

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #295 - Sides A & B

Subject: Marge McRae - With Video

Place: McRae Home - Hines, Oregon

Date: July 12, 1991

Interviewers: Dorothea Purdy & Barbara Lofgren

Release Form: No

DOROTHEA PURDY: This is Dorothea Purdy along with Barbara Lofgren, and today we're talking with Margaret Thies McRae at her home in Hines, Oregon. Today's date is July 12, 1991. Following our interview, we will be doing a short video of Marge, and it will be stored at the library along with the transcript and cassette tape. The number will be #295. Now can you tell us your full name?

MARGE McRAE: Yes Dorothea, my name is Margaret Mary McRae.

DOROTHEA: And where were you born, and when?

MARGE: I was born on August 31, 1925, two minutes to midnight, in the old stone Harney County Hospital. And when Dr. B. F. Smith finally arrived, he was the person who officiated. But Mother had to wait a considerable time, because he was out delivering a calf. When he got the calf delivered, he got in and delivered me, so Mother says, and she's sitting right here.

DOROTHEA: And who were your parents?

MARGE: My mother is Greta Louise Thies, formerly Hufton. She was born in Boise, Idaho in 1906 to William Hufton. And I've forgotten what Grandmother's first name was.

GRETA THIES: Ida.

MARGE: Ida Hufton.

BARBARA LOFGREN: Is that H U F T O N?

MARGE: Yes. And she passed away when my mother was two years old. And oh, about twenty

years ago I was in Boise at the --- oh, I've forgotten it right now. What's the name of that cemetery?

I thought I'd never forget, Mother.

GRETA: Morris Hill.

MARGE: Morris Hill Cemetery. And I went over and looked through all their books, and the very first book had my grandmother's name in it. And the attendant took me over to where her grave was, and it was just one big stone with her name on it, under a big pine tree. And I found a pinecone by it, so I brought the pinecone home for a souvenir. That's my grandma.

BARBARA: Oh, that's nice.

DOROTHEA: When did your parent's family, or when did your parents come to Harney County?

MARGE: Well my father came from Germany when he was seventeen years old. And his brothers, a few of them had come over previously, so he wanted to come too. And he worked his way across. He fed cattle down in the hold of a ship. And he always liked to eat beef, but he would never have anything else to do with cattle when he got off that boat.

BARBARA: He'd done enough on the trip.

MARGE: He'd had enough of that. My father came; oh, I can remember him saying he came to Missouri. Do you know Mother, in Missouri where Daddy came to first?

GRETA: No, I've forgotten.

MARGE: I remember he came to Pueblo, Colorado.

GRETA: Yes.

MARGE: And he came out to San Francisco. And my father bought property right in the heart of San Francisco, and he built several things, I don't know what. But then there was the big deal to come on up here on a stagecoach. So, one day he just got on the stagecoach and came up to Harney County. And ---

BARBARA: Was he a carpenter before he came to this country?

MARGE: He was a cabinetmaker.

BARBARA: I see.

MARGE: And then he turned into a carpenter because they needed homes in the west, everywhere.

And when I was in high school once, I remember Mother and Daddy talking about should they pay the taxes on that property in San Francisco. Daddy said, "Oh, just let it go." He said, "I'm not going down there anymore." And it was right down there in the heart of San Francisco by the courthouse.

And I got to go by the courthouse one time and that is the most fabulous place. And we would have been on easy street if we'd have paid the taxes on that lot. (Laughter)

BARBARA: If you'd only known, huh?

MARGE: Hindsight is better than foresight.

BARBARA: Oh, yes.

MARGE: But that's the end of that story.

DOROTHEA: Did you know your grandparents on either side?

MARGE: I met my grandfather, my mother's father, my maternal grandfather.

DOROTHEA: What can you tell us about him? What you remember of him.

MARGE: The only thing that I can remember is they had a nice big house up on the bench, they called it, in Boise. And was it the Ridenbaugh Canal, Mother, that went right by their place? Can you tell us about going to school in Boise, and a few things? As you were growing up, some things that you remember.

GRETA: I went through all eight grades at the Franklin School. That was a mile from our home. I walked that way back and forth every day. And then I went to the Boise High School for four years, and that was about two miles, and I walked that way twice a day.

DOROTHEA: Well where did you meet your husband?

GRETA: I was --- I took typing and shorthand in high school, and I got a job when I came to Burns with a real estate man. And my husband used to come in and make payments on some property, some houses that he had taken out loans on. One day he asked me to go for a ride. I said, "Well don't you have to work?" He said, "Yes, but I can take a little time off." (Laughter)

BARBARA: What was the name of the realtor that you worked for?

GRETA: Albert Trogett.

BARBARA: Crogget?

MARGE: Trogett.

BARBARA: Trogett.

MARGE: T R O G E T T.

GRETA: T R A U G O T T.

MARGE: First time I ever knew how you spelled it.

GRETA: German I think, Traugotts, Trau ---

BARBARA: So that first ride, what did it lead to, more dates?

GRETA: Oh yes, he just asked me if I'd marry him. And I didn't know any different, so I said, "Yes." (Laughter) So we had known each other about three weeks, so we got married.

BARBARA: Oh, my goodness.

MARGE: Where did you go for your honeymoon?

GRETA: Oh, to --- what's the springs?

MARGE: Blue Mountain Hot Springs.

GRETA: Yes, Blue Mountain Hot Springs.

MARGE: In a Model-T coupe.

GRETA: Yeah, Ford coupe.

BARBARA: How old were you at that time?

GRETA: Eighteen.

BARBARA: Eighteen.

DOROTHEA: Just a young little lady.

GRETA: Yeah.

BARBARA: And then did your husband build a house for you to live in? Or where did you live to start out?

GRETA: In Burns, he had several houses built and rented. And then we lived with the lady that was living in one of his houses until he could get our house built.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Can you remember her name?

GRETA: Oh, I'm afraid I can't right off. Let's see, Lentz, Mrs. Lentz, L E N T Z.

DOROTHEA: Oh, uh huh.

GRETA: And her husband came, she and her husband came from Redmond, I believe, to Burns to do carpenter work.

DOROTHEA: So, did he work with your husband then?

GRETA: No, I don't think he did.

BARBARA: And what was your husband's name?

GRETA: Herman.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

GRETA: Herman H. Thies.

BARBARA: And what was his nickname?

GRETA: "Dutch".

BARBARA: "Dutch", uh huh.

MARGE: "Dutch Carpenter".

GRETA: Yes, "Dutch Carpenter". They never knew his name.

DOROTHEA: That's what everybody knew him as, was "Dutch Carpenter".

GRETA: That's right.

DOROTHEA: I don't think that they knew that he had a last name.

MARGE: He always smoked cigars, and when they went out he chewed them. And he rode the bulls at the fair, at the Harney County Fair. In fact, he built the exhibit building that stands today.

DOROTHEA: The one where all the produce and everything is?

MARGE: Flowers, and this sort of thing, uh huh.

GRETA: And the grandstand too.

MARGE: Oh yes, and the grandstand.

BARBARA: My goodness.

MARGE: And he helped build part of Edward Hines Mill out here, but I've forgotten. Chuck Walker showed me a picture of him one day up on the scaffold, working on the mill. My father

built over, I think it was twenty-six houses in Burns. He built the Welcome Hotel. The building now that houses NAPA, he built that for Pop Finley. Oh, I think, didn't Daddy build the Tonawama Hall?

GRETA: No.

MARGE: He didn't?

GRETA: No, that was here.

MARGE: Help me remember some of the things. He did a lot of remodeling on buildings on Main Street. On his obituary that I wrote for the Times-Herald, there is a whole list of everything, but I've forgotten now.

DOROTHEA: How about the old Powerhouse, did he work on that also? You know out where Powerhouse Restaurant is now?

