

Kathryn Schram, Elsa Ruesch, Interviewer
Zion National Park Oral History
CCC Reunion
September 1989

Interviewed by: unidentified—(The name on the CD said Don Dobbins).
Transcribed by: Ruth Scovill
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Interviewer: to have you all talk together and more or less reminisce. You and I were talking about how you will remember things when you're not trying to think of them and things will come back to you when—

Kathryn Schram: When I try to think of them, I can't. I was trying to think of Marshall Fenton's [?] name and I could not think of it last night, and then today I thought of it, now just out of the blue. Ridiculous.

Interviewer: Sometimes something will come out in a conversation on tape like we've been doing here, some little bit of information like the swimming hole, for instance, you know. That might have been something that Crawford knew about, but hadn't ever thought about. I just use that as an example, but that's why they want the tape. They just want to record you just on the chance that something will come out.

Kathryn Schram: Well, you know, I was telling him about Tom Parker, you know, just what I've told you.

Elsa Ruesch: About what?

Kathryn Schram: About Tom Parker.

Elsa Ruesch: Oh yes.

Kathryn Schram: But you know, I don't know if you want to go over that sort of thing, [Waitress comes and food is ordered for several minutes].

Kathryn Schram: There's some dark clouds over there. Do you think they mean rain?

Elsa Ruesch: Hmm?

Kathryn Schram: There's some dark clouds up there. Do you think that means some more rain?

Interviewer: How do you spell your last name? R—

Elsa Ruesch: R-U-E-S-C-H. You put in just all the extra letters and hook them.

Kathryn Schram: Is there smoke up the canyon or is that a reflection?

Coughing and inaudible speech.

Interviewer: I don't know. It looks like there's a little—could be a little smoke.

Kathryn Schram: It's quite blue—it must be a reflection.

Interviewer: It looks like there's a little smoke up there.

[Type text]

Kathryn Schram: When I move, the reflection doesn't move, but that must be it.

Elsa Ruesch: Myrna's life was kind of tragic—

Kathryn Schram: Was it?

Elsa Ruesch: Yes, she went up to Alaska and back down as some kind of a nurse, but she never was a trained nurse, so some kind of practical nurse or something. Anyway, she met a man up there and married him and had this daughter. Then she came back down here, but he never did come with her. And he did come here a couple of times to see his daughter, but he never lived with her after she came back down here. I presume he did up in Alaska. I don't know, but she hadn't seen or heard of him for so many years that I happened to mention him to her one day a while ago, and she said, "I don't know if he's dead or alive."

Kathryn Schram: Well, he doesn't provide for the daughter?

Elsa Ruesch: Apparently not.

Kathryn Schram: Is their daughter married?

Elsa Ruesch: Well, she'd be too old for him to provide for her anyway.

Kathryn Schram: Oh, yes, yes.

Elsa Ruesch: But he never did live with them, and she was just a baby when they came here, so she never did live with her dad much anyway.

Long period of restaurant noises and silence from speakers, to about 7:33

Interviewer: Well, how old were you when you came to the Park at Bridger Land in '31?

Elsa Ruesch: Twenty-um, in '31? I was born in 1906. So that would make me in '31 . . .

Interviewer: About twenty-five.

Elsa Ruesch: I'd be twenty-five.

Interviewer: And you had been working up in Salt Lake?

Elsa Ruesch: May I have some salt please?

Interviewer: Salt Lake City?

Kathryn Schram: Did you ever work in Boise, Idaho?

Elsa Ruesch: No. I only worked in—

Kathryn Schram: You said something about Idaho.

[Type text]

Elsa Ruesch: Blackfoot, that's where it was.

Interviewer: Blackfoot, Idaho?

Elsa Ruesch: Yes.

Kathryn Schram: Office of Indian Affairs too? You know, I was asking because I have a very good friend who worked in Boise, and I think she worked for the Office of Indian Affairs there.

Elsa Ruesch: Do I know her?

Kathryn Schram: Her name was Myrtle Hansen, and she traveled around. I think she was in personnel. That was many years ago.

Elsa Ruesch: I was probably there before she was anyway.

Interviewer: What were the winters like here?

