

UNION CHURCH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW OF DOROTHY GROSSMAN
RECORDED BY HARRY RICE
TRANSCRIBED BY TAMMY HORN
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Begin Side A UC-CT-010-001

H: This is Harry Rice, and I'm interviewing for the Union Church Oral History Project on Saturday, Sept. 15, 2001. I'm talking with Dorothy Grossman, who has been a long-time member of Union Church. First of all, could we start out by identifying yourself and the road you followed to get to Berea all those years ago? Where were you born? And when? If you don't mind?

D: No, not at all. I was born in Columbus, Ohio, grew up in Ohio, educated at Ohio State, where I met my husband, from Mt. Vernon, Ohio. He had been teaching science in the public school in Mt. Vernon, and he felt that it would be interesting to come to the Foundation School at Berea College. He had heard about the Foundation School as an experimental school, working with people who could not pursue their formal education at home. So we came here in 1944. He became associated with Union Church very early. I did not [become associated with Union Church] quite so early because when we moved here I had an 18-month-old and a six-weeks-old infant. [chuckle] I was a little housebound.

H: Now what was your husband's name?

D: His name was Jim (James) Grossman. And he was on the faculty of the Foundation School, and then at Berea College after the Foundation School was discontinued. He was in the science department of both schools.

H: And he taught what subjects?

D: He taught Biology. In the high school, he also taught physics and chemistry. And at Berea College, he did a bit in the geology department, too, with Mr. Lipchinski. Then he died very suddenly of a heart attack in 1979.

H: Let's go back just a little bit, though. You went to Ohio State. Were both of you there at the same time?

D: Yes. That's where we met.

H: What was your major?

D: Oh! Microbiology!

H: Did you meet through the science department?

D: In a physics class, actually! We took organic chemistry together, and a wonderful course in ornithology, which gave us a lifetime recreational pursuit. We went to dances every weekend, but they were not folk dances.

H: What dances were those?

D: Oh, they were the dances people danced during the early 1940s. I guess you'd call 'em swing.

H: How did the war affect the two of you? Your families? Your educational pursuits?

D: I do remember Pearl Harbor. Jim and I were calling on friends in the church. He was teaching in a small town, right then, in Ohio after he first got through getting his M.S. We just had the radio on for background [noise], and it was interrupted by the news of Pearl Harbor that Sunday. I thought of that this Tuesday ... that very same feeling ... the sickness in the pit of your stomach.

We were married just about the same time, actually. We'd been married in 1939 when Hitler invaded Poland on our honeymoon trip. We were headed on a camping trip to Michigan, thinking we could tell them about the war, and of course, they knew as much as we did. Jim was deferred for awhile because he was teaching chemistry and biology in a high school. Then, when he went for a physical, we had already had our first child. His heart condition made him become a 4-F [Selective Service classification]. He'd had a heart condition all of his life, I guess.

We came to Berea in August of 1944. He was asked to help with the V-12 program that the College was offering to the Navy. He was teaching physics to these young people.

H: Well, to stay in those early years, but this also will relate to Union Church, what church backgrounds did you have?

D: We were both raised Presbyterians, married by a Presbyterian minister. [Harry chuckles, "okay"] And we found Union Church very compatible, liked it very much from the beginning.

H: What is there anything particular which made you decide to go to Union Church instead of another church in town?

D: Actually, the college faculty were rather encouraged to go to Union Church at that time.

H: Was that ...?

D: That was Francis Hutchins.

H: Yeah, Hutchins was the president. And, was it pretty clear, was it [the encouragement to attend] heavy-handed?

D: No, it was no problem at all! Neither of us was a born-again Christian like the Baptists. There was no problem at all. We were taken immediately by the quality of music. We had both sung in church choirs where we had lived. The music, the wonderful organ, the choir was always very fine.

H: Who was the organist? The choir director, then?

D: Ooh! I was trying to think. I think Mr. Taylor had died before we got here. And this was before John Courter. I do not remember. The early choir directors ... Harold Rigby, and then, Mr. Warner in the music department was director. And Rolf Hovey was a wonderful choir director. By that time, my children were old enough that I was able to attend choir regularly. I really enjoyed his leadership.

