

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #268 - Sides A & B

Subject: Bertha Carey

Place: Burns Nursing Home, Burns, Oregon

Date: 1981

Interviewer: Marcus Haines

MARCUS HAINES: You were fourteen when you came to Harney County?

BERTHA CAREY: Yes.

MARCUS: And Charlie and Alvin Spurlock were your uncles?

BERTHA: My father's brothers.

MARCUS: Yes, uh huh. Then you were married to John Carey?

BERTHA: Yes. In 1906.

MARCUS: In 1906. That was the year before I was born.

BERTHA: Oh, was it?

MARCUS: I was born in 1907. Do you remember when you were down there on Crane Creek? Charlie Chapman and I used to stay all night with you folks when we were moving cattle back out to Star Mountain in the early '30's.

BERTHA: Yes, I remember.

MARCUS: Yeah. That's been a couple days ago hasn't it?

BERTHA: Yeah, it wasn't yesterday.

MARCUS: No, it sure wasn't. Yeah, that's quite awhile.

BERTHA: When I come to this country I, my --- Alvin Spurlock, my uncle, and Mrs. Luce my aunt, come with a team to Prineville and brought me over here. There was no such a --- on a old gravel road. There was no such a thing as a, any other way of getting here

then.

MARCUS: No, that's sure right. This ---

BERTHA: That was in 1898 that I came here.

MARCUS: Oh, uh huh. And you came with your parents?

BERTHA: No, not my parents. My parents never lived here.

MARCUS: They never did ---

BERTHA: They were both dead when I come here.

MARCUS: Oh, uh huh.

BERTHA: My father died when I was nine months old. My mother died when I was fourteen years old. That's why I come, why I come here. MARCUS: Uh huh. How, what was your route in here Bertha, how did you come in?

BERTHA: Huh?

MARCUS: How did you come into Harney County, in what way?

BERTHA: Well, lived on Willow Creek, that's thirteen miles north of Prineville, you know.

MONA FITCHETT: Just this side of Prineville.

BERTHA: Came through that way by team. And come up through Prineville, and come up what is it --- I don't know whether it is Crooked River or Ochoco, now which?

MONA: Crooked River.

BERTHA: Crooked River.

MONA: Uh huh.

BERTHA: Come up that, and we was, let's see we was two, nearly three days coming from Willow Creek to Lawen where my uncles lived. MARCUS: Yeah, I bet you were three days.

BERTHA: Of course not, wasn't on the road all that time. But I know one night we stayed

all night at, up someplace on the Crooked River. I don't know just where it was. And the next night we stayed over here on Silver Creek. And the next night then we was at Lawen.

MARCUS: Well, you were moving ---

MONA: Long hours.

MARCUS: Moving right along.

BERTHA: Huh?

MONA: Just putting in long hours. Well they had a buggy see.

BERTHA: Oh, it wasn't a buggy; it was just a little old light wagon, hack. They called them hacks then. And my aunt, and Mrs. Luce was my aunt, my father's sister. She and Uncle Alvin are the ones that went after me, and brought me over here. I was just a kid.

MARCUS: Well where did you stay at Lawen then? You went to the uncles homes there, to Alvin's and ---

BERTHA: Well the Luce's, my aunt and her family, they were staying there putting up hay at that time, working for my uncles is what they was doing. And I stayed there until later on. They had a home down on the South Fork of the Malheur. And, or my uncles had. They didn't have a home of their own, but my uncles had a home down ---

MARCUS: Yeah, near the Visher, I know where they're ---

BERTHA: Huh?

MARCUS: Near the Visher there, they lived near McEwen's.

BERTHA: Yes, across the river.

MARCUS: Yes. Yeah, uh huh.

BERTHA: Yeah, well they didn't live there at that time. They lived down on what they called Granite Creek, down toward; they owned land down there. Down toward

Riverside.

MARCUS: Yes.

BERTHA: And there's where we went from Lawen. And I stayed there. And then in the fall, or in the wintertime they always moved out to Lawen. And what little schooling I got, wasn't much, I don't want you to put that on there and make me appear more ignorant than I am. (Laughter) And I --- what little schooling I went to, why I went to Lawen. Then in the spring as soon as break-up why they moved the stock back to down on the South Fork, you know, and turned them loose there in the hills.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

BERTHA: And I stayed there during the summer again. And that's the way --- and I was, I kept house for my uncles for two years before I was married. The rest of the first part of my life I stayed with the Luce family, my aunt. And then the two years before I was married I kept house for my two bachelor uncles. I was living there with them when I was married and left there. Come back then. Of course Carey's had, they had property over here at Lawen, below Lawen. And they had property down on the lake. Of course then after that, about 1909 we, my husband bought the Billy Cecil place up on the South Fork of the --- or not the South Fork, up on Little Crane Creek. And we lived up there for over twenty years.

MARCUS: What place was that again that you ---

BERTHA: Huh?

MARCUS: What place was it that you moved to when you got married?

