

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #350 - Sides A & B

Subject: Mildred Kaser - With Video

Place: Molt Home - Burns, Oregon

Date: November 6, 1993

Interviewers: Dorothea Purdy & Barbara Lofgren

DOROTHEA PURDY: This is Dorothea Purdy, and we're at the home of Melodi Molt in Burns, Oregon. We're going to be visiting with Mildred Kaser, and she is over here from --

-

MILDRED KASER: Silverton.

DOROTHEA: Silverton, Oregon. Today's date is November the 6th, 1993. And this cassette, along with the video and transcript, will be stored at the Harney County Library. After the interview we will do a short video, so we'll get you on video also. The number is 350. And Mildred, we'll start by asking you your full name.

MILDRED: Mildred Lois Storts, and then I married Floyd Kaser in Silverton.

DOROTHEA: And can you tell us something about your childhood, what was your parent's names?

MILDRED: My mother was Luella Fairbanks Enloe. And my father was Bill Storts, William Dallas Storts.

DOROTHEA: And how did you spell your mother's name?

MILDRED: S T O R T S.

DOROTHEA: Okay. How many brothers and sisters did you have?

MILDRED: I had two sisters and one brother.

DOROTHEA: And when were you born?

MILDRED: 1907, in Hawarden, Iowa.

DOROTHEA: So what brought you to Oregon?

MILDRED: Well my parents came out to Oregon when I was eight months old. They heard there was a land of opportunity out here. So my brother came out first and he said, "Oh this is beautiful country," so they came.

DOROTHEA: And so did they continue to live here then, or did they go back, or ---

MILDRED: No, they stayed in Silverton except my brother. He was the oldest in the family, and he was much older than I. And then my oldest sister, next younger, but then my brother, she was twenty when I was born. And I had one other sister in between there.

And so my brother came out, and they came out. And then my brother was adventurous; he went to Alaska to see what he could find out up there.

DOROTHEA: And where were you in the family, were you number four?

MILDRED: Yes, I was the youngest.

DOROTHEA: You were the youngest.

MILDRED: Way youngest. My mother just lacked a little bit of being forty when I was born, so I was almost forgotten about.

DOROTHEA: How was life when you were growing up with older brothers and sisters like that?

MILDRED: Well I was kind of petted, and babied. Of course I didn't get to know my brother too well, because he was old enough that he could soon go on. He had a hotel in Portland for a little while before he went to Alaska. Then my sister Maymie was next, and she married Melvin Kundert. Around here so many people knew him as Mel. And yeah, he was born in Dakota; I don't know whether it was North or South. But he and a friend of his, Carl Voyne came out to Oregon, and they got on the basketball team in Silverton, it

was a champion team, and boy they were really ... up. And of course my sister sold tickets at the place where they played basketball. And she was very attractive, and he finally snared her. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: And what was your oldest brother's name?

MILDRED: Edward Dwayne Storts.

DOROTHEA: And you had just one sister?

MILDRED: Two.

DOROTHEA: Two sisters.

MILDRED: And I had a sister Mabel that was younger, I guess about five years younger than Maymie. And she worked over here at one time when Mel and Maymie had the Highland Dairy (and Mel's Oasis) here in Burns; she worked in the office for them.

DOROTHEA: Well tell us something about how you came about coming to Harney County, when you came to visit?

MILDRED: Well as soon as school was out, why I wanted to get out of town and come out to the wide-open spaces. And I was crazy about horses; of course I couldn't have one in town. And so out in the sagebrush country in Catlow Valley, why I got to ride a horse, and hunt rattlesnakes, and arrowheads, and I was in the height of my glory all summer.

BARBARA LOFGREN: Which brother was it that was over in Catlow Valley?

MILDRED: That was Melvin that married ---

BARBARA: Melvin, okay.

MILDRED: --- Maymie.

BARBARA: And he had a homestead in Catlow Valley?

MILDRED: Yes. He was one of those that came out in the rush in 1914 to get free land. And there was so many of them that came out in this rush that took up homesteads out in the middle of Catlow Valley ---

BARBARA: Were Renwick's out there at that time? Renwick's, were they out there at that time, do you remember that name?

MILDRED: Renwick?

BARBARA: Renwick.

MILDRED: No, I don't recall that. Of course I was older then when I came out, I didn't come out that early, I was too young.

BARBARA: Maybe I have them in the wrong place. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Well now, what did you brother-in-law do?

MILDRED: Well he grubbed sagebrush, and when he could he worked around at the various ranches out there, just bring in a nickel of money. When he wasn't working why they hunted jackrabbits, they snared them and lopped the ears off, and sold the ears, or traded the ears at the store for a nickel a pair. So when they got a hundred of them on a string why they took them and traded them for groceries. And Fern Kelley had the Catlow Store at that time. And usually when teachers would come out to the valley to teach, one of the buckaroos or homesteaders would glom on to her so she wouldn't get away.

BARBARA: Yeah, most of them only taught one year and then they got married.

MILDRED: Yes. And, but this Fern Kelley that had the Catlow Store, of course he married a schoolteacher. And there was several real small places out there at that time. Now some of the older maps they were on, there was Beckley, and Blitzen, and Sageview, and I can't remember all of them. I've got a lot of them written down in a book over there, where they went to buy groceries. And she kept track of every penny that was spent and came in. And there was times when they didn't have anything but rabbit ears to trade in for groceries.

DOROTHEA: Well five dollars then would buy quite a lot of groceries too.

MILDRED: Oh yes.

DOROTHEA: Well how did your sister happen to meet Mel?

MILDRED: She sold tickets at the theater (in Silverton), and the theater had a big hall in the back, and that's where they played basketball. And so when she sold the tickets naturally she met him.

DOROTHEA: Oh, okay.

MILDRED: I've got, see I guess I didn't bring it with me, the picture of the basketball team and her. I didn't know what you wanted, so I just ---

BARBARA: What year, what summer was it that you first came to Catlow Valley to visit, and spend the summer?

MILDRED: Oh, 1921 I think.

BARBARA: '21. What was the valley like at that time? Do you remember some of the family names that might have been there?

MILDRED: Yes, oh goodness, I try to think of them and then I can't.

MELODI MOLT: There is some written on those pictures you showed us last night.
(Noted later: Osbourn, Downs, Ohms, Wise)

MILDRED: Yeah, there was names on the pictures, they're over there on that paper sack.

MELODI: This one?

MILDRED: Yeah. (Looking at pictures.) Well this is one of my sister in the homestead shack (in Catlow Valley).

MELODI: Here was a family that we talked about last night, they were here.

MILDRED: Osbourn's, yeah. This was Hank Osbourn; he was boss at Roaring Springs Ranch at the time, and his two children (Clyde and Velma, wife's name Jenny).

BARBARA: Osbourn?

MILDRED: And this was buckaroo boss Jim Green, and I wanted a picture of him and Judy Wise because look at the difference in their height? I thought that would make a

cute picture.

DOROTHEA: Well how tall was he, he must have been close to ---

MILDRED: Yeah, he was close to six, six I presume, or maybe even taller, I don't know.

DOROTHEA: And she looks like about four.

MILDRED: Well she and her husband Judd lived at the "P" Ranch at the time. And then my sister in later years cooked for the haying crew there, and down at what was called Brenton Cabin at that time, way down the field from "P" Ranch.

