

The following interview was conducted with Dinka Eckersley by Blaine Lyons with the Star City Americorps History Project on November 9th, 2006, at F St Community Center.

BL: You were born in Sweden?

DE: Yes

BL: The name of the city?

DE: Stockholm

BL: Stockholm, Sweden...in 1939?

DE: Right

BL: So tell me a little about what it was like to grow up in Sweden in 1939

DE: Ok, well 1939 was beginning of the war but Sweden wasn't directly affected even though I do remember black outs--I remember windows being covered with cardboard and lights out and I remember flashlights being covered to go down on the ground which was kind of amazing anyway, but, I was born in Stockholm itself, but when I was 8, we moved out to a suburb and I had two brother and we lived in the suburb until I left home. It was, we had a very nice time. In those days it seems children had alot more freedom than they do now. We didn't really have a lot of organized games--we had little games--invented our own games. Most of my friends say that we wish kids growing up now could have the same experience. My father had worked for a bank, he was very old when I was born. He was 58 and he had a family already. So he had been married first 30 years to one woman and had five children then married my mother for 30 years and had three children. Those older children were really adults when we were born. Some were quite famous in Sweden or some of them were quite famous in Sweden and it was hard for us because we thought we needed to be as clever as they were. Even though we were very young Sweden is a very small country., maybe 9 and a half, those days it was probably eight million people. To be famous in Sweden wasn't that difficult Growing up in Sweden wasn't that different, but if you were growing up under a cloud of fame, that was hard on us I guess. I think, I left Sweden when I was 22, I needed to get out from under the cloud I guess and I found a school in London where I could study Graphic Design, which I what I did. And I have never

lived in Sweden since. Except I've been back to visit of course. And in England, I met my husband, we were students together and the rest is history, I guess.

BL: What was your husband majoring in?

DE: He was majoring in the same thing, we both went to--it was a monotechnic school. Specializing in everything to do with printing. So, we decided graphic design. His father was a graphic designer, he was also quite famous in England. So, I left one cloud to be trapped under another cloud. And I mean was worse for my husband to have this father who was known and now we have a son who is a graphic designer also. My husband died in April, he was also quite a well known designer. His family, his father was a graphic designer of course and he had three sons, who were all graphic designers and all married graphic designers so it was a big cloud, too many graphic designers, but that is what we did--yeah.

BL: Do you remember anything that your teachers and some of your classes--

DE: ok--you mean in high school?

BL: That you remember through the years? In grammar, high school, college?

DE: Ok, yes I think....I had a teacher when I was...in Sweden you grow up knowing that Swedish is not a very useful language. And only Swedish people speak Swedish. So, there is a lot of emphasis on learning other languages. And, I started learning English when I was 11. And I had a very good teacher who if it hadn't been for her, I probably wouldn't be here. She was teaching English and she also taught Swedish and I think she taught history, as well, yea, English, Swedish and I'm not sure about history, I can't remember. She was I don't know, perhaps the best teachers, are not always the best human beings? I think. The best teachers are dictators in the classroom. She was, we had to learn English for 2 years, just studying phonetics, we couldn't read real English at all, we had a book we had to put a hand over the English writing and then we learned to do the phonetics. Which really was a really good idea because it meant we learned phonetics. So, I know p phonetics. Which is a language, really you can use in any language if you know it. Really, it is how it sounds and I and so I am very grateful and interestingly enough, after 2 years of that

we went over to the proper English and it was no problem. I don't know how that worked, she had her own ideas of what to do with us I guess. In English, in Swedish, you don't really have the "o" sound, like "o", she would learn it while doing a task, she would go in front of the class and say "open" and we would learn to say "open." Even though you felt like idiots doing it. So, she, yeah, so she was probably the most important teacher that I had, I would say. And, then, when I went to college, it was fabulous for me really. I really, I mean, I thought it was drawn and my idea of doing good came from a book I saw in a book store, which talked about graphic design. I didn't know what it was but to see that it was good enough to read and I could do something that had to do with print. I thought in my young brain. I didn't want to be a painter. I felt that that was very unrealistic and I wanted to be you know, industrial. So, I studied actually, I was going to go to school in Sweden, in Stockholm and I did internships to do that and then I discovered that it would have made me more of a production person and I didn't want that so I talked to the Headmaster of the school and he suggested England. And my family was very Anglophile anyway. My father had lived in England in the early 1900's. And so I went, I had actually been in England before when I was 15. I went to a boarding school in the summer in England to learn English better. I came home and I said I want to move to England. And my parents said no. And it was very free, I had very easy going parents, it was the modern era of raising people without much ... I was never beaten or very disciplined I guess but a lot of sense of responsibility which I have done with my kids too. Not so obvious to other people sometimes. So, yeah, so then in school that I went to in London, I have a teacher who was well it was interesting in the same in this country, the war had this peculiar side effects apart from all the awful things that happened.