MARGE: I don't know. But we lived just one block on down the street in a little house from there. And I remember the first time we got power. We had one-drop light, one bulb that hung down. And I remember one night I needed a drink of water, and I went in the kitchen and I pulled the chair over and climbed up on the stove and pulled the chain and got an electric shock. It knocked me clear off on the floor. I didn't know, see. But I had to turn the light on. So, from then on, we always put a string on that, and I could reach it. I got my drink and went back to bed. That was wonderful when we got power.

And then we got a telephone. Oh, that was out of this world. And our number was 232-R, I'll never forget it. That was one of the biggest days of my life.

DOROTHEA: Now was that one of the old crank types, or ---

MARGE: No, it was a little more modern, it hung on the wall.

DOROTHEA: Did it have just one ring, or did you have several rings?

MARGE: I think we just had one ring. It wasn't quite that primitive. Although when I moved out to Drewsey after I married Howard Riley we had two longs and two shorts, that was it.

DOROTHEA: Ours was a short and a long.

BARBARA: Party lines.

MARGE: A short and a long. Oh, I'd like to mention that my parents had three children. I was the oldest, then I had a brother William Eugene, we called him Billy, and my sister Helen Louise Sands, were all the children that my parents had.

And my brother died when he was sixteen years, six months, and twenty-one days old. It was a very tragic situation. I think everybody in town mourned, like they did the young boy here just last week. Billy had strep throat or something, infection, when he was three. We didn't have any antibiotics then. The only thing that we had was aspirin, and it was powdered, wrapped up in a little paper. And his tonsils were bad, and we didn't know that at the time. The following year they took them out. But he had so much infection in his system, that he got rheumatic fever. And that, I don't know how to say it, because I don't know exactly what happened. But anyhow, it caused a bad valve in his heart, leakage of the heart.

And Mother and Daddy did everything they could to raise that boy, and he graduated from the 8th grade, and he was later in school, because he was sixteen that summer. And he got on a horse with Jimmy Fawcett and rode out here to Robert's Roost behind Hines on, I believe it was the Fourth of July, wasn't it, Mother? And the next thing we knew was someone came and told us that Billy had been bucked off the horse and he was hurt. And we don't --- do you know how Billy got back home, who brought him home?

GRETA: I don't remember.

MARGE: Seems like somebody says they put him back up on the horse and Jimmy brought him home. But they went straight to the hospital with him. And he never got out of the hospital. He died on August 16th, I don't remember the year. Oh ---

GRETA: '43 I think.

MARGE: Oh no, was it '43?

GRETA: I don't know for sure.

MARGE: Sorry about that. But anyhow, Dr. John even cried. His lungs ruptured, and he drowned in his own foam. And he had the death rattles, and to me it was the most tragic thing I ever witnessed. And everybody in the hospital was just sobbing, and so was Dr. John. We couldn't save

him; we didn't have the miracle things they have nowadays. And he laid there and said, "I'm dying Mama, I'm dying Daddy, goodbye." Just like the movies, you know.

BARBARA: Oh my.

MARGE: It was really something. I remember a Shirley Temple picture where an old --- I'll never forget that where this Negro was dying, and he was telling her goodbye. Always reminds me of that one, the movies. We can talk about it now.

DOROTHEA: Did you know Jimmy Fawcett very well?

MARGE: Well, he was my brother's favorite friend.

DOROTHEA: Best friend.

MARGE: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Did you know that he has a tumor on his brain?

MARGE: No.

GRETA: Has what, I can't hear you.

DOROTHEA: He had --- Jimmy Fawcett has a tumor on his brain that is really affecting him. He's very sick now.

GRETA: Well.

DOROTHEA: Well what have you been doing most of your life Marge? I know that you were married to Howard Riley, and have two children. Can you tell us their names?

MARGE: Yes. Sally Suzanne Riley, she married Tom Lovins over ten years ago. And Tom has since passed away. Sally lives in Bend, she is a beautician. And she is a traveling beautician; she goes to all the nursing homes, and the elderly homes. And then she got involved, by request of some of these people, to clean these beautiful, luxurious homes for people over there. They're just their summer homes.

And now she has a person in Redmond who wants her to run a foster home for youth. He wants it for adults, but she wants it for youth, and they're still negotiating. She would rather take care of the younger. Because she says, "Mama, I'd lose my good friends every week." And she just thought it would be more fun to be with the younger ones.

And my son Tim Riley worked for Jim Howden for many years here. And he found a very special person that he fell in love with. And hopefully they will be getting married pretty soon. They both moved to LaGrande. He works for Logger's Supply over there, and she works for First Interstate Bank. And ---

BARBARA: You say you lived at Riley during that time?

MARGE: No, honey, I married a Riley.

BARBARA: Oh, you married ---

MARGE: And it was in the opposite direction, fifty miles out, the Drewsey area.

BARBARA: Oh, the Drewsey area. Oh, okay.

MARGE: We lived fifteen miles above Drewsey on the Middle Fork of the Malheur River. And I was just telling my friend Bob Moss this morning, that I was so thankful this morning that I didn't have to get on a horse and go up the red trails, and up the Middle Fork of the Malheur, up into Logan Valley, pushing those cows up there in all that dust. That was one of the most beautiful times of my life, but as I got older, it wasn't so beautiful, it was the hardest work I ever did.

BARBARA: It was work.

MARGE: We'd leave, maybe not daylight, because we couldn't quite get going. We had to get lunches and breakfast and that sort of thing. But I can remember when I first started buckarooing, one night we left Logan Valley at almost dusk. And I said, "Well, how are we going to see to get home?" And my father-in-law said, "You don't have to see, the horse knows how to get home." We got home at midnight, and it was pitch dark. I was never so glad to get in bed in my life.

(Laughter)

BARBARA: Oh, dear.

DOROTHEA: And did both of your children ride?

MARGE: Oh yes, Sally loved to ride. In fact, she was the Fair Princess one-year, for the Harney County Fair. And she won first in the barrel races one year. She used to love to ride. She still has her saddle.

DOROTHEA: Does she do much riding anymore?

MARGE: No, she hasn't the last few years. But she won't part with the saddle that Grandpa bought her for her birthday.

BARBARA: Just in case.

DOROTHEA: Can you tell us something about the neighborhood in Drewsey at the time you lived there? Was it a crowded busy town, or was it just ---?

MARGE: Well, it was just a very small country town. We had a real good store. Sam Burt and Castolia Drinkwater ran it. And then we had several people that worked and owned the service station. But we had about a hundred people, in about a hundred-mile radius that congregated at the IOOF Hall for dances every Saturday night in the summertime. And my husband played for them, and I used to have to go and dance all night long with everyone, or sit on the bench, and I danced with everyone.

And I can remember the first Sputnik that the Russians sent up. Of course, you know, when you live fifty miles from town you miss out on a lot of things. So, we had a dance this one particular night and I went out on the grange hall steps about four in the morning and I stayed out there until I saw it. And then I came in and everybody in the dance hall came out and saw it. Now that was really something, you know. That was the first one. Loved it.

DOROTHEA: Who were your closest neighbors when you lived in Drewsey?

MARGE: Mike Acton and his wife Delia. And then after they moved away, Burnice and Elmer Baker were our neighbors. And then Ann Bentz and Ken Bentz bought Mike Acton's Ranch after he moved. But I wanted to tell you that I always wanted to live on a ranch, that's why I married a rancher. And I learned to do all phases of the work. I used to mow hay, rake hay, buck hay with the old buckteeth, you know. And Mike Acton said that I could mow more hay than any person he ever saw. But he didn't know that I burnt that mower up that year. I forgot to get off and oil it.

BARBARA: Oh dear.

DOROTHEA: Did your children attend school in Drewsey?

MARGE: No, they went to, both of them went to Pine Creek until I moved to Burns. And then Sally went to Crane for one year, and Tim went to Filmore School. And then later on I remarried

and they both graduated from Burns Union High School.

