

This is an interview with Sonja Clyne on June 6, 1975. The interviewer is Isabel Miller.

IM: Your full name?

SC: Sonja Christine Clyne

IM: Your maiden name?

SC: Olson

IM: You're the granddaughter and not the daughter.

SC: Right

IM: Have you had a nickname?

SC: No

IM: When were you born?

SC: May 12, 1953.

IM: You were born in?

SC: Moscow

IM: Your address?

SC: Box 45, Elk River.

IM: You've lived here all your life?

SC: Right; I've lived in other places but I always come back.

IM: You have two brothers?

SC: Yes

IM: What is your husband's name?

SC: Stephen Wayne Clyne

IM: Date of his birth?

SC: August 2, 1952

IM: Where was he born?

SC: Princeton, Minnesota

IM: When were you married?

SC: May 26, 1973 At St. Augustine's in Moscow.

IM: What's his occupation?

SC: He's a truck driver.

IM: Has he done anything else?

SC: He's been a cab driver and he worked for the fire patrol for about four years, three years before I met him. He went to college for a half a year.

IM: You have one child, Eric?

SC: He's 18 months; he was born in Moscow Nov. 26, 1973.

IM: You went to high school in Elk River and you went to school somewhere else?

SC: Yes and to San Francisco at the Career Academy for 4 months.

IM: What did you learn there?

SC: I went for medical assistant?

IM: Was that for assisting doctors?

SC: We learned how to type and take care of insurance forms, how to give injections, take x-rays, girl friday type of thing.

IM: Did you hold any jobs?

SC: After I got done with that I moved to Moscow and worked for B&W Excavating for just a couple of months. Then I went to Potlatch to work for Dr. Biggs.

IM: Do you have any special hobbies?

SC: I like to fix people's hair. I'm in Elk River days because I'm a pageant.

IM: Do you help plan it?

SC: I was the chairman of it last week.

IM: Are you likely to do it again next year?

SC: Yeah I suppose.

IM: Any other special interests or hobbies. Are you a member of any clubs?

SC: The Canasta Club and Birthday club.

IM: What is a birthday club?

It's like there are three tables of canasta and if you had a birthday coming up tomorrow and we gave you a party and we'd go at 12 o'clock and give everybody a lunch, then we'd eat and play canasta and then we'd visit. Each one of us gives a dollar to the birthday person.

IM: You have lived in a big city and a small town like Elk River, how do you feel about the differences?

SC: I really prefer the small town. The drastic stumili like San Francisco I never would take my children to that. You can't even go outside at night. Like around here you can go out for walks and stuff. Like Moscow, it's different, you can trust people there where San Francisco it was horrible. In Elk River you know everybody. I'd prefer Elk River you know a small town like this, you know where to look for your child. You don't have to worry about a lot of things like you do in the city.

IM: So you can't think of any advantage of living in the city?

SC: I think there would be advantages. I don't think there would be to many growing up advantages, ~~mainly~~ ^{other than} the school, they have different subjects and proms and stuff and more social things like that but Elk River you just get the main subjects and there is a prom but it's not a big to do. I can't think of any other advantages of having a child raised in the city. If it was just like my husband and I that would probably be different. I don't think for a little kid. I'd worry all the time that somebody was going to kidnap him; I wouldn't want to leave him out in the yard.

IM: How was it for making friends in San Francisco?

SC: It was hard; where I went to school there was only like eight of us girls to a class and we only went four hours a day and you got to know each other. I made a really good friend; she's from Kelseyville, Calif. sort of by San Francisco and we still write. She went on to school in Wash. D.C. Other than the girls at school I didn't know anybody.

IM: Did you live in an apartment?

SC: I lived with a family. I babysat and kept house and stuff for 40 dollars a month. Across the street there was sort of like an old folks home. They had problems to with people. I'd go over there twice a week and take this one lady for walks.

IM: Was this volunteer work?

SC: Yes they needed help really bad. People were able to get out and walk but they didn't have the time to take them out for walks and stuff.

IM: They needed somebody with them all the time.

SC: I think there was a little bit of mental disorder with some of them, too. We'd bake things and take them over.

IM: It's nice you got involved in something like that.

SC: I was so lonesome and you couldn't just go someplace. I always felt like I had to have somebody with me all the time. So that helped pass the time. We were close to a church so I'd go to church every Sunday.