BERTHA: Well I lived there on Crane Creek. At that time my two, my husband and his brother Clarence bought the old folks out, their parents, you know. That's the place that Luke --- that Carey's come here in, before I was born, and settled there on Crane Creek.

Well then afterwards their folks, their father died and they bought their mother out. And we, they were, worked together, Clarence and John did. And we lived there for a few years. I don't know, three or four years. And then we bought that place up on Little Crane, my husband did.

MONA: Who owned that place before you bought it?

BERTHA: What place?

MONA: The little one up on the hill there.

BERTHA: Up on Little Crane?

MONA: Yeah.

BERTHA: Billy Cecil.

MARCUS: Billy Cecil.

MONA: Cecil.

MARCUS: Thissell?

BERTHA: Cecil.

MARCUS: Cecil.

BERTHA: Uh huh.

MARCUS: Was he a relative of Pat's?

BERTHA: Yeah, a cousin.

MARCUS: A cousin of Pat's. Uh huh. Never heard the name before, have you?

MONA: Huh uh.

MARCUS: No, I haven't.

MONA: I knew they lived up there for a while.

MARCUS: Now which place is that Mona?

BERTHA: We lived there on that place for twenty years.

MONA: Well that's the one ... lower end of Frank's place.

BERTHA: And then of course then the depression came on.

MARCUS: Between it and the McClure place was it?

MONA: Huh?

MARCUS: Between there and the McClure place was it?

MONA: No this was over the hill from --- no I'm wrong, it wasn't, it was the Hunter place.

MARCUS: Oh, the Hunter place.

MONA: Uh huh, down the lower end of the Hunter place.

MARCUS: Oh, uh huh. Yeah. Well when did you move down to what we used to call the Johnson place there, near Nellie --- or Elsie Hills, Elsie Bennett's?

BERTHA: Oh, I don't know what year it was.

MONA: Did you ever live on that place?

BERTHA: Yes, and that's what they called the, you know, Stauffer's owned that at one time. Stauffer's owned all that Circle Bar and the whole outfit.

MONA: No this is down the lower end of the old Carey place, where the grove went through. Did you ever live there?

BERTHA: Yes, we lived there. Well that was, I guess during the, after the depression hit. And we lived there one summer. And Johnson's lived, Lloyd Johnson owned it then. You'll have the worst meddled up mess.

MARCUS: No, no.

BERTHA: You'll have the worst meddled up mess ---

MONA: Well no, this is good, this is what we want.

MARCUS: No, this is real good.

BERTHA: Meddled up mess you ever saw.

MARCUS: No, no, you just continue right on.

BERTHA: We lived there, we was living there when Chester was married.

MARCUS: Yes.

BERTHA: And then after that why we went up here and bought this little three acres just above Lawen, or above Burns.

MARCUS: Which place would that be Mona?

MONA: I didn't know what place it was they bought up here.

MARCUS: Near town?

BERTHA: We was living there when ---

MONA: It was near ...

MARCUS: Oh, right here in town.

MONA: ... it was up on the ...

MARCUS: Yeah, I stayed all night with you down at the Johnson place about the time that Chester got married. You remember he and his wife, I think, come there about the day or the day before, that we stayed all night with you.

BERTHA: Yeah.

MARCUS: Charlie Chapman and I.

BERTHA: Yes, I remember you staying there.

MARCUS: Yeah. Well when did John pass away?

BERTHA: 19 --- isn't that awful. Well what year was the war, did they ---

MONA: Second World War over?

BERTHA: Second War, when did it close?

MARCUS: Yeah, about '45 or '46.

BERTHA: Well it was '26.

MONA: No.

MARCUS: '46.

BERTHA: When John passed away, and Chester too. They both died just four months apart.

MARCUS: Chester was pretty badly injured in the war, wasn't he?

BERTHA: Broke all to pieces.

MARCUS: Yeah, I remember. He was lucky to even get home, I guess. BERTHA: Guadalcanal.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Well you kept house for Earl Sitz for many years.

BERTHA: Yes, I kept --- I don't remember just --- after my husband died, and my son died, why I lived, I come here to Burns and lived in the --- well Hudkin's, you know in Mrs. Hudkin's ---

MONA: Well that's about where you got kicked out of, too young lady.

BERTHA: Well you was the cause of it.

MARCUS: We'll have to hear about that.

BERTHA: I hope they don't put that in there.

MONA: Well it's kind of funny. It's still funny to me.

BERTHA: Well I lived there a couple of years, and then after --- well just before Chester passed away, why he helped move me. Let's see, am I getting all, my brain is working this way.

MONA: Well we got to tell him about you, about getting kicked out anyway. While you was down there at Hudkin's. I met her up on the street ---

BERTHA: You put that in there; I'll choke you to death.

MONA: Well anyway it was funny. Mrs. Hudkin's didn't know Bertha very well. So I met

Bertha up on the street and she wanted me to come down and stay all night with her. So I said, "Okay." I was staying out here in a little cabin by myself. And I said, "Sure." So I went down and stayed all night with her. And of course I was dressed like a man, I always wore a man's hat. So this lady saw me go in. And boy --- she knew I stayed all night with her. So the next morning she was over there bright and early to kick Bertha out of those cabins. Because she didn't take on with any hanky panky around there. (Laughter) So when she come in, Bertha introduced her to Mrs. Fitchett. You never saw such a funny look on anybody's face as there was on hers.

