

MARIA ITURRIAGA

Highway 20 West
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Interviewed by:
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Horner Museum
979 1 13 A

If it's O.K. with you, why don't we start with some comments about your grandparents, about what you remember about them.

Oh gee I don't remember very much about them cause they died when I was just a little kid so I don't remember about that.

They died when you were very young

Uh huh, in Spain. Oh I don't know, one granddad, my grandfather, I was about 7 when he died but really I can remember a little about him but, I knew they had a little farm and they ran sheep.

Where did they live?

They live in _____ near the _____, uh huh

Now is that in _____? The province of _____.

Uh huh, we came from there and they lived out in the mountains and they call it segantes _____ that's _____.

Segantes?

Segantes.

Segantes?

Uh huh, had a lot of people go up there just to spend the day or the weekend and now my family has got a bar there now, a bar and restaurant. They're up in the mountains.

In the Pyrenees?

No, not in the Pyrenees. It's right near _____, very close, very close to the city. Everything is very close to the city.

And that's been the traditional home of your family for many years.

Uh huh, many years. That's on my mother's side and then on my father's side they lived on the other side of the river like they say where the Basque live, you know where they talk Basque. Where I came from they don't talk Basque and we're just

a few miles apart but the language never did come to our part of the river. There are two sides to the river.

What's the name of the river.

Well they just call it _____

Oh the river is called _____

Yeah, it just goes across and that's what they call it so that's why we didn't talk Basque.

So your father spoke Basque and your mother spoke Spanish and no Basque.

And no Basque but my dad spoke Spanish but I have a little story to tell about my grandparents on my dad's side. No it's not on my dad's side it's on my mother's side. My grandfather met my grandmother and my grandmother was Basque and she didn't know how to talk any Spanish and my grandfather didn't know how to talk any Basque. They met and they got married and their kids never did learn Basque and she learned Spanish and that's all.

That's how they communicated, then.

Yeah

How did they happen to meet? Was that an arranged marriage?

No, it wasn't. I never heard how they met. That's what I heard from my mother.

What did your father do then?

O.K. my father came to the United States in 1954 to herd sheep.

But what did he do in Spain?

Uh, he worked in the docks there--on the boats.

Near _____?

Uh huh, in _____. He met my mother through their parents really because they both herd sheep. My dad's parents and my mother's parents, they both had sheep and that's how they met. So then my father--oh he was out on a ship out on the sea as a sailor and then when he came home he married my mom.

What year was that, do you remember?

Oh they must have been married, oh gee, how old am I. I'm 31 so they must have been married 32, 33 years ago.

You were the first child?

Yeah. I have one little brother.

Where is he?

He's in Burns. He works at the _____ . He's a mechanic there.

Let's get to him in a minute.

And anyway that's how my mother and my dad met and then my father moved to _____ and he worked there on the docks.

Why did he move there?

I guess it's cause my mother worked there I don't know. She just worked there so-- and they stayed and lived up on the ranch _____ .

This was your grandparents' ranch?

Uh huh, my mother's parents. And then I was born there on that ranch.

What year was this?

1947 and then they bought a house near there, it wasn't up all the way in the mountain but close to town and that's where we moved and then my brother was born in the other house which is not there anymore. When we went back 8 years ago, for the first time, we went to see it and it wasn't there. It had burned down.

Let's go back to your father just a minute cause I want to trace this historical--he worked then on the docks and in 1954 he decided to come to the United States. Why did he decide to do that?

Well I think everybody said there was more money here _____ .

Did you have other relatives here?

Yeah, his brothers were here. He had three brothers and one or two of them had been here for many years. Right now what they've been here 15 or some years.

Are they here in Burns?

Uh huh

What are their names?

First he was a shepherd in Spain

Well when he was a very young boy they had sheep on the land. He wasn't really a

shepherd

Then on the docks--what did he do on the docks?

I really don't know. I know that he loaded ships and stuff like that. I really don't know.

But he wanted to make more money

Right

And so he heard from your uncle

My uncle, uh huh and then there was a _____. They owned sheep.

So my uncle arranged for them to bring my dad here.

Your uncles worked for _____

No they didn't they just knew of them.

Why did your uncles come here?

I don't have any idea--probably just the same reason.

They heard of opportunities

They heard, yeah

Were you old enough--you would have been what 5

I was seven or so

Do you remember your mother and father discussing this change at all?

I don't remember. When we came here, I recognized my dad because of _____ and things like that but my brother, he didn't know really because he was only 4 years old when my dad left--not even 4 he was 3.

So in 1954 your father came over and your mother and her two children stayed in Spain.

Uh huh, we stayed there and his plan was to be here for about 3 years and then go back. That was his plan. It didn't work out that way. He was here seven years and then we came. Then he became a citizen and then after he became a citizen, he brought us over.

You mean you hadn't seen him for seven years?

Right

That must have been very difficult for your mother.

It was uh huh for mother and for us too because we grew up without a father.

Did they write regularly back and forth?

Oh yeah, they always did. He'd send the money and everything to support us but.

What did you do during that time? What did your mother do?

She just stayed home with us. _____ that's how we lived and we spent a lot of time with the relatives, my mother's relatives and my father's relatives.

What kind of things did you do--play with or games or?

When I was a little kid?

Right

Oh the usual thing with dolls you know things like that. We liked to cook outside when we were kids. I remember that.

Cook outside?

Yeah

What kind of things did you cook?

Oh we fixed tomatoes--everything we could get a hold of at home you know potatoes or anything. As little children that was just what we like to do.

