

An Interview with
Judith Hanses

at *The Historical Society of Missouri* St. Louis
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interviewed by Dr. Blanche Touhill
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Oral History Program

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PREFACE

The interview was taped on a placed on a tripod. There are periodic background sounds but the recording is of generally high quality.

The following transcript represents a rendering of the oral history interview. Stylistic alterations have been made as part of a general transcription policy. The interviewee offered clarifications and suggestions, which the following transcript reflects. Any use of brackets [] indicates editorial insertions not found on the original audio recordings. Physical gestures, certain vocal inflections such as imitation, and/or pauses are designated by a combination of italics and brackets []. Any use of parentheses () indicates a spoken aside evident from the speaker's intonation, or laughter. Quotation marks [""] identify speech depicting dialogue, speech patterns, or the initial use of nicknames. Em dashes [—] are used as a stylistic method to show a meaningful pause or an attempt to capture nuances of dialogue or speech patterns. Words are *italicized* when emphasized in speech or when indicating a court case title. Particularly animated speech is identified with **bold** lettering. Underlining [] indicates a proper title of a publication. The use of underlining and double question marks in parentheses [(??)] denotes unintelligible phrases. Although substantial care has been taken to render this transcript as accurately as possible, any remaining errors are the responsibility of the editor, Josephine Sporleder.

Judith Hanses 11-30-2015

Blanche Touhill: Would you introduce yourself?

Judith Hanses: I'm Judith Hanses.

Blanche Touhill: Would you talk about your youth: your parents, your siblings, your cousins, anybody that you played with, how did you play. Just talk about your youth and then tell me, who in your family encouraged you to be what you wanted to be.

Judith Hanses: Okay. I grew up in Kansas City, Missouri on a block where the grade school was across the street so it was a block of houses full of kids, a half a block of houses full of kids and I was the oldest kid on the block so I, of course, was the biggest troublemaker. But I grew up feeling like I was growing up in an important time and a real time because I remember collecting papers for the paper drives during World War II, collecting tin cans, saving fats and oils, that sort of thing but it was happy. I think everybody was poor so nobody knew they were but we were just making ends meet and doing what we needed to do to help the war effort.

Blanche Touhill: Did you have a nickel for the theater, for the movies?

Judith Hanses: Well, our parents took us on Friday night to see a cowboy movie, usually Roy Rogers but it could have been somebody else.

Blanche Touhill: Hop-Along Cassidy or somebody like that.

Judith Hanses: Even some old Tom Mix movies occasionally. It was fun.

Blanche Touhill: And did you play with the boys and girls, both?

Judith Hanses: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: With these kids on the block?

Judith Hanses: The kids on the block seemed to me...I guess we had some of both but I tended to play with the boys a little bit more when I was younger because they were climbing trees and fences and playing baseball at the grade school playground and I did more things like that or my brother and I dug up the back yard to make what we thought was going to be a miniature golf course and then we tried to make it into...thought it would be more exciting to make it into some sort of sluicing operation where we ran the hose and the water all through it and had a ball. We didn't get

in any trouble over that. I don't think there was much grass in the back yard in those days so it didn't matter.

Blanche Touhill: Was it an irrigation system?

Judith Hanses: Well, it could have been, whatever our imagination took us. It could have been.

Blanche Touhill: Was your brother older or younger?

Judith Hanses: Younger.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, you were the oldest one on the block.

Judith Hanses: The oldest one on the block. I have one brother a year younger and one four years younger and a sister who's four years younger.

Blanche Touhill: Did the public school have a summer playground system?

Judith Hanses: Yes, they did.

Blanche Touhill: And did you play on it?

Judith Hanses: Oh, yes. We went all kinds of fun places and things. I remember going to the Folgers Coffee Company in downtown Kansas City for a tour and to the Manor Bakery, to the Borden's Dairy and then, other kids at other grade schools, playing baseball against them and we went on the streetcar and the bus. There was none of this charter stuff like the kids have today.

Blanche Touhill: Did you have streetcar passes?

Judith Hanses: No, we just paid when we went.

Blanche Touhill: I say that because in St. Louis, the children used to buy streetcar passes and you bought them in school and then you got them for a week or something.

Judith Hanses: No, I don't remember anything like that.

Blanche Touhill: I think in the summer we had to pay if we went on a bus or streetcar.

Judith Hanses: Right. It seemed to me, the recreation program provided the passes for that.

- Blanche Touhill: Oh, I bet they did.
- Judith Hanses: But it was a fun time.
- Blanche Touhill: What did you play? Did you play baseball?
- Judith Hanses: Baseball, mostly baseball. I loved badminton and volleyball. I got real good at those and so it was fun. At least I would win sometimes because it's kind of discouraging when you never win.
- Blanche Touhill: That's right.
- Judith Hanses: It was a lot of fun. We were pretty active. I roller skated on the sidewalks.
- Blanche Touhill: Did you play in the streets?
- Judith Hanses: Our parents weren't too happy about us being in the streets, but as long as we were...and, of course, we had the playground right across the street so we had a place to go to play.
- Blanche Touhill: Especially baseball and things like that...volleyball where you would have the...
- Judith Hanses: ...have what we needed, the equipment, yeah, right.
- Blanche Touhill: Yes, and the equipment to get out, yes. Did they have a pageant every year?
- Judith Hanses: Not a pageant but I remember our school having a so-called picnic but there was no food involved. It was all rides and games but it was nothing they brought in like today. We had a large elephant constructed out of wood and batting and gray cloth and they would pull us around on that, maybe a fish tank but that's all I remember.
- Blanche Touhill: Did you play dolls?
- Judith Hanses: I never was much into dolls. I had them and they were fine but I wasn't into playing with dolls but my sister was really into playing dolls and so when I got just a little bit older...by the way, we learned to sew and crochet and knit and embroider young. We learned that young because they were skills that...and my grandparents especially, you had to have...if you were going to have clothes or bedding, you had to have that. So we learned it early. So fairly early I started making my own clothes and then