IM: So that helped your experience in the big city and you wouldn't volunteeringly go back?

SC: No.

IM: Did you meet any girls who had grown up in San Francisco?

SC: Not right up in San Francisco there wasn't anybody that was from there. One girl had grown up in Hawaii from Maui and she came over to San Francisco and she loves it; that's all she's known all her life. Then there was a girl from Washington D.C. and another one from San Jose. I was the only small town girl there.

EC: She even drove in San Francisco.

SC: That was an experience. Like one time I pulled up to the stoplight and this guy was in the car in front of me and he looked through the rear view mirror and waved and I waved back. He got out of his car and come to my car and asked me if I wanted to come to a party that night. I said, "no thank you" and I rolled up my window. I was scared to death.

IM: Just a friendly wave and you got that reaction. I can understand how you might be cautious.

SC: People were so crabby like the house I lived I had to take a bus to school I didn't know downtown San Francisco from anyplace and I'd have to ask the

busdriver and he'd say, "well just recognize this building here," they didn't like that. So I asked some of the people on the bus where I should get off and stuff. I got it down after the first week but that was kind of scary.

IM: You mean they didn't want to take time to talk to you?

SC: Right, they didn't either. There was one friendly bus driver, the morning bus driver, he was really nice. From then on they were crabby. They probably get a lot of it though.

IM: They're probably tired and overworked and have to answer the same questions. It's a contrast from Elk River, everybody has time to help.

SC: This one lady has a really bad allergy and she has to have a shot once a month. I think she must be done with it but she came once a month so I'd give her a shot.

IM: It would be kind of troublesome that she'd have to go clear to Moscow.

SC: Dr. Dreary in Troy he always says if I need anything like *suture* scissors. People are always coming up with stitches that want them taken out and he says that I can always borrow *stuff* from him. I wish a doctor would come in like a week or a week a month or something like that.

IM: Maybe that's something you could get going.

SC: Because I could help him, you know. But I think it would be good for blood pressure checks for the old people who can't get out.

IM: It would help you to keep up your skills, too.

SC: We just kind of have to keep up on them ourselves.

IM: And that would help you do it.

How does your family life now compare with the family life you grew up with? Are there any differences?

SC: I think there will probably be some differences. My mom and dad never were much for camping and stuff. I want to take Eric out camping. Steve likes to take him out fishing and stuff like that. I guess our family life will

probably be similar. It has to be because in Elk River you have to make your own entertainment. We go on a lot of barbecues with friends. There's a lot of people on our block that have a bunch of kids and we go out to barbecues and stuff. Eric loves it, that would probably be the main difference. I think it's important for little kids to be out. A lot of people spend so much money just to come up here and enjoy it where we can enjoy it all the time.

IM: What were some of the things your brothers and you did when you were growing up?

SC: Jeff was so much smaller than him and I didn't do too much. I remember Johnny and I playing baseball out in the back yard. He'd be practicing for little League and I'd bully him and I'd want to help.

IM: Would you like to play baseball if you had enough girls together?

SC: Yeah, we never did that. Other girls did it but we'd play dress up and play house so the boys can enter. That's mainly what I can remember when I was little. And Barbie Dolls I really liked to play barbie dolls.

IM: How about your athletic program at school was there much for girls?

SC: That's one thing about this school, it's bad. When I was a senior for the first year they had girls basketball for ages and all the girls turned out for it and now they have it every year. We had to find a day when the boys didn't have practice and then we'd have practice. We'd have to get up early in the morning and have practice because that was the only time the gym was vacant. So that was the thing we all kicked about. When we had PE we couldn't go out on the football field and play baseball until we were seniors, then we got to do all this stuff.

IM: What brought the change?

SC: I think because we nagged and nagged and nagged and I think also the school board members changed. From the year I was a junior two people got on.

SC: Mainly what was on their was boys father's who wanted baseball and foot-
ball and stuff. All the girls could do was be a cheerleader.

We let them know about it long enough until we finally got something.

IM: There was a time in the past where they had basketball games?

SC: Yeah but they played it different. When we were freshmen we had a drill
team. We never had any women teachers so there was never anybody to do
anything with the girls. Until Mr. and Mrs. Mulsy came; then she was with
it, you know, she knew what we wanted so she helped up a lot. We got
the drill team going and she worked with us and that's when we got to play
baseball outside and stuff.