A lot of people left Germany and they came to all over the place and they came to England. And we had refugee teachers, often Jewish older very well educated. Not of graphic designers perhaps but they were better educated than graphic designers are now. They had a wider knowledge of the world and they were really good teachers and I had one

who liked me very much which is always good and he was very, they were very unorthodox they, England at this time, I went to school in 1962, it was the sixties, it was the Beatles, freedom, we didn't really participate, I met my husband in college, but I didn't, we didn't do that so much, we did go see a lot of movies but we didn't do the Swinging London. London, but without being swinging I guess. But we had in every class, we had 2 teachers. And must be 20 kids, 20 students and and we had 2 teachers, which is unheard of now. Certainly, it was an incredible luxury and sometimes we didn't understand that teachers didn't always like each other. But it meant that you had a choice. You might like one teacher better than another one. And you might learn more from that teacher or yeah it was luxury, it was incredible. At that time, even though my parents hadn't paid any taxes in England, tuition was free basically.. they hardly payed anything. And medical care was free, because I have eczema and I have to go to hospital sometimes in England for bad rash and ...free. My babies cost hardly anything when I had them in London, it was again a good time... it was at it's height, I think my babies cost around \$60, I mean 60 pounds, which is about \$180 now. And I could stay in the hospital for 9 days, which I did, so I could learn to be a good mother. Yeah, it was luxury.

BL: Were you married in London?

DE: Yep, I married my husband in London.

BL: Would you consider it a traditional wedding?

DE: Well, first of all, two things. I actually was married before, I married Ray Young in Sweden, to a painter, who was much older than I was. As I said before, I had this, my fathers first family were in their twenties even thirties when I was born. I tried to quickly become one of them so I married a friend of theirs, who was a painter. We went to London and then I met my husband and I knew. I divorced my husband and I wouldn't have married him if, yea....he wanted to be married and he was 38 and I was 21 and I was flattered and all that good stuff. Anyway, so then the second marriage, we wouldn't have married at all probably, we would have been together but we wouldn't have considered marriage important. But we went to Italy without being married--we tried to rent a room one time in Italy somewhere and the very older woman looked at us and said, "Are you married?" and we said no, we weren't married and then she said we couldn't have a room. That was the first time we'd ever heard

anybody having any problem with us not being married and then as we were going to have children, we knew we might as well get married. So we actually had a very registry office marriage.

BL: I see

DE: And it took 30 seconds basically. It was more radical than even we were I think at the time. And my mother-in-law and husband were witnesses and we were witnesses at their marriage a month later. So, yeah, very basic...it had serious repercussions because when my husband died in April, we thought we had everything organized and then I couldn't find my marriage certificate. So I talked to the Social Security Office and they said, Oh, ok,that's fine, we'll send you a list of possible alternatives and the first one was if you had any newspaper cuttings from our marriage--which of course we didn't, because we were in the USA. But if you had a witness, so I had two, so I called my mother-in-law's husband,who was still alive and he wrote and said, yes, he had been there and it was ok. Because they had to change over the social security so I could get additional.

BL: hmm mmm

DE: So that was kind of interesting

BL: it is interesting

DE: So we know we...what is very interesting is we were radicals in our little, ya know, we were anti...anti-authority I guess. Politically very left and that sort of thing. And now I find our son who is now 31 and he's talking about getting married and he's doing the whole business. He's having engagement rings and he's going to have wedding, a big one, and he's asked his future father-in-law for permission and that shocked me, terribly. I didn't realize I would be so shocked by that. Ya know and my daughters, we have 2 daughters and a son, but they tell me that he's the most radical of the family. He's the one that's road breaking like we did in a way.

