

Interviews

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Interview with Emily Ross

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Emily Ross

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Kathy Riecks
Emily Ross--Farmer's Exchange
October, 26 1994
ANSO 67-68

At 10:00 AM on October 26, 1994 I interviewed Emily Ross in the Conference Room of the Mt. Vernon Farmer's Exchange.

I will refer to myself with [KR] and Emily Ross with [ER].

I was not sure what to do with certain words in regard to differing accents. I have decided to leave the words as they were pronounced.

[KR] This is Kathy Riecks interviewing Emily Ross on October 26, 1994.

[KR] OK. I was wondering if you could tell me a little bit about yourself. How long have you been in Knox County or Mount Vernon?

[ER] We have been in the county for about 18 years, my husband is active with agriculture in the business sense also, so we've gotten to know a lot of the community through agriculture that way. I was a city girl, so I didn't really.

[KR] Where are you from?

[ER] Well from across the county, from Delaware County.

[KR] Oh, OK, so near Columbus.

[ER] But I was born and raised in towns, so I never had the agricultural influence 'til we moved over here. My husband worked through the Soil and Water Conservation district office here in the county. That kind of...I have a nursing background as far as education, so I've kind of changed, changed my background a little bit. But, probably 10 years ago I started working in agricultural business, I worked through Farm Credit services did the lending aspect of it, and then 5 years ago I came to the Farmer's Exchange. We did a little bit of farming for a year, out in Gambier, So I'm very familiar with that area. We did corn and soybeans. It was more of a, umm, educational aspect than a true making money adventure, 'cause my husband did a lot of advising to farmers so it was his practical education.

[KR] That was part of his job, to advise farmers?

[ER] Mmmm.. it was good, good experience in that way. So I started working here, as I said 5 years ago, and I really enjoy this aspect of it.

[KR] What exactly do you do here? {Emily makes some sort of "hopeless" gesture here and laughs}
Next question?

[ER] I'm sort of a Jack-of-All-Trades type deal. Right now we're right in the Harvest Season.

[KR] Yeah, I noticed

[ER] We take a lot of the, the corn and soybeans in right now. The farmers bring their trucks in from the field and dump and then we resell. I'm involved in both aspects of that. We resell the grain from our elevators to like Arthur Daniels Midland, umm Kargill, {?} some of the bigger companies. We either truck it out of here to the bigger companies or we ship it out by railroad. Umm We also work with a broker in Chicago and cover our grain position every day as far as buying and selling corn and soybeans or wheat when wheat is in season in July and August on the Chicago Board of Trade. And then I also do some of the PR work as far as doing the Petting Zoo aspect at the County Fairs and we do some at the elementary schools.

[KR] Definitely a Jack-of-all-Trades!

[ER] That's in a nut shell!

[KR] I'd say describe a typical workday, but I have the feeling it changes from day to day.

[ER] It's so diverse, it does, in the spring when we're into planting we get into almost the sales aspect of working at the counter, loading up cars or trucks with chemical needs or seed needs. So it changes from season to season to.

[KR] So you're coming into contacts very often? every day..

[ER] Oh yeah. all the time.

[KR] umm, Do you think you have more or less contact with farmers now than in previous years in your job. Or is it hard to say?

[ER] Probably more so all the time, because the more I learn, my business as it is now the more they rely on you for information.

[KR] yeah..that makes sense

[ER] They expect you to **know** what you're talkin about. The more background you get and the more you learn the more they expect out of you.

[KR] I bet that farm out in Gambier was probably educational for you too.

[ER] it was. I look back at it now and think about how we marketed our grain at the time, I wish I had my experience now to make better use of that.

[KR] So, do most Farmers use the Farmer's exchange? Is this the only place to sell your grain?

[ER] We're probably the largest in the County. There's place in Danville and in Fredericktown and

Centerburg, but they don't handle, I don't believe, **don't quote me on that**, I don't believe they handle as much grain as we handle.

