

IRC 2

Interviewee: Dorothy Zeuch

Interviewer: Unlisted [I]

Date: January 12, 1987

I: This interview is with Mrs. Warren T. Zeuch, Dorothy, who is member of one of the pioneer families of Vero Beach. It is being done on January 12, 1987. Tell me when you came and why.

Z: We came down in the fall of 1935, bringing our three children, because Warren's father had been busy developing groves and he wanted Warren to take over and learn it from him.

I: Now, that is Warren T. Zeuch, your husband?

Z: That is Warren, my husband. And he did. In the meantime, we first moved into the Osceola Apartments, which were one room. [Laughs.] It was just a stopgap, because Warren's father owned them, until finally he got us a log cabin which was two and a half miles from town, which seemed far away then. I did have my only illness in that half-decade when I had cancer, cured cancer, which is interesting because I am now eighty-eight and I have no cancer. It gives hope to other people. Anyway, we grew up with the people who were here, and they were almost all as poor as we were because everybody had been hurt by the Depression and the stores here did not have very good facilities, or supplies. The hardest thing was lack of companionship, but we soon found our way around that. Eastern Air, at that time, came in here. The airfield had been built, and Eastern came in so, every night, all of us gathered to watch Eastern arrive [laughs], and had our talkfests then. Also, we would go down when the train came through, if we possibly could. Of course, that was a daytime occurrence, where Eastern came late afternoon.

I: Was there only one flight in from Eastern? Just one flight a day?

Z: Well, at that time, yes. The people...

[Break in the tape]

I: And your husband's name is Warren T. Zeuch, and your name is Dorothy. What was your maiden name?

Z: Leavitt.

I: And you had three children?

Z: Three children.

I: And I know one is Warren.

Z: Warren, Jr., Theodore, who was known as Ted, and the only girl, who was known as Dee-Dee.

I: And are all three still living?

Z: All three live right here in town.

I: All live in Vero.

Z: Which makes me very, very fortunate. The thing was that I had left a well-stocked house that we had built in Davenport, Iowa.

I: You came from Davenport.

Z: With a washing machine that had a ringer top. That is what they all had then. I came down here, and that was not the way they washed clothes here. The colored help came in, and took the tub and built a fire and scrubbed on a scrubbing board and hung it on the line. This was the way of the colored help who were available. Incidentally, they were a very unusual type here. We were very fortunate. They worked in our groves and they worked in our houses, and we got to know them, so that when the time came of the war, when war was declared, and the Navy took over the airport, the number of people, not in the town but in the whole area, was possibly close to 5000, not over that. That was, see, after we had been there a good many years. The Navy sent in that many officers for training. The first ones were the dive bombers. There were 5000 strangers in town, which melded the whole town together.

I: It did?

Z: Yes, because every church made the practice of taking the boys home to dinner, and we made many friends, all of us. I was chosen to head the Red Cross. Well, I was willing to do it but I did not know much about it, so people said to me, you know, Dorothy, you cannot go to Gifford alone; a woman cannot do that. And I said, I cannot imagine why not. And I will tell you what I did. I drove up there, and I left my car out in front. I did not go to the front door. I went around to the back door. When I met the lady of the house, I sat on the steps with her and told her what I needed to know, which was usually information that the Army and Navy wanted to know. Some boy wanted leave—we had a lot of boys in the service--and they expected me to tell them because they had no real field director out there as they should have had and did later. Well, the boys, the dive bombers, got through diving at my white roof on my log cabin. They finally \_\_\_\_\_ and used it as a target. Then, in came the....

[Break in the tape]

Z: So, the various officers and men who came in to train were all already officers, all of them, and simply had a Marine contingent guarding them. Many of their wives followed them, and many of them had training in Red Cross. So, we secured people who could train our women in groups. The motor car, we acquired a truck and put it in our backyard, and some of the men helped make an ambulance of it, and things of that sort. The **gray** ladies came in, and the staff assistants, I trained through the office because I had to have help, and it mostly had to be volunteer. Now, I think it is interesting that I got a huge salary of \$125 a month, which paid for my uniforms and that is all. But, we were all doing things towards the war effort.

