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**IRENE SCHEIDECKER**

**The Verdigris Project**

A partnership between KBMF 102.5FM and The Butte-Silver Bow Archives.

With funding from The National Endowment for the Humanities, the Montana History Foundation, members of the Butte America Foundation, and SARTA.

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## Oral History Transcript of Irene Scheidecker

*Interviewers: Ellen Crain & Clark Grant*

*Interview Date: March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018*

*Location: Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives*

*Transcribed: March 2022 by Adrian Kien*

[00:05:05]

**Crain:** So Irene, tell us your full name, including your maiden name. And when did you first come to Butte?

**Scheidecker:** I'm Irene Rice Scheidecker and I was born in Helena, but my family moved to Butte when I was two in 1954. Although my dad right out of college from Bozeman got hired by the Montana Power Company. So he'd lived in Butte for a couple of years, then got transferred to Helena and then and then moved back to Butte in 1954 and then they stayed here the rest of his career.

**Crain:** So I want to focus on your mom and dad for a few moments. So when did they meet?

**Scheidecker:** They met at Montana State College, it was called then in Bozeman. My dad had served in the military and he was going to school on the GI bill to become an electrical engineer. And my mom was going to school. She tells interesting stories about what it was like on campus before when there were no men at all on campus, except the men in the barracks. And then after the war ended, the barracks became kind of married students housing. And so after they were married, that's where they lived was in married students housing while my dad finished his degree. And she stopped short of getting her degree after my oldest brother was born.

**Crain:** What was she studying?

**Scheidecker:** She was studying home economics. That was what her degree was to be in.

**Crain:** And what year did they get married?

**Scheidecker:** 1946. On her 20th birthday, they got married on her birthday. My dad was from a very Catholic family and she grew up in the oil fields of Northern Montana. So they basically had no church or religion in their background at all. Her mother had died when she was 10 and her stepfather was an immigrant from the Netherlands and he had no religion. And so they were not, they couldn't get married in a church. So they got married in the church rectory and my dad's family was there, but her family would not come down for the wedding. So she had no family support at all. When she and my dad got married, it was just his family that were there.

**Crain:** Can I ask something? You said your mother's stepfather, what happened to your mother's father?

**Scheidecker:** He died of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. He was a carpenter and he was building a sheep shed and he was bit by a sheep tick and he died a month before she was born.

So when, you know, her mother was already a widow, when she was born with two other small children. She had a sister that was three years older than she was, and a brother that was one year old when she was born. And her mother worked as a waitress and hired somebody to watch the kids until she remarried when my mother was about four or five and she married this oil field guy who was also a widower. So then she inherited a step-sister or half-sister. She had both in her family, she had half siblings and step siblings. But then they moved from Harlowton, Montana, where she was born, up to the oil fields of Northern Montana. And that's where she was raised.

**Crain:** So is that like Sunburst?

**Scheidecker:** Yeah, actually where they lived was called Ferdig. And I don't know if it's even on the map anymore. But there was a grade school in Ferdig and then when she went to high school, it was Oil Mont high school, which Oil Mont itself is maybe a spot on the map now, but yeah, up by Sunburst and Kevin, Kevin was a huge refinery town at the time, a big boom town at the time and she was one of the wealthier children in the community. Her father had made good money. He hit a gusher or whatever. And so she said she was one of the few girls in high school who could afford to go to the store and buy silk stockings. But she had nobody to show her how to put the silk stockings on. So she used safety pins to pin them to her underwear. And then they always got runs in them, but she had no mother to show her. After their mother died, when my mom was 10, the two older sisters were sent to Minnesota to live with an aunt and go to high school there. So her stepfather didn't feel he could cope with those two girls who were just a handful, apparently. So my mother was 10 at the time and she stayed with her stepfather in Montana. And they had a housekeeper for a year or two. And then my mother became the homemaker for her dad and her brothers.

**Crain:** But he did get her educated, which is a big deal at that time.

**Scheidecker:** It was. She kind of devised a plan with her best friend because she knew that she wanted to go to college, but she would leave her dad and her little brother without anybody to take care of them. So she and her best friend in high school got their widowed mother and her widowed stepfather together and they married. And so then the two girls didn't have to worry about leaving their parents alone. They got them married to each other. So that's my aunt Thelma was her high school, best friend who became her stepsister.

**Crain:** Wow, need a flow chart there.

**Scheidecker:** It's very confusing. It's very confusing.

**Crain:** But very common at that time. So your mom went to college, met your father and in 1946, they got married. And your brother was born in?

**Scheidecker:** 1947.

**Crain:** And then who came next?

**Scheidecker:** Then my oldest sister. Her name was Mary Katherine. The family always called her Susie because I guess when she was a little toddler, they called her little Susie Q because she

was so cute toddling around and the Susie just stuck. And so the family always knew her as Susie, but in school she was always Mary. So she was the second child born. And she and my sister, Jean were both born in Butte. And my mother tells the story of when they rented a house in Butte, they rented one that was near a school. They thought that would be a good place to have a house was near a school. And the school that they were near was Butte High School. And right across the street, turned out to be the Cabbage Patch. And so when my dad was out working on power lines and wasn't in town and my mother was pregnant with this third child. Uh, there were kind of creepy people in the neighborhood.

So in those days, every time a woman had a new baby, they spent five days in the hospital. It was just standard. So while my mom was in the hospital for five days, my dad packed the family up and moved them to a different apartment that was right across the street from the Copper King mansion.

So but anyway, my mother's experiences of living across the street from the Cabbage Patch and the kind of shady part of town that it turned out to be that she thought, oh, this will be so nice because they were right by a school. It didn't turn out to be so great. few. Butte was for a girl that grew up in a town with a population of 30, you know, it was quite an experience I'm sure to live in Butte, even Bozeman on the campus wouldn't have been anything like Butte.

[00:14:00]

**Crain:** Oh, yeah. At that time.

**Scheidecker:** But my parents came to love Butte. My dad was a great lover of history of all kinds and our vacations were almost always, we could never afford nice, expensive vacations and go to a resort, but we always took drives, packed the whole family in. And my dad always wanted to stop at museums in every little Montana town that we passed through. And it was as much to get the kids out of the car and stretch their legs and burn off some energy. I'm sure.

**Crain:** So I want to stop you there. Your mom and dad then went to Helena and came back. And your mom had 17 children.

**Scheidecker:** 16. 8 boys and 8 girls.

**Crain:** And what kind of a car did you have that you would fit 16 children in to go on a drive?

**Scheidecker:** My grandfather sold Jeeps. He was a Jeep dealer at the time that my mother and dad got married. So all the people in my dad's family, all the families had these Jeeps. It was a Jeep station wagon. And as we grew to be more children, the backseat had a small upholstered seat and then a wider upholstered seat. And my dad took out the wider upholstered seat. And he built a wooden bench and it went along the side wall in the back of the Jeep. And that was how we traveled, was sitting along that wooden bench. And then my mother had a big, thick blanket thing that she put on the open space in the floor of the Jeep. And that's where the toddlers and babies could lay down and sleep as the car drove along. And there was a bassinet that was for the small babies and the bassinet could go in the Jeep as well with the baby-babies sleeping in the bassinet and the toddlers on the floor on a thick blanket and the medium-sized kids lined up on the wooden bench. And my oldest brother, my brother, Jim, always got the one upholstered seat

in the back. Nobody ever fought him for it. He was a little bit of a . . . he was the privileged. He exerted his privileges.

