

Carla Shuford
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

* * *

Date: August 24, 2011
Location: Ms. Shuford's home
Interviewer: Sara Camp Arnold
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs
Length: 48 minutes
Project: Carrboro Farmers' Market

[Begin Carla Shuford Interview]

00:00:01

Sara Camp Arnold: Okay; this is Sara Camp Arnold for the Southern Foodways Alliance and I'm here in Chapel Hill, North Carolina on August 24, 2011. And I'm interviewing Carla Shuford for the Carrboro Farmers Market Oral History Project, and if you could tell me your name and where and when you were born?

00:00:28

Carla Shuford: My name is Carla Shuford and I was born April 21, 1943, in Tryon, North Carolina.

00:00:37

SCA: Okay; thank you. And why don't you tell me a little bit about where you grew up and what that was like?

00:00:47

CS: Okay; I was raised in the mountains of North Carolina on a small dairy farm of Jersey cows. We sold raw milk in glass bottles until it was outlawed in the mid-1950s. We--our family was totally self-sufficient except for coffee and salt. We grew and ground wheat and rye, and our bees provided honey.

00:01:13

My grandfather had raised world-record Jersey cows. Shall I go on?

00:01:21

SCA: Well, why don't we talk a little bit more about the farm. Can you tell me—except for coffee and salt you were totally self-sufficient—can you tell me a little bit more about the produce you raised each season?

00:01:35

CS: We had a regular family farm with vegetables, and raspberries I remember especially, and we had—we froze most everything. Mother didn't believe in canning as much; she canned a few things but she felt the vitamins stayed better in the freeze—with the freezing. And we—in 1960—my father was a conventional farmer until about 1958—'59, and then he was sort of on the cutting edge of organic farming.

00:02:17

He was a religious subscriber to the magazine *Prevention*, and he changed the produce farm from—from a conventional to an organic. And it was quite an ordeal. It took about four years until the plants became healthy enough that the insects rejected them. And from that time on, he—we raised all our—all our fruits and vegetables organically.

00:02:52

SCA: Uh-hm; and were you selling any of those, or that was just for family consumption?

00:02:58

CS: It was really just for family consumption, since we tried to provide enough for the entire winter. I will say when I was about fourteen or fifteen I ran a little store in the summer when

school was out down at the farm. It was open three days—afternoons—a week, and it was called “Carla’s Commissary.” And my father would contribute vegetables and so forth. We also ordered health products from Walnut Acres, which I understand is still an active mail-order thing, and we would order things like sunflower seeds and good peanut butter and things like that. And we also grew our own wheat and rye, and we had a little electric mill that we would grind the wheat and rye in two different grinds—a fine and a coarse. The coarse—with the coarse we made cereal to have porridge in the winter, and my mother then used the rye and wheat to bake bread. She did all the bread, and she would sweeten it with the honey. So we were sufficient that way, too.

00:04:22

SCA: Did you have brothers and sisters?

00:04:25

CS: I had one older brother, four years older than me, and but he—he didn’t continue in the—in the farming business.

00:04:38

SCA: And tell me; you used the cows—were the cows just for milk? They weren’t for meat?

00:04:44

CS: Oh no; the cows were dairy cows. They weren’t for meat. In fact, they were very part of the family, as one would see from my stories. [*Editor’s note: Shuford has also worked as a professional storyteller and released CDs of her stories.*] They all had names and we all knew

their personalities and our cows had a very, very good life. We—they were our pets as well as a source of income.

00:05:08

SCA: Did—how many did you usually have at a time?

00:05:11

CS: The most—the largest numbers of cows we ever had at one time was around twenty-seven or twenty-eight, and that would include calves. And we always had one bull. And as I say we sold raw milk in glass bottles; that was when butterfat was considered a good thing instead of a bad thing. And we did that; we sold it in—we iced it and bottled it and sold it in little—in the back of our panel truck and we did that until the mid-'50s, when the State of North Carolina outlawed the sale of raw milk. And because we believed milk wasn't really milk unless it was raw, that's when we discontinued that part of the farm.

00:06:04

SCA: Okay; so then did your parents—?

00:06:10

CS: We continued, however, to grow our own vegetables and organic and so forth.

00:06:19

SCA: Right; right. What was I going to ask you? Oh, did you eat meat growing up?