H: Do you remember about when Hovey came?

D: No, I don't.

H: Who was the pastor of the church when you came?

D: Harold Eyeman. Then Scotty Cowan. I so enjoyed Scotty Cowan's sermons! After he left, I was on the search committee [sigh] for the pastor. And I think we made an unfortunate choice . . . and his name gets away from me ...

H: Was that Leon Sanborne?

D: No, Leon Sanborne was a fine man.

H: There was an intern, William Schorman?

D: Do you have the name right? Is it Schorman?

H: I'm just going by the list I have...

D: okay...

H: There's Harold Eyeman from 1946-49.

D: I didn't get actively involved in the church right at first. I was at home with little-bitty people.

H: Then there's an associate minister during that period, Clyde Flannery ...

D: yes, I remember him.

H: And William Schorman ...

D: Yes, Mr. Schorman made a big impression on me because his daughter lost her eyesight in one eye from a worm infection from a dog. I was appalled because I was a professional medical technologist and very interested in parasitology. I had no idea that dog worms ... I knew people could eat them [worms] ...they weren't supposed to but they did especially children. But I had no idea that the worms could migrate to the eye and cause the loss of an eye, but that's what happened to Mr. Schorman's little daughter. She was four.¹

¹It was hookworm, the only helminth that can penetrate the skin. It migrated to one eye, causing blindness. The little girl contracted hookworm by walking barefoot on contaminated soil.

H: Was any of those ministers related to the college? Were they full-time ministers?

D: They were all full-time ministers. I think Union Church contributed money, but I don't know. I wasn't involved in the finances.

H: It seems that Harold Eyeman from '46-49, and then Schorman was an intern from '49-'50. And then Leon Sanborne.

D: He was a wonderful minister, enjoyed him and his wife. His children were about the same age as mine. The church was a fine, fulfilling place. We were active in it. Jim had a cub scout troop in the church. I had a den. My oldest son was eight under church sponsorship. Earlier, when my children were rather timid, I took over the Sunday School class for the two & three-year-olds.

H: You were telling me about that. Could you tell me what was going on with Sunday schools in general when you became active as a teacher?

D: Sunday School was a very busy place. At that time, so many of the young faculty were members of the church, and they were all having children. Everybody had four children apiece, except the Osolniks...I think they had five. But, the Sunday School rooms were full, and Mrs. Durham was doing the five-year-olds, the kindergarteners.

H: What was her name?

D: Mina Durham. Mrs. James Durham. Her son Raymond eventually became choir director at Union Church for many years. Jim and I, though, we liked the little people.

This was during the War [World War II]. It was easy to tell which little people had fathers in the service because they were missing a male figure. They would go to him before they would go to anyone else. He was very good with children. But, he was really filling a need among the children of Union Church whose fathers were away from home.

We would have a large group, oh! fourteen or so, nearly every Sunday. And looking back on it, I don't see how we did it. Our classroom was a very tiny little room underneath the front stairs on the side facing Boone Tavern. You go down the stairs and turn right and there's a little room.

We found the best way to maintain order among these children was to bring a box of graham crackers. No one could have a cracker until he was sitting and being quiet. Noisy ones didn't get one! Anyway, when we had them sitting down, we could sing songs, tell stories.

H: What age group was this?

D: Two-three-year-olds, which was really my favorite age group.

H: Did you graduate as far as children go, to follow your children to the higher grades?

D: No, we stayed with the two-year-olds. Eventually, I had another baby and had to resign.

The woman's organization—I don't remember the name—that I would go to often, and I joined the choir as soon as I could, and got to sing under Harold Rigby.

H: Did you say he was in the music department at the college?

D: Yes, he was a band man! And I don't know what else. I was interested in the band because my husband was a french horn player. He had been very active in band at Ohio State. We followed that kind of thing, more, I'm afraid, than we did string instruments.