But I did want to tell you about all the things that we used to do at Drewsey. I had a 4-H Club. In fact, I started out with, I believe it was horse, and then beef cattle. And then I always wanted to do leather craft, and I learned to do that by hanging around the saddle shops, and a lot of reading. And I taught leather craft for over thirteen years, and I taught basketry. And I put everything in the little old suitcase that I had when I went to 4-H Summer School when I was in grade school and high school. And I traveled to all these kid's homes in the Drewsey area. And finally, it got too much for me when I got my own children, so then I had all of them come to me. And I don't know how many hours I spent with those kids, but it was very gratifying. And then I could mix with people, because I enjoy people. And just met a lot of wonderful personalities.

BARBARA: How many years did you live in Drewsey?

MARGE: Twenty-two years, six months, and eighteen days.

BARBARA: You've got it down to the day!

MARGE: Right, I remember. And I've been married to John McRae now over twenty-three years.

BARBARA: Oh gosh. So, you must have married very early, your first marriage.

MARGE: I was nineteen.

BARBARA: Nineteen.

MARGE: Ran off to Winnemucca with Edith and Gene Dripps.

BARBARA: Oh dear.

DOROTHEA: Did they get married at the same time?

MARGE: You bet.

DOROTHEA: What was you each other's witnesses?

MARGE: Well I guess, we were just friends. And we came back to Drewsey, and they had a shivaree for us. And Harry Tracy, who owned the big pie shop in Portland, always came out to hunt on the Riley Ranch, and he made a huge three-decker wedding cake and sent it up by the fellow who made it for our shivaree party. And they only lost one little rose off of it, and he repaired that before the party.

BARBARA: Oh, for goodness sakes.

MARGE: But that was a big party.

BARBARA: Oh, I should say.

DOROTHEA: Now did Edith and Gene Dripps, did they live in Drewsey at that time also?

MARGE: Gene worked for his uncle, Mike Acton, who lived right across from us, right across the Malheur River. And Edith worked in town at the bank.

BARBARA: Well if you were just out of school basically then, when you first got married, how did you happen to meet your first husband if he was from Drewsey?

MARGE: Well I don't know --- I had some, I had some --- well in those days people traveled a lot. One of my old boyfriends was Jim Sitz, bless his heart, that just passed away here last year, he was killed. And his wife, I love her, and all of their children and their family, but this was way back when. I mean people came for two hundred miles to Burns just for maybe a dance, or whatever. In early history all people came together, if you read early history. Even the Indians, you know, they had to get together and have their summer pow wow.

BARBARA: Right.

MARGE: Well this happened. We'd meet for dances, or whatever, and that's how I met Howard Riley. And young Joe Boy Lillard, and Gene Dripps, and Hilda Langenfeld. Let's see, what was Hilda's maiden name?

DOROTHEA: Maupin?

MARGE: Sure, Moffet.

DOROTHEA: Moffet, right.

MARGE: And we girls used to ride out on the bus to the Drewsey Junction, and the boys would come out there and wait and pick us up, and then we'd go out and spend a weekend on the ranch. And we'd go fishing, or whatever, it grows on you.

BARBARA: Oh. So, you didn't go off to college then after high school?

MARGE: Yes.

BARBARA: You did?

MARGE: I had a scholarship; I went to Oregon State University. It was Oregon State College at that time.

BARBARA: It was Oregon State College when I went too.

MARGE: Right. Oh, you don't look that old. But anyhow I got a 4-H scholarship; it was a Carl Raymond Gray Scholarship. And I went to Oregon State University. And then my mother had pneumonia, and she ended up with phlebitis in her leg, and she couldn't walk. So, after my first year I came home and I took care of my mother. And the doctor said she'd never walk again, and I taught my mother to walk again. And just a few years ago she walked clear to the top of the Steens Mountain with me.

BARBARA: Oh, marvelous.

MARGE: And I was real pleased.

BARBARA: That's wonderful.

MARGE: Mother, how old are you?

GRETA: Eighty-five.

MARGE: Eighty-five.

BARBARA: That's marvelous.

DOROTHEA: Greta, maybe you could tell us when you were born.

GRETA: When? March the 7th, 1906, at Boise, Idaho.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Did you have any brothers and sisters?

GRETA: I had one sister, Ida. And she passed away with bone cancer, when, '69, '68.

MARGE: Somewhere around in there.

GRETA: She worked as a bookkeeper for Ray Weeks at the Burns Garage in Burns.

DOROTHEA: Oh, she did? Well now why did you, both of you girls come to Harney County, or Burns?

GRETA: Oh, I came with a neighbor that lived in Boise. They bought a ranch over here, and ---

MARGE: Pat Culp's Ranch?

GRETA: Yeah.

MARGE: The one he has now?

GRETA: Uh huh.

MARGE: Dorothea, this picture up here behind Mother is Pat Culp's Ranch when Ethel Walsh owned it. And that is Ethel Walsh in the picture. She looks like a man. She always wore a blue chambray shirt, and men's pants, and a bill cap. And the only difference that you could tell her from a man was that she wore beautiful gold earrings. And how many turkeys did she get, Mother?

GRETA: Oh, about two hundred.

MARGE: She went to Boise and brought home two hundred baby chicks, clear to Burns in her Model-A.

BARBARA: Oh, my goodness.

MARGE: And then, oh, Heck the photographer ---

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

MARGE: He kind of liked my grandma. So, he came out one day and took this picture in three parts, you know, on the tripod with the black cloth over your head. And I'm standing out here, five years old, screaming because I couldn't be in the picture with Grandma. But anyhow, Heck finished that picture.

And when --- we always, I always called Ethel Walsh my grandma. And when she passed away in Meridian, Idaho, about, oh fifteen years ago, she gave everything she owned to the Catholic Church. But I requested this picture, so the nuns kept it for me. Because no one else really, didn't mean anything to them, you know. But I love that old picture. And Heck tinted that with cotton on a ---

BARBARA: Q-tip?

MARGE: --- toothpick.

BARBARA: Oh, on a toothpick.

MARGE: That was before Q-tips. I remember him saying, "I don't know how I'm going to paint the gobbles on the turkeys. I can't seem to get it right." And I said, "Well why don't you do it like Mama does my ears, put some cotton on a stick?" And he did.

BARBARA: Oh.

MARGE: And if you get a flashlight and get up real close, you'll notice that he's just barely touched them in spots. He didn't paint that picture. It looks painted, but it isn't. He blended some colors in there. It's really very unusual.

DOROTHEA: It's a very neat picture.

MARGE: Yeah, for a black and white, I don't know how he did it.

DOROTHEA: Now is that house in that picture, was that her house?

MARGE: No, that's where Cecil and Trilby Bennett lived, and they worked for Mrs. Walsh. And that's since been torn down. And you see those little willow trees there in the back?

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

MARGE: Why those things are monstrosities out there now. I used to have to baby-sit the turkeys, and one day --- oh, Grandma had a slaughterhouse. She built a slaughterhouse with a trap door and everything. And this was all when I was five, between five and six, and I got to stay two nights with Grandma. It was only two miles from town. And she was going to butcher this old bull. And so, we crawled up on the fence, and she had a hammer in her hand. And I said, "Well aren't you going to shoot it, Grandma?" Well Grandma didn't speak too, the most polite English. She said, "Hell no, I'm going to hit it right between the eyes." And she did, and it passed out. And we got off the fence and went outside, and in through, into the slaughterhouse. And she opened the trap door and rolled it over, and that thing got up madder than heck! And she put me under her arm and just left. And finally, she worked around, and she got it back around there. I'll never forget that as long as I live. I said, "Are you going to shoot it this time?" She said, "You're damn right, right between the eyes." And she did!

DOROTHEA: And she did.

MARGE: Oh, those are the good old days.

BARBARA: Oh, goodness.

MARGE: Mother used to make me overall jackets. That was before they were ever heard of, out of Grandma's old overalls. And she made pockets in them. And one day I was gathering the eggs,

and I put them in my pocket. And then Grandma said, "Hey come here, I want you to see this."

And I went over and climbed up on the fence and it was a bull snake that had an egg in its mouth, or was it a chick --- no, that was a baby chick. And it didn't look like a snake, except it had the tail, you know. And I couldn't believe it, and I broke the eggs in my pocket.