DOROTHEA: And that was Judd Wise, you said?

MILDRED: Yeah, Judd Wise's wife, yes, Judy.

DOROTHEA: Judy and Judd.

MILDRED: And let's see, some of these ---

DOROTHEA: Who was this tall man?

MILDRED: That's Jim; let's see, a while ago, Jim Green.

DOROTHEA: Green, that's right, that's what you said, yeah.

MILDRED: And this is one summer when I was out there.

DOROTHEA: Now I know where Melodi gets to like horses. It runs in the family.

MILDRED: And my brother, when he went out there, he took up a homestead out in the middle of Catlow Valley. And that's where he and his wife lived. But he finally says this is not for me, he went back to California working in the oil fields. That was more prosperous than ranching.

BARBARA: How many acres did they take up, 360?

MILDRED: 360, yes.

BARBARA: Did they have water on their property?

MILDRED: Most of them didn't.

BARBARA: And that was the problem mainly, was the water so that they couldn't raise

any hay?

MILDRED: Yes. And Mel let his homestead go back before he proved up on it out there in the middle of Catlow, because there was water next to the rims. But they called it the Company at the time, I've forgotten who it was that owned it, but they called them the Company. And they crowded him out because he was coming in on their water rights. So he gave that one up, and lived on what was known as the Solomon Place, it was empty at that time. And they lived there because there was a windmill and water there.

MELODI: Is there still a Solomon Place out there?

MILDRED: But there is a little old --- this is the Catlow Store.

MELODI: Did there used to be a town named Catlow?

MILDRED: Yeah.

MELODI: Where was it?

MILDRED: The Catlow Store that Fern Kelly had, that was Catlow.

MELODI: From Frenchglen, was it up on the hill?

MILDRED: Yeah, Frenchglen was down over "P" Hill, down closer to "P" Ranch.

BARBARA: Was it out closer to where the Roaring Springs Ranch is now? Or have you been up there recently?

MILDRED: I haven't been up there recently. Roaring Springs was up in the Catlow part, and then you go down "P" Hill to Frenchglen.

BARBARA: Right, right. So the store was how far up "P" Hill would you say then on through the valley? Would it be about in the middle of the valley that the store was located?

MILDRED: Catlow was about in the middle of the valley, then there was Beckley and Blitzen.

BARBARA: Was Beckley off to the west of Catlow?

MILDRED: Oh, I don't know the directions, but it was away from Catlow a ways. But Beckley and Blitzen were pretty close together. And finally they gave up one by one.

BARBARA: Did you ever go to Beckley and Blitzen?

MILDRED: Oh yeah.

BARBARA: And did they just have a store and a post office and everything all combined into one building?

MILDRED: Yes.

BARBARA: And that's pretty much what they had?

MILDRED: Yes.

BARBARA: And did they freight things into the stores, or did the people have to go into Burns, or Ontario, or Vale to get their supplies, do you know?

MILDRED: Well they went by horse and buggy, because they didn't have a car. And sometimes they would go into Crane, and boy that was heaven going into Crane. Burns I guess was just a dot in the map at that time.

BARBARA: Was nothing at that time, right. Yeah. But they mostly freighted in with horses to get their supplies?

MILDRED: Yes.

BARBARA: Okay.

MILDRED: Oh and that's another thing that Mel did too to earn a little money. When they sheared sheep up in the Steens, why he'd haul the wool out in a double wagon.

BARBARA: Down to Crane?

MILDRED: I've forgotten how many horses it took for that double wagon. And one time when I went out in the spring, when school was out in Silverton, why I went on the train to Crane, and he had come out with a load of wool, and he picked me up at Crane and took me out there (Catlow). Because he just didn't, they didn't have transportation then like

they did later. And that's just where they're building their house (picture in Catlow Valley).

DOROTHEA: And houses in those days were just little.

MILDRED: Yes, about one room, possibly two.

DOROTHEA: That looks like a sheep camp, is it?

MILDRED: That's Mel and Maymie homesteading.

DOROTHEA: Oh that's their homestead, that's after it was built a little bit? Oh, that's a tent.

MILDRED: That's somebody homesteading, I don't know if that was Mel and Maymie or -
--

DOROTHEA: Yeah, it says Mel and Maymie. And this is Parker.

MILDRED: Some of these pictures were my sister's, and some were my mother's, and I inherited them. And I've got written on this that this is Mel's barn in the background in there. Ikabod dog.

BARBARA: Was there a schoolhouse at Beckley and Blitzen too, or not?

MILDRED: I just don't ---

BARBARA: Or did they go into Catlow?

MILDRED: I think that they probably went to Catlow, because it wasn't too awful far. That's Maymie playing her mandolin out in the snow.

BARBARA: Did you meet any of the teachers around there that ended up marrying and staying?

MILDRED: Just the one that married Fern Kelley, was the only one. And this was taken at Three Mile Ranch, and I don't know who that Betty is. But that's me with the coveralls, and my sister Maymie next to me at Three Mile.

DOROTHEA: So when you came out here it was like a big wide-open area and lots of room.

MILDRED: Oh yes.

DOROTHEA: And you learned to ride horses then?

MILDRED: Oh yeah.

DOROTHEA: Did you already know how?

MILDRED: I didn't know how, but I finally learned. And the roads of course were dirt, and when I'd go looking for jackrabbits on the snare line, if I'd see a rattlesnake track going in the dust across the road I'd follow it. But my sister didn't know it.

DOROTHEA: She didn't like snakes?

MILDRED: Oh, she was scared to death of snakes, just scared to death. And I had quite a lot of rattles and arrowheads that I found on my horseback ridings out there that I gave my youngest son just recently. He was thrilled to get them.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, because that's quite a novelty now, you don't get to do any of that.

MILDRED: I suppose not.

DOROTHEA: No, it's the, the BLM and the Forest and everybody, they have, what do they call --- you can't do it anymore anyway, it's against the law.

MILDRED: No fun.

DOROTHEA: No, they took all the fun away.

MILDRED: And this is Bill Harris at Brenton cabin, and me. He was hay crew boss, and then he cooked at Brenton cabin for the hay crew. And ... or Bill Harris in Burns when I was here, I think the last time that I was here not too long ago, somebody says well there is Bill Harris, remember him? And I says Bill Harris, he had whiskers, and of course he is getting quite up in age, I'm 87 and see the difference. He must have been in his twenties, late twenties probably. And so he's ---

BARBARA: Bill Harris, is that the one that was married to Katie Harris?

MILDRED: Yeah.

BARBARA: I thought that he had passed away.

MILDRED: Well maybe he has recently.

BARBARA: I mean a long time ago, I didn't know.

MILDRED: Well maybe ---

MELODI: How long ago was it when you saw him here?

MILDRED: Didn't seem like too long ago when I was over here with Sam once before, with Wanda I was over here. Less than a year ago.

MELODI: Really.

DOROTHEA: Well maybe it's one of the boys or something, one of the boys.

MILDRED: Oh.

DOROTHEA: Could have been.

MILDRED: Oh, I don't know what you're interested in at all, but that's Maymie in her homestead shack.

DOROTHEA: Well tell us about what you did when you were, when you came here. Where you went, and who your friends were, and ---

MILDRED: Well in one of those there is a picture of the, where we lived at Blitzen.

