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Interview with Sonya Broeren

Trudy Andrzejewski

Sonia Broeren

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Interviewer: Trudy Andrzejewski

Interviewee: Sonya Broeren

Date: February 20, 2012

Location: Ransom Hall, Kenyon College

TA: This is Trudy Andrzejewski interviewing for the Rural Life Center. It's Monday, February 20th at about 3:20 PM and I'm interviewing Sonya Broeren and this interview is taking place in Ransom Hall at Kenyon College. Okay so Sonya, what is your current occupation?

SB: I am Associate Director of Admissions, so I am an admissions director that goes out and recruits students for Kenyon College. I've worked here for four years, so this is my seventh year working at Kenyon College.

TA: And did you grow up in this area?

SB: I did, yes. I am ninth generation, my maiden name is Dudgeon. It's kind of cool, my children are tenth generation Dudgeon. Generations, it's kind of fascinating. And I also went to Kenyon College. So, I was first in my family to go to college, I was first generation, and my sister also went to Kenyon. My mother always dreamed that both her daughters would go to college and we both went to Kenyon College.

TA: Wow. Okay so, have you stayed in this area throughout your whole life?

SB: No. Actually, I couldn't wait to get out of Knox County. Um, on graduation day I was thinking, I am out of here. I moved to Washington, D.C. and I was there for twelve years. My husband also graduated from Kenyon and he, uh, went to law school and he joined me and we got married. And we lived there until I think 2002. And it was 2001 when we started thinking, started re-evaluating our lives. He was working like eighty, one hundred hours a week for a huge law firm on Pennsylvania Avenue. And we were starting to have children, and then 9/11 happened and that shook us up pretty badly. He was on top of his building watching the Pentagon burn. And, even though we loved Washington, D.C. we decided, you know, this is not a way of living so we decided to come back to Gambier to raise our family and start our lives over again.

TA: What was it that attracted you back to this area?

SB: Well, having come from here but also both of us being Kenyon graduates. We were very comfortable with the village; we knew what this area had to offer. It's a very beautiful area, a very safe area, and to live in academia is like a dream come true. You have all these lectures and plays and concerts. And so when we moved back here we deliberately chose to live in the village. That way if there's a snowstorm we can walk up to the market to get milk, or whatever. *(laughs)* My husband really, he's from Pittsburgh, and he did not want to live out in the country. I wanted to live in the country. But he wanted to be in the village and I said that was fine. It's just been a blast raising our kids

here and having, getting to know so many Kenyon students, you know, babysitters, dog sitters, house sitters. It's just been so much fun. (2:55)

TA: So you mentioned that your family has been here a long time. Do you have other family that is still in the area?

SB: Um, my mother and father are still here. Um, very distant relatives, all of my father's family, his two brothers and sister live in Florida so they left Ohio. For the sun. So all my cousins are in Florida. Um, now my mother's side of the family um, I don't know what generation she is but she's a Dugan, which is another old family name, uh, Irish name here in Knox County and many of my cousins still live here in Gambier, Howard, Apple Valley.

TA: Okay, so, I'd like to hear a little bit more about growing up in this area. Where did you go to school?

SB: I went to Wiggin Street elementary school. Um, Wiggling Street was the Gambier High School. My grandfather graduated from there, my grandfather Dudgen. My dad graduated from there, and my children and I share the same kindergarten room (*laughs*) And then after Wiggin Street, went to Mount Vernon middle school and then Mount Vernon high school.

TA: Okay great, so where were the middle school and high school located in Mount Vernon?

SB: The middle school was the old middle school on Mulberry Street, which is unoccupied right now, and then the high school is the same high school that is in current day use.