MARCUS: Yeah, that would kind of bring you up standing, wouldn't it? How about that.

MONA: But I thought it was funny, and I still think it's funny.

MARCUS: Well sure, sure. (Laughter)

BERTHA: She has to tell that to everybody she sees.

MARCUS: Well it's a good ---

BERTHA: And it wasn't bad either.

MARCUS: It's a good story. You bet.

MONA: Well it wasn't bad; there was nothing bad about it.

MARCUS: No, not at all, not at all.

MONA: Well you stayed there ---

BERTHA: I was there two years in that apartment.

MONA: Yeah, uh huh. And that was about a year or so after that that you went to work for Earl.

BERTHA: Mrs. Hudkin's was one of the best friends I ever had.

MONA: Yeah she was after she found out that you was pretty straight lady.

BERTHA: And then I went from there, and went to work for Earl Sitz. And I don't

remember just what year it was. But I worked for ---

MONA: About '48 or '49 somewhere along there, wasn't it Bertha? Because you'd gone to ---

BERTHA: Well I just don't remember.

MONA: You'd been working for Earl quite awhile when I ---

BERTHA: I worked for Earl a long time.

MONA: When I cooked out there.

BERTHA: And I worked for Earl, I was working for Earl when he died.

MONA: Yeah.

MARCUS: Yeah.

BERTHA: But keeping house for him there and in Burns, you know. Oh, I don't know, I get --- You know in my mind it's all clear, but you know you start in to tell something.

MONA: Then you get a little ahead of yourself and ---

BERTHA: And just like, it's fuzzy, that's all. Too many years behind me. Can't think like I used to.

MONA: I think you do remarkably well.

MARCUS: Boy, I say she does. You bet.

BERTHA: And then of course that was, I never worked for Earl of course until after my husband and son passed away, and we sold the little place up on the river. Sold that just before my husband died.

MARCUS: She must have some stories she can tell us about the experiences she's had.

MONA: She would if she could just think of them.

MARCUS: Yeah, can you remind her of any of them. I think she hears you far better than me.

MONA: You have to just talk real loud to her.

MARCUS: Yeah, but she seems to get you pretty good.

BERTHA: Well I guess that was after the, where we lived down there on the, what we always called the, used to call it the stone house. Of course that's where Stauffer's owned. Where Elsie Hill lived, you know.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

BERTHA: They called that the stone house for a long time.

MARCUS: Oh.

BERTHA: And they --- we were living there after, of course that was before John passed away. But we were living there when --- well after the depression hit. It hit along about that time.

MONA: In '33.

BERTHA: In '33. Well that was the year Chester was married.

MONA: Uh huh. Well you lived there in Crane for a long, long time.

BERTHA: Well we ---

MONA: That's where I got acquainted with you, when I went to high school there.

BERTHA: Well we were on a home there in Crane, and that's where we bought that, to send Chester to school.

MONA: Uh huh, yeah.

BERTHA: But then --- oh, I don't know if --- and they sold the property over here at Lawen, and this, down on the lake. They had property down there, Carey's did.

MARCUS: Was there four brothers of the Carey's? There was Jake and ---

BERTHA: Huh?

MARCUS: There was four brothers in the Carey family?

BERTHA: No, two.

MARCUS: I knew a Jake and a Harry.

BERTHA: No, Harry was a cousin.

MARCUS: A cousin, okay. And then you mention a Clarence.

BERTHA: John and Clarence were brothers.

MARCUS: They were brothers. Well where did Jake fit in?

BERTHA: Well Jake was a nickname for Clarence.

MARCUS: Oh, it was. Oh, I see. I never heard that before.

BERTHA: That's where the third name come in.

MARCUS: Yeah, yeah. That's what had me. I'd never heard Clarence, Clarence Carey.

MONA: We always called him Jake.

MARCUS: Yeah.

BERTHA: Well John and Clarence, when they owned the home place, where their father and mother settled when they come to Oregon in 18 --- let's see, 18 --- I forgot what year I was born. It was the year before --- the year before I was born. 18 --- isn't that something.

MONA: Well it just slipped your mind, you'll think of it.

BERTHA: Well I don't know, I just went down to see Ruth and I got, she's all confused.

MONA: Well you kind of got ---

BERTHA: And I got shook up too.

MONA: Yeah, you kind of got shook up.

BERTHA: And I got shook up too.

MONA: Yeah, you did.

BERTHA: I don't know whether I can think of any --- but all that silly stuff. I wouldn't want

that --- the way I've said that. I'd hate to have that put in print. I'd want to murder somebody. MONA: You would, huh?

BERTHA: You'll put that in print.

MONA: I'm not going to put any of this in print.