from the scraps I would make doll clothes for my sister. So she had a really big wardrobe. I asked her recently if she still had any of those and she did.

Blanche Touhill: Well, she ought to give those to a historical society.

Judith Hanses: She should.

Blanche Touhill: Because that is something.

Judith Hanses: I'll mention that to her. History means something to her. It really does to me. I love it. I just eat it up anywhere I go, loved coming here to see the things on the wall of the Missouri Historical Society-St. Louis Chapter, and it's just so exciting. The first thing I did when I came here was start learning about what's here and what's the background and why is it here and why is it done that way...love it.

Blanche Touhill: Kansas City and St. Louis, they say Kansas City faces west and St. Louis faces east?

Judith Hanses: It did when I was growing up, I think, because I'd never been to St. Louis until it was time to come here. I did a dietetic internship after college at Barnes and in those early years, yes, I thought of it that way and especially in Kansas City when I would go shopping when I was young in the downtown stores, you would see guys sitting and waiting for their wives and they'd have on boots and ten-gallon hats.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, they did?

Judith Hanses: And they would be coming mostly from Western Kansas and Colorado, not so much Texas, and some Oklahoma. I would see that and the minute I got to St. Louis, I never saw that.

Blanche Touhill: No, you don't.

Judith Hanses: Never. I remember one other thing when I came to St. Louis. I grew up where there were blue eyes everywhere...blue eyes, blue eyes, blue eyes. I came to St. Louis and everybody had brown eyes. What is this? It was different.

Blanche Touhill: Was it the Scandinavian heritage?

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Judith Hanses: Well, no, I think it was more the Irish, huge Irish population and Scots Irish also.

Blanche Touhill: In Kansas City?

Judith Hanses: In Kansas City.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, it did have a heavy Irish and Scotch Irish population.

Judith Hanses: Right, it did. So it was strange to me to come here and see all these brown eyes.

Blanche Touhill: Well, who in your family encourage you, or did anybody encourage you?

Judith Hanses: Well, I think there was an atmosphere there.

Blanche Touhill: Were grades important?

Judith Hanses: Yes, grades were important. My parents were always very pleased but encouragement-wise, we just always knew that it was our job, and I asked my sister about this recently, "How did you feel when we were growing up? Did you know what Mom and Dad expected of us? They never really said much," and she said, "No, they didn't" but I knew that I was expected to go to college because my Dad had to work on the farm as soon as he finished 8th grade and my mom was very fortunate and got to go to high school and that was that, but their ambitions for us...although they never especially vocalized it...we just knew we were going to college.

Blanche Touhill: Did all your siblings go to college?

Judith Hanses: All of us went, not all of us graduated, not all of us finished but we all went.

Blanche Touhill: Did their children go to college?

Judith Hanses: Some, yes.

Blanche Touhill: And some not?

Judith Hanses: More, yes and some, no.

Blanche Touhill: I've often thought even if you go to college for a year or two, I've often thought that pays off in the long run.

- Judith Hanses: I think it does.
- Blanche Touhill: Because it's something that at least your family thinks about.
- Judith Hanses: Yeah.
- Blanche Touhill: If you've never gone to college, you say, "Well, my father and mother made a good living doing X, Y and Z and my friends, their families..."...what is it that makes people decide to go to college? It's more than just getting a job. It's that whole...
- Judith Hanses: It's more than that. Yeah, it is.
- Blanche Touhill: It's curiosity, I think, and delight when you find something that you like.
- Judith Hanses: From the time I was really young, I was interested, as I told you, in sewing and I was also very interested in food and food preparation and everything to do with that. The summer I was going to be 12...I was 12 because my birthday's in December but that summer I said to my mother, "I need to learn how to put a meal together so I can cook all those things and they come out at the right time."
- Blanche Touhill: Yes, that's the trick, isn't it?
- Judith Hanses: It is a trick. I think I could do it better than I can now. So, one whole summer I did that and my father had started a business after World War II and we were all involved in that because we knew that meant whether we did okay or whether he had to go find another job and my mother was very much a part of that. But it was very close. He came home for lunch every day and so there was a full meal at lunch and then a lighter meal in the evening for dinner or supper as it was called then. So, it was a perfect opportunity. She even taught me how to make them think it was almost on the table when it wasn't.
- Blanche Touhill: That's a nifty trick.
- Judith Hanses: It was simply a matter of putting the silverware and the napkins and the glasses of milk or water on the table and so it looked like it was imminent.
- Blanche Touhill: Everybody was ready.