Can you describe the landscape where you grew up?

What I tell people is so close to the coastline. Because I lived right by the ocean. I mean we were up in the mountain but we looked down and the ocean was right there. I have pictures if you'd like to see them too but I never learned how to swim, though. But that's so close to the coast you know. It's green and green

Quite a difference from Burns, huh?

Quite, yeah. We never did see snow. Once in a while it would snow a little bit but it would never stay on the ground.

Did you have a lot of friends there?

Oh yes and I still have them. I still correspond with them and when we went back I usually look up most of them anyway.

You were 14 then when the decision to move was made.

I wasn't quite 14, almost 14. We came here in October and I was 14 in November.

How did you feel about leaving all your friends and everything?

I didn't want to leave. I cried for days. I didn't want to leave.

You weren't excited about coming to the United States.

I didn't want to come. I wanted them to leave me over there with my aunts and uncles. I didn't want to come here.

What did your mother think of this? Was she unhappy about it?

Oh my mother wanted to come. That was where my dad was so that was where she wanted to go.

How about your brother? How did he feel?

He wanted to come. He was young enough where he didn't really care. But at my age I didn't want to come.

Did you speak English then?

No, I didn't speak any English at all. When we got here in October of '61 and I think two days after we got here they put us in a school--my brother and I--and we didn't know any English at all.

And you came to Burns?

Yeah, we lived in Burns and went into the grade school.

How about your trip over--did you fly over?

Yeah, we flew over.

Leaving from where?

We went from _____ to Madrid and then from Madrid to New York and then from New York to Boise and then from Boise to Burns by air. That was quite an experience. It was bumpy but the other flight you couldn't even tell you were flying.

How did you feel? Were you sad, happy, excited?

I was sad. I think I was crying all the way.

You knew it was to be a permanent move.

Oh yeah. They told us it would be permanent. They never told us we could back in a few years or anything.

What did you think when you first saw Burns where you were going to live?

I didn't like it. I wanted to go back. I didn't like it at all.

Had your father corresponded with you or just with your mother?

Well my mother unless he would say well give this to Maria Alicia and read it to the little boy because Jose didn't know how to read yet.

May I ask what kind of things he wrote in his letters?

Oh he told us about his work and

Do you remember what he said?

I really don't.

He was herding sheep most of the time.

Yeah, he was herding sheep all the time until--well he was herding sheep for 7 years then he came here and got a job at the mill and then he became a citizen.

Where did he work when he herded sheep for 7 years.

Out in the fields

Who did he work for?

McClain

McClain?

Uh huh

That was a big sheep operation?

Yeah, they have quite a few sheep and he had a lot of Basques working for him

Did your father express loneliness or unhappiness or any of those feelings in those letters?

Now he never told us that he was like that but he was working with my uncle, his younger brother and he told us many times that the first winter that he was here I guess it was very cold and a lot of snow and all he wanted to do was to go back to Spain and be with my mother cause it was just hard on him but he stuck it out and then he was O.K. after that. I guess they had real hard times because of the first year when it was very cold and lots of snow. He had never seen that much snow.

Where did he come for entertainment or did he come to town, did he go to fields, was that the closest thing?

Yeah, I don't think he ever went to town to tell you the truth, I mean he might come

to Burns once in a while if he has to buy something

But did he learn English?

Not very much, not over there.

Did he have something to entertain him like music and that sort of thing.

Well they usually had a radio or something like that but that's all.

Do you remember the reunion when you came and were first met your father.

Uh huh.

What was that like?

It was kind of strange.

You didn't know the man, really.

I knew him by pictures and I remembered him but I really didn't know the man.

I had grown up without him for seven years. That's a long time.

I bet it was very difficult for your mother too.

Yeah, but my brother seemed to adjust better than anybody else.

How old was he?

He was almost 4. No I'm sorry not 4, he was 7. He's 4 years younger than I am so about 10, almost 10 yeah.

What made your mother finally decide to come here and meet your father.

Well as soon as my dad said come, she was ready to come. You see my dad was waiting to become a citizen and you know they have to wait 5 years in order to become a citizen so and they had to learn a little English to become a citizen.

He must have really wanted to leave Spain. Didn't he have strong ties with Spain to give up his citizenship, that was

Well I don't know. I think he thought he could make a better living here than he could over there.

And that was most important.

Yeah.

Did he do that? Did his life improve here? Did he save a lot of money?

Oh yeah, that's what he says. It was quite an improvement for him.

So when you came you flew into Burns in a little airplane from Boise and you saw the

landscape and your reaction was what?

Oh, where am I. It was very different than what I was used to.

Where did your father then take you to live, your family.

He had a house in Burns.

By then he had moved from sheep tending to mill

Yeah, uh huh.

Do you know why he did that?

Well he wasn't going to take us out there, you know to the sheep camp and so he just came down here with his brothers and he lived with my uncle, with his brother and then his brother lived with us for quite a while.

What was his brother's name that lived with you?

Mike

Mike. What were the other names of the brothers?

There's Mike and Alex and Tony

Are they all still in Burns?

Uh huh, and Louie. Louie is my dad.

And he's still alive?

Uh huh. They live in Burns.

So you went to the house to live in Burns and immediately enrolled in school. What were your impressions your first day in school, do you remember?

Yeah, my first day in school all I did all day long from when I went till I got home was cry--all day long and the kids were talking and I thought for sure they were talking about me you know. I didn't know what they were saying. _____
_____. And I can remember still some of my friends that would just sit by me at the lunch room and say well this is a fork and this is a spoon.

They were very helpful to you?