When Leon Sanborne left, I was put on the search committee to find his successor—I can't remember his name—

H interjects: Scotty Cowan?

D: It was after Scotty Cowan left. Oh, yes, Scotty Cowan was a wonderful minister. I went to Sunday School somewhat irregularly as an adult, uh, I was going to all the evening meetings, all of which I don't remember, and ended up on various committees.

H: What was a typical week or Sunday at Union Church? Someone else has told me that there were evening meetings. Is that true?

D: The college had a chapel every Sunday night.

H: every Sunday night?

D: Every Sunday night. And Jim, as a faculty member, was expected to go to them, if only to keep order among the foundation students who were supposed to sit in the balcony. And, they were excellent speakers. Well, some of them were "booooring," but you had to take that kind in order to get the super ones.

H: So, it was a worship service?

D: It was a worship service.

H: Who were the excellent ones?

D: I don't remember.

H: So, for you, as college family, chapel was in Phelps-Stokes, not at Union?

D: Phelps-Stokes. I think the young people had something going on at Union, but I have no idea because we were always going to Sunday night service at Phelps-Stokes.

H: Who were some of the Sunday school teachers?

D: I remember Ethel Martin. I did not go regularly. In 1956, we could see that we were going to have three children in college at the same time. There was an opening at Berea Hospital Lab, and mamma had to go to work—that's all there was to it. So my church activities were a little more limited to just the choir and going to Sunday morning worship. I did serve as a clerk to the church for several years, until I moved my base of operations to Louisville.

H: So, clerk of the church? Like a secretary?

D: Essentially...secretary of the congregational meetings, with Warren Lambert as moderator, and I was clerk. I took the minutes, prepared, and gave a copy to the church. And being clerk, I was automatically a member of the Trustees, so I went to those meetings.

H: Were there issues, decisions that were made that were important? Controversial?

D: I think the greatest controversy in the church occurred during WWII over pacifists, people who refused to enter the Selective Service system. We got here after that was over. We did not become actively involved until after that.

In 1968, we went to Ohio State. Jim wanted to go toward his doctorate, and I had the opportunity to work toward my Master's in Microbiology. During that time, Union Church had the race problem that was going on. The whole town. And there was student unrest, although I don't know much of what happened here. We were much more involved with what was going on at Ohio State. There was a day when my husband came home after his beloved B&Z building [Botany and Zoology] had been broken into. The National Guard had come. That was about the time when Bowling Green and Kent State had the National Guard kill some protesters.

H: This was during the late 60s?

D: Yes. He came home furious. He had been tear-gassed, and he hadn't been doing anything. He had just been concerned about his experiments that were ongoing in the B&Z building, and he got tear-gassed. He wasn't arrested, or anything.

But, during the time, which was a real time of crisis in Berea, there were all kinds of student sit-ins and things—I understand. We didn't keep up with too much here because we were too involved with Ohio State since both of us were going back to school. So, I don't know of any big disagreements while I was personally involved with the church.

H: So did you say that you don't remember Rev. Eyeman? He wasn't here very long...

D: He wasn't there very long. He was very pleasant. I enjoyed him. I enjoyed his family. His wife, his daughters, charming daughters...

H: And you were more active when Rev. Sanborne was here?

D: yes, yes.

H: What were his lasting contributions? Or no contributions?

D: Well, I'm not too much of a philosopher. I just like to be with people I enjoy being with...

Oh, I remember one controversy! Lucille Stephens, a very active member of the church, do you have any notes about Lucille?

H: No.

D: Oh! There *was* a controversy. Union Church used to have very ornate patterned gilt work on the ceilings since early on, probably since it was first built. Stephens' father, who, I believe, ran a lumber yard, paid for a lot of it. Well, there came a time when the church was going to have to be painted. I mean, there were leaks on the roof, there were stains on the ceiling, it *had* to be painted. And it was going to cover over the gilt-work.

H: This was gold-covered?

D: yes.

H: Was it metal? Wood?