I: And you had to wear your uniform?

Z: Oh yes, you had to wear your uniform. The Red Cross car was not allowed to be driven but once from home to town and to the office and then on their business because of gas rationing, which was very, very strict. So, we all did our best. I would put on my uniform jacket and cap for the daytime and then take them off at six o'clock if I wanted to go to a party or meet with some of my friends. We were blacked out, because of course, we had an ocean watch along the beach. There were these towers all along watching for these people being put in small boats for landing, for observation, by the Germans. So, all my family were gone various hours of the day and night, at whatever watch tower they were on. So, everyone was doing something. It was not just the Red Cross. It was all sorts of things. I remember my husband going on one chase through the island, which was not developed yet, because they had seen them come in on boats. And they finally got them. I do not remember the full details. But, it was a very exciting time. The community had suddenly doubled but was not growing any bigger at that point, although it did very shortly after the war was over. There was a great development here. That is what I was going to tell you, the wonderful drainage system that R.D. Turner had brought about, that same system is the one we have today, and it is adequate. The ditches have had to be enlarged, and that is it.

[Break in the tape]

I: And they were his father's?

Z: First, my husband simply followed their round. Warren was wearing knee boots and carrying a sawed-off rifle because of the rattlers, which his father, incidentally, had killed...with his one cane, he had killed 137 rattlers with no vision out of the right side of his eyes. Amazing. Warren had two years to learn the grove work, and then his father's heart failed and he left us. But, Warren went

on with the citrus and eventually ended up on the state citrus committee [commission]. Then, he also developed the real estate and insurance that is in his name now and which my son owns and operates, because Ted did not want to do that kind of work. He does police work. You know, if they like something, they have to be allowed to do it.

I: Yes. Well, did you keep the groves?

Z: No. Eventually, we sold them because they were all small groves. Now, the tendency is to the large ones and the concerted labor, you see. It is the big equipment. It is an entirely different thing.

I: What kind of cultivating equipment and planting equipment did you have then?

Z: Well, we had one truck that my husband sometimes drove, and sometimes Ted drove it because he worked for his father at one time. The equipment came to the county and went to the various groves. You see, those big pieces of equipment...

I: You could not afford...?

Z: Nobody could afford them. Then, they got in, of course, the bigger operation, like \_\_\_\_ Richardson's, big things like that.

I: So, then, your husband went in the real estate and insurance business?

Z: And it still exists.

I: And Warren T. runs that now?

Z: [Yes.]

I: Now, this log cabin that you had, where was that?

Z: Well, it is still out there on 53<sup>rd</sup> and Route 60, but it is not \_\_\_\_ from the road as it was. It used to be we were right on the road. Then, they moved us back and, now, there are a couple of other houses ahead of us. I did not recognize it when I went out. That log cabin was a full two stories, and it was thirty-five by thirty-five size, the living room, with this huge fire place. This was one of the things I wanted to tell you about. The heating system was slightly different than we had in Iowa. [Laughs.] All you could get were the kerosene heaters, so we had two round kerosene heaters, which were no joy at all, and a huge fireplace. On very cold nights, Warren would sit up all night with an alarm clock to wake him when he had to put more...

I: More logs on the fire.

Z: On the fire for the children.

I: And you said that only had three rooms?

Z: Well, it did to begin with. It had just the one bedroom and the roll-away bed that came out into the living room. But, of course, we very quickly put up an additional cottage which was joined then. The accommodations of houses that you could have...well, the ones over on the island, for instance, in Riomar were beyond the means of anybody in those days. At least, nobody would have admitted it if they had more. I am sure some of them did. But, everyone seemed to be in them same [way]. You could only buy certain cuts of meat.

I: That is another thing. How about refrigeration? Did you have an electric refrigerator? You must have had electricity in your house.

Z: Oh yes. We had electricity in the house. Yes, we did.

I: You did have one, yes, because [it was]1935. Why could you only have certain cuts of meat?

Z: Because that is all that they could sell. You see, the supply depends on...

I: Can it be sold, yes.

