

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #316 - Sides A & B & C

Subject: Mary Pengelly - With Video

Date: February 28, 1992

Place: Pengelly Home - Burns, Oregon

Interviewers: Barbara Lofgren & Dorothea Purdy

DOROTHEA PURDY: This is Dorothea Purdy along with Barbara Lofgren, and today we will be talking to Mary Pengelly at her home in Burns, Oregon. The date is February 28th, 1992. Following our interview, which I forgot to tell you about, we will be doing a short video of Mary, and it will be stored at the library along with the transcript and cassette tape, the number is #316. Mary, let's start by asking you your maiden name, and where you were born.

MARY PENGELLY: Okay, my maiden name was Griffiths, and I was born in Klamath Falls, Oregon. And I lived there all of my growing up years.

DOROTHEA: Okay. What were your parent's names?

MARY: My mother's name was Aubra, and her maiden name was Bradbury. And my father's name was Charles Griffiths, and he lived in Klamath Falls from 1921, and he came there from Victoria, British Columbia. My mother is from a pioneer Oregon family that has been here since 1843.

DOROTHEA: Oh, can you tell us something about the family?

MARY: Her family?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

MARY: Uh huh. Well her great-grandmother came across the plains in a covered wagon when she was about fifteen, and they were in the Marcus Whitman wagon train of 1843.

And she married a man who came from Maine. He lived in Maine for --- his family, the Bradbury's, had lived in Maine for seven generations, and he was a whaler. And he jumped ship in Oregon and married the girl that came on the covered wagon. So that's how my mother's family got started in Oregon. They settled at Seaside, that's where the family settled.

BARBARA LOFGREN: You say your father came from Canada. Was he born there?

MARY: He was born in Canada.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

MARY: And his mother and father were both immigrants to Victoria from England. My grandmother, I didn't ever know my grandfather Griffiths, he came from the Welch borders of England, and the name Griffiths is a Welch name. I did know my grandmother Griffiths, and she came from the midlands, Worcester, England. And I have been fortunate enough to visit where both of them lived.

BARBARA: That's an unusual name; can you spell it for us?

MARY: Griffiths?

BARBARA: Uh huh.

MARY: G R I F F I T H S. Very characteristically Welch.

DOROTHEA: Okay, can you tell us something about your mother's family, and how they settled in Klamath Falls where you were born? (Pause, somebody at the door.) Okay, we were asking about how your parents settled in Klamath Falls, can you tell us something about that?

MARY: Yes. My great-great-grandfather settled, his name was Hobson, he settled at Seaside. And his daughter married Bradbury, and they went up on the Columbia River and lived on a donation land claim for a while. But eventually the mother, that woman

who came across on the covered wagon, she died when she was really quite young, and there were three children who grew up more or less in boarding situations. But they really centered their life around the grandfather down at Seaside.

And then they were all restless people. The great-grandfather, my great-great-grandfather who was the whaler, he didn't stay home at Seaside; he went off to the gold mines in California. And then his son also did similar things like that.

So my great-grandfather went looking for gold in Southern Oregon, and had a gold mine at Galice on the Rogue River, and left my grandfather and his mother home to milk the cows. (Laughter)

So then, I think it was my mother's, mother's family retired from a farm in the Willamette Valley, and they went to Seaside, and some of them then were migrating all over. They all traveled, it was amazing how much they traveled. And one of them, one of my great uncles settled in Klamath and it was about the time that the Reclamation Project was established. Then they were going to turn the Klamath Basin into potato country or whatever with irrigation water. So that's when my great-grandfather located in Klamath in the early 1900's, about 1905.

And my mother and her siblings, two siblings at that point, who had been, all been born at Seaside, they made a visit to Klamath to visit the grandfather, then they went back to Portland where my grandfather worked as a steam fitter. And then they relocated to Klamath in 1911, so my mother moved there permanently in 1911. And they had a dry land farm.

My grandfather, my mother's father, became the first secretary of the Klamath Irrigation District after the Bureau of Reclamation built the canal and things like that. Then they turned it over to the farmers to, you know, for the irrigation districts. And that's how

he, that's how they got in Klamath.

And just last summer we had a reunion, my mother was 90, she is the oldest of five children. Two of them were born in Klamath, the two younger ones, but she has outlived all of her five, you know, the five of them. And she turned 90 last September, and we had a family reunion at Henley School, because many of her cousins and my cousins went to school at Henley. And my grandfather was responsible for; he was on the board that helped get Henley High School established, because he didn't want his daughters going to that wicked city of Klamath Falls to board.

So then my mother, the school, she was the first person to go to Henley High School, first class, and they didn't have a standard high school. So she went with one of the teachers who returned to Corvallis, and was on the faculty at Corvallis at the college. And mother went with her, and boarded with her, and helped her with her research project, like she counted the wheat for a wheat project or something. And she finished high school and later graduated from Oregon Agricultural College, and returned to Klamath to teach. She graduated from college finally in 1924. She taught a few years, in between years of teaching.

Then my father migrated to Klamath Falls, which was pretty much a boomtown in the 1920's, because of irrigation. And he was a pressman in a printing shop. So anyway that's where, they were both there when they were in their twenties. And that's where they met, and that's how they both got there.

BARBARA: So how many brothers and sisters do you have then?

MARY: I have one brother; he is three years younger than I am. And he grew up in Klamath, and he went to Oregon State, and he was in the Army Signal Corp. And when he got through with all of that he returned to Klamath for a short while, worked as a disk

jockey at a radio station, he'd been in the Army Signal Corp and done that sort of thing. But he finally went back to college and met a business --- he went to get a graduate degree in business. Well he never finished that, but he met this instructor who invited him back to Chicago to work in market research. And he has lived in Chicago since 1963, or something like that. And he met a, he's married to a woman from Wisconsin, and he's lived in Chicago ever since.

BARBARA: And so you went through your grade through high school in Klamath Falls then?

MARY: Right, yes. I went to the same grade school for eight years, and then I went to Klamath Union High School, graduated from there in 1946. Then I went to the University of Oregon and graduated in 1950 from U. of O.

BARBARA: And your major was education or ---

MARY: No, my major was biology. (Laughter) So after I got a degree in biology I went to San Francisco and got a job in a bank.

BARBARA: Oh, that makes good sense, doesn't it?

MARY: I had one course in education as an under graduate, and was never going to teach, because my mother taught. So I was never going to do that. But I worked in Oakland, California for two years in the bank. And then I got a chance to go to Radcliffe College in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and I got a partial scholarship. I went to a program called the Management Training Program, which was for women who had liberal arts undergraduate work, and they were going to give them one year with Harvard Business School faculty to kind of get them into mid-management positions in the business world. So from biology to banks, to the business administration was my route, and I was still avoiding education. (Laughter)

So I went, I lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts for that school year. And one of their big things was to have you go out on fieldwork assignments. So I worked at Abraham & Straus Department Store in Brooklyn, New York for four weeks as part of my training there. And I spent three times as much money in New York as I was earning at my job.

And then in the spring we had another field work assignment and I worked in the grinding wheel factory in Worcester, Massachusetts, and I followed their paper work where they translated the customer's order into the paper work that went out to the factory. And they built everything; Norton Abrasives built everything from dentist's drills to pulp stones. And so I followed, I just learned what they did in there. We didn't get--- we got paid for this fieldwork, but we didn't, you know, we weren't there long enough to be valuable.

And then I thought about coming back to the, getting a job on the west coast. There were a lot more jobs available to the graduates of that program in the east. But I didn't really want to stay in the east, so I compromised and I got a summer job.

And I went to Maine and I recruited a group of college girls to work in the blueberry canneries. And I was the foreman, forelady on the night crew at the blueberry cannery, and I had lots of adventures on that job.

I was interested in Maine because of the family. I spent, I spent that whole year seeing quite a lot of New England, as well as going to New York for a month. That was a very interesting year, and one which has really colored all of my thinking ever since.

DOROTHEA: Well how did you come about meeting your husband, and when?

