

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #242 - Sides A/B

Subject: Dorothy Johnson Carson

Place: Carson Home - Burns, Oregon

Date: December 15, 1988

Interviewer: Dorothea Purdy

DOROTHEA PURDY: This is Dorothea Purdy, and I'm talking to Dorothy Carson. We're at her home on December the 15th, 1988, in Burns, Oregon. Dorothy, can you give me your name, your maiden name, and married name.

DOROTHY CARSON: Married name was Dorothy Johnson, I guess.

DOROTHEA: Maiden name.

DOROTHY: Uh huh. Now I'm talking in this, this is recording?

DOROTHEA: No, go ahead.

DOROTHY: And then Carson.

DOROTHEA: And where were you born?

DOROTHY: I was born in Valpraiso, Nebraska.

DOROTHEA: Valpraiso. Can you spell that for me please?

DOROTHY: V A L P R A I S O.

DOROTHEA: Nebraska.

DOROTHY: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And how did you come about coming to Burns, and Harney County? Or Lawen, I should say.

DOROTHY: Well my folks moved out to Payette (Idaho), and then I got a job working out at the Denman Hotel in Crane, they wanted somebody. When the Denman was there, for

Jim and Millie. And ---

DOROTHEA: Tell me about that a little bit.

DOROTHY: Well I was --- the first night I was there, it was all strange to me. And they was a bunch of the cowboys and all was in there shipping cattle. And they were a dancing on the counters, and I thought, "Oh, I've got to get out of here!" But I missed the train, I overslept and missed the train, and so I stayed, and that's how I come to be here.

DOROTHEA: And you mentioned Jim and Millie? Who are these people?

DOROTHY: McCulloch.

DOROTHEA: McCulloch. Jim and Millie McCulloch. Okay. Are these local people, or ---

DOROTHY: Yes, they lived here. Jim --- well you know Jim and Millie McCulloch. He was married to --- oh what's her name? Tillie, I can't think what her name is right now, but ---

DOROTHEA: Is that old Jim?

DOROTHY: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And they owned or ran the Denman Motel, or hotel?

DOROTHY: Hotel and motel --- or cafe.

DOROTHEA: And that's when it was in Crane?

DOROTHY: That's the only time it was in Crane. I was in Crane.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

DOROTHY: And then we went to --- And then I went out to --- after that I got a job out at the Roaring Springs Ranch for Joe Fine, and I worked there for two and a half years cooking.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

DOROTHY: And then I went to work at the Alvord. That's where I met --- when I met Ted.

DOROTHEA: And, can you remember some of the years? When did you first come to Harney County?

DOROTHY: I think it was in 1938, I believe. I'm not sure about that date, but I think that was it approximately.

DOROTHEA: Approximately.

DOROTHY: 'Cause I never paid any attention at that time. You know, I never thought I'd be here that long. And then I met my husband, and we was married in 1940.

DOROTHEA: And what was your husband's name?

DOROTHY: Ted Carson.

DOROTHEA: And you were married when?

DOROTHY: In 19--- January the 15th, in 1940. And we was there for --- Well I lived out there for five years.

DOROTHEA: This is out at the Alvord?

DOROTHY: Uh huh. 'Cause he was foreman of the ranch out there for 13, or 12 years. And then they sold it, and we left and went Brogan with some cattle for Gus Davis.

DOROTHEA: Where is Brogan?

DOROTHY: It's down by Vale. Brogan, Oregon.

DOROTHEA: How long were you there?

DOROTHY: Just for the summer. When we had those cattle there. And then we moved back up to Lawen. That's when we come to Lawen. And we was there at the Del Hayes place. He had a place over there on the river, and we rented it, and lived there until we bought the store in '46.

DOROTHEA: Okay, now tell us all about --- as much as you can tell me about the community of Lawen. What was it like, and what brought you about buying the Lawen

Store?

DOROTHY: Well when I first seen it, I said I'd never live there if they give it to me. (Laughter) But the more you was there, the better you liked it. Then it got to be --- I really enjoyed living out there. But the people were really nice. And there was quite a bunch of people lived around their little places and everything, and then they had that Meadow Land, they called it, that was out there. And then they had the Sunday school for the kids. The ministers would come out. And you was always seeing people, a lot of people all the time, they would come and sit and visit for three or four hours. Even if they didn't want to, because they was looking for the mail, you know.

DOROTHEA: And this was at the store, and the post office?

DOROTHY: Yes, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Can you remember when the post office was first established there?

DOROTHY: No.

DOROTHEA: Doesn't ---

DOROTHY: That was before my time.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

DOROTHY: But I know I took it in '46.

DOROTHEA: And who did you buy that place from?

DOROTHY: From Margaret Bamberry.

DOROTHEA: Margaret Bamberry? Can you tell me who had it before she had it?

DOROTHY: Star Bucklin.

DOROTHEA: Can you spell the name, please?

DOROTHY: S T A R B U C K L I N, I guess. I don't know for sure, but anyway, I guess they ---

DOROTHEA: Okay. Now tell me something about the Lawen Store. Was it always there? Was it built there originally, or ---

DOROTHY: No, it was moved up from the old town of Lawen that lived where --- down by the schoolhouse, where that is. That building was moved up to --- when they changed the highway, or they changed the county road.

DOROTHEA: And --- was that before you bought it?