Z: It is no good if it [cannot]. We never had lamb down here in those days, only mutton. Eventually, we got there, of course, especially after the servicemen and all that personnel came in and all of that purchasing power, those additional homes, you know. That brought a lot of things along rather quickly. If we went to the beach, we had to drive with no lights. All you could go by was hoping it was a moonlight night and that you could see the white stripe. As you went towards the ocean, you were not allowed to have any lights.

I: This was during the war?

Z: This was during when the service personnel was here.

I: Were there many people living on the beach at that time?

Z: Quite a few. Warren, Jr. will tell the books to read to tell you about that. I bought the book, and then I sent it right up to my sister-in-law in Knoxville. I knew she would love it. All about those early days when the Riomar golf course was there.

I: It was there?

Z: Yes. It was only nine holes to start with. Of course, things like the Vero Beach Country Club started out as a nine-hole course. The men brought in their trucks and their laborers to do the work and, finally, they developed eighteen holes. Now, you can hardly get a membership.

I: Right. Your children all went to school here, then?

Z: No. Our daughter went to Orlando to an Episcopal boarding school. That is why I preferred not to answer it. So, once a month, I drove from our place to Orlando and picked her up and had her for the weekend, usually with some of her friends. She had very good...but, you see, the girls and boys started dating too young. That is my reason for objection to it, at that time.

I: Yes. Did the boys go to school here?

Z: Yes, they went to school here. Well, they went one year to the Roman Catholic school in Fort Pierce, but the rest of the time, they went to the Vero Beach schools.

I: Did they engage in any sports?

Z: No, they were never outstanding...

I: What did the kids do for entertainment in those days?

Z: Ted loved the ditches, the most dangerous place for snakes of all kinds and everything dangerous, but Ted loved to go running around up and down these ditches, always overgrown, you know. Then, of course, there was always the Saturday movie for the children, and I always made a point of taking them and leaving them there, and Warren could tell you some of the things that happened. It was bad [laughs]. But, everybody went to church, and all churches had their various entertainments and big affairs.

I: So, the church was very important in your life?

Z: Yes. All of the churches were very important in this community. Everyone belonged to some church, or they did not admit it, if they did not. Ours happened to be the Episcopal church but, you know, it makes no difference.

I: No, of course not. Did you have a lot of activities in the Episcopal church, at women's clubs, and...?

Z: Yes. Yes, the women were very active. We also had a very active women's

club.

I: Yes, did you belong to that?

Z: Oh yes, and I worked in the library department. **John Schumann, Jr.** told me that he remembered the book reviews I used to write once a week on one of the new books that had come in and that would be published in the paper, which was not \_\_\_\_, you see. That library was very important in those days because there was not one at the school.

I: None in the school?

Z: No.

I: No wonder it was such an important thing, then. I did not realize that. And the women's club did that all on their own?

Z: Yes, all on their own.

I: That is always a big thing for the women's clubs, is it not?

Z: Yes. It is because it is a volunteer thing. They do not have to pay help. It is always a volunteer thing. You know, those things grew pretty radically.

I: Absolutely. I do not suppose it could be done today because there are too many people here now.

Z: Oh no, not under the present circumstances.

I: But, at that time, it was a wonderful thing.

Z: Margaret Saint John Lane, who played the piano in our church was a librarian, and she would give...I forget the hours now, but...

I: She was the organist in your church?

Z: Well, she played the piano.

I: The piano. You did not have an organ?

Z: Not that early.

I: Do you remember when you got the organ?

Z: No, but Warren, Jr. might.

I: Was the Episcopalian church here?

Z: The church was built. Warren's father secured some property for them.

I: That is your husband's father?

Z: Yes. My husband's father secured some property for them, and they had local people come build it. Now, that, I cannot tell you the details of. We were a mission to the Fort Pierce church. They came up and supplied a minister for several years, and then we got one for winter supply. Our winter people, we called winter supply. Retired bishops and people like that.

I: The organ, was that bought by donations?

Z: Yes, and the chapel, as it is now called, was enlarged twice. I am sure you can get that information just by talking to the secretary.