Oh yeah, they were all very kind.

Who was your first friend?

My very first friend I think was Cathy Jones and she helped me a lot and the teachers were very helpful.

What grade were you?

I was in the 7th grade. I supposed to be in the 8th but I didn't know any English so they set me back one grade.

Did you have to take special English classes?

No, I didn't take anything special. I just took whatever the other kids took.

How did you communicate?

I don't know how I did it but I did it. It took me about 6 weeks to start communicating and knowing what they were talking about.

Your mother didn't know any English did she?

No, she still doesn't--not very much anyway.

So your mother and father then were reunited. Wasn't it a big adjustment for her to once again have a husband in the house?

I don't know. It didn't seem like it. Seemed they had been together all the time. Were there any discipline problems between the father and the children after they were separated so long?

No

Did you mind him when he told you to do something?

Oh yeah, I always did--when I was little and then when I came

Your brother was getting along about the same in school as you were?

Yeah, he learned English faster than I did. He was younger and he wasn't afraid to say anything. If I knew I wasn't going to say something right, I wouldn't say it. I would just shut up but he would talk.

Did you immediately meet other Basques when you came to Burns?

Well yes, older. But there wasn't any young kids my age.

Not at all?

No, they were all smaller or grown up. There wasn't any

Who do you remember that you met? What Basques do you remember that you met when you first came?

Well when I was at the airport there was a lady and a little girl that went over

Agazolo
there to meet us. It was Teresa / _____ and the little girl was Pilard.

Teresa Agazolo?

Agazolo, uh huh and they were at the airport because they had been friends with my dad and my uncle so they were there.

And who were some of the other Basques that you met in the early days when you were first in Burns?

Oh there were some who had moved to _____ and then let's see who else was here--Sabowas

Pedro, Joe

Uh huh, Pedro and _____ and of course Dias, Evel.

Did they make you feel welcome here?

Oh yes. My dad would take us around all the houses--all the Basque houses Had he started working at the mill before you came?

My dad, uh huh

So he had a house for you

Yeah _____

What was his position at the mill, what kind of job was he in?

I don't know. I really don't remember. I think he was _____

What kinds of things did you miss the most from Spain?

The friends, I think. Although I had friends here, but I don't know my family because we were very close to my aunts and uncles and cousins. We were very close so I missed that a lot.

Did you miss the coast--the water?

Well I was so used to it I didn't really think about it until I was here quite a while and then it was oh I don't see it anymore. It was really you know, but not at first I didn't. I think I just took it for granted and then a few days, a few weeks maybe went by and then it just--well where's the water around here and then when I asked where the water they said oh you'll have to go 2 or 3 hundred miles and I go oh my goodness--miles, oh.

Did you ever have any prejudice against you because you are a Basque and different from

the kids or from adults?

I don't know. I don't think I have. I've heard a lot of the Basque people say there is prejudice but I don't know I don't think I ever encountered any that I can recall.

Did you in that early period have dates with some of the boys?

I didn't. The dates, that's one thing we didn't have is dates. It was out of the question. A girl didn't date until later on in life and they went out in groups you know--boys and girls went out in groups. So I didn't date here. It's not because my parents said I couldn't. If somebody asked me I just said no. I didn't want to go out with anybody. I don't know why.

When did you have your first date?

My very first date, let's see oh I know it was in high school. I must've been a senior in high school when I finally said yes.

Was that an exciting event?

Yeah, I went to the high school formal. Really I went because I was a princess.

Oh, you must have been popular

Well I don't know if I was or not but that's why I went cause they chose me and I thought I better go so I did have a date for that.

Was this a non Basque that took you a Basque.

Yeah

It wasn't expected that you'd only go out with Basques?

Oh no

There wasn't any your age you said.

There wasn't oh there was Joseph _____ . He was the closest one to my age and he was a year, two years I think ahead of me in school.

Were you friends with Joe?

No he never talked to me (laugh) so I never talked to him either. No all my friends with American and then there was a girl from Honduras, exchange student, and we became very close until she went back home.

Have you kept contact with her?

She hasn't kept in contact with anybody for about 4 years. She didn't even write to the family that she lived with. We don't know what happened to her.

What did you think of the American school system? Wasn't it very different from Spain?

Yeah, it wasn't as hard as it was in Spain.

It was easier academically?

Yes

How is that? I mean in what way?

Oh, I noticed then in the 7th grade that even the math. You know in Spain in 7th grade you would algebra and very you know complicated math and here it was very simple so I was good in math because my training in Spain was on a higher level than here.

Any other subjects in the same way?

Let's see, maybe grammar. No grammar was hard for me because I had to learn the English which was different so it was very hard on me but I think maybe in Spain it was a little higher level

Were there any subjects you particularly liked when you first came when you were in school? What was your favorite subject?

Spelling, I don't know why. Maybe because I wanted to learn English and _____ or something, I don't know why but I did like Spanish.

Were the teachers, did they teach differently than they did in Spain?

Yeah, when I came here in 7th grade we had to change classes to different teacher and that was a new experience for me. I didn't have any idea what they were doing when they just got me and told me to go with the others and I didn't have any idea what we were doing cause over there one teacher taught everything so we didn't have to move around _____

Did you go for longer days in Spain or longer seasons?

We had longer seasons maybe. We had I think from July to September I think is when we had vacation there. Of course we went over there, we went from Monday to Saturday and then on Thursday we would get the afternoon off, in Spain. That's how they went. I don't know how they do it now but that's how we used to go.

I wanted to ask you about your religion, are you religious at all?