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- Judith Hanses: Yeah. It worked real well for me when I was first doing it, until I got the hang of it.
- Blanche Touhill: So you were always interested in food?
- Judith Hanses: Always. By the time I hit high school...and in those days that meant 8th grade, was at the high school...I knew then that I wanted to be a dietician and I notice kids now just change so many times but I knew then and I knew that's what I was going to do. So I went to Kansas State University because Missouri...
- Blanche Touhill: Oh, now, wait. You're ahead of the game.
- Judith Hanses: Okay, I'll wait.
- Blanche Touhill: Well, finish that then. So you went to Kansas State because they had a program and Missouri didn't?
- Judith Hanses: Missouri had a small program. It has a wonderful program now but in those days, K-State was so much better and it was the same distance to either school.
- Blanche Touhill: Did you get in-state fees or did you have to pay out-of-state?
- Judith Hanses: You had to pay out-of-state tuition. I remember in those days it was about \$650 a semester and that's a far cry from what it is now.
- Blanche Touhill: Oh, yes, but \$600...that was a lot of money too.
- Judith Hanses: It was.
- Blanche Touhill: I mean, that was a lot of money.
- Judith Hanses: It was.
- Blanche Touhill: Then talk about your elementary and secondary school. Were you a leader? Did you play in a band? Did you act? Talk about your extracurricular activities, if you had any.
- Judith Hanses: I loved school. There weren't a whole lot of extracurricular activities in those days. I loved school but I hated school because it meant I had to pay attention to that all the time instead of whatever might be on my brain. But I did well and it seemed like I would lose track of where the teacher was sometimes but I learned later that I was just moving ahead

of where they were. I kept wondering, what's wrong with me? Why can't I pay attention? Why didn't they tell me then? It would have been easier to deal with because then I learned later that that was okay; that meant something good, not something bad. I was in the school Christmas play one year as the understudy for Mary in the Christmas play and fortunately or unfortunately, the girl who had the lead...her name was Barbara...was not sick that day so...and we had the opportunity to learn to play piano. I remember getting stuck in the middle of whatever simple song I was playing and I said, this is not going to happen, talking to myself, and I just kept playing until I finally figured out where to go from there and my mother told me later, she was in the audience about ready to die but she knew my determination so she knew I would get out of there at some point.

Blanche Touhill: Isn't that funny. She knew you'd land on your feet.

Judith Hanses: She did.

Blanche Touhill: Well, that's a wonderful trait to have.

Judith Hanses: Well...

Blanche Touhill: Did you recognize that you had that trait?

Judith Hanses: I don't know that I did. I think I just took it for granted, that I was going to succeed.

Blanche Touhill: You weren't going to give up.

Judith Hanses: No, not going to give up, that I would succeed.

Blanche Touhill: Was there a teacher that said to you you have ability or you should think about college or what do you want to do when you grow up?

Judith Hanses: I don't remember that there ever was one but there were a couple of teachers, Miss Buckley and Miss Setting who were particularly encouraging but I'm thinking that was their personality. They probably were that way with everyone but they were very encouraging, like, "Just keep at it; keep going." But I don't remember in particular, no, and in those days, the scariest thing that could ever happen to you was that you would be sent to the principal's office and I never wanted to go there so

there was never a question that I would. I don't remember anybody ever going to the principal except a couple of hooligan boys.

Blanche Touhill: I often think about the principal in my high school because he was quite an elderly man.

Judith Hanses: This is grade school.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, yes. Well, grade school too, but in high school...the grade school's principals that I was under, they never came out of their offices very much but the high school principal used to walk the halls.

Judith Hanses: Ours did, too.

Blanche Touhill: And I never knew him to say much but when I got older, I thought, that was a very clever thing for him to do, he just walked. He didn't say anything to anybody; he just walked the halls and roamed the classrooms. We all saw him walking by.

Judith Hanses: Ours did that. He did that but so did the assistant principal. I don't know if that's still true but I suspect it is. The assistant principal is in charge of discipline and I never had any run-ins with either one of them. That would have never entered my mind that I would.

Blanche Touhill: Did you have friends from grade school that you're still friendly with?

Judith Hanses: Well, it's been a little difficult because I moved away but I still have friends that I...we do Christmas cards or when I go to Kansas City occasionally I will see someone or if I'm going home and one of my brothers or sisters told me that someone's died, then I make it a point to go to the wake or the funeral that's going to be while I'm there. And I work on the reunion committee so I sometimes go for meetings and do a lot of e-mail. It's interesting to watch what happens over the years.

Blanche Touhill: You know, it does. Did your fellow friends, did they end up as you thought they would?

Judith Hanses: I don't know that I ever thought about it that much. I just knew that I was going to go somewhere, do something, be somebody who mattered, somebody who made a difference.

Blanche Touhill: Did you know you were going to leave Kansas City?

Judith Hanses: No. As college was ending, we had to apply to two dietetic internship programs and I still wasn't ready to go too far from home. I applied to Oklahoma State University and also to Barnes here in St. Louis. Both of them had very strong programs, were highly recognized and I was going, well, I hope I get one of them. I don't know what I'm going to do if I don't. And I was accepted at both and in the end, I chose Barnes, mainly because I thought I'll learn and grow there, somewhere very different than I know and besides that, it's not terribly far from home.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, it's four or five hours?