MELODI: Just says Maymie and Mabel, those are your two sisters. Oh, it's you and Maymie and Mabel.

MILDRED: Oh, this is some of them that, the old timers that I knew, was Wickert. They lived out there and they had quite a few kids. They darned near starved to death too, so they moved. Whether that name is familiar, or if there is any Wickert's around anymore or not.

DOROTHEA: I don't recognize the name, huh uh.

MILDRED: And this is Jack Tohey and his homestead shack.

DOROTHEA: T O H E Y.

MILDRED: Tohey they called it, I don't know how they spelled it. That's my sister's writing on there.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, it looks like T O H E Y. Well what did you, did you help with the cooking, or did you help with the haying, or what all did you do when you were here?

MILDRED: Well I didn't do any more than I had to. (Laughter)

BARBARA: You just came for fun.

MILDRED: Yeah, just to spend the summer.

BARBARA: Did we get down when you were born?

MILDRED: 1907.

BARBARA: 1907, and when?

MILDRED: Hawarden.

BARBARA: What month were you born?

MILDRED: September 25th.

BARBARA: And so you came here first in 1921, so ---

DOROTHEA: She was fourteen, seventeen, fourteen.

MELODI: Tell them about when Maymie was cooking for the hay crew; what you said about she taped paper on her legs.

MILDRED: Oh yeah, when she was cooking for the hay crew down in the field from "P" Ranch, the mosquitoes were terrible, we built a frame around the bed in one corner. It was just a one-room shack. And then we put mosquito ... around that. And when we'd get ready to go to bed, Mel was working some place else, and just Maymie and I down there, and I'd crawl under and get in there and look all around and see if any mosquitoes followed me in. And if they did I squished them, and if they didn't why then I'd say okay Maymie, blow the lamp out and she'd crawl under. That's the way we'd keep away from the mosquitoes. But they were terrible on her legs. I wore coveralls like I say, my arms

and legs were protected, but she wore a dress. And those shoes laced up to about there, and she wrapped newspapers around her legs from her knees down to her ankles underneath her stockings to keep the mosquitoes from biting her legs off.

BARBARA: Oh my goodness. They must have been really big and fierce.

MILDRED: Oh they were terrible. Yes, they were hungry.

DOROTHEA: There must have been a lot of water around that year.

MILDRED: Yeah, down around "P" Ranch, and there was a lot of water down in there. And this is Mr. and Mrs. Henry, and they had three girls, the youngest ones were twins. They lived at, I think, Three Mile (Ranch). And this is some more of ---

MELODI: Do you remember their first names, Henry's first names?

MILDRED: No. Being I'm trying to think of it I can't.

DOROTHEA: It says Frank, Frank here. And where did they live, away from you about?

MILDRED: Oh, out there in Catlow (Valley) some place.

DOROTHEA: Several miles.

MILDRED: Probably.

DOROTHEA: Did you go to other people's houses to play with the kids, or did you ride with other girls?

MILDRED: We used to go over to Al and Millie Ohms, they lived quite a ways over on the other side of Catlow Valley (corrected to store), in a shack over there. And we'd go over there and visit them. People got tired of being out there and left; there wasn't too awful many people except there was the ones that lived on the various ranches. No, Swift and Company I believe it was had the ranches at that time. That's Mrs. Henry and her children. Zelma, that was her first name, Zelma Henry.

BARBARA: I notice in this one picture it shows Maymie and her homestead shack, and she's got kind of a bonnet on, or a covering over her hair. Was that normal that you put

something on your hair?

MILDRED: She did, because she didn't like to have the dust get in it.

BARBARA: All dusty in her hair, uh huh. It's kind of like a little bonnet or kind of made a hair net out of cloth.

MILDRED: Yeah, I don't know what they called it. That's two of the Henry girls and Maymie. And this is Maymie and Mel and his friend that came out from Dakota with him, Carl Voyne.

DOROTHEA: And you spelled that Kundert, K U N D E R T ?

MILDRED: Who?

DOROTHEA: Kundert.

MILDRED: Kundert, yes, K U N D E R T.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

MILDRED: And this is moving day, I don't know where they were moving, but some place.

DOROTHEA: Well how old were you when you first remember riding in a car? Were there, you say there weren't any cars out here.

MILDRED: There was one, Fern Kelley had it at the store. And when anybody needed to come into Burns in a car, why they'd borrow Fern Kelley's car to come into Burns, because that was the only car, and that was a Model-T.

DOROTHEA: You don't know what year it was?

MILDRED: No. But this could possibly have been taken, this was taken in 1917, and there is a car.

DOROTHEA: Oh, Chino ---

MILDRED: Chino Berdugo.

DOROTHEA: Berdugo.

MILDRED: He was in the sheep ranch or something up there.

BARBARA: Did you ever meet him?

MILDRED: Oh yeah.

BARBARA: Can you tell us anything about him; did he used to tell you stories?

MILDRED: No, he used to come to visit Mel, or if he needed something, or needed some help he'd come and ask Mel to help him. And Mel would go help him up in the hills with the sheep every once in awhile too. But I never really got acquainted with him.

BARBARA: You didn't get to visit much with him then, no.

MILDRED: No.

BARBARA: What kind of a, he doesn't look real tall, was he not a tall man, or a short man?

MILDRED: He was this way. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Was he kind of wide?

MILDRED: Yeah. And Mel and ... guy, I can't remember him. But it's written down there.

Maymie and ---

DOROTHEA: A dog.

MILDRED: Her dog, Ikabod, they called him Iky.

DOROTHEA: And a windmill in the back. Can you tell us something about the windmills? Were there windmills all over the country?

MILDRED: There were, if a person could afford to buy one, and find water. They'd buy a shovel and dig and dig, and maybe they'd find water, and maybe they wouldn't. But if they'd find the water, then if they could afford a windmill they'd set it up, otherwise you had a bucket and a rope and go way down in there and get a bucketful and pull it out.

DOROTHEA: So they weren't, the wells weren't very deep?

MILDRED: No. And some of the people that needed water, now Mr. Lemon was one of

them, he had two milk cans and he --- and one horse, and he wasn't married. And he'd come over there in his horse and buggy and fill his milk cans with water and take it back home. One can was for him and the other can was for the horse. And when he got them used up he'd come back over and fill them up and take them back home again. That was his source of water.

DOROTHEA: So the water was kind of scarce in the Catlow Valley?

MILDRED: Yeah, but it wasn't deep. But along the rim where Roaring Springs, and Three Mile, and Home Creek, there was all water up in the cliffs up there by the ranches. And they came down into the fields, and that's why the hay fields were so plentiful there, was the water came down out of the rim rock.

BARBARA: Was it runoff from the Steens Mountain was it, probably?

MILDRED: Well it could have been lower, way down low. The Steens were really high up above.

BARBARA: Uh huh. But I just wondered if some of the water would run down maybe some way.

MILDRED: Well probably when the snow melted in the spring.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: What about the haying, how did they do haying then?

MILDRED: In the horse and ---

DOROTHEA: Horse drawn machinery?

MILDRED: Yeah. Rake, what you call them.

MELODI: There is a picture of that in here isn't there, that huge hay stack with those horses in front of it? The hay must have been twenty feet high.

MILDRED: Oh I don't know if that's in that one, or a different one.

MELODI: How did they get the haystack so high?

MILDRED: I don't know, can't understand it.