DOROTHY: Yes, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: You told me the old town of Lawen. Can you tell me approximately where that was located?

DOROTHY: It was right across --- across from, you know, where you turn in. I think Bamberry's was on part of it, where the house, or some of them was, and the store sat down in --- kind of on the corner of the land there. It was right across from the Jerry Dillon place.

DOROTHEA: The Jerry Dillon?

DOROTHY: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: D I L L ?

DOROTHY: O N.

DOROTHEA: O N. Okay. What do you remember, or have you heard about the early days of Lawen? Can you tell me something about why people settled there, and what brought their interest to settling there?

DOROTHY: I don't know. They all just kind of seemed to take up homesteads, I guess. And just homesteaded until they couldn't make it anymore. And then they'd move on. And then there was a lot of that valley out there that was what they called the meadowland. And I've seen it change hands three different times. Three different sets of

people come in there to --- and I guess there is some of these ... out there yet, or a lot of it. But they moved away, and I guess just left it. And that ---

DOROTHEA: So during your time out there, and that was --- what year did you sell?

DOROTHY: I think it as in '81 --- '82.

DOROTHEA: '82.

DOROTHY: '81 or '82, when the flood come. Now whenever the flood was. The flood was what enticed me to sell. I fussed all year---

DOROTHEA: In those 40 years, or 35 or so years ---

DOROTHY: I was postmaster there for 36 years.

DOROTHEA: How much.

DOROTHY: 36 years.

DOROTHEA: 36 years. So, can you tell me some of the experiences of Lawen?

DOROTHY: Well when we first got there, we used to have dances up above the store there. There was another place up there. And the Grange met there until they dissolved, and didn't have more and moved to Crane. And then they dissolved it altogether. And then I think joined with Poison Creek up here, a lot of them did. And different things they'd have up there, you know. The charivari dances, and everything until they got to fighting so much, and knocked them off the steps, until he had to quit it. So we didn't have any more. But they used to have Sunday school up there, and church services. Sometimes there would be only one or two, but they would always hold it.

DOROTHEA: Who were your ministers? Can you remember some of them?

DOROTHY: Well McDonnells is the only one I --- or MacDougall, I guess it was.

DOROTHEA: MacDougall. Yeah, there was a Don MacDougall.

DOROTHY: He was the only one. I don't know who the other ones was.

DOROTHEA: Don MacDougall. And there was a Willis Case for a while too.

DOROTHY: And I think Bob Dean did too.

DOROTHEA: Bob Dean?

DOROTHY: I'm not sure, but I know he taught school there for a while. Now my kids went all through grade school out there.

DOROTHEA: Well I know Willis Case took us out there for a while. Right after Don MacDougall, and he was from the Presbyterian ministry.

DOROTHY: Well, I don't know. This Don MacDougall was from all over, I guess. He just didn't have any --- and the kids all liked him.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. Oh, I really liked him. I liked Willis Case too; he was quite a nice man. But we did attend church and bible school and everything out there. We had bible school at the Lawen School, but I can remember going up above the store too.

DOROTHY: The store? (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Yeah. How many people was out there when you first moved in 1946?

DOROTHY: Oh, there must have been pretty close to probably a 100.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Was that smaller than it had been? The population? Or ---

DOROTHY: Well, I don't know ---

DOROTHEA: Was it ---

DOROTHY: --- whether it was or not, you know, because like I say they kept moving and going and coming. And I had 35 boxes rented there at the post office.

DOROTHEA: At the post office? That's quite a few. I don't imagine they have that many now. (Laughter)

DOROTHY: I don't think so; it's kind of bad. Everybody was --- There's still some of them mad --- Kind of --- well every time they see me, they say, "What did you ever sell it

for?" Well, I thought I needed a little enjoyment myself, in what years are left. So I got to thinking that it would be worse living way out there than it would be in town. It's much easier too --- And that's why I did.

DOROTHEA: Well I know it's hard for us to pick up roots and move, but sometimes it's for the better of everything anyway.

DOROTHY: Well I think it is. I've enjoyed living here in Burns, and the people. And of course I knew a lot of the people anyway, because they came out to the store. I had a lot of Burns people that would come out to the store.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

DOROTHY: And visit, and say, "Well, oh I remember you." And it, you know, so it makes it kind of nice too.

DOROTHEA: Well I'm trying to do this article on Lawen, and so I need a lot of information on Lawen, and I'm not coming up with too much. So can you remember, was the highway through there when you first moved there?

DOROTHY: No, the highway was put in when --- after we was there.

DOROTHEA: After you were there. About what year?

DOROTHY: I don't remember the year. There was just kind of a graveled road, and then they built the highway. Let's see, it must have been --- I don't remember the year. You know, I've never had any occasion to ---

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

DOROTHY: --- to remember what year it was.

DOROTHEA: But it was after you took over the store ---

DOROTHY: Yeah, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: --- and the post office.



DOROTHY: Yeah, it was when they built that road through there.

DOROTHEA: What were some of your experiences of a store person, or an owner, or whatever you want to call it?

DOROTHY: Well --- (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Were your groceries easy to get?

DOROTHY: Well it was at that time, you got your groceries. And then when they put the highway in, well then they all decided to come to Burns to get their groceries. So then we changed, and just went to what they, the people wanted and everything. And that's what we sold. We didn't sell groceries anymore. And it was better for us that way, than it was with groceries.