00:06:25

CS: We did eat meat. Uh-huh; we did eat meat. My father was too tenderhearted to—to do his own butchering, but we would barter milk for pork and beef from other farmers.

00:06:45

SCA: Did you have chickens for eggs?

00:06:47

CS: No; chickens are the one thing we did not have, so that also we would barter for.

00:06:56

SCA: Okay; so tell me—

00:06:59

CS: We did have a guinea hen; I'm sorry—named Tillie, and she provided quite a few eggs.

00:07:05

SCA: Okay; and then when you were fifteen, your life took a turn?

00:07:09

CS: My life took a turn when I was fifteen. I was diagnosed with osteogenic sarcoma in my left leg, and I was given a dire prognosis of only four to six months to live—even if I had surgery. But at that time, as I say, we were already getting interested in growing vegetables without pesticides and without poisons, and my mother visited with Dr. Max Gerson, who had a clinic in New York City at the time I was having my surgery. And that is when, following that—that was

in 1958 that we began doing the strict Gerson Diet, which is really tied in with produce because it requires enormous amounts of fruits and vegetables that have to be juiced—and juiced on the hour, and daily.

00:08:12

And at that time it was very, very difficult other than my father's small farm to find farmers who—or—or produce that was grown without pesticides. And so my father asked local farmers, and one would be in charge of growing lettuce without pesticides. And the different farmers in the community would keep a part of their garden free from pesticides so that there would be enough juices for me.

00:08:51

SCA: Can you go into a little more detail about the specifics of the diet for people who don't know very much about it?

00:08:57

CS: The Gerson Therapy? [*Editor's note: The Gerson Institute prefers the term "Therapy" instead of "Diet".*]

00:08:58

SCA: The Gerson Diet?

00:08:59

CS: It's based on the fact that cancer—that the tumors are not the disease; that they are a symptom of an imbalance in the body that is caused by a low immune system, and the low

immune system is caused by toxicities in the air and water and especially in the food. And that's why it's become—cancer has become an epidemic is that those have increased.

00:09:30

Also as soil has become depleted, the potassium in the soil is much less, so a sweet potato that is grown nowadays doesn't have the nutrients that it used to have before. And Dr. Gerson's basic premise was that one of the systems in the body that caused the low immune was an imbalance with the sodium/potassium because we were getting less potassium in our vegetables and so much more sodium through salt and—and processed foods.

00:10:11

SCA: I see.

00:10:13

CS: That's very simplistic, and it doesn't do justice to Dr. Gerson because his theory and his therapy is extremely precise and scientific.

00:10:25

SCA: Do you want to tell me a little more about it, or—? I mean, are you interested in telling me more about it?

00:10:31

CS: Oh, I'll be glad to. I'm one of the few—one of two in America, I think, who are still alive who were treated by the original Dr. Max Gerson, because that was in 1958 and I was only fifteen. And he died the following—he was at that time already very old and he died the

following spring, but his work has been continued through his daughter, Charlotte. And she runs something called the Gerson Clinic as well as the Gerson Institute, and I'm one of what they call their "cured incurables," because most people don't look for a Gerson Diet until traditional medicine has declared them incurable.

00:11:22

So—but I'm only one of, I think, two or three still living who was treated by the original Max Gerson and I don't—I don't advertise a lot about the Gerson Therapy, even though I'm on their advocacy program and get calls from literally all over the world, because it's a very labor-intensive program, and if you don't have a caregiver or a caretaker or the inclination to give it your all it's not feasible to—to do it.

00:12:01

SCA: Uh-hm; so you have not—you've been a vegetarian since you were fifteen?

00:12:08

CS: No; I—Gerson wasn't purely vegetarian. He didn't believe in meat, even though he—he believed in the liver. In those days it was the liver of a calf; it couldn't be a cow—a calf that had not been frozen. The liver couldn't have been frozen. So my father had to meet the bus from Asheville every day to get the liver that then was made into juice. Now, because livers are—are toxic because of what they feed to the animals, they now use liver capsules that are more pure. But I have forgotten what you had just asked me.