TA: Do you remember what you would do after school typically? Both in middle school and high school. (4:23)

SB: Yeah. Um, gosh, well I rode the bus, I didn't have a car so I had a very long bus ride home. And if I wasn't doing things after school, I was heavily involved with the orchestra, I played the violin so I did a lot of violin lessons, a lot of ensembles. Um, middle school not so much. There wasn't much to do. Oh, unfortunately. I just went home. Um, high school, you know, the orchestras, French Club, National Honor Society. I did a lot of volunteering, but, this is really funny, um. Just, look at my mother, um it was for her, I don't know if it was just her generation but it was a long way from Gambier to Mount Vernon (*laughs*) but, so my high school activities were limited unless I could find somebody with a car to bring me home. So my mother would, didn't want to have to keep running into Mount Vernon, everyday after school so that's why I'm awe when I'm reading these applications for Kenyon students and I'm like, oh my gosh, they have the time and the energy to do all of this and I look back on my own high school career and it was pretty limited. But I wasn't bored. I wasn't bored at all. We always found, there was always something going on and plsu living here in Gambier I has a lot of access to things up here on campus.

TA: Right. So, beyond doing like schoolwork and those extracurriculars, how would you spend your time? Like, what about on weekends?

SB: On weekends, um. I did a lot of babysitting for a lot of Kenyon faculty, sort of to make money. Homework took a lot of time because, well I was in the first class of KAP, the Kenyon Articulation Program. So I was getting Kenyon credit when I was taking these classes. But, so, we would take long walks in the country. My grandparents lived on a farm so I'd go to their farm and ride their horses. Um, you know, feed the chickens. So I did a lot of rural life stuff. At the time, you know, when you're a teenager, you're like, oh my gosh I am so getting out of here. There's nothing to do here. But looking back on it, it was probably the happiest times of my life. It was just very carefree, um especially my cousins, we would all get together and play. We would go to the movies on the weekends, my friends and I. Um, there was a movie theater right on Main Street that we used to go to.

TA: What was that called?

SB: I think it was Colonial Cinemas. Okay, I'm gonna really date myself. I can remember the old movie theater that was torn down. I was very young. It had velvet seats and velvet carpet, it was where First National Bank or First Merit... it was an old building and they tore it down, unfortunately. Um, I can remember going to see a movie there when I was really small.

TA: Do you remember what you saw?

SB: I think it was *That Darn Cat*, I think is what it was (*laughs*). But um, so on the weekends we would just hang out. We'd go to dinner, we'd always go to football games at the high school and then the big thing if you had a car or your friends had a car would be to drive Main Street, drive around the circle, kind of like "cruise," cruising. Hanging out and checking out people and. You know, didn't do that too often but that's what we would do.

TA: So, can you maybe conjure up a little bit more of an image of that, more of the cruising phenomenon?

SB: Yeah, okay so (*laughs*), it's kind of weird for me to say that. But I, I hung out with the "orch dorks," the orchestra dorks, so we were all the violinists and the cellos, kind of like the geeks. And uh, we would cross along with the non-orchestra people, the non-geeks, and laugh at some of the cars that were really jacked up and had painted, special paintings, so it was a blend of people who lived here just kind of checking each other out. And do that for maybe half an hour just to see who was out. We'd stop on the square maybe and talk to people, but then get back in our cars.

TA: Would you talk mostly to strangers or people that you knew?

SB: People we knew.

TA: Like, who all was down there.

SB: Yeah, mostly high school students. Yeah, and it wasn't just Mount Vernon. It was also Fredericktown, East Knox, so everyone came to Mount Vernon. It was like the central part for teenagers to just come, you know, do teenage stuff.

TA: Would people ever get out and go to any of the restaurants or stores or anything?

SB: No, nuh-uh. No, I mean we would go to restaurants to go get dessert later. But, downtown, eh, a lot of the restaurants weren't open. All the stores were closed. So there really wasn't anything open, it wasn't like a mall, which is surprising but great central meeting spot for people just to talk to each other and just to see each other.

TA: Are there any places now that you think play a similar role to that?

SB: *(pause)* Well, I think sadly, I think a lot of people go to Polaris or to Easton, cause those didn't exist then, I think they find, there's activities for youth to do now. A lot more sports now. I know they really discourage cruising downtown. In fact, I think they were ticketing people if they did more than a couple passes. I don't know what the traffic violation is or whatever but they kind of stopped the cruising.

TA: You mentioned you had a kids. And are they in this area as well?

SB: They are, I have two. I have a fifth grader in school at Wiggin Street and a sixth grader at the middle school.

