

Esther Weik Interview, May 2016

J: June

E: Esther

J: Hello.

P: Hi June, it's Patrick and Esther. How are you?

J: I'm fine. How are you guys?

P: I'm just going to go and let Esther pick up the receiver and I'll let you two have a great conversation.

J: Thank you so much.

E: Ok.

J: Hi Esther.

E: Yes, hi.

J: This is June Hussey in Tucson. How are you today?

E: Tucson, I'm fine, dear. My goodness, how is your weather there? We're having a lot of rain.

J: Well, I wish I could say it wasn't as beautiful as it is but it's perfect here.

E: Oh, cut that out.

J: Yeah, we get a little spoiled here in the desert.

E: I'm sure, I'm sure but we need the rain that's for sure. But it's going to be another week, we didn't need it every day for a week.

J: Yeah, I heard it was a little gloomy there.

E: Yes, yes it is.

J: Well, may the sun come out soon.

E: Let's hope so.

J: Well, listen thank you, Esther, for making time in your day to speak with me.

E: Well, thank you.

J: Yeah, I just interviewed another one of your neighbors and had a pleasant conversation with Augie.

E: Ok, ok.

J: Yeah so as I explained to him I'll explain to you. The reason we do these interviews and I've done a bunch of them around the country. I love meeting all of the different residents from different backgrounds. What we're after is just your personal story and the process that you went through to decide that it was time to move to a retirement community. And we get people's stories and share them with other folks out there who may be just in the beginning and have started to think about, "Hmm, maybe I should be thinking about my future."

E: True, true.

J: So we think it's really helpful for people to, you know, learn about what other residents have gone through and how they've made up their mind and sort of what tips they might have to share.

E: Well, that's very true.

J: Yeah, I will be asking you some questions along those lines and I do want you to realize that we are recording this conversation.

E: Ok.

J: We will produce a transcript of it so the only thing is, if you should happen to say something that you really don't want to appear in the transcript because it is too personal or whatever. just say that right then and there say, "Please don't print this part." Ok?

E: Ok, yes.

J: Perfect, ok Esther let's start by finding out how long have you lived there at Rockland Place?

E: I've been here two years.

J: Two years and where did you come from just prior, before you moved in?

E: My own home.

J: And where was that?

E: In Meadow Wood, Newark, Delaware.

J: Oh ok and was that a house you had been in for quite a while?

E: 50 years, yes, it was a big change.

J: 50 years, oh my gosh. So to back to the days and weeks and months or however long it took you to start to think about making that move. What was going through your mind?

E: Well, I was in a house that had four bedrooms upstairs and one down. And I knew I couldn't stay in a house with that many bedrooms. It just wasn't necessary when I was there by myself. I do have three children. The number three child has cerebral palsy and he is also in a home which is near here which, in that respect it worked out great because he comes over one day a week. They bring him over to visit with me.

J: Nice.

E: Being in a house with all the bedrooms was a comedy of errors. One day I had a charley horse in my leg and I went to get out of my bed to stand on it and I was on the edge of the bed and I fell out of bed and broke my nose.

J: Broke your nose?

E: Yes.

J: Oh my, ouch.

E: And the second time I was carrying laundry up the steps to go to the second floor and I tripped over my shoe and I fell over backwards and I fractured a rib. Then my kids said, "That's it mom, you're out of here." So it was my son Joe that made the arrangements here. He's the oldest son. And he made the arrangements and he thought this was the place for me to be. First of all, like I mentioned, my younger son is in a home. And it's only five minutes away from here so that was one of the reasons I think was the convenience of him being able to come visit with me. So it worked out good for him and good for me.

J: So when your son first suggested that it would be a good idea for you to look around did you look at any other place or was it always Rockland Place?

E: He was the one who did most of the looking and he decided this was where he thought it would be a good place for me to be and it had something to do with where Kevin stayed. I think that had a lot to do with it.

J: I see so the location was perfect for you.

E: Perfect, absolutely and of course I have, you know, family here in town and they can come visit me whenever it's convenient so in that respect it worked out well.

