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JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CEDAR RAPIDS

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH Mary B. Daehler

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INTERVIEW TOPICS
CEDAR RAPIDS: THE EARLY DECADES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

I. PERSONAL LEAD-IN QUESTIONS

- 1-3 --When were you born? Where?
- How long have you lived in Cedar Rapids?
- What are your parents' names?
- Where did you go to school?
- Are you married or single?
- Did you raise a family? How big?
- What has been your occupation (career) during your adult years?

II. COMMUNITY TOPICS

A. Technology in the Community

1. Transportation

- 8 --Railway travel (Union Station, trips to Iowa City on Crandic)
- 31-32 --Trolleys (the Interurban)
 - Horses and First Automobiles
 - Mud roads and the seedling mile
 - Hunter Airport and the first planes
 - Cedar River (ferries, floods, dams)

2. Communications

- Newspapers
- 50 --Radios -WMT
- Advertising
- Telephones

B. People in the Community

1. Amusements/Recreation

- Motion Pictures 20 --Palisades Park
- Cedar Rapids Parks
- Dances
- Carnival Week
- Chautauqua
- Community Theater
- Little Gallery
- Symphony Orchestra
- Circus
- Greene's Opera House
- Amusement Parks (Alamo)
- Camps
- Community Centers (YWCA, YMCA)
- 19-20 --Majestic
- 2. Famous Characters
 - Cherry Sisters
 - 38-40, 44-46 --Grant Wood
 - Carl Van Vechten (The Tattooed Countess)
 - 40-44 --Marvin Cone
 - 32 --Herbert Hoover
 - 19-20 --Pavlova

3. Lifestyle

- 36,37 --Life before air conditioning
- Winter Activities
- Holidays (Memorial Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, Christmas)
- Clothing
- Toys
- Saloons/Taverns
- Farm Life

4. Family Life

- Household Help
- 6,12,37 --Women's Roles
- Childrens' Activities/Behavior
- Sunday activities (Church life, Sunday Blue Laws)

5. Ethnic/Minority Life

- Immigrants (Czech, Greek, German, etc.)
- Indians
- Segregation of Blacks
- Jobs Available

C. Organizations and Institutions in the Community

1. Education

- 13,31 --Cedar Rapids Schools
- 3,1 -11,18,27-30,49,51,52 --Coe College
- Mount Mercy College
- Cornell College

2. Government

- City Services 13 --Kenwood
- Streets/Roads
- Relationship with Marion (Courthouse Dispute)
- 32 --Voting

3. Medical

- 34,35 --Hospitals
- 5 --Patient-Doctor Relationship
- Broken Bones
- Polio, TB, Debilitating Diseases
- House Calls
- Home Delivery of Babies

4. Business and Economy

- Local Factories (Douglas Starch Works, Quaker Oats, etc.)
- Local Brewing Companies
- Retail Businesses /Department Stores
- Professions
- Banking and Finance
- Restaurants (Greek Restaurants in 30's)
- Businesses that no longer exist (old groceries, drygoods, icehouses)
- Farmers Market
- Mills on Cedar River
- Buildings Erected
- Manual Labor/Types of Jobs
- Companies (Labor Unions, Strikes, Pay)

1 --Penick and Ford

5. Attitudes/Values

- Children/Discipline
- Sex/Petting
- Charity
- Divorce
- Work
- Working women, Voting Rights for Women
- Patriotism (World War I)

D. Historic Events in and Outside the Community

1. Catastrophic Events

- Clifton Hotel Fire (1903)
- Douglas Starch Works Explosion(1919)
- 24 --Bank Closings (1933)
- Lyman-Stark Building Collapse(1913)
- Public Library Murder(1921)

2. National Historic Events

- Womens' Suffrage
- 47-48 --World War I
- Roaring 20's
- 14 --Prohibition
- 7,23,25,26,27 --Great Depression
- 46,49 --WWII

Mary Bingham Daehler was born in Chicago on January 14, 1904, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Daehler.

Mrs. Daehler's father, grain buyer and credit manager for Penick & Ford, moved the family to Cedar Rapids in 1921 when the company's office was transferred here. After completing two years at Bradford Junior College, Bradford, MA, Mrs. Daehler joined her family in 1923. That same year she entered Coe College and graduated from there in 1925 with a teaching degree. He marriage in 1929 to Max Daehler, a music professor at Coe, kept her close to college life for many years. Mrs. Daehler's memories include national historic events, college life at Coe, Grant Wood and Marvin Cone and her husband's contribution to the music tradition in the Cedar Rapids community.

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH MARY DAEHLER

March 1, 1985

BM: Mrs. Daehler, I wanted to ask you, where were you born?

Daehler: I was born in Chicago, in the city. And then when I was about a year old or two years old my family moved out to Hinsdale, which is a suburb; and it was a very, very small place at that time.

BM: How big was your family?

Daehler: I have three brothers and myself.

BM: What was your place in the family, would it be baby or....

Daehler: I was second. No, I have a brother who is older, Harold, and then I came and then my brother Rockwell and my brother David.

BM: What did your father do for a living?

Daehler: He worked for a corn products company in Chicago, and then he worked for Penick and Ford. After he worked for Penick and Ford for a few years, they moved their whole office out here to Cedar Rapids. And that was what brought us out here.

BM: Do you happen to know why they moved the office to Cedar Rapids?

Daehler: I don't know their reason, but I suppose it's because it's closer to the center of corn production. My father was the grain buyer. He bought all the the grain for Penick and Ford. He was also credit manager.

BM: Had he been to Cedar Rapids before he told you that you were coming out here?

Daehler: No, never before he knew we were coming.

BM: What did you think when you came?

Daehler: I thought I was probably going to an old hick town.

BM: Do you remember the day when he came home and told you, you were coming to Cedar Rapids?

Daehler: I don't think he told me. I think my mother told me. And I was floored by it. It was the year that I was going away to college and I went east to college for two years to a junior college. Bradford Junior College in Bradford, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, not Pennsylvania. I was there for two years at the time they moved here in the fall, just after I had left for school. So actually my family lived here for two years before I really knew too much about it. 'Cause I was only here the summers. Then I came here and went to Coe.

BM: What year was it that you first really came to Cedar Rapids?

Daehler: Well, I graduated in a, my family moved here in 1921 and then I went to Coe in '23 and '24. I went the first two years to the eastern school, then I finished up my last two years at Coe and I graduated in 1925.

BM: Did your father come on first and find a place to live?

Daehler: My father came first and rented a house over on Fifth Avenue for awhile, until my mother could come and look around. I think we lived there about a year and then they bought the house on 18th Street and 2nd Avenue from a Mr. Deeman, who was an architect and built a lot of houses here in Cedar Rapids. And he built that house for himself; His wife was a sculptress so the third floor was her studio and had a

beautiful skylight in it. In fact, it was listed as one of the historic homes of Linn County, I think, for awhile.

McGrath lives there now.

BM: What's the street address?

Daehler: 1800 2nd Avenue. It's really a lovely old home. I was married there as a matter of fact.

BM: I didn't know that. Did you, when you first came, like, I know you said earlier that you thought it felt like you were going to a hick town, but what was your impression when you first came out?

Daehler: Oh, I liked it when I first came out. The thought that my father had come home for lunch is what made me think it was a hick town 'cause I had never been any place where the man came home for lunch, you see. My father always took the train into the city in the morning and then we didn't see him again 'til night. But my father didn't live very long. He only lived six years after he came here. So, that changed very fast. And, of course, then I started in to go to Coe and I loved that. I lived at home at the time that I went to Coe.

BM: Well, Voorhees was built, there was a dorm for women.

Daehler: The only two buildings that are on the campus now that were there when I was there are Voorhees and the science building, which is now a complete change. Added on to it, it is now the alumni thing.

BM: But where did the men live as students at Coe?

Daehler: They lived in town, I guess, and around.

BM: They had to find their own accommodations?

Daehler: Yes.

BM: That's interesting.

Daehler: And there was no co-habitation. No building with men and women. In fact there was no smoking on the campus. Oh you couldn't possibly smoke on the campus. In fact, if you wanted to smoke, you would go across the street. Can you imagine that?

BM: No, I can't. As a matter of fact.

Daehler: Very different lives.

BM: Very, very. I wish they wouldn't have any smoking in Voorhees. I worry that it's going to go up in smoke.