TA: Okay, so they're still young. They wouldn't be involved in, if it were back then, cruising. *(laughs)*

SB: Exactly, no.

TA: Okay so more on Main Street when you were younger. Did you go to any restaurants around there?

SB: I did, um. There was one in particular, especially in my teen years, it was called Sweet Williams. Yeah, but the reason why I remember this is they had the most delicious crème-de-menthe parfait, ice cream parfait. And we would all just go in there because we loved it so much but we didn't know, it was actually real alcohol. But that's not why we got it, it was just really minty and really yummy. And they realized they were serving it to under-aged, they had to take it off of the menu after a couple years and we realized oh, we've been drinking crème-de-menthe *(laughs)* which were just delicious so. So Sweet Williams was one of those. Um, Jody's. Um where was? Where Pink Cupcakes is now, um. Plastic pictures of old Mount Vernon, old street cars that go through Mount Vernon, pictures from the turn of the century like 1900s, I don't know where all those pictures went to but we would go into Jody's, she had this really yummy dessert called Sweetie Pie, and it was like custard pudding in a cake it was just a sickeningly sweet dessert but we would go in there and enjoy that. But she had really good breakfasts too, so Jody's was kind of an establishment downtown.

TA: Would that be like Saturdays, or um,?

SB: Yeah.

TA: Lunch break during school?

SB: Um, well actually we weren't allowed to leave Mount Vernon High School for lunch so it would be more of a weekend thing. Yeah.

TA: Um, and would go basically just go downtown, get that food, then go come back?

SB: Uh, we ate there, yeah.

TA: Um, what about any stores, were there any stores?

SB: Yeah. I'm sure you've heard about Ringwalts. Ringwalts was where First Knox is and then there was another clothing store, Rudins, and um, what I remember about each of those stores, um. Rudin's had an elevator man. And they'd pull the gate shut and say what floor and so he'd press the floor and let you on and off the elevator, so it seemed very old-fashioned or like, big city kind of. And then Ringwalt's, I'd always go in there I remember buying an Easter dress every year. I think it's the best place in town. To get your special occasion clothes, or coats. They didn't have cash registers. Um, all the money was up on the third floor so they had this vacuum system, um, I don't know what you would call them, little containers so they would put the sales slip and the money and send it up the vacuum, suction up, and then they would send your change back. This was before credit cards. Um, so you paid everything with cash. And that was always fascinating to me, even as a little girl I thought that seemed so old-fashioned.

TA: Would you know, when you would go to like Rudin's and Ringwalt's or anything, would you say you recognized a lot of the people?

SB: Um, I knew the business owners, we knew who the business owners were. And occasionally you'd run into friends shopping there cause it was the only clothing store in the county for special occasions, but um, I wouldn't know everybody.

TA: Yeah, so Main Street probably attracted people not just from Mount Vernon, but...

SB: Yes, people who lived in the countryside of Gambier, the entire county, cause it really is the county seat and everyone in the county would, uh it was the big city.

TA: Do you think there are other things now that kind of attract people to Mount Vernon, or? You kind of mentioned Polaris as a de-traction, but...

SB: Um. Yeah, it's saddens me that there isn't as much traffic to downtown Mount Vernon. There have been so many stores that have come and gone. Like, basic home goods store if you want to go in and buy a platter or a gift, a wedding gift, you can't do that. Um, although I have to say Paragraphs book store is one of my favorite bookstores. I'm so proud of Anne for keeping that going. And Sips, and Pink Cupcake, but there are those, unfortunately, I think a lot of is East Side. They've got that Wal-Mart and the plaza where JC Pennys is.

TA: Coshocton?

SB: Coshocton. I call it "Generica." You can find that anywhere in the country and I think a lot of people just tend to hover there. The prices are good at Wal-Mart It's kind of funny, my ma, my mother has never stepped foot in a Wal-Mart. But I go to Wal-Mart to buy pet food. But she said, you're killing the downtown businesses and I totally agree with her but, so, I'm so proud of my mother she has lived here all her life and she still has yet to step foot in a Wal-Mart.

