

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #253 - Sides A & B

Subject: Helen McCart & Beulah Clemens (With Video)

Place: McCart Home, Burns, Oregon

Date: August 3, 1989

Interviewers: Dorothea Purdy & Barbara Lofgren

DOROTHEA PURDY: This is Dorothea Purdy and I'm with Helen and Beulah --- Helen McCart, and Beulah Clemens, and Barbara Lofgren. And we're at Helen's home in Burns.

The date is August the 3rd, 1989. And now we'll visit a little bit with Helen and find out some of her life's history. Helen, would you like to tell us your full name, including your maiden name?

HELEN McCART: Helen Mary Clemens McCart.

DOROTHEA: And when were you born?

HELEN: September the 9th, 1920.

DOROTHEA: And where?

HELEN: Burns.

DOROTHEA: In a hospital, or ---

HELEN: No, home.

DOROTHEA: At home.

HELEN: At the Summit Hotel.

DOROTHEA: Can you tell us something about this? Maybe your mom has said something about what kind of time it was to deliver a baby, and --- do you know anything about that?

HELEN: Well not at the time I was doing it. (Laughter) I've heard stories about it. The

Summit Hotel was the Whittier Hotel now. Isn't that right?

BEULAH CLEMENS: Yeah, my grandmother owned the hotel.

BARBARA LOFGREN: Your grandmother owned the Summit Hotel?

HELEN: Grandmother Smith.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: What were your parent's names?

HELEN: Glen Clemens, and Beulah Clemens.

BEULAH: Beulah Smith.

HELEN: Clemens.

DOROTHEA: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

HELEN: I have one brother, Darrell.

DOROTHEA: And where did you go to school at?

HELEN: At Poison Creek, through the eighth grade. And then two years at the Burns High School, and the last two years in Boise, with my grandparents.

DOROTHEA: Do you remember something about the school? Can you tell us maybe your first grade teacher's name, or something that really stuck in your mind, and ---

HELEN: It was a one-room schoolhouse. One teacher, Mrs. Tipton was my first grade teacher.

DOROTHEA: What all did you do at the school? Did you play games, and have recess --

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HELEN: Oh yes, at recess time hop scotch and anti-over, and ball, baseball. Of course those days, they didn't have very many athletics or anything. So it --- swing and slide. Later years I think we had a little merry-go-round. But you made your own fun.

BARBARA: Do you remember any of the programs; did you have special Christmas

programs or things like that?

HELEN: Oh yes, Christmas and Thanksgiving, and all the parents gathered around. And they had a program at that time. Easter egg hunt.

BARBARA: Did you have to learn parts for the programs?

HELEN: Oh yes, each one, each child, student would take a, have a part, a poem in the plays.

BARBARA: Were they religious programs, or were they just ---

HELEN: No, not really that I remember of any, you know, in the religious. More for holiday or that time of, for the holiday time of the year.

BARBARA: Uh huh. And everyone's parent's come did they?

HELEN: Oh yes, yeah they always had their parents there.

BARBARA: Did they hand out hard candies, and oranges, and things like that, nuts?

HELEN: Oh yes, they had --- the women, the mothers would gather before the Christmas program and make stockings and put nuts and candy and an orange.

DOROTHEA: Did they have a Santa Claus come and visit you like they do today? Or did ---

HELEN: Oh yes, there was always, one of the parents; one of the fathers would dress up as Santa.

DOROTHEA: Where was this school at?

HELEN: Well the building is still standing, it's where the "Y" of the John Day and Ontario highway, the junction. And it's about a mile east on the right-hand side of the road. And it's the Shepard place now.

DOROTHEA: That's where Wes Shepard lives, yes.

HELEN: Wes, uh huh.

BARBARA: Did you ride a horse to school?

HELEN: Oh yes, three miles.

DOROTHEA: What do you remember about the first grade, and some of your school friends?

HELEN: Well I was, it was only one other student there, that I can remember in the first grade at the time I was, was Stephen Hebner. And McClaren was one of the other students. There was never very many in each grade then, maybe three or four students at a time, in each grade. One teacher took care of eight grades. DOROTHEA: So you, what was the whole population of the school?

HELEN: Oh, maybe twelve, fifteen at the most.

DOROTHEA: And one teacher.

HELEN: One teacher. Maybe there'd only be one student in one of the grades.

BARBARA: How long was your school day? What time did you start, and what time did you finish?

HELEN: Nine to three-thirty.

BARBARA: And then when you went home, did you have chores around the ranch to do?

HELEN: Not while I was in school. In the summer months I did. But not during school time.

BARBARA: And in the summertime what did you do around the place?

HELEN: Well it was, always, of course we went to the mountains before haying started. And then after haying, when it came time to hay we'd come down from the mountain ranch, and of course put up the hay. And I worked like a boy instead of a girl. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: What kind of machinery did you have in those days?

HELEN: Oh, it was all horse driven until later years, then we got the tractors.

DOROTHEA: ... What kind of machinery did you run?

HELEN: Oh, I ran the tractor.

DOROTHEA: Did you rake, or ---

HELEN: Oh, I run the, oh I see --- oh yes, did all types of everything but stack the hay.

DOROTHEA: Did you get to ride the horse as a pull-up horse, or pullback, or --- that was always my job. I hated that.

HELEN: Yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: I always pulled it too far.

HELEN: I did too, yeah. I was scared to death I would. No I did everything but stack hay.

BARBARA: How did you get along with your brother Darrell in doing the chores?