Daehler: Yes, I wish they wouldn't too. Well, I wish they wouldn't have them smoking period because of health.

BM: When you first lived here, when you were at Coe, your brothers were still at home and you told me that they went down to old Washington to high school.

Daehler: Yes, they went to Washington High and they walked. Four times a day because they came home for lunch; there was no place to eat downtown. Everybody went home for lunch.

BM: This seems so, that when I think of that now, it makes it seem as though all you mother must have done is cook.

Daehler: Well....

BM: Because, I mean if you have a big dinner when your dad's coming home and...

Daehler: Oh we didn't have a big dinner at lunch. We just had lunch. And my father wasn't very well. He developed ulcers very soon after he came here, so he had to be on a very strict diet. So

our lunch was very simple. We always had our dinner at night. We'd always have dinner at night as I was growing up and we just didn't change it. I think in smaller communities, especially farming communities, the men needed a big dinner at noon. But we were accustomed to having dinner at night and everybody around us did so that was what we did.

BM: What kind of treatment did the doctor suggest for your dad for his ulcers?

Daehler: Oh, I think a great deal of milk and cream and quite different then now. In fact, my father eventually went up to the Mayo Clinic at Rochester and had surgery and then from complications he passed away. But the doctor, Dr. Willburn, was our doctor at the time, and he was one of the very fine doctors and he lived right over here. But, behind me from where I now live. He didn't live that close to us on Second Avenue. But, he's often said to me, "You know if we had known if we knew now, if we had known then what we know now, it wouldn't seem serious." I mean people have ulcers all the time and they don't consider it serious. But they had no antibiotics, you see, so when you had surgery you just got along if you could, but...

BM: Did they make a connection between work stress and things like that in his office?

Daehler: I'm sure so because my father volunteered in every organization under the sun. I mean he was very active, very active in church and very active in boy scouts and he was always helping with some, he was always being asked to do something or other in some volunteer work. And I'm sure that had a lot to do with it.

BM: You told me that your father died in 1926. How did your mother get along after that?

Daehler: I think she was wonderful. She, women didn't have the activities then that they have now. She didn't belong to very many clubs-- she must have been very lonely and we didn't ever realize it. She never let us realize it if she was. But, and I often have thought since then, I mean that since I've been grown and years later, I think she was just wonderful. She never depended on us too much. I've known other widows who just depended on their children and expected them to wait on them hand and foot. But my mother, if she'd want us to do something, well then she'd say, "Well if it's convenient to you." She never made us feel obligated. She was really quite wonderful.

BM: Because she was pretty young?

Daehler: She was young. My father died, he was only 52. And mother was only 51, and that's young to be left widowed. She lived longer without my father than she did with him.

BM: Did she have, were there enough benefits and things from your dad's job so that she was...

Daehler: I don't recall that there were any benefits especially. Just what he had saved up. I think they paid his salary for the rest of the year or for a few months, something like that. Or during his illness. But there were no long term benefits and, of course, there was no social security. Fortunately, she had enough. I mean he had been very careful and she had enough so that she got along. But she was very much worried in the beginning,

she was afraid she wouldn't have. But as it turned out, she did. But, she never was extravagant at all. If we took trips she'd go up Charlevoix way with my grandparents. My grandmother, my grandfather was not living then either.

BM: We were talking about that a little bit earlier, about Charlevoix; now this is the place where you had a summer house.

Daehler: My grandmother, my grandparents had a summer home up there. It was in what they call the Belvedere club. They were clubs, they were private clubs, and there was the Belvedere club and then there was the Chicago club where the Douglasses had their summer home.

BM: Did you used to go up there in the summer with your dad and all your brothers and everything?

Daehler: I don't recall that my father went up very often because he was always working. I think he maybe was up a few times for vacations when I was younger. After my grandmother died, we still went up, and especially then, after my mother died, Max and I would take the children and go up. But the family wanted to sell the house; we couldn't afford to buy it because it was really quite expensive. We used to go up and take our children for vacations and just about that time the Depression came and we didn't have gas to drive up there. The family sold it anyway. But people went and spent the whole summers, people didn't travel around from one place to another the way they do now. The people that went up there usually had their homes and they would usually stay for the whole summer.

BM: When you were a girl, how did you go up there with your family? You just drove?

Daehler: No, oh no, no. We took a train up there. There was a night train and we loved going. On that was one of the fun things. It was fun to go down to see the train go through. There was one that came up in the morning and one that went down at night. And the men would come up on weekends. See, their families would come up and stay for the week and then they would come up for the weekend. And quite the thing to do was to go down and see the train go through at night.

BM: What do you remember about the train ride up there?

Daehler: Well, we used to take a sleeping car, you see, and that was always fun. We'd leave Chicago about 6 o'clock and we always had a berth or state room and I remember once or twice we went up by boat. There used to be an old manitou that went up from Chicago and would leave in the evening and get up there about noon the next afternoon. That was fun, too.

BM: And there was a sleeper in that too and you'd...

Daehler: Oh yeah, you'd sleep there at night.

BM: That's wonderful.

Daehler: But there weren't as many cars, you see. And there was a man, who, old John, used to meet the trains. In the trains, we'd take trunks. When we went up there, I remember one time they sent me up to spend a few weeks with my grandmother when she was going to be alone at one stretch, and I took a trunk. I was gone two or three weeks, I guess, and it was terribly hot in Chicago. Oh, just boiling hot. And mother said, "Well we'll put your",--I suppose I was about 14 maybe, no 12, maybe 13. Mother said, "Well we'll just put your coat in the trunk, 'cause it'll be

there at 7 o'clock in the morning when you are". Well, they put it off someplace along the line. I think in Travers City and I didn't have it for two or three days and my grandmother was so embarrassed she had to borrow a coat for me from the neighbors and she was positively humiliated. She said, "Mary never go without a coat again," and I don't think I ever have. I always think of that.

BM: What did you do up there for your days during the summer?

Daehler: Nothing very exciting. We just mostly went down on the beach, swimming or that sort of thing. Or we'd walk downtown. We didn't have a car and we'd hike and we'd sometimes go over to the bee farm. Take a boat, go across the lake to a place where they sold bees. I mean it was just very simple. And the homes were very simple at that time, too.

BM: I bet you used to hate to come back down in the fall.

Daehler: Well, oh, we didn't stay that long. My family never stayed that long. My mother was one of nine children. There were many in the family and many families used to take turns going up. So we never stayed very long.

BM: Wonderful...

Daehler: I stayed longest after my grandmother was dead and when Max and I were the only ones who wanted to go. And then we would stay at least a month in the summer.

BM: What years were you a student at Coe?

Daehler: I went there in '25. I mean in '23 and I was there for two years and I graduated in '25, in June of '25.

BM: Was it about an even mix between male students and co-eds?

Daehler: I think pretty much.

Bm: What about kids, were there a lot of kids from here in town or like you?

Daehler: There were many from here in town, yes. And some of my friends then, are still some of my best friends. Esther Armstrong and I were in the same class. She was Esther Youel. And there were others. Margaret Armstrong Race was in the class and Katherine Bryan Hamilton, whose sister is Ruth Chehak. But we were all in the same class and we all remained friends. We're still friends.

BM: Cedar Rapids has a wonderful way of keeping people here.

Daehler: I think so and we, and our holidays we spent together for years and years and years. But when I was in Coe it was very different from the way it is now. Everything was very strict; we always went to Chapel every morning. My boys say to me, "You mean to tell me you went to Chapel every single morning", but we did. All the announcements were made; if we didn't go to Chapel, we missed important announcements.

BM: Was there a strong feeling that it was a Presbyterian school at that time? Did you feel that?

Daehler: Well, we felt it was a church-related school, and every Wednesday was YW day and YMCA day. And we always went to that.

BM: And what did you do?

Daehler: Well the YW would have a YW meeting and the YW was very active on the campus and they had activities of one kind or another. And when they needed money, they'd have a hotdog stand outside

of the Chapel after Chapel.

BM: What was the situation with women's hours?

Daehler: Oh, very strict. Very strict. Much stricter than the men's hours. Since I didn't live on the campus, I'm not just sure, I can't tell you exactly, but I think they probably had to be in at 10 o'clock or maybe 11 o'clock on weekends or something like that, because they were very strict. And when I went away to school, it was very strict. We were not allowed to practically do anything. In fact, we couldn't go out of the building after dinner.