TA: Good. So are there businesses on Main Street that attract you (15:57)

SB: So like the three I mentioned, um, we try to buy, we buy our appliances at Herald's instead of at Lowes. My husband and I are pro-small business, in fact when we moved here from Washington, D.C. he came home with the best haircut ever. After being in DC for twelve years, and he went to this solo hairdresser. She did not have a receptionist, she ran the shop, and it was near the courthouse, where his office is and so we've been going to her ever since we moved back. So we try to support local businesses over like the Great Clips and these corporations. Amy, she just gets our curly hair. So we've recruited, yeah you have to go to Amy... trying to get more people to go downtown, her shop is downtown. Yeah, we try to do as much as we can.

TA: Um, do you ever go to the farmers market?

SB: Yes, Oh absolutely!

TA: Who's there?

SB: Um, we usually go early in the season because by the middle of the season we are travelling and all this stuff. But umm, there's a lot of plant growers there, Dharma Farms is there, um, there's some early produce like, like some lettuce we always like to get the early vegetables um yeah.

TA: Do you think the its like a very social space?

SB: I do, yeah, and it's true, it's like, uh, you go there and like you run into so many different people that you haven't seen, and you stop and have these conversations, but you need to go there for maybe half an hour to just do some shopping but it ends up being an hour and a half, because your just running into so many people who are also down there and its just very casual and. Like. You know it's just very interesting that it is the square, and how the square was the center point. It's so funny, it's not even a square its like an octagon (*laughs*), but yeah it's like the central, it's like a meeting place. So maybe the farmers market is the current day meeting... I don't know.

TA: Yeah. Do you ever go downtown just to just to like window shop? Or, what typically do you like would draw you down there if you go?

SB: I enjoy going into Woolsens, um, just because I like Burt's Bees and I like the bulbs that they have for gardens. It's a very old store, have you been in there? Yeah. It really

takes you back. Um, but I love going to Farley & Moore, the antique store, even though I may not buy something, I love antiquing. I love going in there just to see what tools were used for what, it's like a museum sometimes. Occasionally I'll buy some things for the house, too, but that's my draw. And they're open on Sundays and that's the thing, it's so dead on Sundays downtown, nothings open, they're like the only thing open on Sundays. And that's the day that I am not at work, I can go down and enjoy. And that was the case when I was growing up, it's always been kind of dead on Sundays.

TA: Would businesses have different hours on the weekdays when you were growing up, or?

SB: I think it's pretty much the same. No one stays open beyond five. And unfortunately, with the 24-hour Wal-Marts, people start to expect local businesses to stay open later.

TA: I think that one of the things that I've figured out recently is that, even though people love antique stores a lot, even us college students, but, the fact that the inventory isn't changing like it was in a department store, um, might detract locals from going super often.

SB: You're right, yeah. The stuff just sits there. It doesn't move. Um, when I was growing up it was huge for people to go to auctions, too. It just seemed like the antiques that people really wanted were at the auctions and not the stores. Like estate sales, for older people that have died and the family doesn't want their things and so you would find these McCoy pottery and even locally built furniture that were very old and had a reputation, people would just snatch those up. Everyone would want that. (20:33)

TA: I'm just gonna take a second to look over my questions. (*pause*) So, in that vein, would you say that you have any ideas or suggestions for how Main Street might be able to draw people again?

SB: I, I am very hopeful. I think Mount Vernon is trying to revitalize downtown. It's going to take a lot of work and I think it's going to take the business owners a lot of patience. And we're gonna depend on them to try, well. Maybe if they stayed open late one night or, I don't know. Well like, my mother didn't work and so it was easier for mothers to go to these stores. But now you have two parents, well not everybody has but two parents working and it's harder to go during the day to shop. Whereas my mom could go to shop any day during the weekday but now it's harder for somebody like me to go shop. So maybe if they had like an evening, stayed open late one evening, I think Paragraphs may do that. But just try to get more people to come downtown, attract, just see what there is to offer. And steer them away from the Wal-Marts and just, you know. I do think these smaller businesses, well, I remember it was a big deal there was this store, it was a women's clothing store, I forget the name of it but they sold Clinique. And that was huge, that was huge. It was the only place in Knox County that sold Clinique. And you can imagine us teenagers, and even the moms, were so excited about Clinique makeup being sold at this place. I can't remember the name of the store, but it was just, you know. (*laughs*). This is before the internet, this is before you could order things online, too. So you had to drive to Mansfield, drive to Columbus, to get this.