HELEN: Oh he was six years younger, so he wasn't too much of a help to me. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Did you go to some of the dances that they had in those days? Can you remember going to some of the dances, and how you went?

HELEN: Oh, I learned to dance in the kitchen. (Laughter) Oh gosh, with my dad, because Mom played the piano.

DOROTHEA: Beulah, you're sitting there laughing, can you tell us about some of these dances that they had, and how you went and how your traveling, you did your traveling?

BEULAH: Well we went with a --- gosh I'll have to think, a car when we first had these kitchen dances.

HELEN: No, we went ---

BEULAH: You know most of the people had kitchen dances, and they were so crowded that you couldn't even move. You just had to stay in one place. And sometimes they

would have a violin, and a harp, and --- But then they'd have supper at midnight. Everybody put their food out and had a big supper. And then they would dance sometimes until maybe four o'clock in the morning. Everybody was sociable and had a good time. And there wasn't any, I don't think there was much drinking around at that time. If it was ---

HELEN: There was drinking, but it wasn't --- (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Did you go by horse and buggy? Or was it ---

BEULAH: Well in the wintertime we went by sleigh. We had a sleigh and a lot of times up the river we went. And then the neighbors would get in the --- they would have a bobsleds on the sleigh, on a ---

HELEN: Runners.

BEULAH: Yeah. And we'd all bundle up, thirty below zero maybe. It didn't make any difference. And we'd go up the river, which is, how far is it up to the Baker place?

DOROTHEA: Oh, it's at least ---

BEULAH: Where we had the dances.

HELEN: Five miles.

DOROTHEA: Ten miles anyway.

BEULAH: And one of the neighbors would maybe drive the horses, and Glen would drive the horses. And we got there. We had a good time.

HELEN: Never get home until almost daylight.

BEULAH: No.

DOROTHEA: What did you do with your children?

BEULAH: Oh, we'd put them to sleep, and they was under coats. And when you got ready to leave you'd have to fish around in the coats, and if you'd come across your baby

why you would take it. (Laughter) And wrap it up and go home.

HELEN: When you were big enough to dance, you joined the older people and had just as good a time.

BEULAH: Yes.

HELEN: Midnight basket social, and lots to eat.

BARBARA: Who were some of the people that played for these dances? Didn't Darrell used to play, as he got older?

BEULAH: That was later on. Way later.

BARBARA: Uh huh. But in the earlier times ---

BEULAH: In the early days ---

HELEN: Buchanan, Buchanan.

BEULAH: I think Paul Weil was it? I don't remember.

HELEN: Yeah, Paul Weil played.

BEULAH: But we give a barn dance in our barn up there in the loft. And they moved the piano up, put it on two big runners and pushed that piano up, and we invited the --- hall was full, and that's the ---

HELEN: Made it a ---

BEULAH: --- Eggleston's Orchestra, and we just had a ball.

DOROTHEA: I understand that when you built a new barn, in order to initiate this barn you had to hold a dance. Is this right?

BEULAH: Well you didn't have to, but some of them --- I don't think very many did, did they Helen?

HELEN: Well Dad made, put in a special floor, three inch flooring so; you know it would be nice to dance on. But they held two dances, and then they was afraid it would catch

on fire.

BEULAH: But houses too, some of the homes were built, and they'd

--- before they moved in why they'd give a dance too. But not very many, there was a few, but not very many.

HELEN: But a lot held dances in their home. Not barn dances, but dances in their home. We went down to Ryegrass, I remember going to Ryegrass.

BEULAH: Yeah, they had a dance down there one time in that old hall, down to Ryegrass.

DOROTHEA: The old schoolhouse?

HELEN: The schoolhouse.

BEULAH: Was it a schoolhouse?

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: A schoolhouse.

BEULAH: Oh, I don't remember it being a schoolhouse.

HELEN: Oh, I remember.

DOROTHEA: I think it was a schoolhouse.

BEULAH: ... too.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

BARBARA: Can you tell me where was your home place in relation to the town right now?

BEULAH: Me?

BARBARA: Uh huh.

BEULAH: It was six miles out, wasn't it? Six miles out to the

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HELEN: Northeast.

BEULAH: --- to the, what is ---

HELEN: On Poison Creek, on the ---

DOROTHEA: Sand Hill.

BEULAH: It's, about a few steps from her home.

BARBARA: Oh, out by the sand hill.

DOROTHEA: It's where Joyce and Thad live now.

BARBARA: Oh, I see. Okay. I was trying to get in relation to, the part of town where it is now. So that you --- Helen, you said the school was about where the "Y" is, so I'm trying to get a picture as to how you came to school and that sort of thing.

HELEN: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

HELEN: We went in at the sub-station, turned there and went north where Drinkwater's and Delmer Clemens. They went in on the John Day highway.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

HELEN: Turned in on that side.

BARBARA: I see. And then you went in by the sub-station. Okay.

HELEN: Uh huh.

BARBARA: And in the summertime did you go to the rodeos and the fair and that sort of thing, always?

HELEN: Oh, yes. That was always ---

BEULAH: People never missed a thing in those days, they went.

BARBARA: If there was an activity going on, everyone partook then.

BEULAH: Oh everyone would come to town on Saturday. You know things used to be

open on Saturday, and that was farmer's day, everybody would come to town.

BARBARA: And so during fair week then, would you pretty much come in for the week, or go back and forth?

BEULAH: No, we went back and forth because it was so close you know. We all had cars at that time.

BARBARA: I see. And Helen, you said that you were a princess one year. What time, when was that?

HELEN: That was '37.