BL: hmm mmm

DE: ...in a way he's breaking the ya know....So, that for me the most shocking things my children might have done is to be either probably in the military or a minister. Ya now, I'm not religious, so it swings round. Ya can't, I don't....

BL: You find it like they are doing the opposite of what you did?

DE: Yea, yea

BL: Yea, when did you come to America? and what made you decide to come to America?

DE: Ok, we lived in London and we taught which is very common in England and we taught graphic design and freelanced. And also, my husband had his first job and was actually he was a printer at a publishing company. I worked for a designer that worked for a publisher. So we were all into publishing I guess and we like to read and so on. And then we had a friend, in fact my husband's boss really, he knew an American who wanted to come to England. As an exchange, he didn't

know us. So we exchange jobs and houses.

BL: Oh

DE: And the American came to London and stayed in our house and we went to New England, and stayed in his house. And my husband took his job at the University of Massachusetts Press at the time. And the American taught at the school with the beginning students. And that made us feel like America was kind of nice. Ya know, it was possible. And you also understand that we didn't have to live in London. So we moved to Bathe in England and at that time you could have a tiny little cottage in London and sell it and buy a regency--1700 house in Bathe.

Because Bathe was too far from London at that time, the train took too long so we lived in Bathe for two years. And we shared a house with my mother-in-law and her new husband, the one that was the witness at the wedding.

BL: hmm mmm

DE: ...And we hadn't realized that she had a drinking problem. And we, it became impossible. At one time we lived together, when I was a student, we married in the last year at college and I moved into my husband's mothers and also a younger son lived in the house. And it worked really well because we were students and we were the young ones. She was the queen really. When we moved to Bathe and she moved in with us, I was the queen in the house. In her mind, I was the queen. I didn't care, but it became very difficult. And I, in a way, I had a life that she'd had a long time ago. I had small children, I had lots of friends, my life was wonderful and hers wasn't. So, we had, we couldn't, it didn't work, so then my husband's friend found, told him about a job in Ireland. My husband had studied in Ireland--he'd started college in Dublin, before he went to school in graphic design, he was studying a degree in Italian there before I met him. And Ireland was very close to his heart. So, we moved to Ireland, we were there for 6 years. He was working at a government agency that was to improve design in Ireland. After 6 years, it was obvious that this agency wasn't working as a team. It became more of a tourist shop. And that's when we thought we might move to America. Yeah and my husband wrote to various school in England and in America too. How do we get a job in England? America? So he got an early visa at the time...PH visa to teach, or something like that. And we all went to Philadelphia and this friend that we exchanged jobs and houses with long ago he knew of a job here. And he worked for the University of Massachusetts Press. And the university presses--there are many--hundred twenty in America, at least. They are very connected. Especially in the decision area or any other area actually.

BL: hmm mm

DE: So he got a job here. The University Press here had never had a designer before. But the director thought that it would be a good thing to have a designer. And of course no American would come to Lincoln, Nebraska, no designer would

come to Lincoln, Nebraska because where is Lincoln, Nebraska, I mean, in Philadelphia people said that they'd been to California, I mean Colorado, but they never heard of Nebraska. You had to be a foreigner really. So the University here and the director of the press, had to do quite a little work to get green card for my husband. And once he got a green card, we all did. So we all had green cards and that's why we are here. And we came in 81.

BL: So in 81 you started working for Nebraska press?

DE: University of Nebraska Press, yeah my husband did and then 6 years later I got a job there also. So I was here, I wasn't working, I was doing a lot of freelance. Lots of volunteer stuff which I have always been interested in doing. I learned to weave, also interviewing with various neighborhood association and PTA and the school and you know my kids were quite young so and then I also got the job in 87 then we both worked there and we thought we made it, we hadn't really come here to stay because we also had this idea that we had to live on the east coast or west coast or whatever. We thought we would stay some years and then when I got a job also, it was hard for us to think we could both get jobs. My husband actually got a job in the Smithsonian and he stayed for one day and then he came back--then he also had an offer of a job at Yale. At the time, I said I'm not moving because my son was just in high school then and I didn't want to move him. And I think we felt also that earlier on, to move the kids, we moved them halfway round the world already that they should now be able to stay here. And I, ya know for me it's been good, for my husband, it's been really good in his job I mean he's done very well in his work. I think he wasn't very happy here. He didn't make a lot of friends, but that was his fault really. He worked alot. So, that what, yea...

