

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #212 - Side B

Subject: Marion Louie

Place:

Date: 1981

Interviewer: Marcus Haines

MARION LOUIE: ... The people of big man they decided they going to kill that man. They was, he was living in a place by himself. There he was sitting by the fire, they took all them, a bow and arrow. They went, they try to shot him, he couldn't do nothing. After they run out there, there ... he just grab him. Grab him and tell the others, put pieces of wood by his fire, make a big fire. They going to throw him in there. They just grab him, the witch doctor. They grab him about the neck, threw him in fire. Yet he don't die. Keep on putting him in fire. And they said his body was just sounding like a gun. He was a real witch doctor. That's how ---

MARCUS HAINES: He was a good one, wasn't he?

MARION: Yeah, that's how they describe him. To ... arrest after they done it to him. Oh, he destroyed his people. There were many. That was the second ... Old Tabby was kind of a big boy, he remembers everything. He used to name the names of those man's names, but I forget.

MARCUS: Yeah.

MARION: All these old guys sitting together and tell story, one another, how they was doing, and how these people were living in the wintertime, out in the country. Some live in caves, pretty tough it out.

MARCUS: You bet.

MARION: Living on the rabbit, food like that.

MARCUS: Well now, they did a lot of fishing down on the lake too. I see them do that.

MARION: Yeah, you know where that others, how they call it around The Narrows.

MARCUS: Yes.

MARION: There's ah, I didn't see, but he said the water just come from underneath out there, hill or something.

MARCUS: Yeah, Sod House Spring, wasn't it?

MARION: A kind of spring, and the water just come swift, under.

MARCUS: I live a half a mile away from that Sod House Spring there.

MARION: Yeah. That's why the men folks, during the wintertime, 'cause they got nothing to wear.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MARION: In wintertime, the women, women folks carry a lot of sagebrush wood to build fire, to get the men folks to get warm and get more fish.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MARION: That's how they catch them fish.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MARION: Some catch the fish and we just leave ... woman to fire, and go get more fish. That's how they living on fish in wintertime.

MARCUS: When I was a kid, and we walked out in Sod House Spring ... and it was down and we would take a ladder, a lantern at night and go out and fish on the end of this log, and take a cane and we would just get a washtub full of fish. They'd come up to that light and just --- could string them out.

MARION: Uh huh.

MARCUS: ... Yeah.

DAVEY JIM ?: ... I've seen fishes do that.

MARCUS: Yeah.

MARION: Uh huh.

DAVEY: ...

MARCUS: Uh huh.

DAVEY: ...

MARCUS: I'll bet that was --- you see those sand dunes down below The Narrows, you get across there ---

MARION: Yeah. Soft ---

MARCUS: Yeah. It was bad. It held Malheur Lake in to ten or fifteen feet deep where there was --- That was after this went out, which I guess went out in '83, I think. When Mart Brenton--- you know Mart Brenton?

MARION: Yeah.

MARCUS: He was the guy that was supposed to kick sand with his boot. You see Malheur Lake drains into Harney. So after that happened then it lowered the, Malheur Lake never filled up again as high as it did at that time.

MARION: Uh huh. Oh.

MARCUS: You bet. Well, we've still got quite a little tape left now. You were telling us some pretty good stories, you better think of another one. You'll have me afraid to go home.

DAVEY: Well, that's what she lives for ...

MARCUS: She tells some good ones. Those are the things that are going to be lost with people like her too. That's --- we've got to get them in here so somebody else can enjoy them, you know. You bet. We've waited a little too long, actually, though on some of this

stuff. The old timers, they're just dropping off pretty fast now. ... There's a new crop coming on but they don't know

--- is the thing of it.

MARION: Yeah.

MARCUS: Yeah. I was going to ask you something else too. Well you, you have been across --- you've been all around Harney Lake there too, haven't you Mrs. Louie?

MARION: Yeah.

MARCUS: Did you ever live down --- when you were a youngster, around in that country? Or would you just be passing through probably?

MARION: Oh, we was stayed by the Harney --- or Malheur Lake one time when he was a boy. Was you there? You know they was killing this old sheeps one time.

MARCUS: Oh, uh huh.

MARION: Stayed around there for quite a while. But we didn't walk around the lake.

MARCUS: Uh huh. But from there to where the refuge headquarters was ---

MARION: Yeah, uh huh.

MARCUS: --- to Sod House Springs, and I helped build those buildings in 1939. That was a burial ground.

MARION: Yeah.

MARCUS: In fact we dug out lots and lots of skulls and artifacts, and that's --- when I was a kid, you know, we used to play around the spring, and there was arrowheads laying everywhere. When we'd find a nice one, we'd stick it in our pocket. And in about three days, and it was gone. You don't pack an arrowhead around very long; it cuts its way out. That was a great campground back then.