MARY: Well I went to all the happy hunting grounds. Graduate School, San Francisco, and all that, and I came home broke, had to recoup my finances, so I went to work again

in a bank in Klamath. And after he had been an educational gypsy and gone to many schools, he ended up teaching school in Klamath Falls. And mutual friends thought we should get together. (Laughter) So we met in Klamath Falls. He was teaching, and I was working in the bank.

BARBARA: And where did Russell go to school?

MARY: He went to Keystone Junior College in his hometown in Pennsylvania. And then he went to college at a, in Idaho. It was a Naval Training Station that had been turned into a college after the war, on Lake Pend Oreille, Farragut Naval Training Station. And he took all the courses in biology there, and he transferred down to New Mexico State at Las Cruces, New Mexico, and he got his degree in botany from there. Then he went back to do graduate work in Montana. And then he, I don't remember if he finished that, but I didn't know him then.

But he came to Oregon looking for; he was tired of school, and needed to go to work. So he came to Oregon, which is something that I think his father put in his mind a long time before. It was something his father had kind of dreamed of doing, but never got to do. And so Russell came to Oregon, and he ended up getting a job on the green chain at a sawmill in Coos Bay. So he did that a couple of years, and then he decided well he better go back to school and get his teaching degree.

And then in the meantime, just before I met Russell I decided that yeah, I had better go back and get a teaching degree, it would be better than working at a bank forever. The opportunities for women in the bank were not what they are now.

So I had gone to Southern Oregon and gotten my teaching certificate. So we both, he was in his third year of teaching the year we --- we got married in the summer between summer school and the beginning of the regular term. This is kind of the story of our

lives.

And I taught one year in Klamath, and then David was born the next spring. And then I didn't teach anymore, and then Aubra was born a year later. So I didn't go back to teaching until we moved to Burns.

DOROTHEA: So when were you married? What year and month?

MARY: We got married in August of 1954.

DOROTHEA: And you have two children?

MARY: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: A daughter and a son.

MARY: David was born in '55, and Aubra was born in '56. And Russell was teaching in Klamath, he taught there for --- well we moved to Burns in 1959.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and what brought about moving to Burns? Was there a job opening, or did you just decide you wanted to go someplace else?

MARY: Russell had been, he was teaching in the junior high in Klamath Falls, and he really wanted to get into high school. So it was --- he had a degree in biology, and usually the biology teachers in high school were coaches at that time. He didn't really want to coach, but the way it worked was that coaches had enough biology to teach biology, but he was a botanist, and he really was interested in the science part of it. And so he looked for jobs several years in Northern California and around Oregon. And it was hard to find a job where he could teach science and not be a coach. So there were a few, and one of them was here in Burns. They had a really strong academic program at that --- and the man was interested in his science. So that's why we, he accepted a job here.

And I was never going to teach again. But we got into a really, we got into a very controversial problem the year we came here. The budget had failed, and they had hired

three additional teachers and they didn't have the money to pay them. So they were going to take money out of the other parts of the budget, but two taxpayers filed a suit against doing that. So by the middle of the year, this went through a court case, and by the middle of the year the three teachers who had been hired --- they could always hire back as many teachers as they had the year before at the same pay they had the year before, but they couldn't expand the number of people or give raises if the budget failed. So the middle of the year we found out that Russell's job here was not legal.

BARBARA: Oh dear.

MARY: And so the three new teachers were in a, you know, really a bad situation. So that was a very interesting year. And the three teachers chose to stick together and all stay as long as they could. And one of them found a job in The Dalles before Christmas, and then Russell and the other one went job hunting at Christmas vacation. And while we were away from Burns, that Christmas vacation, some unallocated forest service money came into the school. So they could keep one of the teachers, and they knew where the business teacher was, he was being interviewed for a job in Coos Bay. And they called him and got him in the superintendent's office, but he was going to get a much better contract than he had here, so he liked that and he didn't want to come back to Burns. And so that left it, that if they could find Russell he could have this job here. Well he was actually in Portland looking for a job. And the way they found us was, somebody knew that I had gone to the University of Oregon, they looked, they didn't know where we were Christmas vacation. They didn't know my folks' name. So somebody knew I had gone to the U. of O. and they looked us up in the Oregon Yearbook, and found out my maiden name and called my folks in Klamath Falls, and that's how they were able to tell Russell that he had the job here. So out of the three, he was the only one that stayed.

BARBARA: Isn't that wonderful.

MARY: That's kind of an interesting---

BARBARA: Round about way of getting it.

MARY: Really, that was a very exciting year.

BARBARA: I should say.

DOROTHEA: So how did you get back into teaching then?

MARY: Well I let --- when we weren't sure we were going to have employment (Laughter) and we had --- cost money to move, and we had taken a reduction in his pay to come here, well I let it be known that I could substitute, or I needed to look for --- I kind of felt like I should do something about this. So when they found out that I had been a teacher, Mr. Slater --- well he had been told that he could no longer hire teachers from North Dakota without interviewing them. So his strategy was not to change his ways and go interview the teachers in North Dakota, but he interviewed local housewives that had been teachers and tried to sign them on, and that's really what he did.

And so he --- and I really didn't want to teach, I hadn't liked it all that well. And so I sat down and I figured out my budget for twenty years, and the one thing that we could do that if I taught, that we couldn't do otherwise, according to our plans, was that we could go visit Russell's family. And after, we had never --- I had never met them, and they didn't know the kids. They lived in Pennsylvania, they didn't come to our wedding, and we had not had enough money to go meet them. So based on that I decided to teach again. So that's how I got back into teaching.

BARBARA: And so when you went back to college after working in the bank, you took elementary education, is that what you took?

MARY: Yeah, I did that. I quit the bank in Klamath Falls just about the time I met Russ. I

had already decided to go to summer school and get my teaching certificate, so that's what I did. But I did have to take some more classes. I took almost a year's worth of extension classes here. It really worked out well; I hadn't had any education classes except Southern Oregon one summer. But there were many teachers here who didn't have degrees, and they were having to get degrees. So there was a lot of extension courses offered through LaGrande, and so I got all of my teaching

BARBARA: Did they call them Reading and Conference Classes at that time?

MARY: No, they were called extension.

BARBARA: Were they, uh huh.

MARY: They were called general; yeah they were called extension classes. And the instructors from LaGrande would haul all the library and everything down here. They would come on a Friday, they'd drive down on a Friday, we'd have three hours Friday night, and three hours Saturday morning, and they would bring us books and whatever. And there were a lot of teachers who taught here then who were trying to get their degrees. Well I had my degree, but I didn't have the teaching credentials. I didn't have the education hours. So that's how I got enough of those to go into teaching.

But then after I had taught for five years, I went back to school summers, and got a certificate in special education. They were starting up the Special Ed program, so I started the program in this county for the educable mentally retarded in 1967. And then I stayed in that field.

I got two different certificates. I earned my master's degree in the field of mental retardation, and then I later updated that again to a handicap learner's certificate. And I worked in the field of Special Ed for twenty years at the elementary school. So that was

my teaching career. Then I retired in 1987.

BARBARA: What did you see happening during those twenty years of teaching in Special Ed? Since you started the program, how has it blossomed out into what it is today? I mean it has really expanded in the school systems now. Did you have a lot of students when you first started out?

MARY: No. And the people, the parents were very skeptical about it. Well a lot of people were, you know. Well first of all I just focused on educable mentally retarded. Then I got a different certificate and we --- well I had all of the kids the first year. I had grades one through eight in that --- and there were, I would say my average load for a long time, for the first ten years, I'd say it probably averaged twelve kids a year. It might vary from nine to fifteen. The first year I had no teacher's aide at all, and that was --- didn't work, especially with the wide age range. Well eventually they followed up my program by, when the junior high split off then they did hire a teacher to teach a half a day at the junior high, and half a day at the high school to follow these kids that I worked with down in the elementary. So that narrowed that age range. And they were, we were getting aides in the classroom to help with this.