I: Yes. I was just wondering if there was anything that *you* knew that was...

Z: Well, my husband wrote the...that something that went into the new church's first...

I: Do you mean like a time capsule that they are going to dig up?

Z: Yes.

I: Did he write something about the church? Or what was it that he wrote?

Z: I do not remember.

I: Probably something that was going on at that time. That is in this present church, in this new church?

[Break in the tape]

Z: In 1952, when I was fifty-four, my children were all married and gone their way, so I decided to start a travel agency, and I did. I called it Vero Travel Service. It is still in existence, but I do not own it anymore. I sold it, of course.

I: How long did you have that?

Z: Of course, in 1952, it was not much of an agency because you had to do so many things differently. I had to work for Eastern, learn how to make their tickets and do this work, get my instructions from the boys who were selling tickets out at the base, and got nothing for the first year. Then, they gave me the proper accreditation. But, that is the way it went in those days. I have the

records out there some place, but it was in the 1970s when I sold it. But, in the meantime, we had done some beautiful trips.

I: You had? How did you learn to do that? You just learned it on the job?

Z: There was no school at that time, no travel agent school, but there are many now. You just learned it from the agencies that came around wanting you to sell their cruises. You picked up a little here and a little there. **Lucille**, who is no longer, but local people would remember...

I: I remember Lucille.

Z: [She] was in Fort Pierce, and she had a branch up here, but they did not keep it open. So, Lucille and I have often talked about it. Of course, it has changed so terribly now. It is all computerized. But, we did. We learned. My husband was a beautiful printer, and he would print the tickets for me. Sometimes, we would be doing that all one evening, because every ticket had to be in sequence if they were attached. It is difficult to explain.

I: Yes, but I understand.

Z: But, I feel I have left out something that I ought to have mentioned.

I: Well, how did you get your clothing back when you came here? Were there nice stores here then, or did you have to go to Fort Pierce to shop?

Z: Yes, there were stores here.

I: Was **Wadtke's** here?

Z: No, Wadtke's was not, yet. A little later, it became very important. There was one place, and you must ask Warren the name of it, the big store. But, we had to go all the way to Palm Beach to get our new things. Fort Pierce was not enough better. Of course, we all had catalogues. We bought from the catalogues.

I: Certainly, Sears, was it?

Z: Mostly Sears, and Montgomery Ward. It was Montgomery Ward, then, you know.

I: Yes. But, you went to Palm Beach if you really wanted to get anything...

Z: Yes. In fact, that first Thanksgiving we were here, it was very, very bitterly cold. That makes us appreciate the winter we have had this year. My sister-in-law

had said to me, do not bother with those Melton jackets, packing them; darling, you will not need those in Florida. So, we drove all the way down the sandy road to Miami to try to find Melton jackets for my children. Miami had bought them all up.

I: You mean to say that there was not a good highway to Miami back then?

Z: No.

I: How about to Fort Pierce?

Z: Well, it was not paved. You will have to ask when it was paved. It was not paved to Orlando either. [Laughs.] I thought nothing of driving it.

I: Is that right? Were they shell roads?

Z: Yes.

I: Well, those are good roads.

Z: Yes, they were very good roads.

I: Shoes and all, you could get here, I suppose.

Z: Shoes, we could get here. [They were] not always what we wanted because the supply was not very large.

I: Well, with 5000 people, how many can you keep on hand? That is right. How about your Christmases? Did you always have big Christmases?

Z: Of course, I told that story to the Historical Society.

I: Tell it again.

Z: There was snow on the ground, and it was blustery cold. Warren took the boys, and they went out to get the Christmas tree because everybody went somewhere and picked out their own tree.

I: This was in Iowa?

Z: This was here.

I: Snow on the ground?

Z: Yes. That year, there was something...

I: What year was that?

Z: It was our first year here.

I: 1935.