00:12:57

SCA: Oh no; I was just asking—

00:12:59

CS: Oh in terms of meat. I'm not what you would call a strict vegetarian, but I find myself over the years, I really don't eat meat and—or chicken hardly ever. Once in a while if it's served at a—I will eat it if it's served to me. What I do eat still are lots of eggs, but they have to be eggs from the farmers. I will not buy an egg in the store. And if—I know when the farmers have them pasture raised because the yolks are a bright golden instead of a pale yellow. So I—for protein I eat a lot of eggs and I eat a lot of fish. And I get fish from the local fish market, Tom Robinson's, so my fish is always fresh.

00:13:59

SCA: Uh-hm; so tell me—you began the diet, and when did your cancer go away?

00:14:07

CS: Well, the beauty was that I don't know when it went away because I never—it never came back. My mother, not knowing what to do—I was a minor—agreed to have the surgeons amputate my leg. But she decided she'd do both the conventional and the other, even though they had said if they did the surgery that I still had a dire prognosis. It's just in those days, they didn't have other things to offer. But she did that just in case, and so I had to go regularly for lung X-rays because it was to metastasize in the lungs in a few months.

00:15:00

But the beauty is that come this September 4th, it will be—if I make it that long—will be fifty-three years since my leg was removed, and I've never had a touch of cancer since. [*Editor's note: Shuford was indeed doing well on September 4, 2011.*]

00:15:16

SCA: Wow.

00:15:16

CS: And I attribute it to almost solely to my diet, and I think of—I think of the vendors at the Farmers’ Market as my medical team. And I think of food as my medicine—and not in a bad way.

00:15:35

It was interesting because recently they mentioned on *People’s Pharmacy* that why don’t people think of food as medicine? And I thought, “Well I’ve done that for fifty years.” But as far as I’m concerned, the farmers are my medical team. And years ago I heard Bill Dow [of Ayrshire Farms] at a Sunday afternoon farmers’ gathering ask people in the audience how many people had gone out for brunch that day, and over half the audience raised their hands. And he said, “Well, you know we’re very careful about who we get for a doctor or a lawyer; they have to be good upstanding citizens and morally correct. But how many of you know who grew the food that you ate at the brunch this morning?” And I’ve never forgotten that. I remember—I remind Bill Dow of that. And ninety-five percent of what I eat comes from the Market.

00:16:44

I only—I buy fish from the local market, but I get olive oil and herb teas [from the store], and the joke is with the farmers that if they sold toilet paper, I’d never have to go in a commercial store for anything else. I get my bread there, my honey, my peanut butter, and even my corn and wheat cereal that’s ground fresh. So—and that includes actually not buying vegetables or eggs or anything from the so-called local markets that are healthy, like Whole

Foods and Weaver Street Market. I prefer to go straight to the farmers. I want to know—I want a face to associate with the food that goes in my body.

00:17:38

SCA: Well let's get—let's talk a little more specifically about the Market and how you started going there. Can you tell me how long you've lived in Chapel Hill?

00:17:46

CS: I came to Chapel Hill in 1965, and I—I think the Market just recently—I'm not sure—celebrated their—maybe their thirtieth anniversary, but I started going from its inception.

[Editor's note: The Carrboro Farmers' Market was founded in 1979, so 2011 is its thirty-third season.] Before that, I knew a few farmers and would get things, but I started going from their inception. And I'm very, very dedicated; I'm religious about two things—the Farmers' Market and my swimming. And you can find me at the Farmers' Market every Saturday morning, very early. As Betsy Hitt [of Peregrine Farm] says, “There's early, and then there's Carla.” And I have a personal relationship with the farmers. I visit their farms. I often go and pick their berries. They know what I like. They save it for me. And it's—it's very, very important to me.

00:18:52

And people assume that the Market is more expensive and more laborious to buy things that way, and I find it just the opposite. I know exactly what I'm going to get. I know what's—what's in—in season. I buy in quantities. One summer when I was not able to get to the Market and had surgery on my foot, a friend went for me, and she told me later, “Carla, I was glad to do it, but to buy your weekly produce is like buying for a supermarket!”

00:19:32

SCA: Well, why don't you tell me; so we're in late August now—last Saturday at the Market can you tell me what you bought?