But then I, a lot of things were going on, there were children who weren't identified as educable mentally retarded, but needed more help than they were getting. So first I pirated some of those into the program, because they really needed the same kind of help. But eventually they, I got a handicapped learner's certificate because they realized that there were many areas of exceptionality not just mental retardation.

So it moved up in the direction of learning disabilities on the side of the scale where the students didn't have mental retardation, but they had special learning difficulties.

The program also moved down to the other side of the scale with the trainable retarded, who formerly had been in institutions, and they were bringing them back into communities. They were bringing them back into communities. And so they were, the public school had to provide, you know, service to that population.

Well I got some training in that area, which is a more --- it's a different kind of education than for the educable retarded. The educable retarded you can teach them reading and math with hands on type things. The trainable it's more a question of teaching them self-help skills, and not much reading. But, you know, just teaching them what they need for life skills. And that program got to be, especially in Eastern Oregon, they called it the rural model where a teacher with the academic training could supervise aides who did the work with those more handicapped students. So I worked out from being focused on educable mentally retarded to doing learning disabled and trainable retarded.

BARBARA: I think that's what they're doing now, they have a lot of aides in the school systems that --- several of my friends work with the children. Maybe they have one or two that they work several hours a day with, one on one.

MARY: That's kind of the way they are able to provide the service. And the last four years that I was at school, before I retired, I worked in the paperwork part of the program. The kind of administrative, diagnosing the kids. And I had, you know, I picked up some training on giving tests, of doing the testing.

BARBARA: I understand there is kind of categories for these groups of children now too -
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MARY: Yeah.

BARBARA: --- that they have, and what they need to work with.

MARY: What we're seeing right now, and I began to see it before I retired, was that now we have many children that are damaged prenatally with drugs and alcohol. And those children have a lot of learning problems that --- and this is one reason that Special Ed is expanding.

Another thing that has happened in Burns, that because of our economics you get more people who are marginal economically that stay here, and even come here. They can get welfare quicker, they stay with relatives, and they can get cheaper housing. They can

--- we, when you have poor economic condition like the mill going down, you attract more people with problems. So you get a higher percentage of these kinds of kids when you talk about the programs. But it is true all over the country that we are seeing many more handicapped students in schools, for many reasons.

DOROTHEA: Well this is one of the questions I was going to ask, when you first started this program, how did you come about getting it started? I mean did you go out and more or less solicit to help, like the handicapped children, or were they coming into the schools at that time, or how did you get them started coming?

MARY: Well we knew that there were children in our classrooms who were not academically capable. They had to be tested on a standardized intelligence test, and they had to meet criteria set by the state as to who could be identified as mentally retarded. I had children in my first classroom, some of whom I'd had in my regular classes, and there was one girl who in my regular fourth grade class knew that you did this to write, but she literally just scribbled. Well she learned to write in the penmanship sense of the word, and she learned to write sentences because she had enough help in a Special Ed setting that she could do that.

And I did a lot of practical things like field trips, cooking, shop, I did all these kind of things to relate, to make learning relevant to what --- well I used to say that, well my curriculum for special ed was what do I need to know in the summer. Well I need to go to the store without getting gypped. I need to know how to cook a meal. You know, I don't need to know about the economic geography of the American colonies, which I was trying to teach at fourth grade. And it's interesting that the fact that I had gone to this program at Radcliffe where they send us out on fieldwork, really had a great influence on my ability to know what these kids need. And to understand how to learn so much more by what you do, than by learning it out of books.

BARBARA: Did you have any problems with other parents, or the general public, when you started this out about having the Special Ed children in the school with their children? Was there any conflict at that time when you first started?

MARY: There is always a problem about identifying people as having special needs. We really are, we don't like to face the realities, and so we make a lot of effort to --- well half of your job as a Special Ed teacher is to explain it to teachers and to the public, it really is. Part of it is teaching the kids, but, you know, a lot of it is selling it to, selling it --- I mean encouraging people to understand that these people can do things. And that generally the kids I had at first, or that one population, they are people that can fade back into the main stream in the community after they grow up. They stick out a lot when they can't learn to read and write as fast as the others. But they are people that will take care of themselves.

And the purpose of the program was to keep them from getting discouraged. Because they were already, you know, the kids all know who is not able to do the work. And to keep them encouraged, and to make what they are doing really relevant to their needs. So ---

BARBARA: But you never had any trouble with parents saying, "I don't want this child in my student's class, because ---?"

MARY: Yeah, you always have some trouble. But, you try to deal with it, because you have to.

BARBARA: Right.

MARY: Right.

DOROTHEA: Do the students, I don't want to say pick on these children, but do the students --- you say they know who they are.

MARY: Oh yes

DOROTHEA: You know, because they are slower. But do they really treat them like an outsider, or do they kind of treat them like one of themselves?

MARY: A lot of times those children get picked on, because that is the nature of children to be --- they are kind of mean to each other, even, no matter who they are. They're, actually gifted children have the same problem. The kids recognize that they are different, and they have a lot of trouble with social acceptance by other students. It's really, both sides of it ---

BARBARA: You're just a bookworm; we don't want you around, teacher's pet, and all that sort of ---

MARY: We don't want you if you're a bookworm, and we don't want you if you're a dunce, you know, or whatever you call it, you know. And so really a lot of the idea of Special Ed is to help all the kids understand that, you know, we are all human and have the same feelings. You know you spend a lot of your time in school doing that anyway, in any group of kids. But it's because you label them, and one of the big things that happens in Special Ed is that they, you're always changing the title, the names, the labels.

First I had a kind of an amusing incident with a sales lady over in Bend who was up on the jargon. And she said, well she said, "I was born with a problem," she said, "I'm vertically challenged." And while she was trying to tell me, and she was joking, she was trying to tell me that she was shorter than average, and so --- and then I said something to her later, I fed it back to her later and said, "Oh, you're vertically handicapped." She said, "No, not handicapped, challenged." Because see that's the new word with Special Ed, you're not, anybody is not handicapped anymore, now they're challenged, you know.

And I saw many, many changes of labels as we went through, even the twenty years I was in it. And I delivered the services in various ways. First there was a self-contained room. Then it was inter-digitations, they can go out to certain classes where they aren't conspicuously challenged, handicapped, or whatever. Then its resource room where they live in the homeroom, but they come to the resource room.

And two years I was an itinerant teacher where I drove around from school to school, and they didn't take them out of the room at all except when I was there. They have tried every variety of delivering the services to the, you know, and they all have some advantages, and they all have some disadvantages. People don't like being, in our culture; they don't like any feeling that they are different.

DOROTHEA: Well my grandchildren got started in the first grade and kindergarten; they have now the junior first grade. Is this helping these children that say are a little slower, or not quite ready to go to school and the parents put them into school anyway?

MARY: Well that program got started just before I retired. The idea was that these children are not; they don't have learning disabilities as far as reversal of letters, things like this. They are not mentally retarded or mentally handicapped, they may be socially immature. The thing is that if a child doesn't succeed in his very first experience at

school, then he gets a really bad feeling about himself in the school setting, and he's got to be there for the next twelve years. And the very first experiences at school are very crucial to his self-image.

So this was another effort to --- I worked a lot with self-image with Special Ed kids, you know, that they were okay. They were maybe different, maybe they couldn't do everything other kids do, but I said when I was in school, you know, I had freckles, and that was a big disadvantage. It was, it was a source of being teased and ---

DOROTHEA: It was kind of like wearing glasses.

MARY: Wearing glasses. And you know you work a lot --- I would say special ed is, in the classroom itself is fifty percent counseling, because they have to learn how to deal with other people making fun of them, you know.