BL: Was there a big difference between, you talked about earlier on, people not knowing where Nebraska was, was it the cultural things you had to adjust to like moving from Philadelphia to here.

DE: I think when we were in Philadelphia we, my husband taught at the Arts school that is connected to it's called Tyler school of art and its next to university, quite a radical university and very good one. But because he was teaching at Tyler, we lived in a suburb in Philadelphia which turned out to be a very jewish suburb and schools were excellent. They were amazing I would say. But it was also, it was very jewish. I made friends with people. At one time, I was in a situation, I invited some people to my house and one of the people had converted from being jewish to being protestant because her husband was a protestant I guess. And that went very badly. I mean, I just listened to them. I didn't know anything about it but..it was..but it was a solid jewish community, the whole place was Jewish. So, I the way they dealt with the food in school, they always had dishes for people who couldn't eat the food, I mean...

BL: hmmm mmmm

DE: So, I think they would have got a better education there, I think probably. But I think...we liked Philadelphia we liked it there, but I liked it there I mean it's been good here I think but it was different. I mean one of the things any foreigner meets here I think is...why are you here? We've had that so many times which I think indicates a notion that no one wants to be here unless they are born here. I'm now in a situation where my husband died and people are saying, where are you going to live? I mean you're Swedish and you lived in England and you lived in Ireland, and I've been looking into, I've been traveling a lot this fall but I think I've been here now 25 years. I have roots here. I have a lot of friends here, and I plus it is much cheaper here. I can travel. I think that to me you have to if you live here. It is a very people have said that's probably true. So many people here... grew up here and have family around them. Do not understand what it's like to not have that. And not necessarily completely welcoming to foreigners or strangers. I mean they don't because them themselves have not been in that situation. I mean people are...people are inviting me to church and stuff that's quite a common. They want you to I mean the church is kind of like a social club to some extent, and I, I have that. I think that exists but in terms of what I've heard is that people. It's not easy to come as a newcomer here, I think it's probably because people are not ... no experience of being one themselves. So they don't.. they don't try or they don't invite or they do invite but they don't follow up or something. I must say that's not been so much my experience. But I think it helps if you have a job, if you have a job, you meet people, in your job, and that's a big difference. You meet children I mean you meet people when you have children, you meet people if you have a dog I think, but then you meet people at work but if you don't have those it's not so easy, that's what I think.

BL: Do you feel it's kind of a, like you said, if you grew up here you have family, in generations back that when you come in it's like a newcomer and it's kind of cliq-ish.

DE: Uhm?

BL: And not so much in a bad way, but just that we're with this group, we invite you in, but you have to think like us....

DE: Well you mean, I know, politically I think one of the things that when we come to this country we had to swear that we were not communists, ya know. That we were husband and wife and three kids and the youngest about 5 or 6. We had lots of friends who were communists in England. At that time there was much more like being an idealist actually, and I think communism in it's real.. I mean, Marx. It's Marx notion is more like Christianity, I mean I don't know the fear of communists, we escaped the Cold War.. was this notion if you were communists you were, I dunno, a bad person. And I think the whole to me, the conservative climate here is hard to accept. I must say in that sense Sweden has more of a nexus. Sweden I realize, that I have in me a notion that of familists which is a different one here, the notion

here is that I have the right to own what I make. That's a different attitude than Sweden. A Swedish attitude you feel that you have to look after people who are not as lucky as you. You have and the idea that you pay taxes according to your level of income and if you have a high income you pay more tax because you've been lucky and that money goes into paying for healthcare or I'm really tired of all the fundraisers and all the noise about how bad taxes are. I can't ..I don't ...It's a difference that is inbred I think that in from the beginning it's almost like a racial thing. We talked about United Nations one time, in a group that I was in and somebody pointed out, that you can either think of the individual as an important, which we do here in a way... the western notion to be happy and to be fulfilled and to have a good life for the individual. There's some cultures where you're more interested in the group. I haven't thought in those terms, but I think maybe it's a little more like that in Sweden. Even though, of course the individual is very important. But the group idea is that the group supports the individual...it's in a more fair system and I can't, I find it hard to accept here that everything here seems to be given to the ones who are healthy and wealthy and goodlooking and I mean it's all.. I think it's Calvinistic, ya know. Ray used to talk about it, it's like if you are poor, it's your fault. But I think that you're just lucky if you're born in the right place, you could be born in Africa and yeah so that's I think there's a big difference. I mean this is a very conservative state and it's embarrassing. I mean I think the whole election system probably doesn't work to have two parties and especially it doesn't work to have it all funded the way it is. So then money can buy, I mean nobody could run to office who doesn't have the warchest. Then the way the companies can buy votes...I don't..it doesn't work.