DOROTHEA: Nice mess.

MARGE: I wasn't too good a ---

BARBARA: You had scrambled eggs, huh?

MARGE: Yes. Mother wasn't too proud of me.

BARBARA: What a mess to clean out, huh?

MARGE: I used to have to go out and bring the cows in too. One time I didn't bring in old whitey, and Grandma whipped me and sent me back out to get her. She was in the willows. Those were the milk cows. Well, we had better be rushing along. I'd be on the ranch forever.

DOROTHEA: We've got lots of room here. I even brought an extra tape. Can you tell us some of your favorite things that you did when you were a child?

MARGE: The most --- well with my family, which was very rare, we went fishing once. And I saw a picture of the cupie doll I had that mother got for me in the paper just a few weeks ago. But my cupie doll was only about six inches tall, and it was China, you know, glass. And we were going fishing, and I wanted to take it. And mother said, "No, you'll just break it." And I said, "Oh, no Mama, I won't break it, I'll take care of it." But I fell over a log and fell on it, and it broke. And I've never seen one since, until just last week in the paper. They were showing these old dolls that this woman had given to some charity in Portland.

The biggest time of my life when I was younger, where I got to get out and go and see things, was the story that I wrote for the Harney County Centennial Book, traveling with Floyd and Ruth Capps and their daughter Leonor. He worked for the government, and they took me with them as a companion to Leonor. And we were out, I don't know how long, all summer it seemed like, in an old Model-A without a top on it. And our beds were in the rumble seat, and all the kettles and the groceries. And Leonor and I sat on top of that. And we went up to Seneca, and he worked up

there, and made all kinds of reports to the government. We went to Lake Creek. That's where Leonor and I were sitting out beside the cabin and eating these apples, and mine had dark seeds and I said, "My Grandma says if you plant these black seeds they will grow." So, I reached down beside me and poked that seed in the ground, and I said, "Dear God, please let my seed grow." And let's see, I had to be seven or eight.

And in 1965 when we built the Lake Creek Lodge, '64 and '65, there was the funniest looking dwarf apple tree that they skinned up with the cat as Jim Tackman pushed these big trees over. And I know in my heart that's my apple tree. It's the exact spot, but it's gone now, they pulled it out. Oh! But can you believe the power of prayer on things? A lot of people don't, but I do.

I had a cactus bloom after twenty years, just because I sat and prayed for it and talked to it. On the day I had Garden Club it bloomed. They fell off the next day.

DOROTHEA: Talking about Garden Club reminds me; what kind of activities and organizations do you belong to?

MARGE: Well, for many years I was in a real active Green Thumb Garden Club. That's when we girls were younger and could do more things. We planted trees in the Hines Park. And we planted all the shrubs; well we had 4-H kids help us do that at the Fair Grounds. And we planted a lot of trees at the Fair Grounds. Oh, we've planted so many things; it's hard to remember. Let's see what it says here, landscaping Harney County Fair Grounds.

What I'm doing right now is I'm reading out of "Personalities of the West and Midwest". They had written to me several years ago and requested some information. And it says in the book, I was a cattle rancher and a sheep rancher. And I also attended Oregon State University. I took many, well let's not say many, I took five or six adult education courses through Treasure Valley Community College. I have a list of those things that I took here somewhere, I don't remember. I know I took a college law for business course, administrative management, political science. Then of course my fun things, Japanese floral arrangement and watercolor. And later I went into oils, and I got a blue ribbon on my still life at the fair one year. So, when I get old then I can start going back and doing these things.

When I lived at the Riley Ranch, I was asked by "Farm Journal Magazine" to be a family test group member. And for five years I tested a lot of products, and gave reports on them, and they sent me different things to try. It was really kind of a fun thing.

BARBARA: I can remember the "Farm Journal Magazine".

MARGE: Oh, I loved it.

BARBARA: When my husband was in college he took that one year. And I remember those, yeah.

MARGE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Did you do different recipes and things then also, and try them to find out whether they worked?

MARGE: Right. And we had to give our report on a new type of grapefruit sections. I can remember that, Stokeys. And that was such a good one. And they gave me the nicest gift; I've never seen another one like it. It's a stainless-steel spring on a long stainless-steel handle, with a hardwood handle that I used, and have for thirty years.

DOROTHEA: And it's for?

MARGE: Stirring gravies and puddings, and things like that. And they never stick. And they always gave us gifts. One year they sent me a beautiful tray that I've gotten many blue ribbons on at the fair with my flower arrangements on it, you know.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

MARGE: And Tupperware. Oh they, one Christmas they sent me two huge boxes of Tupperware. They never paid you, they just did ---

BARBARA: Well, that's kind of fun, yeah.

DOROTHEA: That's neat.

MARGE: And then I found this the other day, I hadn't seen it for years. This is for twenty-four years of 4-H. And then I completed a few more years. Finally, they just gave up and gave me my thirty-five year pin. I always wanted to have all of the 4-H pins. And I finally got the one with the emerald on it.

DOROTHEA: Oh, neat.

MARGE: So, I'm in the ---

DOROTHEA: I got as far as the silver one, and then I quit. That was terrible.

BARBARA: That's special.

MARGE: And another thing that we did when I lived at Drewsey is Howard and I were chaperons for the Harney County Fair Court. And let's see if it tells us the year, June 13th, 1958. Well just a few years back they sent our fair court to Portland to ride in the parade. And they said, and this is the first time. And I thought they're all wet, but I couldn't prove it. But now I can, see I've got it, 1959.

Ganger and Grover Motor Company loaned us a beautiful yellow station wagon, and we took their saddles and these three girls to Portland. And they rode matched palomino horses in the fair, or in the parade.

BARBARA: The Rose Parade?

MARGE: Rose Parade.

DOROTHEA: The Rose Parade.

MARGE: And then we were invited, the Lions Club sponsored us down there. I want to be sure and get that; the Burns Lions Club sponsored our trip. And Leonard Waterman was the one that set it up for us. But anyhow we got to go to the Royal Rosarian Ball, and I had a beautiful gown. And my mother-in-law loaned me her beautiful fur cape. And Mayor Terry Shrunck really gave me the eye, and I finally went over and spoke to him. And oh, we just had a big time hobnobbing with people, and here we were just country bumpkins, you know.

DOROTHEA: Can you remember what court that was, who the girls were?

MARGE: Yes, it was Janice Bailey, she was the queen. And Gibson, that married ---

DOROTHEA: Ron Brown?

MARGE: Ron Brown. What was her first name? Oh, beautiful girl. And Mary Ann, oh what's her dad out there?

DOROTHEA: Hart.

MARGE: No. Mary Ann Robinson. Oh, why can't I think of that beautiful redheaded Gibson girl?

Oh, and then we had a friend of Janice Bailey's in Portland who came and took us on their yacht on the Willamette River. And we had oh, a lovely luncheon on the boat. But it was fun for a country girl to get to take part in a lot of these things, you know.

BARBARA: Oh, yes.

MARGE: When --- in 1939, First National Bank of Oregon, I believe, sponsored me to Portland to stay at the Heathman Hotel for a week. And I had one dress, and a skirt and blouse, and a new pair of shoes, and Mother bought me a coat. We were poor people. I didn't have anything. But I went and had the nicest time, just like I was queen for a day. And I learned so many things.

DOROTHEA: Well, my sister was on the court in 1964, and she was with Janet Howard, and Ruth Ann Hotchkiss, and they went. I think that was the second year. And Ganger and Grover supplied the car for them to go also.

MARGE: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And it was a real, real good time that they had. And one of the, you know, one of the second, I think they were the second group to go at that time. And really it was a fantastic thing.

MARGE: Oh, it was.

DOROTHEA: I remember when they said this is the first group that went. And we all said, "No, it wasn't."

MARGE: Well, that's all right, you know. People don't know anything about the past, but I've got it right there.