BARBARA: And basically since you helped initiate the junior first grade program, what do they do between kindergarten and first grade then? Are they just really working on their social skills, and they do the reading and everything else too, but just ---

MARY: Uh huh. Really there is a tremendous difference in rates of maturation. And people think because their kid is six years old that he should be ready for reading. That is not true, and that is not the kid's fault. In general boys develop more slowly in verbal skills. This is why you have heard for many years that they shouldn't go to school until they are seven. But parents want them to go to school. They want them to, you know, whatever reason, they don't want them to be different. And so the theory is that you put the child in the situation where he is not going to fail, which he could do. Typically what they would do with those children, the most common recommendation for an immature child is to hold him back a year. Well let him go to first grade a whole year, and then hold him back. That is a tough decision. Better to tell him that he is going to junior first and,

you know, where the work is geared to his maturation. But it works in some cases, and doesn't work in others. It's not labeling them as special education because generally those children will mature and then, you know, they don't have to be in with "dummies", I mean it is all this social overlay, yeah, really.

BARBARA: And did you have much problems with parents when you suggested that they go junior first rather than going into first grade? Or did most of the parents see that that would be a benefit to their child?

MARY: You have the whole range of acceptance, even in a small place like this. You have to do a lot of explaining, a lot of education. Interestingly, I'll make a generalization which probably isn't true, but a lot of times mothers are willing to keep the babies babies, you know, or let them grow up slowly. Fathers want them to be ready whether they are or not. That's a generalization, you know. Sometimes it could be the other way around. Sometimes a lot of the problem comes when the parents can't, the two parents can't agree.

BARBARA: Can't agree.

DOROTHEA: Well we're going to have to pause for a moment and turn this tape over. So we'll pause for a second.

SIDE B

BARBARA: When you first started out with Special Education, you were one, and when you retired in twenty years how many were involved in the Special Ed program?

MARY: How many teachers?

BARBARA: Teachers.

MARY: Uh huh. Well there would be a full time teacher at the high school, full time

teacher at junior high. When I started the program for the mentally retarded, it was underwritten fully by the ESD under equalization. Maybe the ESD put in 85% of the money for each district, but they supported the Special Ed program a 100% because it was to serve any mentally retarded, educable mentally retarded child in the entire county. The family might have to move to Burns from an outlying community, but it was supposed to be for the whole county.

Well Hines School started their own special education program about the time I retired, so that was another classroom. Then we have, you know, I really can't tell you, I know that there are --- I was the only teacher in special ed. There were reading teachers who, and that's become the Chapter One Program. Remedial reading teachers, where you did pretty well, but you needed some help in reading, and that turned into the Chapter One Program. Every school has a Chapter One reading class I believe, and an aide working with children on both the pullout model where they go to a special room for the reading, or maybe they work in the classroom with the teacher. I really can't tell you right now how many teachers, Special Ed teachers there are. But there is more than one.

BARBARA: Uh huh. So the year that you retired again was?

MARY: 1987.

BARBARA: '87. And you were Educator of the Year in '86, was it, '85, '86?

MARY: I think it was January '87, the year I retired. It was before I retired, but I think it was the year that I retired.

BARBARA: Okay. And were you surprised, or had you the inkling with people coming in?

MARY: Well, I wasn't totally surprised. They had people asking me questions, you know, which ---

BARBARA: A little give away, huh?

MARY: Yeah. Of course others, every school nominates somebody so to be chosen was not a sure thing, and so it was a nice surprise, shall we say, that I was selected. Yes, that was a nice honor. I appreciated being honored that way.

BARBARA: And when you retired then what did you become involved in?

MARY: Well I knew I needed something to, what shall we say, so I wouldn't get the bends, you know, decompression. So I got on the committee that was working on the Bi-Centennial, I mean on the Centennial of Harney County. And I worked pretty --- I did that the first two years, and I really enjoyed that a lot. I went out to lunch a lot with, well with two other teachers who had just retired that year, and I just sort of caught up on my social life.

We did go, Russell and I went to a national, we went to the Appalachian Trails Conference in Virginia that year. But, well I did something kind of exciting that year, the very day that I turned in my resignation, I had been talking about it, and I turned in my announcement that I was going to retire, and the school board accepted it. Well we had a fire in the house --- (telephone rings) I think Russell is here. Anyway --- well maybe he is not going to answer it. (Pause for call.)

BARBARA: Okay, we're on.

MARY: Well I said the day, the morning after the school board accepted my retirement letter, we had a chimney fire that caused considerable damage, nothing --- it didn't get inside the house but it did burn some of the timbers in the roof and the side of the house. So I decided since the firemen chopped a hole in the roof that I would chop three more, and so in the process of redoing the house we put some skylight windows upstairs and that took --- it was two weeks of work that took us about three months to get done.

BARBARA: That's usually the way it works.

MARY: And so that was an interesting project.

BARBARA: You mentioned that you worked on the Centennial; I know that your motto was chosen for the theme of the Centennial.

MARY: Yeah.

BARBARA: How did you happen to come up with the idea, or that?

MARY: Well I drove from Klamath Falls to, I drove from Burns to Klamath Falls, and on the way I didn't have much to do but think about, the road of course, but there is a lot of sagebrush out there. So I kept thinking about possible mottos, just kind of running around in my head, and I got to Lakeview and I quickly wrote them all down, about twenty of them. And then I looked them over and decided which one I liked the best, so I picked it out, and that's how I picked that out. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: And what was that motto?

MARY: Proud of the Past, and Poised for the Future, am I right?

BARBARA: That's right.

MARY: Yeah, that's right, yes.

BARBARA: Put you on the spot.

MARY: Yes you did, because I haven't really thought about it a lot for a while. But ---

BARBARA: And what other phases of the centennial program did you work on? The little history book that we put out?

MARY: Yes, I worked on that with Pauline. I was, I got two awards that year, well I didn't really get two awards, I got one award in January of 1988, probably for being the chief nag for the Chamber Music Society. That was, president, I was always nagging her, and she really appreciated it she said. But Pauline gave me the job of assigning the reports,

and then calling the authors and reminding them all the time --- well she gave me a title called editorial assistant. But it was really, what I said, was I have a license called the teaching certificate to do this sort of thing. So ---

BARBARA: Official nag.

MARY: So I had official nag, was kind of my title that year. Well that was one thing I did, and that was what I did on the book. But the thing that I got most involved in, and it really had its ups and downs, was I wrote --- I met a woman who told me she had a grant to write the Steens Mountain Symphony, and I got all excited about this and I got in touch with her. And yes, she had this grant, and she had never written it because she didn't have an occasion to play it. And I thought our Centennial would be the perfect thing. And I wrote grants, and we got grants from, we got over \$5,000 in grants to bring an orchestra here to perform the premier performance of this symphony. Well I could write a book about all the things that I got into over that. I'm only going to say that she wasn't able to get the job done in time for the Centennial.

The Chamber Music Society who went along with me very loyally did do two major programs for the Centennial. One was the birthday party in February, and then we had to kind of, when it became obvious in April that we weren't going to get the symphony done that we did put together a program for the week of Centennial. It was kind of the culmination of the Centennial events. And I'm real proud of the Chamber Music Society and what we can do, and did for the Centennial.

And the other thing that I did for the Centennial was to make the birthday cake. Do you remember the cake with the hundred lights on it? Well I built that out of a couple of cardboard cartons and a piece of knit material that I bought to make myself a suit. (Laughter) It looked just like icing, you know. (Laughter) It was white on white, it was

embossed, and I had a lot of fun doing that. I was very involved in the Centennial. I just thoroughly enjoyed that Centennial committee, I thought it was wonderful.

I'm really very interested in history. I didn't want to commit myself to a long-range project with Historical Society. I had done their newsletter for them for a long time, and I didn't really want to get, I wasn't ready to get back into that kind of commitment. But the Centennial was kind of a limited time. But I thought the Centennial committee was a really wonderful group to work with, and it was different people than I had been working with at school. And it was just kind of a transition into a new life.

BARBARA: You mentioned that you were editor or whatever of the Historical Society's Newsletter. When did you start doing that, and how long did you do that? And how did you find your material for what you published?

