

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #289 - Side A

Subject: Katie Harris Wheeler

Place: Voltage, Oregon

Date: October 16, 1983

Interviewer: Marcus Haines

MARCUS HAINES: ... Katie Wheeler who lived here in the early, late fifteen --- teens, and the early twenties.

KATIE WHEELER: Sixty-one years.

MARCUS: Sixty-one years ago to be exact, so --- And on this ---what is the date anyway? Does anybody know?

KATIE: Today?

MARCUS: Yeah, what is today?

KATIE: Sixteenth.

MARCUS: Sixteenth of October 1983. Okay Katie, tell us a little bit about Voltage, will you? We're standing near where the old store used to be.

KATIE: We're standing here where Alfred Marshall's Store used to be, it burned. And all that is left is an old watering trough, and the remains of the old safe is still here. There is a big log here, it's gone.

MARCUS: Well their home was ---

KATIE: Right over there.

MARCUS: Right over here wasn't it then. They had some corrals and barns.

KATIE: Corrals and barns were down in ---

MARCUS: Down in here. Well now, there was some houses Katie, back in here as I

remember.

KATIE: Here's where we ...

MARCUS: Let me catch up with you here. Did you find an arrowhead?

KATIE: Huh?

MARCUS: Did you find an arrowhead?

KATIE: No, just some obsidian.

MARCUS: We're walking out here to find Katie's house here.

KATIE: This is all bare, all this is ---

MARCUS: What do you think of this for a gopher mound? Look at that. Did you build a house here, did your folks build a house, or did it belong to somebody else and you moved into it?

KATIE: The old Race house.

MARCUS: It was what?

KATIE: The old Race house.

MARCUS: Okay, the old Race house. There was another house right up here at the foot of the hill, the remains of it. Do you recall who lived there?

KATIE: I remember ... but I don't know who lived there.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

KATIE: What was the old fellow's name that used to live with Jones' over here? Big old bachelor.

MARCUS: I don't remember, Katie.

KATIE: ...

MARCUS: I've got a, I've got a tape I made with Culver Marshall; he named all of these people he could think of here. He might be in that bunch.

KATIE: ... can't tell much ... low place where the well was, if I can find it.

MARCUS: Where the house was, Katie, right in here?

KATIE: Right in here.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Well we're what, a hundred or so yards from the Voltage Store sight.

KATIE: The well ... (too far from microphone to pick up)

MARCUS: Where did this road go to, Katie, that --- right here, we just crossed?

KATIE: This road wasn't here then. It was one that went from Alfred's across. I think this is a trapper's road, and the BLM.

MARCUS: Well there was a ---

KATIE: There was a road across there that --- I guess you could still go straight through to Burns.

MARCUS: Yeah, we'll go through there after while. But this, there used to be homesteads back out here to the south of us, remember?

KATIE: Uh huh.

MARCUS: A fellow name of Claude Shug, do you remember him?

KATIE: Who?

MARCUS: Claude Shug.

KATIE: I remember the name.

MARCUS: And then the two Jones' places, Calvin Jones and the old man.

KATIE: ...

MARCUS: I bought the old Calvin Jones place, a 160 acres out there, yeah.

KATIE: Oh did you?

MARCUS: There is your coal oil can.

KATIE: Oil can. ... two years ago there was still a low place ... This is where the well was when we lived here. The house sat right over there where that post is, with corrals and a shed is all.

MARCUS: Well this --- there was quite a family of you Katie, there was --- the house was fairly big, must have been.

KATIE: Yeah. Well there was two bedrooms upstairs, and one down. Then Mom and Dad had their bed in the, along in the front room ... The boys all slept upstairs. When we was here about four years ago, Artie and Fay come out here, and we was here. And Fay found a --- she said look at this funny looking rock, it has Carl Jones' name on it. It was a piece of slate.

MARCUS: Well, I'll be darned.

KATIE: It had been laying there ---

MARCUS: Laying here ---

KATIE: Fifty some years, uh huh.

MARCUS: Was the house torn down, Katie? Did it burn down, do you recall?

KATIE: Torn down, I don't know just when it was.

MARCUS: Yeah. As soon as they are vacated the windows and the doors were taken.

KATIE: Oh, yeah.

MARCUS: There is something else here in the sagebrush. Buggy tire, isn't it?

KATIE: There isn't much left here.

MARCUS: No. Quite a little mound out in here, this must have been where the barn was.

This looks like it might have been a manure pile here, huh?

KATIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: ... part of the old school here now, Katie, it is a couple hundred yards west of where the Voltage Store was. And you went to school here several years, I guess, didn't you?

KATIE: Two years.

MARCUS: Just two years.

KATIE: And Harley, my youngest brother, started his first year here. Well let's see here --

-

MARCUS: Well you graduated here?

KATIE: No, I went the 8th and --- 9th and 10th grades here.

MARCUS: Oh, you did.

KATIE: Two years of high school here.

MARCUS: Oh, uh huh. Who was your teacher?

KATIE: Irma Hankins.

MARCUS: Oh, uh huh.

KATIE: Well let's see, there was the two Steel boys, Carl and Stub, and Irish Marshall.

All those students ... But that was about it, the few years that I went here.

MARCUS: See, was Theodore, was he out of school then?

KATIE: He was through, uh huh.

MARCUS: Uh huh. I guess --- let's see, that was when, 1920 --- you moved here in '23, was it?

KATIE: Sixty-one years ago.

MARCUS: Yeah, it would be '22 then, 1922.

KATIE: '23, '22.

MARCUS: Yeah. Well these people, homesteaders out here to the south were leaving then, weren't they?

KATIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: Started to starve out, and most of them were gone I think.

KATIE: Yeah, I think they were gone. The Jones' lived over in the, kind of swampland.

MARCUS: They were living down there then where Culver and Violet ended up living.

KATIE: Uh huh. Well Culver and Violet's house was ... right over here.

MARCUS: Well who, was Ray Marshall have a family over here at his house at that time?

KATIE: Yeah, he lived straight down from the store there. That was ... But no, he was married then, about that time.

MARCUS: Didn't have any family?

KATIE: Not yet.

MARCUS: Katie, I was out here out here wandering around thinking about it --- now the Durell's lived right up over the hill here, do you remember them?

KATIE: On the other side.

MARCUS: Yeah.

KATIE: I think they left here.

MARCUS: Yeah, on the other side. Were they gone when you came?

KATIE: Just about the time. I remember them coming back and seeing --- but they moved away about the time we came here.

MARCUS: Herman lives down at --- near Vale. Up Willow Creek there. He and Wilbur and their families came up here and looked at the high water here during the summer sometime. This card we got from Wilbur's wife said that they had been up here. Then I was thinking about something else too now, about the time you folks came, some folks got lost out there on the lake skating in the wintertime. And they got quite a bunch together here to look for them. Do you remember that? It seems to me like the, that Dixie Durell was the ---

KATIE: I think that was before we came here too.

MARCUS: --- involved in that. Culver and Dixie, they were out of school --- school sweethearts.

KATIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: I remember Culver was quite concerned about --- he was home from going to

school at Ontario I think.

KATIE: Culver ... where that trough is, they had some bushes and little trees, and they had that ...

MARCUS: I'll be darned. But, well when did you leave here? We haven't got that --- when you got married then?

KATIE: Uh huh.

MARCUS: Did you leave and --

KATIE: I ---

MARCUS: Were you still living here when you were married? That's what I should say, I guess.

KATIE: Yeah. I was working most of the time. I worked at the Sod House, and then over at Cattersons. The last two or three years I wasn't home much.

MARCUS: Uh huh. But your folks were still living here?

KATIE: Uh huh, uh huh.

MARCUS: Yeah, there was quite a community around, about that time.

KATIE: About that time, yeah, quite a ---

MARCUS: When we go home this evening, we'll --- I'll play the tape that Culver made about Voltage. And named some ---

KATIE: There was some that were gone when I come. Culver knew

---

MARCUS: Well, I'm sure that's right, but I mean he will name the people that lived around here. I have a paper that was signed by these people out here to get a bounty on jackrabbits and present it to the county court along about 1917 or '18. And you would just be surprised the people that signed that, that you have forgotten all about, you know. But they were Voltage; they were Voltage people there.

KATIE: Uh huh.

MARCUS: Now this schoolhouse, Katie, I don't know whether you knew what happened to it or not. But Pat and Hank Church bought it, and were going to move it to Weed Lake. And they come in here and got it on skids here in the wintertime, and took off across the Sagebrush Field over here, and got out in the middle of it, and couldn't pull it any farther and gave it up.

KATIE: Oh.

MARCUS: So it set there for quite awhile. Then Lloyd Hill bought it from them, I assume, and pulled it up to what was called their Hill Camp. That's up near the, where the sagebrush house used to be. And it's up there. They use it for a storehouse or something now.

KATIE: Well I'll be darned.

MARCUS: Uh huh. At least I think it has a roof on it. It's being preserved anyway.

KATIE: No, I didn't remember what happened to ---

MARCUS: Yeah. Well, we'll walk over ---

KATIE: ... Marshall used to --- right up there is where his place was. He had quite a house and barn and whatnot.

MARCUS: What is it now?

KATIE: ... well go down here to where this house was across --- right up, right straight towards the ... up there.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Up there about --- there is grave up there, Mrs. --- I think Mrs., the mother of the Marshall's, I've been told. There is no marker or anything on it. C.C.'s boys, they built fence around it, but I think it has all fell down now isn't it?

KATIE: Yeah, I think it was Bill Marshall's wife.

MARCUS: It was his wife.



KATIE: Uh huh.

MARCUS: Oh.

KATIE: Well he was older than --- now he lived there --- I guess he lived there until he died.

MARCUS: Yeah I had, I got the --- see William Dunn bought the garage, and there was a little cabin there, and they moved it off down to the, what was the Woodcock place. And I bought the old Dunn house down there and tore it down. And I gave the garage to John Porter and it's up at Diamond now. And the old house is out on Foster Flat.

KATIE: And that was over by ... dam.

MARCUS: No, no just right straight up the foot of the hill here, right there near that grave.

KATIE: Well didn't she live over there by the dam, or did she? In a house ...

MARCUS: Well, yeah they did. There was a few homesteads.

KATIE: Well she had moved up here ...

MARCUS: The old man owned a 160 acres, and Billy owned the other, they had 320 acres up there, and it belongs to Amberson now, or did. It's been passed down. The government has tried to buy it, and condemned it and everything. But they never could get it; it stays right in the middle of the refuge.

KATIE: Well Mary Marshall stayed at the refuge a long time. Finally she come out of it pretty good I guess, didn't she?

MARCUS: Probably about the only one.

KATIE: Probably the only one that got paid.

MARCUS: How they come out on it there. But those things down here in --- left in 1936 I think, according to Culver's story. But we'll play it, that will refresh your memory too. He made a good tape of this. He made it along in August, and he died that fall.

KATIE: Culver?

MARCUS: Uh huh. Just got him in time.

bl