TA: Are there things from your childhood that you wish were still institutions downtown?

SB: Hm. *(pause)* I'm trying to think. *(pause)* I miss Jody's, the restaurant, that was just a cute little restaurant, that was very sad when that closed. Um, it closed, I'm not really sure, fifteen years ago? Ten years ago? It wasn't here when we came back. So it was really sad. The Alcove has always been there and that used to be a really great restaurant, it's just kind of mediocre now. Food, the food is just not great. Again I guess it's signs of the times I don't know if they just don't want to upgrade or what. Um, things I miss from my childhood. It's funny, the library. The Mount Vernon Public Library is still where it was. The YMCA. Um, they have really done a nice job of the houses in the historic areas because a lot of those were really starting to decay in like the 70s and 80s. And I'm so happy that they've done that and I mean, just recently part of East Vine Street has been named part of the Historic District, so these homeowners have really taken pride. Because Mount Vernon was such a beautiful town right around 1900. Just so many businesses, and all the brick-lined streets, and houses. In fact there were mansions I can remember, where condos are now, there were just these beautiful houses and they started to fall because it's hard to take care of those houses and I think Mount Vernon's doing a really, really good job of preserving that history. And the other thing, too, Mount Vernon is always criticized, we had the opportunity of having I-71 come through Knox County and for years they talked about how backwards Mount Vernon was that the poor truckers had to go through downtown, and get stuck on these brick-lined streets, and we didn't have an interstate and people were just like, it was just the wrong way, didn't allow businesses growth or, the county to grow. But now, the idea is gosh, Mount Vernon was smart for being dumb. Because people want to hold on to those small towns, they don't want these interstates going through anymore. Like they've destroyed so many, divided Columbus from old east to split these neighborhoods in half and now people are like, I'm so happy that Mount Vernon doesn't have an interstate. It's preserved that charm that people want to hold on to. So, I think there's hope.

TA: So, people like the idea of Main Street and of local businesses. But I feel like, if you were to go to Main Street and then go over to Coshocton, you would see a lot more people over on Coshocton.

SB: Oh yeah. It's depressing. I think it's convenience. You've got all your grocery stores over there. Most of your pharmacies. Drive-thru fast food. You know, people are just, um, very quick and easy to run into Wal-Mart and into Aldies, and I think the east end is the convenient side whereas downtown you deliberately have to park somewhere, albeit a whole block, but um, you don't have everything downtown. You're gonna have to drive. And there is no grocery store downtown. So they have to go, why make the trip downtown when you can just get everything on the east side? So.

TA: It's just sad to think about, because I think that throughout my interviews and throughout getting to know people in Mount Vernon, it's clear that people love the idea of Main Street and the idea of local businesses. But the convenience prevents a lot of people from patronizing those businesses. I'm just trying to think of ways that would

attract people more to Main Street verses, and just understanding what is being done when they are only going to Wal-Mart and Ruby Tuesday's and things like that.

SB: Right. Exactly. I mean, you can't there isn't even a newsstand downtown anymore. There was when I was growing up. I don't really remember it, I'm sorry, but even just to go to buy a pack of gum. There used to be a candy store, I remember that as a child, that was my once a month treat. You'd get a little white bag and you could go and fill it up with candies, and I always get hard candies like root beer barrels and peppermints and things like that. And that would be my treat. And it was a local business and you could just go in there and pick out your candies, it was fun to do. It was on Vine Street. The building is now gone, First Knox is there, it was part of that whole block. It's kind of where the ATM is on Vine Street, so it was across the street from Sips. And it was this old building and they had this little first floor. The owner was Deb Shouten (*spelling?*) I do remember that, but I don't remember the name of the store. (29:14)

TA: When was that?

SB: That was the 60s, 70s, and 80s, so. And I remember it from the 70s and the 80s.

