

Interviewee: Laura Steinbach (Gave hyphenated name to one daughter, but not her sister)

Interviewer: Sarah Hautzinger

[Intro, consent] So my name is Laura Steinbach. I've always been Laura Steinbach. There's never been a name change. I married late, at thirty-six, and by that time I had had a career. I had a long series of activities associated with Steinbach and I had no desire to change it. In fact, it looked like just plain blotter to me, for no real purpose. So when Randy Payne and I got married, I kept Steinbach. We had a child and decided to keep the Steinbach-Payne, and I am not sure that I had strong feelings around the hyphenated name. I think it felt natural because I kept Steinbach and he kept Payne, so it made sense to be hyphenated. *Mhm. For her? So she's the only one who has the hyphen?* She is the only one in the family that has a hyphen. I have another daughter, Julia Steinbach, who was born out of wedlock, so she has Steinbach and has always had Steinbach. *And she's older than Katherine?* She is older by a decade. *Okay.* So Katherine and her family have Randy Payne, and she also has a brother by Randy's first marriage, Drew Payne. And then she has Julia Steinbach, and then she has her mom, Laura Steinbach. She has her dad and the Payne. So she is the only Steinbach-Payne. She has lived with me the majority of the time, since the divorce, and I perceive that she is more comfortable with Steinbach because that's who she's around all the time. The Julia Steinbach, Laura Steinbach, Katherine Steinbach unit has been in place for some time. And I think -- I'm not positive and this is where I would like confirmation from her -- is that it's just plain a long name, so to shorten it, she picks one.

She has on occasion picked Steinbach. I did notice one time where Randy was present and somebody called her Katherine Steinbach. She was concerned what her dad might feel. So it was more a concern about his feelings more than... At least that's what I sensed through conversation. I wonder if he was upset that they didn't say Steinbach-Payne, but I really get the sense from her that it's not all wrapped in the long history of Steinbachs and Paynes and -- it's just that I want a plain, simple last name that I can write in the blocks. [laughs]

*Has she ever speculated, in your hearing, what she will do in the long run?* Um, I speculate that she would take Steinbach. I say that and yet, at the same time, I think if she chooses to marry, she would take the husband's name to eliminate the problem.

*Isn't that ironic that you put her in a position where she's more likely to do that? That's interesting.* I get a sense that we put her in a loyalty box, unknowingly. Her real objective might just be to have a simple last name that is easy to remember. "Hi, I'm Katherine (bleh)." Or Kat... She does often just call herself Kat Steinbach. I have noticed that.

*Does she ever use just Payne?* I've never heard her use just Payne. *Is she very close to her dad?* Um, they have a relationship. I wouldn't say it's as close as her relationship to me. Um, I think they do have activities. They do things together. That kind of thing. But they did have a falling out somewhere along the way and then now they're, you know, coming back together.

I think she identifies more, from a closeness perspective, with the Steinbach. *Okay. And so, if she did use Payne alone, do you feel like you would feel a little bit rejected or left out or...?* No. I

don't think I would. Um, if it swept by me, it would sweep by me in a millisecond. Um, I would never want her to carry loyalty baggage on something as simple as a name.

*Do you think your ex-husband feels similarly or do you think he would feel a little hurt? I don't know. You don't know? Okay. Last question: If you had it to do all over again, do you think that you would do the same thing or anything different? No. I don't think I would do anything different. You know, knowing the dominoes that all fell. So for example, if I kept Steinbach, gave her Payne, she ended up being-- the divorce still happened, now she's living with me primarily and she's a Payne and I'm a Steinbach-- I don't know that anything goes without issues. I think life is messy. And, um, yeah. The message I give her is, as far as I'm concerned, you can change everything, you can go down to the court house and change it to just Kat. [laughs] You don't have to carry any of it and it won't mean you don't love me, or you know. You get to be yourself. So I'm not as rooted in the family tree. I think about it more genetically. Here's the things you should worry about from a health perspective, not from a name perspective. [laughs] Well, that's a funny thing too that we do have now... Um, genes. So it's not like we lose all of that history, if we want to retrace it in terms of genes.*

My dad has done a lot of family tree activity, so she'll never lose the history. *On your side, at least? Or on Randy's. He did a lot of work on Payne relatives. This is so great that we got to do this. It's a really interesting case. I really appreciate it. And, um...* So the only thing-- [end]