DOROTHEA: They probably used a slide or something where they had a pullback horse, and a pull-up horse, and nets and things. Or somehow they came about building those anyway.

MILDRED: Yes.

DOROTHEA: So ---

MILDRED: And their woodpiles, very rarely they'd get trees out of the lower part of the Steens, juniper trees for wood. But most of the time the wood was sagebrush, and they'd have huge piles of sagebrush and hope it would last them until, well into the season.

DOROTHEA: When you first came to the area, was there a lot of sagebrush?

MILDRED: Oh, it was all over. And the last homestead that Mel took up, permanent in, that had oh great big brush, and high, just almost like a forest.

DOROTHEA: Un huh.

MILDRED: But out in the middle of the valley where it was dry and the water didn't get too, why it was little icky stuff.

DOROTHEA: So the sagebrush grew better where there was water then?

MILDRED: Oh yeah.

DOROTHEA: Did they have many fields that were open, or did they, had they, had to grub these fields or were they normal?

MILDRED: They had to grub the brush out to get a field. Because otherwise it was just plain old grass grew among fields. But if you wanted a good hay crop, plant a hay field why you had to grub that sagebrush out of there.

DOROTHEA: Did people have cattle then, or how did they make their living at that time?

MILDRED: Well some of them had a few cattle. And of course the Companies they had big ranches and a lot of cattle. But you were lucky if you could afford to buy a milk cow.

DOROTHEA: Did they have mostly horses?

MILDRED: There was a lot of horses out there, because they didn't have machinery like they do now.

DOROTHEA: So were you ever around when they were breaking some of these horses?

MILDRED: Well mostly Mel just broke his own. And it seemed like I got there after they got done bucking, but they were gentled down some. But they were still wild; I wasn't allowed to get on them. And then he had one that he bought from Dave Crow, he called him Kentucky. And he was a pure bred from something that Dave Crow had gotten in. He used to ship out there, and this was one of the younger colts, and Mel traded around and someway or other got this colt, and he called him Kentucky. And oh, he was a proud stepper, and I wasn't allowed to ride that. Huh uh.

DOROTHEA: He was afraid maybe you'd run him?

MILDRED: Yeah, he was afraid he'd run off with me.

BARBARA: So what kind of a horse did you have to ride?

MILDRED: Oh, just a plain old horse, his name was Dexter and we called him Decky. And Mel could make him do most anything; he'd perk up and go for Mel, but for me ---

BARBARA: Maybe he knew that you were young and you didn't need to go too fast.

MILDRED: I think so. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: I think horses have a way of telling that.

MILDRED: Yes, whether you know anything or not.

DOROTHEA: We had a few like that. Yeah.

BARBARA: So the first summer that you came out in 1921, what kind of an experience was it for you to finally get out and to be able to run around in the open spaces? Were you really excited about it?

MILDRED: Maymie pretty much kept her eye on me, she was so afraid of rattlesnakes.

We had what they called a snare line, the jackrabbits run in trails. And they had at the store, you traded in the ears and got this real fine wire, and you fastened it in the sagebrush and hung it down over the trail in a loop about like that. And the rabbits would hear you coming and they'd run, and their head would go through that loop, and they'd back up and it would choke them. So what we had to do was --- cut their ears off, and if the dog hadn't had anything to eat why you would skin them out and give the meat to the dog. Maymie wouldn't eat jackrabbit meat, oh heavens no!

BARBARA: Did you cut the ears off yourself, or did someone else?

MILDRED: Oh yeah.

BARBARA: And what did you think about doing that the first time? Were you kind of squeamish about it?

MILDRED: Well, I was a little pinky about it at first, but Mel sharpened up my knife, and he says, "You take this with you now and you just grab the ears and ---"

BARBARA: Oh dear.

MILDRED: And string them on the wire.

MELODI: You guys didn't eat jackrabbit stew or anything?

MILDRED: No, she wouldn't touch one of them.

BARBARA: Were they afraid they had disease or something?

MILDRED: I don't know, just the idea I guess it was.

BARBARA: Just the idea, uh huh.

MILDRED: ... jackrabbit, and the sagebrush was full of them.

DOROTHEA: Did they have cottontails at that time?

MILDRED: I don't think so.

DOROTHEA: Didn't notice them. I know when I was a kid we had the jackrabbit runs too, and there wasn't the cottontails. But I guess they were safe to eat. The others were, I

guess, afraid of disease.

MILDRED: The cottontails were smaller, and they had a white tail, I guess that's the reason that they called them cottontails. But those jackrabbits, some of those were huge.

DOROTHEA: Some of them got pretty good size, yeah.

BARBARA: Did they ever have roundups when you were out there, or were most of them just trapped, or have your snare lines?

MILDRED: We had the snare line, and then each sagebrush that we had a snare under we took an old piece of dried up sagebrush and stuck up in the top of that brush so you could find it.

BARBARA: See the mark.

MILDRED: Need to see those markers where you'd follow them.

BARBARA: But the ranchers never had big round-ups to try to ---

MILDRED: Not at that time.

BARBARA: Uh huh, okay.

MILDRED: I know I have read in the paper in later years where they'd have the round-ups, and how many of them they'd catch, and oh goodness. They were eating the crops I guess.

DOROTHEA: Kind of like the grasshoppers here a couple years ago.

MILDRED: Oh yeah, and then those were terrible. I don't think there was any out there at the time that I was out there.

BARBARA: So were you able to come every summer then after your first summer, as long as you were still in school?

MILDRED: I came every summer except one, until I got married. And that put a kibosh on that. (Laughter)

BARBARA: And so did you do, each summer were you allowed to do more things out

there then? Or what did you do the next summer when you were fifteen then?

MILDRED: Well it was just about the same every summer, except that in the meantime I'd been able to get a car. And then we'd come into Burns, and we'd come in at round-up time, and boy that

--- they call it rodeo now. But then it was round up, we'd come in with the round up, but boy that was something.

BARBARA: Were they pretty rowdy at the round up?

MILDRED: Oh ---

DOROTHEA: Where did they hold the rodeos or the round-ups then? Can you remember an approximate place?

MILDRED: No, and I guess I didn't bring that picture, I had a picture of the rodeo stand, and it was just a little tiny thing with the benches. Oh my goodness now, I guess a great big outfit.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. Well I understand that the bleachers, what we call the bleachers now, is the first stands that was at the first rodeo grounds, which was around where the Pine Room is now.

BARBARA: It was closer down ---

MILDRED: I don't remember where it was located.

DOROTHEA: So you don't know whether it was there or further down. MILDRED: No.

DOROTHEA: Because later it went, moved down, they just kept moving south more or less. Because later it was down where the railroad, close to the railroad tracks. And then they moved it on down to where it is today. But what was a rodeo like then? Was it just bucking horses, or did they race, or ---

MILDRED: It wasn't like it is now, it was really rough. They brought in the wildest horses they could find off the range, and let her buck.

DOROTHEA: Did they rope steers and calves, or did they have any roping?

MILDRED: No calves, calves was too tame.

DOROTHEA: And race, did they have races?

MILDRED: Yes, they had races.

DOROTHEA: What kind, were they regular horse, saddle horse races, or were they wild horse races?

MILDRED: I don't know, except they were races.

DOROTHEA: Just races.

MILDRED: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Where and when did you meet your husband?