BM: Did you ever know anybody that got expelled for behavior?

Daehler: I think there was one person, but it was always very hushed up. Of course, if you got married on campus, you were expelled because they said there was nobody by that name registered, so you were not allowed to get married. And of course you couldn't smoke and if anybody had a baby out of wedlock, it was so hushed up we didn't hear about it. I mean it was just, everything was very strict. Parties were all chaperoned and there was no drinking. They were and it was always, every spring it was Flunk Day and that was always fun. And that was the day that they took off, you know, and everybody...

BM: That's interesting, you know, because they still have Flunk Day.

Daehler: They still have Flunk Day, but I think it's probably different now; then they really and truly took the first nice day in spring. I think nowadays everything is so structured that

they have only certain days that they know they are allowed to take, that it'll be possible. But then, any day was possible.

BM: Did the president ring the victory bell?

Daehler: Not the president, but the president of the student council.

BM: Student council, I mean, yes.

Daehler: Would ring the victory bell. And they would announce it and your friends would all telephone you if you didn't live on the campus. And then they would go to the kitchen and they would fix up sandwiches and things for... they would be prepared because they always knew it was coming. And they'd fix up lunches for those that were eating in the dormitories.

BM: Why did you go to college?

Daehler: Well, I wanted a higher education.

BM: Did a lot of your friends from high school go on to college?

Daehler: Most of my friends did. All that I can remember. Most of them did. I grew up, see in Hinsdale, which was a suburb of Chicago and it was oriented towards college and most of my friends went to college.

BM: Well, I know that you taught school for a while. Did you go with the intention of getting a teacher's certificate? Or did that come....

Daehler: Not particularly, but that was just one of the things, one of the options open to women, to young women. There really weren't too many. You could teach, or you could be a nurse, or I did consider being a librarian. I wish afterwards that I had studied Library Science because that would

have been something in which I was interested. But as it was, I taught. And my father really didn't want me to teach. I think he thought, he had the old-fashioned idea that young women should just be at home and do volunteer work, you know, and so forth. But everybody that I knew was getting a job and I was determined that I was going to get a job, so finally I said, "All right, if you don't want me to leave home, I'll teach out in Kenwood." Kenwood was a separate town then and so I went out there and applied for a job. Of course, I was the only one who had a college degree who was applying so naturally I got the job, because the other people who were applying were all people who had just one or two years of college. And I taught there for three years.

BM: Tell me about the building that you taught in.

Daehler: The building that I taught in is now the Presbyterian Church. Is now the Presbyterian Church. And at first, when the church took it over, I think they had services in the school part. Now that part is their educational building and they eventually built on a new sanctuary. But I feel like Rip VanWinkle when I go back because I taught there, you see, and I'll go back. Especially when I moved back there. I lived there for awhile when I was first married, I lived over on Mount Vernon Road for three years. Then we thought that house wasn't big enough for us and we moved out to Kenwood. And that was when I felt like Rip VanWinkle 'cause the students that I had taught, you see, were all three years older and at that age they change quite a bit. But it was a

very pleasant place to be. And then one summer we were up at Charlevoix and when I came home, I said to mother what terrible has happened. And she said, "What makes you think anything terrible has happened?" And I said, "Well, you know you always say somebody died or something." Oh, by the way. Once she said, "Your house has been sold." So then we had to move and my family was my mother and my brother; by that time my father was dead. And my mother and my brother were living at this house on 18th and 2nd Avenue, and it was much too big for them. And so we were looking all over town for a house and couldn't find anything we liked and finally we said, "Mother why don't you and Rocks take some other house, smaller house and we can take this one?" And so eventually they moved here where I am now. And so I've kind of followed them around and we took that house. And I'd been married there so it was just like home. And then my mother lived here for about the 25 or 6 years that we were raising our family over there. When she died, we took this house.

BM: Everybody's always interested in Prohibition stories because it was such a noble experiment.

Daehler: Yeah.

BM: And, did you, what impact--earlier you said that nobody drank on college, on the campus.

Daehler: Well, I won't say that no-one did, but it was not allowed. And we didn't see much of it. Any drinking was raised subrosa.

BM: Do you have any impresssions or memories about Prohibition and what impact....

Daehler: Well, it really never bothered me very much one way or another because my family never had any alcoholic beverages in the home. And so, I was very much aware of it, of course, but I can't say that it really bothered me very much because I didn't have any anyway.

BM: Were there any notorious places around town that you used to hear about?

Daehler: I suppose there were, but I think I led such a sheltered life I really didn't hear very much about them. They always talked about the Roaring Twenties but I don't think we roared very much.

BM: I've always wondered how much of that is the Hollywood invention.

Daehler: Well, I think a lot of it is, because we really led a very calm life. I was married in '29 and so I was in school for the first part of those twenties and then I was teaching the second part. And I think our entertainment was very mild. We'd have parties in the homes, so much. They weren't very much in the way of structured parties. The big ball in Cedar Rapids during all those years was the charity ball once a year. And that was something we all looked forward to. It was a beautiful party down at the Montrose and the Montrose was a really beautiful hotel in those years. The Mezzanine was open like a balcony; they eventually filled it in so it was just a solid floor. Which took away all the charm. But you'd look over that balcony and see this lovely staircase that came up and it was always decorated. Oh, it was a beautiful party.

BM: Your particular generation was very revolutionary, really.
I mean there were a lot of changes right in there.

Daehler: Yes. Well, of course, the Depression came along then, too.

BM: And that was a big change, yeah. But what did you think at the time that you were in college? Everybody thinks they're different from their parents. But what did you think was the biggest difference between the way you were growing up and perhaps the way your mother grew up?

Daehler: Well, I don't know as I ever really gave it very much thought, but I think women were more independent, were becoming just as I say about like teaching. I was going to work no matter what because all my friends were getting jobs. I'm sure when my mother went through school it didn't occur to her to work and get a job because she was a girl. The men were all expected to get jobs, but the girls were expected to kind of stay home and take care of the family.

BM: I've always felt that the people that grew up in the 20's and the early 30's really laid the groundwork for a lot of the changes that were made later on.

Daehler: I think they probably did. And then I think the fact that the Depression came along and women had to get out and work to support their families sometimes; especially if the men weren't there. And they had a bad time.

BM: When did you meet your husband? Your husband was Max Daehler, right?

Daehler: My husband was Max Daehler and he came to Coe the same year that my family moved here and I entered in '21.

BM: As a student or professor?

Daehler: No, as a professor.

BM: Is that right?

Daehler: Yes. And I met him, I didn't ever study with him which may be as fortunate. He taught piano, you see, for many years. And he was very active in the musical life in Cedar Rapids. He was very active in the beginning of the Community Concerts and he was interested in the Symphony. He was interested in all musical events.

BM: Where was your husband born?

Daehler: He was born, this is the interesting part. He was born in Chicago, but he was raised in Switzerland. Most people think he was born in Switzerland. But he was raised in Switzerland and then he came back here about the end of the first World War. He was in the army in Switzerland and they sent him here as a courier with messages or papers of some kind for Washington. And he got a leave at the same time and while he was there, the war ended. So then he got permission to stay and so then he just stayed. His parents were gone. He had just a sister and he kind of wanted to come to Cedar Rapids, to the United States anyway. But he was actually born in Chicago. His parents had come here thinking they would stay and then they had the two children, Max's sister was the older and then he. And so, course, the mother wanted to go home and show her children to the family and so she did one year. And while she was over there in Switzerland, his father got sick, got homesick; they were living in Chicago. And he got homesick, and he packed up, went home and that was the end of their American stay.

But because my husband was born here, he never had to be naturalized. He was a citizen at birth.

BM: When you say he was in the Army, he was in the....

Daehler: The Swiss Army.

BM: The Swiss Army,

Daehler: He was in the ski patrol cause he loved skiing.

BM: Well, when he first came back to this country, did he come right to Cedar Rapids?

Daehler: No, he was in Chicago a short time. Then he went to Fort Worth, Texas. Then he was in Grinnell a year and then came here. I think it was the other way around. I think he went to Grinnell a year or two years and then he went to Fort Worth, Texas. And he hated it because it was so hot. And then he got a job up here and came up to Cedar Rapids, went to Coe.