Oh yeah, of course I'm Catholic and I'm very involved here in the church
And you were in Spain

Yeah, I did get involved as a kid, that is not very much really. But I remember
when I wanted to be a nun, for a long time I wanted to be a nun when I was there
Why is that?

I don't know. I don't know why but I wanted to
Are you glad you didn't become a nun?

Yeah, now I'm happy that I'm not. Yeah right now I'm very involved here in the
church. I belong to the Parish Council and I teach catechism to the second graders.
So religion has played a prominent part in your life

Uh mmm, yes.

So when did you begin to feel comfortable in this--in Burns in this school setting
with your friends or anything. When did you have English well enough that you felt
comfortable communicating and getting along?

I really felt comfortable really not too long, maybe a couple, few months something
like that cause all the kids were really nice, even the parents of the kids, you
know. They would invite me over to the house and there was a few people that I
really enjoyed like the Johnsons. You know they would take me to their house and
really tried to teach me.

What kinds of things did you do with your friends in those early years when you first
came to burns?

Oh we used to go ice skating--that was a new experience too.

Where did you do that?

On the river, the _____ River. Yeah, I never did learn how to do it. I
would just stand there and fall down you know (laugh) but that was where they wanted
to take me so I went with them and they would take me to the show and things like
that.

Were those entertainments/recreations different from what you did in Spain, then?

Yeah, kind of. I don't know there was more fun or something. There was more there.

More fun or it was different. Here was more of a quiet life than there. We didn't live very far from the town and we went over there and had fun with a lot of people. So it was different. And then we went--they had dances outside and we used to go out there--outside the town. It was outdoors I mean. Well we went there, boys and girls altogether and had lots of fun.

What did you think of American football when you came here?

I didn't like it. I think I started to like two years ago.

TAPE 1 (side two)

Yeah I didn't like football at all. I thought it was

Did you go to any games and watch it?

Oh yeah. I went to all the school games but that didn't mean I liked it

Did you miss soccer?

Oh I never really liked soccer either. We used to go you know on Sundays. _____ we used to go to soccer games but it was just for fun. I didn't really --no I like football now I mean I follow it on TV. I'm really a big fan of football and basketball but when we first came, I didn't like football, I didn't like basketball, I didn't like anything (laugh).

What was your early family life like, do you remember what your family did together in that early period when you first came over here when you were 14, 15, 16 years old?

Yeah, well they stayed home a lot and then he would take us out in the woods and show us the forest and they took us lots of places. They took us out to Sisters and Bend you know places like that for us to see.

Had your mother had a car in Spain?

No, cause she doesn't drive but we did have a car here.

Is that common for the women not to drive?

Well right now it isn't but then

_____?

I don't know, there wasn't very many cars in the first place when we first came here. I mean from there. Right now there's lots of cars everywhere but it was

a poor country and there wasn't many cars around.

How did your mother adjust to the change? Was she happy here?

Mom was happy. I think she was.

She didn't miss Spain as much as you did?

I think she missed it too but of course my dad was here so--I missed it. I think

I was the worst one in the family. I missed it.

Did she stay mostly with women that were Basque that spoke Spanish all the time?

Yeah, so she never did learn much English

Had your father learned English in the meantime, in the seven years?

The seven years that he was on the sheep _____, he didn't learn very much because he was by himself or was a sheep tender which usually was Basque--you know the one who took the food and things to him so he didn't know very much.

Did he ever talk to you about being in the sheep camp?

No, well he would say, you know, oh sigh you know, but he would never complain.

He didn't tell you about

I don't remember. Now he would tell us more stories than then. You know, now that we're older.

Can you remember any of those stories?

Ah, let's see. He's got so many of them I can't--on Christmas Holidays that's all he does is tell stories. Oh the main one really is that first winter you know that I told you before that he had been so--he wanted to go back to Spain so bad because he was so cold and that and we heard that story many many times from him and from my uncle.

How lonely he was.

Yeah, all he wanted to do was go back.

Would you celebrate holidays in any special ways once you got together as a family again?

Oh we'd just get together like we do now.

How is that? What did you do on say Christmas?

O.K. we'd have a great big meal, mom and I cooked it.

What kinds of things did you cook?

O.K. we usually had like tripe and squid and _____ and
Garbanzo beans?

No, for us it's not very _____ because we have a lot of _____.
Go ahead, what else did you have?

We usually have, oh there are so many things--oh cod fish with peppers and then
we'll have flan for dessert which is custard and then cake or something like that
cause we usually have some friends come over too you know American friends and
some of my brothers friends _____ so we have something that
everybody can enjoy and then we also celebrate Thanksgiving just like everybody
else with turkey.

That holiday didn't have any meaning for Basques did it?

No

Are there some holidays that Basques have that you celebrate?

Well yeah they have the 6th of January you know is All Kings Day.

All Kings Day?

Yeah, the three kinds, the three wise kings and that's when they have all the gifts
opened. They don't open them on Christmas. They open them the 6th of January.

That's Spanish rather than just a Basque custom.

Yeah, that was Spanish. Basque, I don't really know of any holidays. We do have a
lot of Spanish holidays

Is there a particular patron saint that's the patron saint of the Basque?

Of the Basque, oh gee I don't know.

No single one?

I don't know. There's so many that they celebrate all over the little town all
over you know _____ and they have their own patron in every little town
so if you want to have fun you can just go to all those little towns and they
have big _____.

Fiesta all the time, huh?

Oh yeah (laugh).

Did you get together as Basques when you were younger--did all the Basques get together and have some kind of celebration or party or anything?