Judith Hanses: Yeah, and in the early days, after I graduated internship, it was about five hours and twenty minutes, something like that and now it's four hours and twenty minutes.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, the roads got much better.

Judith Hanses: Yeah, the roads were all regular old highways in those days.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, I remember that.

Judith Hanses: But fortunately I like driving and I didn't mind doing it and I wanted to go home.

Blanche Touhill: Where did you go to college then? You went to Kansas City?

Judith Hanses: I went to Kansas State University.

Blanche Touhill: And where is Kansas State?

Judith Hanses: It's in Manhattan, Kansas. The closest other settlement there is Ft. Riley, a very old military post that was established when the pioneers went west. It's a cavalry post and it's also fairly close to Lawrence where KU is and we both had really good basketball teams in those days so it was a major rivalry.

Blanche Touhill: Could you go back and forth to the games?

Judith Hanses: I didn't.

Blanche Touhill: What is it, 60 miles or so?

Judith Hanses: Oh, it's a little longer than that maybe but not much, about that much. It was an hour and forty-five minutes' drive home to Kansas City and it was maybe an hour or two.

Blanche Touhill: Did you have a car when you went to college?

Judith Hanses: Well, not in the beginning. Then my brother, who's a year younger, started school as an engineer in the Engineering School, those days in Rolla, Missouri, School of [inaudible 21:02] at the time. But he decided he didn't like it there at all and my parents said, "Well, if you'll go to the same school, you can have a car." So we both said, "It sounds pretty good," except I didn't get it much because he ended up living off campus so I could occasionally get it on Friday night and I think that was because he wanted to drive back to Liberty, Missouri to see his girlfriend who was in school there, at William Jewell, so he'd go Saturday and come back late Saturday night so he didn't mind giving me the car Friday night and he knew that he'd be in big trouble if he didn't share appropriately because there's no way I wasn't going to be yelling to Mom and Dad about it. He never said it but he knew and I knew it too.

Blanche Touhill: What did he end up getting as a degree?

Judith Hanses: He ended up in...was it industrial engineering? He may have but he actually came home to run the family business which was a metal fabricating business that my dad started after World War II. My mom...they both worked really hard at it.

Blanche Touhill: Isn't it wonderful that they succeeded?

Judith Hanses: They did. That was a generation that did that kind of thing. As a rule, there were so many of those, not only guys, but there were women in World War II, mostly nurses, but there were some working in women's Army Corps positions as office workers, et cetera. But they came home and changed the world.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, they did.

Judith Hanses: And so our family was a part of that. My dad didn't go to work for somebody else. He decided it was time to work for himself and that would be a better thing.

Blanche Touhill: But how did he know the trade of the sheet metal work? He must have been in that before the war?

Judith Hanses: Yeah. Before the war, the reason he was in Kansas City...or my family was...he worked for his father-in-law, my grandfather, as a mine foreman. My grandfather had Barite ore mines all over central Missouri, around the Lake of the Ozarks and the mines were closed by the government in order to take the metal from all the ore-washing equipment and the machine repair equipment, et cetera for the war effort so bankrupt my grandfather.

Blanche Touhill: Well, he must have gotten something.

Judith Hanses: Ten cents a ton. That wasn't much even in those days. So my uncle had a job waiting for my dad in Kansas City at a company called Darby Corporation and I'm not sure what they do. I don't remember. Then after that...and nor would I remember it at that young age; it was just before my 4th birthday when we moved...and he worked for [inaudible 24:12] and Bill Pontiac plant and then when the war was coming, one of his friends at the plant moved to Pratten Whitney Aircraft Engine Manufacturing, a war effort and so he brought my dad, said, "Come on along. We'll sign you up. You got a family. You don't need to go," plus at that point we were also supporting my grandparents. So he worked at Pratten Whitney Aircraft Engine as foreman and machine repair.

Blanche Touhill: So he knew all about it?

Judith Hanses: Well, yeah, pretty much, and besides, my dad was just a natural engineer. It was the way his brain worked. He understood stuff, how metals behaved when you do different things to them, when you cut them, when you heat them, whatever you do. And he understood the reality of being in business for yourself, one through his father-in-law, second, through his own father who was a farmer and you either perform or you die because you don't have any other options. So he had that kind of motivation and a very creative mind and I can remember him all through life, people would come to him and say, "You know, I need to do this. How could that be done?" It was nothing, on the back of an envelope to have the whole thing mapped out. He just had that and I inherited a little bit of it.

Blanche Touhill: Yeah. I was going to say, you know, a dietician in a way has to analyze everything and put it together.

Judith Hanses: You have to...

Blanche Touhill: And you have to know what the problem is and then what is the solution and then you have to create it.

Judith Hanses: You do. You're managing a whole lot of things. My first job was managing 50 employees and they were divided up into various sections according to what they did: the bakery; the entrée and vegetable production; the vegetable pre-prep have the special diets, had a butcher. All of those people had specific jobs. I had to know enough about them to figure out schedules and how much food I needed to order and what preparation time was and all of these things and you have to make them all come together.

Blanche Touhill: I want to just ask: What did you do in the plant or your father's business?