DOROTHEA: I don't suppose you had to stock so much that way?

DOROTHY: No, they wanted mostly bread and a little milk. And just stuff that they was short of, that they had forgot in town, or run out of before they went to town.

DOROTHEA: So the highway more or less kind of hurt your business, but in some ways it helped your business.

DOROTHY: It helped it, because you had a lot of the people, and you sold gas. Of course gas was a big thing.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. So you had a gas station there also?

DOROTHY: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Can you remember some of the prices of your gas in the earlier days? I can remember when it was quite reasonable.

DOROTHY: Thirty-five cents. And everything was cheaper, a lot cheaper than what it is now.

DOROTHEA: Oh, you bet.

DOROTHY: And you kind of wondered where in the world it all went. And we tried to stay with Burns prices, because if you didn't ---

DOROTHEA: Nobody would buy.

DOROTHY: Huh uh. And then when they put that electrical line in, you know, well they gave me the contract of buying all the gas there. They'd leave their pickups parked there, and the trucks and stuff.

DOROTHEA: Well that kind of kept you busy, didn't it?

DOROTHY: Yes, it did.

DOROTHEA: Yes, it did.

DOROTHY: And they were real nice. That was when the REA went in, and that was real nice to have electric lights. And then they put in a gas pump, and it was electric, and so it made it a lot easier.

DOROTHEA: What did you use for electricity before the REA went in?

DOROTHY: Gas lamps.

DOROTHEA: Gas lamps? How did you pump your gas?

DOROTHY: By hand.

DOROTHEA: Oh, really?

DOROTHY: Yeah, you just ---

DOROTHEA: Just turned it, huh?

DOROTHY: Yeah, it was kind of --- It only had a --- I pumped it.

DOROTHEA: Oh, pumped. Kind of like a pitcher pump in other words. Yeah, it was pull and push.

DOROTHY: Yeah, just a pull and push.

DOROTHEA: Pull and push.

DOROTHY: A lot of people run out of gas. We had walkers going by --- Which they would stop and wanted to know if they could work for you a little bit to get something to eat. And we'd give them something to eat, but we never did have any work for them to do, so we'd give them something to eat and let them go. And a lot of them come for gas, to get, you know. They was --- Well we didn't have any place for them to stay, so we'd just give them gas to get to Burns where they could get help. And that's about the story.

DOROTHEA: Did you always get paid for your gas, or was there people that would come and fill up and drive off?

DOROTHY: No, there was only one time that that happened, and we thought that was pretty good. But we never had any trouble or anything out there.

DOROTHEA: You were very fortunate. I don't know whether we can trust people that well anymore or not. So ---

DOROTHY: Well no, we never --- A lot of them --- Now there was one couple come along and they was stranded, and they give me a broach for their gas. They wanted a tank full of gas, and they said they'd leave this broach. And they made all kinds of fun of me because I took it. But I thought it was kind of pretty. I thought, oh well, what was the difference. Her father had died and that was where they was going, and they said that when they got back, well they would stop and pick it up and pay for their gas. So of course I did. And you know, they did! They didn't come back right then, and they kept saying, "Oh, well, you just got stuck with the broach." But they did, they sent a letter, and it was registered with a money order in it to register that broach back. It was an heirloom of the girl's great --- oh, great grandmother, way back there, and it was an heirloom. And they wanted it registered back and everything. And so I did, and got paid for the gas. And I said, "Well they were good honest people, I guess." And you know ---

DOROTHEA: Well, you know, you don't always run across those kind, but you had one thing. You ---

DOROTHY: I had the funniest experiences. We was setting out there one night on the step, or the porch, you know. And there was some people from Redmond over there visiting. They used to live there, and we was sitting out there talking. And there was, I don't know how it was, but there was a couple of young men come along in a jeep. So I got up to wait on them, and they wanted --- they had eleven cents between them. And they wanted eleven cents worth of gas. Well I knew eleven cents wouldn't get them to Burns. And then they wanted to give me a drink of whiskey. Well I didn't want their whiskey, and so they said, "Well we'll be out tomorrow and pay you for sure," you know, "but we want you to take this eleven cents." And I said, "I don't want your eleven cents." I said, "I'll give you enough gas to get to Burns with," and I said, "if you don't come back, well I'll just be out the --- that, but that won't hurt me any." (Doorbell rang.) And do you know they came back and paid double for the gas, and then every time they went by, they would stop and fill up. And one was a coach from over in John Day, and the other one coached up here. And one of the boys was out there and he said, "I know them, I played football under them." And that was kind of a funny experience.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, this is your brother?

WAYNE JOHNSON: Tape recording, huh?

DOROTHY: Yeah, this is my brother.

DOROTHEA: Well maybe he can help us on Lawen.

DOROTHY: Yeah, he can help us on Lawen. I've told all the --- pert-near --- Now what do you have? What funny experience? Well, you had a funny experience with a guy that come a walking in there in the fog.

WAYNE: What is this all about?

DOROTHEA: Sit down and join us. I need some information on Lawen, and I'm trying --- I have to write an article on Lawen.

DOROTHY: You see I was trying to think when that store was moved from Lawen, over there across the tracks, over there across from the Dillon there. Was that in the 1900's?

WAYNE: What's that?

