I can't really remember but I think it was about a dollar and five cents an hour. I worked 48 hours a week, and there was no overtime.

Me: What kinds of jobs did you have throughout your life?

Her: the only jobs I've ever had are in the office type work, bookkeeping, clerical, etc.

Me: How did you decide on your career?

Her: Because I liked accounting and bookkeeping when I was in high school. My high school bookkeeping teacher recommended that, that was the course that I followed.

Me: how long were your shifts at work?

Her: I usually worked just eight hours every day, we worked every Saturday, and most holidays we had to work.

Me: Where did you work at when you moved to Michigan?

Her: I worked at Northern Automatic Electric foundry in North Lake.

Me: What kind of work did you do at the foundry?

Her: At the foundry I started out part-time doing clerical work and pay-role. Then it became a full time job and I worked there for 25 years.

Me: Was it a very hard job?

Her: No, I loved my job. It was hard and stressful but, to me it was easy.

Me: How old were you when you retired?

Her: (laughs) I really haven't retired yet I am still working part time doing book keeping at OK Auto in Ishpeming.

Me: is there a person that changed the course of your life?

Her: It was probably my bookkeeping teacher from high school, because I had planned to elementary school teacher. When I graduated, a job came up at the Sebeka Creamery, they asked him to recommend someone, and he recommended me and I got the job and then I never did go to college.

Me: What US President do you admire the most?

Her: Probably John F. Kennedy.

Me: Why is that?

Her: probably just because he was young and getting things done and then he was killed.

Me: As you see it, what do you think are the biggest problems that face our nation today, and how do you think they could be solved?

Her: I think probably drugs and crime and violence. For one thing I think that there is too much violence on t.v. that the children see, I also think that the Nintendo games and video games are too violent for the ages of the children playing them. We probably need more law enforcement and we need to spend more money to keep drugs out of the cities and schools.

Me: Were you very tan when you were younger?

Her: (laughs) No, I was all freckled.

Me: What was your hair color?

Her: it was brown, light brown.

Me: Were your eyes the same color they are now?

Her: yes, they are green-gray

Me: How tall are you?

Her: I'm five foot six inches.

Me: Were you the normal height growing up?

Her: Yes I was.

Me: Where have you lived as an adult?

Her: I've lived in Minnesota, when we got married we moved to the iron range in Minnesota. I lived in a little town called Calumet. In 1969 my husband transferred to Michigan and we moved to a trailer park four miles west of Ishpeming. Now I live about a half a mile from there.

Me: how many years have you lived in Michigan?

Her: I've lived where I am right now for the past three years. In the Ishpeming area since 1969.

Me: if you could live somewhere else where would it be?

Her: Probably back in Minnesota.

Me: How would you describe your general health?

Her: My general health is good.

Me: Do you have any hereditary health problems from the past?

Her: The only thing I'm checking on as a health problem is that, my mother had Austria Peruses. Which is thinning of the bones, I guess I have a slight case of it so I'm taking medication for it.

Me: do you exercise regularly?

Her: No, (laughs)

Me: Has anyone ever saved your life?

Her: Yes, when I was a child, I don't remember it but, my mother had taken I and my brother to the river. We were swimming and she turned around and I had gone under the water. My older brother pulled me out. Then there was another time I was probably nine or ten years old the water in the spring was real high and we decided to go swimming when we weren't supposed to and I can remember going under the water and coming up. My same brother jumped into the river holding on to a branch and pulled me up out of the water. (Laughing) If it wasn't for him I would've been a goner. That I remember well.

Me: have you ever been hospitalized?

Her: I was hospitalized when I had my three children, and I had my appendix removed.

Me: What church do you attend?

Her: I go to Hope Free Lutheran Church in Ishpeming.

Me: What was it like cooking when you were younger?

Her: We cooked on a wood stove so you really couldn't control the temperature. I don't really remember baking in the wood stove. I remember my mother would always bake her bread, cookies and cakes and they were always really good? Sometimes we had burnt bread crumbs, but we had to eat them. My mother always said that it'll make your hair curly. It never did though. (laughs)

Me: What is the scariest thing that ever happened to you?

Her: Almost drowning, I can't really remember anything else.

Me: That's all the questions I had. Thanks so much.