BL: Well apparently I mean, it seems in this country, the people that make more money pay less taxes.

DE: I know.

BL: ..and when I was, do you think the education in Europe is a better format the way they do it then opposed to here?

DE: I don't know, I mean I suppose from my point of view, Europe actually doesn't exist, I mean it does exist of course, but there is no, if you live in Italy or Spain well you know that, but I mean, in Spain, Germany, or Sweden, I mean, these are different countries. They are not like different states, they are, yes they are in that sense. I mean I hear in Lincoln, Nebraska, of course there are a lot of Swedish descendants, I hear it all the time, they say, "I am Swedish too!" But they have never been, and they don't speak the language and so on, of course. But they will also talk about Scandinavia and nobody in Sweden would talk about Scandinavia. Really, it's not, Sweden is too different from Norway, from the outside it's not, but the inside yes, and I think it's the same with Europe. So I can't speak for the education system, the English system I wouldn't have thought this perhaps earlier, but I do think the

English system is based on specialization early and I used to think that was a bad thing. Because I thought that then you miss out, ya know. You choose your scientific area and then you miss out on all the others. I don't think that now, it's kind of important to have achieved something and I say in my son's case, this is going back, not to America, this is a little bit circular here, but my son played baseball in school and he played for Lincoln High. I always thought, okay, it's really good for him to experience that you're not so good and you are learning. In what's good you learn it and next year you lifted some weights or you've done some running so you've improved, you get better at it, and eventually you get really good at it. And I think the English system has a system where you, my husband, for example, when you go to high school you have two years. By that time, you've picked so you've chosen so in his case he did. English and History, the two subjects he spent two years on, by that time, which means by the time you go to college, and this is when Americans go to England to study they have to actually do an extra year because they can't... they're not on the level. If you came as a high school graduate and you're going to do history in England, you can't, you're not on the level. People have already done their two years, so they are already at their bachelors level. Only Americans I think knows what that means. You know my husband was very intelligent and very well educated. But what he could do in terms of conversation, he had hooks in those subjects, you could always turn it to, I mean, because you have the knowledge. I feel I had more of an American education where you had towards the end of high school, you had an exam at that time. But you had carried nine subjects and of course you had them at the lower levels. And I feel very ignorant, I wish I had more certainly in history, I wish I had more, not so much the real dates, but just to know which century things happened. I think I don't and I'm..I think thats, yeah. In that sense I think the more specialized system is the better one.

BL: When I was stationed in Germany I was told that the person in high school for instance had to learn a language of the country that surrounded them and they had to learn English...

DE: Mmmhmmmm...

BL: Where as opposed to here, that you know, that if you're going to college prep courses in high school, then you have to take a foreign language. But over there, especially in Germany that they had to take those classes you know, regardless and then when they got high school age, they either went to a vocational type thing or to the university.

DE: mmmhhhmmmm...

BL: And here we don't steer our people, the kids, one way or the other. If you're not looking to a university, you don't start preparing yourself for a vocational avenue. And you know, essentially go through with the rest of the class and graduate. You're not really prepared to do any vocational and I thought that was to separate early

and start working on a vocational skill, would be more beneficial than you know, then to not....