Elsa Ruesch: Here?

Kathryn Schram: Gorgeous.

Interviewer: Did it get cold?

Elsa Ruesch: It gets down to freezing at night. But we seldom have snow that lies on the ground for more than an hour or two, and the weather is always really pleasant. In the day time, it's bright sunshine, and it gets warm enough that often you don't wear your coat outside.

Kathryn Schram: Yes.

Interviewer: Have there been any important people come to town like presidents or celebrities that you know of?

Elsa Ruesch: Not that I heard about.

Interviewer: It's probably just as well. They would have ruined the place.

Elsa Ruesch: Once in a while we get a TV anchorman, or something that—and that's about all. I don't think we've even had the governor down here.

Kathryn Schram: He doesn't know what he's missing.

Interviewer: Have there been any momentous events over the years? Any big storms or rock slides, or . . . ?

Kathryn Schram: Well, there was a flood while I was here—a bad flood too.

Elsa Ruesch: Well, we usually get a flood down the river in the springtime. We didn't this year because we didn't get any water up on the mountain. We usually get floods down the river, but not this year.

[Type text]

Kathryn Schram: One year when I was here, there was a flood. Oh, the noise was just terrific. It washed out a water main. It brought the rocks down, and tree trunks and everything. The noise was just deafening.

Elsa Ruesch: One that we had several years ago that there were some hikers up above the Narrows, and it caught them and killed at least one. It was bad enough that I remember the stories that further down the river of cows that had been drown and/or up in the tops of the trees. The river would have to be pretty high to put them up there.

(Break in conversation/dinner related comments)

Interviewer: Yes. Other than the fellow you were talking about before that told the tall stories, there must have been some characters in the Park Service through the years then. I'd like to hear some more of your tall tales.

(Laughter)

Kathryn Schram: We got so used to them we didn't pay any attention, did we?

(More laughter)

Elsa Ruesch: I don't remember any particular characters that were worthy of paying attention.

Kathryn Schram: Well, I saw Walt this morning, didn't you?

Elsa Ruesch: Yes.

Interviewer: Who's Walt?

Kathryn Schram: Ruesch. He was probably her husband's uncle.

Elsa Ruesch: Uncle, yes. Well, as I was telling you, he was probably the first supervisor of any kind in this park when it was made a monument still.

Kathryn Schram: Yes, oh yes. He was made the first superintendent here.

Elsa Ruesch: I don't believe that he was ever appointed superintendent, but he was acting superintendent.

Kathryn Schram: Yes, at first.

Elsa Ruesch: Yes, when it was first made a monument.

Kathryn Schram: I remember hearing them tell it. He went to the Park Service convention, you know that annual convention. He started out. He sent his trousers to Cedar City to be cleaned and they didn't get back, so he started out with his park service hat and jacket and some white pants. He got his jackets and trousers on the way, and he got into this convention or so it was called, but they'd never seen anything like him, and thereafter, every time any people from Washington or the other parks came to Zion, the first thing they wanted to see was Walt because they'd heard so much about him, and a lot of them were of the opinion that they never saw anybody else like him.

[Type text]

Elsa Ruesch: Yes. He a—

Interviewer: Well, what was so noticeable about him?

Elsa Ruesch: He would swear a blue streak every time he opened his mouth.

Kathryn Schram: Oh, he was always into cuss words.

Elsa Ruesch: You'd think that he was mad at everybody and was going to kill anybody that got within ten feet of him. And he was the softest-hearted thing you ever saw in your life, but when you get right down to it. But he sounded like he was going to tear everything apart.

Kathryn Schram: Yes, one night my fire went out. It was in the winter. It was real cold. And I just about froze. The fire went out and Mr. Rozelle said to me—he was in charge of the CCC boys work—Mr. Rozelle was, Frank Roselle. And he said, "Well, I guess maybe I'd better send a CCC boy over to keep your fire going again." Well, Ruesch landed on him and said, "I don't think you ought to speak that way to her." He thought he was saying something indecent to me I guess.

Interviewer: Was it a wood fire?

Kathryn Schram: Yes.

Interviewer: Did you have to make your own fires?