IM: Did she take charge of that?

SC: Yes, she was really a good teacher but they are gone now.

IM: Do they have a woman on the staff now?

SC: No

IM: Who handles the basketball team?

SC: Mr. Ireland. He's just a coach for girls there's a different one for boys.
There's a femal teacher in high school now.

He teacher shop, crafts and things like that. When I was in school he
taught geography. He used to do lots of things but now he's just shop teach-
er and girls basketball.

IM: And the boys coach teaches something else?

SC: Yes if they get scmebody they do about three different things.

IM: What was the feeling in your family about your going on to school? Did
they want you to get more schooling beyond high school?

SC: My mom didn't want me to go to San Francisco. She just knew that I wouldn't
like it. But I never am sorry that I went. My dad encouraged me to go.
Mom encouraged me to go to school but she didn't think I had to go so far
away. But I thought I should go out into the world. They always encouraged
me to go because I wanted go so bad. I didn't want to go to the Univ. be-

cause it would take a long time. I wanted to go into speech pathology but I could never find any schools. There was one in Texas, places like that.

IM: Was it hard for you to get the information?

SC: Right I just got a coupon from magazine about San Francisco and the was the closest one and they had the type of thing that I wanted.

IM: Did you ever have counselors at school anybody to help make decisions?

SC: We had a test where you answered all these questions in different areas and they told you what they thought you were best suited for. I think my was electronics which can't be right because I have no interest in that at all. We didn't ever have any counselors.

IM: Did very many other people in your class go on to school?

SC: Just one, Kathy, she went over to Lewis & Clark vocational to become a secretary or something.

IM: Did most of the boys stay here and get jobs in Elk River?

SC: One boy came just at the first of our senior year so he wasn't really considered part of our class. He's in the army and he was the only other boy and he's just working in the woods.

IM: How about your brothers, did your parents want them to go on to school?

SC: They really want Jeff to go on to something mechanical because he's really mechanically inclined. Johnny; he always had such a hard time in school, he didn't ever finish.

I think he just got off on the wrong foot in the first grade. Nobody expected him to do good, they didn't help him. That was his main problem, inferiority complex and that's horrible.

IM: He kind of fulfilled their expectations.

SC: Right

IM: Your younger brother's a junior now and is he checking around to see what kind of a school he can go to?

SC: He's talked to a lot of the teachers. Jeff would really like to be a mechanic or something like that.

EC: There's a car in town that could never get started and they didn't know a thing about it so they took it to the shop. Jeffrey, it must of been two years ago, got to messing with it and he got it going.

SC: He can fix radios and he's just really good.

EC: They couldn't believe that he did it.

IM: There is certainly a need for mechanics all over. So it's possible that he could get a skill like that and come back to Elk River.

SC: It seems like everybody comes back; even if you leave for awhile you end up coming back.

IM: I've noticed that.

SC: If you like it, you stay here and if you don't you get out.

IM: A family seems to be important for people that live here.

Where did you meet your husband?

SC: Here in Elk River, he was working with the fire patrol. He came from Minnesota in 1970 and he worked out here every summer. He'd come out here and work for the summer and then go home and he'd been here three years before I met him; I didn't even know him. That seems strange to me because he was here very year and I didn't even know him.

IM: In a small place like this.

SC: Right.

IM: You met him through a mutual friend?

SC: Right.

IM: How long was your courting period?

SC: Five months.

IM: So you made up your mind pretty fast.

SC: I made up my mind the first night.

IM: Were you back from your school then?

SC: Yes I was working in Potlatch.

IM: Had you always planned to get married someday?

SC: That's always what I really wanted. I was never really happy living alone
I mean I was happy, I was having a good time. I always wanted to settle
down and have a baby.

IM: So you really were kind of looking for a husband?

SC: I wasn't really looking for a husband but somebody that I'd like to settle
down with.

IM: so it was a matter of deciding who it would be.

SC: Yeah to meet the right one.

IM: How do you feel about marriage by now?

SC: I've never been happier, really.

IM: So it's fulfilled your expectations?

SC: Right.

IM: Well we talked a little bit about medical services and your child was
born in Moscow.