TA: You also briefly mentioned grocery stores and pharmacies being on Coshocton. But when you were growing up, were there any around the downtown area?

SB: Um. Yes. Um, there was a pharmacy on the Square, it was Heckler's. It was right there. Um, I think right now there's a tattoo shop and something else. So there was Heckler's downtown and you could buy gum there or you could buy a newspaper there. It was right next to the city hall. Grocery stores? Um, Neffs is still around. Which I sometimes frequent. It's kind of nice to have, and its just over the viaduct. And so during my time there wasn't a grocery store but I know there have been grocery stores in downtown Mount Vernon. Um, Pinkits?

TA: Pitkin's Corner?

SB: Pitkin's, yeah, that's it. Um, and I think there might have been another pharmacy. The building that just burned down, with the workout facility in the basement yet, there was a Kresgie's, which was a five and dime store. It was like a Woolworth's, do you know what a Woolworth's is? These were the original department stores that would sell things like your dictionaries or your greeting cards (TAPE MUMBLES, DIALOGUE UNCERTAIN) candy, kids would like to go. I don't remember if they had a counter but I know Woolworth's had a counter and you could just go in and get a flavored soda, and it was fun.

TA: So you would like sit at the bar and drink your sodas?

SB: Yeah. So, that was Kresgie's and then it was _____, and that was a department store. But Kresges. You'll have to look that up. I think it was a Midwestern... it wasn't just a local businesses but it was locally owned.

TA: So the counters, where people would go sit and drink. Do you remember a lot of those?

SB: I do. There was a department store called Big N, and that was on Coshocton Avenue where K-Mart is, and my mother would take my sister and myself up there and we would always get lunch before we did some shopping, and I can always remember having open-faced sandwiches, like turkey with mashed potatoes and gravy, things like that. I remember, um, we got our first McDonald's in Mount Vernon when I was sixteen so there wasn't a lot of fast food around but we had this burger place that my mother would sometimes drive through, I don't remember what it was called, but there was also, have you heard of Ike's? You know where CVS is, and Wendy's? Well there was this drive-thru called Ike's and it was an all night diner and Kenyon students would go there, get coffee sometimes, or fast foods after a night of ... but it was open all the time and it was kind of an institution. Um, but then CVS came, bought the land and they tore down Ike's. Added more to Generica. But Ike's was clearly, it was a local restaurant. They brought you like, pitchers of coffee, that you'd just pour yourself. Lots of pies and, jukebox at every table. It was a lot of fun. But the counters. Woolworth's had a counter, at the five and dime, and you could just sit and eat a sandwich.

TA: So you would shop and be able to eat at the same time.

SB: But these were real meals. They were cheap.

TA: So I just have a couple more questions.

SB: Sure.

TA: So, did a lot of your childhood friends stay in the area, or come back after leaving, anything like that?

SB: That's a good question, yeah. So I would say I have a lot of chapter in my life in here Knox County and my friends from Wiggin Street stayed in the area. They were farmers. My family, well we were originally an Irish farming family. But my father was not a farmer, um, But many of my classes at the Gambier schools did stay here. And at the high school, a majority of them did stay here. I don't know what percentage, but a lot of my closest friends, we did go on to different... I had two friends who went to Williams, um, another friend of mine came with me to Kenyon, Carlton. So we were scattered, we went to all these small liberal arts schools, yeah, I wanted to go to college out of state. I had my eyes set on Colby, I had never been to Ohio until I was thirteen. But my parents said no, Colby is too far and we can't afford it, especially for flying and all that. So I looked at Oberlin, Kenyon, Denison, all that, Miami of Ohio. And I fought, I fought with myself, I am not staying this close, but Kenyon was the best match, so. And my parents gave me the total college experience, they never came and knocked on my door or anything like that, they just left me alone. A little bit of space. But I'm, of those who left to go to college, I am one of very few who have returned to Knox County. Um, now I couldn't wait to get out of Knox County. And once I started having children and realized how

important family is, I couldn't wait to get back. It's just kind of a phenomenon. But most of my friends have not returned. They've moved on to the big cities.

TA: Do you think there a lot of people in my age, in mid-twenties, who stay around?