BARBARA: In 1937 you were fair princess then. And who were the other girls on the court with you, do you remember?

HELEN: Geraldine Bardwell and Louise Clay Williams. Louise Williams Clay. And Mary Higgs and Florence (Canning) VanCleaf. And a girl over at Drewsey, I've just forgotten her name now.

BARBARA: And in the early days, not early days, but years ago how was the queen elected as compared to how it is done today?

HELEN: Well when anyone made a purchase at any of the businesses, why they were given so many tickets for their purchase. And then the people would turn those tickets in to the one that they wanted for queen. They didn't have the contest like they have now with horsemanship.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: So you didn't have to really ride a horse, or know much about a horse in order to be on the fair court in those days?

HELEN: No, they judge them entirely different now.

DOROTHEA: Do you think that this is an improvement, or do you feel that they should go

back to the way they used to do it?

HELEN: No, I think it's better now days, the way they have of choosing them.

BARBARA: Years ago it was an incentive to come into town and purchase something during that time so you could vote for whoever you wanted to be queen then. Maybe the merchants liked that so people would come in and buy things.

HELEN: It could have been.

BARBARA: To kind of boost the economy a little bit at that time.

HELEN: That's right.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

HELEN: Just a popular vote.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Do you remember your grandparents?

HELEN: I do on my mother's side. But I was only five years old when my Grandmother Clemens passed away. And in the same year I was born why Grandfather Clemens passed away.

DOROTHEA: And what were their names?

HELEN: Jennie Clemens and Pete Clemens.

BARBARA: And your grandparents on your mother's side?

HELEN: Ray Smith and Pearl Smith.

BARBARA: Is that S M Y T H, or S M I T H ?

HELEN: S M I T H.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Can you tell us something about the Smith grandparents? I understand ---

HELEN: My grandmother, she came from Blackfoot, Idaho. And Grandfather Smith

came from Iowa.

BEULAH: Michigan.

HELEN: Michigan.

BEULAH: I think it was Flint, I'm not sure but they left a big ranch, sold out the ranch and come to Blackfoot.

BARBARA: And they were ranchers when they came here? Did they homestead?

BEULAH: No.

BARBARA: Or what did they do for a living when they came?

BEULAH: Well my folks, my dad was a carpenter.

BARBARA: Okay.

BEULAH: And they had started for the Willamette Valley and they, this Lunenburg and Dalton had one of the first mercantile businesses, and he wanted a house built.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

BEULAH: So they thought they would stop and --- until they got the house built. And the house is where the Pioneer Federal is now. And they tore that house down. And then they bought property, and my grandmother bought the Summit Hotel. And then my folks had the hotel that was where the Good Eats is now, and that set back a quarter of a block there. The Good Eats, and what's the next one?

HELEN: The Central, The Central.

BEULAH: The Central. They owned all that. And eventually it was sold, the way it is now.

BARBARA: So your grandmother came with your parents when --- they were on their way to the ---

BEULAH: My grandmother did on my father's side.

BARBARA: Uh huh. So you say that when they came here, and he stayed to build the house, she came with them then?

BEULAH: Yes.

BARBARA: Okay. And she decided to stay here too then?

BEULAH: Yes they all stayed. My grandmother and ---

HELEN: Then Mother here was born here in Burns.

BEULAH: Yes.

BARBARA: So he stayed and did carpentry work.

HELEN: Yes, until 1919, and then they went to Boise.

BARBARA: I see.

DOROTHEA: Can you tell some of the buildings that your father built and worked on?

BEULAH: My father? Well the Pat Culp Ranch was one of them. It's still there, that beautiful stairway and everything. I guess it's still there. And the Foley place.

HELEN: He did a lot of this fancy --- they call it bric-a-brac.

BEULAH: And Foley place. I don't know who lives in those places now up there on the hill. But he built quite a, all these fancy bric-a-brac things. He had a machine that he --- that's how you could tell his work, because --- And where the Pioneer Federal, that house there you know, had all those --- So he stayed in the carpentry business for quite a while.

Then he went to well drilling. He drilled pretty near all the wells in the --- there was wells in the block, see in Burns. Every block had a well. And when the fire, when there was a fire, then they would bring the old hose in and put --- and the people would get on the side and pump, you know. In those days ---

HELEN: He built the Clemens barn, Grandpa Clemens' barn.

DOROTHEA: And that's on the place where Del lives now, right?

HELEN: Uh huh.

BEULAH: Uh huh. That's on the original Clemens place.

DOROTHEA: Did he build the hotel that was up on the hill? I think you called it the Summit?

BEULAH: No.

DOROTHEA: He didn't.

BEULAH: No, no. The people by the name of Simms built the hotel.

HELEN: They ran this hotel, had roomers. That's where you were married, is in the hotel.

BARBARA: So people had babies in the hotel, and people got married in the hotel.

BEULAH: Well they got married, but they had babies I think at home. I don't ---

BARBARA: Oh, uh huh.

HELEN: No, there was no hospital.

BEULAH: Well later on they did, but ---

BARBARA: You say you were born in the Summit Hotel, Helen.

HELEN: Uh huh.

BARBARA: Beulah, did you come into town so that you would be closer to the doctor when you had Helen then?

BEULAH: Oh yes, yes. I'll say we did.

HELEN: Del was born at Grandma Clemens' house in 1926.

DOROTHEA: Beulah, can you tell us some stories about some of the people that you can remember, and the things that you did that maybe might be a little comical, or things that you especially remember?

BEULAH: Well we organized the Sagebrush Club. Maybe you've heard of that. Your mother belonged to that, do you remember?