BARBARA: You say you went to Portland to spend a week. For what purpose was this?

MARGE: It was 4-H.

BARBARA: 4-H.

MARGE: I have the book right out there, I saw it the other day, that I saved all my brochures, and our pictures and things. All I can remember is the bank let us in the vault. And they showed us thousand-dollar bills, and five hundred-dollar bills, and hundred-dollar bills. And I was kind of up toward the front, and the kids back there wanted to see it, so I just handed it back to them. And this gal up here that --- from the bank that had given me that thousand-dollar bill, she went Ahhhh!

You know, I said, "That's alright lady, they'll give it back." (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Let's pause for a moment while we turn the tape over.

MARGE: Okay.

SIDE B

DOROTHEA: You just got through telling us you had a certificate of training, and what was this about?

MARGE: Well this is from Oregon State University, a cooperative extension service. I have satisfactorily completed a training program, in you, the informed meat buyer. That's when they were changing the grades on beef and everything, and they wanted people to really be on their toes. As long as you were in the business, you needed to know every aspect of the beef industry.

And then I went on to be Cow Belle president for, it seems like I was president for two years. But the first year I was in charge of coordinating the Cow Belle breakfast. And I had never done anything like that in my life, and I did it. I had a lot of good help. But just coordinating it, I just read the material and did it. And the only thing that I goofed on, and actually it worked out, was one of the ladies out in the country always brought in fresh eggs for it. But she told me she was going to be a little late, and I thought well, I won't order any eggs, she'll make it. But I had to have Joe Hardwick bring us; I don't know how many dozen eggs, before she showed up. And I tell you, that could have been a catastrophe, without any eggs for their hotcakes and steak, you know. But it worked out beautifully.

DOROTHEA: Do you remember what year that was?

MARGE: I don't know whether it was '70 and '71, or '71 and '72, it was right in there.

DOROTHEA: And the Cow Belles now are called the Cattlewomen.

MARGE: Right.

DOROTHEA: We've transgressed this name.

MARGE: Yes, I'm still a Cattlewoman.

DOROTHEA: You're still a Cattlewoman.

MARGE: Hopefully my dues are paid; it's hard to tell. But I'm still a part of the group. They'll be paid if they aren't.

DOROTHEA: We'll probably be calling on you to help serve breakfast. I think you are one of those volunteers, aren't you?

MARGE: Oh yes, volunteer for everything, if I'm able.

DOROTHEA: And what else do you have on your list of many things?

MARGE: Oh, I don't know, I was just trying to think here. I've got to jump back here a ways. You know I was telling you about going to all these different places with Floyd and Ruth Capps. Well not only Lake Creek, but we went to Steens Mountain, we went to Riverside. And for many years I could remember this long dark hall with these unusual little windows in it with the sun coming through. And about ten years ago Clifford Blaylock took me into the dam at Riverside again, and that was the place that I had remembered. And I used to dream about that at night.

BARBARA: Oh, and you couldn't remember what it was.

MARGE: Wondering, I couldn't remember where it was. But the reason I wanted to go back is that when we left Lake Creek as a child, the last time, I didn't want to come home. It was just beautiful, I loved the forest. And I spent my summers out with these people. So, when we left I said, "Oh, when I grow up to be big, I want to come back up here and build a big old barn for a bunch of kids to have a good time." And Floyd said, "I'm going to put that in my report." Well, you know, they came over to Drewsey and called on me to help with that when they got ready to go.

BARBARA: Oh, great.

MARGE: And it was a privilege to help with that. And we had a lot of heartache, and my family disowned me, Mother and my sister anyhow, because I spent so much time up there. But my kids received a lot of benefits from it. We went to camp every year. But Mother thought I was spending too much time with other people's kids. Well heck, I was, I had my own with me. That's why my son is out in the woods today. He loves the woods.

DOROTHEA: Does your mother need the air conditioning on?

MARGE: Are you too warm Mother?

GRETA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: We can probably --- I don't think it will bother us too much.

MARGE: Think so?

DOROTHEA: Okay.

MARGE: I also wanted to mention that my friend Dewey Anderson here in Hines, who worked for the Forest Service for many years, cut out 365 bird house kits, out of scrap lumber that I got from Edward Hines. And the boys and girls at Lake Creek made birdhouses for several years. And they hung them up, and we painted them, and it was a good coordination lesson for them in hammering nails. And I'll bet you we drove a million nails in those birdhouses, but it was great sport.

It was a real rewarding experience to help build Lake Creek, and see all the boys and girls. In fact, my neighbor right now, Laurie Draper, was one of our 4-H boys and girls at camp. She was from Grant County. And I met boys and girls from Grant, Wheeler, Malheur, just broadens your horizon. You get to know more people.

GRETA: Oh yeah.

MARGE: And when I walk down the street, I like to know people. I was laid up for about fifteen or twenty years. A horse rolled over me at Oregon State, and I was in trouble. I'm doing beautifully now. I hurt but I try not to let it show. But I want to get out there and be with people. That makes my life. That's when I'm really living.

BARBARA: And that's probably why you tend to volunteer and do a lot of things, so you have the opportunity to be with lots of different people, and different ---

MARGE: Oh yes. Well right now my husband John McRae, he's a wonderful fellow, we've been married over twenty-three years, and he was an excellent father to my children. But he works for volunteer services, and he started out just about five years ago, just, they needed somebody to go somewhere. And John, if he can get under the wheel, and the car runs, and it's got gas in it, he'll go anywhere. He loves to go.

BARBARA: Well that's great.

MARGE: And he's learned so much about the doctors, and the people that he takes. And he can

even suggest and help, you know, if they need help.

BARBARA: Is this from the Senior Center that he does some of these things?

MARGE: We really should ask him. It's volunteer services, and it's a special name, but hey listen, I let him handle that one, I can't tell you. The government pays him a pittance for gas, and his meals sometimes. But I have gone with him as an assistant. We took two women to Portland, and they had to have psychoanalysis. I don't know what all, for a week, and then we went back and got them. That was kind of great for me, because I hadn't been to Portland for an age. I'd been through it, but never stopped off. Got to see Burnside anyhow. (Laughter) It's changed. Well let's see here, what have I done?

BARBARA: You were talking about Lake Creek, how long do the sessions run up there in the summertime? How many weeks would you be at Lake Creek during a summer?

MARGE: Oh, I would just go for the Harney County 4-H group.

BARBARA: I see.

MARGE: We would give them anything that they wanted, you know, that we had, that was available. And people came in from everywhere. It's for Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, all church youth. Now they are renting to reunions, any organized group.

BARBARA: Uh huh. During the time that you had Harney County students there, would it be a week session, ten days, two weeks, or ---

MARGE: Usually a week.

BARBARA: A week, uh huh.

MARGE: And by that time the adult chaperons, and teachers, were totally exhausted. I have seen the time when I had to stop the car and sleep ten or fifteen minutes before I could make it home.

BARBARA: Completely exhausted.

MARGE: Totally.

DOROTHEA: Pauline Reed is still Girl Scouting, and she goes up there, and she only spends I think three days now, because it just is too much for her.

MARGE: You bet.

DOROTHEA: I don't know for sure if she is going right now, because she is what, eighty-five years old or something like that.

MARGE: I know. It's really something. But it is in a beautiful setting.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. It is.

MARGE: We took the boys and girls in to High Lake, which is the Strawberry Wilderness area, walked clear down in there. It's a mile down, and three miles out on a hot day! We'd pack in watermelons and take the butcher knife, and all the kids would have a big chunk of watermelon.

I --- years before I had gone out on High Lake in a little rubber raft and fished, and it was a real fun time. But just being with all the kids, and meeting all the interesting extension agents, and just good people.

DOROTHEA: And the thing I think that I enjoy the most is when I'm working with children like that is to see the joy in their faces. Their eyes light up, and oh, they are so thrilled to be able to build a campfire with a little tuna can that is filled with wax and cardboard paper or something.

MARGE: Right. You bet, it is just unbelievable.