Not in my home town I don't think. I don't remember that. Maybe in my husband's town they did.

What about here in Burns?

Yeah we have it once a year. You know it used to be a big holiday. We used to have big wood chopping contests and water buckets carrying contest and all that.

What's that. Tell us about some of those _____.

Well they used to have a bucket full of water and the woman carried it on her head.

The woman carried the water?

Yeah, my mother carried a lot of water on her head when she was in Spain cause we didn't have running water at home. So anyway she won the contest here.

How was the contest judged. Is it how far they carried it?

How far they go uh huh.

Do they go in a circle or how do they go?

Usually a straight line. A lot of women don't carry very far. It usually falls cause they can't hold it or anything.

Oh I see, it's a kind of contest of balancing the water.

Yeah, kind a uh huh. They'll have some type of cloth or something on their head and then they would put that on top so it wouldn't hurt their head.

Did you enter those contests?

No, I was too young. I never carried water (laugh). But my mother did.

What other events were there in the contests.

They had a woodchopping which my husband won.

On how fast you could chop a piece of wood.

Oh they have I think it's four, three or four logs like that and then how fast they can chop all of them. And then they had a weight carrying contest. They carry weights in their hands. _____

The men _____ or something?

Yeah the pans I think they were iron but I'm not real sure and then there was a big

cement block that they just lifted. Now we used to have all the things here but we don't anymore.

Where in Burns was that held?

We had in Memorial Park. In the Veterans Memorial Park.

Why don't they have them anymore?

Oh, some of the Basques they got in a feud I guess you would call it so there wasn't enough now that want to do it. Just a few of us we still carry on kind of a--we have a picnic every year and we usually go out to Idlewild or someplace like that

Idlewild?

Uh huh and then just have a picnic over there.

Where's Idlewild?

About 17 miles from Burns _____ park. Yeah we just

How many are there of you?

We usually are about oh maybe 40 or so on the picnic

Are they mostly young people?

No most of them are the older people that go to these things

The younger people your age aren't as interested

There isn't that many and the ones that are are not that interested.

Why do you think that is?

Well I heard one story that one young fellow said, that we are not going to have anything here, you know any meetings, until some of the older Basques die because they just don't get along and maybe the younger ones will get something going later on but I don't know because in a lot of places you know they have these things. You know like Boise or

Do you ever go to those?

We used to, we haven't gone in a few years.

Alcoe?

Yeah, we went to Alcoe four years ago I think.

Maria, I wanted to ask you mention that you used to dance when you were in Spain. What kind of dances did you do?

Oh just slow dances, just

Social dancing.

Yeah, just social dancing.

I understand the popular dance for the Basques is the _____.

Oh yes, now I didn't do that in Spain. I learned that here.

Oh you did?

Yeah, I knew it here.

Is that more common here than in Spain?

Well maybe it is I don't know, among the Basques here because I don't know if the young people there dance it but not anymore. The old people used to dance it but I don't know

Let's back up a minute in her life. We got to the point where she was in high school and a princess and she had her first date.

Oh yeah, I went to college _____.

When did you graduate from high school?

I graduated in 1967 and then I went on to college to Boise.

What were you thinking about then? Where were you directing your life towards?

Well I wanted to go to school and continue my schooling for a while. I didn't want to go very long.

To become what?

I just wanted a secretary or something very simple I didn't want to go into

You knew you were going to get married some day

Yeah, uh huh

Did you have boyfriends in high school once you had your first date.

No, I met my husband and then I didn't look at another boy after that cause I met my husband when I was in high school.

You met in high school.

Well he was out of high school. He was working but I met him when I was in high school.

He was working at the mill?

No he was working in the _____.

I see, tell us how you met him.

I met him in the hospital. He was there. He had a broken arm I think and that's how I met him.

What were you doing there?

Somebody said that there was a young Basque there in the hospital and we used to go see all the Basques in the hospital when they were there so I went to see him and that's where we met.

That was the custom that if any Basques got sick the Basques would take some food or

Usually, yeah, uh huh. We just went to see them. Introduce ourselves.

Was he much older than you?

Oh he's seven years older than I am. Well my dad knew him. My dad had known him. He was 19 when he came here and he went to the _____ and my dad was there and so they worked together.

We'll get the story from him when we interview him but you met him then roughly in what year, do you remember?

I must have met him gee around '62 maybe. I'm not sure.

Did you like him right away?

Uh huh. He was very nice

What is his name?

Claudio.

Were you attracted more to Basque men then you were to Anglo men?

I don't think so. They were really about the same to me I guess.

Can you contrast the styles and _____ to here at all. Do you remember that?

No I was too young and I didn't really care for boys and I was too young yet.

What was the next step then in your relationship with your husband to be?

Well we wrote to each other for a long time.

He went back to _____?

Yeah.

Where was that?

_____, he worked at McClains too and we wrote to each other and we would see each other once in a while when he came to town.

What would you do? What kind of activities?

Oh we'd just go to the show or something like that or just go for a ride or something.

Did your parents approve of him?

Uh huh, yeah.

Did it matter to them that he was _____ or was not a Basque? Did they want you to

No, it doesn't matter, it didn't matter with them.

Did your parents encourage you to get an education?

Uh huh, yeah

Did they stress that or did they not care

They wanted me to go on. They said they didn't have an education so they wanted their children to have you know an education.

Did they care what you studied?

No, just what we wanted to do.

So what year was it again that you graduate from high school?

'67

'67--you went to the University of Idaho?

No I went to Links Business College in Boise.