00:19:41

CS: Sure; I bought—and there's—I buy a lot of everything I see. I bought tomatoes, and you can see if I show you later in my pantry how many—they're about half gone. I buy enough for a week, but that's a lot. And I bought four watermelons. I bought—I bought fifteen pounds of okra, which I can keep in the refrigerator and eat twice a day. I eat the tomatoes three times a day. Let's see; I buy a green called purslane. I buy corn whenever it's in. As someone said, "Carla likes anything that's green." Right now lettuce isn't in. I'm waiting on the sweet potatoes for the new season to be cured in about a month, and then I'll start buying lettuces and greens.

00:20:53

SCA: Can you tell me how you prepare some of these things, for example how you're going through that many pounds of tomatoes in a week?

00:21:03

CS: Well as someone always says, even farmers will say, "Carla, what are you going to do with all that?" And I said, "I'm going to eat it." Now sometimes I do give some away to friends who are too lazy to get up at dawn to go to the Market and who trust that what I get is the best—very best. Often people say, "I don't want to go to the Market. I don't know who has what or how to buy." And so I have given several people—gone with them their first time and shown them around. And in terms of preparation, I keep it very, very simple—very simple.

00:21:50

A lot of people wouldn't like the way I eat, but my theory is if you get really good food and get it fresh, it really doesn't need—it doesn't need much preparation. Right now, I'm eating—for breakfast I'll have an egg and tomato sandwich, but it's not just any egg and tomato sandwich. That's the difference. People will say, "What do you eat?" But they don't understand it's also the quality and the origin of the food. I get the rye bread. I get very heavy rye bread that reminds me of what my mother used to make. And I have that with olive oil and sliced tomatoes—and big sliced tomatoes on it, and either poached eggs or hard-boiled eggs. And then I—I have some—if I'm still hungry, I'll have some apples. And then the okra and—and the corn, the corn is so good raw, it's sweet; I eat it that way. The—all my vegetables I mostly steam, and I don't put anything—anything on them because I'm perfectly—they taste so good just like they are, I don't want to gild the lily.

00:23:14

Right now, because greens are low, I have a kind of—I call it my salad at night. I have some new potatoes that I've boiled and I will—of course not peel—and I'll dice them up and put sliced tomatoes with them. And cut up some of the cooked okra, put sweet onions, and then a homemade dressing that has olive oil and honey from the Market, and—but so I eat very simply and I eat large quantities. People can't believe because I don't gain weight that I eat such large quantities. And I say the difference is what I don't eat. It's not only what I eat, but it's what I do not eat.

00:24:04

You'll see a—a piece of ice cream and cake made up on my table. And that's to remind me what not to eat, because I don't think sugar is helpful.

00:24:20

SCA: So it's a little piece of pie, a little pretend piece of pie with ice cream on it, and then a spilled cup of pretend coffee.

00:24:29

CS: That's right. And often people say, "Oh, Carla, I didn't mean to interrupt you. Go on eating your pie à la mode." I've even had people come get the kitchen sponge and try to wipe up the coffee. But so anyhow, it's a little diversion. We all need diversions.

00:24:49

SCA: [*Laughs*] Can you go through—and it could be any time of the year—tell me about a Saturday morning when you get up, when you get to the Market, who you see and talk to and things like that?

00:25:03

CS: Well, I don't want to broadcast how early I get there, because I like to come very, very early. I have a flashlight in my car, and in the winter, I buy by the flashlight. And they always say, "Carla, the moon is going down; the sun is ready to come up. It's time for you to leave." Because I mean business. And now—what did you just ask me?

00:25:31

SCA: Can you tell me who you'll talk to and buy from?

00:25:36

CS: You mean specific vendors?

00:25:37

SCA: Yeah; if you don't mind.

00:25:39

CS: Oh okay; oh no, I didn't know. Okay; I will—I usually park in the handicap spot, so I'm very close to farmers. I start out by going to Michael Brinkley. I check what he has. I—I've always gotten corn from him. And he is very honest. He tells—all of his stuff is delicious, but he tells me which things have been sprayed and which haven't. And so I get—I get corn and often—you mean this time of year?

00:26:18

SCA: Any time.

00:26:20

CS: I'll get kale, I'll get greens from John and Cindy [Soehner of Eco Farm].

00:26:25

SCA: Wait; before you go on from Michael, he's the one who has cornmeal and flour?

00:26:30

CS: He's also the one that has cornmeal and flour; yes. I get my eggs from Wilma. I don't remember her last name.