BERTHA: Well you better not if you want to be a friend to me. MONA: Well if I do, I won't tell you. (Laughter)

BERTHA: Well, I don't know. But you know when I come to Harney County, I was going to say we come up that --- and come over Buck Mountain. I'm going backwards now. Come up over Buck Mountain to Silver Creek. That was the route we come. We didn't come through Bend at that time, when I come to the country.

MARCUS: No.

MONA: There wasn't any Bend there, was there, when you come to the country?

BERTHA: Oh, it was --- no. Used to be a ferryboat, they called it Farewell Bend, is what they called it, Farewell Bend.

MARCUS: It was, huh?

BERTHA: That's what they used to call it. When I was a child they never called it Bend, it was Farewell Bend. The bend in the river they said. And there was no, just a few houses around. But we didn't come that way. But we come up over Buck Mountain, and through Silvies Valley --- not Silvies Valley, to Silver Creek.

MARCUS: Yeah, Silver Creek.

BERTHA: And out that way. And --- into Burns. And then to Lawen. MARCUS: Well you've seen a great change in the country during your lifetime.

BERTHA: Well, I'll say.

MARCUS: Yes, you have.

BERTHA: Well you used to have to, no way to go only with a team and a wagon, or a team and rig of some kind. We didn't even have any buggies in the country then, when I come to the country. I think my husband bought the first public buggy that went into, so far as I know, went into Lawen. That was, of course that was before we was married. But I always told him all the girls in the country rode in that buggy before I did. (Laughter)

MONA: Well you don't want to be jealous of them.

BERTHA: They're all dead and gone. (Laughter)

MARCUS: You don't have to worry about them now for sure.

BERTHA: They don't worry me. Well I don't know of anything else to --- But we, when Chester was born we lived up on Little Crane Creek. Of course he was born here in Burns. But we was living on Little Crane Creek when he was born. That was in 1910. I don't remember, that was 1909 I think we, I know we went to the World's Fair in Seattle. And after we come back we bought that place up there, and moved there. In 1910 Chester was born. And then after which we bought that house down at Crane. It afterwards burned down.

MARCUS: Yeah, Crane was nearly all burned down, hadn't it?

BERTHA: The whole thing.

MONA: Moved out or burned down.

BERTHA: No way to fight fire.

MARCUS: No.

BERTHA: That was --- that was after Chester was, quit going to school. And we was, oh we just had that place there. We rented it part of the time to Mac Thompson and Ilda. They lived there awhile in that house. But I don't know, there was nobody living there when it burned down.

MONA: ...

BERTHA: We lost everything we had in it. We had beds and ---

MONA: Everything.

BERTHA: Everything. All our dishes and stoves and --- lost everything we had right there in that ---

MONA: Where did you live when John run that garbage service around here?

BERTHA: Just up the river here in that little three-acre place.

MONA: Oh, up the river. Uh huh. Yeah. That was in '42 when he run that here.

BERTHA: No, that was ---

MONA: When he hauled our garbage and we was living up here, driving stage to Ontario.

BERTHA: Well he bought that after we --- well we lost the place, that's all, just as well say it, because we did. Up on the --- and so we wanted to, and it's when his health failed and Dr. Smith told him he'd have to, he couldn't run his cattle, he couldn't do anything like that anymore. He said, "You'll go out in the hills some day and you'll never come back." So we sold the cattle, and then didn't have anything like that. So we went up there and bought that little three acres. And he cursed that place as long as he lived there. And we afterwards sold it to Dickerson; Ashley Dickerson's father-in-law bought it first. And then after that why Ashley Dickerson bought it from his father-in-law. He run it several years.

MARCUS: Well we used to have some pretty severe winters here, Mrs. Carey.

BERTHA: Oh, winters. They don't have winters here anymore. It amuses me that they, hear these young people, "Oh my, we had such a hard winter." And the snow fell two or three inches. I said, "You don't know what snow is," and they don't.

MONA: That's true.

MARCUS: ...

BERTHA: They don't know what water is either.

MARCUS: No.

BERTHA: They think this is a desert, and the whole country, and it will dry up and blow away. It pretty near does in the summer I guess now. But you know when I come to this country in the spring of the year water was all over the whole country. People had to move out all over those lower places. They had to move out of there because it was, just mud and this water was so deep, and stay out. That's why so many people had homes in the hills, you know, and around. And then the snow used to drift over the rim rocks, and you could almost ... well, they could have, I guess. Drove a, teams probably over, it was froze so hard in a lot of places, the snow was, you know, and so deep.

MONA: Wasn't anything for the temperature to drop down around fifty below zero, forty-five, thirty-five, twenty-five.

BERTHA: Oh, no. I've seen it here forty below zero for one solid month. There never was a day that it wasn't forty below. I tell you, that was a winter.

MONA: Those were the good old days.

BERTHA: Winter with whiskers, I'm telling you.

MARCUS: You bet. They had whiskers.

BERTHA: And I went there --- and you know we didn't have electricity; we didn't have any electric lights. We had coal oil lamps, and had just wood stoves, and so many of the shacks in the country. I'll bet if your mother was alive, some of it, of course the early part of it she went through.