Judith Hanses: Well, I did several different things. My dad started us out on piecework that he could set up and we could do so we could earn money that way. So I operated a lathe and a punch press and some other stuff. I don't remember it all now. But if I had a job, I wasn't moving one inch until that was done because I knew time meant money and I knew I was helping my dad with his business. He tried to teach me, and he did, how to order steel for certain jobs, how to figure what you needed and how to deal with the salesmen and so on and so forth and, in fact, he really did want me to go into the business but I had my eye on being a dietician so I went off and did that and my brothers ran the business. But I did, I made good money.

Blanche Touhill: Did you work full-time in the summer or something?

Judith Hanses: Well, it depended on how much work he had, however much work he had that's what we did.

Blanche Touhill: And what did your mother do?

Judith Hanses: My mother ran a household for seven people and did all the secretarial work for my dad, for the company.

Blanche Touhill: Did she do the accounting?

- Judith Hanses: My grandmother did that. My grandmother was very good with that. Her mother lived with us by that time because my grandfather had died and so she handled all that. It was a real family affair.
- Blanche Touhill: The reason I asked that, there's another woman who did a video and her family went into the restaurant business.
- Judith Hanses: Oh, my.
- Blanche Touhill: She was about 13, she was in high school and everybody had to work in the restaurant and you sort of had the same thing.
- Judith Hanses: Well...
- Blanche Touhill: I'm not saying you worked all the time, but I'm saying, whenever you could work.
- Judith Hanses: We had the option.
- Blanche Touhill: And you wanted it.
- Judith Hanses: And I wanted it, and my one brother had more opportunities because sometimes he got the jobs where they were, in those days, hand-bending tubing or something and he'd use a lever set up to do that and he had a few more muscles than I did, although I resented that. I wanted that job. It paid the best.
- Blanche Touhill: Were there union troubles?
- Judith Hanses: No, the plant was never unionized. The benefits were good and my dad worked hard at having a good relationship with the people and helping them out when they needed help and being able to count on them.
- Blanche Touhill: What happened to the business?
- Judith Hanses: It's still running.
- Blanche Touhill: And your brothers are still running it? Well, some of them, or their descendents.
- Judith Hanses: My one brother still has some role. He's actually [inaudible 29:41] at this moment but he still works and he's still on the board and the third generation is in it.

Blanche Touhill: Isn't that wonderful.

Judith Hanses: Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: What's the name of the company?

Judith Hanses: RMF Steel Products.

Blanche Touhill: So you're still in steel?

Judith Hanses: Yes, and build things for all over the world, canning factories, still building much of the commissary equipment for many of the fast food chains where they mix the meat, make the patties, nitrogen freeze them, vacuum pack them. They make equipment for all that kind of process and they've done some...I remember a particular project a number of years ago for Carnation where they were building canning equipment for the large tin cans that they use in institutions. You can can them but if you don't move them after you get them out of the canning, they keep the temperature so hot inside that it finally spoils the food. So they built what they called a "shaker" and it took the cans off the end of the line and shook them for so many feet until they knew they had the internal temperature down so that it would cool and stay good, and my dad figured all that out.

Blanche Touhill: That's wonderful.

Judith Hanses: He didn't have any college; he just figured it out.

Blanche Touhill: No, but in those days you really didn't.

Judith Hanses: No, who did? He had an engineer working with him to be sure his designs were going to meet codes and all that sort of thing but he was the one who figured it out. I was proud of him.

Blanche Touhill: Go back to college. Did something happen to you in college that really had an effect on you?

Judith Hanses: Just kept growing and that desire to go do something that meant something just grew. I loved it.

Blanche Touhill: Where did you get that idea, that you wanted to do something to contribute?

Judith Hanses: Well, my dad started off this business making a simple thing that was a whole lot like a wheelbarrow except that it would hold milk cans for all the farmers in the area where he had grown up. They would separate the milk from the cream and put the cream in a spring or something to keep it cool until Kraft came along with their big trucks to take it away and those cans could get really heavy and if you had to carry them all the way from the barn to the road...he just built this little thing very much like a wheelbarrow that would hold the cans steady so they could be carried. You could take two or three at time and I just said, you know, the world is better. I remember my grandpa was pretty old at that time and it was a real struggle for him to get those cans up to the road and this made life better and I just said, I'd like to do something like that.

Blanche Touhill: Was there a college teacher that you liked in particular?

Judith Hanses: Yes, Grace Shugart was the head of the Department of Dietetics and Institution Management at Kansas State University when I was there and she had me figured out better than any other teacher, I think, and she knew I was going to push ahead, I wasn't going to do anything that I thought was worthless or useless or that I wouldn't grow from. So when it came time to select internships, select where I was going to apply, we went through some of the options and the military was an option and I didn't think I wanted to do that. I didn't think so. And she said something in sort of a tactful way, was that "I don't think that's the place for you right now," and I knew what she meant was, I wouldn't put up with the regimentation and I think many years later...I still think about it occasionally...I ended up joining the Army Reserve when I was about 33 or 34, something like that. I'm thinking, what would she think now, and I had a wonderful part-time career there, did amazing things. I had amazing opportunities, put it that way.

Blanche Touhill: Well, I think sometimes when teachers say that, they say "now." It's not to say in the future, don't you think?

Judith Hanses: Right, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: Well, one never knows.