**Crain:** So I want to ask you, did your parents want, did your mom want a big family?

**Scheidecker:** She never really, you know, we talked about it once. She has this beautiful tablecloth that she embroidered when they were kind of newly married and it fits on a pretty small table. And so, you know, one time when I was talking about it and she said, "Well, I never dreamed I would have a family this big." So it wasn't something she dreamed about. It was just . . . it was just the way she lived her life. She was just always, always, always giving. And we all loved the babies. We never, you know, every time that she found out she was pregnant, I know that she didn't say, "Oh my gosh, what am I going to do now? I'm pregnant again." She said, "Oh, boy, we're going to have another baby." Because that's the way she was. And it's the way we were. We just always celebrated every new baby that came and it was just a great and joyous time. Every time a new baby was born and we'd bring all our school friends in to peek into the bassinet at our new baby.

**Crain:** So your mom must have become a Catholic.

**Scheidecker:** She did become a Catholic and I don't know exactly when, but by the time I was growing up and in Butte, she was already very much into her faith and they had an organization going at that time that was called the Catholic Family Movement. And it was pretty well organized and they planned events. And the one that sticks out in my mind is a time when I was, you know, maybe four-ish, four or five, and the parish got this big bus and all the children got on the bus. And I guess all the parents drove out in their own cars because I don't remember our parents being on the bus and we drove someplace for a picnic, but there was this really young priest that was on the bus with all the kids and the whole way driving to the picnic, he taught us silly songs, some of which I can sing all these years later. Or just funny little things like "Shave and haircut, six bits. Back and a belly rub, same price." And this was the priest on the bus that was teaching us little kids to sing these songs.

So, you know, so this Catholic family movement was very strong in the parish at that time. And we only had one children's magazine that was delivered to our house and it was put out by the Mary Knoll sisters. So it was this Catholic magazine, but we loved when it came. It had great children's stories and poems and little poems about your manners and also little stories about being good children and that kind of thing. So that magazine was our one children's magazine. And so my mother just totally embraced her new Catholic religion. She and a bunch of the women in the parish formed a group that they called study club. And the original purpose was that they would get together and talk about Catholic teachings or Catholic literature or whatever. And so they were called the study club, but my memories of study club is that us children would always be put off in one part of the house. And we would hear these ladies upstairs laughing their heads off. Oh my gosh. They had so much fun. And the friendships that they formed in that study club lasted until my mother died. That was her one outlet of getting out of the house and not being around her kids. And it traveled from house to house. So it was only at our house maybe, you know, once every year or something.

**Crain:** So I want to ask you about, when did you move into your neighborhood and tell us what neighborhood it is, what parish and how old you were when you moved there?

**Scheidecker:** So are we talking about the house where my mother still lives? Okay. So we moved there in, it was actually new year's day in 1960. My dad moved us over the Christmas holiday and my parents had been renting the house that they were in and it was a big old craftsmen that we loved. And we moved into this house that was at the foot of the big M upon Lewisohn Street. And it was a very, very old duplex; an upstairs/downstairs duplex. But the price was right for my dad. And he was a carpenter. My dad was a very capable person. He could do plumbing and electrical and carpentry and all this. And so he cut a hole, a square hole in the floor upstairs and he built a ladder and secured it in the hole. And that was how we got upstairs and downstairs in that house.

Because my dad worked full-time and because we didn't hire any construction guys to come into things that ladder stayed, you know, it was this temporary thing until stairs got built and that temporary ladder lasted for, I don't know, eight or 10 years. So if you can imagine my mother being pregnant many times with a baby or two babies or a basket of laundry, up and down that ladder to get from the upstairs to the downstairs. But we got pretty good at it. You know, we didn't know any other way to go. So it was fun. Our friends came over and they would look at this ladder and say, "Well, how do you get down here without falling?" And we'd say, "Well, just turn around backwards and go down at like this." You know, we'd have to teach our friends how to go up and down the stairs in our house. So we moved in there, I was seven at the time. And the construction of the house. It got an addition built onto it. My grandfather came over the summer that the big addition was built on because he also could do all that stuff. And they added a big wing to the house that had living room and dining room upstairs, and two big bedrooms downstairs.

And then the construction just progressed slowly over all the years until things finally got finished when I was a senior in high school. And I tell you, I was pretty bummed out about that because the bedroom that I slept in all the time, there was no wall between it and the next bedroom. And so that wall got finished with its built-in closets and its nice storage spaces, right when it was my turn to leave home. I was kind of bummed about that. Eventually, he added a nice bathroom that my dad built. It was in separate little rooms. So there was a room that had two sinks, and then there was a separate little door for the toilet and a separate little door for the shower and the separate little door to go and use the tub so that multiple people could be in there. Somebody could be using the toilet while somebody else is brushing their teeth while somebody else has taken a bath. And they're not all in people's ways. So that was how you had many people in a house using one bathroom. And the upstairs bathroom was primarily my mom's and dad's. That was where their bedroom was and where the babies always slept in the one room up by them. And then all the older kids were in the downstairs.

**Crain:** So where do you fall in your family?

**Scheidecker:** I'm number four. So there are 12 younger than I am. So I was a big sister.

**Crain:** So did you feel a lot of responsibility for those 12 as you were growing up?

**Scheidecker:** Well, I don't know that it was so much feeling responsibility as just, you know, I was never, my mother never made us feel like we were obligated to do this. And, you know, so I had sisters that would just go off and read their books and do their own thing when they got home from school. But I always liked being around my mom. And so I would be the one that would be in the kitchen. And I would be the one that, you know, on Sunday morning when everybody had to get ready for church, I would be the one combing the little boys' hair. I'm sure my sister would say I helped with that too. But you know, I just remember that my mom would say, "I'm doing this? Can you get the little boy's hair combed?" Or whatever. And that, you know, by the time I was seven years old, my mother could hand me a baby and a baby bottle and say, "You feed the baby while I fix dinner," or whatever. So we all just did that. By the time the littlest children were born, I was in high school.

And so those little ones, you know, we're almost like my own little children. I just adored my little sisters and the youngest, number 16, was the most colicky baby that the family had ever had. And us teenage kids would stay up and walk the floor with her at night so that my mom could go to bed and get a good night's sleep.

And we would just walk that baby through her colic till she'd finally fall asleep. And then we'd slip into my mom and dad's bedroom and slide the baby into her crib.

**Crain:** So your mom and dad sent you all to Catholic school?

**Scheidecker:** Not all. Do you want me to get into the Catholic school flap? The older children, my parents very much believed in Catholic everything and in Catholic education. So the older children all went to Catholic school and graduated from Butte Central. And so that would be Jim, Susie, Jean, Dan, Debbie. Okay. So six of us graduated and then when my brother Rick was a senior and at that time there were three boys at Butte Central high school, and the Catholic elementary schools had already closed. But my brother, Rick was a little bit of a wild thing. He was a troublemaker. And he had been, he'd been expelled from the Catholic school and had to go to the public schools when they were still open and teachers would throw erasers at him and he was just a troublemaker. He was the one that took our Barbie dolls and held their feet over the stove and burned our Barbie dolls' feet. And so I love my brother, Rick, and he knows he did all this stuff. So Rick was a senior and Steve was a sophomore and David was a freshmen and they were all in the band.