00:26:40

SCA: Is it Hanton?

00:26:41

CS: Yes; I get my eggs from Wilma, and I get them from her because I can tell from the yolks that her chickens have run free. And she always has them ready for me. So usually I go to Wilma first and get my eggs and get that out of the way. Before she even has time to unload her car, she has the cooler out. Then I go to Michael Brinkley.

00:27:09

Tomatoes, I get either from John Soehner or Ken Dawson [of Maple Spring Gardens Farm] or Doris and Keith Lewis, and often some of these farmers know that I buy in such quantity and I don't care what something looks like. To me it's a good sign if there is a worm in the corn, 'cause then it means it hasn't been eaten. It means if the worm likes it, it's good enough for me.

00:27:37

So all these people know me, and they know I buy in quantity and I have a very limited income, so they will often have picked out some of the number twos. But they're not number twos to me, because they haven't been sprayed or fertilized. They're number twos because they aren't absolutely picture perfect. And I have forgotten the name I get the purslane from. I get baby salad greens and pea greens from Daniel [Tolfree of Millarckee Farm]. Henry is a conventional farmer like Brinkley, but I will get—Henry Outz, I think it is—but he—I get okra and apples and he again tells me which things haven't been [sprayed]—. And if they don't have

enough, these farmers have been known, as Henry has, to come by house during the week and leave them with me.

00:28:43

I get sweet potatoes from Stanley [Hughes of Pine Knot Farms] and I get them in quantity, so I usually meet him on a Tuesday when he's making deliveries near here to one of the local restaurants. So I spent a lot of time this spring picking strawberries at John's [Soehner] garden.

00:29:06

SCA: He told me about that. [*Laughs*]

00:29:08

CS: One time it was funny because he wasn't there and I—I scooped and I lost my crutches because I had forgotten where I had started, and I panicked.

00:29:19

So I want to show you before you leave what my freezers look like, because I'm like a squirrel getting—hiding acorns. And I have two big, big—in addition to the refrigerator freezer—stand-up freezers. And this is the time of year that I fill them up with corn and berries and fish and a back-up of—of cereals. So when people say to me when the weather gets bad, “Carla, do you need bread and eggs from the store?” And I say, “Oh, no, I have much better things right here a step away from my—in my garage.” And I had one stand-up freezer for a long time and a friend of mine said, “Carla, let's go on an Alaskan cruise.” I had known her for years, and I said, “Well, okay.” And it got to be a few weeks before and I called her up and I said, “I

hope you won't be mad at me, but I can't go on an Alaskan cruise and get a second freezer, and I really want to get a second freezer." "And I've never regretted it, and she's still my friend."

00:30:33

SCA: [*Laughs*]

00:30:34

CS: So you can have your vegetables and eat it, too.

00:30:38

SCA: I guess—are you retired?

00:30:42

CS: Yes; I worked for the University [of North Carolina] for twenty-three years, and I took early retirement in 1988.

00:30:51

SCA: What did you do for the University?

00:30:53

CS: I worked in various departments as secretary or administrative. I never went to college because for the five years after high school I was—I ended up graduating, even though I was a sophomore, from my local high school. In fact I was valedictorian. But I never went to college because I was living at home and the doctors didn't want me to leave home because they were

constantly checking me medically. And also to do the Gerson Diet I couldn't have gone to college. So I skipped college and started working as a legal secretary and then came to the Chapel Hill in 1965 at—a professor brought me here to teach adult illiterates because I was doing that in the mountains as a volunteer. So that got me to Chapel Hill for six months, and I've never left.

00:31:53

SCA: Do you have any family here in Chapel Hill?

00:31:56

CS: No; I don't. I don't have—actually any family anywhere. My parents have died. My brother has died and there is no other living relatives. And that brings up another subject, which is how important the farmers are to me. They're not only my medical team, but they provide me with so much emotional satisfaction. And my life would be very different if I didn't have a relationship with the farmers. I'm sure part of it is nostalgic from growing up on a farm. But I—I would not—I would not be who I am, and I would not be as happy as I am, if I didn't have the social relationship that I have with these farmers.

00:32:49

SCA: And you see them outside of the Saturday Market sometimes?

00:32:55

CS: Sometimes. I do what's convenient for them. If I can come to their place and—and pick, I do. Otherwise, some of them deliver to my home or meet me when they're going to be near here.