Kathryn Schram: Oh, sure.

Interviewer: Was it a fireplace or a wood stove?

Kathryn Schram: A stove. You know, I lived right down in that amphitheater of rock and when it gets cold, it gets cold in there. That rock was cold as . . .

Elsa Ruesch: Yes.

Kathryn Schram: The first time I saw Walt, I thought he was losing his trousers. (Laughter) You know, he had a big thing, and he wore his trousers right down below on his hips, I thought. I don't know how they ever defied gravity, but they did. I said to somebody, "I think he's losing his trousers." "Oh no, that's the way he keeps them. But once his wife was in the hospital, and I sent her some flowers, and he came to thank me, and you know, he had tears in his eyes. He said, "That's the first time anyone's sent us flowers."

Elsa Ruesch: Really?

Kathryn Schram: He was an old softy.

Elsa Ruesch: Yes, he really was, but he sure didn't sound like an old softy.

Interviewer: He'd use that language in front of the ladies as well as the men?

Kathryn Schram: Oh, it was his way. Nobody paid any attention to it because it was just his vocabulary.

[Type text]

Elsa Ruesch: Speaking of using swear words in an unexpected situation, it reminds me of on TV a while ago, these TV anchormen, you know. They're very precise and very particular, and don't swear, and everything. And so this man was telling us a story about some place where they broke into a place where nuns were, a house where nuns were living. He was telling about a man came into the nuns' place with the intention of robbing the nuns. One nun happened to still be awake and heard something down there, so she went down to see what the commotion was and found him, and he was so provoked at being caught at the thing that he started beating up on her—the nun. And the commotion waked up the other nuns, and so they came downstairs. And they came down and saw the big, old, ugly man beating up on the poor, little, old nun, and they stood there and wondered what to do. And the anchorman stopped and thought, and you could just see his head turning—the wheels turning—and you literally could see the wheels turning in his head, saying, “Shall I, or shall I not?” And finally he said, “They got so mad that they beat the hell out of him.” (Laughter) And that just tickled me to death. It was so unexpected.

Kathryn Schram: Well, a story went . . . you know, these things are all things that I heard. I wasn't there. They said that the Secretary of Interior and the Superintendent of Park Service came out here, and of course, their information—they, at that time, people in the Park Service thought that the director was next to God. And so, I can't remember the exact words, I guess, that they told us that Walt Ruesch dropped a big bomb. He said, “Well, I think that those two—I'm glad that those two are gone, but I think the S.O.B's had a good time.”

(Laughter)

Kathryn Schram: It was probably stronger than that.

Elsa Ruesch: Probably. Do you want some cream for your coffee?

Kathryn Schram: No, thank you. Oh, it looks good.

Elsa Ruesch: They usually have bread here.

Interviewer: Yes, I think they make it. I notice a lot of places here do make their own bread. I just imagine that it probably because by the time they ship bread in from outside world, it's pretty stale.

[More dinner conversation]

Kathryn Schram: Everybody liked him, and everybody respected him. And he used to tell how—

Interviewer: Is this Walt you're talking about?

Kathryn Schram: Yes. They used to tell how he would have a work crew. I don't know what you would call it. You don't call it mining, I guess, but whatever you call it, you need to tell them how these people up there were waiting around for that rock. They couldn't work because they didn't have the rock, and then he goes back and tell them, “Go up and tell the other fellows, all these men down at the quarry have so much rock standing around

[Type text]

it's in their way." (Laughter) These are tales. I don't know if they're really true. But anyway, that's what these people told on him. And I wouldn't put it past him, would you?

Elsa Ruesch: No, sure wouldn't.

Kathryn Schram: He said that if he had an emergency, he'd go right into the church services and drag the men out of there.

Interviewer: Where was the church?

Kathryn Schram: In Springdale.

Elsa Ruesch: It was. When Kathryn was here, it was there in that old church building just across the street from that little store there in the middle of town.

Interviewer: What kind of church was it?

Elsa Ruesch: Mormon.

Interviewer: And that was the only church that was here?

Elsa Ruesch: It still is. But they—

Interviewer: You're either Mormon or you weren't. Right?