DE: I think then, I think what I understand from the situation here is that at one time high school you really, you learned a lot. That was a long time ago, that was my generation kind of. But high school now is nothing and now you have to and so many people go to university and perhaps and if they are told they can go to university you are going to earn more money. That's the way it's sold, but you have that..means university should probably be for a certain people who have the interests of scholarship. It shouldn't be, again, it's always the money thing that comes in. And then of course it costs a lot of money to go, but I think that of course the problem is always you have the situation where some kids...I know I have friends in Holland who have had that situation. If you steer towards the vocational fairly young and you suddenly find that you are actually...that you would like to go to university, sorry, you can't do that because you've missed out. I mean, you can you know and this country has this wonderful and I think other countries are learning from that. But you can go back, you can as an older person, go back to school. And I think that's for the longest time it was not so in England. I mean you are eighteen and you are at university but you could not go back when you were twenty-four or thirty or something. And that's, yeah, that's a gift. And I think that's a gift for classes to, because you have the young and then you have somebody older who has more experience that could be sort of a mother or father figure in the class. So I think that's something America's really good at.

BL: I think sometimes you graduate out of high school and you don't really know what you want to do and get some experience and you decide this is what I want to do, but you are already twenty-three or twenty-four and here you are allowed to go back and pursue that.

DE: Yes, absolutely...and by that time you know what you want, I mean I suppose with my kids but I didn't. They went to college and then they worked, all of them actually, for some years. And then they went back into masters, which is hard, but how I wanted it to be. There's certain times when you don't, you need to know, for one thing that school is for you and you're not for the school. High school is hard to understand that...school tells you what to do all the time. So you have to grow up a little and know that it is you and it is your life. But you don't know that until you are out of there.

BL: Yeah.

DE: So yeah.

BL: Did you live in this area in Lincoln, in this neighborhood for quite a while?

DE: Yes, we moved here...we arrived five o'clock in the morning, by train from Philadelphia and that afternoon we had found an apartment and it's been in this area all the time, yeah. We like this area very much and the kids went to the Lincoln

schools, and they all went to Lincoln High School, and they all went to Everett, and McPhee, depending on how ...Everett changed was middle school of course, junior high before Park was. So yeah.

BL: Has the, well certainly, has changed in the neighborhood. Can you tell me a little bit about the changes the neighborhood has gone through since you moved here?

DE: Well there is a fear in Lincoln of this neighborhood, I mean people there's always fear of the unknown. We've had no problems, we've sidled at night, we've had no problems. And maybe we're lucky but I think it's, I was involved with something called Strengthening Neighborhoods. Which was kind of a misguided idea. I don't know if you can strengthen a neighborhood really but unless a neighborhood wants to strengthen itself possibly, but at the time we, this was a move by population and over population is bad for the schools, the kids have to move to another school. At the same time, you realize some of the reasons people moved out of the rental apartments, they might get a house and their life might be better somewhere else. Of course, I have an attitude about rentals, I own my own house but in Stockholm, many people live in rentals all their lives, that is what they do. Of course now they tend to buy them, that's changed. But I think here the attitude is that living in a rental place is that it is not good. And another is to go on the bus is not good. Mostly people have never been on the bus and the rental places, when you go look at them, they look terrible and that is, that doesn't have to be and I think there should be much more people living in there should be much denser population in this area. And down town, and then you could have this proper transport system because I think it's crazy how we live with our cars. And that's, but in terms of, I haven't directly experienced how things happened here, I hear it I think..I am involved with something called Tea & Talk, which is a group of women, who are interested in International issues and this Saturday I'm having, they usually come to my house and I am having a woman talk about what it is like to be an African-American in Lincoln, which interests me very much, it's really hard to be an African-American in Lincoln because there is no, there isn't the whole range of classes really. If you go to St Louis or you go to Chicago, you only need to be in the airport and you can see middle class black Americans who are just like whites. What you see here is, you see athletes and then you see unhappy, uneducated, bitter young men generally. Or pregnant, it's really bad for everybody, it's really bad to see that, I mean to not have a role model. I think you learn obviously from your parents and then you learn from your parents' friends who you see and if there is no model of and you feel as a black person that, especially young men, if you see yourself, if you study hard and you're being told you are behaving in a white way. I see just opposite the street from me, I have a whole crew of young men who...they need alot of help. That's what I think.

BL: Has there been an ethnic change in the neighborhood--do you feel in the past few years?