BM: And, did he teach, he taught piano?

Daehler: He taught piano and music.

BM: How big was the music department at that time?

Daehler: Well it was really a very active department. I can't tell you how many students, but it was one of the strongest departments in the college. Because we used to sometimes hear people say, "Well is Coe mostly a music school." Now people object to that probably, but I mean we did hear people because at that time Paul Ray was here and his voice and Joe Kitchen and his violin, and so forth. And it was, and then we had a very active band. And the band went to Washington for the inaugurals for about 4 or 5 different inaugurals.

BM: That's for the inaugurals for....

Daehler: For the presidential inaugurals....

BM: Right. It would be like for Hoover, and....

Daehler: My boys went with the band almost every time.

BM: Wonderful. How did you meet your husband?

Daehler: Well, because I was a student at Coe and I think Margaret Armstrong Race introduced me--she was just Margaret Armstrong then. I think she introduced us and we used to go on picnics together and so forth. But then I went with others, of course, in college, but then when I was teaching I started to go with him seriously. And we knew each other and I taught for four years. I taught for three years out in Kenwood, then Kenwood was taken into Cedar Rapids. And became a part of Cedar Rapids and they took all their teachers from Kenwood and spread them around in different Cedar Rapids schools and put Cedar Rapids teachers out there so they could get in the system. And I taught a year at Franklin and then we were married.

BM: You told me the other day when we were talking about your first date, which to me was very lovely.

Daehler: My first real date, I think I'd been on a few picnics in which he was there. But my first real date with him was when he asked me to go see Pavlova dance down at the old Majestic. It happened to be on my birthday, which I don't think he even knew at the time. But I always remembered that, you know to see her dance down there. It was beautiful.

BM: Was this a particular big event, or were there lots of...

Daehler: There were lots of things down there.

BM: Entertainment?

Daehler: Yes. The Old Greene Opera House had gone by the boards by that time. I never did know that. But the Majestic Theatre, which was at the base of the "A" Avenue viaduct at the foot of the hill, was the place where everybody went then. And I remember seeing the Cherry Sisters there one time. But people didn't throw things the way they always talk about, when they talk about it. It was a very well behaved crowd and they just enjoyed it. It was kind of corny, you know, but it was fun to see it.

BM: What other kinds of entertainment came through town? You know, now we talk a lot about the rock concerts that come through.

Daehler: Well, we didn't have rock concerts. There really wasn't very much in the way of entertainment coming through town. I mean they'd have either a big theater of some kind, you know, like the, like Pavlova or some. And that was only occasionally. But they didn't have rock concerts, of course. And they didn't have the entertainment for young people. Now days young people have to be entertained 'cause, you know, with so many things. Really, I can't think that we had any structured entertainment.

BM: You've been talking about picnics. Where did you go for picnics?

Daehler: Oh we used to go up, either we'd go up to Palisades, which we did frequently or we'd go up to High Rock. Do you know where High Rock was?

BM: No, I don't.

Daehler: Well, you go up the river past Ellis park and there was only a road paved or probably it was gravel, up to Ellis park and we

would often go to the Shefdick's, which was a boat landing. There was a Mr. Shefdick who rented boats and so forth. And that was right close to just before you got to Ellis Park and we would rent canoes and tie them on behind his motorboat and he would--this was because some of us were going with young men and were working and so we couldn't go until late in the afternoon. They'd tie them all on behind his motorboat and he would pull us up to high rock and then we would climb up there and have our picnic. Now it's all built up, it's hard to find. But it was really quite a wild area, all woods, you know. And a very high, one high point that looked up right over the river. We'd have our picnic then and then we could float down in the evening. Made a wonderful place to picnic. We often used to go--for years we'd go to the coliseum, too, and we'd hike from the upper to the lower or the lower to the upper. And it wasn't built up there, you see it was PWA.

BM: Yeah, or

Daehler: Or WPA?

BM: Yeah, Works Project Administration.

Daehler: Yeah, works project, the WPA, that did all that building. But that was later on. And when we used to go up there, especially during college, why it was just kind of wild and woodsy. It made a beautiful place for a picnic.

BM: What year were you married?

Daehler: I was married in 1929. My father was dead by that time so there was just my mother and my one brother at home.

BM: You said you were married in your family home.

Daehler: We were married in the family home on 18th Street and Second Avenue.

BM: Was it a big wedding or small wedding or....

Daehler: I think we must of had something like 150 and, of course they all had to stand up, you couldn't sit down. But we had lovely refreshments as I remembered. Mother had a cateress or some, at least she had help. And I was married in front of the fireplace and I thought it was a very nice wedding. My relatives all came. My family, my grandmother came from Chicago and....

BM: Did you dress, where did you get your dress?

Daehler: I bought my dress in Chicago from some people, from a shop that we knew.

BM: Would you describe it to me?

Daehler: Yes, it was hideous. (laugh) At least I think now it was hideous. It was one of these. It was beautiful, I thought it was just lovely and I thought, "Oh it'll never go out of style." Dresses were so short then, they were way up above the knees. And I thought the front, I guess it had kind of a satin skirt and then "points desprit" hung down in points all the way around. And in the back it hung all the way down to the floor, you see and then the front of it was kind of short. And it was just long, no waistline, just long and straight. And I thought it was just lovely, and I thought it will never go out of style because of these, cause there was "points desprit" so long, you see, in the back it comes way down so whether the styles were short or long, it will always be in style. Believe me,

it didn't stay in style long. And then that fall, I think it was, styles changed and they began having waistlines and got longer.

BM: Well you know...

Daehler: I was married a little too soon.

BM: Well, there is a theory that women's hemlines follow the stock-market and that would have been the fall of 29.

Daehler: Yeah.

BM: You were married right before the crash.

Daehler: Well, you see, I was married in June. I was married in June just before the crash.

BM: Tell us about your personal experiences at the time of the crash.

Daehler: Well when I was first married--then we went out to Montana--Max was teaching at the time at the University of Montana in the summers. So, that was where we had our honeymoon. And then after the six weeks of teaching, we went up to Glacier Park and hiked and we hiked all over Glacier Park and that was really an experience. That was the beginning of my mountain climbing experiences and I, we did a great deal of mountain climbing in years after that. In Switzerland, mainly. But you were asking about...

BM: Oh, about the Depression. You were married right before the crash came.

Daehler: Yes, and the Depression came and it was really something. We just had very, very little to go on. We were fortunate in that we always ate, because Coe paid sooner or later. If they didn't

pay, we had very, very tiny salaries. It was hardly any living salary as it was. Because they didn't pay, they didn't pay faculty much. But we managed to scrape by. But it was really a horrendous time. We lost money in the bank when the old Cedar Rapids National closed and that was horrendous for us. And people, I and the Junior League, we had a soup kitchen over at the Community House for the children. I am sure that for many of them that was maybe their only meal.

BM: Do you remember a specific day, a moment, or a time when people realized really how bad things

Daehler: Oh very right, at the very beginning. You know just went right straight down, it was just a crash, just a plain crash, like that. So far there has never been another one like it. I hope there never will be. But with safeguards they have now, I mean they hope that there won't be another one like that and they certainly have depressions. This depression right now is bad, but people aren't really starving. I mean people were, there wasn't any government support, you see. And people were selling apples on the street as they were going by your house asking for any little job that, anything that they could get. And people would take any job. Now we have a food bank for people that are in desperate situations down at our church. But the attitude there, even with some people, isn't the way it...and I feel terribly sorry for them, I mean it would be awful not to have food for the next three days, but well, we won't go into that. One man was, well anyway mostly the ones that come really need it.

BM: Yeah, did you know families whose circumstances were really

drastically changed? Like you....

Daehler: Yes, yes, my own brother lost his job in-- I mean it just folded in Chicago and he had a job, he was selling I think books, World Book or something like that from door to door or vacuum cleaner or something. Anyway, they got down to the point where they were selling the money in their coin collection. I mean that was

BM: Pretty drastic.

Daehler: Yeah.

BM: Do you remember the talk at the time about what, what was the blame that people put on, you know for these for the hard times?

Daehler: You know they didn't blame everybody then the way they do now.

BM: The way they do now?