D: no, it was paint. Gilt-work. Painted on...spritzed on...I'm not into that kind of thing. But, it was an integral part of the ceiling. It was metal, well very metallic, it was very expensive. And these days, it would have been very costly to replace.

Anyway, Lucille Stephens said, "They'll paint over that gilt-work *over my dead body!*"

And there were some heated discussions about whether the ceiling would be painted over that. We were very involved with Lucille Stephens because she directed the children's choir, and I had children in the children's choir.

H: What was the outcome of that...

D [very emphatically]: They *ainted* the ceiling. And Lucille Stephens did not drop over dead anyway.

H: So, whatever was there is *still* there?

D: underneath. It *had* to be painted over. There was no doubt about that.

H: Was that in 40s?

D: oh, later. I was involved in a music group that a woman's group sponsored. And Lucille Stephens was an active member of that group. So, I was over at her house quite a bit. And with the children's choir, so I got to know her. But we knew the ceiling had to be painted. It was painted.

H: This was the 50s?

D: early 50s.

H: The centennial of the church was in 1953. Do you remember anything?

D: No, perhaps the painting was honoring that, I do not know. There was discussion when the chapel was built, whether it could be afforded. There

was a lot of soul searching about that. Our church doesn't have very many wealthy people associated with it. It has a lot of middle-class people who manage all right, but as far as wealthy tycoons that fund all kinds of projects at some places, well, Union Church didn't have that.

H: So, in terms of ministers, before we get off that subject, Joe Peacock was assistant minister. Do you remember him?

D: Yes, very pleasant man.

H: Do you remember what sorts of things he did? What leadership he took?

D: No, he was very active with young people. By that time, I was not involved with that age group.

H: During 1957, Scotty Cowan came. Can you tell me what he was like?

D: Well, I remember when he was coming. Perley Ayer, have you heard reference to Perley Ayer—was a good friend of ours. Jim was very active in the Council of Southern Mountains, and so was Perley Ayer. I heard a great deal. Perley lived close to us, and he and his wife were good friends. Perley said that he'd start coming to Union to hear *the preaching* because Scotty *could* preach.

I got the feeling that he left because....well, a minister of a church has got to be able to give sermons that teach and hold the attention of the congregation....he also has to be an administrator. And I got the impression that Scotty Cowan was not an especially good administrator.

H: Oh!

D: I don't know why he left. He was older by this time...he had been preaching in Lexington for years before he came here. So, he was not a young man *at all* when he came. He may have just decided that he had done enough. I don't know.

But there was some feeling that it was time to get a more business-like person in the church. Or at least that's what I heard.

H: What do you remember about his preaching? He was a wonderful preacher, but not-so-able of an administrator?

D: Yes, I did not have contact with him as an administrator. I *did* know that he was a very good minister, and I looked forward to hearing him talk each Sunday.

D: Who followed Scotty Cowan?

H: That would be Donald Johnson.

D: And who followed Donald Johnson?

H: Let's see. Harley Patterson.

D: Donald Johnson. I was on the search committee for Donald Johnson.

And I was required to draft the letters to go to theological communities. Oh gosh. They were such formal things. I would have never responded to them if I had been a ministerial student or seminary graduate. We got him anyway, and his wife was a splendid person.

H: Where did he come from? Did he come from someplace else? Just out of school?

D: I don't know. He was older. But, it seems to me that would have been in the 60s.

H: That was 1966 when he came.

D: We went away, remember. We were gone for two years. And he got into troubles.

H: What kind of troubles?

D: Sexual, I believe.

H: uhmmm?

D: Yes. You never heard—right out—but you heard about counseling sessions with the door closed. And I felt terrible because I had been on the search committee that had chosen him, and I was not here when all the trustees were discussing him. And I never got too much. People here don't discuss things like that, or at least here in Berea, they don't talk flat out. Or they didn't in the 60s.

So, I knew he just left under a cloud. I believe he left to become a hospital chaplain, and perhaps became that. And then, Harley Patterson came.

H: Okay. And you were back in town by that time?

D: We were back in town.