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

BEULAH: And they organized that. And oh, we just got together and visited.

DOROTHEA: What was the purpose of the Sagebrush Club? Was it ---

BEULAH: It was just social.

DOROTHEA: Was it?

BEULAH: And at first ---

HELEN: It was really called the Sagebrush Embroidery Club.

BEULAH: At first it was just for the country women. But eventually there was one or two of the Burns women wanted to get in so bad, that they let them in. And that started the whole thing with the women in town. And we just had that club for a long time. It met at the different homes in the country.

HELEN: They'd bring their fancy work, their ---

BEULAH: Yeah, just social.

HELEN: Then you were the first --- when the grange was organized. Dad was the first master.

BEULAH: Yeah, that grange out there.

HELEN: You were secretary.

BEULAH: Yeah. You know, it's been a long time since that --- Oh it's so much different now. People just get off in little cliques you know.

BARBARA: They really do.

BEULAH: And they don't get together like we used to do.

BARBARA: Well people don't visit with one another like they used to.

BEULAH: No.

BARBARA: I think the television has ruined the art of conversation.

BEULAH: Oh, it sure does.

BARBARA: It really has.

HELEN: You can tell about the time you threw me out of the old car. The one that started, that caught on fire.

BEULAH: (Laughter)

HELEN: If you could call that funny.

BARBARA: Your car caught on fire?

BEULAH: Well we were coming from Boise, and we had a Ford in those days, you know. You just strap the things on the side.

HELEN: Suitcases.

BEULAH: And suitcases and things. And my husband's brother was sitting on this side, and he smoked a pipe. And he dumped his pipe ashes I guess, just over the side. And looked up there, and there the smoke was a coming, you know. And I thought it was going, I had Helen, she was just a baby wrapped up, you know. And I just kind of threw her out, tried to get out myself, and just kind of threw her ahead of me in the sagebrush. That was around the Fourth of July, about the --- We stopped in Vale, and then in order to get the fire out why Glen's brother and him, they burnt their hands, you know. And we had to stay in Vale that night. Oh boy, was they ever having a time.

HELEN: It was long before the highway.

BEULAH: Yeah.

HELEN: It was over, through Stinkingwater. Then you had to go by Crane and Riverside, and out that way to get to ---

BEULAH: Oh, yes. You know, we didn't mind it in those days though. They never had the highways or anything. Just the --- of course when the train come into Crane,



everybody went to see the train come in. Glen's mother, well she drove the golden spike. That's been in these books, you know. But anyway, Mardell, that was Glen's brothers --- their daughter was born. She was bound she was going to go to Crane to see that train come in whether --- you know she was expecting her baby just any time. But she was bound to go. So they got down there, and begin, about the time the train would come in she'd begin having labor pains. And Clay started the old car, they had an old car and they just come up through the sagebrush. Mardell was born out here between Crane and Burns in the sagebrush someplace. (Laughter) They asked Clay what he done, you know, what he done. Well they had the two boys and they sent them on ahead. And well he said, "I just went over and cut a piece of barbed wire and tied the cord." (Laughter) The baby come.

DOROTHEA: That's ---

BEULAH: Cut a piece of barbed wire from the fence.

DOROTHEA: Those are the good stories that we like to hear.

BEULAH: She was bound, she was bound she was going to go. I tell you, nothing could stop her.

BARBARA: And where did you buy --- you talk about your car, did you buy your car in Burns?

BEULAH: Oh yes. From the Ford Garage.

BARBARA: At the Burns Ford Garage.

BEULAH: Our first Ford I believe ---

BARBARA: From Archie McGowan?

BEULAH: Yeah.

BARBARA: And can you recall about how much a car cost in those days?

BEULAH: I think it was seven hundred dollars. I believe it was seven hundred dollars. Yeah.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

HELEN: A little different.

BARBARA: And did they teach you how to drive the car, or did you already know?

BEULAH: Well I didn't. My husband did, but I learned to drive, you know, but --- They tell another story about Dr. Geary, about this car. He didn't know anything about it, and this -- - are you taping this? No, you're not, are you? No, no, don't. (Laughter) DOROTHEA: Well ---

BEULAH: But anyway he just, he had to go around the block, and he went around the block, and didn't know how to shut it off. And I guess he run around the block until the gas went out. Until he ran out of gas. He didn't know how to stop it. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Oh, that's great. That's good.

BEULAH: And those cars in those days, we had, instead of the glass like they have now, it was canvas flaps. You know you rolled them down, the canvas. So the next one we got had the glass windows. (Laughter) Oh, there is a lot of funny things when you stop to think about it, you know.

DOROTHEA: Did you have many flats in those days? And how were they fixed?

BEULAH: Well, I can't hardly tell you. On the rims, you know, you had to take the tire off and put it back on the rim, blow the tube up and put it back on. And I remember them having such a time, it was quite a chore. But we didn't have very many flats. But one time they advertised that they were, what is it --- would re-rubber, would make them over. What do they call that now?

DOROTHEA: Recap.

BEULAH: A recap. So we bought a couple of recaps, you know. In those days there wasn't very much money circulating around. So we bought these recaps. And I think we went about two or three miles and they both come uncapped. So ---

HELEN: Talk about having flat tires, when you had to come to town to have Darrell. You had been out riding that afternoon and got home and said you had to take off for Burns. Why Dad went out and you had two flat tires.

BEULAH: Yeah, two flat tires.

BARBARA: So he had to change tires before he could take you into town.