MARION: Did they ever, hear a story of the Modoc and the Paiute Indian where meet ---

MARCUS: No.

MARION: --- on this side of Frenchglen? The rock used to be, you can see it plain from way in the hills, down, I don't know how close.

MARCUS: How much ---

MARION: It used to be plain, you can see the rock, coming two skips. One the Paiute, and one for the Modoc Indians.

MARCUS: Oh.

MARION: Why they have a great war with the spirit.

MARCUS: No guns.

MARION: No guns.

MARCUS: ... the old-fashioned mountain men.

MARION: Yeah. Uh huh.

MARCUS: Well there is some good Indian legends about the Malheur Cave down here too, you know.

MARION: Uh huh.

MARCUS: You probably ---

MARION: You can go too, in there.

MARCUS: Yeah, I bet you've been there lots of times.

MARION: Uh huh. That's why some of the old Indians --- for their winter. Used to see a rock crawling up like that, and the sagebrush grow over, now it's all clear.

MARCUS: Yes.

MARION: It's clear out.

MARCUS: Yes, you had to crawl in.

MARION: Yeah.

MARCUS: The first time I was there, years ago, you had to crawl in, maybe 25 years ago.

MARION: Uh huh. Yeah, real --- go slow. But now it's wide open.

MARCUS: Yeah. They cleaned it out now and the Masons fixed it up. ...

MARION: Uh huh. Yeah. Uh huh. Malheur Cave.

MARCUS: There have been some great battles fought there, you know.

MARION: Yeah.

MARCUS: You can still get arrowheads, clean arrowheads out of there.

MARION: Yeah. There's --- I guess the Indians, Paiute Tribe and Modoc Tribe they meet in the morning with our tribe, fighting with this Modoc. And two brave men was against one another. The rest were fighting with it, besides them.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MARION: They had a --- when they --- everybody were ready. We heard the noise coming toward them. Early in the morning before sunrise you can heard the walking. And they were getting ready. Here they just meet, and some work, these rocks piled between them and they shot one another. And one a great doctor, a mean doctor. It was my father-in-law's father, way back time. He just suffered out the arrow. Arrowhead out of his people, some of them. Some died, but some are living.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MARION: But he get a bunch of arrowheads out of Indians.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MARION: But the others were killed right off with the Modocs. But only two left, these two brave men were fighting. Fighting the Paiute brave, killed the Modoc.

MARCUS: Modoc too.

MARION: Uh huh. So we just stand back. We all stand way back. 'Cause nothing protect them after that.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MARION: That's what the story is, a real true story.

MARCUS: I'll tell you something we haven't talked about, and that's the smallpox epidemic over in Drewsey. We talked a little bit about that this morning.

MARION: Uh huh.

MARCUS: That's when your father died, wasn't it?

MARION: Yeah.

MARCUS: In that there ---

MARION: Uh huh.

MARCUS: Was there many Indians died, do you recall how many it was?

MARION: I don't remember, but our father.

MARCUS: You were just a baby of course.

MARION: But our father died of the smallpox, right by the bridge.

MARCUS: Yes.

MARION: Right across the bridge.

MARCUS: Mrs. Drinkwater told me about it. She told about a doctor that was part Indian

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MARION: Oh, Doctor down in Drewsey.

MARCUS: What did she call him? ... And anyway, he doctored the people around there, and there were two white people died. There was a fellow 19 years old, and a younger girl, I believe she said. And then she wasn't that sure how many of your people died.

MARION: Uh huh.

MARCUS: But this fellow, after the epidemic was pretty well over, he got it, the Doctor got the flu. He got the smallpox.

MARION: Uh huh.

MARCUS: And he went in the sweathouse, and went down and jumped off the bridge, there was a bridge there, into the water. And she said that he died with consumption,

they called it. Then he managed to live out the smallpox, and he died shortly after from lung disease.

MARION: Uh huh.

DAVEY: I think I know which bridge she was talking about.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Yeah, the old one in Drewsey; in through there. And you know Mrs. Drinkwater runs the store there, she and Sam Burt, there at Drewsey.

DAVEY: ...

MARCUS: She was born there in '88, Mrs. Drinkwater was.

MARION: Uh huh.

MARCUS: I visited with her there yesterday. I got an interesting tape that's on the other side of this one.

MARION: Uh huh.

DAVEY: I've got gifts from them.

MARION: Yeah. He's the one --- Her and her mother and sister and --- either one carry our daddy this way up to bury him. Put him on a horse, lead him, and bury him way up on the mountain somewhere.