SC: Yes

IM: We've talked about how you really need something here.

SC: Yes because if somebody gets sick, it's really hard; these roads aren't
the best either. In the wintertime it's really bad. They flew in a heli-
copter one time for this lady.

IM: How many children do you want to have?

SC: I think two, I kind of have a hard time deciding how many kids so he said
only two. I sort of want three but we'll see what he says with this next
one.

IM: If probably you had a girl.....

SC: Yeah if I had a girl that would end it.(end of tape, side 1 tape 16)

IM: Are there any problems about having children or raising babies?

SC: They help because Eric just loves them because I have to go someplace

then grandma sits in or my mom. If I don't know something then mom or grandma is right there to tell me.

IM: You don't have to run and get Dr. Spock or something.

SC: Right. That's a real advantage.

IM: What do you see as a future for Eric? Have you thought about what you'd like to have him do?

SC: I sort of hope he doesn't work in the woods, but then I don't want to choose for him, whatever makes him happy. We keep thinking we want to get out. We want to live here but we keep thinking we want to get out so he can see a little more of everything. We'll probably end up living here and he'll probably go to school here and stuff. I want him to go to high school and then go on to something else. I'm not gonna push it. People here go to school for five years after high school and still don't know what they want to do. I hope he know by the time he's a senior in high school what he wants to do.

IM: So he has some choices to.

SC: Right; I'm sure he'll have lots of ideas we haven't even dreamed of. Probably lots of occupations will have opened up.

IM: Do you see the role of children having changed from the time you were growing up to now? Of course you haven't had a child very long, Eric hasn't got into his role yet. Do you see any differences in that respect?

SC: I don't know if this is how it was when I was little but the only thing I noticed is a few of my girlfriends that have babies they are out constantly comparing. My child can do this or my child is potty trained already. I want Eric to stay a baby, they are just babies for not very long at all, I don't want to compare him with anybody.

IM: So they are kind of pushing them to grow up.

SC: Right; I want Eric to stay little.

IM: Do you think it has anything to do with their achievement because their

children are potty trained faster than yours?

SC: I think so; I've talked to my doctor about potty training, talking and walking and stuff like that. He says when Eric is ready he'll let you know, little kids cannot control their bladder. So he'll let me know when he's ready.

IM: So you think these other mothers might be putting some stress on their children?

SC: I think so

IM: The doctor seems to have some sense of this so he's encouraging you to let Eric go at his own pace.

SC: Right.

IM: What do you do for relaxation and recreations. is it mostly with your husband?

SC: Yeah; he's got this new job now so he works longer hours so we don't do anything during the week; we just stay home and he goes to bed early. On the weekends we try to go on picnics. We've gone on picnics the last two weekends and take Eric. We both like to water ski. We both like to go for walks. He really likes to walk out in the woods, look at things, so that's what we do a lot.

IM: Being in Elk River that's easy to do.

SC: Yeah that's mostly what we do because if you want to go to a show you have to drive clear to Moscow. We go once in awhile but not very often.

IM: You have to be pretty sure that the show is good enough.

Did your family do things together as you were growing up? Do you anticipate a change in your family?

SC: I think we'll probably go more, all three of us.

IM: There was a wide variation in ages with your brothers.

SC: Johnny and I were close but Jeff and I he was five years younger. I really can't remember too much when I was little but I do remember

mom and dad going and I stayed at grandma's.

EC: I had the kids most of the time.

IM: So they went off for their recreation?

EC: Right; some people just think; I think I'd like the three of us to do stuff together and not leave Eric ~~too~~ all the time.

IM: Did you feel left out?

SC: I think I was lonely for them. They would only go downtown for a few hours but I wanted to go and see what they were doing and stuff. But I want to take Eric with us because what we do he might as well go, there's no reason to leave him home. The only recreation in this town is going to the bar and Steve doesn't really enjoy that too much so we don't go down there. We go once in awhile. They had the pool tournament, we liked that; grandma babysat every Sunday for that.

IM: Did you both participate?

SC: I did the first few weekends and then I didn't because it was just mainly guys.

IM: Do you enjoy things with other girls now?

SC: Yeah

IM: Do you ever think about the possibility of what would happen if Steve got injured or hurt or something?