MARY: Well I had started going to Historical Society in the summer when I was, you know, I couldn't do it during the school year because teachers generally have their lunch hours at different time than other, than people that can go to luncheons. So in the summer I went, and then I was, well I'm real interested in Oregon history, and I thought they had some interesting programs, and I just said, "Well I thought they should have a newsletter that would kind of help glue them together for people like myself that couldn't always come." "And so fine, would I do it?" And I said, "Well I'll do two issues for you to demonstrate it. If people like it, then they can do it." Seven years later, eighty-four issues later, I said, "I really can't do this anymore." (Laughter)

BARBARA: You should always be forewarned if you suggest something, be prepared to do it yourself.

MARY: Yes, I know. Anyway, well I really enjoyed doing this. I got us involved with exchanging newsletters with other Historical Societies. Where did the information come

from? Well there are just millions of stories out there about Harney County pioneers, Harney County history, and you know, I mean there is no end of material. Yeah, you sometimes have to write it yourself.

My best story about that newsletter is the time the "R" fell off the typewriter in the middle of the night. I always tell English teachers, if you really want to do a lesson on synonyms, what do you do when the "R" falls off the typewriter, and you have to substitute any word that has an "R" in it. You have to find a substitute word for it to get the newsletter out by 8 o'clock in the morning to take to the printer. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Impossible.

MARY: That happened to me, the "R" fell off my typewriter in the middle of the night. (Laughter)

BARBARA: I can relate to that, my "A" fell off once too.

MARY: Then you know.

BARBARA: It's awful.

MARY: But it's a wonderful, I tell this to English teachers, it's a wonderful thing for synonyms, you know. It really happened to me. I don't know what I did, but I survived.

BARBARA: Do you, okay the time frame then, that you did the newsletter for years, do you have an idea?

MARY: Yeah, it was 1975 probably, because this is where I first got working with Pauline a lot, because she became membership chairman and the newsletter was just perfect for doing the membership for campaign for Historical Society. And her goal, because it was the Bi-Centennial year, was to get two hundred members. Well the newsletter kept it alive and we got two hundred members over, I think it was, you know, like a year and a half we worked on --- she worked on that and I was putting out the newsletter.

And it was a very, it was a good time to start a newsletter because there was a great deal, that was one of those times when there was a great lot of interest in history. And a lot of material coming out, state level, national level, and a lot of interest on the part of everybody to preserve history.

BARBARA: Are these newsletters on file someplace? Does the Historical Society keep a record of their newsletters? I have recently; this last year joined the Historical Society so I don't know what has gone on previous to this time. Are they on file someplace for people to refer to?

MARY: We have tried to keep a fairly complete file. I'm hoping there is one at the library. We tried to make provision for that. The secretary --- I have a fairly complete file. I have a lot of ownership, you know, and I have even kept them since then because that's what I do.

BARBARA: I have, you know, those that have come out since I have become a member. But I was curious to know the ones that, prior to that, digging out little information out of those, and I was just wondering maybe ---

MARY: I think there is a file on them at the library, back in the back room.

BARBARA: I'll have to ask Peggy and see if there are.

MARY: I'm quite sure there is, because she has always been very good about the history aspects anyway. Yeah, well I got into a lot of real interesting things with Historical Society, but finally I was getting too tired, as I got more involved at school. So I kind of got out of that. But I'm always into something.

BARBARA: So you mentioned the Chamber Music Society. I know I've seen you at functions, and bringing military bands in, and that sort of thing. When did you start with the Chamber, and what instrument do you play?

MARY: Uh huh. Well I play the flute, and I started when I was in sixth grade, and I played in our grade school band, and all city orchestra, and in high school band, and I played at the University of Oregon in a band and orchestra, not always at the same time. And then I didn't do anything with it from the time I graduated from college until ---

Well no, in Klamath Falls I helped start a, it was kind of interesting, we became rather famous. My husband --- there was three of us that started the, a little chamber music group really. And one of the husbands, these were faculty wives, and one of the husbands said, "Well you've heard of the Boston Pops, well these are the Klamath Moms, or Bach and Smock was kind of the problem." So we started that.

And then I belonged to AAUW, so we had a AAUW instrumental music study group, and that kind of expanded this group out of just teachers, into more women in the community. And after I left Klamath one of the women that played the violin in that, she was real, she got going really strong and that became a little symphony in Klamath Falls. It did start with AAUW.

Well we had to perform at one of the meetings, and the state, our president went to the state meeting and told about, told what I said, which Russell said, he told the kids that mom was going out on her weekly toot! And that kind of became a --- Klamath Falls became famous for that.

So that, and then there wasn't any group like that here in Burns when we moved here in 1959. There were some community concerts and we went to those until they kind of dissipated, then they couldn't get them organized anymore. And then the Chamber Music group started here in 1980. And I didn't --- the first concert they had was Mother's Day of 1980. And I didn't participate in Chamber Music that year, I was still teaching. And that particular day, I didn't even go to the concert, because that was the day of my

father's funeral, or the weekend of my father's funeral. He had died in 1980, and we were in Klamath Falls at that particular time. But I think I went to their next concert, and then I wasn't really ready to start playing with them.

But I think I started, I joined the orchestra in 1982. I used to go, and I'd think oh it's so simple, I can just sit here and listen to this music, I don't have to worry about refreshments, I don't have to worry about dues, I don't have to worry about writing a newsletter, and pretty soon I got on the board.

DOROTHEA: That seems what always happens, put your name in your own board.

MARY: So I've done all of those things for --- but I really --- well I went to Europe in 1980, was before I knew my --- I had this all planned to go with my daughter to visit Russell's cousins, and to visit my father's relatives that we were in touch with, a few of them. And when I came back from going to Europe, I said I was going to go home and work for two things, and one was peace, and the other was the arts. So the Chamber Music is kind of -- I belong to the, they had a peace group here for a while, and as long as it was going, I attended, I didn't do a whole lot. I just felt after seeing Europe that, you know, things, there were so many war memorials in Europe, they had been so devastated by wars, and it seemed so senseless to me. But anyway, so that's why I ---

BARBARA: How has the Chamber Music Society grown since you started? How many people did you have playing at that time, and what kind of numbers are there now?

MARY: Well as far as performers, there probably were more performers in the early years. They have a very strong music department. They had a group of music teachers that were, Chuck Roberts who was a counselor at the high school, was a professional musician before he went into school counseling. And Bill Martin and Eric Smith, and Sally Heerwagen was a cellist, her husband ran the --- he was the Burns Times-Herald editor,

and Susie Smith were all very strong professional musicians. And they started doing the Messiah and they got maybe sixty people out for the chorus and thirty maybe for the orchestra.

And then as things began to go downhill in Burns because of the mill closing, and losing the population, you know, Bill Martin's job, you know, became half time. And then pretty soon it got where he couldn't be here anymore, and others left. Then we had a lot of turnover of directors. It was always a, there was--- and some of the people that came were very inexperienced. Now I think they have all done a good job, but you had this problem in Burns that there was a lot of turnover. And we really rely on the teachers a lot.

But the patron membership has grown. We hung on there, and really we're coming back as far as people participating. And ---

BARBARA: Do they meet on a weekly basis, do they practice?

MARY: The orchestra practices the first and third Tuesdays, and the chorus practices the second and fourth Tuesday.

And actually we, well we gave some scholarships. And starting with the Jeff Hull scholarship, when Jeff Hull was killed, his folks named Chamber Music Society, or they established a scholarship fund. So we began, later we said, well whoa, let's don't spend all this money, all the capital, let's endow it, and live off the interest. So we did that, and once we did that we have now got five endowed scholarships.

Ray Weeks gave one in memory of Jerry, and then they came to the scholarship audition recital that we had, and Mrs. Weeks was very impressed with it, and she was a teacher, and she also loved music. She was not a performer, but she loved music, and when she passed away last year he gave us enough money for two more scholarships. So, you know, I mean it is really grown in that way.

So we kind of expanded from just having local musicians to, we are trying now to have, to bring in one professional group a year. It's kind of a new venture for us. We feel like our scholarship programs kind of stabilized. You know, we are not always scrambling to see if we have enough money above operating costs. We are able to carry on the scholarship program with a little more security.