DOROTHY: When the store was moved over to where it is now. I can't remember whether they told me that was in the 1900's, it's about in that time anyway, when it was moved over there.

DOROTHEA: This is Wayne Johnson, and he is Dorothy's brother. He is from the Lawen area also, so he's going to join us maybe, and tell us a few things about some of this that he can remember.

DOROTHY: Well, remember!

DOROTHEA: Remember something about Lawen. (Laughter) I've come to a blank, and so I've called on Dorothy to help me out.

WAYNE: What is this going to be, in the paper?

DOROTHEA: Well it's for --- I'm writing an article on Lawen for the Centennial Book that they are putting out. You know at the first of the year it's supposed to be coming out. Well hopefully it's going to come out at the first of the year. But I've come up with kind of a blank spot, and I don't really know too much about Lawen. I've lived here for 40 years and still don't know anything.

DOROTHY: She came down there to Sunday school, when we had the Sunday school in the top of the house.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

WAYNE: Well, what all have you told her?

DOROTHY: Oh, I told her about when we bought it from Margaret Bamberry. And ---

DOROTHEA: She's told us about when she first came here, and who she worked for, and how she met her husband, and some of the experiences of the Lawen Store after they bought it, and where it was moved from, and ---

DOROTHY: Yeah, I was just telling her some of the funny things that happened, and about the two guys that stopped there and wanted to buy eleven cents worth of gas. And they was coaches. (Laughter) And they was kidding me about the time that they left that broach, but that was before you was out there.

WAYNE: That was the schoolteachers.

DOROTHY: Yes, that was the ones that I just got through telling about that.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, the coaches.

DOROTHY: But the other one was a girl, and she lived way back in --- But that was before you was out there. But I was trying to think of something else that was funny that happened out there. I know a time when that guy come they dumped off, and about the one that was sleeping on the corner of the snowplow, covered him up. So we've had some funny experiences that way.

DOROTHEA: Well those are interesting too, although I don't know if that tells me much about Lawen. But it's interesting to, you know, to relate some of those things.

DOROTHY: We found that guy in the water, there above the store there, and we didn't know whether he was dead or alive.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

DOROTHY: But we never had any trouble out there over that. Never had to have the cops out there for anything. Never was broke into.

DOROTHEA: Well I read --- when I was doing --- I had to write the thing on Crane also, and I read where the old ranchers used to move back and forth from Crane to Lawen, from Lawen to Crane. And mostly it was to send their children to school. And then why did they go to Crane.

WAYNE: That was the only high school there.

DOROTHY: Well it was the only --- that was the only high school.

DOROTHEA: But they went there in the summer, it said, and then in the wintertime they came back.

DOROTHY: They had pasture up there, you know, had to have a place for their cattle.

DOROTHEA: Oh, they had pasture in Crane?

DOROTHY: For their cattle. Well above in those mountains.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. So they just moved over there and lived with them?

DOROTHY: Well I don't know, they just turn them out, and then they'd move back.

WAYNE: No. They'd move in the ---- in the winter they'd put up hay and stuff around Lawen and then ---

DOROTHY: Move back then.

WAYNE: And then they'd had to move out on account of water, a lot of them. The river, you see, they didn't have no way out, so they'd have to move out to high ground.

DOROTHEA: Oh, I see.

WAYNE: And then they'd --- when the water went down they went back and hayed. But they, a lot of them sent their kids to Crane to school.

DOROTHY: To Crane.

WAYNE: To Crane to school.

DOROTHEA: At that boarding school there.

DOROTHEA: And that was before the railroad came in. And then after the railroad came in well they decided that they needed a grade school in Crane, so they built a grade school in Crane. But I didn't understand why they moved back and forth. Why they didn't just stay in Lawen, you know, and raise their crops and --- but apparently there was water there that ---

DOROTHY: Yeah, you had the flood irrigation, you know. You'd have to wait until spring, and the water would run off, and come in and would go off. And then they'd go in a hay, put their hay up. And then they'd feed their cattle there in the wintertime, and in the spring they'd have to move out again.

DOROTHEA: Now Wayne, when did you come here? Did you come before your sister did, or at the same time?

WAYNE: Right then.

DOROTHEA: Oh, at the same time?

DOROTHY: Yeah, he was little.

DOROTHEA: Oh.

WAYNE: You mean at the store?

DOROTHY: No, I mean when we come out from Nebraska.

WAYNE: Oh yeah, that was in '32.

DOROTHY: Was it '32? I said '38.

WAYNE: Oh god, we've got pictures over at the Alvord in '32. Hell, I graduated in '41 from Crane High School. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Well our memories don't always serve us right. I couldn't tell you one date from another, so ---

DOROTHY: I don't either. Are you saying '32?



WAYNE: Yeah. We went to the Alvord in '32, and come to Payette around, before that.

DOROTHY: Well when I first came here, I went to Crane and worked at the Denman for Jim and Millie McCulloch, and George --- What was his last name, Gauginola? (sp.?)

They had it together, but I couldn't ever remember ---

WAYNE: Johnny Gauginola.

DOROTHEA: I hope you can spell that.

DOROTHY: I can't, 'cause I don't know how. That's Basco.

WAYNE: It's Basco.

DOROTHEA: And his name was what?

WAYNE: Johnny Gauginola.