BEULAH: Oh, yeah. But Del wasn't born until --- well the doctor said, we almost called it the 3rd of July. But he was born the, a minute before twelve. And Dr. Homan said, "Well it's a minute before twelve, it isn't the 4th of July." So he was born on the 3rd of July. But I tell you ---

HELEN: I wonder how accurate their clocks were in those days. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: They didn't have fast time, and slow time, probably.

BARBARA: Helen, can you tell us how you met your husband?

HELEN: Mom can tell that. (Laughter) He was working at the post office, and Mom had got, came in and got the mail. And he was also driver --- the elevator, you know ---

BEULAH: Yeah, in the post office. Paul was there, and I said, went home and told Helen there is a pretty good-looking guy in the post office, you ought to meet him. So the next time we went in, I guess ---

HELEN: Of course he tells it, I rushed right through you know, and never had a chance to --- (Laughter) Kind of looking out the corner of my eye, I guess. Finally one day he cornered me.

BEULAH: Been together ever since.

HELEN: Forty-eight years.

DOROTHEA: And he was Paul McCart. And then how long did you go together before you got married?

HELEN: A year and a half.

DOROTHEA: A year and a half. And when did you get married?

HELEN: New Year's Eve.

BARBARA: Oh.

DOROTHEA: About 1941?

HELEN: '41. Ten below zero.

DOROTHEA: Oh, that sounds like the time I had my babies was thirty-five below zero.

HELEN: Oh my, this was in the daytime. Right at eleven o'clock in the morning.

BARBARA: You were married here in Burns?

HELEN: In Burns.

BARBARA: Uh huh. And after you were married, did Paul continue to work for the post office?

HELEN: No, well he did for three months. And then that starts the beginning of the war years. Pearl Harbor was in December. First we had planned to go down to Los Angeles and have a honeymoon. But when they bombed Pearl Harbor why, that changed our plans. Mom was scared we'd ---

BEULAH: Huh?

HELEN: I said she was scared that we'd get bombed on, on the coastline I guess.

BEULAH: I was always scared of something.

HELEN: They didn't want us to even leave Burns, but we did. So we spent it in Portland, down the Oregon coast.

DOROTHEA: And how long were you gone?

HELEN: Two weeks.

DOROTHEA: And then what did Paul do after working in the post office?

HELEN: We went to Portland. And of course he went to work for McGonnagal.

BARBARA: For who?

HELEN: For Poole and McGonnagal. They repaired ships.

BARBARA: Oh, I see.

HELEN: Repaired, you know, for airport and material for the war

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BARBARA: Uh huh. In the shipyards there in Portland.

HELEN: That's right.

BARBARA: And how long did you live in Portland?

HELEN: Six years.

BARBARA: Six years. And then you came back to Burns after that did you, or where did you go?

HELEN: Yes, after the war.

SIDE B

BEULAH: ... people got different; they didn't get together and visit. They didn't have the concern for the neighbors like they used to, you know. I mean it's just different. It's more

---HELEN: You left your doors unlocked and ---

BARBARA: People looked after one another.

HELEN: One another.

BEULAH: Well that's what I say. They don't have any, they don't care now days usually,

only just ---

BARBARA: Okay Helen you ---

HELEN: Some do, but you know a lot don't. I mean it's still ---

BARBARA: A lot of people don't even know who live on their own block.

HELEN: No.

BEULAH: But you've got to live those times like I have to compare them.

BARBARA: To see the change.

BEULAH: Because you don't have anything to compare with, when you're ---

HELEN: Well yourselves, I mean you girls, why you know; you can see the change in just your length of time.

BARBARA: Well Helen, you say you came back after living in Port-land for six years, and you moved back to Burns. What did Paul do when you returned?

HELEN: Oh, we started in you know, worked together with Dad on the ranch. Of course there was, didn't work out on account of after the war years why it took awhile for all industries and that to kind of get back.

BARBARA: Things were tough.

HELEN: Tough. So he went back to his electrical work. He is an electrician.

BEULAH: The air base up here.

HELEN: Oh no, we went to Seaside, and he worked for a building contractor for five years. And then when the base went in, he got back with civil service.

BARBARA: And do you have any children?

HELEN: Two boys.

BARBARA: And what are their names?

HELEN: Pat and Mike.

BARBARA: Pat and Mike.

HELEN: Pat and Mike.

BEULAH: Sounds Irishmen. (Laughter)

BARBARA: And where do they live?

HELEN: Michael lives in Bend, and Pat in Prineville.

DOROTHEA: Well they live right close to home then.

HELEN: Oh yes.

BEULAH: Not too far.

DOROTHEA: Do they have any children?

HELEN: Pat has two boys, Jacob and Ryan.

DOROTHEA: And Michael doesn't have any?

HELEN: No.

DOROTHEA: Is his name just Mike?

HELEN: No, Michael.

DOROTHEA: Michael.

HELEN: And Patrick.

BARBARA: And what kind of hobbies do you have, Helen? I know you like to play bridge and collect antiques.

BEULAH: Look around the house.

HELEN: Jack-of-all-trades, and master of none. (Laughter) Fishing, hunting, travel, just about everything.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: You do a little bit of camcording; this is video movie taking now. Have you done much of this in this year of 1989, the centennial year for Burns?

HELEN: Oh yeah, I've been helping the Chamber of Commerce with taking centennial programs.

DOROTHEA: And you worked on the centennial quilt.

HELEN: Oh yes.

DOROTHEA: Was that quite a project, or how did you get the design for that blanket?

HELEN: I didn't have anything to do with making the blocks or that, but I did the quilting. Helped with the quilting part.