Elsa Ruesch: Yes, I believe up at the lodge in the summertime, they have some Catholic services.

Interviewer: Yes, I noticed there was a sign up there that said Catholic services.

Kathryn Schram: You know when I lived here, a friend visited me from Salt Lake, and she came from a Mormon family, but I don't think she really was practicing too much. I don't think she was really a church-going Mormon at that time, but she was interested in finding out about what she called a communist settlement that had been over in Orderville, up beyond the tunnel somewhere. Is that Orderville?

Elsa Ruesch: There was a—what they called a—

Kathryn Schram: I think that's what it was. This had been years ago.

Elsa Ruesch: Yes.

Kathryn Schram: And it was called the United Order.

Elsa Ruesch: United Order. Now that was sponsored by the Mormon Church though.

Kathryn Schram: Yes. And so we went over there, and we met this old couple who had been a part of it. And they told us that when they went in, an accurate record was kept of what each person put into it, and an accurate record was kept of the time people worked, and the man said, "But you know, it never did work, because some people are ambitious and some people are lazy." I'm not sure he used just those words, but in effect, that's what it amounted to, and the people who work aren't willing to support the people who are lazy. He said, "Of course, we do anyway."

[Type text]

Interviewer: Well, were most of the people that were in the Park Service at that time Mormon?

Kathryn Schram: No.

Interviewer: They just didn't go to church, huh?

Elsa Ruesch: Or if they did, they'd have to go to Cedar or St. George. I remember hearing of some of them who went to Cedar to church.

Kathryn Schram: Well, in St. George, there's a Mormon temple, isn't there?

Elsa Ruesch: Yes.

Kathryn Schram: There was a Mormon college, a junior college there, wasn't there?

Elsa Ruesch: It probably was a church college when it was first started, but it's been state for a long time.

Interviewer: Did some of the people, not all of them, except you, you said, were married.

Kathryn, right?

Kathryn Schram: In the Park Service down there, they were all married except me at that time. Oh, maybe some of the rangers weren't, but apart from that, when I was there, they were all married except me.

Elsa Ruesch: Were they?

Interviewer: Did they have children that lived there?

Elsa Ruesch: Sure. Some of them had—

Kathryn Schram: Jolleys had four children; Patrows had two.

Interviewer: Where did they go to school?

Kathryn Schram: I don't know where the school was.

Elsa Ruesch: They had a grade school here in Springdale, up to I think the sixth grade, and then they had to ride the bus to Hurricane.

Kathryn Schram: Hurricane's what, about ten miles from here, ten or fifteen miles?

Elsa Ruesch: It's twenty-one.

Kathryn Schram: We used to go there to the movies, and there used to be a lot of cowboys in the movies—especially if it was a cowboy movie. They loved them because all these cowboys in the movies wore these silk-shirts, and all dressed up, you know, and they got a big kick out of it.

Elsa Ruesch: (laughs) Drugstore cowboys, they all—

Interviewer: And there were some real cowboys around here, I guess.

[Type text]

Kathryn and Elsa together: Yes.

Interviewer: Was this largely a farming community here outside the park?

Elsa Ruesch: Yes. That's—the park, and at that time, very few, very small motels or restaurants here in town. And that's all the business there was. So if you didn't have a job in the park, why you farmed.

Kathryn Schram: Well, everybody, practically, when I was here was working for the Park Service. Because they had the FERA (Federal Emergency Relief Administration) on at that time, you know. And they had a lot of work going on.

Elsa Ruesch: Did they have the CC boys while you were here?

Kathryn Schram: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: What were they doing? Were they building the trails and the road?

Kathryn Schram: Some did a lot of roadwork.

Elsa Ruesch: And they did a lot of work on controlling the rivers and waterways, so they didn't wash out, the banks and so on, putting in rock cribs.

[More dinner-type conversation]

Interviewer: Bonita, is that her name? That's not any relation of yours? It's just that other lady's granddaughter or something? No—that was at (Bill's).

Elsa Ruesch: No, no.

Kathryn Schram: It's her daughter, isn't it?

Interviewer: Yes, it's her daughter.