But it all works out. I have their cell phone numbers. I know not to call them if I can help it on Fridays when they're getting ready for the big Market on Saturdays. And I think of them as family. So I do have a family.

00:33:26

SCA: Do you ever go eat at local restaurants, or do you prefer to make everything at home?

00:33:30

CS: I'm so used to eating at home, and I know exactly what I'm doing. But I'll be fine to go to restaurants. And I'm easy enough now that I know what to sort of order. But I'll be honest; usually when I come home I think, "That didn't taste as good as what I would have had." And the other thing is—is I always come home hungry, because they serve regular servings and that's not enough. So I come home usually from one of those restaurants and often have the meal that I would have had anyhow, so that it—I'm used to it. My body is used to fiber.

00:34:13

SCA: Are there any specific stories or Farmers' Market experiences that you want to tell me about, maybe any specific stories that stick out?

00:34:26

CS: Well, this isn't about produce, but it's about the Market. I had a—I still have a wonderful cat, but I had a cat before him—Simba—called Mary Smith. And Mary Smith—I was—she was with me twenty-two years. And everyone knew about Mary Smith. She was on TV. She wrote stories for children. She had her own mailbox. And Mary Smith was very much a part of things.

And I remember this—the Friday night I had to call the vet. She was twenty-two and a half, and I called the vet, and I knew she was ready. She was ready to go. She had been going downhill. So the vet said she'd come at 11 o'clock on a Saturday morning.

00:35:20

I got up and went to the Market and was teary. And first of all, John Soehner saw me and he said, “What’s wrong, Carla?” And I told him, “Mary Smith.” And he said, “Take whatever you want from my table today, please; no charge.” I went to Doris and Keith Lewis and got a bouquet of pink roses to put on her—to put with her. And then I told Betsy and Alex [Hitt]. And when I got in the car to go home, Betsy had put three of the most beautiful bouquets that she had made up on the backseat of the car. And she said, “Carla, one is for you, one is for the vet, and one is for Mary Smith.”

00:36:22

And since then through the years—and that was in 2001—every year on the anniversary of Mary Smith’s death, which is June 23rd, Doris and Keith have let me come out to their garden and pick a bouquet of roses at no charge for Mary Smith, in memory. So that’s why I say it’s like family.

00:36:50

SCA: Absolutely. Do you feed your cat food from the store?

00:36:59

CS: [*Laughs*] I do two things. I should be cooking him vegetables like I do myself, but I get a canned food. But I get—it’s the Newman’s Organic, so at least he gets organic. And then I dice it up, which—what he loves most is I get raw salmon from the fish market, and that’s what he just

adores. And I eat the cheap fish. I eat shad, but my cat won't eat it, so he eats salmon—expensive salmon—and I eat the cheap shad.

00:37:42

And—but he does love vegetables when I'm cooking them sometimes. And what he loves to do, he loves corn like I do, particularly raw corn, like I do. So he doesn't think his mama should be the only one to enjoy raw corn. So he gets in my lap and I put an ear of corn out in front of him and hold him in my lap and he eats the corn straight across on the cob just like a person would.

00:38:10

SCA: [*Laughs*]

00:38:12

CS: And then I often eat the watermelon and all out on my deck and then I take the rinds and throw them over for the deer and the rabbits and the squirrels.

00:38:28

SCA: Well what—is there anything about the Market or anything else that I haven't asked you that you'd like to tell me about?

00:38:37

CS: Well, I want you—because seeing is believing—to be sure and see—and see my—my pantry and my freezers, just so you know they're the real thing. I haven't told you—or we can do

that later—about the Gerson and the—my story about that. Well I told it briefly; yeah—. About the Market—

00:39:10

SCA: Maybe you could tell me—since you've been going there for 30 years—maybe you can tell me a little bit about how it's changed over that time.

00:39:21

CS: It's changed in a good way and a bad way for me. The good way is there's such a variety, and you can find almost any time of year what you need. And I like all of the farmers. I use some more than others because of my restrictions for the things, but the Market now has a lot more activities going on. I mean, it was a very simple Market in the old days, very, very simple. And a part of me—maybe it's my oldness—misses the simplicity of the—of the Market the way it used to be. I think there are more rules and regulations. There's more extracurricular activities, but I just sort of ignore all of that because I know I'm still using it the same way I did before.