MILDRED: In Silverton. He had a hop ranch, and we raised hops for several years. I think my third son was born out there on the hop ranch. Finally sold that and moved up in the Silverton hills by Silver Creek Falls, if you've ever heard of that. We had strawberries up there. And I thought well good, I was getting rid of those old hops, and have strawberries. But oh my aching back! They were good to eat.

DOROTHEA: What was your husband's name?

MILDRED: Floyd.

DOROTHEA: And how many children did you have?

MILDRED: Four, or no, five.

MELODI: Five.

MILDRED: Yes, five.

DOROTHEA: And what were their names?

MILDRED: Bill is, was William Floyd, everybody knew him as Bill. He was around Burns here, Bill was. We talked to a man the other night, Sam did, coming over on one of these things, he talked to a trucker that passed him. He was a guy that knew Bill and Sam

when they were out in Catlow, haying out there.

MELODI: Oh really.

MILDRED: So then Keith they were all born, no Bill was born at my parent's house in Silverton. We lived ... and then Sam and Keith were born out there. That's ... they called it, my hop ranch. And then the girl Jeannie was next. And by that time the doctors would not come out to your home, you had to go to the hospital to have your baby. It was unsanitary to come out to an old farm home and have babies. So, and then the youngest one, Kit, he was premature so naturally I had to have him at the hospital. And now they are wanting you to have your babies at home.

DOROTHEA: More and more of that, I think the expense is part of it.

MILDRED: Oh, it's terrible.

DOROTHEA: Well you went up to the place then and you had strawberries. What else did you do, did your husband have a trade?

MILDRED: Well my father was a plasterer, and so Floyd worked for him helping him plaster. And then when the boys got big enough to help mix mud, and carry it, they didn't have machines then like they do now, why then Bill and Sam helped with the plastering.

DOROTHEA: And so what did they do, plaster walls in houses?

MILDRED: Yes.

DOROTHEA: And so they more or less did house work, decorating, or what I'm --- building.

MILDRED: Building, plastering, stuccoing the house after it was built.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

MILDRED: And I don't know if you have ever been down around Mount Angel or not, that big Catholic Church that they have? It was built so long ago (completed in 1912), my dad plastered that, and it took him two years to plaster it, but it's still there. My dad has been

dead a good many years.

DOROTHEA: So did the boys take up this trade too then, or ---

MILDRED: No, after Sam ---

SIDE B

DOROTHEA: Go ahead.

MILDRED: When Mel and Maymie moved into Burns then they had the Highland Dairy.

DOROTHEA: And where was that at?

MILDRED: In Burns on the main street I guess it is, darned if I know where the Highland Dairy was. It was down there pretty close to Copeland's someplace.

MELODI: Oh was it?

MILDRED: Things have changed so around.

MELODI: Is it where their house was?

MILDRED: Yeah, where their house was, Highland Dairy office and building. And the bottling plant was in front of it.

MELODI: Okay, yeah the house used to be right there behind Copeland's, and it's moved and it's beside the Dry Cleaners place now. That home was moved there.

DOROTHEA: Oh, that big white one?

MELODI: Uh huh. It was just moved like one or two blocks over. And that's the one Mel and Maymie used to live in.

MILDRED: Yeah.

MELODI: Yeah.

MILDRED: Yeah, the one behind there.

MELODI: Yeah.

MILDRED: And if you want to get that book out, maybe she might like to look at some of

the prices. Oh, you've got it.

MELODI: This one?

MILDRED: This, my sister kept track of everything she had.

MELODI: Her monthly budget ... a month.

MILDRED: Here is ten cents, five cents, ten cents, everything that she spent and took in.

BARBARA: It's like the things we put on Quicken now.

MELODI: Yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Mailed a package to Kundert's, ten cents.

MILDRED: That must have been Mel's mother back in Dakota.

DOROTHEA: Parcel post to Lawrence, ten cents. A role of paper, wow, a dollar and twenty-five cents. Flour at Beckley, two dollars and fifteen cents. A yeast cake was a nickel. They must have bought a load of hay for something; it cost seven dollars and fifty cents. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Can you buy a bale for that now?

MELODI: Not very many places.

MILDRED: And she even wrote down where she got a lot of those. That looks as though that might be ---

DOROTHEA: Crackers, twenty-five cents, milk twenty-five cents.

MILDRED: No, that isn't it either, but there is some pages there that I --- oh yes, I did turn that down.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

MILDRED: They name some of the towns there. I turned the corners down until I thought ---

DOROTHEA: Butter from Catlow, eighty cents. And they had the month's budget was

\$18.56.

BARBARA: I wish I could go to the grocery store for that now, for just one bag.

MELODI: One bag.

BARBARA: Oh dear.

DOROTHEA: Well they must have had some accounts here too, because they had Kundert and Osbourn accounts, and it says due \$15.65, and that's in 1926.

BARBARA: You say that, did they come into Crane to do some of their shopping then too, when they were still out in Catlow Valley?

MILDRED: Yeah.

BARBARA: Uh huh. And did you get to come into town with them during that time?

MILDRED: Oh yeah. We came in in the horse and buggy.

BARBARA: And did you trade at the Vale Trading Post, or VT I think they called it.

MILDRED: I don't remember that.

BARBARA: Vale Trading, uh huh.

MILDRED: It kind of seems to be a blank ---

BARBARA: Uh huh.

MILDRED: --- as the railroad just came as far as Crane.

BARBARA: As Crane, right, uh huh. And did you ever go to shows or programs or anything for entertainment, did you come into Crane to do anything?

MILDRED: Well I don't think there was much of anything for entertainment there, because the town wasn't much.

BARBARA: Uh huh. I wondered, did they have any dances or anything like that? Were you ever allowed to come into a dance?

MILDRED: I never danced, but Maymie did, she loved to dance. And people used to stand back and watch her and Mel dance. They just made such a beautiful pair.

DOROTHEA: They really cut the rug, huh?

MILDRED: And they had at the different homesteads out there in Catlow, they used to have a little party and they'd have a dance. And if they were going to dance, Maymie wanted to go.

DOROTHEA: How about movies, did you go to any movies?

MILDRED: I just don't recall. Probably might have gone to one in Burns if there was any in Burns at that time.

DOROTHEA: That probably cost a whole nickel too.

MILDRED: Yeah, probably. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Now today I think it's like five dollars, or six or seven dollars and fifty cents. It depends on the movie you go to I think.

MILDRED: And how many kids you have with you.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. I think we used to go to the movie, the whole family, there was five of us kids and my mom and dad, I think we went for two dollars. (Laughter) Well how many grandkids do you have?

MILDRED: Oh, I've lost track lately. I quit counting at eight. And then some of the younger generation, they have kids, and I don't even know their names, little own how old they are.

BARBARA: Well you are at the home of one of your grandchildren, right? Aren't we visiting with one of your granddaughters?

MILDRED: Great granddaughter.

BARBARA: Great granddaughter.

MILDRED: It's Sam's daughter.

DOROTHEA: Well that's just the granddaughter, and she's got your great grandsons.

MILDRED: Yeah.

MELODI: Right.

DOROTHEA: And so how did Sam come about being in Harney County?

MILDRED: Well he and Bill both, in the summertime, would come out to be with Maymie and Mel, and by that time Maymie and Mel had moved into Burns and had the Highland Dairy and also the skating rink. And so Bill and Sam used to just love to come over and spend the summer and skate.