MARCUS: Yeah, she came here in 1896.

BERTHA: Oh well she ---

MARCUS: Uh huh. Yeah these old shacks that you lived in you could throw a cat out

through the cracks most of the time, you know.

BERTHA: And you'd catch hold of a doorknob, and if your hand was wet, the hand would just stay there.

MARCUS: You'd stay right there, didn't you.

BERTHA: It stayed there.

MARCUS: And the frost would come out on the heads of the nails about like that.

BERTHA: Yeah sure, I've seen it many a time.

MARCUS: You bet. I think we're all talking about the same vintage here.

BERTHA: What little schooling we got, we lived there on my uncle's place. Well they had land down below Lawen. And then they, if you remember where there once was a great big barn, and it's just below where the Sitz place is, you know. I don't remember what place that was. But there was a great big old barn there, stood there for years after my uncle's bought it. And we used to, there was a house there of course, but we used to walk from there down to the edge, down where the schoolhouse used to be. Of course they moved it after I quit going to school there.

MARCUS: Well there used to be a schoolhouse over just west of Rhu's along the river. Was that where you went?

BERTHA: No. No that's what they called the Otley School, wasn't it? Or the ---

MARCUS: No, there is another school to the, on out to the east there, east of Otleys I think, that they called the Otley Schools. BERTHA: Well.

MARCUS: You were, the Spurlock place as I recall was about half way between there.

BERTHA: Well I never went to school at, down there, when it was down the river, down below. Well I used to know the names of all the people that used to --- and you know, I guess it's on record once, those names. But I don't --- of course my uncles bought a lot of

land. They had land all over the country. I think they had about as much land as anybody around the country at one time. Down here and on South Fork, and they bought the Daneen place down, the Daneen place was the one just across from the Visher. They bought that, Chris Daneen.

MONA: That's where Harry Carey used to live. They called it Daneen Siding ...

BERTHA: And then they bought the Granaford place. And then they had land where they didn't have any house, just the land, you know, all over the country.

MARCUS: Neither one of them were ever married were they, Bertha?

BERTHA: No, they were old bachelors.

MARCUS: Yeah. Yeah, I remember them real well. We used to see them quite often when they were moving out to Star Mountain there with Charlie Chapman. And they had a, their place was right on the county line there, you know. About half of it in Harney County, and the rest in Malheur there.

BERTHA: Yeah. Well they had land; they had land right on the line.

MARCUS: Yeah.

BERTHA: In both counties. No, they never married. Just two typical bachelors.

MARCUS: Clarence Luce, was he, he was a relative of yours?

BERTHA: Well he was, this aunt, Mrs. Luce I told you that I lived with a family, you know, when I first come to Harney County. He was their oldest child, the boy. And then there were two girls in the family. Three children in the Luce family. Of course everyone of them dead, there is not a living one of them.

MARCUS: No, no.

MONA: Bertha, wasn't Mrs. Luce a Spurlock?

BERTHA: Yes, and Mrs. Vanderhoof, you know George Vanderhoof?

MARCUS: Yes.

BERTHA: Well George Vanderhoof's mother was my aunt.

MARCUS: Oh.

BERTHA: And she was a, Alice Spurlock. And she was a twin sister to Uncle Alvin. Alvin and Alice were twins.

MARCUS: Well.

BERTHA: And they were the last of their family. There was only thirteen children in that -
--

MARCUS: Sounds like enough.

BERTHA: And you know there was --- they all died with scarlet fever in the early days, all but --- there was four that come to Harney County. And, well my own father he died at Prineville after, he come to Prineville for his health, and he died there. And of course my mother never went back to the valley to live. She went back for a while, but she didn't stay there. And she died there in Prineville too. They are both buried at Prineville. But Clarence Luce, his two sisters, his father and his mother, and they're all dead. And Alvin and Charlie Spurlock are dead, and I'm just a lone wolf.

MARCUS: By golly ---

BERTHA: I don't know what I'm here for, but then I'm here.

MARCUS: You've been a little too rugged for them, that's what's the reason. You've outlived them.

BERTHA: Too ornery to die I guess. Don't know what else. Seems like I --- my health I think is better than it was --- ten years ago I had awful poor health, for awhile. But I snapped out of it. MONA: Well next Sunday she celebrates her birthday, a week from

MARCUS: How old will she be?

MONA: Ninety-seven.

MARCUS: Ninety-seven.

MONA: I was just telling him you was going to celebrate your ninety-seventh birthday a week from this Sunday.

BERTHA: Too many birthdays.

MARCUS: By golly we'll have to come up and do something about that.

MONA: Well Lela Sitz is going to furnish the cake and ice cream.

MARCUS: Is she? By golly we'll have to come up.

BERTHA: Mrs. Anderson called me yesterday, and she said, "Now there is two things I have laid out for you," she says, "you're either coming to our house for dinner the day of your birthday, or coming over there for ice cream and cake," she said.

MONA: Well Lela was going to get a hold of her.