SC: Yes all the time. My girlfriends husband was killed and they just had a three month old baby and it really scared me because Steve drives over that same road every night. We think about it, we have life insurance and I have my training and I think Eric and I would be alright even if he was injured I could go to work good enough to support us.

IM: You have something you can depend on.

SC: Right to fall back on.

IM: Some girls don't have that, so that's a benefit for you. What do you think would happen to your relationship with Steve if you ever had to

support the family?

SC: For him more than me, I think. I don't think I would resent having to work if something was wrong with him. He went absolutely nuts on his lay off, he was laid up for a long time. He doesn't have any hobbies like grandpa making baskets, to keep busy. I think it might hurt it, I don't think it would fall apart or anything but it might take a little bit of adjusting.

IM: Would it be damaging to him to have a woman supporting him?

SC: Not so much as he wouldn't want to be sitting around the house taking care of the baby and housework and stuff like that.

IM: That isn't what he'd really want to do.

SC: No, I don't think so.

IM: Do you think it would be hard to get a job for yourself?

SC: It was hard for me to get a job right after school. ~~Where~~ now I have the experience at least. I still think it would be hard. When I first went to look for a job they asked if I had any experience and I had my application in every doctor's office from here to Pullman. I think it would be hard but having a little experience would be to my advantage.

IM: Do you ever hear your mother or your grandmother ~~her~~ talk about the war years or the depression years?

SC: My grandma, not ~~my~~ mom so much.

IM: Do you have advice for her from the depression?

SC: Save your money

SC: A lot of people say that you know it's tough all over you are just going to have to start scrimping and saving and all this. It's hard for us, you know. We feel, well we got it we might as well spend it.

IM: How do you feel about buying on credit?

SC: We don't like that.

IM: Did you tell her anything about that, about getting in debt?

EC: Not really, I haven't said to much to any of them. Unless they come and

ask me for advice. My opinion just sometimes don't appeal to them. You just have to find out for yourselves. If they fall, they fall hard and they can come back and say, "mom you was right."

SC: My mom doesn't like to buy anything on credit because they went through it, I think.

EC: The credits I don't believe in this here third party which is the finance. If I go buy a stove from Sears&Roebuck I don't want them to put it on another finance. Let them finance it through themselves. I bought a second hand tv, this really burned me up. I shouldn't say this, maybe.

IM: No, that's fine.

EC: From the Security ok we were agreeing at it. I bought this tv for \$285.00 which wasn't worth it but we wanted a tv. We got the tv, they took our old one in for \$25, we could of gotten at least a \$100 but they only give us \$25. Come to find out it was over \$300 or more because it went through some company. The first year we were married John would say that we'd have to have money for this and if we couldn't pay cash for it he'd say well we'll borrow the money from the finance company. So I write to Spokane to get maybe \$100, well it would take \$150 to pay it back. I says if we ever get out of debt I will never get anything with a third party because I didn't like it. You pay \$150 for something, you have to pay maybe \$250. It's not doing you any good, it's just doing them good.

SC: We just went and bought a new tv and a bed. Our bed was 15 years old and it had had it, just a box springs and mattress.

EC: I found out one thing, if you buy one second hand thing, you are buying somebody else's troubles.

IM: That's the reason why they got rid of it.

EC: You bet.

SC: Steve likes to save up enough money and that's getting pretty tough to do; to save up enough money and live at the same time.

IM: So you still remember some things from the depression.

EC: You bet I do. One thing for sure, I can remember at depression time. We had a washing machine which I needed desperately, I was pregnant with Norma, our middle girl and our other girl was real little and I only had eight dollars to pay on it. One dollar was as much as a \$100 is today. Do you know I couldn't even scrape enough to pay \$5 on my washing machine. I asked several people in town but no they wouldn't give it to you. He made \$36.00 a month and sometimes he didn't get that. I don't know whatever happened but I think we just told them we would pay it next month and next month until we could pay two or three dollars on it but they never took my washing machine. But that's the kind of incident we were in. At that time you couldn't get even a piece of bread and butter on the table for your children, really; we only had the one child and I can remember when she was born and we lived in a little shack and we paid \$13.00 a month which at that time it was pretty hard. There was a big forest fire out here and she didn't sleep very good, her father had to go to work at 3 o'clock in the morning and she was fussy like most babies are and I put her in the bedroom and there were cinders on our front porch. They come to us and said if you want to live, if this town burns up and you want to live you all get together and go up to the river and stay on the river banks to save your life. She was only about three weeks old. There's a lot of things I can remember. He used to get up at 3 o'clock in the morning and it seemed like they didn't have the facilities to put out a fire like they do now. Now they can drop stuff down and that kind of smothers it.