BARBARA: Oh, they kind of did like you did, they wanted to come over here and have the good life then in the summertime, huh?

MILDRED: Yes.

BARBARA: All right.

MILDRED: Yes, instead of living on a farm and picking strawberries.

MELODI: Now Grandma, you only had nine grandchildren. You have a lot of great grandkids. But Kit your youngest boy has four girls.

MILDRED: Yeah.

MELODI: And Keith never had any.

MILDRED: No.

MELODI: Jeannie never had any. Dad has us four, and then Bill had one, so that is only nine grandkids.

MILDRED: Grandkids yeah. The great grandkids I've ---

MELODI: Lots of those. (Laughter)

BARBARA: So you say that there was a skating place, or you mentioned them skating in Burns.

MILDRED: I didn't quite get that.

DOROTHEA: Skating.

MELODI: Where was the roller-skating?

MILDRED: It was in the hall there at Burns.

MELODI: What hall?

MILDRED: The big hall next to Highland Dairy, I don't know what, who had that hall, but it was a big hall.

MELODI: Like there where Copeland's is now then, there was a big hall somewhere there?

MILDRED: Yeah.

BARBARA: They just had it for skating, or was it for dances too, or ---

MILDRED: Well anything they could rent it for, for the time being.

BARBARA: Just kind of a social center then? Uh huh. And you talk about this Highland Dairy was --- they milked their cows right there, and then did they deliver to people in Burns? Or did they sell to stores, or did they do both?

MILDRED: They did both.

DOROTHEA: Now where did they take their cows? They must have had cows if they had a dairy. How did they feed them?

MILDRED: They lived up the canyon, you know which road that is, instead of turning to come out here, it goes straight. It was off out in that canyon someplace.

BARBARA: Out Foley Drive maybe?

MELODI: Out by the Indian Reservation, up that canyon?

MILDRED: Oh, I don't know where the Indian Reservation is anymore. It used to be just as you come in town, it was on the top of the hill. I think it has been moved.

DOROTHEA: Well we talked to some people that they moved their cows, and every day they'd have to take them to the green grass. And they took them out towards Hines a little ways, is that possibly where they were?

MILDRED: I think they bought the milk from people, and then they had the bottling plant.

A lot of this stuff I'm kind of foggy on.

BARBARA: Oh, they didn't have the cows themselves, they just bought milk from different people around town, and then they processed it? Is that what they did?

MILDRED: Yes, they processed it and bottled it.

BARBARA: Okay, okay. So they didn't have ---

MILDRED: I think I've still got a bottle or two with the caps that Keith brought.

BARBARA: So they didn't have their herd themselves?

MILDRED: No.

BARBARA: They were just processing other people's milk?

MILDRED: That was too much hard work.

BARBARA: Yeah, well I can see that all right.

DOROTHEA: Well did they have a creamery at that place too then?

MILDRED: There was a creamery there pretty close. But I don't remember much about it.

BARBARA: Did the kids ever take the milk around to the people in town, deliver milk?

MILDRED: Oh they probably did, I don't remember.

BARBARA: Uh huh, you don't know.

MILDRED: Because by that time I was still over in the valley, and the kids were over here for the summer.

BARBARA: Right, uh huh.

MILDRED: They were like me, they hated to go back over and go to school.

BARBARA: Were you glad to have them come over every summer then?

MILDRED: Oh yeah, because they enjoyed it.

BARBARA: Because you remembered how much fun you had then probably.

MILDRED: And they were so willing to come. And I knew Mel would make them mind,

they wouldn't let them get away with anything.

BARBARA: Uh huh, well that's good.

DOROTHEA: Did Mel and Maymie have any children?

MILDRED: No.

DOROTHEA: They didn't? So they were kind of special aunts and uncles then I suppose to everybody.

MILDRED: Yes, I should say. And I've got a scrapbook there, I don't know whether you'd be interested in just looking at it, or whether you have time.

DOROTHEA: Well, would it help you to remember some of the things that you have done? Melodi, if you think of anything that you would like to ask her, or that you can remember her talking about, well feel free to jump in.

MELODI: Okay.

BARBARA: Jump in any time.

MELODI: These are newspaper articles that she has put in this magazine, used it for a scrapbook. And it says, "Women's Home Companion," October 1928. It's the magazine that she's put all these newspaper clippings in it.

BARBARA: Oh my goodness.

MILDRED: Yeah, now this was, happened in Burns, and the man that goes by the name of Flint Sprag in here, he was Tobe Skiens, and the girl was a Melvin girl. And he was presumably supposed to have kidnapped her, and it says all the trail they went. And I have quite a lot of articles, quite a long ---

DOROTHEA: Yeah I heard about that story. My dad told me something about Tobe Skiens, he run around with him a little bit.

MILDRED: Oh.

MELODI: Your dad did?

MILDRED: And she --- But I saved everything, and Maymie saved them for me too.

BARBARA: That was pretty exciting stuff then wasn't it?

MILDRED: Yes, oh my goodness. And somebody else said, "Oh she just run off with him, he didn't kidnap her."

DOROTHEA: Well that's the story Daddy said, he said, "Well that's what they said." But he said, "He didn't really kidnap her."

MILDRED: Yeah. But this long trip that they were supposed to have taken ---

DOROTHEA: Yeah, that looks interesting.

MILDRED: See all this along ---

DOROTHEA: It goes into Idaho, and into Arizona, Nevada, down into Mexico even. Did they trace him all that way?

MILDRED: Well a lot of it he told I guess after he got back, or else she told, I don't know which. But anyway I didn't know if you had heard that story.

DOROTHEA: Well just what my dad told me, and that was about all. I don't even think Marcus (Haines) told us much about Tobe Skiens. But my dad had run around with him a little bit, so ---

MILDRED: I thought that name Skiens; he might possibly be some of them around Burns yet.

DOROTHEA: There used to be, but I don't know whether there is anymore or not.

MILDRED: This was I think 1929 that I cut this out of the paper. And then memories of an Oregon horse thief.

DOROTHEA: Now who was this?

MILDRED: Well it probably tells it under this picture.

DOROTHEA: Flint Sprag, now is that Tobe Skiens again?

MILDRED: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Did he or didn't he? That print is too little for my eyes. Well these are quite, this is quite a book.

MILDRED: Well I only had two kids when I was making these scrapbooks, so I had more time.

BARBARA: Uh huh. Did you ever write in diaries at all when you were growing up, and keeping a record as to what you did?

MILDRED: No, I don't think so. In later years I started, but then I'd write awhile and then I'd ---

BARBARA: Then you'd forget about it, uh huh.

MILDRED: Yeah.

BARBARA: So it wasn't an every day thing that you did?

MILDRED: Say, well I'll do it tomorrow. No.

DOROTHEA: Well this guy was quite a guy. He even, he flew an airplane to steal horses huh?

MILDRED: Search me, I haven't read those for ---

DOROTHEA: For a long time.

MELODI: And did you know the people in these articles Grandma?

MILDRED: Oh, some of them. I don't know why I stuck them in there.

MELODI: This is an old copy of the Ruralite, Harney Electric Co-op. What's it dated? Oh, those are only March '72, but its some older people is mentioned in there. Here it is, Coco Wilson and the ranch that she is on. There is a picture of Bob Wallace on the back of that magazine; he used to run the Mann Lake Ranch.