BERTHA: And I said well Lela was here first.

MONA: Lela was going to get a hold of Mrs. Anderson.

BERTHA: So Lela said she wanted me over to her house for ice cream and cake. I don't know, they give me so much ice cream here; I'm almost filled up on ice cream.

MONA: Well we'll warm it up and let you drink it over there then. Okay.

BERTHA: Better I guess.

MARCUS: You're too popular, Bertha, that's the trouble.

BERTHA: And I just, they have it for dessert here so much of the time. I don't --- filled up on it. I don't like it in cold weather anyway. But, then they told me here that they was going to have something, I don't know what.

MONA: Oh, they'll probably have cake.

BERTHA: Last year they made a great big cake, and wrote my name on it here. And they had ice cream to go with it. Had just the bunch around in here to come. So, I don't know. They're making too much of a fuss over my old birthdays. They come too often.

MONA: Well ours don't come often enough, so we have to celebrate yours. (Laughter)

BERTHA: Yours will get here if you keep a living. You'll just have as many birthdays as I've had.

MONA: Well the doctor told me here the other day that I was going to live until I was over ninety. So I'll just run you a good race. (Laughter)

BERTHA: You might do it too. If they'd have told me that I'd have said you're crazy. I'm not going to do anything of the kind.

MONA: I don't say anybody's crazy anymore.

BERTHA: Well I don't either now. I used to say that, but I don't anymore. Well I don't know. What in the name of sense have you got, did you write that stuff down?

MONA: No, he's taking it on a tape.

BERTHA: Well, is it down? What in the name of sense, how are you going to word that?

MONA: Just like you worded it.

MARCUS: Just like you did.

BERTHA: You better not. If you do, you're not my friend.

MARCUS: (Laughter) Yeah, we got to record Harney County history. We're going to get Mona here one of these days. She's going to tell her story too.

MONA: Well I'll tell you a good one, Marcus.

MARCUS: Yeah, I know you will.

BERTHA: She'll make it sound; she made mine sound just as bad as she could. She'll make hers sound nice. You let me go with her and I'll fill you in. I'll give you a few

pointers.

MARCUS: You'll help out too. Yeah, you bet.

MONA: That's a date now, don't you forget it. Don't you forget it young lady.

MARCUS: Yeah, we've got to come up here; we'll come up here and do that. How about that?

MONA: Every year, for the last seven years, she's told me that I kept making a date with her for Pioneer's Day. And she'd say, "Well, if I'm here." So last year she started that again, and I said, "Listen, you sound a little like a broken record." I said, "I don't want to hear that anymore."

BERTHA: When you're old enough to die, you're liable to go any time, and just keep right --- I don't know what I'm living for. I did hope I'd never have to come to a place like this. Although it isn't a bad place. But I've been treated nice. I can't complain about my treatment or anything of that kind. But just the thoughts.

MONA: That's the big problem, just the thoughts.

BERTHA: I never ---

MARCUS: How long has she been here?

MONA: Huh?

MARCUS: How long has she been here?

MONA: How long you been here, Bertha, two years?

BERTHA: This place? Two years.

MARCUS: Two years.

MONA: Two years last January.

BERTHA: Two years the 11th of January since I moved here, after I broke my hip.

MARCUS: Uh huh, uh huh. Well you kind of kept track of her out there at, where you

live.

BERTHA: What?

MARCUS: Mona kind of rode herd on you for quite awhile before you came here, didn't she?

MONA: When you was living out at Saginaw.

MARCUS: When you were out at Saginaw. Didn't Mona ---

BERTHA: Oh, she used to come in and boss me around. Try to. No, I'll tell you Mrs. Anderson was the one that took care of every-thing for me for, you know.

MONA: Her business.

BERTHA: Down there, all my business and everything. Of course now I don't have anything.

MONA: All I was, was just a pest wasn't I Bertha, out there?

BERTHA: Oh well, I don't know what I would have done without these pests. Well I consider I, I had a lot of good friends in this county.

MARCUS: You bet. You certainly have. You know when you've got friends, you've earned them too, you know. A person with a lot of friends is a pretty good person too. You have to kind of think of that.

BERTHA: Well, there is one way to look at it. If you want a friend, you've got to be one.

MARCUS: Right, you bet.

BERTHA: Of course I never done anything to help anybody much that I ever knew of. And still ---

MONA: Nobody ever went away from your house hungry.

BERTHA: No.

MONA: Well, then what did you do?

BERTHA: Well --- and I'll tell you I have waited on a many a sick person too.

MONA: Yeah, uh huh.

BERTHA: I was just thinking the other day; there is two people, two old people that I helped to lay out after they had died. That's old man Hunter out there is one. And Mrs. Catterson, the old Grandma Catterson down here at Lawen, when they died. Of course I, you know --- and then when Jim Green's wife, she was a nurse, you know. And I don't know, when I lived there in Lawen I used, or I mean --- Hines.

MONA: You mean Crane, you mean Crane. When you lived at Crane.

BERTHA: Huh?

MONA: When you lived at Crane.