00:40:23

SCA: Uh-hm.

00:40:26

CS: And I really appreciate Sarah Blacklin. She's very, very kind and good to me.

00:40:32

SCA: Good. Well, maybe we can go back and talk about the Gerson story that you were going to tell me.

00:40:38

CS: Okay; or I can—I don't have a copy of it, but I can—.

00:40:45

SCA: Maybe you can just tell me about it and then we'll go take some pictures.

00:40:50

CS: Okay; it—the Gerson—Gerson puts out—the Gerson Clinic puts out books periodically, and a few years ago they put out a book that were case studies, so they asked for my story. And this was when I had been doing the Gerson now—that was their fortieth—for forty years. And in it I thanked them for saving my life. And Charlotte Gerson, Dr. Gerson's daughter is now eighty, the same age, and very—very healthy, incidentally, and travels all over promoting the Gerson therapy; she's now the age her father was when he—right before he died, and when I saw him.

00:41:43

And they get out a bimonthly newsletter. And my story is in that, and it tells basically how hard my mother and father worked when the Gerson Diet was even more labor intensive. And it also tells how—again, it all goes back to farming—how my father was able to get local farmers to buy—to—to grow one product that would be free of fertilizer and sprays, because it takes almost a crate of lettuce to make a glass of juice. So and—so really it's—that's—that's the story.

00:42:46

And as I say, I don't—I don't broadcast about Gerson. It's not a secret. But I don't push it on people, because it's very demanding of both the recipient and the caregivers. That's why I think it's a good—what makes it a good diet. But I get calls from—some days—sometimes a week will go by or two weeks, and then sometimes I'll get two calls a day from literally all over the world. And right now there's a young boy, Jonathan, in Rockingham, [North Carolina,] whose parents heard about Gerson from a doctor in Colombia, South America, and started on the Gerson. And then the Gerson referred them to me. And they—they have been to see me a couple times and he—they're very strict about following the Gerson. He's seventeen or eighteen and the best news is that the tumor—that UNC Hospital gave him a dire prognosis—he was like Stage 4 or whatever—and now I keep up with them, and his tumor has receded. All his blood counts are fine. They go to UNC to have an MRI every so often. And the doctors congratulate him. But they don't put two and two together with what he is doing. They will tell them, and they're very polite about it, but they don't listen in terms of that. And I'm very proud of the progress that he's making.

00:44:38

And he plans, since he knows now he'll—he'll live, he's seventeen, and he hopes to—to get in the healthcare field and continue this—the work of Gerson.

00:44:57

SCA: That's a good story. Well, before we finish, is there—is there anything else that you want to tell me that I haven't asked you about?

00:45:06

CS: Well, let me see. Well, people think it's funny because Sloan-Kettering—that was in 1958—sent out a survey every year because they wanted to know the survival rate. And on my twentieth anniversary, because I'd always send the form in and say, "I know this surprises you but I'm returning your form, I'm still here," and on the twenty years I put at the bottom, "Don't think you I deserve some roses?" So some roses came that year.

00:45:59

And after forty years, I realized that fall that I didn't get the survey. And I thought, "Did it get lost in the post office?" And the next year, I didn't get one. And I realized that—ha-ha!—I'd outlived the Sloan-Kettering survey, thanks to—to Gerson and farmers and especially the Carrboro Farmers' Market. I'm religious about two things—the Farmers' Market and my swimming.

00:46:35

SCA: Do you swim every single day?

00:46:36

CS: I swim every day—well, now I've gotten lazy. I take Sundays off, but otherwise I swim every single day. During the week I swim at 5:30 in the morning, and I swim a mile and a half. And on Saturdays the pool opens at 9:00, so my Saturdays are absolutely no—people know, "Don't bother Carla on a Saturday morning." At daybreak with my flashlight I'll be at the Carrboro Market. I'll come home, put my stuff away, put on my swimming suit, and be at the pool at 9:00. And those are my two—my two medicines. And they're my—they're my lifelines.

00:47:22

SCA: Well, thank you so much.

00:47:25

CS: You're certainly—you're certainly welcome. Thank you.

00:47:29

[End Carla Shuford Interview]