[KR] But you handle basically everything.

[ER] yeah

[KR] I really don't know anything about the Farmer's Exchange and none of us have really looked at it. Yet, I keep saying this is something important we need to look at it.

[ER] Well we'll be glad to give you a tour any time you need one.

[KR] Yeah, thanks. I may take you up on that actually.

[KR] How would you describe farming in Knox County?

[ER] It's pretty diverse. You have your high, high management type farmers who are very well organized and know how to turn a dollar and plant their crops real well or do their whole farming operation real well. And then you have the opposite end of the spectrum. And we have, well Knox County is supposedly known as the "No-Till Capital" of the World.

[KR] Really?

[ER] It's one aspect of farming it's kind of been one of those step out on the edge type farming, type of farming. It requires less going across the field as with conventional where you had to go out and plow and all that. So you're using less gasoline and diesel fuels, and you're making you're time more useful.

[KR] Does it also affect erosion somehow?

[ER] It reduces your erosion.

[KR] Ok, How have you formed this image of farming? Obviously from your work..is there anything, just interactions with the farmers here? Is this how you form this image.

[ER] Right, and also with my husband's work.

[KR] Now you all aren't still on the farm,

[ER] Right, we left Gambier area and moved to Centerburg when my husband took a position in Columbus. he works for the State Dept. Of Natural Resources in the Soil and Water Division. So he covers the whole state now, instead of just Knox County.

[KR] So is he gone from home a lot?

[ER] Not a lot, probably not as much, as much as he was when he was here. Because they had a lot

of late night meetings.

[KR] oh OK, I thought since he's in charge of the state he's..

[ER] Yeah, he's got staff underneath of him there, so they cover most of it.

[KR] Do you like Centerburg?

[ER] Love it!

[KR] yeah, I've done work down there.

[ER] It was the best move we could have made. Not that I disliked Gambier but we have two kids in school. We love the Centerburg School district.

[KR] Yeah, I know some good teachers down there, actually.

[KR] How important do you think farming is to the Knox County community?

[ER] Oh it's very important. It's one of our major economic areas of the county. It's part of the roots {roots} of Knox County. It's a very agricultural oriented community, it makes it a high priority item for this area.

{intercom in background}

[KR] Do you need to go?

[ER] If you don't mind?

At this point I turned off the tape recorder so Emily could take the phone call. I neglected to turn it on properly when she came back so the rest of the interview is lost. We were finished with the interview when the tape ran out, but I went ahead and turned the tape over. I do have the last few minutes as follows.

{Emily had just suggested that it would be interesting to see what the non-farming community thought of farming. }

[ER] ...It'd be interesting to see what they thought of farming, to be a little mouse.

[KR] Business leaders, just store keepers, or....?

[ER] Oh like the Chamber of Commerce

[KR] oh yeah.

[ER] Even some of the management people from Cooper's.

[KR] What's Cooper's? Oh I should know this. Who is that?

[ER] It's a big business in this area. on this side of town that.. and they make engines or something.

[KR] Yeah, we were talking about them because they were in the news sometime recently.

[ER] They're more world wide oriented so it'd be curious to see how they looked at the farming community

[KR] If they're who I think it is, their other base is in Houston.

[ER] Right.

[KR] Which a student in our class is from Houston and knows the people. So that was sort of interesting. Oh yeah that it started in Mt. Vernon. So we've talked about them some.

[KR] OK I think that's everything. Thanks you've been a great help.

[ER] oh. {laughs}

[KR] No, you have been.

[ER] Oh, I feel I have just rambled around in circles at times.

[KR] You should listen to me.

[ER] I'll give you a good laugh on the tape when you listen to it I'm sure. Well, thanks for stopping.

[KR] Thanks again for all your help. Now I don't know what your schedule is like. Can I come back sometime for a tour or get one now?

[ER] Oh sure.

end of interview.