BARBARA: What year was this built?

MARGE: Well I have a book in here, it's the only records that they have. And I think it was, it was in the planning stages in '62 and '63, and I think we finally started ground breaking in '64. I'd have to go in there and get that book.

BARBARA: It was early to mid '60's when it was started?

MARGE: Yes. And we had a lot of wonderful help from all over. I made the kitchen curtains, I can remember that. I pounded two nails into it; I wanted to be able to say I was one of the builders of a miracle. (Laughter) I hustled the beautiful aluminum covered plywood that is the kitchen. We thought that might be kind of a deterrent to flame in case the place ever got a little bit hot, you know. And then that fire went right by it last year and missed it, thank heaven.

BARBARA: Oh, yes.

MARGE: Well let's see, we go on down the line, and 4-H, and then finally after I had this problem with the horse rolling over me, I kind of let 4-H go by the way, and I got myself physically back in

shape. I had my body re-sculpted by an osteopath in Boise, which most people don't believe in. But I would have been in a wheel chair today if it hadn't of been for him.

And then I decided I wanted to go to work. And it just happened one day that my neighbor, who worked at the employment office, came home and said, "Hey Marge, there is an opening up at the Chamber Office." And I said, "That's just what I want." And we were moving from our other home to this place, and we had just barely started moving in. So, I went up and talked to Red Bailey, who was the Chamber Manager at that time, and told him that I would like to try to do the work. And he said, "Well just set down and go to work." And I said, "I have to have at least two weeks because we are in the process of moving, and it will take that long to get organized." And then I said, "I'll put my heart and soul into it."

And I didn't really know what to do in a Chamber Office. But when I went in there, the first day I started updating all of the information. I was on the phone constantly. Joe Hardwick wanted to know why he could never call the Chamber Office. I said, "Because I'm updating all this information on our community calendar, and our calendar of events." And I learned to do those, and I wrote them for the Times-Herald for six years. They don't have that service anymore.

DOROTHEA: No.

MARGE: You can get it through the TV now.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

MARGE: But I enjoyed my work immensely with the Chamber.

BARBARA: And how many years were you there?

MARGE: Almost six years to the day. In fact, it was six years that I was there. The objective for the Chamber was to promote the betterment of Harney County for tourists, as well as the County in general. I was efficient in typing, adding machine, copier, business communications, tourist service, business psychology, secretarial, accounting, bookkeeping, filing, payroll, public speaking on occasion, cashier, sales, museum rental. And I would show the people through the museum when no one else was there. Made the bank deposits. There wasn't anything I couldn't do there, that, you know --- I was more, I wanted to be the office manager, rather than go out and do the other

things. Because I just enjoyed meeting the tourists, and I didn't want to leave the office.

I met people from all over the world. In fact, I just corresponded recently from my friends in The Netherlands, Maria and Antonio Jungslager from --- they used to be from Papendrecht, Holland, which is just a few miles south of Amsterdam. But they sold their big home and moved into a cottage. And they came over on a boat to Canada and brought their Volkswagen. Toured Canada, came down through this area, and they stopped in. And she walked in the Chamber office and she said, "We're from Holland, we have no rocks, we want rocks." And I said, "Well if you'll wait until I get off work at 2 o'clock, I'll take you out, and I'll get my husband and we'll take you out and find some rocks." Do you want to turn that off for a minute? (Pause)

BARBARA: The Holland ---

MARGE: She wanted rocks. Are we on?

BARBARA: Uh huh.

MARGE: So, I did take my friends out. Now Tony was a retired lawyer, and Maria was a retired medical technician, as near as I could understand. I'm of German descent, and I can understand just vaguely a few things, because we never spoke it in our family. But I've heard other people talk, so I kind of got the gist of it.

Anyhow we took them out, and my good friend who just passed away, David Jones, lived in my old home on Riverside Drive in Burns. And he gave us an apple box full of all kinds of rocks and petrified wood for them. Then we took them arrowhead hunting, and don't tell the BLM or the Forest Service. But anyhow, they came home to our little home and she says, "Oh, I love your cottage." And she said --- I said, "Well would you like to stay and eat?" "Yah, we'd like to stay and eat."

She went out in her Volkswagen, took a spit bath, dolled up fit to kill, formally came in ready to eat. I'd been out all-day hunting rocks, and didn't have anything to eat, but I threw a salad together and had some steak or something. And I said, "Now is that food alright?" She said, "Yah, but you have no vegetables." See she just, a spade is a spade. (Laughter) Anyhow she sent me a picture of their rocks in their home. When they went back they built special shelves, varnished,

deluxe, and had each rock named, you know. Hey, no rocks from Holland. But she wrote and told me just recently that they had changed their home, and she wants me to come and see them. And I may have the opportunity next year, I don't know, I hope I can.

BARBARA: Oh, that would be a marvelous trip.

MARGE: To me it would just really be something. And then I'd take a quick swing around --- my German ancestors, it wouldn't be too far away. But I want to go and see the McRae Castle in Scotland.

DOROTHEA: Oh, yeah.

MARGE: Helen Cowan and her family have been to Scotland, and they have seen the McRae Castle. In fact, she gave Tim, my son, some old calendars of Scotland that their relatives had sent them. Tim and Clifford were friends in high school, and still are. But that would be a fun thing, you know, as long as you're over there, hit a few of the ---

BARBARA: Might just as well.

MARGE: Sure.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, right, you bet.

MARGE: And I have cousins there that I don't know, but I could find them if I really tried. Well let's see, I took part in the Western Regional 4-H Leaders Forum in Boise one year. And I, actually I'm a member of the Episcopal Church, but I live so close to the Nazarene Church in Hines, I started going there to help a friend of mine that needed a friend, and needed some help. And so, I have been going, John and I have been going to the Nazarene Church since. And I used to put flowers on the altar, and oh for over four years I just enjoyed making flower arrangements for it.

And another thing I was real fortunate one year when I finished with my 4-H tenure, you might say, I received the Outstanding Achievement Award at 4-H Camp. And they gave me this little plaque up here.

BARBARA: I noticed that, uh huh.

MARGE: Which was kind of nice. There are several of those around the county. And I was invited to become a member of the International Platform Association. It's inter-continental

biographical association, and that's why I have this "Personalities of the West" book. They just put things down that you've done. I haven't done anything so great, but Richard Nixon is in here, and I feel like maybe I shouldn't have had my name in there after all. (Laughter) Bless his heart.

Let's see, what can I tell you about my past? Oh, I was --- I had a friend, Agnes Cleveland, who lived, oh about ten or fifteen miles, no about ten miles on the Van road north of Drewsey, who gave me a beautiful book, oh, on wilderness, poetry. And I used that at our 4-H non-denominational church service for many years. Every Sunday, the last day of 4-H camp, the young boys would go out and fall a couple of small lodge poles and make a cross for us. And the girls would go out and gather evergreens and wild flowers, and we would decorate the cross and then we would have our little Sunday service. And you know, they just loved it. And so, I helped with that for about four or five years, that was an interesting thing.

I was superintendent at the Harney County Fair for over eighteen years in arts and hobbies. And then when Ethel Hotchkiss retired she asked me to take over the horticulture. And I wanted to introduce flower arranging, which I had studied for quite some time. So, I started the artistic design for flower arrangement.

And I attended the Rose Festival several years, and a doctor's wife who used to come out to our ranch years ago, took me to the rose shows. And I got information there, and then we had different organizations sponsor trophies here in Burns. And we had trophies for several years, which was kind of a fun thing. And the arts and hobbies was great, I liked that part of the fair.

Oh, I told you I did the flower arrangements for the altar for four years. Tim and I would go out and get, and sometimes we would take other people to help us, to get a tree for the Nazarene Church. We have done that for the last several years. And help decorate for the Messiah.

DOROTHEA: Now I know that, I know a little secret about you. You also make little wreaths for the --- is it the nursing home or the hospital, pinecone wreaths?