BERTHA: Crane.

MONA: Yeah.

BERTHA: And I used to go, and she was sick, you know, once or twice, and I'd go and do what I could. And I never done anything, and never charged anybody a nickel for anything I ever done for them in my life.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

BERTHA: I don't, I always was brought up to help people instead of charging them for everything. But nowadays, if you can't pay for things, why you're out.

MARCUS: That's right. Well we've been here ---

BERTHA: So there is quite a difference from the way it used to be. People used to go, you know, and neighbors would go and help one another. Mona has been awful good to me. She, ever since I knew her, why she's done a lot of things for me, now I'll tell you.

MARCUS: Yes.

BERTHA: When she didn't, not in this kind of a deal, but you know, when I lived down

there. When my eyesight failed, why she would come and go through my clothes and ---

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BERTHA: He lived down in the neighborhood; he never volunteered to do anything for me like those people had. And they, I don't know how many times they moved me around, you know. Andersons and Bennett's, Mr. Bennett. They moved me from place to place and they wouldn't even let me buy the gasoline.

MARCUS: What Anderson was this?

MONA: Sandy Anderson.

BERTHA: And then they sure been friends. Sandy Anderson, and Cecil's dead of course.

MARCUS: Yes.

BERTHA: His wife lives right over here. Well, friends you can't forget.

MARCUS: Well you can't buy them either, you know.

BERTHA: No, you bet you cannot.

MARCUS: Nope.

BERTHA: You can't buy friends. You can't forget them when you got them. There is so many, you know, that will be your friend just long enough to get there for a handout. I don't know. I've thought so many times, if I had all the money that has been, you know, been, I don't know --- John was one of the biggest hearted men in the world, I think, one of them. And he used to never charge anybody anything, for anything. He'd take his team and go to the neighbors and help them plow, and help them to do all kinds of things like that. Didn't charge anybody.

MARCUS: But Bertha, when you were a young woman that's the way the country was.

BERTHA: The whole country was that way.

MARCUS: You helped each other, you neighbored. And you helped each other.

BERTHA: Everybody was neighbors, and everybody helped one another. And you know I can't get that out of my system today. Nowadays, if you went to somebody's house and they was eating a meal, well maybe they'd ask you, maybe if it'd be one of the old timers they'd ask you to eat. If it was some of these new people, they'd shove it back and ---

MONA: Well these new people make you bring your lunch.

BERTHA: You take it in a paper sack or you can do without it. You know I can't get used to that.

MARCUS: No. (Laughter)

BERTHA: I just wasn't raised that way.

MARCUS: No, you bet you weren't.

BERTHA: When we lived in Crook County my mother lived, we lived right along the road and you know along about the time that William Jennings Bryan was running for president, and it was hard times. Well there was people, men without work, a lot of them. And they tramped up and down the highway. Come by and some of them would stop and say they'd like to cut some wood for a sandwich, or --- my mother never charged them, she'd give them coffee and give them a lunch, and fill them up. And that's about all she got done. And I always say that's why we died poor. She never had any money because, give it all away.

MARCUS: Give it all away. Yeah.

BERTHA: Yeah. Your mother, I'll never forget while I live, one time John and I went by, your folks was living --- Didn't they live in the Otley, Fred Otley place for a while?

MARCUS: Yeah, the winter of 1931 and '32. Lived in the Fred Otley place, on the right.

BERTHA: Well I don't know for some reason, I don't know what for, but anyway we went, we was on the way to Burns, my husband and I. That was after we bought our first Ford. And it started to snow after we left. We was living up on Little Crane then. And after it began to snow, why he said, "I don't know whether we better get off the highway or not." But he says, "It's only a little ways." He said, "I guess we'll make it." We went into your mother's place, where they lived, you know.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

BERTHA: And, wasn't it Pete Caldwell, or wasn't he your stepfather?

MARCUS: Uh huh.

BERTHA: Well he wasn't there at the time, but anyway we got there just about, oh I don't know what, I think it was just after, just a little while after noon. Well whatever it was he went there for, why we was going to hurry on and try to get out to the, on the main road and come on to Burns. And your mother insisted on fixing us a dinner. And I'll never forget that good dinner as long as I live. She had just the best dinner. And she was a good cook. And boy did she --- and I've never forgot how much --- I ate until I was ashamed of myself. I was about starved, because we, you know we had to fight that snow.

MARCUS: You bet.

BERTHA: I don't know why, and whenever we finally, when we got back on the highway he said, "Well we'd have died if we hadn't of got that good dinner." But he said, "There is one thing sure, we'll stay with the road." Oh, I never forgot that good dinner. And I said, well a lot of people wouldn't have never --- I think she'd had her dinner and I think Pete had gone somewhere. I don't know, he wasn't there anyway. And she was there alone. She just insisted on getting us some dinner. She, I guess it hadn't been too long since

there'd been somebody there. Maybe he'd been there, I don't know. Anyway she'd had a warm dinner, you know. And she had, just seemed to me like everything. It was good. I told my husband after we left, I said, "I ate until I was ashamed of myself." But I said, "I never tasted a dinner in my life that tasted any better." (Laughter) Potatoes and gravy and meat, and just ---

MARCUS: Mama could fry meat and visit with you all at the same time.