SB: I, I do. I think there are those who, yeah. Yeah, definitely I do think so. Again, if, I don't want to label anybody but anyone that doesn't go to a small liberal arts school, like if they go to OSU or Bowling Green, any big state school or something, I mean, they tend to come back. Does that make sense? But yeah, I would say a lot of them do stay around here.

TA: And do you have any ideas of like, if people are, don't have a family, and they're around that age.

SB: It's hard. It's hard. And, funny story, there, the woman who sold us our house, she was a year older than me at Mount Vernon High School. She was a cheerleader. And she was so looking for Mister Right, you know, she was having a hard time, she moved back to this area. She said the scene here was nothing like it was in Columbus. And, she came back here because her mother was sick. Um, I just found out she's engaged. She's forty-four years old, she's engaged for the first time, happy, happy, happy. So. But it is hard. It's a man from this area. I don't know if he went to Mount Vernon High School, but um, but it is hard. The single scene here is very hard.

TA: Where do people go to socialize?

SB: Yeah, it's a very good question. Unfortunately I think they meet, um, work? There are so many churches in this area too. But there really isn't a place outside of work or church to get involved in like, a group or.... Well, I suppose there are some volunteering that people do meet. But, it's hard. It's a great family town, but it's a terrible place to be single. I think.

TA: So if you're like a newcomer to the town, I mean, you mentioned church, but I'm trying to think of places people would go to meet, be seen, maybe.

SB: Hm. Again, you know, um there are some things that you can get involved with but I think it's hard. Um, when we first moved back here it was hard for my husband um, he actually opened up his own business, law office, by himself. And he is not from around here and Broeren is not a Knox County name, so, it was, Who is he? Nobody trusted him, because nobody knew him, you know, he wasn't an old name. Um, but when people started finding out that he was married to a Duden, then he was okay. It was interesting. So, it's still this small town...

TA: So then you're working from this population that has been here for so long and I feel like as a newcomer it would be so hard to try and integrate yourself into this community.

SB: Yeah, Unless you work for Kenyon College, or Mount Vernon – because there are some, I think, those of us at Kenyon are so lucky, some of us are single but yeah there is just so much activity going on down here but yeah if you're not affiliated with Kenyon or

the Naz, then I think, eh, I suppose if you work for Rolls Royce or Ariel, you may have ways of getting involved but other than that I think it's very difficult to break into the community.

TA: Yeah. But it's still, I love this area, I guess I'm kind of playing devil's advocate by thinking of like negatives of the small town life, but I love it.

SB: Yeah we love it, we love it to. And when I say it's hard to break into the community, I don't mean that people are not nice, people are very friendly and very nice. It's just hard to get involved sometimes.

TA: Um, do you have any other, maybe thoughts on public life? Any questions that I didn't cover? (40:46)

SB: Let's see. Education, politics...Um..

TA: Are there any venues for things like lectures or concerts or things downtown, like there are at Kenyon?

SB: There, I personally think the Memorial Theater is underutilized. It's a beautiful theater. They have unique concerts there. Sometimes guest speakers will come there, but again it's not often enough, I think. There's the Place at the Woodward, that has a great Chautauqua series I think, um they put on plays there. I've only been to a couple but the Mount Vernon Players, they are very serious about their art. And they're trying to restore the Woodward Theater. Have you been in there (*gasp*), yeah, oh good you have to go. It's just hard to imagine, it's beautiful. There were operas here, there was some art.

TA: Growing up was it open at all?

SB: I didn't even know it existed. Because there are all these storefronts along the bottom, I had no idea there was an opera house inside of that building. It,

TA: One of the bets kept secrets. Well, I think that's it I don't have anymore formal questions, so.

SB: Okay, great. Well I was going to say, if I think of things, I'm kind of brain-dead right now, because of well, I was in charge of the Arts and Fellowship weekend, but if I think of anything can I just send you emails, just little snippets?

TA: I would love that. That would be great. And as I go through this interview, if I think of any follow-up questions, is it okay if I contact you?

SB: Absolutely, mhmm.

TA: Well thank you so much! It was great meeting you. (45:05)