H: And what about Harley Patterson do you remember?

D [stifling a giggle]: May I say that my reaction to him was ... he was stuffy.

H: oh dear.

D: I loved the music in Union Church. I loved the hymns. I loved the associations. *All* of my friends were in Union. I sort of *endured* Harley Patterson.

And I think the greatest shock that I had, was after he left—Nell and Rexie Gill—have you heard any reference to them. Nell taught 3rd grade. She taught my children in 3rd grade in Knapp Hall. She had a sister Rexie. I think Rexie had an infirmity. They lived on Jackson Street. Anyway, they had an unfortunate experience with their furnace. Carbon monoxide, in fact.²

End Side A – Begin Side B UC-CT-010-001

² Nell had left the car running in the attached garage. By the time it had run out of gasoline, carbon monoxide had killed the sisters and affected Ms. Goble in her apartment. The latter recovered.

And Harley Patterson had left the church. He was away, retired, an older man. He was asked to come and preach the funeral sermon since he was pastor when they were active in the church. And the subject of his sermon was...I hope this isn't going to be written down in a book someday. You will edit it, or do whatever.

Anyway, the whole topic of his sermon was that they are released from their misery; they are at peace at last. Well, they had not been miserable people. They were happy people. Well, I just thought that showed an awful lack of sensitivity on his part.

H: But you weren't surprised at those kinds of sermons he would preach? That's sort of what you were saying about him being stuffy.

D: Well, I remember, I think I mentioned this to you the other evening. My son, daughter-in-law, and grandson. We were going to the candlelight service at Christmas Eve. My grandson is a wiggly little boy, and I wanted to sit in the front. I thought if we were closer to the front, time would pass a little faster for him. My daughter-in-law wanted to sit in the back, so she would be inconspicuous. But I was sort of running things so we sat very nearly to the front. Then, about halfway through the service, Harley Patterson went down to the altar in order to do something very solemn.

About this time, the grandson got away from us, crawled underneath the pews. Of course, we couldn't follow; we couldn't fit under the pews. He crawled all the way up to Harley, and in a voice you could all over church, said "Hi!"

His mother tried to pretend she wasn't even there. His father had to go rescue the little boy. Harley never responded. That's where Kent Gilbert would have handled things much differently. Kent would've picked him [the grandson] up and made him part of the service! But Harley Patterson was totally incapable of doing that. So, we all left the church, and his mother hasn't forgiven me yet.

H: During that time, Thurlow Scudder was the assistant minister.

D: Yes, although I didn't have much contact with him. He was very pleasant. He was very active with young people, and I wasn't much involved.

H: Also, in the area of music during the late 50s, there was an oratorio called "Children of God" that was performed on campus but combined the Union Choir with the college. Clara Chassel Cooper in the Psychology dept. had a lot to do with it.

D: Oh yes, I had forgotten all about that.

H: Were you in the choir? Since it was combined church-college combined performance.

D: No.

H: So you don't have much memory?

D: no, no.

H: It was a national program of music...

D: yes, yes, it was. It was rather interesting music. We heard selections from that for several years afterward.

H: It seems that Dale Crockett after Harley Patterson.

D: He was minister when Jim died. He officiated Jim's service. I was very grateful for the kind of service he did. It was very helpful.

H: During your time as church clerk, Warren Lambert was the moderator. What kind of moderator was Warren?

D: Warren Lambert was an excellent moderator. I don't know who moderates things now. I haven't been able to attend since 1992. I was impressed with the way he kept things going, with the way he kept things under control. I very much admired the way he conducted church meetings.

H: Did you get to see him deal with controversy?

D: We didn't have too many divisive issues at that time.

H: I was wondering if he would try to stay in the middle rather than take sides?

D: He certainly allowed varied viewpoints to be presented. Most of our discussions were financial, such as whether we could afford an assistant pastor, things like that. I thought he did a very good job of allowing people to speak who wished to. He didn't allow things to go forever and ever. He was quite capable of bringing things to a close, calling for a vote. I thought he did an excellent job.