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And Joe Trethaway had been the band teacher at Central for many years and everybody loved Joe Trethaway. And my dad's mom was a music teacher and he himself played the violin, but it was very important to my dad that all of us have music lessons. So we all took piano or whatever. And then when there was this band teacher in town, then the younger kids started getting, so Dan had trumpet lessons and Debbie had clarinet lessons and Rick who was the troublemaker. He took drum lessons. And then Steve was trombone and David, I think learned to play the trumpet from his older brother, Dan, but so they were all playing in the band. The Rice kids were band kids. So Joe Trethaway had a heart attack or something and was not the band teacher this year. And so they found this elderly nun to teach band. And this elderly nun did not know how to handle teenage boys and especially teenage boys like Rick. And Steve was very



mild-mannered. He was just the gentlest, nicest of kids. And David was just kind of slow and kind of not caring how things went. So anyway, the boys got in trouble with the band teacher. And in those days, band wasn't part of the school curriculum. They had to go an hour early in the morning anyway to be part of band. And so this one day they were a little bit late. And so they knew if they went in the band room that the old nun would yell at them. David said the old nun would yell at him for bad notes, even when he didn't have his trumpet to his lips. And my mother had tried to pull the kids out of band because of this conflict and the principal would not let them get out of band.

So that's, you know, that was part of the conflict was the principal said, the only way your boys are gonna get out of band is if they leave this school. So there's my mom. She tried to resolve it by taking the boys out of band. That didn't work. So anyway, one day they're sitting in the hallway outside of band class, because they didn't go in and the principal sees him there and he calls my mother and says, "Come and get your sons. They are no longer welcome in this school."

**Crain:** Who was the principal?

**Scheidecker:** Father Beaulieu. So anyway, all the rest of my siblings, six graduated from Central and the other 10 all graduated from Butte High. For my dad, especially that kind of treatment was not tolerable. And there was no way he would ever go back even after the principal changed, even after things had been smoothed over and it was Butte Central's loss because my family, you know, with the exception of troublemaker, Rick, my family was very bright, very talented, very, they were the kind of students that made your school shine. So it was definitely Butte Central's loss that they loss the Rice family as students.

**Crain:** Yes, that's really true because you were all noted for being creative and musical and very, very smart. Very smart. So I want to go back and have you tell about your dad because we talked about your mom, but we didn't talk about your dad.

**Scheidecker:** My dad was born and grew up in Livingston, Montana. And his dad was a car mechanic and also finally kind of had his own dealership, the Jeep dealership, but mostly he was a car mechanic. And his mother was very well educated for her time growing up in Montana. She grew up in a little community of Big Elk. Her dad was a sheepherder. But he had come to Montana from St. Louis where he was a streetcar conductor. And when they had a huge streetcar strike, they decided to leave Missouri and she already had some aunts who had settled in Montana. So they came to Montana and because he was a sheepherder, they lived in this tiny community of Big Elk where she went to elementary school.

But then she was sent to St. Vincent's Academy in Helena, and that's where she went to high school. And from there to Bozeman where they have a normal school. And so she became a teacher and she taught in country schools and she was very well educated musically and after she was married, then she became a piano teacher. She didn't teach in the schools anymore, but she taught private piano lessons. My dad's dad, hose Rice's, my dad's dad came from a family with many boys in it. And they were the ones who built houses. They really could do anything. When they moved to Montana, they built their own barn. And so when I drove through the Shields Valley and saw this massive barn that those Rice boys had built. I was just amazed, you know, but that's who they were. They were builders. They were doers. My dad's dad, when automobiles

first came in and he was 16 years old, he was just fascinated with cars and he would work driving cars across country, where there were no roads to deliver them to people.

You know, they lived in Nebraska and he'd drive cars to Arizona or to California as a 16 year old. And so it was him that brought the Rice family to Montana because he and his brother Percy had driven a car out. And then they were just young, you know, young men looking for adventure and they happen to be in the Livingston area. And there was some land for sale that had cattle on it. And so he wrote to their dad and whatever. And so the whole Rice family moved to Montana and they settled in Montana. And then there was a huge drought in 1917. And basically devastated the whole country. And they were around Livingston. They weren't in far Eastern Montana, but it was devastating there as well. And so all the other Rice family moved to California after the drought, but my grandpa had married my grandma and there was no way she was going to California. Montana was her home. And so they were the ones that stayed in Montana and settled in Livingston where he became a car mechanic and auto dealer.

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And I don't think my dad ever thought of himself growing up as headed for college. But then after he served in the military and the GI bill was offered to him, he took them up on it. And he and his brother both went to Bozeman and studied electrical engineering. And that's where he met my mom.

**Crain:** Okay, good. So, I want you to talk about the business that was purchased, the reason it was purchased and your sort of career there before you went to college.

**Scheidecker:** Well, the original plan that my dad had because college education was a goal for him and he had all these children. And so his original plan was that they would send the older children through college. And then when the older children had their degrees and got jobs, then they would contribute towards sending the younger children to college. That was my dad's first plan. And so then my oldest brother, Jim, graduated with his degree in chemistry and the Vietnam war was going on. And so in order to not get drafted, he joined the Navy for six years and he got married and he wasn't putting anything back into the college fund.

And my sister, Susie, graduated with her degree in math, and she got a job with the Anaconda Company here in Butte and as a computer person. And I don't know if she put any money into the college fund or not. And then Jeannie graduated got married right after graduation. And then I went to college and I was the first quitter. I quit after my junior year. And so I didn't have a good job. I came back to Butte and I got temporary work working for Steve Hadnagy who had just bought Big Sky Color Lab. So he was not only a photographer, but he was processing the film for all these photographers in the area.

And so I got a job for him printing school picture packages and to my dad, this was not a good and acceptable vocation for me. And so that was about the time that my dad reading the newspaper saw that this business was for sale, the S&L ice cream store. And so he said to me, if they bought the S&L ice cream store, would I be the manager of it? Because I didn't have a decent job and I wasn't going to school. And so I said, yes, I would. And so that was going to be his solution to getting the children through college is that they would all have jobs at the S&L

and they would earn their own money and they would pay for their own college education. And so my parents were the owners of the S&L and I was the manager for a couple of years until I did go back to school and get my degree. And then my brother Dan quit college and he became the manager. But it did provide employment for all our kids and my parents owned it until my youngest sister Beth was through college and then they sold it to my brother, Dan, and he continued to run it for a number of years.

**Crain:** So where was the S&L?

**Scheidecker:** The S&L was on Broadway Street and the original address was 72 West Broadway. And one of the community correction facilities is in that location now. But at that time Hennessy's was still a going concern in the uptown. And so there was a lot of street traffic along Broadway Street, and we had a jewelry store on one side of us and there was a little cafe on the corner and then us and then some attorneys' offices. So that street was a whole string of businesses. And there was a lot of foot traffic. In the first summers that we owned it we were just always busy and we were swamped in the summertime with people lining up out the door and us just knocking ourselves out.

And then when Hennessy's closed, foot traffic uptown declined dramatically. And so we did stay in that location at 72 West Broadway for several years. And then the bus Depot was located directly across the street from us on Broadway Street at that time. And when the bus depot cafe people closed the bus depot cafe, then the buses coming in had no place to send their bus passengers to get a meal. And so they asked the S&L if they would move into the bus depot cafe location. And so that's what my family decided to do. They were only renting in the old S&L location. The building was owned by somebody else and there were apartments above it that had not so great plumbing and directly above us was an older woman who often ran her bath at night and then forgot she had turned the water on and the overflow drain in her apartment didn't work. And we would come in.

Luckily we went in an hour before we opened to the public and we would have, you know, we would have a mess of water to clean up. That had seeped through the floor, anyway. So it was a good deal all the way around to move across the street, into the bus depot location. And then we added soup and sandwiches and things like that to the menu on top of the ice cream and the candy that we'd always carried.