Elsa Ruesch: No, or a waitress.

Interviewer: No, but the other. . .

Kathryn and Elsa: Yes. (Unintelligible)

Interviewer: Who was Brockmeyer?

Kathryn Schram: Well, the Brockmeyers lived next to me when I first moved here, and he was the head mechanic. Verna was just a young girl, I don't know, twelve-years-old or ten or something, and Lynné and a boy, Harry. I think they had some other children, didn't they?

Elsa Ruesch: They had . . . I can think of three other boys, besides Harry, that they had, Bill, and one they called Babe, and then the youngest one. "Brock" was telling us one day that he and this young kid, six years old or something, were at home by themselves. There was nobody else there, and they were each in their own room reading or doing whatever they wanted to, but Brock kept hearing talking going on—and Gregory was the youngest.

[Type text]

Kathryn Schram: Oh yes, Gregory. He was named after Dr. Gregory.

Elsa Ruesch: Oh, yeah. And he kept hearing talking in Greg's room, so finally, he went in to see who was in there because he thought Greg was in there alone, and Greg was in there on the bed lying by himself, talking out loud to himself. So Brock stood in the door and listened to him for a few minutes, and Greg didn't know he was there, and so Greg would lie there quietly for a minute, and then he'd say out loud, he'd say, "What?" And then he'd lie there for a minute, and then he'd say, "What?" And that's the only thing he said out loud. So finally Brock interrupted him, and he said, "What are you doing?" And Greg said, "I'm talking to myself; I can't hear me." (All laugh)

Kathryn Schram: It reminds me of my friend's little girl years ago; her name was Kathy. Her mother and another friend, and I shared a flat for a while, and so her mother named this little girl Kathy Lee after the other two of us. So she had these two daughters, Patty and Kathy, and Kathy usually got home for lunch before Patty, and usually her mother would give her her lunch, and then when Patty came, give hers. But this day she was painting, and so she said, "Now Kathy, today you're going to have to wait 'til Patty comes before lunch. I can't stop painting." And so Kathy was put out. She went into her room. Her mother heard talking, and she said, "All she does is paint, paint, paint. She doesn't even feed the starving children." (Laughter) Her mother looked around and said, "Kathy, who are you talking to?" Kathy said, "My dolls. You won't let me have any friends." (Laughter)

[Background noise drowns out the conversation.]

Interviewer: There were the Stevensons, right?

Elsa Ruesch: No, that was-----

Interviewer: Did they live here in the start?

Elsa Ruesch: No. They moved.

Interviewer: But the Stevensons did?

Kathryn Schram: Yes. Do you remember Steve Stevenson?

Elsa Ruesch: Yes.

Kathryn Schram: He and his wife live near Sacramento. It's about thirteen miles from Sacramento. I saw them a couple of months ago.

Elsa Ruesch: They're both still alive?

Kathryn Schram: He not well. Well, he's pretty old, except I think his one eye. He doesn't see with one eye, so the other one—the good one—that was—

Interviewer: What did he do in the park?

Kathryn Schram: He was a landscape architect. He was here in the summer, and then they went and moved to the regional office in San Francisco in the winter.

[Type text]

Elsa Ruesch: They were my next door neighbors.

Interviewer: That's probably part of the reason you went to San Francisco, or wound up there, huh?

Elsa Ruesch: Yes. He was a really good-looking guy.

Kathryn Schram: Oh, he was.

Elsa Ruesch: I can't remember her.

Kathryn Schram: She was a nice looking woman. She was a very charming woman, and you probably didn't see much of her.

Elsa Ruesch: Yes. She might not have come around the office.

Kathryn Schram: They have a lovely daughter, Kathy. She's married now. She has her father's extreme good-looks, and her mother's charm.

Elsa Ruesch: She's got it made.

Kathryn Schram: Yes.

[Break in conversation]

Kathryn Schram: She has a real good job. She and her husband both have real good jobs in Washington.

Elsa Ruesch: Did you ever regret retiring?

Kathryn Schram: No.

Elsa Ruesch: I haven't either. I retired early. I retired at fifty-five. People have said to me many times, "Oh, you'll be sorry you quit," but I never was.