H: During the period in which you were a clerk, what were the financial circumstances? Were there ups-and-downs?

D: There were always ups and downs. The heating system, should they go to a more expensive heating system. The roof repAyers....

H: During this time, were decisions to build the chapel made and add on the educational building?

D: There were discussions about the AMERC's use of the educational building (?). There were some people very upset about the AMERC given favorable positions within the church. They felt there were more uses for the building. In fact, I think we lost some members over that. I never could tell that AMERC was a dreadful organization.

H: What sort of uses went on?

D: They had offices there. During discussions, it would be brought out that they paid in rent, and that if they were kicked out, no one would be renting the building. But, I still know members were very upset about that. They went.. There's no point in naming names....

H: You don't want to name names...

D: Well, Ann Mullins was one of the leaders of that, and she had been very active in the church.

H: just over that particular issue...

D: so far as I know, that was what she was quarreling about.

And then there's the little problem of the kindergarten. The church was renting out a preschool place. Was the rent enough to pay for the costs incurred? So we'd talk about the water bill. A lot of these discussions occurred during the trustees' meeting, rather than the congregational meetings, and Ann Mullins was on the board of trustees.

H: Were there people that worked with AMERC that you remember?

D: No, I know people now. Some come to the dances. My grandson has married a girl, who has remained close with a person associated with AMERC. Since I left Union Church, essentially, I've had more contact with AMERC than I did while they were. And AMERC solved Ann Mullins' problem. They built their own building and moved out anyway. But Mullins did not come back to the church.

H: Just to back-step just a bit. What do you remember about Woman's³ Industrial? Was it a going concern when you were a member?

D: yes, it was.

H: What was going on with WI?

D: Again, because I had a house full of small children, I did not go to WI. I know that Ethel Martin was deeply involved in WI.

H: Is she still around?

D: No, they moved away. Her husband has died, and I believe she has died too. They moved to a retirement community. I used to bring what things I could to WI. I remember those barrels in the hall. It was always busy on Fridays. There were a lot of people there. I knew friends would go in and prepare soup for them [the low-income women who were being served], and there was a kind of condescending attitude to them [the patrons]. I wasn't willing to do that. I wasn't sure I was a good-enough cook to do that. I wasn't interested in taking part of that.

I was quite disillusioned a few years ago, when they [Woman's Industrial] had a big to-do for the daughters who were now coming to Woman's Industrial. It seemed to me that if we had had a successful program, we would have raised the women's level so that their daughters wouldn't have had to come to Woman's Industrial. That still troubles me a little bit.

H: Do you remember how long ago that celebration was?

D: No, although I'm sure that the WI keep excellent notes, so you may find out. Mrs. Noss is very much involved in WI.

H: What was her first name?

³ This organization prefers to keep this spelling.

D: I don't remember. Her daughter, Martha, used to babysit. Of course, Judge Noss and Mrs. Noss were retired missionaries from Japan. Marie! That was her name.

H: Was she on the faculty?

D: No, I'm not sure that he was either. They had been interned by the Japanese during WWII. They lived in a big house on Prospect Street. They had a large family. Everybody in those days had large families.

H: Other folks that were particularly active with Woman's Industrial?

D: No, I just didn't have that much connection with WI.

I would like to mention one name that you may not have. She was a marvelous children's choir director. She was only here for a couple of years. Her name was Eleanor Gruman. She was the daughter of E.J. Weekes. They were very active in the church. They were old people when Jim and I came, so they have long since gone. And Eleanor Gruman...

H: Do you know how to spell her last name?

D: Gruman. And the Weekes. Eleanor came here...I don't remember whether he was involved in some service operation during the Korean War...I don't remember. In any case, she ran the children's choir. It was a wonderful experience.

H: When was that?

D: When my two older were in the children's choir. They would have been eight and nine, which would have been during the early to mid 50s. It would have been during the Korean War. You probably haven't heard her mentioned before.

H: No.

