

TAPY: blaze! It was really something. I'll never forget it. Ever.

JW: Nineteen /hundred/ thirty.

TAPY: Um hm.

JW: The whole church burned, and they were able to redo the inside, keep the outside structure. But the dome was lost.

TAPY: That's right. Yes, that's right.

JW: Funerals. At one time were not most held in churches?

TAPY: Absolutely. That's the only place unless they were at home. People who didn't go to church would just have them in their homes. But anybody who went to church would have them at the church. Never a funeral home. That was just never thought of. But . . .

JW: What happened?

TAPY: I don't know. Well, I didn't like them in the church. My father was buried from the church. And every time you went to church you saw that casket down there in the front. And they would have them . . . they'd usually bring them to your house /for the visitation and kept them there till time for the funeral at the church/. And all that visitation was in your home and you just hear that tramp, tramp, tramp of people in and out and in and out, you know. It's better this way, I think. /While the corpse was in the home it was the custom for someone to sit up all night with the corpse to prevent a cat from getting into the casket and mutilating the body/.

But they had the whole choir come and sing /instead of solos or duets/.

JW: Do you know approximately when the movement began to kind of have the services in funeral homes instead of churches for the most part?

TAPY: Well, let's see. My father's was in the church and that was about 40 years ago, so I suppose maybe 35 years /ago/.

JW: Probably after World War II.

TAPY: Yes. Probably then, uh huh.

JW: Any splits from First E.U.B. that resulted in a new church? Or have you been able to keep it together?

TAPY: No. We're fortunate. No splits.

JW: Vacation Bible school, is that something that's been set up in the last 30 years? Or does it go back to when you were a child?

TAPY: It started about 1916. My mother had the first one. It was just an experiment; they had never had one at the church, and she asked them if she could try. She worked with the children all the time anyhow, and it was quite a huge success. I imagine about 1916.

JW: What would you . . . do you know what your mother did with that first vacation Bible school?

TAPY: Oh, they had Bible stories, Bible lessons, Bible songs. Then they had a recreation period. They had some good times.

JW: Any lemonade and cookies?

TAPY: I don't think they did serve. (laughs) But, you know, you can't go to church any more without coffee or something /to eat/.

JW: That's right.

Vigo County Church Women United, do you know much about that?

TAPY: Um hm. I've got something on that for you, too. Now this . . . Mrs. Sudbrink is the one /who/ gave me this /information/. She is on the board, and she also belongs to this St. Mark's church out here /on Fruit-ridge Ave/. She is a cousin of my husband.

JW: What's her first name?

TAPY: Josephine. Sudbrink.

TAPY: It just so happens that this year the United Church Women are celebrating their 40th year. It was organized in 1941.

"The purpose was to encourage church women to come together in a visible community to witness to their faith in Jesus Christ and enable by the Holy Spirit to go out into every neighborhood and nation as instruments of reconciling love."

And then these are their goals. "We intend to grow in our faith and to expand our vision and what it means to be Christian. Women of faith in society today, we intend to develop as a visible ecumenical community. We intend to work for a just, peaceful and caring society. We intend to use the resources God has entrusted to us, our intelligence, time, energy, money, creatively and responsibly as we carry out the mission of Christ." We have invited all denominations, and there are 21 churches that are in it.

JW: So, the organization still exists?

TAPY: Oh, yes, very active.

JW: Um hm. What kind of a thrust have they had in the city? I mean do they . . . .

TAPY: They sponsor these ecumenical things, these Thanksgiving services, these Lenten services that we just finished and . . . or will finish. And they have the World Day of Prayer. They organize and have that program. Just quite a lot of things where the churches go together that way. But it's a very strong organization.

JW: An early preacher who visited Terre Haute in 1825 said it was a very good town for business but no place for preaching.

What about Terre Haute in 1925? Was it a good place for preaching or did people . . . ?

TAPY: (laughing) They sure needed it! In 1925 . . . I graduated from high school then. I think it was a fine place for preaching. You know in those days the church was your whole life. There were not

- TAPY: so many activities in school like there are now. And we were just busy all the time. It was just great. All of our recreation and everything was at the church. Our friends were there and fellowship there. But the preaching . . . I'm sure I would say, it was a good place.
- JW: What kind of a relationship did the United Brethren churches have with the Catholic church 50 years ago? We've already talked about the fact the Catholics probably . . . and I know for a fact they didn't participate in the citywide revival services, of course. But what was the general feeling of . . .
- TAPY: Well, the only time we ever went to a Catholic church was to a midnight Mass.
- JW: But you did go!
- TAPY: I did go occasionally. Everybody went to that /on Christmas Eve/.
- JW: That's interesting.
- TAPY: Yes. I don't know why. It's just the different, the awesome . . . it was a beautiful service.
- JW: All these products of the Protestant Reformation would go to midnight Mass!
- TAPY: (laughing) Right.
- JW: Where'd you go -- St. Benedict's?
- TAPY: That's where everybody liked to go.
- JW: It's a beautiful church.
- TAPY: It is a beautiful church.
- JW: But generally people got along with Catholics, didn't they?
- TAPY: Oh, we got along fine, but they just went to their church. And then it was all done in Latin, and we didn't know what was going on, where now it isn't, you know. I went to a Catholic funeral last week, and

- TAPY: it was beautiful. Just fine /all in English and the congregation sang together/.
- JW: How did your preacher at First Church feel about Al Smith's candidacy in 1928 for President? Did he ever say anything from the pulpit about that?
- TAPY: I don't remember of him ever saying anything. I sure can't tell you anything about that, because I don't remember.
- JW: Well, the last question I've got is with the W.S.C.S. /Women's Society for Christian Service/ which is a Methodist organization. But are you familiar with it?
- TAPY: Um hm. (laughing) I'm the president (both laugh) at our church.
- JW: Well, were you connected in any way with the W.S.C.S. when you were United Brethren?
- TAPY: I was. I was president. That was called . . . our missionary society we called that. Our Ladies' Aid, which was different . . . there were two organizations, see, where /with/ the Methodists it's all one. Methodist Woman's Society takes in all this working for others. Now, we have one group that makes baby layettes, for instance, /to take to/ the hospitals for pregnant girls who are unmarried or on welfare, you know, for them to take their baby home in. You'd be surprised how many go into the hospital with nothing to take the child home in. We have a group in our Women's Society who work making those things. They also make things for the County Homes and /are/ just busy all the time at that. Other groups do other things, but we're all one organization, where in the U.B. church there was the Ladies' Aid and the missionary societies.
- JW: So, when you became Methodist then you were the Women's Society of Christian Service?
- TAPY: Right.
- JW: So you had your own organization at United Brethren, and they had theirs which was the W.S.C.S. and then when you came together, you went under the label of the Methodist organization.

TAPY: Mm hm.

JW: Well, listen, I think we've just about covered it. I've asked you just about everything I wanted to.

TAPY: That W.S.C.S. is outdated though. It's United Methodist Women now [U.M.W.].

JW: Good.

TAPY: (laughs) They changed that several years ago.

JW: O.K. Thanks a lot.

END OF TAPE