**Crain:** Did you make your own ice cream?

**Scheidecker:** We did make our own ice cream. We got our ice cream mix from a dairy in Helena that would deliver it once a week. And usually made ice cream twice a week and we had all the ice cream recipe flavors. And we had learned these from . . . the S&L Ice Cream had been in business since the 1920s. And it always kept the same name. It had gone through several owners before we bought it. And when we bought it, we just kept the name, S&L Ice Cream. But all the recipes and all the things that they had done or handed down to us and we had kept it pretty much the same. So one of my brothers made the ice cream. It was made fresh. And as it came out of the ice cream machine, you would stir the ingredients into it. Like if it was nut ice cream, then as it's coming out of the machine, you're pouring the nuts in and stirring them in and it filled up a big five gallon metal can. And then there were these little hooks that you would pick those five

gallon cans up with, and then you'd swing them up high and drop them into these freezers. And so there was two sets of freezers. One was called the hardening cabinet. So right after the ice cream was made, it would go into the hardening cabinet and would set up pretty fast and hold its texture and everything. And then once it was hardened, it got moved into the tempering cabinet. And so each of these big ice cream cabinets had room for maybe 12 or 14 cans of ice cream. And then from the tempering cabinet, they would get moved up into the serving cabinet. And so, you know, we made probably a couple of batches of vanilla every time we made ice cream and we'd usually make one chocolate. And then the other flavors, we just, you know, replace something that was on the board with something else that we knew we could make. So some weeks it'd be raspberry ripple, and the next week it would be angel food, which was a honey ice cream. And so we just had all these little signposts for like 42 flavors of ice cream that we could make. And we'd have 20 flavors at a time.

**Crain:** Tell us a little bit about the menu both before the bus depot and after.

**Scheidecker:** The menu. The family that had had the business for a long time, a husband and wife, and before he had bought the ice cream store, he sold King Dan's donuts. So everybody thought his name was Dan and they always called him Dan, when they came in and he just smiled, like he was Dan, King Dan. But their names were Lily and Lamar, Lamar Enderlin. And he was a Butte character, if ever there was one. He had a bum leg and his wife . . . he was just Mr. Friendly. He was just the kind of guy, everybody in Butte loves. King Dan and his wife, Lily was this very prim person that her idea of what you should wear in a ice cream store was a nurse's uniform.

So when we first bought the business from them and I had to go and train, I had to go and buy a white nurses uniform to train, to work in the ice cream store. And so after we owned it ourselves, we designed some new, uh, uniforms that were a little apron cover up with little ruffly cap sleeves. And the boys always wore matching vests with little caps on them. You know, we looked classy. But King Dan had this, he liked to invent drinks. And so he had the wall plastered with all the signs for all the drinks he invented. So there was like a Muddy River that was made with Green River. Green River used to be a pop flavor. And so he would make a Muddy River by adding chocolate to Green River and mixing a drink that was called the Muddy River. And the one that people always loved to order was called Bangarman's Satchatully Spider Juice. And his sign on the wall showed a big spider coming down to land in this drink. And, he had a zombie and a zombie was made by adding like eight different pop flavors. And you put a squirt of each in. In those days, the pop wasn't dispensers like now. You had these rows of syrup with little pumps on them.

And so you'd put a pump, you know, you pump in however much syrup you needed and you just knew that it had to be an inch and a half deep in the bottom of the glass and you just eyeballed it. You know, you didn't, we didn't measure anything. We just pumped it until it was at the right level. And then you take it over to the carbonated water dispenser and you'd stir the carbonated water into it and stir it up. And that's how fountain drinks were made. And so that's why you could make all these crazy invented drinks because you just added these syrups and stirred them up. And the other one that people loved to order, even though they knew it was going to happen was a Sonic Boom. And so you mix the Sonic Boom, you put in the flavors for the Sonic Boom, and you put it in the carbonated water, but you didn't stir it. And then you spooned marshmallow

ice cream topping on the top of it. And then you would give it to the customer with the spoon and their straw. And as you set it down on the counter, you would say, "Okay, now you need to stir your own drink and you need to be ready to drink fast." Because as soon as you started stirring it, it would foam up crazily and usually made a huge mess on the counter. But customers loved that. And even though they'd done it before and made a mess before, you know, then they'd still order it again or whatever. So Sonic Booms were a really big drink in the S&L. And when we served one to somebody, we were ready with the damp rag because we knew it was probably gonna make a mess all over the counter.

But so those were the kinds of drinks. And of course we had milkshakes and we had ice cream sodas and we had just all the things, banana splits and all those things. And then he had also invented little ice cream sodas, and some of them were classics from other Butte places. Like there was one called a Ping Pong soda. And I know that when Gamers had an ice cream, as part of their Gamers candy store, that they had a ping pong soda there too. And there was a black and white sundae and those were like classics of the 1920s or thirties that had been handed down from other ice cream stores.

And that we still continued to make on top of the ones that Lamar Enderlin invented, you know, like the spider juice and stuff. So there was a menu with all these different kinds of sundaes or banana splits that you could order. And, you know, but people also had custom orders and we had a lot of characters that came in everyday. And we always knew what they were going to order like this old guy. He was an immigrant with a really heavy accent and he always wanted chocolate ice cream with pineapple topping and nuts on top. And so I always made it for him. And one day I thought, I wonder what this tastes like. And I made it for myself. It was delicious, but you know, it wasn't on our menu, but that's what he wanted. And so, you know, we could do that. We could, it's the joy of being a little business like that.

**Crain:** So when you moved to the bus depot, did it change dramatically, change your business?

**Scheidecker:** It dramatically changed our business. Besides us having to learn how to make sandwiches. Then we ordered from Butte produce our big roast beefs and our big hams. And we put a meat slicer in the back so we could slice them and have sandwich meat ready, and the cheese and the bread and all that stuff. We made a different kind of soup every day of the week. That was in a big crock pot. And we made chili every day. So chili was always on the menu and the soup of the day. And my mother baked pies for a long time. And I think she might've baked pies till they sold it. Her homemade pies were delicious. And so we would sell a slice of her homemade pie, topped a la mode or whatever.

There were also specialty things that we always made at holidays. And these came with the business. There were these little ice cream molds made of metal and they had a hinge in them. And so you would pack them full of ice cream and then you would squeeze them shut. And then you'd put them in the hardening cabinet and set the timer for 15 minutes. And then when the timer rang, you'd run more and water on it, pop the ice cream thing out of the mold and get it back in the hardening cabinet. And you fill it again. So like before we moved into the bus depot, we had a huge business in these at every holiday because there was an ice cream turkey, and we made it. There was both a pumpkin and a turkey, but people mostly loved those turkeys, which were a devil to pop out of the form because their feet were very tiny and you had to make them

stand up once they came out. So, you know, if you didn't pop them out right then their little feet would be deformed and your little turkey wouldn't stand. So we'd make these, and, you know, people would call and say, can I ordered 20 ice cream turkeys for Thanksgiving? And, then at Christmas it was a Santa Claus and he was a really, these molds were so old that he looked like an old Saint Nick from the 1920s.

But you know, it was the 1970s and 80s and people still called and said, I'd like, you know, so we'd be filling all these orders for Santas and turkeys and, you know, popping them out one at a time. And then individually wrapping them and putting them, packing them in the cake boxes, you know, counting them out. And people would often come and get, we made ice cream cakes and ice cream pies, and people would come and order an ice cream birthday cake and we'd write happy birthday on it. And sometimes they had to travel to Helena or to Missoula. And so we'd put them in the ice cream box and then wrap it all around with layers and layers of newspaper.