Daehler: Nowadays, everything is the government. Everything is the president. You know that, I just get sick and tired of hearing them blame everything on the government and they expect the government. People in those days didn't expect the government to do much for us. The government had never done much in their lives and they didn't expect it. The government really didn't do, they had soup lines. They did what they could, but I don't recall, the blame I think was put on the overspending, you know, and building up too much and buying, overextension and so forth, which is, I'm sure what the basis was for everybody buying too much and I suppose borrowing too much and so forth. And....

BM: There wasn't a situation where people were blaming the Hoover Administration or anything like that?

Daehler: No, well of course, many people did blame the Hoover Administration, but we never did. Most of us didn't. Many of us didn't. I suppose the Democrats all blamed the Hoover Administration. But I was a Republican and I didn't really blame him, I thought, because I knew how much he had done in the war. Oh, what a wonderful person he was in feeding the, that's what a wonderful administrator was when he fed the Belgians and sent all that grain over there. We can see that now and these beautiful flour sacks that the Belgian people made, embroidered for them because they had nothing, no other way of expressing their thanks.

BM: Was there a lot of feeling about Hoover and loyalty to him as an Iowan president?

Daehler: I think as an Iowan, there was a lot of loyalty to him.

BM: So probably the feeling might have been different here?

Daehler: Yes, different here than it was other places.

BM: Yes. What about, let's talk about FDR.

Daehler: I never thought much of FDR.

BM: My family used to think he was the devil incarnate and so....

Daehler: Well, I never really thought that, but I never had any use for him. I remember all these little fireside chats and I just, and yet I suppose he did do a great deal of good, but now he changed the name of the Hoover Dam, you know, and wouldn't let-- I mean he did a great deal to destroy Hoover's reputation, I felt, too. Eventually, it was changed back to Hoover Dam, but not during Roosevelt's Administration.

BM: He probably did a lot to change people's attitude toward government, too. As you were talking about, people said to the government, "Well do for me".

Daehler: And I think people, I think people felt that he did a lot to make class consciousness, make people class conscious because, you know, they talked about a chicken in every pot and so forth and the wealthy doing this and the poor. And I think a lot of people felt that he did a lot to make people destroy the unity of the country. Now maybe other people don't feel that way, but I knew people who did.

BM: Did you feel any impact on a lot of the programs that were instituted during the Depression like the NRA?

Daehler: Well, not I personally because you see my husband was at Coe and we were involved so very much with Coe that we weren't involved with these other programs. We were very much aware of them, you know, going on and so forth, but they didn't affect me personally, I would say. We should talk about the Coe fire.

BM: I know, I do want to talk about that. What about college life during the 30s? You had a big change from a student to a faculty member.

Daehler: To a faculty member. Well, we had a faculty women's organization they called the Martha Marquest and oh it was very formal and everybody went to it. I mean it was, now days it has a struggle existing, but in those days it was just taken for granted that you would belong to Martha Marquest and would go to it. And people practically felt they had to turn their houses inside

out to clean them before they went or somebody would be looking in their closets. It was very strict.

BM: Did you feel, did you have a lot of contact with the students?

Daehler: Yes we did because we always entertained the students. But we had, especially when they first came in the fall. The first day we thought they might be lonesome, the first weekend, and we always would have a supper for them at our house or something. So we really had, especially all the students that my husband taught, we had a lot of contact with them. And I still hear from some of them.

BM: Did you have any specific impressions of them at the times when they, you know....

Daehler: Well....

BM: Of what kind of kids they were, where they, were most of them from here in town?

Daehler: No, they were from all over in Iowa, mostly in Iowa I would say. But they were from all over. But I was just very fond of them and they were all good kids. They were really nice young people. I can't tell you anything special about them.

BM: I do want to hear about the fire. This is a little bit later, this was in '40

Daehler: Well yeah, my three sons were growing up then. Well, the fire.

BM: I should say to the tape that when we talk about the fire, the present chapel is, of course, new and this is the old chapel fire.

Daehler: Yes. The old chapel was really a chapel, too. It had transepts on the side so it was more or less built in the shape of a cross. And

faculty always sat in those transepts and the students sat in the main body of the, probably we were seated alphabetically and they took attendance, believe it or not. So, you can see why we went.

BM: I can see that.

Daehler: And the choir sat up in the choir loft. The fire was, what year was the fire?

BM: I think it was in 46.

Daehler: Well about then. And we were sitting playing bridge in our house over on Second Avenue. I think it was about 9:00 and the telephone rang and somebody said, "The chapel's on fire; get down there right away." And we got down there as the fire engines were coming. So then we must have been called right away. Because the fire engines were just pulling in as we got down there. Oh, it was a terrific blaze. And of course, they were very much afraid that Marshall Hall, which was the music building, and which was right next door to it, would go too. So all the music people were busily carrying their music trying to save their music and their valuables. And they spent hours running back and forth taking the music from there to the old main building which they didn't think would go. So it was really quite, that was terrible. It burned down the day they had been redecorating it. Doing a great deal of redecorating inside. And the very day it was finished, was the day that it was burned down.

BM: Did they ever know what cause it?

Daehler: Yes. It was a man who was a disgruntled custodian who caused the fire.

BM: I just, I never knew that. So you could really say that it was arson

Daehler: Yes, it was arson.

BM: I never knew that.

Daehler: Oh no, it was definitely arson. And the man went to jail.

BM: There must have been a lot of hard feeling about that, I mean that....

Daehler: Of course, the man went to jail.

BM: I mean, that was a robbing of a real symbol from the college.

Daehler: Oh yes, they just felt terrible about it, you see. And then they had to have chapel any place they could for a long time. And the YW had all their equipment. YW owned quite a bit of furniture and equipment and so forth. They had a room in the basement of the chapel. Course that all went too.

BM: Did it? Tell me about the building of the new chapel and the rebuilding and things like that. I mean how did things....

Daehler: Well the building, when the new chapel was built, my husband was the first one to have a recital there. And he had a recital in which our three boys took part. My older son, Rocky, plays quite a lot. And he and Max, well Max played the first part of the recital, but then the last section, he and Rocky played together and the twins turned pages. So I was a very proud momma and wife. I've got a picture of them. Oh, that was the very first activity in the new auditorium. It's really more of an auditorium now than a chapel.

BM: It really is. Was it, tell me about the funding and things for building the new chapel. I mean, do you remember any fund drives or was there anything like that?

Daehler: Yeah, I can't remember any fund drives especially. We didn't have

any money to pay for it, so I suppose they did have fund drives, so we were just barely scraping by, so I don't recall that we were particularly involved in that.

BM: When the new one was built, did everyone miss the old one? Cause it's a big change in image

Daehler: We did miss the old, yes we did miss the old one, a great deal. Course now they've gotten used to it and they have the art galleries and so forth, but it was nothing like that at that time.

BM: Well it's a big, as you were saying, the old one was a real church and it's a big change in image.

BM: The old one was a real chapel, yes. People were married there and you know it was a chapel.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

BM: We were talking a little bit about how Cedar Rapids was so much smaller just a short time ago. We were talking about Kenwood being a separate town, things like that. When you, like let's say the year that your first boy was born. What were the boundaries of town?

Daehler: Well, I would say that the east side was the main part of the residential section of this side of the river. The northeast side didn't go much beyond, I'd say, Arthur school. And beyond that was mostly fields. Think how's it grown since then. And of course the transportation wasn't so great. There was a street car going out 1st Avenue and going to Marion when I taught school out there. I would take the streetcar at the corner of 18th Street

every day and go out there to Kenwood. But, also the Crandic and the Crandic came up 5th Avenue and it cut the corner at 18th Street and 5th Avenue 'cause there was no house there. Then it came over to Blake Blvd. and it cut the corner there and curved on around and went on out to what we call the right-of-way now, you know, and went on out to Mount Vernon. And then eventually, it was taken out and then of course those corners were filled in and houses built there. But Cedar Rapids was very much smaller. When we moved to 2nd Avenue and 18th Street, there was nothing behind us on that whole block except one big house almost up at the corner. And there was a little voting booth right across the alley from us. And that was where we voted. Didn't send us all over town to vote in those days. We voted there, but it was much smaller. I'd even say it was about 40,000.

BM: You know just last fall, when you were talking about voting, just last fall we were coming down off a presidential election. What about and there was so much hoopla especially now with the Iowa caucuses and things.