MARGE: Well, we made pinecone wreaths for the hospital for many years. But some of the ladies in the garden club are getting a little older, and it's a little hard to make these pinecone wreaths.

Hopefully there will be some of them that can make them this year. But it has been suggested that

maybe we could start making other types of wreaths. Now I have a willow wreath in here that I am putting red poinsettias on, that I think would be nice. And I don't know whether I should get into politics on this now or not, but I have to say this. I was in the woods over the Fourth of July, overnight, I got to stay up there all by myself with my friend Bernice Cote, who is the camp attendant. And here is these little worms falling all over us. And those are the spruce budworm, and I thought they had taken care of that. I didn't know they were in our pine forests. Those are beautiful timber trees, pine trees. And the Forest Service is making no attempt, or the government; I don't mean to knock the Forest Service. The government is making no attempt to do anything because of the environmentalists. But I would like to speak out, because we are never going to have a forest, it's all going to be dead before they ever cut it down. And it's stupid not to do something about it. They let all the forest up around John Day on Canyon Creek die.

DOROTHEA: Died.

MARGE: Finally, when they could get in there with the spray, the environmentalists said let it go, we don't want you to kill this. It's a touchy subject with me.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

MARGE: Sorry about that.

DOROTHEA: I think you're not alone in these feelings either. But on to other things. You mention the garden club. Have they reorganized, or have they been an ongoing club?

MARGE: Well our Green --- I belonged to the Green Thumb Garden Club years ago. And finally -- that was when I was on the ranch. When I moved to town I was quite sick for a while with my back, and I thought well wouldn't it be so much simpler just to merge with Sunrise. And some of them thought this would be fine. So, that's what we did. And we have a pretty good working group, although we don't have too many Sunrise members anymore. We have more of our Green Thumbers, but I mean whatever. We're not picky about it, we work together.

BARBARA: Is that the group with Agnes Hirsch?

MARGE: Yes, uh huh. Yes, I was --- Aggie came --- oh I might mention I had Garden Club on the 21st of July, no June, and we had such a lovely time, and Aggie came. She is having a hard time

gardening now that Frank has been injured, or had his stroke. And ---

BARBARA: I play bridge with her, so ---

MARGE: We need to get some new blood. I've been working, we have a new member, JoAnn Graves joined our Garden Club. We need some more new members. Then we went out to Diamond this year on a tour. And the Diamond ladies, well all the 493 ladies, were our hostesses. We had a lovely luncheon there, and then we went on down to the McCoy Creek Inn, because we wanted to see what it was all about, and it is beautiful, if you haven't been there.

DOROTHEA: Haven't been there. Can you tell us something about it?

MARGE: Yes, get a group together and call Shirley and go down for a brunch or a party. They're doing this all the time. They run from six --- let's see, from seven to eight dollars for a brunch, I think, to anywhere from ten to fifteen dollars for a dinner. It just all depends on the menu. And the setting is fantastic on McCoy Creek. It runs right through this working ranch, beautiful old home. They have turkeys, and chickens, and guinea hens. And they have remodeled the old home, and they have wall papered it with antique, beautiful, expensive wallpaper, I tell you.

DOROTHEA: And who are the owners of this?

MARGE: It's the old Leon Thompson Ranch, I believe. Now I stand corrected if not. But Gretchen Thompson married Dan Nichols, and they live there and work the ranch. And they have their own home. And then the older home Shirley and David Thompson, and probably Nevin too, her husband, have restored this old house. And Shirley prepares the meals. And they have a small bunkhouse there too for people to stay in. And really, I think it is fantastic. I'd like to run away for a whole week and go down there and just fish and play, and walk around the hills.

DOROTHEA: Now do they take you on fishing tours, or can you go fishing?

MARGE: I don't know. I have the brochure here, but it was a month ago that I read it see, I don't retain too well. I'm sixty-five and a half. Remember when you used to say I'm two and a half? I'm sixty-five and a half.

DOROTHEA: Have you done much traveling, Marge?

MARGE: Not a whole lot.

DOROTHEA: Besides what you've told us.

MARGE: Oh, I've gone to the Mayo Clinic twice with my husband for cancer surgery. And that was a fantastic, fabulous experience. The attitude that we took when we started out was that it's another day, and if we can be helped we will. And we drove back there both times. They did radical cancer surgery on John's nose. And they had never diagnosed it properly here in Idaho, where he started having surgery. He had squamous cell, or squamous cell, which is the festering, real bad kind of cancer. And they said it was another type here in Boise. But it was great that we went. They operated on him one day, and then they turned around and took him back in and took off another whole area. And John was on IV's for thirty days in the hospital there. Oh, it was the Methodist Hospital right downtown, Rochester. Then they have a beautiful huge hospital that the nuns built, called St. Mary's, which is out a couple miles.

But I enjoyed going across the United States. And we stopped at every capitol of every state that we went through, and I took pictures of them. And my scrapbook shows all the capitols of the --- the capitol of South Dakota is positively beautiful. And let's see, is it Des Moines, no Lincoln, Nebraska, I believe that is the capitol, that is a beautiful place. Just different ones, I haven't looked at the pictures for ages.

It's been ten years, I guess, since we were there. And I got to see the I.D.S. Building in Minneapolis. And we went to a bear farm in Rapid City, South Dakota. There were just bear everywhere. That was interesting.

And of course, we went to Mount Rushmore, and I saw a wild goat, a real wild goat. And I screamed for John to turn around, but there were so many people following us, that we couldn't. So, then I go into Dr. Wendel's office up here, and he's got a mounted goat that looked just like it.

DOROTHEA: I saw that.

MARGE: Have you ever seen that?

BARBARA: No.

DOROTHEA: Yes, I did, I saw that.

MARGE: But two years ago --- oh I've been to Glacier National Park, and Yosemite National Park.

In fact after John had his cancer surgery we had to go to Stanford University for checkups for five years. And I have seen so much sickness, and so much heartache in people, it's unbelievable. So even though I do have pain from my back problems, I try not to let it get to me, because you see other people that are in so much worse shape.

But now I read that Glacier National Park, you're not even allowed to drive through it. You have to go in a bus, and you miss half of it.

DOROTHEA: Oh, really?

MARGE: Oh yes, they're ruining the national parks.

BARBARA: There are just so many people, it's just ---

MARGE: Yeah, people just take them over, and just, you know --- Are you too cold there?

DOROTHEA: No.

MARGE: Then two years ago, two years ago, three years ago, oh in '87, let's go back a ways. Mrs. Poteet moved to Oklahoma and she wanted us to come and visit her. So, I took two weeks off from the Chamber, I had coming. And John and I started out; I believe it was about the 15th of March. And I wanted to go where I would see a few other of the major sites, so we went down through Grand Canyon. And I can't remember what that place was down there that we stayed all night. I have blanked out. But anyhow we woke up to four inches of snow, and I thought --- oh, Kingman, Arizona, I believe that was it. Flagstaff, there we go. Woke up to four inches of snow, and I've always dreamed of Arizona of being a hot dessert, you know. I didn't know any better, I hadn't really studied it.

BARBARA: The mountains, uh huh.

MARGE: And so, we couldn't go east on that highway. So, I said, "Well great, I always wanted to go to Mexico anyhow." (Laughter) So we headed for Mexico, and we went down through Phoenix, and Tucson, and down where I could see into Mexico. But you had to buy a special license, or insurance to drive your car over there, so I said what the heck, we won't go. And we came along the border, and on up through Texas, and we got to Midland in the evening and we had dinner at a Holiday Inn. And I said to the waitress, "Well, I thought this was the place where all the oil wells

are." And she said, "They are." And I said, "Well, I haven't seen them anywhere." And she said, "Well, they're just right out the door there." Well, we came in from the south, and after you leave this little Midland town, it's all oil wells north. But there wasn't any back here, see.