And apparently they traveled fine because those same people would come back and order one the next time they were coming through town. And so there was a lot of that that was involved with the original ice cream. And then when we added the bus depot, we had a lot of people that worked uptown that would come in and have lunch at our counter. And then we had bus rushes and those were two times a day. The one was at about, just before noon, maybe 11:00, 11:30 in the morning, we would have a big bus rush. And then again, about seven o'clock at night, all the buses would come in. That's where they would meet and transfer to another bus. So they would, you know, all the buses would stop at the bus depot and have about an hours stop there so that people could eat and change buses.

[00:55:10]

And so these times we called them bus rushes and they became a huge part of the income of the S&L after Hennessy's closed and other uptown businesses left, then bus rushes were basically what supported the business that would have been marginal without them.

**Crain:** So then you left and went to college and what did you become?

**Scheidecker:** I graduated in chemistry with a teaching degree and I taught school for one year and I'd gone through all the Catholic schools. So I ended up teaching junior high school in Libby, Montana, which at that time Libby dam was being constructed. So there was a rather large population. They had built a huge brand new junior high school, great modern facility. And I basically had two sets students. I had the sons and daughters of the engineers working on the dam project. And I had the sons and daughters of the logging industry people. And so when I graded my classes, I had an upside down bell curve. If I tried to put them on a curve, I would have all these C and D students and I'd have all these A and B students and I'd have nothing in the middle. And it was just really, all my bright students, I had early in the day teaching them science. So my first and second grade, first, and second period classes were all these really bright students in classes of about 17 or 18. And then after lunch in the afternoon, I had a class of 30 students. And better than two months into the school year when the principal came and said to me, I'm going to see if I can get you an assistant for your class that has special ed students in it. And I went, "What?" So my class of 30 students had six special ed students who spent their whole day in special ed and were only mainstreamed for one class. And it was my biggest class,

late in the day. And nobody told me. It was a very stressful year for me. And I decided teaching wasn't for me. And I came back to Butte and I went back to work at the S&L ice cream store. And I had met Don when I worked at Hadnagy, Don, my husband. He was also working at Hadnagy when I had worked there. So when I was back in town and working at the S&L, he often came in as a customer, got to know all my family who were the servers behind the counter and the ice cream makers. And anyway, that's the rest of that story.

**Crain:** So where did you first go to college?

**Scheidecker:** I went to college at Rocky Mountain College in Billings. No, no, no, no, no, no. I went to school at St. Mary College in Leavenworth, Kansas. Because I went to the Catholic high school and the nuns who taught at the high school where the nuns from Leavenworth, Kansas, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. And therefore I got a very good scholarship there. So my college education did not cost my parents a great deal because I had a scholarship and I had work study and I worked a ton of hours. College wasn't great fun for me because when all my college friends were going out doing all the fun things they do, I was doing my work study job in the chemistry lab.

**Crain:** Did you always study chemistry?

**Scheidecker:** I loved my high school chemistry teacher who was sister Kathleen Steffani, who was a Butte native, who became a nun. And I don't know that I like chemistry as much as I liked her as a teacher. And she, to me was the ideal of what a good teacher should be. And so when I decided I wanted to be a teacher, I thought, well, I shouldn't become a teacher in English or history because they're a dime a dozen. If I want to always have good work, I should become a teacher in science because they'll always be in demand. So that's why I chose chemistry.

[01:00:02]

**Crain:** And so you left St. Mary's. Two years?

**Scheidecker:** I went three years there before I got burned out.

**Crain:** And then where did you go again the second time?

**Scheidecker:** That second time is when I went to Rocky Mountain College and finished my degree there and then got the teaching job.

**Crain:** And then you worked as a chemist?

**Scheidecker:** After I taught that one year, and then I came back to Butte. I did go to work for Stauffer Chemical Company, which has gone through many name changes since then after Stauffer, it became Rhone Poulenc, but there was something in between Rhone Poulenc too.

**Crain:** There was something in between Stauffer. Yeah. Well, DuPont . . .

**Scheidecker:** And then it was Victor chemical and then it became Stauffer, so it was Stauffer when I worked out there. Phosphate. That was an interesting time too. That was the time when

they were finding chunks of phosphorus in the downstream, in the stream beds. And the plant manager, when he was interviewed on TV about the little boy who picked up a rock he saw in the creek and put it in his pants pocket and it spontaneously combusted. They called the kid 'Little Johnny Hot Pocket' kind of disdainfully. But that was the time. And so when I worked there part of my job as lab manager was the environmental testing for fluoride because the phosphorus plant was a pretty serious fluoride polluter. And so we tested vegetation at sites all around the chemical plant and people who raised cattle in that district received compensation. You know, their cattle had to be tested. Fluoride in small amounts is very good for your teeth. In larger amounts it's very bad for your teeth. And so, you know, before getting hired there, you had to go to a dentist on your own and have your teeth in good shape. And then once you started working there, they paid for all your dental after that because of the fluoride and teeth connection.

**Crain:** So explain the chemical process that occurred with Little Johnny Hot Pocket. Explain what that is about.

**Scheidecker:** Well, elemental phosphorus combusts when it's exposed to air. And so in a chemistry lab, if you have phosphorous in your cupboard, it is stored in a jar in oil. And if you need to use it for an experiment that you're doing, you would take a small, take it out of the oil and remove a small sample and put it back in the oil. Highly combustible. So when this rock was in the creek, it wasn't combusting. But once the little boy picked it up to put it in his pocket, then it's exposed to air and it would start, it would burn. And so often I did not go out in the plant itself very often. I mostly stayed in the lab, but the guys who went out in the plant when it was working, they would sometimes come back in and one of the guys would have been out in the plant and he'd come in and be talked to an us in the chemistry department or, you know, back there in the lab department.

And he'd be sitting there talking and all of a sudden he'd jump up and start brushing his pants because the phosphorus dust on his pants would start to combust. That dust would never make enough of a fire to catch you on fire, but it was enough that you wanted to brush it off your pants, so your pants didn't burn anymore. So phosphorus was, uh, you know, it was a pretty interesting commodity. Basically, that's what we did. We took phosphate ore and produced elemental phosphorus, which would get shipped out in railroad tank cars to people who were in the fertilizer industry or who were in whatever industry.

**Crain:** Was it food grade?

**Scheidecker:** Is there phosphorous in any food?

**Crain:** No, fluoride.

**Scheidecker:** Oh, fluoride. We didn't produce fluoride. It was a by-product. It was airborne.

**Crain:** I was just curious. My husband used to say that they put critters in some tanks out near there. They'd run out and catch on fire.

**Scheidecker:** That would be phosphorus. That wouldn't be the fluoride.



**Crain:** Well, I just wonder.

**Scheidecker:** Your husband was a naughty boy, but that is totally believable. And the settling ponds out there are still a problem.

**Crain:** Yes, they are because critters go in them alone.

**Scheidecker:** Well, they have them, you know, there's a huge layer of water on it. And they have plastic floating balls on top of the water to keep the water from evaporating. I'm not sure what they're doing, but it's still an issue. All these many years later. And that was late seventies when I worked there into 80, I was still working there when I got married in 1980.

**Crain:** And then so I want to ask you about, well, tell us, summarize, you got married, you had children . . . Summarize that for me. And then we can go back to your childhood for a few moments. So you married Don.