MARCUS: Well, you know Mrs. Drinkwater told me that when an Indian dies there, that he is put on a horse, and led back over the hills there, and nobody ever knew where they were buried. The fellow would come back with the horse without the corpse.

MARION: Probably him.

MARCUS: She said they tried to follow these people ---

MARION: Probably him. ... Uh huh.

MARCUS: ... that he followed him.

MARION: Uh huh. That's what she said, she followed somebody.

MARCUS: That's where, where you buried your dead.



MARION: Yeah.

DAVEY: ...

MARION: Yeah. A lot of Indians I think usually be buried anywhere, you know, in rocks.

MARCUS: Yeah, that's what she said.

MARION: Uh huh. Uh huh. It was where we did a roads. Usually go there in a roads. I saw this, a rocks, you know how the rocks when they turn up, from the ground, they white.

MARCUS: Yes.

MARION: I used to see --- what, I want to see what that is. And last year ---

MARCUS: ...

MARION: --- last year ago I stopped there. I was going to dig it up, I used my digger. I just pushed those rocks, big rocks on side. On side there is a big rock, and kind of cave underneath, and I stick one my digger, and I start in to dig in the thing under the rock, after I pushed these other rocks away. I keep on digging; I keep on digging, what's under there? And I dig it up, and I get a piece of a board, a board. It must be like a baby board, working on site. And I thought it must be a little baby, must be buried there, but it's all gone.

MARCUS: Yeah.

MARION: But a little piece of a board, and I just threw it back in there. But I didn't find anything besides that, except the board.

MARCUS: I dug out --- building up at Buena Vista. You know where Buena Vista is?

MARION: Uh huh.

MARCUS: Out by the "P" Ranch, and dug up twin babies, had been buried there.

MARION: Uh huh.

MARCUS: I remembered what had happened. They'd been there 30, 35 years I suppose.

MARION: Uh huh.

MARCUS: And all that was left was just the skull, they had black curly hair. They died at birth, and they were wrapped up, and in a little casket. And they dug them out there, and they were all gone except, except this skull. They don't last too terribly long, you know, unless they are really, been buried. Youngsters, you know, their bones are soft and all, and they go through the stages ---

MARION: Yeah. In 19--- what, you know Mr. Paige were here? And there was two couples, hauling a dirt out this way. And they find a little grave there. They dig it out, a little skull, and a bone I guess, and a beads.

MARCUS: Well, beads, huh?

MARION: And these boys, they killed their dogs, and he saw a bone, and he picked them up and he dug up ground and put them in and covered up. But he told --- Mr. Paige told me, he picked me up on the road and told me.

DAVEY: ... Well ---

MARION: ... then me and my husband, generally we walked up, we walked, we walked and we know where that is, because they kill one dog right by it. There was in a rock right by it. There was in a rock showing in the ground. We dig it out, and my husband said it was little round thing like that. Must be a blanket or something, and we dig it up. He said, "What's that it? What's that?" He push it towards me and I cut it. There was a, three and a half, a silver dollar, and three half dollars. They were sticking into this rag. But it won't come out. We tried to wash it, it won't come out.

Everybody come here and they want to see, of course the money. We show it to them. And we find a, beside a beads, and one little teeth. And Mr. Paige tell by the teeth it must be 7 years, it must be 7 or 6 years, a girl. Uh huh.

MARCUS: Oh, uh huh.

MARION: Uh huh. And they try to take away, then they can't find anything but this beads, and this money, and this shell. And this must be a bone of a fingers. They put it back. And way after that, my daughter, when she came to gather those beads into a bottle and put it back. It's still there.

MARCUS: Well, I'll be darned.

MARION: But we kept the money.

MARCUS: You didn't bury that, anyway?

MARION: No.

MARCUS: Were you able to break it apart and use it? Or do you folks still have it around?

MARION: No, one of the daughter of mine she took it to Portland, and somebody gave, stole it away from her.

MARCUS: That's the daughter I met here last winter?

MARION: Uh huh.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MARION: No, another one.

MARCUS: How many children do you have, Mrs. Louie?

MARION: I have two boys, and --- three boys and five girls all grown.

MARCUS: Eight children.

MARION: Uh huh. Lots of grandchildren, many grandchildren.

MARCUS: I'll bet you have.

MARION: Uh huh.

MARCUS: Well, Erwin Peck ... he has ten children.

MARION: Yeah.

MARCUS: Uh huh. We work together once in awhile. I live right across the road there

from Wallace. He's quite a fellow, I like him. ... Well, we're just about out of tape, and I can't imagine, we're just about to give out, aren't you?

MARION: Uh huh.

DAVEY: ...

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