Oh, Links Business College in Boise.

Uh huh. I was there for 11 months. I went right after graduation. I graduated in May and I went there in June.

You wanted to become a secretary?

A secretary--I studied for executive secretary--took shorthand and all that.

Did you graduate with some kind of a degree from there?

No

Did you want to stay in Burns or did you want to live someplace else?

I never though about going anywhere else. I mean I got used to Burns. It kind of

grows on you. I got used to it so I never thought of moving anywhere.

You did come back here after that year?

Uh huh, yeah I worked for the newspaper office after I left there and then I worked for the hospital office and then after I was married

When was that that you got married?

I was married in '69 and then after when I was pregnant I quit the hospital then I never went back to work.

When did you have your first child?

In 1970

And you just had one, a boy and his name is _____.

Yeah _____

Tell us about your wedding day. What was that like?

It was a big shindig. It was just like a Basque wedding back home.

Describe it.

Well we had a big reception. It was a dinner that the _____ had cooked for us and I don't know there was over 100 I guess.

Basque and Americans.

Basque and Americans both and we had an accordian, two accordians and tambores playing.

Did you have the _____?

No we didn't have that but we danced til gee I don't know we didn't leave here til way in the afternoon, probably 6 o'clock in the afternoon.

Where did you go?

We went to Lake Tahoe for our honeymoon.

What kinds of things did they serve food-wise?

It was just like American food because the _____ cooked it so they kind of --oh they had salmon and stuff like that, a little with fish and stuff so everybody would like it and chicken

You said it was just like back home--a wedding back home.

I mean lots of drinking and lots of dancing--all that and it went on until two or

three o'clock in the morning so we left and then we had it at the Terrace Hall and then they moved on to the _____ room and they were there til--like the ladies that had served at my wedding still say they had never seen a wedding like that before and don't think they'll ever see it again.

Is it the custom in Spain for the bride's parents to pay for the wedding?

I don't know if it is or not.

That's the American custom.

Yeah, that's the American but I don't know. I don't know about that.

Can you tell us a little bit about the ceremony. Does the father give the bride away like they do in America?

No we didn't do it that way. Usually the _____ give her away. The bride walks down the isle with the best man and the groom walks down the isle with the matron fo honor and it's usually the parents of the bride or maybe the father of bride and mother of the groom that will be matron of honor and the best man. But I had my uncle Mike. He was the best man so I walked down the isle with him then Claudio had a lady that used to be--her name was Lucy _____--and he'd been real close to her, just like a mother. So she was the matron of honor so he walked down the isle with her.

His parents did not live in Burns.

No, his mother still lives in Spain. His dad passed away two years ago so that's how our wedding went. So we had a traditional Basque wedding.

And it was in the church?

Uh huh, it was here in the church.

What church was that?

The Catholic Church--Holy Family.

What's been the pattern of your married life, have you mostly associated with Basques in your _____ time?

No we associate with both--really most of them are Americans cause we have social things with the church and things like that and usually the Americans are there more than the Basque.

Does your husband speak English?

Yeah, pretty good, yeah.

He learned that at Hines?

Well he learned that in the sheep camp. He was still very young so he picked up English pretty fast and he was _____ so he could pick it up there.

He decided after you were married that he wouldn't work in the sheep camp anymore?

No, oh he was here before we were married. He came here and then after he got a job and everything and we got married after that.

So you mentioned that you've been back to Spain once.

Twice.

Twice. When did you first go?

We went back eight years ago and Louie turned one year old over there, our son and we went back again four years ago.

Let's talk about the first time you went back, what were your feelings? How did you feel?

I was excited. I don't know it was just very different. You know I left there as a little girl and I went back as a married woman with a child so it was a very different--and then I had to meet all of my in-laws.

How was the reception? Were they

Oh they were all very warm and they were really excited to see us.

Did you feel sad that you had ever left Spain?

I don't think I did because well I was married. I was a different person really than when I left so I don't think I was sad.

What was your reaction to what you saw in Spain--living conditions as compared to your life here? Was it much different from what you remembered as a child?

Well as a child, yeah. We didn't have any running water or anything like that or washing machines. My mom did all that herself so here it was different cause we had a washing machine and running water and everything else so from that point it was different. But when we went the first time, our family all lived in nice places

you know, apartment houses. Usually most people live in apartments and they all had washing machines and stuff like that so on that point it wasn't very much different.

Can you describe your childhood home, what it looked like?

Just like any kid here I guess, really.

No not in Burns, in Spain.

Yeah, but I mean we did about the same things really that the kids do here.

What does the house look like? What does the structure look like?

Oh the houses have red roofs--that's one thing I remember

Tile?

Yeah, I guess they are tile and usually in the houses there was a parent that would live you know with a married--like if a son married well the parent would go live with him or they would go live with the parent so usually there was more than one family in the house I remember that. Well we lived by ourselves and my mom and dad, well my dad wasn't there, but we had a house of our own.

That was unusual

Yeah but a lot of people left you know with a _____

Was it unusual for a single woman to be living alone I mean was that

Yeah, usually a single woman or single man they usually lived with the parents.

I think they still do come to think of it.

But because your grandparents had died she didn't want to move in with sisters or brothers or

So after she was married you know they just moved to house.

I understand a lot of homes have--the animals are on the bottom level and and then they live upstairs

Is that the way it was in your house?

Not in my house but in my grandparents' house it was similiar to that, yeah. They had the cows downstairs and they lived upstairs--both grandparents, yeah. In my dad's house and in my mom's house too. They both had.