DOROTHEA: How did they come about getting this pattern? Did one person do it, or did they have several people ---

HELEN: No, there were several that worked on it. The blocks, the quilted blocks, or the pieced blocks I should say, are taken from old quilt patterns. And then the logo in the center is like, that's on the banners that you see here around town.

DOROTHEA: What are they going to do with this blanket? Or I should say a quilt.

HELEN: They are selling chances on it. And then it will be raffled off in December at the last program.

BARBARA: At the closing ceremonies?

HELEN: Ceremony, closing ceremony.

BARBARA: How are they doing with the sales, have you heard?

HELEN: I haven't heard. The 4-H, and I think the Cub Scouts, or Boys Scouts and 4-H are selling tickets. And then they can also be bought I think at Ruthie's, I understand. But I haven't heard recently, but their goal was a thousand dollars.

BARBARA: To get down on tape here, can you tell us the different Clemens families here in the area? You mentioned there were three brothers to start with.

HELEN: The three brothers is Cal, Clay, and my father Glen. And Uncle Cal had a son



Pete, and a daughter Irene. Clay had two boys, Buck and Elton, and a daughter Mardell Cody. And then my father Glen, there was just Del and I.

BARBARA: And what was their reason for coming to Harney County, do you know? Or how did they get here?

HELEN: Well my father came from Luxembourg, Germany.

BEULAH: Grandfather.

HELEN: Grandfather. And my grandmother from down in the valley. That was back in 1879, when my grandfather came to Poison Creek, or Harney County. And then their family was living, was all brought up here in Harney County.

BARBARA: And they all started out as ranchers, did they?

HELEN: Ranchers, that's right.

BARBARA: They homesteaded?

HELEN: Yes, uh huh, on Poison Creek. The Poison Creek, that was all one ranch at one time, where Jack Drinkwater, Thad Geer, Delmer Clemens, and John Clemens live now.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

HELEN: Then it was divided there, among, after he passed away. Or my grandmother passed away, it was divided among the three boys, Glen, Cal and Glen --- Glen, Cal, and Clay. Of course they are all deceased now.

BARBARA: Uh huh. And they were all --- continued in the ranching business too then.

HELEN: Yes, uh huh.

BARBARA: Uh huh. So the family has pretty much been in the ranching, the Clemens family.

HELEN: That's right.

BARBARA: And, can you see some big changes in ranching from the time your

grandparents were, started out until now?

HELEN: Well, you think, there is electricity, and the modern machinery would be one of the main changes. From the horse-driven machinery to your gas and diesel power.

BARBARA: Does it take more land now to make a living than it did then, do you think?

HELEN: Well, not as much really, because of irrigation. A lot of it is still flooded land, but they get, like hay crops or more than one crop where it is irrigated.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

HELEN: Alfalfa, where it used to be all wild meadows, and still are a lot of wild meadows.

DOROTHEA: Well one of the big changes I think is the methods of haying. Today our main reason, or I should say our main way of haying is in bales, either round bales, bread loaves, or square ton bales, half-ton bales, little eighty-pound bales, or whatever.

HELEN: Oh yes, because where one man can cut the hay, and one man can do most all of it there, you might say. Where it takes several men years ago to --- one to cut, one rake, one to stack, and I mean not, more than one to stack, maybe five or six men --- or it would take to put up a stack of hay where one man can practically do the same job.

DOROTHEA: We call that, now we call that wearing different hats. But earlier did the ranchers share during the crops? In other words did you all get at one place and do the haying in one place, and then you would move to the next man's place?

HELEN: Some did, some did.

BEULAH: Just the neighbors usually, just the close neighbors. They didn't move out.

DOROTHEA: Not too far away, just ---

BEULAH: Unless they contracted the hay, you know.

HELEN: And somebody had to do their own, because when they got ready to harvest or

cut, why you know each individual would do his own because they wanted to get it up before it got too ripe. BARBARA: Did you have very many people come in to help during hay time, just maybe hire some ranch hands?

HELEN: Oh yes.

BARBARA: Have to cook for your hired help and that sort of thing in the summer?

HELEN: Oh yes that was, yes that was always --- You know they always had to hire extra men. Generally like --- Dad would have a hired man the year round, just one. But when it come to harvest time, why then they'd have to hire extra help. That's where the Indians ---

BEULAH: Some of the boys come from Tennessee, and back east, some of them did. We had ---

BARBARA: Oh, is that right?

BEULAH: Yes.

HELEN: And generally you always had one man work the year round for you.

BARBARA: Uh huh. And did you help out in the field Helen, or did you help your mother with the cooking and that sort of thing?

HELEN: No, I worked outside.

BARBARA: Uh huh. You continued to be a tomboy then?

HELEN: Tomboy.

DOROTHEA: Beulah, can you tell us something about the meals that you prepared for the hired hands?

BEULAH: Oh my, it's different than it is now days. But we had, of course we had our own meats you know, and our butter and cream and everything. And the tables would just be loaded down with food. And they'd eat real hardy.

HELEN: It was dinner and supper those days, instead of breakfast, lunch and dinner.

BEULAH: Three meals a day then. And they didn't stop for no, what is it now?

DOROTHEA: What time did your day begin?

BEULAH: Oh, five o'clock in the morning.

HELEN: Breakfast at six.

BEULAH: And maybe dinner at twelve o'clock at night. Glen would have to milk the cows. I think between about five in the morning and ten at night, usually.

BARBARA: Did you make bread every day, or every couple days?