**Scheidecker:** I married Don.

**Crain:** You have three children.

**Scheidecker:** I had three children.

**Crain:** You didn't work.

**Scheidecker:** I worked part-time at the S&L until the children were born and I even worked after Alan was born. I'd go down and decorate the ice cream cakes and stuff like that. So I worked part-time after he was born, but after I had two children, I didn't work anymore. But I started volunteering when the children entered . . . I did enroll them in the Catholic schools which had Catholic elementary schools had been closed since 1969. And they had shortly before my children were born or while my children were still preschoolers, they had reopened one Catholic school. And I hadn't really thought of putting them there, but my son Alan was born in September and he was really a smart kid.

And I went to the public schools and I said, do you have tests. You know, my son's born in September and he's really ready for kindergarten. And a very, very nasty person took my phone call that day and said to me, "We don't want to babysit your kids just because you think they're ready for school and yang and yang and yeah. And we're not going to make any exceptions and yang and yeah." And I went, "Thank you very much." And I enrolled my son in the Catholic school the next year, and then all my kids went through the Catholic schools because of one nasty person who made me so angry. You know, I get this from my dad. We get our backs up.

So I did volunteer then for years at the Catholic school, first helping out with the computer program. And I did that even before my littlest one was in school. I had left him with the lady next door while I went and volunteered. And then when he entered school, then I became the coordinator for all the volunteers who helped with the computer program. And I was pretty much a full-time volunteer. I'd take my kids down there in the morning and I would stay there and the volunteers would come and go that would help with their children's classes. But I was always there to kind of supervise and make sure it went smoothly. And if the volunteers didn't show up,

then the kids didn't get their class cancelled because I was always there to run their class. And then they asked me to do the library program. So I did both computers and library one year, and then I loved library so much that I found another lady to run the computer program. And I just did library full time until my youngest was out of this school. And then I went to the Butte public library, but history and the history of Butte has been in my blood.

Like I said, my dad loved history. And so when he moved to Butte, he loved Butte's history. And when we had visitors to town, I was always the child in the family that hung around and listened to their stories. And when my dad would say, "Well, let me take you up and show you the Berkeley pit viewing stand." I was always the child that jumped in the car and went along and my dad had designed a big substation up there near the Berkeley pit viewing stand. So I would go. My dad had keys to the substation. We'd always take the visitors in there. And then my dad would drive them around the little neighborhoods of Centerville and Walkerville where all the streets were crooked. And he'd talk about, well, the reason these were all so crooked like this, and he'd talk about how these neighborhoods, but my dad loved all that.

My dad loved that there was a street in Butte that was called Donkey Road. And when I was a little girl, I thought my dad had invented the name Donkey Road for this street that went around. So the first time I heard another grown adult say, "Well, she lives on Donkey Road." I went, "You call that donkey road too?" But that's what, you know, my dad just loved, loved this kind of thing. He loved it for all of Montana. He loved native Americans. You know, we grew up. Just knowing from the time we were small that native Americans hadn't been dealt a dirty deal. And my father ingrained that in us, that Indian culture was to be respected. And, you know, we were poor, but we always, my parents always sent money to the Saint LaBree Indian school, always from the time I was small. And we were encouraged to save our money and send it along to those Indian children that needed a better life because they'd been dealt a dirty deal.

And, you know, so it was just, but so my dad loved Butte history. And I always wanted to get away from Butte. I wanted to live someplace that had trees and green grass. And then I met Don who had moved here from Billings and who thought Butte was really cool. And we married here and stayed here. When we looked for a place to live, we looked for a place to live in the part of Butte that I'd been taught to love. So we live right near the uptown. We live in the house that was the house of Larry Duggan, the undertaker and his nephew, Johnny Dougan after that. So it was called the old Duggan house and it was the Undertaker's residence. And we just embraced that history. And so of course, when a job at the archives opened up, it was the job of my dreams and has continued to be the job of my dreams because not only am I doing something I love, I'm doing it with people that I love in a place that I love.

**Crain:** And you're also a pretty good steward of many other historic properties, not just the Duggan house. But you own other properties that you have fixed up and maintained and ensured they stayed vital.

**Scheidecker:** As a family project, we did buy the Leonard hotel at a time when it had been vacant for 10 years and its roof was failing. And I was very angry about how many of Butte's really significant older buildings were owned by people who were not taking care of them until they became demolition projects. I was very angry about that. And one day I was ranting to somebody about. It just makes me furious that this person owns this property and this property

and this property, and they're all going to hell. And the person interrupted me and said they don't own the Leonard hotel. And the person who owns the Leonard hotel is from Alaska, but he's in town right now. And he would sell that building for \$50,000 to anybody that would give him \$50,000 for it. And I went, oh, and this is after I had quit volunteering at the school full-time and so I went up to the Leonard hotel and sure enough, there was this man who was taking his belongings out of the Leonard and was packing them into a big moving van. I think his wife had connections to Butte, so they had bought the Leonard and they had been going to convert it and they had made an apartment for themselves in the Leonard. And then they had thought they had a good person to watch over it for them when they were out of town and they had left town.

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And when they came back, they found that the person they thought was taking care of it was nowhere to be found and that the building had been broken into and that their private residence in there had been totally trashed. And the man was just disgusted and he'd bought it apparently for \$75,000, but he sold it to our family for \$50,000. And I went and quickly got my brothers that were here and said, "Come and look at this building and tell me what you think." But I drew up the buy/sell agreement on the spot. I just ran home, pulled one up, you know, you could Google anything. And I pulled one up and I just changed the wording so it reflected what building we were buying and who we were and got him to sign it before he drove off to Alaska.

So then we did a more serious inspection of it and flew in my brother-in-law, who was a mechanical engineer, I think you call them, that do heating and cooling systems and came and said, you know, is it possible to heat this building and blah, blah, blah. So anyway, the family did invest in that. And number one priority we did the first year was to get a roof on it because the roof was leaking and there's no way to get a building down faster than to leave it with a leaking roof. And we had the brick re-pointed, and we brought in a new water main that would be big enough to support the fire suppression system. And we restored the lobby floor, which was buckling from the water on it. We did all those things and, you know, we'd sunk probably \$200,000 into it. And then we looked around and said, "Our pockets aren't deep enough for this." And I had to sell it.

**Crain:** But still good stewardship. Yep. Because I think without your stabilization of that building, it would not be viable.

**Scheidecker:** I don't think it would have. I don't think with the state that its roof was in. I don't think it would've, it would've been a different demolition project in about three years after we stepped in and it had been being lived in by homeless people. You know, we found that all throughout the building, just the messes we had to clean up. And for their garbage, there were these deep window wells at the back because they built buildings to have light and ventilation, even these huge buildings. So if the back of the building was below ground, there would be these deep window wells that would let light into those basement quarters. And so the garbage in those window wells was probably about 12 feet deep. And we didn't hire anybody. We were the Rice family. And we filled five-gallon buckets and hauled it up bucket by bucket, by bucket to take to the dump, to get those window wells cleaned out.

And the same with the pigeon poop. Well, it wasn't 12 feet deep, but it was about three feet deep. And we scooped three feet of pigeon poop out of a window well, and then to get rid of the pigeons, I just would go, luckily, all the windows opened, I would just go routinely through the building. And every nest that was built, I would scoop that little nest and its new eggs. And I would put it in the garbage until the bird said, this isn't a good place to hang out anymore. And they left us alone.

**Crain:** You could have hired my husband. He has a gun and goes and shoots the birds out of the window. Anyway, I want to talk about when you're growing up with that many siblings there had to be a lot of chaos.