Judith Hanses: I knew even at that time some of the women who were in charge of the Army Medical Specialist Corps when I was in college, I knew them later and I could see why she didn't think I'd make it with them, because they

were more blind hard line and she knew I wasn't going to be able to function in that kind of an environment.

Blanche Touhill: But you did function later?

Judith Hanses: I did.

Blanche Touhill: Was that because you were allowed certain freedom?

Judith Hanses: Actually, it was, which kind of surprised me. I started in the 21st General Hospital which was a hospital that was formed...the first actual commissioning dieticians and physical therapists, artificial therapists, first commissioning of them and the first commissioning of hospitals to serve in World War II. There were hospital units in World War I but they were all Red Cross people. So our unit, the 21st General Hospital was formed with the first six hospitals that were ever instituted. And I enjoyed it there but there were some guys there who were resentful of women and I decided it was their problem, not mine because there were mostly guys who were about ready to retire and didn't have any special influence on me and they were so open about not liking women in the military and I thought, whatever. It's okay.

Blanche Touhill: Well, I had a similar situation. I was working here, as a matter of fact and there were men who were in administration that didn't think women should...they thought of the women as staying home and taking care of the children.

Judith Hanses: See, I never had that model.

Blanche Touhill: And making the dinners for the guests they would bring home, the perfect wife of an academic administrator.

Judith Hanses: My mother was always a part of the whole package so I didn't know any different.

Blanche Touhill: How did you decide to join the military, because that was a big step, wasn't it?

Judith Hanses: It goes back to, I decided to stay in St. Louis because I was offered a really good job. I always thought I'd go back to Kansas City and work.

Blanche Touhill: When you finished your internship?

Judith Hanses: When I finished my internship. So I thought, well, I'll do this for a while. It's pretty interesting.

Blanche Touhill: And did you work at Barnes?

Judith Hanses: I worked at Barnes and rose to associate director of dietetics there.

Blanche Touhill: How long did that take you, to work your way up?

Judith Hanses: A couple, three years maybe, and there was no issue about men or women there.

Blanche Touhill: There were mainly women?

Judith Hanses: There were all women.

Blanche Touhill: In the dietetics?

Judith Hanses: As dieticians, the cooks and butchers and bakers.

Blanche Touhill: But the management?

Judith Hanses: But the management in the department was all women and that was fine but at the same time, I started working on my MBA at Washington University and I decided that, at this point in the world, that I was going to need more education for whatever reason I might need it and I didn't choose to do a Master's Degree in nutrition because I knew I didn't want to go into clinical nutrition or research.

Blanche Touhill: You wanted to do management?

Judith Hanses: I wanted to be where the rubber meets the road in terms of making things run. So I said, well, an MBA is going to broaden this rather than narrow and that's what I did. And at the time that I finished that, I knew it was time to move.

Blanche Touhill: In your MBA program, were there many women?

Judith Hanses: In all of Washington University at that time, in that program, there were only two or three of us and it was a big program. That's fine. I was just used to working with men as equals. To my mind, there wasn't a question, they're another human being and we support one another. So I didn't think about it that way. But I joined the VA.

Blanche Touhill: That was your next job?

Judith Hanses: My next job, and I said, well, let's do this. I wasn't ready to go home because I had met a man and I thought it was going to turn into something and it did but I didn't want to go home because of that and then this job was real interesting and I worked in a mixture of clinical dietetics, which I hadn't done since my internship and it was nice to keep up with the clinical side of things but while I was doing that, I was also responsible for education and employees, med students, and so on and so forth in an informal kind of way. But I decided that we were going to have a dietetic internship program and I went to the boss...he's the one who recruited me for the Reserve because he was in the Reserve. He had served in Korea, went to college afterwards and then worked in the VA...and he said to me, "You know, it's an opportunity to learn more, to grow more, to go places you might not otherwise go, see, do, whatever," and I said, "It sounds like that's it for me." So I did, I joined the Reserve.

Blanche Touhill: Were you in his unit?

Judith Hanses: Yes, he was my immediate boss.

Blanche Touhill: But in the VA, but then in the Army as well?

Judith Hanses: As well, yes, and developed programs there for training our soldiers that we had in hospital food service because they weren't anything else in the world; they were just...knew nothing about what their job was supposed to be. So I developed a training program for them and worked with them.

Blanche Touhill: Other nutritionists?

Judith Hanses: To be a hospital food service specialist, so that they, should we ever be mobilized, they would know what it was they were supposed to do and how to do it. And it was a good thing I did because eventually Desert Storm came along and practically all of my men...and I had only men...

Blanche Touhill: Taking the courses?

Judith Hanses: Practically all my men were mobilized for Operation Desert Storm in 1991...or '90.

Blanche Touhill: They knew what to do?

Judith Hanses: And they knew what to do and how to do it.

Blanche Touhill: And did they give you thanks?

Judith Hanses: Yes, they did.

Blanche Touhill: Did you go to Desert Storm?

Judith Hanses: I did.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, my. How was that?