DOROTHEA: Johnny, oh Gauginola. (Laughter) Okay, it wasn't George? Okay, I'll see if I can't spell that. Maybe one of the Bascos around here can tell me how to spell it. And you were just a small boy when you came here then? So --- then you graduated from which school?

WAYNE: Crane.

DOROTHEA: Crane? In the high school?

WAYNE: Yep.

DOROTHEA: High school?

DOROTHY: Well you went to the grade school there.

WAYNE: Yeah, I went to grade school there too. I was in the seventh grade when I started there.

DOROTHY: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Can you tell me something about Lawen that you can remember? Ah --- maybe why people settled there instead of on into Crane. I know the railroad came into

Crane in 192--- '16, or 1917.

WAYNE: Well I don't know why they settled there, that was before  
--- they was settled in there before we come.

DOROTHY: There was homesteads there.

WAYNE: Yeah, there was a lot of homesteads there in that lake bottom.

DOROTHY: Then I told about that they sold that meadowland three different times that  
people come in on that meadowland thing. And now I guess --- I don't know how many is  
left out there. I guess there is still some of it left out there.

WAYNE: Yeah, but the old timers they got their hay there. That's where they put up their  
winter feed was around that Lawen area, see. And the ground was just all up in that lake  
hay, you know.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

WAYNE: That was all it is. And then they had place over there that --- I guess most of  
them was homesteads out there, weren't they?

DOROTHY: Yeah.

WAYNE: And then they'd move out in the spring, you know. And that was just cheap  
country, cheap feed there. And then they went through that drought and they had to  
leave.

DOROTHY: And they had to leave.

DOROTHEA: What year was that?

WAYNE: I don't know, that was before I come there.

DOROTHY: That was before I come too. But I don't know when it was.

WAYNE: Must have been in the ---

DOROTHY: But some of the old buildings and stuff was still out there.

DOROTHEA: Where?

DOROTHY: Out at Lawen.

DOROTHEA: Lawen.

DOROTHY: Where they homesteaded, you know.

WAYNE: Must have been '29 or '30, somewhere --- I think they said there was a ten year drought there, wasn't it?

DOROTHY: It was quite a while. I don't know, but it did take several years of drought.

WAYNE: Ten years. I know it was quite a while.

DOROTHY: Because I don't know if it was ten years, or five years, or what.

WAYNE: Anyway they moved out of there for that.

DOROTHEA: My machine is tells me that I should change my tape over to the other side.

SIDE B

DOROTHEA: Okay here we're back again. Can you tell me anything else that's ---

DOROTHY: The flood come and run everybody out. (Laughter) That's about all ---

WAYNE: Yeah, she told you about everything that's in the ---

DOROTHEA: Can you remember, Wayne, approximately when the post office was put into Lawen? I found somewhere in a book that said in the early 1880's, but it doesn't say what year.

WAYNE: I don't know, I never heard.

DOROTHY: Oh, I wonder if I've got that historical book that that girl wrote. Can I go look and see?

DOROTHEA: Yeah, just unhook it. (Disconnected microphone) There. I'll let you talk while she's gone. Tell me some of the experiences that you had. She mentioned a boy

walking in, in the fog.

WAYNE: Well, that shouldn't be told.

DOROTHEA: Oh, okay, we won't tell that then. Ah --- around Lawen, when they closed the school down, can you tell me something about that?

WAYNE: Well that was when this flood come.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

WAYNE: Well they just got out there and just shut her down. And the kids hauled the books off, and that's all it was.

DOROTHEA: Does it have a school now, or are they still going ---

WAYNE: No, it's ---

DOROTHEA: It's still closed down?

WAYNE: It's --- consolidated with Crane.

DOROTHEA: Oh, I see. Okay, so they --- do they haul the kids back and forth, or do they go to the school and stay?

WAYNE: No, they haul them.

DOROTHEA: They do?

WAYNE: They don't have a bus, but they get transportation, I think. Each family takes them.

DOROTHEA: Do they do this every day?

WAYNE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: How far is it from Lawen to Crane?

WAYNE: Oh, it's 12, 15, 12 miles. High school kids, if they are in high school, they can stay at Crane, see.

DOROTHEA: Oh, they don't have a dormitory for the younger kids?

WAYNE: No, huh uh, that district is just high school.

DOROTHEA: How do you manage to get your kids into the high school out there? Do you have to live in that area, or ---

WAYNE: Yeah, you have to be a ---

DOROTHEA: Resident of ---

WAYNE: Or have somebody --- Used to be that if you could get somebody to be a custodian to them, you know, and take care of them, then they could go. Somebody that would take responsibility of them, you know.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

WAYNE: But I don't know, they have changed so many of them laws since I was there. I don't know just what it is now.

DOROTHEA: Well the people that live in Diamond area, and French-glen, do they haul their kids clear into Crane too?

WAYNE: No, huh uh. No, they ---

DOROTHEA: They have their own schools?

WAYNE: Lawen had their grade school too; until they flooded out, see. But after it flooded out, now they are consolidated with Crane.

DOROTHEA: Well I asked Dorothy something about, approximately what was the population of Lawen. Ah --- she thought around 100 people out there. Was that ---

WAYNE: That's a little ---

DOROTHEA: A lot?

WAYNE: A lot.

DOROTHEA: Well at one time I know it was pretty well --- There was Cattersons, and Cochran's, and Seeleys, and Carsons --- Oh---

WAYNE: Millers.