Z: It was that cold winter I told you of, and they came in and the telephone rang and **Elvira Buckingham** said, Dotty, is Warren there? I would like to speak to him. That was the way she always spoke. I put Warren on the phone. I think they had just come in with their Christmas tree and were probably having an eggnog. He was probably having an eggnog, not the boys. Elvira talks for a while and Warren says, well...and then they would talk a little more and then, well...alright, we will be out. So, he gets in the truck with the boys, and they had for the Buckingham's, which was other side of town but not very far, to pick up the pony she had sold him on the telephone [laughs].

I: I remember you telling that story now, yes.

Z: She had sold him a pony for \$75, I think. I cannot remember the amount.

I: How long did you have the pony?

Z: Quite a while. The pony would not be fastened. We could not tie him up any place. We built a little stall for him that would get out and wander around the yard, which was as big as three or four blocks, and he was allowed to run around. But then, all of a sudden, I would hear this clop-clop-cloppity-clop on this pavement. So, I was wrong; there had to be pavement there. I would wake up, (I was sound asleep) and I would go to the window and scream at the top of my lungs, Billy! Billy! Come back here! And clop-clop-cloppity-clop, and Billy would come back. And I rode the pony because I just weighed about eighty-eight pounds. So, when the boys were not using the pony, I would ride with **Betty** \_\_\_\_\_. Have you interviewed her?

I: No, I have not.

Z: Do it, some day.

I: I know her. Yes, I have forgotten about her. Yes.

Z: Do not forget!

I: No, I will not. Thank you. I will do that.

Z: She will tell you some dandies.

I: I met her--I used to be a volunteer at the Sunshine Center, and that is where I met her.

Z: Well, now, I am very active in the Sunshine Center. I mean, as a participant. I have been there, I do not know how many, times, maybe four times. Two years ago, I was in there, from June until Christmas, three days a week. That is when I went back to the nursing home after the hospital, after they straightened out this paralysis. See, I had put myself in the nursing home because I did not want my children having to give up their lives. I did not think that was fair. So then, I went in for surgery and paid for my bed so that I could get back.

I: So you could get back in, yes.

Z: Because I had a real nice roommate. I will tell you how nice she was. [Tape interrupted.] I was very active in the women's golf, and I went to state tournaments, not that I was a good golfer but there was always room for others just like me. We had our good times together. Then, we began...that is when Carol Krum was alive, and we worked on the problem of getting these women to admit they were fifty and form an after-fifty group for the state.

[End of Side A1]

Z: ...did get the women's over-fifty, and now they have two groups. We could not get fifty women to sign up and then, all of a sudden, there were 200 clamoring. It was quite exciting to do, and I was president of that for one year. I also was the vice president of the state cancer society, which is quite important because their president is a doctor who never has time to appear. So, the vice president runs the whole state affair. I also was president, from 1949 for three years, of my church's group, women's group, in what was then the Diocese of Florida. That is from Ocala south, everything, so it was very large. I had that job for three years.

I: You were president of the women's group for the Diocese of Florida, not just for this church? That was a big job.

Z: Oh my, yes. I loved it. Which reminds me, I saw my vice president's name in the Davenport...Florida...our church has a home there. She is there, so I must write her. She was much younger than I was. She was there and, evidently, something happened to her family.

I: Yes. Do you still drive the car?

Z: I did until I got this paralysis. Whether I will ever go back to it, I do not know.

I: Has that pretty much cleared up, though? Are your hands alright now?

Z: Yes. I am sure I could drive a car, but the boys do not want me to. And, if I am going to have to have live-in help, they do not want me living alone, you know, because I have that kind of heart that... But, I am going to Orlando to see if they have some new medications that I can take. I have taken all of them, and most of them turn my hair pink, or it falls out. [Laughs.] The most awful things happen. They just do not work with me.

I: How many grandchildren do you have?

Z: Well, let me show you. They are all on here.

I: Isn't that darling! Did somebody make this for you?

Z: Of course. Geenie, Ted's wife. She lives right next door to me. Now, you see, it starts out with Molly.

I: It is Warren and Molly, yes.

Z: Warren and Molly. And it shows their three children. \_\_\_\_\_. I do not even remember--let us count them. What are we going to count, the grandchildren? All right, let us count them. Warren and Molly have two, and Geenie and Ted have....

[End of the interview.]