IM: Are you involved much in community activities or church activities.

SC: We go to the Catholic church in Bovill. Community activities is Elk River Days. There's only about four couples that put on Elk River Days so we really worked hard.

IM: What happens, if is it a festival day?

SC: We have a parade and songs and dancing, motorcycle races, a big barbecue and a breakfast in the morning. It's the thrid week in August.

IM: Do you have lots of people here?

SC: Oh yeah, we pull in a pretty big crowd.

IM: You don't have county fairs out here?

SC: No

IM: Do you have any exhibits?

SC: No

IM: If you had a friend that you met in San Francisco and she married and came to live in Elk River, what would she have to learn or develop in order to live here?

SC: I don't know. She probably would really freak out at the winters because the lights go out and stuff. I think personally, this one frimnd of mine, I think she'd love it. She keeps wanting to come out for a visit but her job keeps her there. The people would probably be a lot different than what she's used to. She'd have to get used to the bad roads.

IM: Is it hard for a stranger to come into this community.

SC: It depends on the person. If they act friendly and stuff. I think Elk River is really a warm town.

IM: She'd have to find things to do by herself. Things to do alone.

SC: Right.

IM: Some people from the cities haven't developed that.

SC: Like this one friend she embroiders and stuff, I think she'd like it.

IM: You have to have something to do for yourself.

SC: Right. Like a lot of us we play cards all the time.

IM: You can't run out and go to the movies for some other recreation.

SC: You can't go out to dinner or go bowling.

IM: You have to learn to live without that.

IM: Do you take any magazines or newspapers?

SC: We take the Sunday School magazine.

IM: Do you buy magazines?

SC: I sometimes buy the Cosmopolitan but not regularly.

IM: Do you watch TV?

SC: Yes; I like Rhoda, I like Medical Center and Dr. Welby. I watch the soap operas a lot. By the time we have supper over with and Eric's bath, I don't watch too much tv at night, mainly during the day.

IM: Do you and your husband make decisions together?

SC: We do make decisions together. We talk it over a lot before we make a major decision.

IM: How about spending the money?

SC: I pay the bills and stuff; we talk it over but I do most of it. If we have twenty dollars I make the decision so he doesn't have to.

IM: He trusts you then.

SC: Right.

IM: Is there anything that he decides and you wish you had more influence with him?

SC: I just tell him; we get along pretty good as far as decision making goes. I never go out and buy anything without him with me.

IM: Who decided that you were going to live here in Elk River?

SC: It was his job; we both like it here, that wasn't the only reason we stayed here.

IM: What differences do you see between yourself and the girls that didn't go away to school?

SC: Narrowminded. I don't know; like they talk about the city but they don't know really what it's like. If I say something, they don't know. They don't know how hard it is to cram a year's work into four months. That's the main thing, they think they know it all about going away.

IM: Do they see it as something desirable?

SC: They think it would be a bunch of fun going away from Elk River.

IM: So you experienced that it was not that glamorous.

SC: Right but I hat to say, open your eyes it isn't all that great. I don't want to discourage them.

IM: Are they saying they would like to live in the city and get away from Elk River?

SC: Yes a lot of them but yet they stay.

I think if one of us decided we wanted to get away one of us could find a good enough job to get us out of here if we wanted to that bad.

IM: That takes care of most of the questions I have to ask you, would you like to add anything else? Have you ever wished you were not a girl?

SC: I like being a girl; I'd rather be treated like I am now. I see good things in women's lib but I like being a housewife and taking care of Eric. I think I'd miss a lot if I had to work. I'd probably go to work when I have both my kids and they are in school and they won't need me so much. I like being like I am.

IM: You are pleased with your situation now?

SC: Yes

IM: Anything else you can ad about Elk River?

SC: I can't think of anything right now.

IM: I think we've covered quite a bit.

(End of interview on tape 17 side 1)