Kathryn Schram: You know some people like us are fortunate to have a job they just love. . . . really. But I don't think of us either felt that way. It's a job. It's really not more.

Interviewer: I think for a lot of people, whether they like it or not, they get very involved in their work, and their life revolves around their work. So when they stop working, it's just a big hole in their lives, especially people who are like doctors, or like supervisors, people who are used to having people work for them underneath them, so to speak. Those kinds of people all of the sudden find that they're not being given the respect that they were when they were a big cheese, a big wheel. I think for those kind of people particularly, it's very difficult retiring.

Elsa Ruesch: I can believe it, or people who live in the city in an apartment and have no yard work to do, no pets to take care of, nothing to do except sit and watch TV or read or something.

[Type text]

Kathryn Schram: Well, I moved into my house the day after I retired, and I was not without something to do. It was a new house, just built, and there was nothing there but just soil, you know. I had to . . . -

Interviewer: Put in the lawn—

Kathryn Schram: Steve helped me. Steve Stevenson helped me with that.

Elsa Ruesch: Yes.

2nd Male voice [must be Kathryn's brother]: She had a wonderful house up in Vallejo. It had a very large patio out behind that she had covered, and it was sort of like a corner, you know. Part of the house went back toward the back of the lot, and the family room was much shallower, so the patio was protected on two sides by the house, and then she had this cover put over it. It just seemed to blend very well with the weather in that particular part of the country. It was just so pleasant out there all of the time, wasn't it?

Kathryn Schram: Oh, yes.

2nd Male voice: So many times during the year—there's an awful lot of time during the year when the patio was protected from the sun and the real hot time, and because there was a fence on one side, and the house on two other sides, it was pretty well protected from the wind and the cold, in the colder months, and in the rainy season, it was still very livable house. It was always kind of blocked there. I had five brothers and sisters, and one time—it must have been in about '87, '88—I don't remember when it was, there were four of us—three—let's see—my one brother and two of my sisters, and Kathryn, were all at her house at the same time. We drove—you know, we're scattered all over the country where we don't get together often. We decided that we would make a recording for my other sister that wasn't there. And so we spent the whole day recording songs. I played guitar—well all of us play guitar a little. I guess I play it more than anybody else, but we all like to sing. So we spent the whole day making this recording for my sister, and all of us do some harmony as well as, you know, singing. So we just sort of took turns singing lead and singing harmony, and picking songs. Kathryn sang one, and so it was really a very nice recording, and my sister to this day—and that was maybe fifteen years or more ago—but to this day, the sister that we made the recording for will get that out occasionally, and it's usually in the late afternoon or evening, and stay outside, or sit wherever she is, and just listen to it over and over, and get tears in her eyes. It was just really a very—

Kathryn Schram: Well, one brother and one sister are gone now. So—

2nd Male voice: Yes. Two of the people who are on that recording have died of cancer.

Overwhelming background noise. (I think Elsa asks a question here)

2nd Male voice: Leda was actually, as I recall, she had cancer at that time. I remember she was coughing a lot and we had to redo the recording because of her coughing

Elsa Ruesch: But you didn't know she had it.

[Type text]

2nd Male voice: Oh yes. We knew. Let's see

Kathryn Schram: She kept herself alive five years or more.

(More noise drowns out conversation, then waitress returns and offers coffee—break in transcript)

2nd Male voice: She died when she was fifty, didn't she. She would have been born in about '33—she was born in '33—so that would have been '87?

Elsa Ruesch: She was born in when?

2nd Male voice: Thirty-seven. —Thirty-three. No—in '83.

Elsa: Eighty-three. Yes, she would be fifty.

2nd Male voice: Yes, '83. That sounds right. And it was several years before she died, so it probably was about '78 or '79 when we did that.

Interviewer: Well, that's not long ago. It's twelve years, eleven or twelve years ago.

Break

Elsa Ruesch: Did you enjoy your house?

Kathryn Schram: The one thing I miss about it, particularly, is that I don't have a place to entertain people like I used to. The whole family could come there, you know.

Elsa Ruesch: How big are your quarters now?