Daehler: Yes.

BM: What about that kind of thing like what day,

Daehler: Well I remember seeing Hoover go through the city when Hoover was running. I remember seeing him driving out 1st Avenue to Bruce more where he was entertained and course you know that was always interesting. And there's always the stories that people start. Mrs. Hoover was actually a very brilliant woman. I remember hearing a story told that she was supposed to be mentally retarded and so forth. Oh, they started terrible stories

about people, you know. And for years I always wondered about her. It wasn't 'til many years later that I realized that she was really a brilliant woman. But it's funny how they'll start stories and rumors about people and it'll go all around.

BM: Were there--what about the voting returns and things like that, did they....

Daehler: Well, of course we didn't have. I can remember the beginning of radio actually. And of course Art Collins was involved in that. He was a friend of my brother's. And of course the movies were all in black and white and no sound. Adn the radio and no TV. We all had to make our own entertainment. People say now what did you do without TV, well it never occurred to us for a thing like TV, you know, that was a mircle.

BM: Do you remember when Valentino died?

Daehler: Yes,, I remember that.

BM: Do you remember anybody that was upset?

Daehler: Well, I wasn't particularly. I suppose there were people, but I never got that involved with any movie actors.

BM: Well, I just think of him as being the first really big media superstar.

Daehler: Yes, I think he probably was a great big superstar. But it was just around the time that I was out of college and...

BM: Beyond that?

Daehler: Well it just didn't mean that much to me, I think. But the transportation was very limited. And I remember when they changed the street cars on 1st Avenue to buses. My children were small and I thought now they've never had a ride on a streetcar. I

thought now they should have a ride on a streetcar so they'll know what it's like. So I took the three children, I think the twins were about 3 and Rocky was about 6, and we took the bus to the streetcar and went out to Kenwood and stopped and got an icecream cone and took the streetcar home again. 'Cause I thought they should have a ride on a streetcar before they put buses in.

BM: Was that a big deal in town when they took the streetcars out?

Daehler: Yes, it was a really big deal.

BM: Did they, were there some people that fought it?

Daehler: I'm not aware of, I don't recall. It doesn't seem to me they used to have the fights about everything. And people didn't sue people for everything else. In those days, doctors too would come to the house and see you. And I can't remember anybody ever suing a doctor. That was just unheard of. I mean it had to be something really, just radically horrible for anybody to have lawsuit. That was just unheard, practically unheard of.

BM: What kind of things did you ever, you know we've talked so much these days about prenatal care and things and it changes so much from time to time.

Daehler: Well, I went to the doctor.

BM: What kinds of things did the doctor tell you?

Daehler: I went to the doctor ahead of time but I don't recall that I was ever told anything very much to do. They never paid very much to nutrition. I don't recall....

BM: Other than common sense.

Daehler: Just common sense, yeah. And I'd go see him once a month and

I wasn't very well before the twins came. I remember I fell once and broke my nose and I didn't even call the doctor. I often wondered after as to why I didn't. But....

BM: Where were your boys born? At St Luke's?

Daehler: St. Luke's. And in those days they, course it was much smaller. You had to go up a whole long flight of stairs to get into their hospital. It was before they put on the additions, any of the additions. And the nursery was way around on one side and they'd bring the children around to be nursed on a kind of cart, kind of a wagon. They'd have about five children in a row on this little wagon and they'd take them into the different rooms. And people would hang over those wagons and admire their own child or not admire it. And so it was very simple. I think my first room was \$5.00 a day. I think that was because there was no bath there, but you stayed in bed for about 14 days anyway, and so that was fine with me.

BM: That's amazing when you think about it.

Daehler: I remember the other rooms were about \$7.00 a day and I remember before the twins came, nobody knew I was going to have twins, and I was at a luncheon one day and a friend of mine was going to have a baby too at the same time. She said I have put my name in for that room and the doctor would say a certain room such and such which was the one I wanted. She said the doctor said if I get there first I can have it. Well, I knew it was the one I was scheduled for. And I got there first, so I got it.

BM: When you said that you stayed in bed for 14 days, that was with...

Daehler: I think it was 12 actually.

BM: He told you that you, you must have been well rested by the time that you finally got up.

Daehler: Well that was the last rest I ever had for a long time. After that I didn't ever, I just had plain hard work because I didn't have any help to speak of. We had a little bit of help that came in once in a while but wasn't very good, just a high school girl. But as I say the college didn't pay very much and we couldn't afford any help.

BM: Diapers?

Daehler: Diapers, I had, I'd have just a whole line full of diapers and it was so hot, those summers. You see that was along about '34, '35, and '36, and the summers were just ghastly hot. And we had no air conditioning and we had no porch. It was a nice little house out in Kenwood, but we had no porch. And it would be so hot that we could hardly stand it. We would sometimes bring the babies down, put them on a sheet on the floor downstairs. Because it was really just something to live through.

BM: What did you use to do to escape the heat, especially in the evenings?

Daehler: Didn't do anything, just suffered. We just suffered. I know I had to hang the diapers out in the back yard. Sometimes it was so hot I'd wait 'til evening to bring them in. And I'd have 60 and 70 diapers at a time. And ironing, we'd iron the babies' clothes. We didn't have any drip dries. And we didn't have any prepared food. And I couldn't have afforded it if we had had. It was coming in about the time the twins were born. But I couldn't afford it and I always had, I could

just see myself scraping carrots and boiling the milk and so forth. But course you were supposed to sterilize all the bottles too, but after I saw the children picking up lint from the floor and putting it in their mouths and so forth, I decided that that sterilizing was going to be too much of a good thing, so I just washed them well with soap and water and poured boiling water over them and let them drain.

BM: That is about the first time that Gerber food did start right about then.

Daehler: Just about then, the Gerber food began the fixed foods.

BM: And you really thought of it as being expensive?

Daehler: Well, it was too expensive for me. I couldn't afford it. And of course we didn't ever have diapers, you know like Huggies, or anything like that.

BM: Right.

Daehler: That was a thing of the future. And we didn't have automatic washing machines. I had..., when our first child was born, I didn't have a washing machine, so we went down, I think I'd been sending the laundry out, I don't know what I'd been doing. I guess we'd been sending it out. So we went down to the light company and bought a second-hand washing machine for, I think, \$15.00, and I used that then until after. Well, the twins were about 5 years old, I think, and in kindergarten and they were sick. They had an awful spell of sickness during that time. And they were running fevers day after day, and I was beside myself. Finally, a man came to the door and he said, "I want to sell you a Bendex". I said, "Don't bother me, my children are sick;

we're trying to decide whether to take one to the hospital," and I said, "I'm just not interested". He said, "No, but your husband is". So my husband had been down to see it, so I think we had the third Bendex in town.

BM: Was it an automatic?

Daehler: It was an automatic washing machine, yeah. It was almost the first one that was.

BM: It was....

Daehler: It was automatic.

BM: It was not a wringer, but....

Daehler: No, not a, it was an automatic washing machine. You know, it did the whole works.

BM: Well that's wonderful.

Daehler: And oh, that was, people and neighbors came to see it. That really was a life saver for me.

BM: We were talking earlier about how you and Max knew both Marvin Cone and Grant Wood. What can you tell us about Grant Wood, for instance?

Daehler: Well, Grant was a very good friend of my husband's. He was-- both Max and Grant were a little older than I--so they had, Max had many friends whom I hadn't known before I married him. But Max and Grant were very good friends. One of my special remembrances of Grant was about our clock. We have a grandfather's clock that's close to 300 years old. And my great-uncle brought it over from, it was made in Ireland. He brought it over from England when he had it, and gave it to my grandfather, and my grandfather gave him a horse, just an exchange. Then my grandfather

willed it to my father, who was always very fond of it. And when it came out here, it was in such poor condition that my grandfather, my father took it to or didn't take it, he had a builder by the name of Prucha, look at it. And he was going to be so expensive that father put it away for a while and then, as I told you, my father didn't live very long after we came here. So it was always down in mother's basement. And finally after Max and I were married, we were talking about grandfather clocks one day and I said, "You know there's one in mother's basement". He took a look at it and thought it was hopeless. And he got interested and refinished a chair one day, one time, and when he found out how much of a change that made, how well it came out, he said maybe there a hope for that clock. So he got it out one summer and worked on it all one summer. It was the summer before Rocky was born when I was pregnant. And I worked on the brass face of it, cleaning it up because it was just black. And Max worked all summer long, there was a cabinet maker here in town who helped him and loaned him clamps and taught him how to do it. He took the whole thing apart and did it all, had to scrape it all and redo it all. And when it was all done, Grant Wood came out and gave him some suggestions about refinishing it-- what kind of a finish to put on it. And he said, "Now about that face on the clock. Just let it get a little bit tarnished and then shellac it". I said, "Grant, I could kill you. I spent all summer long polishing that thing". But of course that's what we did; we let it get a little bit tarnished, and then took the shine off of it and shellacked it. And that's one of the

things I especially remember about Grant.