DOROTHEA: Millers. Oh, I can't think of --- how about the Otleys? Was there any of the Otleys?

WAYNE: They used to, but they didn't stay there, no. They just had a man come in the wintertime and stay there.

DOROTHY: This is on the --- That was on the --- This is on the Alvord, when we was there at the Alvord. It tells about that if you --- I don't know if you can get anything.

DOROTHEA: What book is this, oh Rankin Crow?

DOROTHY: I think this whole thing is here, right here, and I think it's ---

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

DOROTHY: It goes on over to the next page, and it tells about the --- when we got the store, I think. But it don't say any dates, does it? I don't think. Of course I never read it. I couldn't think ---

DOROTHEA: Well it tells you when Ted (Carson) passed away.

WAYNE: Well anyway I told you about all I know.

DOROTHY: Did you go see the doctor about your eye?

WAYNE: Yeah.

DOROTHY: What'd he say?

WAYNE: Oh, he gave me some high-powered medicine for infection.

DOROTHY: Its got infection in it? That's what's the matter with it?

WAYNE: Yes. Went to the eye doctor and Melanie (Harris) both.

DOROTHY: They sent you over there, huh?

WAYNE: Yeah. Said you've got an infection, so ---

DOROTHY: You got infection in your eye. It wasn't pink eye after all then?

WAYNE: Well it might have been pink eye to start with, and then it got infected see.

DOROTHY: Oh.

WAYNE: Well, I'm sorry I can't help you any more, but I think she's told, about got all you need.

DOROTHEA: Well, thank you anyway.

DOROTHY: You're leaving are you? I think the post office was --- when was Burns?

DOROTHEA: I don't know, I think 1912, but I don't know for sure.

DOROTHY: Oh, this was long before that. It's been there a long time. They figured ---

DOROTHEA: Maybe that's when the post office was built.

DOROTHY: Well, you know, it was always ---

DOROTHEA: Here in Burns.

DOROTHY: Well I don't know how they had it at the old Lawen. But when they moved that building up, then they took off a partition, you know, and made a post office in the store.

DOROTHEA: Well was it always a grocery store, or mercantile more or less?

DOROTHY: Yeah. It had a side built on to it, you know, when they had it there. And that was in the 1900's, when that was. So it must have been about the 1889's when the post office was built, so that's about right.

DOROTHEA: Well, I don't know even who the first post master was, but ---

DOROTHY: I don't know either. Ah --- I know Star Bucklin was, and I know --- Carey, Harry Carey was there. He was postmaster at one time, but I don't know when he was. But he was there at the store; I don't know whether he owned it, or whether he worked there, or what.

DOROTHEA: Now is Bertha his wife?

DOROTHY: Bertha Carey? No, let's see, what was his wife's name?

DOROTHEA: She must have married one of the Careys then.

DOROTHY: Yeah, she --- well it could have been Bertha, but I don't know. Ah --- but I know they mentioned Harry. I know he was the one that hauled the lumber or something in here for it to be built, and then he run it for a while. And that's all they ever said about that. And I know --- Oh, what was his name? When they moved that up there in 1928, I think ---

DOROTHEA: 1928?

DOROTHEA: I think that was when he said it was. I can --- oh they're both gone now. He worked for the county a long time. He done construction there. What was their names? That Lillard girl, it was her folks.

DOROTHEA: Oh, Herb Fawcett?

DOROTHY: Yeah, Herb Fawcett. He said he was a small kid, you know, when --- and he helped move that up there.

DOROTHEA: Did he live in the Lawen area?

DOROTHY: No, I don't know. I suppose he worked out there. I don't know where he was, but he said he helped with that.

DOROTHEA: Maybe the county had something to do with it.

DOROTHY: To do with it. But he was just a kid, I guess, I don't know. He said he helped move it up there. That's what he always told me.

DOROTHEA: Did he used to live out there?

DOROTHY: No.

DOROTHEA: He didn't.

DOROTHY: No, no he didn't. I don't know how come he helped. But I know he said they



had it on big old rollers, you know, and they pulled it by horses up there. And he used to tell that, when he was there. Well I made the mistake of not writing all this down when they was, you know, would come in there and tell it. And it's hard to remember now after all these years, you know. There's so much you forget.

DOROTHEA: Well that's my problem too.

DOROTHY: But I knew your folks.

DOROTHEA: My folks?

DOROTHY: Uh huh. And you have two --- there is another sister and a brother, didn't you?

DOROTHEA: I have three brothers and a sister.

DOROTHY: Three. Well there was just the one brother that I remember.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, probably the youngest one. Yeah, my older two brothers didn't participate much. (Laughter) One brother though, you might have known him, the oldest one. He used to go out in that area and shoot cannon balls or something. Those kind of old guns, with Weston Wright. And they were real active in that kind of thing. So you might have known him. He sold Christmas trees for Lanfear one time. And ---

WAYNE: Did you tell her about the water fight, that's a --- when they blew the big dam?

DOROTHY: No, I haven't got to that yet.

WAYNE: Well that's the --- that's the funniest thing that ever happened there.

DOROTHY: Well, you tell her.

DOROTHEA: You'll have to come a little closer. (Laughter)

DOROTHY: Yeah, that was quite a thing. I haven't got to the water dam yet, but that was Vogler.

WAYNE: It was Vogler's dad.