Kathryn Schram: I have a very large room with—it's called an alcove (?) apartment. There's a half-size room opening into it. It has a nice view. It has a little view of the lake and the hills. It's very pleasant. There's a little kitchen, and nice bathroom. It's adequate, but it's not a place where you can—well, you can entertain there, and of course, they have a place where we can entertain a larger group, but I haven't done it.

2nd Male voice: It's a very lovely residence, beautiful and they serve great meals. The entire time Library, recreation rooms and other kinds of areas.

Kathryn Schram: I have friends there. It's very well run. The food is excellent. They do take care of you. That was the main reason I moved there. Getting old.

Elsa Ruesch: Do they have organized entertainment?

Kathryn Schram: Oh yes.

Elsa Ruesch: As far as games and everything.

Kathryn Schram: Oh, yes. They have games and canasta and classes, and they have square dances, and they have all kinds of things going on. And they do have some exercise rooms.

[Type text]

2nd Male voice: They play music, and they have music concerts there.

Kathryn Schram: Oh, yes. They have two movies on and they also have a very good program of concerts. It's right in downtown Oakland, and five blocks from the main street. There's transportation. It's very expensive to drive a car there. And you have to pay for parking where I live. When you live in Oakland, insurance doubles. I decided I could take taxis if necessary, and public transportation's good too.

2nd Male voice: Yes, she took the BART, rapid transit into the San Francisco area. And it has a tube that goes under the bay. And she took BART over to San Francisco----a couple of weeks ago, I guess it was. And she took the ferry from San Francisco over to Marin County where my sister lives, and I happened to be in Victoria that day. I don't live in Marin County, but it's not too far out of my way to go past Kathryn's residence on my way home, so I just took her home on the way home. But as she said, the public transportation is quite good.

Kathryn Schram: BART is really comfortable. What it means is Bay Area Rapid Transit. And it gets you there in nothing flat. It's either over or under the ground, very fast.

Elsa Ruesch: Does it have all the stops that some of the other systems do?

Kathryn Schram: No. You can go to Berkley. I can get to Berkley in about 12 minutes, and I can go to the end of the line in I guess about twenty minutes. And I go to Vallejo to visits my friends every. So I take BART to the end of the line and get a bus there to go to Vallejo. It takes me right where I need to go within a few blocks of where I used to live. Oh, it works out pretty well. But I don't get to the sea any. But you can't have everything, can you Elsa?

Elsa Ruesch: No.

Kathryn Schram: Well, one reason I stay in the Bay area, is because I have a Kaiser Health Insurance. It's very good, and I've had it for almost thirty years. When I had my . . .

Elsa Ruesch: Hmm.

Interviewer: What did you do for medical attention while you were living here?

Kathryn Schram: Well, I didn't need any.

Elsa Ruesch: We had a doctor and went galloping down to Hurricane. That was the nearest doctor.

Kathryn Schram: I never did go to the doctor.

Interviewer: It probably still is. Are there doctors in town here? Is there a doctor in town?

Elsa Ruesch: No. In the summertime we have a clinic that's connected with the doctors and the doctor's office in Hurricane. There isn't a doctor that runs it. It's just some kind of a technician, but he's only doing it during the summer months. And that's all we have besides Hurricane, even then.

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Kathryn Schram: Oh, Hurricane's very small, too. Of course it was when I was here.

Elsa Ruesch: Well, it's larger now, but actually the commercial section isn't any larger. It doesn't—the commercial section doesn't seem to grow any bigger, but there are a lot of retirees and people like that have moved in and built new houses out in the fields where you aren't aware that the town's expanded, you know. So in town, it still looks like a little country town, and it is!

Kathryn Schram: So there's no doctor anywhere around here, then?

Elsa Ruesch: No.

Kathryn Schram: Oh, heavens! What happens when you get sick!

Elsa Ruesch: We have an ambulance that we can call, and he takes you either to the hospital in St. George or the doctor in Hurricane—whichever you want to go to.

[Break in conversation.]

Interviewer: Elsa, were you married the whole time you were here in 1931?

Elsa Ruesch: I got married after I came. I got married in '33.

Interviewer: So you were single for two years.