So, I learned so much about the geography of the land. And I got to cross the Red River, and its really red. And we went up to Coweta, Oklahoma where Minta was. And her niece took us into Oklahoma City; no what's that one? Blanked out again, Tulsa. And we went through that famous museum, it starts with a G, and I can't tell you the name of it. If my dear departed friend Anna Hammond was here, we'd really tell you all about it. She's been through it, "fantabulous" museum.

And then I couldn't stand it; we had to go out to Oral Robert's University so I could see what that was all about. And that's a lot of glitz and glitter. And Oral was up in his tower praying that day, so we didn't get to meet him. And that was a wonderful trip.

On our way home, it snowed so bad we had to go the southern route, down through New Mexico. And there were huge eighteen-wheelers with trailers tipped over, off the road. And we just sailed right through, because we're used to snow, you know. We knew --- you don't stop, you just keep on going.

BARBARA: Right.

MARGE: Then we came back through Las Vegas; I'd never seen that. So, we had a pretty good tour, you know. I got to see all of the cactus. And you know you're not supposed to pick cactus, it's illegal. But I couldn't stand it; I had to have a souvenir. I said, "John, stop." And he said, "What for?" And I said, "Oh, I just want to get out here for a minute." And I ran up this shale talus a little bit and reached down and I tried to get just a little one, you know, and it wouldn't come loose. And I pulled on it, and I kind of slipped in the, in this shale talus, and I fell flat on that cactus.

BARBARA: Oh, no.

MARGE: Got it in my "boobs". (Laughter) I tell you I was really picking and fighting there, but I didn't get it too bad. I got in the car; I haven't stole any cactus since. (Laughter)

BARBARA: They were trying to tell you something.

MARGE: Yeah, somebody was trying to tell me something.

DOROTHEA: Well, I wanted a souvenir like you, so I bought one, and it died. So, I don't have a souvenir.

MARGE: Well, mine lived for several years, you know. Did you know they have cactus in North Dakota?

DOROTHEA: No.

MARGE: With beautiful pink blossoms. Hey, I didn't know that. You know, it doesn't pay to fly. You end up getting dead anyhow. (Laughter) I like to just go on the ground. Get in the car and go, you see so many things.

Then we went to Glacier National Park. Oh, we took Mrs. Poteet and John Creed that year. And I loved it so much, that we went back the next year and took Mother. And we went on up through Alberta, Calgary, and I drove all around Calgary by myself and didn't get lost. That was right after the Olympics, and I kind of was familiar with what I'd seen on that Olympics. And we went on up through, oh the most beautiful mountains in the world, the Rocky Mountains. And there is one huge group of mountains all by itself, they call it the Castle, or Cathedral Mountains, or something. It looked just like a huge castle.

And then on up to Banff, which is nothing but a commercialized deal, but it was "fantabulous". Every home, every place on Main Street has flowers, potted summer flowers. And it has the Tyrolean, Swiss, German decor in their town. And people of every nationality under the sun are speaking, and you can't talk to anybody.

Then we went on over to Lake Louise, and the beautiful hotel, and they were doing some renovations there. I took a fantastic picture out of the window of the hotel. It looked just like pictures you see anywhere.

And the water from the --- what am I trying to say, that big glacier, it was a milky green. And I had never noticed that before. And now when I notice pictures like these steamships, or voyage liners that take you up through the Alaskan strip, or the Straits of Juan De Fuca, and on up to the glaciers, that water has that greeny, milky look.

I love, see I studied art and colors, and there are so many things out there that we don't realize until we just see them face-to-face. It's kind of a fun thing, I notice everything.

When I buckarood in the spring of the year, the wild flowers were unbelievable. I've seen things that a lot of people will never see, just because I was out there. So, it's just a fun world to live in. I'm kind of a pioneer.

DOROTHEA: We're about coming down to the end of our tape, and I don't think we've got time to go much further.

BARBARA: I wanted to ask just one little thing. You mentioned when you went to Portland and stayed for a week, you had a dress, and a skirt and a blouse, and were very poor as a child. What did your father make as a carpenter, and a cabinetmaker?

MARGE: You mean like amounts?

BARBARA: Well not specifically dollar amounts. But I mean did he not make a very good living at being a carpenter?

MARGE: Oh, yes.

BARBARA: Or just wasn't money to be had at that time?

MARGE: Well, I'll tell you what. He had the, he built all these homes, and then I've forgotten what caused it --- the depression of course, sure. It was in the '29's and '30's, there was a depression, I'd forgotten for a while. I was so small it didn't penetrate my soul. But he had to borrow money from a loan company. Mother mentioned something about that. He came in to pay on his loans. Well when I graduated from high school, my father just finished paying off all these twenty-six homes that he had built. And he built two duplexes. I can't remember what else he built for himself. So, see then he was just finally --- and then he started selling them, fixing them up again and selling them.

And then he built the Gayway Motel and Cafe. Actually, he built the Gayway Dance Hall for, who was the guy that trained the bears, Walt Lowe. He built it for Walt Lowe, and Walt couldn't make it work, so my dad took it over.

And Mother always wanted a motel, so he built her seven units the first year, and their

apartment. And then I don't know whether it was the next year, or the following year he added on ten more. Then he turned the dance hall, which was also used as a roller-skating rink for many years, into apartments.

BARBARA: Well, where was this dance hall located?

MARGE: Well right down here on Highway 20, between Burns and Hines.

DOROTHEA: Where the Sundowner is.

MARGE: And then they sold that to the Hindu people. And we won't go into that at this point in time.

DOROTHEA: Also, didn't you get big entertainers, like; I can't remember some of the names because I'm not a western singer person. But didn't you have ---

MARGE: Well, I was living at Drewsey at the time, but they used to have some pretty good dances in there.

And Edward Hines always rented the place early in December for their Christmas parties. And I know my folks would recruit me three weeks before Christmas to come in, or before the parties, to decorate. And I decorated that old barn for years, and years, and years. And we put on some fabulous parties. We would bake fourteen hams, and I don't know, maybe twenty turkeys. And we'd get them all ready and take them to the bakery and they'd bake them in the bakery. And then Hattie Schroeder for many years baked the turkeys for us. She was a precious woman, and a wonderful cook. She taught me many things, and I have some of her recipes now.

But it's just been a great life. And I love Harney County. I loved working at the Chamber office. People would come in and I'd tell them where to go, what to do, what to see. And I was always so enthusiastic about it; they always wanted to come back. When I worked in the Chamber, I've had people call me from all over the United States. One little man called me from New York City and he said, "When is the High Desert Fiddler's Contest," he said, "I got to be there?" Just a little old crotchety fellow, you could tell by the way he was talking. And I told him. And he said, "Lady, I'll be there."

And I received correspondence from Grenada, from the Falkland Islands, the Iron Curtain,

behind the Iron Curtain in Poland. Several letters from people there that I had to answer. And you know I've had those people come to the office after I have answered them. I've had people from South Africa, oh, Hawaii, Italy, Ireland. I had a lady from Germany. After I had visited with her, she went out to her car and brought me a little vile of perfume which I have that she, they make, they made it in Germany, you know.

BARBARA: Oh, uh huh.

MARGE: They'd bring me little gifts. And people from Switzerland, I have invitations to go many places. All I've got to do is win the lottery. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Well before this stops, we're getting the red light again, that means we're almost to the end of the tape. I'd like to thank you --- don't let this stop you from telling us of your experiences. But we do thank you for the afternoon.

MARGE: Well, thank you Dorothea, it's been a privilege. I just love to visit with people, and I go on forever.

DOROTHEA: Well, we've enjoyed this too, so like I said; don't let us stop you, because we have a little tiny stab of tape. But we do want to do a video, so that we can stick you in the video too. So --

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MARGE: Oh yeah, well I don't look too sharp today, but whatever.

DOROTHEA: Oh, you look beautiful.

MARGE: I'm getting cold from that --- (air conditioner).

DOROTHEA: That's what I was going to say, you can turn that off. So, we'll stop --- you're fine, you're fine --- we'll stop right now and pause ---

MARGE: Warm it up a little bit.

(END OF TAPE)

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