So we are going --- and then we have, because we are organized, and we are a non-profit organization, and we know how to put on musical programs, we have been able to get the Air Force or other groups where they can come and they don't have to charge us, you know, we don't have to charge an admission. We have never charged admission; we take donations which go toward our scholarships.

The new program we're trying is to bring somebody where you pay for a ticket, and we have asked for grant support from Oregon Arts Commission, or a similar foundation that will help in, so that the tickets can be at a reasonable price. But it's, you know, it's growing and I feel quite solidly.

And the, I think we have another kind of wave of people that --- we had an excellent concert here Friday night of local musicians. We have a lot of people in this town with musical talent. We've kind of got another group, some of them are with Forest Service, they're not all associated with school. And Peckham's are really very involved again, now that he is no longer working night shift. And of course he is very dedicated to his own performance and to music. So I think we really got a good program going right now. And I bake cookies, and I worry about newsletters, and I write grants, and all those things and sometimes I practice, not very often.

BARBARA: I understand that you were involved with the National Honor Society, to putting on the desserts and things. Was that the sorority that was involved with that?

MARY: That started off as a project of the OEA when it was a countywide OEA, Oregon Education Association --- the teacher's thing. And Russell and I both worked on that from the time it started. And then when OEA kind of broke up into individual schools, because of the laws regarding salary negotiations, Delta Kappa Gamma, a teacher's honorary, took over the organization of the Honor Society. At first it was a banquet, and then they finally decided, oh I'd say five years ago that it would be better to spend the money, to ask people for donations and put it on scholarships, and have a reception where the public is invited, like we had done before. But to put the money into a scholarship fund rather than spending it on a meal.

BARBARA: I remember when my children were in school, that we had dinners at the time that they were in the Honor Society. And then a few years down the road it was a dessert, and now I know that it is, groups will sponsor a student and pledge money for the scholarship fund.

MARY: And I think that's a, maybe better.

BARBARA: Money going to a better cause then.

MARY: Well when there is more need, money is tighter, yeah. Of course what that did was shift it away from whatever group did the dinner, they earned the money for their projects. And of course I think it became so popular that it outgrew all of our facilities was one thing that happened. But I think it is real defensible to put that money into a scholarship program. So ---

BARBARA: And were you involved with the library at the time that it was down in the old city hall?

MARY: Oh yes.

BARBARA: Do you have a story to tell about that?

MARY: Well we used to have National Library Week, and it blew out all the lights. And that's when I decided that we had better advise the city that the library needed more support. (Laughter) What we did, they used to solicit for library; they used to have a library tag day on Election Day. It's probably as illegal as you could imagine, but maybe they stayed away from the polls. But I said, "Well instead of just having, asking them for money, why don't we ask them for what they want in the way of library services." And that was a novel idea, and so we did. And then we forwarded these suggestions to the Library Board, and they didn't respond. And then we said, "Well this is under the city, so we should go to the city council and find out why they aren't responding." So we went down, and we said, "Well the library needs a typewriter, she needs a telephone, they need a better electrical system so we can plug in the coffee pot for National Library Week." "Why would she want a typewriter, why would she want a telephone, wouldn't it just bother her work?" And I said, "Well as it is, they call her at home, and she goes to the library, gives the answers, then she calls them when she gets ---" I knew this. And so, oh --- and then we wanted a book drop.

Well anyway, and then they found out that the Library Board hadn't been meeting. And the person on the city council that was the liaison between the Library Board and the city council hadn't been meeting, and it led to resignations.

BARBARA: You stirred up a little nest there, didn't you?

MARY: Yes, I did.

DOROTHEA: Resignations, but had they been in to see the librarians office, if she had one at the time?

MARY: Oh, it was --- well what really happened out at that meeting was real interesting. This happened a long time ago, George Hughet said, "Well according to --- back in 1928,"

this was 1961, '62, 1962. "Back in 1928 they were supposed to do certain things." And I sort of blurted out, "Oh well we really are in the dark ages aren't we?" (Laughter)

So anyway several people resigned from the Library Board, and that paved the way for Pauline's mother to become the chairman. And then she got real busy. She hadn't been able to function. I didn't even know this; I just was a busy body.

BARBARA: You just jumped in, huh?

MARY: Yes. Well what I did, I did the unpardonable, I went to a meeting in Ontario with some people from Burns, but I went off and talked to people other places, instead of sitting with Burns people, and I found out how to do things. That's really what happened.

So anyway Pauline's mother, Mrs. Ausmus, got her opportunity at that point to become the chairman of the Library Board, and she is the one that --- there was a National Library Act and it was about to expire. We didn't know that, but we got one of the very last grants under the National Library Act to build a new library.

DOROTHEA: I think Inez was telling us something about this when we did an interview with her. She had told about when Gen was working up there, and she worked in this little cubby hole with a board over the sink, and put her typewriter over there.

MARY: Oh, it was unbelievable. And she was a really nice lady. You knew Gen Slater?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

MARY: Yeah, well she was a really nice quiet lady. Lots of ability, but she wasn't going to rock any boats. And I really took a big risk, because I was working for her husband, and I --- but actually it turned out good.

I think we, there were several of us that was in the library --- there was a Library Club. And they had this library tag day sale, but I just said, "Well

we need room for books, we need new books, we need new this and new that." And actually there was, the state librarian was coming around making visits to different localities, and trying to get people to think about what they could do for their library services. And then we all went to Ontario one time, and that is where I said well --- where I left the Burns group and I went over and talked to somebody on the State Library Board. And I said, "Well what do you do if you can't get them to answer your letters when you make suggestions?" And so that's when he told me what to do.

BARBARA: Well that's great, it kind of worked out, and we have a beautiful library now.

MARY: Yeah.

BARBARA: For a small town, it's certainly well used I know. What about going on, what about the 4-C's, were you involved with that in any way?

MARY: Well I served very briefly on their board about the time that Phyllis Weare was getting ready to leave. But it was too much like; it was kind of too much like school. It had a lot of problems at that point, and I really wasn't ready to --- well I was really a supporter of Phyllis Weare. I felt she developed a, well she did develop a model program out there. And they were trying to, the people that were real dissatisfied with what she was doing, and so I just wasn't philosophically in tune with what was happening, so I didn't really work on that a lot. I knew a lot about the 4-C program.

I actually worked with Phyllis Weare when she first, before she started the 4-C program. She started an Indian tutoring program at the, after school program. And she did it the right way, she went out and got input from the tribal council, permission from them, found out what they thought the kids needed. And at that time I was just starting in Special Ed, so I worked with her on what, you know, I shared with her what I knew about working with kids. And that's kind of how --- then she kept; Phyllis kept going to school,

and learning how to get grants, and studying on this. You know she was a nurse, but she went back and got a degree in education. And so I always ---

BARBARA: Was this sort of a youth services organization, or group or whatever?

MARY: The 4-C, the Indian tutoring program was established by the Christian Church, and very largely supported by them. But then she learned about getting grants from public agencies, and private foundations, and she really --- I was always very impressed with how she studied that, and how she --- she herself went back and got a certificate, a teaching certificate. She was a nurse, but she went back and got the credentials.

And the program just grew from first being, happening in the cafeteria at the grade school, to being bigger down at the basement of the Christian Church for many years, and then finally they acquired the building that they had. And then of course they doubled that building finally with a building fund. And then I don't really know why people got dissatisfied with her. And I got on the board and there was a lot of controversy, and I really didn't feel I could deal with it. So I didn't stay with that very long. I think things are kind of back on a better keel now.

And its been a very --- one of the things that was real important about 4-C is that they served the Special Ed population at preschool level. And I really do believe that, that's something I didn't mention about the expansion of special ed, the last few years I taught was the beginning of what they call early intervention where they begin to serve the kids from birth to five. You, there is a whole, this is state mandated, way to screen newborns, and to get children who are handicapped, challenged, whatever word we are using this year, to get intervention for them at the earliest possible stage before they begin to --- there is a great deal that can be done for them, and the sooner you get it, the less time they have to feel frustrated or poor self-image and all that.