D: It was an experience that I don't think I'll ever forget. She did a marvelous job with the children in the choir. In fact, the choir I go to in Louisville sang one of the songs I first heard sung by my children in her choir. It just about broke me up, remembering that.

H: What song was that?

D: "Father James' Ayer." Do you know it? I won't offend your microphone by singing it, but of course, it's in my head just as I speak. It was a wonderful tune. Then, in later years, I assisted in the choir with Mary "Molly" Levey. Judith Drake was the pianist, but sometimes she would be out of town, so I would fill in for her. But, I wasn't a piano player at the level of Judy Drake, and by this time, I was working the hospital laboratory. I was working outlandish hours. Jim was dead. There was nothing in the house to come home to. If I worked ten hours a day, it was okay. So, I was not as involved with a lot of the church activities as I had been before.

H: During the 1960s, Gordon Ross taught Sunday School? Were you around? Part of the time, you were in Columbus?

D: Yes. So, I never went to any of his classes.

H: Well, we dug up some of the recordings of those Sunday School classes. I'm looking for people who had been...

D: I wish I had. He was very thoughtful. He was a profound thinker. I would have enjoyed his classes, but I could not go to them.

I remember one potluck. This is another one of those things like “Father James’ Ayer” that I will never forget. The church would have the potlucks periodically, and there would be graces offered. One of the graces was offered by Mr. Orrin Keener. I believe he was in the department of Bible and Religion in the college. His prayer was that through no virtue of our own our lives have been put in the pleasant [? Or perhaps proper] place. That’s a thought I’ve carried with me ever since then. I’m sure those weren’t his exact words, but that was what he was saying, impressed me tremendously.

H: Are there other names that have flashed through your minds? Like the children’s choir director? Some saints who may have not been on the staff but were important to the life of the church?

D: I think the Kindel family. Ersal Kindel. He was in the Foundation School. He had children about the same age as ours. His oldest and my oldest are good friends to this day. His wife’s a wonderful woman. We enjoyed visiting each other’s homes, sharing meals, ...

H: What was her name?

D: I’m not as good at remembering names as I was a few years ago. They went back to Africa as missionaries. While there, she died of cancer. He married the woman who had been her nurse while they were in the mission field. Her name was Mary. He brought her back to Berea. They had a child. They were very active in the church. He is my nearest idea of a living saint. And then, she died of cancer. I was working in the laboratory when she was taken into surgery. I remember Ersal just standing in the operating room. When [the doctors] opened her up, they saw there was nothing they could do, sewed her back up.

And then, he married again, another nurse from the mission work. They’re still members of the church, or they were. They have since moved to the St. Andrews’ retirement community in Richmond. So, I don’t know if they come to church. They went to Friends’ Mission in Kenya. He was as saintly a man as I’ve ever known. I think his influence was great, not because he said or did anything, but because he was there and guided people into peaceable solutions to their problems. He ended up in the Industrial Arts dept. at the college. Have you talked with him?

H: No, I haven’t.

D: His wife has not been well. And so, I’ve not been able to go to church but one or twice since I go to a church in Louisville. Since I’m not available for night meetings during the week, I found a church in Louisville. I’ve continued financial support of the [Union] church, requested the church send me newsletters, I understand Kent Gilbert is doing great things for the church. He has really changed the spirit of the church [by bringing] in

younger people. That was a problem the last few years I was going. The church was always “white-haired”!

H & D both laugh.

D: You didn't see many young people. And the young faculty...Sometimes I got the impression that the young faculty were not going to church anyplace. I don't know whether that's true or not.

H: So, there are some underlying basic changes that since that you have observed between the 1940s and 1980s?

D: Yes, it got older. More conservative. It got older. I've just been delighted with the feeling I get with the church. Not looking for problems. Not looking to make waves. It's become more passive. The older people were slowly dying off. You'd go to a funeral, and you'd look around at the church full of mourners and wonder who's going to be next. (Harry laughs). It was very serious. The Sunday school was far smaller. And you didn't see the young thirties out there. You can see in the choir. Most of the choir is my age. They were good musicians, but you didn't have the vibrancy of the young people. The new college faculty didn't seem to be apart of the church. The college students didn't seem to be a part of the church as nearly as much.