MILDRED: This one?

DOROTHEA: Huh.

MILDRED: There is a barrel race.

DOROTHEA: Oh, and here is the saga of Bill Brown.

MILDRED: Yeah, any of that stuff interested me, and so I ---

BARBARA: I don't believe I've ever seen a picture of him before.

MILDRED: That's when he was young.

DOROTHEA: This is from a photograph taken of his graduation, San Jose Normal, class of 1878 or something.

MILDRED: This is 1941, I don't know what there was in this that I ---

DOROTHEA: Everybody in this country knows Bill Brown. Have you looked through these Melodi? Oh, I'd love to look through this. Oh, and Pete French, Oregon's cattle king.

MELODI: Yeah, there is a neat article about him in there. There are some pictures of the big round building, and barns too.

DOROTHEA: April 14th, 1933, or '35.

MELODI: Did you forget your glasses Dorothea?

DOROTHEA: No, they're in my purse, but I don't wear them.

BARBARA: She says she can't see with them, or without them.

DOROTHEA: I've got to get new ones. I'll let Barbara look at these a little bit.

MELODI: Here's another one.

MILDRED: Then this one, I ---

DOROTHEA: They don't make magazines to put together like they used to.

MILDRED: No.

DOROTHEA: We'd never be able to put a magazine full of ---

MELODI: She said she glued those on there with just flour and water, and they're still together.

MILDRED: Oh yes, Kate Smith.

MELODI: Did you know her when she was here?

MILDRED: No, but I found some articles just recently, you know, within the last few years when she was over here. She was out in, it wasn't Hampton, but it was that other place out in the desert, Riley I guess.

MELODI: Yeah, there is Riley, and Hampton, and Millican.

MILDRED: Yeah, Millican it was.

MELODI: That's where it was, yeah.

MILDRED: She was out there.

DOROTHEA: Klondike Kate.

MELODI: Yeah. You never saw her when she was here, you didn't know her?

MILDRED: Huh uh. Yeah, this is Millican. What's his name, that name is familiar.

DOROTHEA: Sure.

MELODI: What does it say?

DOROTHEA: Right under the big picture.

MELODI: W. A. Rohn.

MILDRED: Rohn.

MELODI: Rohn.

DOROTHEA: Rohn.

MELODI: Who was the mayor of Millican?

MILDRED: That was a one; I started to say one horse ---

DOROTHEA: One horse town.

MILDRED: One horse in town.

DOROTHEA: Isn't that interesting?

BARBARA: I should say so.

DOROTHEA: We've been looking at some magazines that Mildred has filled with articles

out of newspapers about the local people. Some, one about Pete French, and one about Bill Brown.

BARBARA: Bill Hanley here, did you ever know Bill Hanley?

MILDRED: I saw him a time or two, but I never was acquainted with him.

BARBARA: Uh huh. Kind of a big man, wasn't he?

MILDRED: Yes.

BARBARA: Smoked cigars.

MILDRED: And he was always in at round-up time, and that's where I saw him was at the round-ups, with a big hat.

DOROTHEA: Always black I understood.

MILDRED: And long white hair.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

MILDRED: That's curled up in the back.

BARBARA: Did you ever go up on the Steens Mountain when you came here during the summertime?

MILDRED: No, not too far.

BARBARA: Up to Fish Lake?

MILDRED: No, I never got up that far. And the caves in the rim-rock up above Roaring Springs. When Maymie cooked, like I say for the different hay crews, she followed the hay crews around. Why oh, I wanted to go up in that rim rock and look in those caves, and, "Don't you go up there, there is rattlesnakes up there." So ---

BARBARA: Did you help her cook at all during ---

MILDRED: Oh, I washed dishes, I didn't care about cooking. I'd rather be outdoors.

BARBARA: You didn't learn to cook then here, you learned to cook at home did you?

MILDRED: Yeah, and oh I knew a little bit, something about the cooking that she was

doing, but ---

BARBARA: What kind of meals would she serve the hayers?

MILDRED: Oh, beans, potatoes, and they always had beef. I don't remember, a lot of it was dried stuff because they didn't have access to canned stuff like they do now.

BARBARA: Uh huh, dried fruits and things like that, did they serve?

MILDRED: Yes.

BARBARA: Did she make cakes and pies; did she always have a dessert?

MILDRED: Oh yeah, and bread. She was busy.

BARBARA: And bread, uh huh. Did she set bread every day, or make biscuits, or quick breads?

MILDRED: I don't know, but I've got a picture of her hay crew here.

BARBARA: Uh huh. Did she have help with the cooking, or just did it by herself?

MILDRED: No, just me.

BARBARA: Just you.

MELODI: What did they pay her for cooking, do you remember?

MILDRED: I don't remember, but it probably wasn't very much.

DOROTHEA: Did she do this to make some money to buy groceries, or did she just do this because she liked to? Or did she follow the hay crew with Mel?

MILDRED: Well probably, mostly to get money to tied them over.

MELODI: I'll look for it while you're ---

MILDRED: The hay crew.

DOROTHEA: Well what are some of the other things that you have done around? You lived on a couple of farms, or places like this, raised your children. And did you, were you active in church, or with the children in school?

MILDRED: No, I used to go to Sunday school when I was little, and that's as far as I got.

And my husband Floyd, his parents belonged to the Swiss Church. And of course when he'd get with his buddies he'd talk Swiss with them, and they'd laugh, and talk, and laugh. And I couldn't understand a thing they said because it was Swiss.

DOROTHEA: Do you feel that maybe they talked like this so you couldn't understand them?

MILDRED: No, I couldn't understand them. And that's the hay crew that she (Maymie) cooked for.

DOROTHEA: Well they had quite a few guys.

MILDRED: You bet.

MELODI: There is a bunch of names on the back of that.

BARBARA: Roy Witzel, Deb Garber, Carey Campbell, Shorty Garber, Townley, Grant Young, Jim Wells, Oliver Edmonds, Jim McCullough, Bill Harris.

DOROTHEA: Bill Harris, that's 1924.

BARBARA: There is sixteen men in this picture.

DOROTHEA: So she cooked for --- I suppose that they didn't let women work in the hay fields in those days.

MILDRED: No.

DOROTHEA: That was all a man's job. And so did you help, did you go to school, like did they have PTA's or anything, were you active in any of that?

MILDRED: No.

DOROTHEA: You didn't.

MILDRED: I wasn't interested.

DOROTHEA: Did your kids have to ride buses, or did you have to haul them to town?

MILDRED: They walked.

DOROTHEA: They walked.

MILDRED: Some of it was two miles, but they'd cut through the pastures and woods. And when the snow was deep, they didn't have school.

DOROTHEA: So what kind of school did they have, a country school?

MILDRED: A country school. They went to country school until we moved into town. We lived within a mile of town for about a year before we moved up in the hills, in the strawberries. So the kids were close, they walked to school. And now of course they go by bus. They don't know what walking is like.

DOROTHEA: I know that your son Sam worked in Harney County for a while. Did you come and live with him for a while, or did he just work here? Did you visit often?

MILDRED: Well he stayed with Maymie and Mel a lot, and so did Bill, but they liked it out here. And of course the war come along then. Bill joined the army and was a paratrooper, that was more adventurous, they jumped down out of an airplane, than plain old army. And then Sam joined the navy, and when he got out of the navy he went to college, he wanted to get some smarts.