BM: So he had a way of looking at things that was pretty....

Daehler: Oh yeah, well he knew that was what it should be. He gave Max one of his pictures one time. And my son, well my oldest son, has it now. One time I asked Rocky what he would like in the house more than anything else. I thought he'd say the piano, 'cause he plays so much. But he said, "Oh, I'd like that picture of Grant Wood's". And I said, "Okay, if you like that so much you can take it right now".

BM: He was, he did a lot of work for families around town. He did portraits....

Daehler: Yes, he did a lot of work around town. He did parts of Stamat's house, you know. He helped the Armstrong's a lot with their house.

BM: What was your impression of how famous he was outside the immediate circle right here?

Daehler: Well, I remember somebody saying he's a past master of advertising himself. I mean, I can remember once he advertised for long underwear 'cause he wanted to paint a picture and he did eventually paint a picture of a man in long underwear, you know. And just somebody made that remark, and that was the first time I ever thought of that. Why I suppose he did. And Marvin, on the other hand, was very modest, never said anything about...well he never, Grant never, maybe that's just my idea, I just heard somebody say that one time which put it in my mind, that I supposed he was good at building up his reputation. Marvin was always....

BM: This is Marvin Cone you're speaking of?

Daehler: Marvin Cone was always very modest and very retiring, but he had a great sense of humor and was a lot of fun. Marvin and Winifred were always very close friends of ours.

BM: Do you think this is the difference between, Marvin, Mr. Cone was also a teacher, as well....

Daehler: Yes.

BM: As well as....

Daehler: Well course Grant was too, in the beginning. He taught at McKinley. I know Miss Prescott was quoted as saying one time that when she couldn't do anything with some of her students, she would take them into Grant, and say, "Here, put them to work," and Grant would put them to work doing something.

BM: Was he a good teacher, do you think?

Daehler: I suppose he was. I think he was a very original teacher; I think he did what he wanted to do. Course, I didn't ever go to him so I shouldn't talk about him as a teacher. But they said he was a very good teacher.

BM: But Mr. Cone taught at Coe.

Daehler: Mr. Cone taught at Coe, yeah. And he was about the same age as my husband. But he and, well we have a whole group at Coe that used to get together for pot luck suppers and now most of the men are gone. A few of them are still living.

BM: What are you impressions? Well, of course, this sounds funny because he was a friend of yours, but tell us about Marvin Cone a little bit because of the two, he's less known.

Daehler: Well, I think in my book....

BM: Because his work is work is so much more....

Daehler: He should be as famous as Grant. 'Cause I have two of his pictures. I have one hanging in the dining room and one in the living room. And I think they're lovely. I think he should have the same standing that Grant had. And he, as I say he was, he always lived very modestly, well, like all the rest of us at Coe. We had to. But, he had a very nice home down on 5th Avenue which Winifred still lives in. And he built a studio on the back of it so he would have light. I mean, as part of the house, but he built a studio room onto the house. Which makes a very nice studio. And she has a great many of his pictures, still. And of course Coe has a great many of them.

BM: I know, Did he talk about his work a lot? I mean, were you aware that, when he was working, when he was painting and things like that?

Daehler: He never talked about it very much. And he was very modest about it. We had this one picture--we said we wanted one of his pictures and got that one first. And we said, "Now", we said, "How much it this?" And he said, "No, you don't pay me now. You take it and hang it in your house and see how you like it". I think we had it for a year or two and finally I said, "Max, we have got to either pay for that picture or take it back". So Max went to him and we paid for it. But he wouldn't let us pay for it in the beginning. He said, "Oh no, you hang it there first and see if you like it. See how it goes".

BM: Did he sell a lot of work around town, or....

Daehler: Yes he did. He and Grant went to Europe at one time and I

believe, it kind of seems to me, that people took up a collection and sent them money to send them to Europe. And then they repaid it with pictures. Which was a big deal for the pictures for the people who got them.

BM: That's wonderful, I never knew....

Daehler: I'm not absolutely sure, I think that's right, you'd have to check that with Winifred.

BM: That was when they were still painting in a surreal impressionistic way.

Daehler: Yes, yes.

BM: That European....

Daehler: And many of those French pictures are very impressionistic, you know. I love them myself.

BM: They are lovely.

Daehler: Then he went through many different phases. And his first pictures were of course the natural looking like fields and so forth. Then he....

BM: You're talking about Marvin?

Daehler: Marvin, right. And then he had that lovely cloud era where so many of his pictures have these beautiful clouds in them. And he went through different phases. I can't tell you just the exact order, but one was where he painted the doors. And one was where he had painted circus people. And his last phase was impressionistic. And he was painting those at the time he died.

BM: Well the door paintings at Coe, to me, are so enigmatic. Not spooky, but you really....

Daehler: Yeah, you kind of wonder what's behind them.

BM: Right, they really draw you in. And his use of lights and things, it makes him seem like a very mysterious fellow and yet

Daehler: Well he wasn't mysterious and he was just down to earth. He was lots of fun to be with. He had a very keen sense of humor.

BM: Did he make a living in his painting? Do you think?

Daehler: Well, of course he taught at Coe, too, and between the two they made a living.

BM: Well I know, it's just always curious to know if, how appreciated his work would be.

Daehler: Well, of course he gradually became more appreciated. I don't know how well he'd of done if he had just painted. He took a year off one time and painted. But I'm sure he received something from Coe at the same time. Probably a Sabbatical, but Coe didn't give many Sabbaticals.

BM: Did he have shows here in town?

Daehler: I suppose he showed at the art museum, but I can't remember; I suppose he did. Coe of course was always acquiring his pictures. And the museum of art did too. But I think it was later that they really collect the things for shows. At least I can't remember them especially. At the time he was teaching at Coe, I don't think they had many shows.

BM: What about Grant Wood, were there, did he have shows?

Daehler: I don't remember any Grant Wood shows either. Occasionally, they would have some of his things, but. And, of course, he painted. In the Montrose he painted a whole wall there. And

I think they preserved that wall. I'm not, seems to me I saw it someplace, I don't know.

BM: I don't know either.

Daehler: It was kind of a farm scene with a back of a cow and somebody milking the cow, you know. They were kind of humorous.

BM: Well you know, just recently they've restored those Grant Wood stained glass windows in the, at the Armory. Do you remember anything about when those were being built?

Daehler: Yes, I remember when those were put in. The Memorial Coliseum. He went to Europe and studied. I don't think he got the credit for them then, that they do now.

BM; Yeah, I don't think they were very popular at the time, to hear people talk about....

Daehler: No not especially. I don't, I can't remember the people thought a great deal about them.

BM: Well you know it's remarkable to me that....

Daehler: It was just part of the building as it went up.

BM: Right. Well and it's kind of remarkable to me that up until that, it was kind of forgotten; not strictly, but half forgotten that he had really done them.

Daehler: Yes in a way. I think....

BM: Cause that's not that long ago.

Daehler: No it isn't. And I can't remember that it had that much. It seems to me it's been later years that it's been attracting more attention.

BM: Right.

Daehler: To me it was just sort a part of the building as it went up.

BM: Well I know that he did, there's a little screen porch up at Bruce more that he did some decorating in the, on the walls and stuff. Do you know of any other places around town where he did that kind of thing for people inside?

Daehler: Well....

BM: Cause I don't know of any....

Daehler: I'm just trying to think now. I don't really think of any, but I'm sure there probably were, but I don't happen to know of....

BM: Yeah, well it's an interesting mixture of sort of doing this sort of decorating stuff on the side.