So how many rooms did the house have

Well the house where we lived was a 3-bedroom house. It was three bedroom and a kitchen and there was no bathroom.

You had an outhouse?

Yeah, that's what we had and then a lot of houses didn't have bathrooms. Now all the houses have them but then

Well when you came to Burns wasn't that a luxury or wasn't that a novelty

Yeah, and the washing machine. I can remember thinking oh God, mom, now you're really going to be a queen because I can remember my mom going with all these clothes on her head down about a mile or two miles down the road to wash clothes and then to bring water home.

She would carry it on her head

She would carry it on her head

What _____? What was two miles down the road?

Oh they had a public I don't know what they would call it--anyway like a wash-- it wasn't a washroom because it was outside but it was a big public deal where women went to wash their clothes and that's where they went. I remember mom going on Monday with all the sheets and all the bed sheets she would wash on Mondays and she would just put them on her head and go down the road and wash clothes.

As a female, were you not taught to wash the clothes and cook? What kind of things did she teach you?

Well I was too young. I think she thought I was too young for those things. I used to love to go down with her and help her wash clothes but it wasn't a thing that I had to do. It was just something that I liked to do and I would go with her.

You had a brother, so was he taught different things than you, I mean was he taught cleaning the house?

No

Any of the domestic things?

No, I don't think any boy in Spain was ever taught that to help a mother. Usually a mother will do everything around the house.

Did your brother associate with an older man when he was in Spain at all?

Well my uncles and cousins were very close.

So he learned a lot of his values from them.

Uh huh and he is not married either--my brother isn't. He's 27, yeah, he's 27 but he's not married.

How long did you stay there on that first visit?

We were there about 26 days.

What was the overall impression that you brought away? Do you remember any?

That it changed, oh everything was changed. They had built new apartment houses all over place and lots and lots of cars

More prosperity then?

Yeah, a lot more, a lot more

Was it a good experience for you to go back?

Very good and then we went back again

When you came back to Burns then how did you feel? After being in Spain, did you once again get that old feeling of why am I here?

No, I was just tired and I was glad to be back really because all we did was run around and talk to people and that's all we did and we were so tired. It was 27 days and those 27 days were just like a year I mean we went all over the place to visit everybody.

Do you remember anything about the political climate there where you were there on the

_____ was there much talk about politics.

We didn't run into anything you know that--they would tell us to be sure to carry a passport with us and all these things just in case they would ask for it--if the police would ask for it and the people around there told us not to talk politics to anybody unless we knew them, knew who they were and that's what they said--to really stay out of it just in case.

Speaking of politics, did your parents ever talk about political activities happening in Spain?

No

They weren't interested

No well right now all we hear about it is you know on the news. Usually the family doesn't write very much about politics. I don't think they want to get involved.

Are you and your husband interested in the politics of Spain and what's happening there?

Well we're not really interested but his sister would write and say well the communists want to take over and all that. They're worried so when they get worried we get worried for them and what would happen to them. They say the young people want communism so I don't know.

Are the conditions for Basque better since Franco died?

I think so in my opinion but I don't think they think so because there seems to be something going on there all the time and I know they have more freedom now than they used to.

They now can speak Basque in public and they can have their Basque newspaper and the flag

Uh huh so they do have more freedom but I don't know what they want. Well I think they want independence I guess but it would be kind of hard I think

Did you remember what you did with the French _____? Did you ever meet any of those people?

Here I have but not

Did your mother's family not speak Basque because of the restrictions?

No it's just the Basque language never got around to that part of the river like I said before and now it's a little different since this Basque movement is going on over there. A lot of the young people are starting to talk Basque again. For a while they had let it kind of die down but now they have schools and things like that to teach Basque. Claudio's niece speaks in Basque _____.

Tell me about the French Basque you've met here. Are they culturally any different?

I don't think so. I think they just talk a little different Basque.

Same Basque tradition?

I think so I mean they join in you know when we have things.

Are there very many French Basques here in Burn?

I think maybe two, Jean Harriet and Pierre _____, I think that's his name.

_____, huh?

Yes, uh huh I'm sure that's his name. I think they're the only two French Basques. I can't think of anybody else.

What about your second to Spain, now when was that?

That was four years ago and by the way, these tourists were taking a Charter flight the Basques had set from Boise.

Oh they charter a plane?

Uh huh and a whole bunch of Basques went, yeah and a

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I think four years ago we had, oh I don't know I think we saw more people than on the first time--four years ago because we had to see the people that we hadn't seen the first time and then we had to see the people we'd seen before. So we travelled a lot this last time and Louie, the second time we went, we got there and he got very upset because people wouldn't understand him, you know. He didn't know very much Spanish or Basque so and he couldn't understand why the people didn't understand him when he was talking English.

How old was he then?

He was four. He turned five over there and then he got to handle Spanish just like that. He was talking Spanish real good by the time we got back and then we got back and he started talking Spanish to the boys here so he didn't know why the boys here didn't know his feelings. Poor thing, he was confused by the change.

How did you get together for that charter flight? Was there some group in Boise that organized the charter?

Uh huh, the Basque Club in Boise, the _____, Inc. And they charter a flight every four years. Now this year they had one flight that was late in May

when they were leaving and people don't want to go there that early cause it rains a lot so only about 40 people signed up so they had to cancel it cause it wasn't

_____.

What's the feeling when all these Basques get together to board the airplane? Is there a lot of excitement?

A lot of talk--yeah.

Are they mostly Basque?

Well yeah, there were people that were Basque but for maybe second or third generation.

How many of them didn't even speak Basque, maybe?