And it is amazing what, and that happened at 4-C, and I was involved with it in that way when I was still in Special Ed. It was kind of a peripheral part of my job.

BARBARA: Behavioral problems under control before, at, you know at that early they can really get out of control if you don't see what's happening.

MARY: The behavioral problems, usually those arise from frustration because they can't do what people expect of them. And then with mentally retarded kids their parents don't take them shopping because they don't know how to act. And then they don't learn what the average kid knows. Even from, you know, from the time they're born this is what's happening.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

MARY: Now we have a program under the auspices of the Youth Services Commission, which kind of carries that on in the great start program.

BARBARA: Back up just a little bit; when you were still in school, I understand you were involved with the artists in residence program that started in the schools here. I remember you came to our sorority one time, looking for donations for the people that we got in here.

MARY: Oh, yeah. We're kind of back in the same boat where the school failed, and we haven't, this year they weren't able to get any artists here because the school budget failed. That was cut out of the budget before it went to the voters. Well I figured there was enough interest in art in this community that I figured that for at least a year that you could support, you could bring at least one artist in if you could just raise some money privately. So we did that, and the teacher's supported it like gangbusters. They really were very generous, and then sororities and so on helped us too. And we did get an artist in.

Well the same thing happened the second year, and then there were artists that donated artwork for drawings and things like this. And we did it that way two years here in Burns. The schools had been one of the really early schools to take advantage of that artists in education program that is administered through the Oregon Arts Commission. And so we had a, you know, we had a track record down here. And we did keep it going for two years on a limited basis, but we gave it more publicity, so then it was marked acceptable in the school budget. And that worked well, I only worked with it a couple of years. Then that worked well, and it's just been this last year that it was cut out again by the budget board. That's no doubt due to Measure 5 and everything.

And it is kind of interesting that the PTA earned enough money that they could have had the artists, but they didn't have the information in time to get them signed up. And there is a lot of competition for these, for the matching funds, so Burns kind of lost out this year, or Harney County kind of lost out this year. But well, yeah, I, and nobody had --- basically until Burns demonstrated that you can get private support for this, the artists in education program was pretty much a, pretty much a school administrators, you know, a school budget thing.

So all I did was kind of patch it together for a couple of years, but it kept it going. And I do believe that Burns --- we have a lot of people here interested in arts.

BARBARA: We have a lot of talented people in this town, a lot of artists.

MARY: Yeah, in this county. We do, we really do, and they are very supportive of, if they know the facts. They are very supportive of --- we have to do a lot of things for ourselves in everything, and I think we come through very well. Sometimes you think you're out here real isolated and everything, but you know I think that for the size of the community and everything, I think more is done here for these things than in some other areas where

it comes easier.

BARBARA: It's just automatically there, and you don't think that much about it.

MARY: Uh huh. So I think Burns does really well on many of its services. Special ed, library services, our --- they kind of look and marvel at what we can do with the music program, you know, when you talk about it at the state level. But I think we need to get out. We need some people at least getting out and finding out what is going on.

DOROTHEA: Do you have some more questions?

BARBARA: I have a couple more questions here, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Because our tape is about to the end.

BARBARA: Shall we turn over?

DOROTHEA: Well it doesn't turn over; it's at another one.

BARBARA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Okay, we'll pause now while we get ready another tape.

TAPE 2, SIDE C

BARBARA: I understand during the Centennial time that you did have a walk around to some of the historical homes in Burns. How did you get involved in that, or interest in that?

MARY: I think that was during the Bi-Centennial back in 1976. At one of the Historical Society meetings there were three, there were some women, I don't know how many, but they were talking about three houses in the community that were built by the same builder on the same plan. So I found out more about those, and I thought it would be interesting to develop a walking tour. So I got pictures of those houses, and got permission from the owners to feature them, plus the house that was the headquarters of the Pacific Livestock. The house, which was moved into Burns from Harney by, it was pulled in, in

the winter, so they could go across the river on the ice. Wally Welcome had a picture of that. So I just developed, pointing out buildings down town, very brief information about them, like just the date they were built or something, and featuring these three houses, the three houses that were built on the same plan.

BARBARA: And who was the builder, do you recall?

MARY: I think his name was Smith, I can't remember now.

BARBARA: And which houses were those?

MARY: Well this one up on the hill here that is close to the school, and the house that Tim Doherty lives in on "D" Street, and a house down, used to be on the lot where Safeway's back lot is, and they moved it across the street, or up a block when Safeway bought the property. And if you look at those houses, you can see the similar --- they're totally different in their finish, you know, their outside finish, but if you look at them you can see the similar, that they were built on the same plan. It is real interesting that they have ---

So the Historical Society and the Chamber of Commerce together published that walking tour. But really the suggestion on that was to start an inventory of historic homes. And you may or may not know that Ida Renwick has, you know, kind of gotten that program back on track and tried to do more with it. That's kind of the way it goes, you start something, and the time of high interest on history, and now the Centennial was an opportunity --- especially the Burns Centennial. There were a lot of things for the Harney County Centennial that didn't get done, and there were plenty of things you could do for the Burns Centennial. And she has worked on that project. I haven't talked to her at length.

She wants me to do something on this house, which I know the history of this

house; we're the third owners. And that's the kind of thing she wants, for people to tell the history of their houses.

DOROTHEA: Is this an older house that you have remodeled?

MARY: Yeah, well this house was built by, do you know Dorey Burden?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh

MARY: She was a Hotchkiss, and it was built by her family. And there was another house of the Hotchkiss' on this property, and it burned to the ground, and this house was built. And in our chimney there, there are charred bricks that were --- we didn't know that when we remodeled this kitchen we uncovered that chimney, it was plastered in. But I have a tape of Dorey coming here with George Hughet who lived with the family, and telling me about this house when she lived in it as a teenager. Anyway I should give that to Ida Renwick.

It was kind of interesting how the, why they had to build this house. And that's because the pipes in the old house froze up, and Neil Smith's, did you know Neil Smith, the postmaster?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

MARY: Well his father was a plumber, and he was Mrs. Hotchkiss' brother, and he came over to thaw out the pipes and he used a blowtorch, and he burnt the house, the house caught on fire.

DOROTHEA: I think she was telling us about that in her interview. She was telling us.

BARBARA: I think that happened to a number of families.

MARY: Oh yeah, I think so too, yeah. I know it was, and I kind of jokingly say, "Well you know why they call this town Burns, it's not because of the Scottish poet but it is about all the famous fires we have had." (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: And it seems like we have had a lot of those.

BARBARA: Going on to another thing, I know that your husband is involved with the hiking, Desert Trail. Can you tell us a little bit about that? Well first you might mention when he retired, and maybe got more involved in it.

MARY: Well Russell stood on the top of Steens Mountain and looked around and said, "This has potential." (Laughter) And so he and another teacher, Bob Gail kind of worked together, exploring what potential it had. And he started that probably; it must have been in about 1962 that they first got the idea.

And they talked to a lot of Forest Service and BLM agencies about developing a trail across desert lands that would be similar to the Pacific Crest Trail, and the Appalachian Trail but go across public lands in the desert.

And in 1964 he went to national meeting of the American Nature Studies Society, which is a sub-division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. There was a national meeting in Logan, Utah, and he and Bob Gail attended that meeting and they took a slide show and showed what their idea was, you know, some of the outstanding scenic features.

And the American Nature Studies Society endorsed the idea, and then they began to collect endorsements from other groups that would be interested in preservation of scenic, and historic, and natural, you know, we were beginning to get into the environmental movement at that time. And anyway they have hiked over it, looked at maps, talked about it, taken the show on the road, you know with slide shows and things.

And anyway eventually what happened was that all the government agencies agreed that it was a very good idea. But until you organize a citizen group to promote it, then they really, they really aren't in the business of promoting these kind of things, they

respond to what citizen's want.