BEULAH: Oh, I made bread. But we didn't have any bread in those days like they do now. No, I made the bread and biscuits and ---

HELEN: Always pie and cake, and they fed well.

BEULAH: Always had a dessert.

DOROTHEA: What kind of a meal was breakfast? It wasn't just bacon and eggs and hot cakes like it is today. What kind of a meal did you serve for breakfast?

BEULAH: Well, different people had different ways. But there was always potatoes, fried potatoes and steak and ---

HELEN: Gravy.

BEULAH: --- maybe gravy. And eggs and cookies, you know, things like that.

DOROTHEA: Fruit?

BEULAH: No, it was --- there was jelly. Jam, I used to put up about two hundred quarts of fruit a year.

BARBARA: Oh my.

BEULAH: Oh yes, it would be all gone. But you can't even afford to buy a pear nowadays. The prices were different. I was thinking about the hay, the hay sold for five

and a half a ton. And we made money at five and a half a ton. Nowadays it's what, eighty and ninety dollars a ton? And the machinery cost, those big tractors and things cost fifty thousand maybe.

HELEN: More than that.

DOROTHEA: For one tractor.

BEULAH: Yes. Well it's ---

DOROTHEA: And that's not a very big one.

BEULAH: No.

HELEN: What was it there, when you had quite a crew, and they drank five gallon of iced tea one day, whatever.

BEULAH: I think it was the Indians, I think. We used to put up our own ice too. They'd go to the river, you know, and use that ice. Never killed anybody.

HELEN: There was no pollution in those days.

BEULAH: That ... the Indians we had, they used to, the Indians used to work, some of them. And they were real good help. But you know they got so, you know how they did, they got to drinking and everything. So ---

DOROTHEA: But they were good help. Because I remember my parents had a lot of Indian help.

BEULAH: Oh, they were good. They were sure good.

DOROTHEA: We ate a lot of fish. They loved fish.

BEULAH: Yeah, yeah.

HELEN: They were good workers, but maybe not so good on Monday morning after taking to town on Saturday night.

BEULAH: Well it got to be that way later on when, you know ---You'd go to get them,

leave them Saturday night and go to get them, and they'd be maybe still drunk on Sunday. Well, it's a great life. We never ---

HELEN: Didn't weaken.

BEULAH: No.

DOROTHEA: You mentioned Helen that you milked cows. How many cows did you milk?

HELEN: Oh, from eight to twelve head.

DOROTHEA: You did this all by hand?

HELEN: That's right.

DOROTHEA: And then what did you do with the milk?

HELEN: They brought it in, the milk was, they would separate it and sell the cream.

BEULAH: Shipped the cream to Caldwell, wasn't it? Shipped the cream.

HELEN: Bring the cream in, and sell the cream. It was separated, and the milk was fed to the hogs, chickens.

DOROTHEA: Did you raise a garden?

HELEN: Not too much garden, no. It was time consuming. They had gardens, but not too large a garden.

BARBARA: Just to eat out of, not to put up?

HELEN: No, no, not to ---

BARBARA: Can.

HELEN: Corn, we had corn and potatoes. But not, they never put up --- We'd go to Boise in, a lot of times in the fall of the year and can corn and fruit. When the cannery, when they got to doing that ---

BEULAH: They changed too, the prices got higher, and they charged more for the cans,

and got so after while that you couldn't --- But people in the war days, you know, why we went --- Mrs. Doc Smith, the doctor's wife used to go over there with it, and we'd go to the cannery and we'd just can them big cans, just like they would the commercial, you know.

They had those, and gee we just

---

HELEN: We'd eat the canned meat, it was ---

BEULAH: ... Quite a savings.

HELEN: Big soup.

BARBARA: Did you have a root cellar to store your potatoes in and things?

HELEN: We had the basement. Well the first house there, the folks' first house burnt when I was five years old.

BEULAH: Cellar in the hill, but we never did store potatoes or anything in it.

HELEN: The new house had a basement. The house that's standing now had a basement. Stored their apples and potatoes, and things like that downstairs where they wouldn't freeze.

BARBARA: Well, have you enjoyed living in Harney County?

BEULAH: Oh sure, I wouldn't live anyplace else. And I've been all over the --- North America, been everyplace. But I always come back here. Yes.

BARBARA: You've traveled around a lot too Helen. Do you still like Harney County too?

HELEN: Well I like it more than I used to. (Laughter)

BEULAH: Yeah, a lot of people that left that is coming back though, a lot of them.

HELEN: Been in all states but three, which is North and South Carolina, and North Dakota.

BEULAH: We've been to Fairbanks, Alaska. We went up there to that centennial on the

Alcan Highway.

HELEN: Then I've been from coast to coast in Canada, clear to Quebec, Victoria, to Quebec. All the northern part of Mexico.

BEULAH: I've been to Mexico City, Acapulco, everywhere.

HELEN: Clear --- Chesapeake ---

BEULAH: Like that song, I've been everywhere.

HELEN: Key West to the Fairbanks, Alaska. The longer you live here, you know, the more you want to enjoy it, to be out of the city.

BEULAH: One of the pioneers, I forget who it was here awhile back, was coming back to Burns. And they said the closer they got to Burns, the faster the car went.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: Yeah, I think the climate is a little better than it used to be. You don't have the cold winters like they used to.

BARBARA: As a child, do you remember the winters being really cold and lots of snow and wind?

HELEN: Well Mother sent me to school when it was cold.

BARBARA: Fifty below?

BEULAH: She was bundled up good.

BARBARA: Probably couldn't move, huh?