Judith Hanses: Oh, my, when I was mobilized, I was saying, what? I'd been in 18 years. I was 50 years old the day before I left. My birthday is on Christmas and we left the next day and I'm thinking, I'm going to die of the heat. I am not going to die of anything else. I'm going to die of the heat. And it was a little scary. Then, to further complicate things, we went to a mobilization post where the hospitals who needed to fill their units...in other words, they had vacant positions, we were sent to help fill those positions. Well, at this point I was a colonel, a full colonel and the commanders of most of these hospitals, and many of them active duty people, were lieutenant colonels and no way did they want a full colonel working for them because that was just going to be nothing but trouble. I don't know why they thought that because in hospital units...maybe not in active duty but in my experience in hospital units was, it doesn't matter what your rank is, you do your job and you make sure things are done right and well so that things go smoothly and you can take care of patients. That's what it's all about. That's another thing I was scared of: what am I going to do when kids the age of my children start coming in with terrible injuries. Well, because of all this, I was assigned to a unit in Puerto Rico, the 201st evacuation hospital. I said to myself, well, maybe I won't be on the front lines; I think I'll be back a little bit, because it was the combat support hospitals were more forward with the troops and the mobile army surgical hospitals, the MASHes and that turned out to be true. We were in Saudi Arabia, maybe two-and-a-half hours south of where most of the warfare for the two-and-a-half days took place and in the end, the only patients we had were Iraqis, who had either been captured or surrendered; mostly they surrendered and they processed them in the prisoner of war camps and those who needed medical treatment were shipped out to us and it was with a guilty sigh of relief that I saw I wasn't going to have to be taking care of American soldiers whose lives were destroyed because of their injuries there. That was strange. My youngest

patient was 14, who was a conscript. He had a double below the knee amputation and he came in wearing civilian clothes. His t-shirt had...I can't remember now...something on it about some sort of race. He'd obviously gotten it maybe through a clothing drive or some English troops gave it to him because it had something to do with London on the front of it. And my oldest patient was in his 60's. He was a Kurd and we had him in cardiac intensive care. Well, military hospitals are not set up for that kind of patient. They're set up to treat troops and even among my soldiers, because of their heritage, from Spain, many of them had diabetes, high blood pressure, et cetera, as a part of their cultural heritage. So here I was with a bunch of soldiers and for a long time we had nothing but the meals ready to eat, the MREs that they developed for the space program and they're relatively high in sodium and relatively high in calories so they weren't especially good for these people. But it got all worked out when we started getting fresh food. We were in the rear enough, it was located an hour north of Al-Khobar and an hour south of Al-Grobar out in the desert...intense. This is the girl who wouldn't go to Girl Scout camp because I didn't want to sleep in tents and use the latrines. There I was, it just caught up with me about 40 years later. But it was okay.

Blanche Touhill: Were you the only woman colonel?

Judith Hanses: Best we figured out, I was highest ranking woman in the theatre operations. There were lieutenant colonel nurses at some of the headquarters but when you're sent to fill a position, you fill it no matter what your rank. You do what needs to be done. That's your job.

Blanche Touhill: How long were you there?

Judith Hanses: It was only four months. When you think about what the military had to endure during wars like World War I or World War II and Korea, it's only four months and it felt very strange coming home because it was a popular war and people were so welcoming and thankful. They'd stop you everywhere you would go. They had us travel in our uniforms and I just felt guilty because I had a lot of friends who were just a little bit older who were Vietnam veterans and really unpleasant things happened to them, really unpleasant. So I felt kind of guilty about that.

Blanche Touhill: When you got back, what did you do then, go back to the VA?

Judith Hanses: Oh, yes. It was just a pause. I picked up where I left off.

Blanche Touhill: But you were changed.

Judith Hanses: Was I ever! Was I ever! I put up with less nonsense; I was more driven, accomplishing things that meant something. I didn't suffer fools so I had to learn to temper it a little bit because when you're in a war time situation, even if you're not at the front, you've always got to have on your mind what is immediately important and then what's the goal, the longer term goal and you're very intently focused on that. That stuck with me for a while and my husband used to laugh at me. We had SCUD missiles aimed at our site every single night of the air war which went on for a month and when the sirens went off, that meant you were out of bed, had your mask out of the carrier, had it on, blew out whatever bad air there might be and had it sealed on your face so that you weren't breathing anything that would kill you or harm you otherwise. And it was every night. You just knew it, started getting kind of, oh, my goodness, here comes another night, we've got to do this again, and then you'd put on the rest of your suit. Your mask had to be on and sealed within nine seconds and then you'd hustle into what I called our charcoal snowsuit because we were in activated charcoal that helped neutralize whatever was out there. And the longest I was ever in that was so-called mock 4 military...what shall I say, occupational protection, whatever, was four hours one night and that was a terrible night because my mask would not completely seal and it left me with some residual breathing issues because of that and it turned out there was a little raveling in it and I'm sure that's what the problem was, even though they said the SKUDs really didn't have much of anything in them. I don't think I'd be having a few problems if it didn't have something. But that's what you do when you go. OSHA is not a part of military function. You do what you need to do. I mean, you deal with it when you're training to a certain extent in a position here, but when you deploy, you do what needs to be done, period.

Blanche Touhill: Would you do it again?

Judith Hanses: It's somebody else's turn but, yes, I would.

Blanche Touhill: Because you felt it was meaningful?

Judith Hanses: It was very meaningful. It made a difference.

Blanche Touhill: Did you get along with the Iraqi and the Kurds?