**Scheidecker:** No, actually there was not chaos. And I think that, you know, this had to do with the fact that my dad was a very strong disciplinarian and that from the time the family was small, we had jobs and we knew what our jobs were. So when I was five years old, I was standing on a stool to wash dishes. And, you know, my dad was really, he was a harsh guy and he really had a temper, you know, my brothers called it the OP octave because his initials were O.P. And when he was mad, his voice would raise a full octave and just come at you at full blast. I was terrified. I ran to the other room and hide when somebody else was getting yelled at, but my brothers would just stand there and take it. And then as soon as my dad was gone, they'd be [sobbing/laughing] you know, think that was so funny that they got yelled at by my dad.

But he thought the television was an idiot box. And if he came in and people were watching a show that he did not approve of because it had violence in it or whatever, crude humor, he'd say, "I don't think this is a very good show you're watching." And that meant you turn off the TV immediately. And if he should come back a week later and somebody should be watching that show, he would cut the cord off the TV and then we would have no TV in the house for months. And then some friends of the family would be coming, say New Year's Day. And the husband was a big football fan. Then my dad would splice the cord back on the TV and then we'd have TV again. So this probably only happened two or three times in our childhood, but it was enough for us to know that we didn't, if my dad said it wasn't a good show, or if we looked at it and said, dad would think this is a bad show, we just turned it off.

But my dad didn't believe that girls did girls jobs and boys did boys' jobs. So my brothers were always expected to help with the dishes. We had assigned chores. Somebody would clear the table and scrape the plates and somebody else was responsible for getting them in the dish washer. And then the job of doing sink dishes rotated. So you always knew which night was your night to do sink dishes. And that meant you had to wash all the pots and pans that didn't fit in the dishwasher and wipe down all the counters. And so, you know, if, you know, if it was, my dad would come into the kitchen half an hour after dinner and things weren't done, he'd say, "Whose night is it for sink dishes?"

Because to him, my dad treated my mother very, very well. She fixed the meals, but she was not to do the dishes. And from the time I was quite small, we had a cleaning lady that came in once a week. And that was a luxury that was worth money to my dad so that my mom wouldn't have to have the burden of keeping up the house. So we always had cleaning ladies that came in once a week and my mom didn't sit with her feet up while the cleaning lady cleaned. She would clean right alongside the cleaning lady and the house would be spotless from top to bottom one day a

week. And then by the next day, all the toys would be scattered on the floor and all the whatever.

[01:22:20]

**Crain:** When I speak of the chaos, just the whole idea of, you know, 10 or 12 people gathering their homework, gathering their books, you know, and their coats and the mittens and the hats and all of that type of thing becomes in my house of three . . .

**Scheidecker:** It sounds huge. But in the house that we bought on Lewisohn street, it had a long hallway where you came in, so there were coat hooks on it. And then there was in those days we all wore galoshes over the top of our shoes. And so there was a boot box and you'd pull off your galoshes and throw them in there. Later boots became these separate things that took up a lot of space, but when we were first there. When my dad did the remodeling of that area, he built this huge coat closet that had room for the boots underneath and the coats above. And there was storage space. He built this bookcase in the living room that held both books. And then it had these hidey cupboards with doors closed, and that's where our homework went. And everybody had their shelf in there where their stuff went.

And if you left anything out on the day the cleaning lady came, the cleaning lady that we had the longest, God love her, was named Louise Nichols and she showed up dressed to the nines, white pants, classy, sweaters, nails, all done, lipstick, whatever. And when she went home after putting in a shift, she still looked just the same, but Louise would take anything you left out and you might never see it again because Louise would put it away. And she never threw anything in the garbage, but it might be months before you found something that Louise put away because that house was spotless when Louise left. And my mother also when she and my dad would get to travel to a convention or something, which was the one vacations that they have was when they would have these, I Tripoli conventions for electrical engineers and my mom would go along, then she would hire Louise to babysit.

And then as us kids got older, then we had to do the babysitting, but we'd go away to school. So Louise would watch the little kids while we were at school, but there was one convention that the older kids all got to go because some friend engineer of my dad's, his children who were all older, were going and he wanted his children to have people their age while we were up in Banff, Canada, actually. So Louise comes in and the stories my brother tells about life with Louise in charge are hilarious. And one other trip when we traveled down for my grandfather's funeral in Arizona, my mom's stepfather and the little kids were all left at home, but the big kids all went.

And my little sister who was less than a year old at the time, Louise decided that that was time for that child to be potty trained and she put her on the little wooden potty chair that we'd had for every child. And she put a broomstick through the handles on it so that the child could not get up. And by the time my mother got back a week later, this 11-month-old was potty trained. the Louise method. Oh my God.

**Crain:** So you're all very close, which I think is a wonderful testament to your parents. And the way you grew up and a big holiday is coming up and you've just lost your mom. And I want you to talk a little bit about holidays and what you do on your holidays, what your traditions are.

**Scheidecker:** My mother was very social and my dad was more like I am, very antisocial. So kind of, you know, kind of when I was in maybe around seventh or eighth grade, they quit accepting invitations to go out and, you know, so new year's Eve was always a kid's holiday where we had a babysitter come in and our mom would buy. We only had pop twice a year on the 4th of July and on new year's Eve, the rest of the time we had Kool-Aid. And so we'd have pop and potato chips and all these things that were luxuries for us. We never knew, we never knew that other people had these things all the time.

We didn't know we were poor, you know? So these were big luxuries for us to have pop and potato chips. It was a big holiday. Religious holidays became very important to my mother and probably through these Catholic magazines that came, she learned a tradition for Holy Thursday. And my dad never wanted my mother to slave over the stove on holidays. So that was gotten rid of, you know, sometime when I was young and so on Christmas and Easter, those kind of big holidays, my mother did not spend the whole day cooking. She made salads the day ahead. And that day she would put in a roast ham or a seasoned roast beef or whatever, and maybe bake some rolls. And so she did minimal cooking on those holidays and we ate off paper plates on those holidays.

So the only time that the whole big table was set with China was Holy Thursday. And the good China would come out. And we make the traditional unleavened bread and the traditional Charoset, which is the Jewish. It represents the mortar that the Israelites used to make the bricks when they were enslaved in Egypt. And the bitter herbs were always represented by a radish on the plate. We didn't know what other bitter herbs were. So we always had a radish and a little blob of this apple salad.

And we didn't make the unleavened bread in the old days, my mom went and bought matzo in the store, which was Jewish unleavened bread. There would be a whole packet of matzo leftover after we'd all have our little piece on Holy Thursday and she'd spread peanut butter on the leftover matzo and make my brothers eat it. But so very traditional and she had a cast iron mold that she makes the lamb cake in. So the lamb cake was made every holy Thursday and decorate it with this fluffy white frosting and two little raisins for eyes and a little pink jelly bean for the nose. And the lamb cake was always the center of the, I don't think we ate lamb for dinner in those days because it was too expensive.

Now we do buy a leg of lamb and have lamb, but she would just have a nice roast and we'd have the lamb cake to represent the lamb on holy Thursday. And we would read the prayers and then Good Friday was always, she always made hot cross buns and we always had oyster stew. And the kids that didn't like oyster stew would just get canned cream of celery soup and cheese and crackers, very simple meals. Because at that time, these holidays were days of fast and abstinence in the Catholic church. And so you ate minimally and you didn't eat meat. And she adhered very, very severely to those, to the point that, you know, she would have me taste the soup so she wouldn't accidentally put some soup in her mouth to make sure it was salted because she had to fast. And I was too little, I guess I didn't, you know, it was, she just really followed those rules and regulations of the Catholic church very closely in those days when we were growing up.