BEULAH: She never thought anything --- we never ---

DOROTHEA: Wear those long old gorgeous socks that we always, we always get back to talking about those brown socks. (Laughter) Everybody loved them I'm sure.

HELEN: High topped shoes.

BEULAH: I know when I went to school here you know, too, I went to the --- two years in



high school and then I got married. But anyway, my mother in the early days, she would put them long underwear; we had to wear them long underwear. And just as soon as I got out of sight I'd drag them up so that bump wouldn't show, you know. They folded it over, get behind something and just take and pull them up so they wouldn't ---

HELEN: And then you made me wear them, huh? (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: She learned it kept her warm.

BEULAH: Oh dear. They had an old horse they drove to school. One time he'd balk, he got tired of going you know. He'd just balk, and they got out and put rocks in their lunch cans and buckets and rattled them, you know, to get that. And finally he'd just stop, he wouldn't go.

HELEN: He would come home all right, but he wouldn't go to school. That was a little shetland pony.

BEULAH: Those Hebner kids, you know, you know where they live Dorothy? And they drove a buggy, they was three of them. Which one was kind of, she was ---

DOROTHEA: I can't remember. (Laughter)

BEULAH: ... that doggone horse would go down in the barrow pit, and up on the road, and down in the barrow pit, and then up on the road. Oh I tell you, Barton, it was Barton that was, yeah he ---

DOROTHEA: I think there was Barton, and Steve, and Pete, and how many Hebners, Alice?

BEULAH: Yeah, yeah. Well the girl too, the girl you know, there was a girl.

DOROTHEA: I think her name was Alice.

BEULAH: Yeah, Alice. (Laughter) Oh dear. ... (Unrelated conversation)

HELEN: When we first got my tape recorder, oh about --- you know my recorder, and ---

see our house was, when we moved back here we built the house. You know, we stayed near where the folks was. And so Mom came over one day they had the radio on and this Chinaman gave, you know, recipes and that. And I don't know, she said get him because he was comical. And it made me think of it, because I turned my tape recorder on, she wanted me to tape it, you know. And we got to laughing, and we couldn't turn the thing off. And then I erased it. I wished we'd kept it, because we was laughing so hard.

BEULAH: We got laughing at one another, we just kind of got hysterical, you know.

HELEN: And I couldn't get to the tape recorder, because ---

BEULAH: And she went and erased it, you know. That would have been good now.

HELEN: I wish now I'd have kept it. Yeah, because what made me think of it, we was laughing so. ... (Unrelated conversation) BEULAH: It's like that centennial book, you know, we --- I didn't know they was going to put it in that centennial book, and it was about Glen. He was operated on for appendicitis you know, and that. Right north of the courthouse was that, that's all they had was that building there. And it's still there. And he was telling about it. And it's comical to read.

HELEN: She remembered it because it wasn't recent; I mean it was several years ago.

BEULAH: They were telling about the early days of the hospital, what they done, you know.

HELEN: But Pauline remembered it.

BEULAH: And I think three days after Glen was operated on, a while after some of them, they had to go clean up the bedpans. The things they used, they was still there you know, in that room. Oh my, and Glen was telling about it. He said --- I didn't think they were going to put that in. I didn't know. And he said, "Yes", and he said, "I damned near died." And that was --- and then us kids, I can remember when they would take anybody

and they had, and they operated on them, and then they would take these stretchers and they'd take them down to their homes. They'd operate and then take, and we kids would be playing out there, you know, and by golly we'd run clear around the block, you know. We was scared to death to see them coming down the street with a man, carrying them you know. Of course kids in those days didn't, I guess you just didn't realize that. Thought it was death or something, I don't know.

HELEN: Well they used to, they never had a mortuary here you know, never had a mortuary.

BEULAH: Oh no.

HELEN: A body, they would you know, keep it in home or wherever.

BEULAH: Well up there where the Bontemps, or up there where the One Stop is, they had a furniture store. And they'd take the bodies back in there, you know, among the crates and all that stuff, and take care of them, Clevenger did. Yeah.

HELEN: And they'd always sit with them too. Sit with them until after they were ---

BEULAH: Oh yeah, in those days I can remember ---

BARBARA: A wake.

BEULAH: Well they sat with the dead till, you know, just sat with them, that's all.

DOROTHEA: I can remember talking to somebody, and he was just a little boy. And he'd go back and sit in the back rooms, and he said he would play with the toes on the dead people. (Laughter) That's what he did, because his folks was sitting with these people. And he'd play with these people's toes.

BEULAH: Well you remember Buck would tell, Helen don't you, that time that he went with ... This Clevenger had a boy too about Buck's age. And they went through there, Buck was always scared too. But anyway he was going through, and in the dark, and

they had a corpse there, and he just pretty near put his hand right in his mouth.

HELEN: They were feeling their way through. But Bessie, up there to Harney, this little fellow had long whiskers, and you know, it was before the funeral, the night before. And she was curious, she was a little tiny thing, and she was curious, you know. And she looked in on him, and walked over there and stroked his whiskers. (Laughter)

BEULAH: Oh.

HELEN: She told about that, about stroking his whiskers.

DOROTHEA: Well this has been quite a visit. This is going to be a --- going to be a tape to remember.

HELEN: Oh, I guess.

DOROTHEA: We've enjoyed it, and we have had a good laugh, and a good story or two told.

... (Unrelated conversation)

DOROTHEA: So we would like to thank you. And then we will get busy and visit a little bit more here, and take a few pictures, and see some of your videos.

(END OF TAPE)

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