BERTHA: Yeah.

MARCUS: And she never missed a lick while she was talking, and she come out with the finest meal you'd want.

BERTHA: You know, I don't know, it seems to me that people used to cook so many vegetables. It wasn't this packaged stuff that they get in the stores. But they raised it, a lot of it, you know. It was just good. I don't know, so different from what it is now. Now you can go to the store and you can buy a full meal. You can buy anything. But it don't taste like the old. But I'll never forget ---

MONA: When you get the meat out of a butcher shop, it don't taste like out on the ranch.

BERTHA: Yeah, that meat, I won't eat meat. I never eat meat here. They keep putting it on the plate, and I tell them every time I don't want it, I won't eat it. I won't eat that stuff. Old black looking stuff. I won't eat it. The good old meat, and we used to raise our hogs up there on the ranch. And my husband, he was a dandy good hand to cure meat. And those great big old hams, and I can taste that ham yet.

MARCUS: You bet. Ham and eggs, I'll tell you, they were the best.

BERTHA: I'll tell you, it was worth eating.

MARCUS: You bet. It sure was.

BERTHA: But people didn't seem to appreciate it like they --- now when they can't get

things like that, why you know they stop to think about --- kind of extravagant I guess. But everybody had everything to eat. Nobody would ever --- and it was in the way, everybody cooked all their lives. I guess those old sourdough biscuits melt in your mouth. Yeah, it makes a difference.

MARCUS: You bet. Well do you suppose she's getting kind of tired here?

BERTHA: Well ---

MONA: She's beginning to run down.

BERTHA: I know your mother-in-law. Wasn't she --- Oh, what was her name? I forgot it.

MONA: Grace Dougall.

BERTHA: Yeah. I knew her. I never was real well acquainted with her, but then I know who she was, and I seen her a good many times. But all those old timers, most of them are all gone.

MARCUS: You bet, you bet, that's right.

MONA: Not very many of them left.

MARCUS: No, no you bet there isn't.

BERTHA: And so many of these new people come in here that you don't, that you never heard of.

MARCUS: Well that winter that we were down there at the Otley place you were telling about, that was a dry year and they put, had so much grain on the Malheur Lake and we -

--

BERTHA: You remember Frank Neuman and my husband, they farmed an awful lot of, I mean raised grain there.

MARCUS: Putting grain on the lake.

BERTHA: Oh, an awful lot on that lake.

MARCUS: Yeah, yeah, you bet. It saved the country in those days.

BERTHA: Yeah.

MONA: Yes it did.

MARCUS: You couldn't go out here and buy a bale of hay and cottonseed meal. You didn't have any money to buy it with to begin with. It wasn't here to buy.

BERTHA: Then after your folks, after your folks left there, I don't know how long it was after that but we, after they raised that grain, why there was one winter that John and I lived there in the Fred Otley house.

MARCUS: Did you?

BERTHA: Uh huh. That was after Chester, he'd gone to California.

MARCUS: Oh, uh huh.

BERTHA: And after he was married, and the oldest, or their, yes their oldest grandkid was just a baby when they went to California. He clerked down there a couple years in the Safeway Store.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Did he have any children?

BERTHA: Yes, two little girls.

MARCUS: Two little girls. What's happened to them, Bertha?

BERTHA: Well the oldest girl is married and lives up here, the last I heard, lived out, just out of Seattle. Her husband is a mechanic.

MONA: There at Auburn, Auburn, Washington.

BERTHA: What?

MONA: She lives at Auburn, Washington.

BERTHA: Yeah. And then my youngest granddaughter, the last I heard of her she lived in Portland. She had five children, my youngest.

MARCUS: What was the wife's name?

BERTHA: Granddaughter did, but I've never seen any of those kids. Those kids are all ---

MONA: ...

MARCUS: No, Chester's wife. Chester's wife, who did he marry?

MONA: Ella Dennis is her name now. What was Ella's maiden name?

BERTHA: Huh?

MONA: What was Ella's maiden name? Chester's wife.

BERTHA: Adair.

MONA: Adair.

BERTHA: Eleanor Adair was her name.

MARCUS: The only time I ever saw her was when we stayed all night with ---

BERTHA: Just a fool kid. Those kids had no more business getting married than I would have right now.

MONA: I never did see Barbara.

BERTHA: Huh?

MONA: I never did see Barbara.

BERTHA: Well Barbara was just a small, you know, when they left. She was only eight years old when, after Chester died. Of course Chester and Ella separated, they're divorced. And they went, then afterwards they, my husband and I kept those kids for six years.

MARCUS: Oh.

BERTHA: After Chester and Ella had separated. Doris was about twelve years old, and Barbara was about eight years old when Chester died. After he went to war, and we had them then when he went to war.

MARCUS: Well, maybe we better ---

(END OF TAPE)

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