Elsa Ruesch: And then my husband died thirteen years ago.

Interviewer: That was long after you retired then.

Elsa Ruesch: Yes.

Kathryn Schram: That was good you had him

Elsa Ruesch: I hope I can die as easily as he did. This is a real gay topic, isn't it? (Laughter)

Interviewer: Yes—it's very cheery.

Elsa Ruesch: It's so unusual. We were going to go to a special program that they were having up in Dixie College auditorium that night, and so for the heck of it, I cooked up a special dinner, and we were just going to make a night of it, you know. And I got dinner ready, and it was time that we started getting ready to go to the thing, and he was still down in the fields. And so finally it was so late that I decided I'd better go down and tell him it was time to come up and eat, and time to get going. And so I went down there, and he had been sitting down on his heels, hammering something—hammering a nail down at ground level—just—you know when you sit on your heels. And he had got struck down so fast that he didn't even lose his balance. He was still sitting on his heels.

Kathryn Schram: Did he have a stroke?

Elsa Ruesch: I guess so.

Kathryn Schram: That was wonderful.

[Type text]

Elsa Ruesch: It was just so fast that he didn't even lose his balance.

2nd Male voice: That's real strange though.

Elsa Ruesch: I hope I go that way.

2nd Male voice: Me too.

Kathryn Schram: Yes. That's what we all hope.

2nd male voice: Me too, and I don't want any lingering. If we want to go on with this curious subject, my brother and sister both died of cancer, my sister lingered on for about a year. I shouldn't say she lingered because she was very, very active until the very end. It was in the last six months or year of her life she had run for and been elected to city council in York, Pennsylvania. This was all after she had cancer. First she was on the school board. Then she got elected to city council. Then she was re-elected to city council. I think she was re-elected a third time to city council. In the last year of her life, she ran for state assemblyman. She was defeated, but she really was not well enough to campaign, and you could see that she was very ill person. Of course, all of her hair had been gone for a couple of years because of the chemotherapy. For several years, she wore a wig.

Kathryn Schram: It looked like her hair.

2nd male voice: It looked pretty good, but by the time, you know, she was within about six months of her death—she was shriveled up to almost nothing. My brother, on the other hand, went very quickly. It was three or four months, wasn't it?

Kathryn Schram: It was four.

2nd male voice: It wasn't very long. Well, he died in—what did he die? In April? I think. Well, it was a very short period of time in any case. He was in the hospital, and boy, it—just went like that! (Snaps fingers). He had lung cancer—very, very heavy smoker. Boy, it just took him downhill in a minute. But I wouldn't even want that, you know. I mean. Of course, he never really accepted the fact that he was going to die, but we all were pretty sure he was. I mean he was just wasting away so fast. He was still talking about going into the plumbing business or something when he was within a day or two of his death. That was sure sad. But anyway.

Kathryn Schram: But I think it was worth it. He had those plans to think about. Kept his mind occupied.

2nd male voice: Yes. He had us go down and get him some drafting tools. He was not a draftsman. He was a steamfitter. But he wanted a drafting board, and he wanted special pens. They had to be this certain type of pens—certain brand name. I don't remember what they are. And he gave me the job of getting them for him. I don't remember if it was a doctor or—I don't think so. I think it was somebody. I don't remember who it was. Somebody said to me, "Don't bother getting him those things. He'll never be able to use them." I said, "I don't care if he uses the stuff or not. He wants the pens, he'll have pens." And I remember one other example that was somewhat like that. He kind of dropped his

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head because the cancer had gone into his brain, and one of the symptoms of this particular cancer is severe paranoia. And he had come to the conclusion that some of the doctors, or somebody, or the nurses were trying to burn the hospital down. And he was going to it that that didn't happen. And they finally strapped him in because he was pulling tubes out of himself. So I was there one day—and I think you were there too, weren't you? My sister was there, anyway. I was sitting next to the bed, and he looked at me and there was this woeful, woeful look. He said, "Are you going to let them do this to me?"

Elsa Ruesch: Are you going to what?

2nd male voice: "Let them do this to me." And I said, "What?" And he just said, "Strap me to my bed."

(End of Tape).