Judith Hanses: Well, yeah. Somehow they knew.

Blanche Touhill: ...that you were there to help them?

Judith Hanses: ...that I was there to help them and I think they were relieved. They'd been told that if we got our hands on them, the allies, we would kill them. So they gave up anyway, many of them...not the Republican guard soldiers; those were scary; you had to really mind your P's and Q's around them, but the others were glad to be there and many of them, the vast majority spoke English reasonably well and our unit spoke Spanish much more fluently than they spoke English and I'll be darned if the Iraqis didn't speak Spanish reasonably well. So here I was, roaming through the wars or the tents with the patients and the Spanish is flying but they knew that I was not Spanish, clearly, so they called the "food ma'am."

Blanche Touhill: I imagine they were happy to get fed and washed and...

Judith Hanses: Oh, they were, I'm sure they were.

Blanche Touhill: ...and treated.

Judith Hanses: But the Republic guard soldiers were not. You had to really be careful. They would go the ends to kill one of the allies; they really would and we had several of them with serious injuries, very serious injuries and we had mostly orthopedic surgeons on our staff and we had one maxillofacial specialty surgeon and we had some eye surgeons. So we did a lot of really tough kinds of things and we never know what happened to them. We're assuming they gave them back to Iraq because we had to turn our patients over to Saudi Arabia when it was time to go. I'm sure they didn't want to support them. I'm sure some of them got turned loose and said, "Go home." But we don't really know. I was glad to be home.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, I can imagine. Did you retire from the VA?

Judith Hanses: I retired from the VA in 2005.

Blanche Touhill: And did you get out of the service?

Judith Hanses: I retired, I was 34 ½ years in the VA, 10 at Barnes and I retired from the Reserve after 25 years.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, how wonderful.

Judith Hanses: So it was fascinating, every bit of it.

Blanche Touhill: Was your husband in the military?

Judith Hanses: He was...

Blanche Touhill: With you?

Judith Hanses: No, he went in right out of high school and did his six months on active duty, six years total in the Reserve and that was well behind him when we met. We were about 30 when we met, so that was long behind him. He'd been to college by then. He went to St. Louis University, in business.

Blanche Touhill: Did he have his own business?

Judith Hanses: No. I met him at Barnes. He came to work in what's now Human Resources and I met him there, a long time ago.

Blanche Touhill: Well, Barnes has changed.

Judith Hanses: It certainly has. All I have to do though is go to the basement, then I know my way around. It hasn't changed at all.

Blanche Touhill: To this day?

Judith Hanses: To this day, it hasn't changed.

Blanche Touhill: Let me ask two other questions: Have you ever gotten an award or awards that you're particularly proud of?

Judith Hanses: Well, a couple, yeah. I have to think about. Of course, the most recent you know about, is as a remarkable, ageless...or ageless, remarkable, whichever way it goes...St. Louis from St. Andrews Society and I was, as the kids would say, blown away by that.

Blanche Touhill: It was a wonderful night.

Judith Hanses: It was.

Blanche Touhill: Talk about St. Andrews, why you value that award so much.

Judith Hanses: Well, it sort of proved to me that all of these things that I'd been doing for so long in support of the community, whatever, they were recognized

as that thing, a lifetime achievement award, that I had made a difference and that I had made a difference to other people, not just to myself.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, and it is a wonderful award. I was there that night and I really did think it was a glorious, glorious evening.

Judith Hanses: Thank you.

Blanche Touhill: If you had been born 50 years earlier, what would your life be like?

Judith Hanses: Well, I have to look back on my parents' lives to know that and I think because of the way they were, their personalities, their minds, I probably would have been very much like them because I'm very much like them. I think I would have been looking for ways to make my family's life better and those in my community, whatever that community was as I pass through life. I really think that's what it would have been because they were always looking to the future. They were never living in the past. I never want to do that. It's okay to remember it and enjoy it but it's always, what's the next challenge?

Blanche Touhill: May I just ask: When you were going overseas to the Desert Storm, what did your family say to you? Nothing much?

Judith Hanses: Probably nothing. I don't remember.

Blanche Touhill: They knew you were going to go.

Judith Hanses: Well, yeah, they knew.

Blanche Touhill: You had to go.

Judith Hanses: I had to go. There wasn't any choice. You sign on, that's what you sign on for if it comes along but I got lots of supportive mail. My brother sent me a baseball bat and he sent me a baseball bat because when we were kids and the boys my age would pick on him because they were afraid to pick on me, I would go after them with a baseball bat. So he sent me a baseball bat.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, wasn't that nice.

Judith Hanses: And that was a, "You can do it, kid!"

Blanche Touhill: Do you want to talk about anything else before we close off?

Judith Hanses: Well, we haven't talked about my two wonderful step-children, Louis and Virginia and from them, I have five amazing grandchildren who are all good kids. There's no way to say how much you love your grandchildren, no way, and they're all on a life of a leadership of their own. They've seen in their parents; they've seen it in their father; I know they've seen it in me; I know they've seen it in their mother and it's just wonderful to see them, even as teenagers, giving back.

Blanche Touhill: Well, that's a marvelous way to end our interview and I'm so pleased that you came and did it today.

Judith Hanses: Thank you very much for asking me.