Right, oh maybe just a few words.

But all the chatter on the airplane is Basque, Spanish and English.

Oh yeah, _____, he went the last time, no six years ago--they charter a plane every 3 years, yeah--it was six years ago that Dave went over there and he went to see his family. I mean he was born here but his family lives right next door to Claudio's family, so he got to meet Claudio's parents and everybody so they go to see the families--the ancestors I guess they would call it.

Do you still have a strong tie, do you still feel strong ties with Spain and that that's home? Or do you feel Americanized?

I think I'm very much Americanized but I do feel strong ties there too.

Do you prefer the Anglo culture to the Basque culture?

We're so similiar though, I don't know. If I was younger, you know unmarried, uh the young people there, they seem to have more fun. There's a different atmosphere than here. Cause I know Claudio's niece, she wouldn't even hear of coming here and her parents are here in California and she wouldn't even hear of coming here. And her parents, her sister, and her brother are here. She's a teacher.

Why is that?

She just won't leave there. She says she's not gonna come here cause she won't leave her friends or anything. She says it's gonna be a different life here so she's not coming.

What do you think of that?

Well, her parents are here so maybe she should come, maybe just for a visit. But like she says, she's young and she's got all her friends there and she's about 21, 22, something like that, and it would very hard for her to come here now-- very, very hard.

Have you and your husband discussed going back there and living at all?

No, well in passing we say oh when we retire we will go but that's years and years away. But we never thought of going back and living there.

What travels have you done since you've been here in Burns?

Oh let's see, we've seen most of Idaho and then we went to the Expo in Spokane and then we've seen the redwoods.

Have you gone back east?

Uh uh, we went just to New York on the plane, just to the airport, that's all.

Do you ever go to the coast?

Yeah, we've gone to the coast--not much but last year for vacation we went to the coast and spent a few days over there.

Did it remind you of Spain at all to be near water again?

Yeah, and I pick all these berries along the highways cause that's what we used to do in Spain.

Have you ever considered going back to work?

No, not yet, anyway. I don't want to go back to work until Louie is in school all day long cause I don't want to leave him by himself so that'll be a few more years.

What do you think of this women's liberation movement, being an independent woman?

I don't know. I don't like to be independent. I mean I like my husband to tell me things--what to do sometimes and so I don't know. I think that it's gone a little too far maybe.

You don't believe in a lot of things--do you believe in anything that they say?

I don't know. I guess they do have their points. My husband and I have discussed this lots of times, but you know those women work and not the males and he doesn't think that's right--for some jobs he says it's alright but like what he's working

where they have women there, if she can't do something, she would ask the man to do it so the man is happy to go help her out and she gets paid the same as the man and he doesn't think that's fair cause they don't work as hard as a man.

That's the reason, because they don't work as hard or because they're women?

I don't think it's because they're women, just they can't do the same as a man can, I guess. Women are not biologically built like men.

Hope not.

(laugh) But I wouldn't work at the mill for any--I don't think it's the right place for a woman but

Do you think that's your cultural background of being Basque?

I don't think so because women there work quite hard--I mean not in mills and things like that but in the ranches and the farms. I mean I was amazed when we were there how my sister-in-law works. She's like a man you know there at the farm.

What did she do?

Oh, she would carry hay and stuff from the fields to the house to feed the animals. I told my husband, I never ever could do that.

You think there's a difference they're not employed in a paying--you think that's the reason--but they're working for the family on the farm instead?

Maybe, maybe that's it. Right now she's not working. I mean she's working in the factory where they make silverware and they have moved from the farm but on week-ends they go back and I suppose they work.

When you went for your visit, did your relatives and friends, did they ask you a lot of questions about America? Did they feel like they wanted to come to America to visit?

No, oh they ask questions about the family you know the family here but I don't think anybody wants--as for my family, I don't think they wanted really to come. They were happy there. They had good jobs.

Are you teaching your son about the Basques and their cultural?

Yeah, we try to dress him up in Basque outfits for different things.

What's that?

Like when I cater, once in a while I cater for groups. I fix Basque meals like I think I did for the Historical Society too, I'm not sure I did so many and then he would go dressed as a Basque and he would pass out hors d'oeuvres or anything like that.

How does he feel about that? Is he interested in getting into the Basque culture?

Yeah, uh, huh. He likes it. When he was little I think he was more into dancing and stuff like that, the _____ . So he'll probably go back to it.

Your trying to teach him to dance the Basque dances?

Uh huh

Do you try to teach him Spanish?

Yeah, we talk to him in Spanish and he'll answer us in English.

Your husband speaks Spanish.

Uh huh

Does he try to teach him Basque too?

No, no just the Spanish. That's all we've been trying to teach him but we might go back to Spain this summer too and we want him to really get used to that Spanish language because that's about all they will talk to him.

What do you think will happen to the Basque identity in Burns in the future?

Well, unless the young people, like I said before, unless the young people are working at it I don't know it might just die down.

What do you think of that?

I don't think I want it to die down. I think it should go on. I think we should have our picnics and fun and I'd like to go back to the big picnics we used to have.

Do you think there's any conflict between being a Basque and being an American or can you be both?

I think you can be both.

So that's what you'd like to see then?

Yeah

Keeping the heritage but also getting involved in this whole American culture?

Yeah, sure. We're really Americans too because we're citizens--most of us are citizens.

When did you become a citizen?

In '67 just before I graduated from high school.

And Claudio is a citizen?

He became a citizen about 4 years ago.

And your son is automatically a citizen?

Yeah, he was born here, right.