DE: I don't know, in my, again in my neighborhood, I live 2 blocks south of A on 14th street and I have a rental apartment and house just opposite me. I've had in the last few years, I've had the experience, first a family from Guatemala and they had about 3 or 4 kids I think and they it was very interesting. They didn't have much room to grow, they only had a parking lot beside them but the family was always together and if there was a child who, a younger child that would follow, they had a system and there was a togetherness and if they had a party.... We also had a mexican family opposite us and they had a high school reunion or high school or somebody taking their high school diploma--they would be--the whole family, aunts, uncles, their whole family, huge family, lots of music, lots of party and this Guatemalen family was very supportive of each other I think. Now, they've moved away, and the families now are black mostly and there is, it is hard to understand how the family, who is who. There is a lot of young men who I don't quite know who they are and a lot of cars--there is a woman there who I know--I don't know who she is married to and I also see her children, not her children but other black children....so much but the other young children who are basically told no and they take chances because they expect to get no. I, to me, if I was raising children, the important think was that they have a sense of responsibility inside them, they have a sort of inner parent really. Not waiting for someone to say no and of course I see this no business all the time anyway, in shops, not just the blacks, its the whites too. That a child picks up a can in the supermarket and gets a sort of slap on the hand and say no, then the child starts crying and then you get another slap for crying. They could make fun out of it and say this is a can of beans, let's take it back. Can you find another one or could you help me to put it in the basket. That's a parental learning and if you don't have it or you've never seen anybody doing that, then you don't know how to do it.

BL: You mean like a good role model?

DE: Yea, of course, I mean when you ask about--if the change.. there is a much more hispanic presence and of course much more hispanic shops...the supermarket near us, the B&R, that we call it still. They have ethnic foods. They have shelves of ethnic foods. And the spanish language is creeping into all sorts of things--you have things translated into spanish. So, yeah things have certainly changed there. I think, yeah.

BL: Did you have, and you don't have to answer this, did you go through the citizenship process?

DE: No, and I will. I saw the notice and I'll take the classes and for a long time, I couldn't do it. If I become an American, I would lose my Swedish citizenship. Sweden wouldn't allow dual, but that has changed. United Nations have, European

community rather has changed that. Sweden now you can have dual and I think it's time I did it. My daughter has done it she's the only one so she did it last April and she is now American and it's obvious that I should do it.

I also found out there is certain economical situations -- there aren't many that are some different that which they are not going to directly affect me but I think it is time. And it's embarrassing not being able to vote. I was very embarrassed when I was here on Tuesday and people had the "I voted today" and I couldn't have it. So...

BL: Like I said earlier, you get a copy of this and a CD...what do, if any, do you want your children to learn from this--from your experience and to get from the CD of this interview?

DE: Well, I think they probably don't know, I mean, I haven't told that much in depth, I probably should tell them that subject anyway, but we are going to Sweden in June and my teacher came and my husband died in April and we went back and one of my kids had been there for a year so she in a sense she was the ambassador to learn about Sweden. They, but I think this time, my brother who is still in Sweden took his uncle's rather seriously and told them all about the family...probably more than they wanted to know anyway but they feel, I think it's not just I, who have a Swedish inheritance, maybe, they do too. Even now it's not very, they haven't lived there, although they've summered there ???? island, they spent the summer and they would they have some memories. One in particular, she didn't really, she hadn't been there for a very long time and so I think they now feel that, they and also perhaps after my husband died we better get on with this together because we are the only ones left Eckersley is very bad at and we don't have a lot of family. My husband's two brothers have died and his parents have both died. We have the step father is still alive, but otherwise family is actually very bad at keeping, I mean we know there are people out there but we don't know them very well. And I mean I can say family doesn't matter but it does in the end, who is going to come and ya know, yeah, family matters. I think and my family of course is horrendously big and complicated. And my brother knows all about them and I know nothing about them or try not to but it's kind of nice to go back and feel like you are a part of the family. So I it's easy to say, my kids say they have a very small family so in a sense they can get that but they know. I think one of the things that I didn't and I wish I hadn't probably one you know when I was growing up in Sweden I was the artist sort of speak. I left very young, I wasn't an artist, it's what I do..I was the drawing person. And I enjoyed being that, everybody else was writing or something like that. And then I got into the Eckersley family and my God everybody was being a designer. So, I really didn't want and then if the kids did something in school, the teachers would say but your parents are artists. Well, I didn't want that so I really kept, I don't think we told them enough. In fact, my oldest daughter has said that she it hadn't even occurred to her that she could go into some kind of