DOROTHEA: And so what did he do in college? Did he study a special subject, or ---

MILDRED: Electrical engineering.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

MILDRED: I don't know if that's what they called it, but that's what it was.

MELODI: Yeah, that's what they call it.

DOROTHEA: And so did he eventually get a job with an electrical company, or how ---

MILDRED: Yes, down in Southern Oregon, I can't think what ---

MELODI: Coos Bay.

MILDRED: Coos Bay, yeah. And then, where else was it, well he was stationed up pretty close to Astoria.

MELODI: Tillamook, Astoria, yeah.

MILDRED: Then he went to Saudi Arabia, and then he went to Alaska.

DOROTHEA: Well I know he worked in Harney County for what, how many years, five or six years?

MILDRED: I don't know.

DOROTHEA: Or several years.

MELODI: '60 to '69.

DOROTHEA: About nine years. And he worked with the power company at that time, didn't he?

MILDRED: Yes.

DOROTHEA: And we're talking about Sam Kaser, who is Melodi's dad.

MILDRED: Dad, yes.

DOROTHEA: And so this is how we're at Melodi Molt's, is because that's one of your son's daughters. Can you think of anything else that you would like to share with us of things that you have done in Harney County, or places that you have been?

MILDRED: Well I presume that's about all I can think of right now.

BARBARA: Did you know anything about the areas around the lakes at all, maybe Albritton or Harriman? Or anything from Crane on into Burns, did you know, were you familiar with any of those areas?

MILDRED: I just recall when the road went between the two lakes, and there was a time or two that we came through there, and there was no water any place. And the next time it was just up the road, just barely went through. And a few years ago it was all water.

BARBARA: Through The Narrows?

MILDRED: Yes.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

MILDRED: They built a new highway out there because the water was all over every

place.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

MELODI: Naomi Walters told me that, that about every twenty-five years the road would go away, it would be all one lake, and then it would just recede. It would be a desert again.

MILDRED: I presume that's why they called it The Narrows, because it was just a narrow road between the two lakes. But there was a little town there, or a little store anyway. I probably shouldn't call it a town, it was a store called The Narrows.

DOROTHEA: Well at one time The Narrows was quite a large place. It had a tavern and dance hall, and store, and post office.

BARBARA: School.

DOROTHEA: School.

MILDRED: Well I wasn't through there at that time, it was after.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, yeah.

MILDRED: It was after I come through there.

DOROTHEA: Well Melodi, can you think of anything else that maybe we should ask her, that she might want to tell us about?

MELODI: Did you tell me that Mel used to drive a beer truck back and forth from Frenchglen (corrected to Portland) to Burns? Did he have a route where he drove a beer truck?

MILDRED: Yes. He didn't drink, he nor my sister either one drank beer, they drank soda pop. But when they had the dairy they drank milk. But he did have a truck that he did, wholesaled stuff through, but I can't recall who he handled it for. He hauled it from various places in the truck to Burns.

And I cut a little thing out of the paper this morning, one of your older papers about

the shack on the homestead burning down. Just a little article, so I says, "Do you suppose Melodi would care if I take this?" And Rose says, "No." She got the scissors and cut it out. But they ---

MELODI: What shack is that that burned down? Mel's homestead shack?

MILDRED: Catlow, yeah Catlow shack. She (corrected to I) sold it to Mrs. (Malena) Koenik, it might be in that bag there.

DOROTHEA: Did you own a place yourself out in Frenchglen area?

MILDRED: No, but Mel left the homestead to me, because they didn't have any children. And then he married Elsie Woodfin in later years, much later after Maymie was gone. And she wouldn't live out there, not Elsie, huh uh. So they moved to Dallas and that's, her brother lived in Dallas, so she moved out to Dallas. Wanted to move out to Dallas, so they moved out there. And they were living at Dallas at the time he passed away.

DOROTHEA: And so did you ever come out there and stay, or did you just ---

MILDRED: Oh yeah, I used to go out. Maybe I'd stay all night, they didn't have too much room, but I'd stay all night.

DOROTHEA: So do you still have the place then?

MILDRED: No, I sold it to ---

MELODI: The ...

MILDRED: Is her name Koenik, or something like that.

DOROTHEA: Oh, Malena ---

MILDRED: She is at Frenchglen.

DOROTHEA: Koenik or something, yeah. For a while I understood that you had a place that John Wooster leased, is that this place?

MILDRED: Oh that's, yes he had leased it. And --- (Note: previously a Mr. Glen had it leased.)

DOROTHEA: So did you grow alfalfa, or what did they grow out there?

MILDRED: Yes, he had alfalfa, and he had some cattle. But he lived in closer to Burns; I've forgotten where it was that he lived. But he said it was too far to travel back and forth to take care of everything. And Mr. Dan wanted to rent it then. So ... rented it to him, and that's when he leased it to me too. I sold it then to Mrs. Koenik.

DOROTHEA: Koenik, or whatever.

MILDRED: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: It says here that, suspecting potential arson. So somebody apparently set it on fire.

MILDRED: And I heard that somebody told them that she (Koenik) was very disappointed because she wanted to keep that shack as a historical thing.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

MILDRED: And it said near Frenchglen on the Mormon place. Now that wrinkles me because --- (Note: Mel had homesteaded it and it was Mel's place.)

DOROTHEA: It wasn't the Mormon place.

MILDRED: No, it was not a Mormon, but Mr. Glen was. Mr. Glen just had it leased. So when they call it the Mormon place, it kind of ---

DOROTHEA: It kind of wrinkles you, huh.

MILDRED: Yes. It should have been the Kundert place.

DOROTHEA: Right, right.

MILDRED: Everybody knew it as the Kundert place. So I'm going to stick that in there with my ---

DOROTHEA: Well if there is not anything else that you can think of --- I can't find my notes. Let's go ahead and do our video, and maybe we can remember some things while we're doing that.

MILDRED: Well tomorrow we're --- Sam I guess it was said that tomorrow she is going over to some place and get a sign for her shop downtown. She was going to take me with her, so you'll have to ask her what time she's going.

DOROTHEA: Well let's pause then, and we'll thank you for the afternoon, and your time, and we've enjoyed the visit.

MILDRED: Well I hope I haven't talked you to death.

DOROTHEA: Oh no, no.

BARBARA: Oh mercy no. That's what we come for is to visit.

MILDRED: Oh, well I did most of the talking.

DOROTHEA: So do you like coming back to Burns yet?

MILDRED: I enjoy coming over and visiting yet, being the kids are over here. Why that is a good excuse.

DOROTHEA: And it has changed quite a bit.

MILDRED: Yeah. Oh, gee I get lost.

DOROTHEA: Do you? You don't go to town much then, you just stay around the place?

MILDRED: Yes. Brought enough stuff to last awhile, because otherwise why the stores handles such a small amount of stuff, just what you needed, and that was it.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. So you could buy enough to last you for a month and not have to go back to town for that.

MILDRED: Yes. Not have to horse and buggy it.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. Well we'll thank you for the afternoon, and we'll close now and we'll do a short video. And what we do on that is the same thing that we're doing now. So we'll pause for a little bit.

BARBARA: Thank you very much.

MILDRED: Oh ---

(END OF TAPE) b1