J: That's great. So how was the process of moving out after 50 years? How did that work and what kind of help did you have?

E: Well, we had a mover. They came and brought the stuff here that I would need and I do have two rooms so it's just a living room and the bedroom. So I brought the living room furniture and the bedroom furniture. And then I told the kids they could divide up the rest of it.

J: And did you sell your house or did you keep it?

E: No, no, we sold it. Now that is a sad subject. They made me sell my car, sell my house and leave my neighbors. I said the hardest part was selling the car because boy that takes away all your independence.

J: Yeah, they didn't want you to drive anymore?

E: They didn't but I never had a problem up until then but you know they did all this for my good. I know they did.

J: Right so without a car then and living at Rockland Place, are you able to get to places that you would like to go?

E: Yes, I have one sister, God bless her, that lives near here. Anytime I need to go anywhere or do anything she is right there for me. I'm one of seven kids. We had a houseful to begin with.

J: It's nice to have so much family around.

E: Absolutely, absolutely. It's a blessing.

J: Now did you ever take advantage of the transportation offered there at Rockland?

E: Oh absolutely, absolutely yes, go out on the van. Some days we do some shopping and some days we go to a certain place like we went to the Chester Aquarium.

J: Oh.

E: And that was a delightful day.

J: Oh, I love aquariums.

E: Yes, it was well worth seeing, believe me. If you're ever in this end of town that's where you can put down and try to remember to go there.

J: I will and did you know people before you moved in?

E: I didn't know anybody specifically, yet when I got here I had met delightful people and I remember meeting two or three of them in the past. So that worked out great.

J: So there's people, someone else said that to me, that there were people that you didn't know that would be living there.

E: Delaware is such a small state you're either related to somebody or you know somebody. And that's how it works out here.

J: That's funny. Well, great. Give me an idea what a typical day is like for you there. What do you enjoy to do?

E: Almost a little bit of everything. We start out with our exercise in the morning and then we play games like trivia and different things. Of course we go out to visit different areas even if we just go out on the bus and take a ride around to different parts of the city and see different parts. And go to Mass, which is one good thing I thoroughly enjoy, make sure we get our religion in. And they even have a priest that comes here, one day a month, I guess it is. There's a lot of opportunities here. There really is, which is really wonderful to be here. No place like home though I've got to say.

J: Well, no place like home. What about cooking? Is that something you enjoy doing?

E: I did but I don't have to do any now. It's a tough life I have to tell you. We come down

for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

J: That's great, how nice. Well, what would you say to somebody that has never visited a place like Rockland Place and has no idea that option even exists and maybe they think their only option is to stay in their house forever. What advice would you give to them?

E: I would certainly tell them that they are wasting their own time, to go out and check places like Rockland because it is a delightful place to be. We've got a lot of delightful people that work here. They're very patient with the residents which I do have to give them credit for that because I know it's tough some days.

J: Well, good. And did you say how long you've been there I can't remember if I asked that question?

E: Two years, a little over two years.

J: Good, ok, well, is there anything else that you can think of that I did not ask you that you would like to share with people?

E: Not off hand dear, other than to say it's a comfortable place to be. You have your independence a little bit. You can't drive your car if you don't have it but there's things for you to do. All you have to do is put forth a little effort, come out of your room and get involved with the people and if you don't, that's your problem really. I don't mean that to sound nasty but that's how it works out. You've got to make the effort as much as anybody else and if you have any problem there is always plenty of people here that are willing to pitch in and listen to you and help you and steer you in the right direction.

J: Oh, that's great, good. Well, that's good to hear. Ok, well I can't think of anything that we haven't covered then. I appreciate your time. Thank you very much for sharing your story with us.

E: You're quite welcome, dear.

J: Alright, now I hope the sun comes out for you.

E: It'll come out one of these days. What's the song? The sun will come out tomorrow. We're certainly hoping, that's for sure, that we realize the farmer needs the rain now when they put their seeds in.

J: That's right, ok. Well, you enjoy the rest of your day there. I appreciate your time. Take care now.

E: Thank you, you have a good day.

J: Alright, Esther.

E: Take care.

J: Bye-bye.