DOROTHY: It was his dams that he built. And he was going to dry everybody up from the Lawen Lane that was on this side, to where his land was. And they wasn't going to give any water to anyone. So he had a big dam made, and levies built. And somebody blew the dam. And he never --- and I don't think he ever knows yet to this day, does he?

WAYNE: No.

DOROTHY: Whoever blew it. They tried and tried to, and they had the sheriff out there and everything else, trying to find out who blew that. Well we was sitting there and ... well we heard the thing, but we didn't know what it was. But I'll tell you, the water sure went. But, you know, they'd have water fights out there like that, and they'd just be enemies. And then when the water was all gone and everything, everybody was friends again.

DOROTHEA: Oh, water was almost like money.

DOROTHY: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: You know, it is the death of people. (Laughter)

WAYNE: But the funniest thing when the dam blew. They knew it was going to go, you know, the fellows that was instigated in it. And they was there at the store waiting for it, and so they kept watching the clock pretty close, and about 7:30 that thing erupted, and heck beer bottles went everywhere. (Laughter) It blew a hole in that thing probably 40 feet long.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

WAYNE: And that's --- and next morning there was water all over the east side of Lawen down there.

DOROTHEA: Everybody had water, huh?

WAYNE: Everybody had water, yeah. Yeah. (Laughter)

DOROTHY: And I guess to this day they don't know, he don't know. Well of course he's

gone now, you know ---

DOROTHEA: Yeah. That was old Henry?

DOROTHY: Uh huh.

WAYNE: And the man that put up the money for the dynamite and stuff, he's gone too.

DOROTHY: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Oh, you knew who it was?

WAYNE: Oh yeah. And ah --- yeah. A contract job.

DOROTHY: Well now can you think of anything else that was funny that I've forgot? See I forget some of these things. When you get right down to the --- But I know we helped a lot of people. But then there was poor people just like there are today, you know, too.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

DOROTHY: And they didn't have anything to eat and everything, so we'd always feed them.

DOROTHEA: Well I don't think really people have changed all that much. The environmental things have changed, you know, and people require a lot more than they used to. But economy wise, we are still poor people. There are still ---

DOROTHY: And we still want to send all this money, and don't help the ones here where they need it.

DOROTHEA: No, no.

DOROTHY: And raise your taxes, and who pays for it? The working people, or the poor people?

DOROTHEA: No, the people do.

WAYNE: hey are going to raise the president's salary to \$350,000.

DOROTHEA: Oh, I know it. Yeah.

WAYNE: And all of Congress.

DOROTHEA: Don't you wish that we were --- didn't --- Don't you wish we were government people? Maybe we could get our ---

WAYNE: Well the water fights sure did it.

DOROTHEA: That's interesting. 'Cause I know a lot of those things took place that a lot of people didn't ever know about too, so --- But I'll tell you water used to be the root of all evil. That and money!

DOROTHY: Yeah, they was sitting in there waiting, and they come in to question you, and you didn't know anything about it. Well, you didn't. They was in there and then after it blew, they said that was it.

DOROTHEA: That must have been it, huh?

DOROTHY: That must have been it. (Laughter) But you had to be pretty mum, I'll tell you. But they had lots of water meetings there. They'd meet there, and you know, but it was so funny to think how people would be enemies, and just fight over the water. And then when it was all done, and everybody was haying and they was all good friends and neighboring back and forth.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, I remember those days.

DOROTHY: Of course now, then the floods taken it all and they don't seem to do anything about it. Never have anyway, let's put it that way.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, well I imagine it's going to go through another period to where it'll dry completely up, and people will move in and think that's great land, and then all of a sudden they will be flooded out again. So ---

DOROTHY: I don't know how many years that it was that it was dry, that you could just go clear across it, you know, and they farmed it. And then all at once ---

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

DOROTHY: But I don't think they can run it like they think they can. Because I always felt that if they would have let more water go down --- They had fields and fields that was dry on the "P" Ranch and in there. That they could have turned some of that water, and it wouldn't have got everybody. It would have got some of them, yes, that lived right by the lake. But some of them where it went clear up there to the road at Lawen, you know, that Highway 78.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

DOROTHY: It never would have got up there if they would have let that go, so I don't know. I always figured that they could have done more to prevent it than they did.

DOROTHEA: Well now out by the school where Cattersons --- Wasn't that Catterson that lived out there?

DOROTHY: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Was it Allan?

DOROTHY: Allan Catterson.

DOROTHEA: Catterson. Is that where Frank and Sharon (Catterson) live now?

DOROTHY: No, they live on the Fitchett place. There where Clarence Fitchett lived.

DOROTHEA: Oh, they live on the Fitchett place.

DOROTHY: You go down and up that lane, and up to that house up there.

DOROTHEA: Toward See leys? Out towards Seeleys?

DOROTHY: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: What was Seeley's names?

DOROTHY: You mean all of them?

DOROTHEA: No, the --- Elsie and her husband.

DOROTHY: Lynn.

DOROTHEA: L Y N N ?

DOROTHY: L --- I guess that's what ---

DOROTHEA: Len or Leon?

DOROTHY: L E O N, I think.

DOROTHEA: Leon.

DOROTHY: Leon.

DOROTHEA: Seeley. S, or I mean ---

DOROTHY: S E E L E Y.