design, art school or something like that. Now the other two, the little one is now, after some search, she is now a fashion, has a fashion company and she is a fashion designer and the younger, my son is a designer, so those two went into that, actually and the older daughter is always done cards and things so in a way she is a designer too but we did keep it very quiet and they don't, the English way of life and maybe the Swedish too is very understated. Much more understated than here. When I taught at the University for a year, somebody else was going to be gone on leave. So, he suggested I take his job. So, I wrote a resume of my knowledge, of what I had behind it and my resume was you know, paper a bit like that. and he said that is much too short. Ok, so I yeah, I could pad it and have pages of it and I did. I mean that different and I think the same, with we didn't tell our kids if we'd done something...we run to war or something. It's not, that's not, there's a certain arrogance in that I think..I mean Richard's father first of all, who was a designer and ran them in Sweden or rather England, he made posters, especially during the war. He was, you would see his posters in the underground and he would do posters for the war effort. You know, don't talk because people could hear you or don't walk on ladders which have a bad, ya know, he would make a design out of it. That's ok. I lost my line. I went too far back and I can't remember what I was talking about. Sorry, yea, I don't know..

BL: So, it would be like that "Loose lips sink ships?"

DE: Yea, that was his, yea, he anyway oh yea, I was going to say so he had various awards in his life, he had an O.B. which you get from the Queen, it's not nobility, but it's a medal, and you can have that after your name, you can have your name, the O.B. and ok, he never did--too famous for that. He just had his name. And I think my husband was the same, he could also have things after his name, it doesn't mean that he doesn't think he was good, it meant you don't blow your trumpet because if you do....here, people do, and it's a little hard. It's a little hard I think even in my design, when they had the bikes here, the Tour of Lincoln, when they had these bikes that were painted?

BL: oh yes

DE: I did some bikes, I have some bikes in Lincoln--then later on they did one about the stars. Did you hear about that? I can see in my design, I am unfreely, very low key and that is my heritage I think. It's not American, but thats what I am, I try to be more freely, but I can't so ya know..

BL: Is there anything else you would like to say--you have such an interesting life and career--that I think I could sit here for another hour and talk...

DE: The tape might run out

BL: yes

DE: Well, I don't know, I've been very lucky I think in many ways, very many ways actually and I am mostly happy, I think, even though, which is luck in that too, I've

had a good time. I usually have a lot of friends, I've been involved with society here. I've been especially with them and I might be saying maybe in this Tea and Talk group which has been going for twenty years. I have not been involved all that time but different formats, it started under a professor at the university who found there were a lot of students who came here from other countries who have, whose spouses had nothing to do. So, she started to invite them to her house and then she thought I could take the spouses out to visit small towns in Nebraska and it would be good for the spouses to meet Nebraskans and Nebraskans to meet the foreign spouses. So, she started it and now it has various meeting times? Some years ago we invite speakers to come and we had a speaker from Catholic Social Services who came to tell people in Nebraska about refugees. And she talked to the group and she said what you can do---you could sponsor a refugee family and so we talked about that and we thought it meant, have a fruit bowl and see that they have furniture or I don't, we had no idea what it meant, anyway we get a phone call, yes this family has arrived, they are from Pakistan and if you could come and visit with them it would be nice. So three of us went to see them and they had only just arrived and that was 6 years ago. They had travelled from Pakistan to New York and they hadn't slept and they had one suitcase and they were shellshocked. We heard that they couldn't speak English but the son could actually speak a bit. Anyway, that family happened to live near me and I've been knowing them ever since, I taught them to drive, took them to the shops, I still deal with Immigration. I became a sort of grandmother I guess, they have a grandmother with them but I've been dealing with immigration which is insane. And we have found a lot of immigrants or a lot of refugees, they fought some of their...., it's a daughter, three kids and her mother and we have found a brother and he lives in St. Petersburg. We've been trying to get him over here and the INS wouldn't believe he was the son so we've got him DNA tested, we've, I mean it's been amazing. I've learned...what they have--one is in Southeast Community College and the next son is a senior in high school and the little girl is completely American except they speak of course their own language at home. But, yeah, that's been very interesting.

BL: It sounds very interesting

DE: Yeah

BL: I want to thank you very much for doing this interview

DE: OK, Thank you--you probably got more than you wanted

BL: It was very interesting