Of course, when we first came to church in the 1940s, church attendance was required of all college students. Many of them went to the Baptist church; many came to Union. There were a lot more young people there then. I was very sorry to see that happen.

H: Well, after Dale Crockett left, Charles Murray was

D: yes, Charles Murray was here. I was the clerk of the church and served on the Board of Trustees. I admired him very much. I enjoyed his sermons. I found him to be a very agreeable pastor.

H: He came in 1986.

D: He was involved with the AMERC discussions.

H: Part of that time, it seems, he and Theresa Scherf would share pastoral duties.

D: There were considerable discussions in congregational meetings about whether that was appropriate.

H: What seemed to be the concern? The role didn't need two people?

D: All of that.

H: Was he nearing retirement? Did he want to slow down.

D: I don't know the undercurrents that brought about that. She as a pastor annoyed a lot of my friends because she had a way of dropping her voice at the end of her sentences. Most of my friends are senior citizens. They couldn't hear her...

H: as a preacher.

D: As a preacher! She was a fine person, but her preaching style. Well, you know Theresa Lowder in our dance group. You can hear her anyplace she wants to project her voice. You couldn't hear Theresa's. That was an unfortunate episode. And about that time, I left the church and went to Louisville.

H: I see.

D: So, I don't know the end of that. And Charles Murray had that unfortunate accident. I was so sorry to hear about that. I liked him as a person. I liked his wife. I was very happy with the Murrays.

I've never been one of the people who would show up after these discussions like Porter Drugstore. Partly because I was working all the time. Any spare time I had was going to the Berea College Country Dancers. I was playing for them, traveling with them, traveling with the adult dancers. So my life was much more centered on the hospital or the Country Dancers than it was on the church. I would go to the church on Sundays, but your wife's a nurse...

H: yes.

D: I was working on Sundays quite a bit of the time. So, I had to drop out of the choir because the choir director didn't like people who were just there every other Sunday. But when Ray Durham came in, he didn't care. You could show up anyhow. So, I sang under Ray Durham.

There was an unfortunate business that occurred after I left. You may have heard rumors about that?

H: No, no. tell me about it.

D: Ray Durham was *getting old*. He was losing it.

H: Just generally? Musically?

D: Generally.

H: Memory-wise?

D: Memory-wise. Musically, yes [he was okay]. But, memory-wise, he wasn't doing a good job directing the choir. He, well, he was just being rather inadequate as director. Judy Drake and Molly Levey would appoint themselves as people to make sure that he had the right music on the lectern and so forth. And John Courter was getting more and more upset. Again, this happened after I left, so I just heard about through folk dancing, the great communication device we have on our campus. Apparently, Courter said, "You're going to have to choose: Ray Durham as choir director or me as organist."

There was no doubt. Ray would forget what we had done. Or bring out something we had just done to do again the next Sunday. And he wasn't aware of what was going in the choir. Ray had a beautiful tenor voice and had been a tenor soloist. We had a good tenor section with Dick Drake singing. He [Drake] could read music the way you could read words, Ray

would bury his head in the music and sing along with the parts, even though the basses were dying back there, didn't know any of the parts.

Please edit this.

H: He [Ray Durham] had had a remarkable career at the heights of his powers.

D: He had a *wonderful* career. He had been a volunteer choir director wherever he had been stationed: he had worked for the government. I believe he was a CIA man. And he had organized very successful choirs wherever he had been. But, he should have quit before he did, and he didn't recognize it. So, this was after I left, so the Music committee asked him to leave. It killed him, and it killed his wife. She felt very bad. In fact, she pulled out of the church. And Maureen, his sister-in-law, pulled out of the church. She had been singing alto, and we had sat next to each other for years. So, that was a very painful thing, and another big thing I missed. I wasn't here when that to-do came about. Of course, after he died, the choir had a wonderful memorial service. They called in singers from Richmond, and I suppose from the college.

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