DOROTHEA: And Jim (Seeley) still lives out on the home place?

DOROTHY: Well he is now, I guess. As far as I know, he was out there. But I know they moved out down there to the other place.

DOROTHEA: What other place?

DOROTHY: Ah --- down there by the Nine Mile Slough.

DOROTHEA: Oh.

DOROTHY: They had a place down there, and that's where they'd always move out when the water come. And then the kids went to school in Crane.

DOROTHEA: I see where Cecelia is back.

DOROTHY: Yeah, she's back.

DOROTHEA: Is she living with her dad?

DOROTHY: Well, Melveta is out there too.

DOROTHEA: Oh, is she?

DOROTHY: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Huh, I didn't know Melveta came back.

DOROTHY: Yeah, she came back. And --- Well I don't know, I think she stays in town. Maybe she drives back and forth, I don't know. I haven't seen her.

DOROTHEA: It isn't all that far, you know, what I mean. Today we drive back and forth. When I was living in Silvies, I drove back and forth and never thought anything about it. So really, it isn't all that far once you drive.

DOROTHY: No, it's just bad in the wintertime when the ---

DOROTHEA: Yeah, it is, but ---

DOROTHY: But when we first was out there, there wasn't nobody lived out there, you know. There was no lights or anything, now it looks just like a ---

DOROTHEA: Town.

DOROTHY: Town out there when you go through it, you know.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, those night-lights make a difference in the way population --- Well I can't think of any other questions that I wanted to ask. I might ask you who your parents were? What was your parent's names?

DOROTHY: Oscar and Josie Johnson.

DOROTHEA: Oscar and Josie. Did they live here?

DOROTHY: No. My father came out here, but he didn't stay, he went back. But my mother did, she lived with us there at the ---

DOROTHEA: Store?

DOROTHY: Store. And he went back. I have a brother that lives back there in Nebraska, that he did. But now he is retired and moved to Colorado, right across the line in Jewelsburg, Colorado. You probably know where that's at. It's about 90 miles on the other side of Denver. But there --- he was in this end of it, but he's that far from Denver. But anyway, he was --- the line just went, just like Denio and Oregon and Nevada.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

DOROTHY: Well the town of Jewelsburg sits right over here, and then he just lives across the line. I only have the two brothers, Wayne and him.

DOROTHEA: You're the only daughter?

DOROTHY: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Well I might as well get your family. You have two children?

DOROTHY: Two children, and four grandchildren.

DOROTHEA: And it's Earl and Nancy?

DOROTHY: Nancy Dowell.

DOROTHEA: D O W ?

DOROTHY: E L L.

DOROTHEA: And she lives where?

DOROTHY: In Battle Mountain. She has two boys, and Earl has a girl and a boy.

DOROTHEA: What's her husband's name?

DOROTHY: Dick, or Richard. Richard, I guess.

DOROTHEA: Dick, called Richard. And --- Shirley (Otley).

DOROTHEA: Shirley, yeah, that's Earl's wife.

DOROTHEA: How old is Todd now?

DOROTHY: Todd's 21.

DOROTHEA: Oh, really.

DOROTHY: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Oh, my goodness sake. Those kids are getting old, old, old.

DOROTHY: Yes, Robin is 23.

DOROTHEA: Uh. How old are Nancy's kids?



DOROTHY: Well she's got one 16, and one 19.

DOROTHEA: Huh, her's are getting old too. (Laughter) That just ages me terrible.

DOROTHY: Oh, well what do you think about me?

DOROTHEA: ... (Idle chatter) Well, Dorothy, I thank you for all your information and help. And I'm trying to get this information down so I can write this article, and I don't know what I'm going to come up with. But we'll see if we can't get something, and ---

DOROTHY: Well maybe you can come up with what everybody else comes up with.

DOROTHEA: Well, you know, whatever we can come up with, they have completely forgotten it so far. But the boy that they ask, or I shouldn't say boy, the guy that they asked to write the article on, would probably know more about it.

DOROTHY: Who did they ask?

DOROTHEA: Oh, I can't say, but anyway, he would have known more about it and been able to write a good story on it.

DOROTHY: Well maybe he will with your help.

DOROTHEA: Well I guess I should get a hold of him, 'cause I'm ---

DOROTHY: See if he knows anything more that he could put in with

---

DOROTHEA: Should get a hold of him and see if he'll write it for me, really. But I do appreciate all the help that you've give me. And like I said, we may put this in the Library, because we do need information on Lawen, and several of the smaller towns that we don't have anything on. We're going to have to find out more about. I talked to a man by the name of McHargue the other day that was from the Crowley area, and he now lives in Harper. And we went over and did an interview with him, and really enjoyed our day and visit with him. And he gave us some information that we were real tickled and --- And

come to find out my brother's sister was married to one of his relatives. His grandmother had married his --- had a son that married this, or had a daughter that married this man by the name of Edward Gilliland. And he is my sister-in-law's, father-in-law. So ---

DOROTHY: Oh, for heavens sake.

DOROTHEA: They are all passed away at the time, but I mean, still you know, how small is the world when you really get to relating with other people.

DOROTHY: I know.

DOROTHEA: But I really appreciate your time and your help. And maybe with this I can get some kind of information down. So, thank you.

DOROTHY: And if you mention something to him, maybe you could get a good story out of it.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, yeah. Okay, thank you.

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