Daehler: Yeah. I know the Armstrong's have a couple of frames and he always, you know these mirrors where you, what do they call them, where you really don't see, they're so darn reflected? And he always was going to paint a picture of their girls, but he never got around to doing it. He always said he'd paint a picture, pictures for those frames, but he never got around to doing it, so he didn't do that. But he, of course, did a great deal of work in their house in helping them. 'Course he did. Course he had the art colony at Stone City, too for a number of years.

BM; Well, we've gone up about through the 30s and stuff. I think the next big thing I want to ask you is a real touch stone date is Pearl Harbor. What do you remember about Pearl Harbor day?

Daehler: Well, I was in church. I remember we came home from church and we had turned on the radio and heard all about this. And of course it was very shocking. And we thought well that's gonna mean war. I mean people were really upset about that, you know.

BM: It was just evident then, obviously.

Daehler: Yeah.

BM: Well, what was the feeling up until that time of, about the war in Europe?

Daehler: Well, we thought it was a terrible thing. It seemed to me that it was never gonna to be over and, I mean it was just a horrible thing that hung over you all the time, you see. And of course when our country got involved, why it was even worse.

BM: Was there a lot of....

Daehler: But I can remember the First World War. I can remember when that was, I was just in high school then. And I remember reading the papers and thinking, "Oh I wonder if this will ever be over", you know. It just kind of hung over you like a black cloud. And I can remember when they finally had the Armistice Day. There was so much excitement and my father took us into Chicago to see all the ticker tape parades and all the papers being thrown out the windows and so forth. And I remember we came home on the train, the train was so crowded we rode in the engine. People were just getting on anyplace. I lived out in Hinsdale and it was a commuter train, and by the time we were going home, thousands of others were going home too, and they were just hanging on any place. And I remember we rode in the engine.

BM: Well that's something that....

Daehler: That's way back.

Bm: Yes, I didn't even think to ask you about....

Daehler: Oh we knitted, and I can remember knitting scarfs and so forth for soldiers during the First World War. 'Cause I was in high

school about that time.

BM: You sent that through the Red Cross?

Daehler: Yes.

BM: Did you know anybody who was a soldier at that time? Did...

Daehler: Just my uncle. I had an uncle, and that's about the only one.

BM: And did he return?

Daehler: Yes, he did. He returned safely. He lived to be an old man.

BM: Did he ever talk to you about his experiences?

Daehler: No, I was never very close to him. I mean I lived in the suburb and I never saw him very much. I'd see him on holidays. We'd always have, we were always together at Christmas time. We all went into Chicago to my grandmother's at Christmas and, you see there were nine children and nine families. And so there'd be 29 or 30 of us for dinner at my grandmother's, but didn't allow for very much chat with any one person. Besides I was a little girl at the time and he wasn't about to

Bm: Were you old enough during the First World War to have any impression about what it was all about?

Daehler: I suppose not really. I was in high school and you were kind of very insulated I think then. We had classes, I remember afterwards where we'd roll bandages and then we, we would knit. And turn it in and that's about the extent of involvement.

BM: There wasn't any feeling about the issues at hand, the issues...

Daehler: Well, to a certain extent.

BM: Of course, the issues weren't terribly clear cut either.

Daehler: No, no they weren't. We just wanted our side to win, you know.

BM: And they wanted it to be over.

Daehler: Adn wanted it to be over, mainly.

BM: Well then, when the Second World War came, what changes did that have at Coe?

Daehler: Well, course we had an ROTC at Coe at that time, and my son was comissioned a 2nd Lieutenant. He had gone through ROTC. And he, well he was in Korea for a year, so of course, I was very much concerned about it.

BM: Did they....

Daehler: We did know a lot of people then that were involved, of course, and I was just very thankful when they came home. And then he, on the GI bill, he went to Ames for another year and got another degree. He had graduated, you see, with a BA and I think he wanted some science, he got a BS. He was at Ames for a year and then he began to work.

BM: We've talked a lot about general life in Cedar Rapids, but Cedar Rapids is lucky because we have a tradition of music here in town.

Daehler: I think we do.

BM: And I know that your husband Max was very, can I say instrumental.

Daehler: Yes, instrumental, he was.

BM: In getting that started. Could we talk about that a little bit, some of the music programs in the beginnings of the musicians?

Daehler: Well, he was very much interested, of course, in the symphony, but he was especially interested in the Community Concerts. They had started out at Coe as a series, and then Coe couldn't financially keep it up because people would come if they felt like it or

thought they'd enjoy that program, and they were having a hard time financially. And so they went to join the Community Concerts, which is a nationwide organization, you know. And the people would pay a certain amount and then from what they got in they would hire the talent. Well now, it's gotten to the point where they can, in later years, it got to the point where it was well enough known so people were willing to buy their tickets. And they even announced the programs ahead of time because they could manage it. Max was always, but he was also very much interested in, for instance, music week programs and that sort of thing. For a long time Max had a series of his own on Saturday afternoons on WMT, in which he would play and which he would get other artists to play too.

BM: Where they live?

Daehler: Yes.

BM: Live radio?

Daehler: Oh dear, oh yes. They would get, but he would have other artists, maybe students or other faculty members, and would join him and they'd have a program. I forget whether it was half an hour or an hours. But that, he had that series just on his own for a long time. And then, also at another time, for music week, he put on a program of seven pianos. And I think there were 14 different musicians who took part in that. And we have a picture of that with some. And then they have some students playing and then they had groups of teachers, professionals playing. And that was very interesting. We have another picture of a program that Max put on with children, with what they call

butterfly pianos. Just little tiny pianos, little tiny grand pianos. They were so cute. And that was another, I think, music week program. So Max was always very much interested in any of the music.

BM: Well this was a lot of extra work for him, too.

Daehler: Well, of course it was. It was all very much extra work.

BM: Something he did on his own time?

Daehler: He just did it on his own time 'cause he was interested in furthering music in the community. And then after he retired, he taught at home. And he had a large class at home so he was just about as busy after he retired as he was before. And then he'd have recitals twice a year and we finally, we started to have them here at our house but we couldn't get people in. So then he'd have them down at the YWCA. And I would take refreshments down, cookies and drinks for, you know, cold drinks. And so around Christmas time I spent my time making hundreds of cookies for these recitals.

BM: This tradition is something we take for granted. You don't think about how it got started, and things. Was it, how about, did he do lessons from students at Coe or did he have private lessons as well?

Daehler: Well, during the many years he was at Coe, everything went to Coe. He had high school and grade school children, too, but they all went down to Coe. And everything he did was done through Coe.

BM: Do you think....

Daehler: But after he retired, then he taught at home.

BM: Did they have a music program in the community schools at that time?

Daehler: Not nearly as much, not nearly as much. But there always were many recitals down at Coe. I don't know if they had that many student recitals down there or not, I suppose they do, but...

BM: Did you teach music when you were teaching?

Daehler: No, I didn't teach music.

BM: What I mean, was it in your classrooms? Did they....

Daehler: No. Well, we had music. We had one teacher who went around to the whole school who taught music class, I think once or twice a week. I think it was twice a week. And so we did have a music program, but it was not an extensive one. They didn't give choral chorus recitals and that sort of thing.

BM: Well this sort of music tradition has filtered down so much all the way....

Daehler: There are so many things in the schools now days that they have. For instance, they didn't have swimming pools, they didn't have the athletic programs that they have now. They didn't have of the entertainment things, you might say, in the schools that they eventually developed. So that, in a very live sense, people had to make their own entertainment. And they were expected to.

BM: Did you and your husband talk about specific goals that you would want to do, music goals you were talking about?

Daehler: I think more as they came along. I mean, as the different things developed. Why he would be involved in getting this or doing that, you know. And then, of course, we were very much involved,

I don't know as we've talked so much about it in the larger sense, what eventually it would be....

BM: But jumping in with both feet.

Daehler: We jumped in with both feet in everything that came along. We both helped sell tickets for the Community Concerts. He was especially involved in the Community Concerts. Although we were all both charter members of the symphony, too. So I mean we were supportive. Max was interested in supporting anything musical, whatever, that came to Cedar Rapids. Town's better for it too.

BM: I just want to say thank you for your time and we really appreciate it for this oral history project. Thank you very much.

Daehler: You're very welcome. It's been a pleasure.

END OF SIDE TWO

END OF INTERVIEW