**Crain:** So what was Christmas like?

**Scheidecker:** Oh, Christmas was grand. How she ever found the energy to do this and to shop for that many children and to keep that many presents hidden, which she did hide in the closet in her bedroom because my sister, Jean, who was naughtier than I was dragged me in there one year to show me what she'd found in there. But I never looked after Jean made me look that one year. And then when the house got enlarged, my dad built this room that we called the storage room, but it could double as a bomb shelter, you know, concrete walls, concrete ceiling. And so my mom who canned fruit every fall and then those shelves down there were always lined with her canned fruit. And so if we ever had a nuclear war, we'd go in the bomb shelter and we'd eat canned fruit. And I don't know what we would do, but anyway, so Christmas.

Somehow they'd get us all in bed. And we did have strict rules after a certain year, when little kids got up way too early and caught my mom and dad in the act of filling the stockings. So then it was, we were put to bed. We could not, could not get up until 6:00 AM. And so we'd be downstairs in our rooms all night long, playing Chinese jump rope, playing card games, staying awake all night till 6:00 AM. So we could run up on Christmas morning and you know, nobody got huge amounts of stuff. You'd have your stocking with its little stocking stuffers, and everybody got one really nice present, and we always all got one new set of clothes. And so Christmas morning, you always had your one new set of clothes and your one really nice present and all your little stocking stuffers, and then it was just a magical day because everybody was playing with everybody else's stuff.

And, you know, between that many children, there was just a ton of new, fun things, new games to play new everything. And dinner was delicious, but my mother didn't have to work very hard at it. We always had the same favorite traditional salads that only got made once a year at Christmas.

**Crain:** Clark?

**Clark Grant:** I was curious, did you ever invent drinks at the soda fountain?

**Scheidecker:** Not that I put on the menu, but I was always experimenting. And my favorite drink when it was slow and I got to sit down and take a break, was a chocolate Coke, and I'd just go fix half Coke syrup and half chocolate and stir it up. And it was delicious and it wasn't on the menu. But my brother, Dan, when he took over as manager, Dan was very creative and very artistic. And so all the kind of homemade little signs that were all over the wall, he redid those and he airbrushed them and they were beautiful works of art that made the wall look less cluttered and junky and more really eye catching and popping.

And I think Dan probably invented some drinks because that's the kind of creative guy he was. And so for years it was only our family that worked there. But then as each child graduated and went off and had their life, then we had to start hiring people from outside the family. And in the end, that's kind of why Dan wanted to sell the store because the young teenagers that he hired did not have the work ethic that we had grown up with. And they would show up with their, you know, their little, my mother always made sure that our little uniform coverups and the guy's vests were always spotless and these kids would come in and they'd put their thing with the ice cream spills from the day before. And this kind of stuff just made my brother crazy. And, you know, in the end he just didn't have the heart for it anymore. When he was working with people

that did not care about the business the way we had cared about it. We did shut the ice cream store down once a year. We closed it between Christmas and new year. And so it was kind of a vacation from having, you know, my parents went down every single night and closed the store up. They never had the kids do that.

That kind of could be dangerous chore where somebody might come in at close up and rob you at gunpoint. So my parents always came down and my dad counted the till. My mother helped with mopping the floor and cleaning the counters, which the kids also helped with. But between Christmas and new years, we just cleaned the place immaculately top to bottom, everything possible. We did all the cleaning in that week, but also had a great holiday week of the week between Christmas and new year where nobody was, you know, nobody had to work because the store stayed open in the evening till nine o'clock in the summer and stayed open till seven o'clock in the winter time, until we moved to the bus depot, and then we had to keep it open until after the buses had come and gone, which was more like nine o'clock I think. I don't know.

**Grant:** You touched on a little bit on the decline of uptown culture and Hennessy's. I was curious if you ever observed any of the big fires, what your thoughts were on those?

**Scheidecker:** Oh, the fires were so very sad. The one that took out the JC Penny building and the buildings next to us and jumped the street and took out several buildings across the street happened while I was away at college in Kansas. It happened in January. And so we came home that summer and just saw this huge emptiness. The one that took out the medical arts building happened in the summertime when I was home and we were out. I had a boyfriend and my sister, Debbie had a boyfriend and we were out at Mel's Supper Club and Debbie's boyfriend was a volunteer firefighter.

And so while we were out at the supper club, he got the call that there was a big fire uptown, and it was the medical arts building, which still had businesses in it. It wasn't a vacant building. It was really hard to watch the decline and to watch Penny's fight against it, you know, and all these businesses knew that the Anaconda Company wanted them to move because Anaconda Company had tried to get them to move voluntarily and to create a new business district somewhere else. And they hadn't done that. So when Penny's had their big fire that destroyed their three story department store, they stayed uptown and they moved into several locations. So the Penny's home department was here.

The Penny's shoe store was here. The Penny's clothing store was here and they were in several locations, but Penny's was still uptown. And then they had, uh, another fire happened in one of their branches where they'd moved. You know, so they finally moved off too. So we owned the S&L when the place across the street, when the pre-release first came in across the street and was a pretty small operation when it started and pre-releasers came to be our customers, you know, so we knew who they were, they came and they hung out at the S&L. Because we were just across the street. And, you know, at first it seemed like a good thing because those buildings were in decline and the pre-release bought them and they restored their facades and they made them usable and looking good again, you know.

It was when they grew to the size that their population hangs out on the sidewalk in front in big groups that make people who live on the flat, very scared to be uptown to where people who live



down there. "I'm not going uptown." You know, that's when it made me angry and sad because uptown is Butte to me, not just its history, but its future. You know, if all of uptown disappeared, we would be like any other place in anywhere with our Harrison avenue strip and our malls. And what would we be? We'd be nothing without this history and these fabulous buildings that people who come from other places look up and stare in awe at what we have left, even after more than half of it is gone and they're amazed.

That's the decline that has made me really sad. And boy, am I just, you know, and that's kind of why we bought the Leonard is because, you know, and our Leonard kind of had a ripple effect because the Ueland family bought the Metal's Bank building a year after we bought the Leonard and totally restored that. And they did have bigger pockets, deeper pockets than the Rice's did, you know? And they were able to pull off a better thing than we managed to do. And, but yeah,

**Crain:** I would say that what you did was important and not being able to meet what you presumed your goal would be with the Leonard is one thing. But I think what you did was really important because it did salvage it and you have been a good steward of many historic properties. So I think that's it.

**Scheidecker:** Thank you. You were a good interviewer because I thought I couldn't do this at all.

**Crain:** Well, and your siblings would not come and say, "Well, it wasn't like that."

**Scheidecker:** Well, that's, you know, that's why I thought, well, my siblings should be here to tell this story because when they listen to this, there'll be, what are you saying that for? Because that's what we do. [. . .]

In Phoenix after my grandfather died and I loved it so much and it got dropped in the parking lot and run over. I remembered that it was mine and that I played it, even though it was cracked. And then years later, my sister Debbie said to me, that was not yours. That was mine. I bought that record. And then I thought about it for a long time, you know, days. And then I finally said, yeah, she dropped it in the parking lot.

And they got run over and she was mad and she didn't want it anymore. And I saved it and I played it even though it had that big crack in it, but she bought the classical, it was hers and I still have it. Okay.

[END OF RECORDING]