So in 1972 we organized a Desert Trail Association. And this is real sketchy, because it has been a lot of work. And then Al Ullman, he took it to Congress as a proposed addition to the National Scenic Trails Bill, and it was studied by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation at that time to see whether or not --- it was studied, what they did was a feasibility study. And they said well it was, it probably wasn't real feasible for them to add it onto the National Scenic Trails.

And then so, instead of trying to get it all made into a national trail all at once, we started doing it section by section. But he has been really working on that since 1962. He was president of the association until just two years ago. And he has hiked hundreds of miles, he has driven thousands of miles, he has talked to probably thousands of people, and we have, the Desert Trail Association has about six hundred members who support this idea and hike with us. And it has been a, really a pretty much a full time, all consuming occupation.

BARBARA: Do you hike with Russell?

MARY: I did, I have hiked. I don't hike much anymore, no, but I did for a while. But I've done, you know, I do other things. I travel with him.

BARBARA: Well sometimes it is good when both people are retired that you each have your own little interest.

MARY: Well, it's probably good.

BARBARA: You did mention that you have two children. We didn't really go into what they are doing, what their occupations are. Your son is in the Air Force, I understand.

MARY: Uh huh. He is now; he went to college on an ROTC scholarship. He went to Oregon State and got a degree in civil engineering. And he flew F-4 fighter planes for

probably eight years. And then he went to school and got his master's degree at the University of Arizona in computer systems analysis, and then he became an instructor pilot. He was at Alamogordo, New Mexico for a couple of years, and now he is an instructor pilot at Luke Air Force Base in the F-15E. He married a girl from Albany, and they were in Germany for four years. They have been in southwest now for about, since 1985, in Arizona --- Tucson going to school, and Alamogordo. And now they are in Phoenix, and they have a three-year-old son.

BARBARA: And your daughter?

MARY: My daughter is Aubra, named after her grandmother. And she has a degree in home ec. from Oregon State and Montana State. She started at U. of O. and then she went to Montana State, and then she got her degree from Bozeman in Montana State. And she worked for; she cooked at the Frenchglen Hotel one summer. She worked for the BLM and the Forest Service while she was going to college. And then she moved to LaGrande, and finally got a job after much persistence, got a job with the power company doing energy audits. And then she worked for a while selling insulation, and then she worked for a while for Bonneville Power doing energy audits. Then she finally did what her mother did, and decided to go back and get her teaching certificate. (Laughter) So she ---

BARBARA: Must be in the genes.

MARY: It must be, because my mother was a teacher, and she taught homebound students when she first went back to teaching in Klamath. So there is three generations of Special Ed teachers, because Aubra taught over at, she is certified to teach Special Ed and home ec. And right now she is not teaching, because she has a seven-month-old baby. And she lives in Cheney, Washington, and her husband is on the faculty at Eastern

Washington University. But she will probably, she will be going back into teaching.

BARBARA: So what are some of the other things that you have been interested in, or involved in, since you retired? You mentioned doing a lot of traveling with Russell with the Desert Trail. Have you done much traveling?

MARY: Not as, well, we went to Germany twice to visit David, but that was before I retired. And actually since we've been retired, we did make a trip to the east coast when he was on the, he was on the program at the Appalachian Trail Conference. Our traveling has been kind of mainly to see the kids, and the grandchildren.

BARBARA: I think that's what most of us do.

MARY: Yeah, yeah, you know, I want to see the grandchildren when they are little, you know, because they change so much.

BARBARA: Right.

MARY: And so I ---

BARBARA: I think they need that bond.

MARY: Yeah, and I went down when Todd was born, and then I went up and spent a week with Aubra when Aaron was born. You know, by the time you make two trips to Phoenix, and two to Spokane, and they come here, well --- and then I see my mother and do things with her, you know since my dad ---

BARBARA: The year slips by in a hurry, doesn't it?

MARY: Yeah, the year goes by. So I kind of laugh when I say well we haven't really done much traveling. Because we have visited people in England, and they think you have gone a long way if you go four hundred miles. And we have, you know, gone thousands just in the United States. And you say just in the United States, but you know, that is really a lot of traveling.

BARBARA: Are you interested in politics at all?

MARY: Well, I like to know what is going on. I have never been

BARBARA: Involved with people's campaigns, and that sort of thing?

MARY: Not a whole lot. Not, I really, we watch the news. I really enjoy keeping up with national affairs through reading and watching TV, and discussing it with people. But I've never gone out and been a --- I don't have any ambitions to run for public office, or even to get real involved with the local party. Although there were a few local races where I wish I had been more involved. (Laughter) But, we won't talk about those.

So I'm on the Youth Services Commission, and I suppose that has some political overtones to it in a sense that you are working with, you are under the jurisdiction of the county court. You know, what they do, you know, what --- they do realize that we can make a difference, and we better pay attention to what is going on, or somebody else is going to make all those differences for us. I mean I'm involved in politics to that extent.

BARBARA: What do you see happening to our educational system with Measure 5, and with our enrollments maybe going down here?

MARY: You mean the enrollments in Harney County? Well, kind of the big leveling --- well to be really perfectly honest about it, I'm more concerned about what is going to happen to my retirement funds, I'm at that point. Well I'm not un --- I've been real active as far as school elections, you know, that is a form of politics, which is important.

Well I think we are going to --- there is probably waste in school, I think there is. All of us are going to have to work at things. I don't like to see them blame teachers for everything. I don't know how we are going to educate parents to work. We all have to be a whole lot more firm.

BARBARA: Just because we've got our education, doesn't mean that we don't need to help our young people.

MARY: Oh no, no, no I would always vote. I mean I always vote.

BARBARA: Well there are some people that figure well I've got mine; I don't care what happens now.

MARY: No, no, you can't do that. And I think that's one thing that has happened here that people who, you know, I'm getting to be an older person now, and I don't think it is fair for older people not to support schools. No, I don't think I will ever change that way.

BARBARA: Do you, some of the new ideas coming down in education; do you have any thoughts on that? Some of the proposals that Vera Katz has ---

MARY: Yeah, there are some of the old ideas that have come around before. I have been in it long enough to know that there are kind of cycles.

BARBARA: Cycles.

MARY: We have been indulgent and wasteful nationally.

BARBARA: But the new suggestions in high school, about three years, and then breaking off if you are going to college you're going to do this program. If you're going into the trades, you might do this. Do you have any feelings on that? Too new?

MARY: You come back to the --- no --- it's the same thing about being honest about children that have handicaps. I think you need to be very honest about their problems, and give them something appropriate. Okay, I think it is the same thing, that we are not all going to go to college, and we need to be honest about that. And we need to have appropriate education for those that are headed for vocations. Give them the best you can for vocational education. I don't know how you can do this and not lock them in. I think there are kids that might get tracked, you know, this is a danger, they might get

tracked and they would do higher level, higher level things. I think we need to have more respect for people who are blue-collar people, or mechanics, you know. I think we have too much high prestige stuff, and not enough honesty about what we really need. I think we need to --- that's what's the matter that we all think we have to be up here, and nobody can be in the middle, and nobody can be in the lower end. So I think we have to be more realistic about what we can really do with our resources.

I really do not agree with, even though I have been in Special Ed, I do not agree with changing the entire world. I don't think we have the resources in our society to change the whole world for the benefit of people who can't reach the telephone, can't get up the curb. I think when we build new things we have to pay attention to that. But I don't think we can remodel the whole world. I don't think we have the resources.

I spent my time; I really went into that EMR program, because I really believe that we need to give those kids hands on type of thing they can really work with in their lives. And they need to teach everybody else to respect them for what they are. And you need to get them to believe that they are worthwhile being able to do what they can do. But I don't think we can say that we are all exactly the same.

And I think we need to give the very best we can to the gifted, because we're going to depend on them to lead us. And if they are wasting their time because we are spending all our time on discipline, and lowering our standards to the lowest.

And I've seen state department people say that every kid should receive the same diploma, and I do not believe that. Every kid should have a chance to develop to his best ability. We are not the same, and if this kid can get a diploma, why should this one work? Why should this one up here put forth any effort? Well he has got to put forth all the effort he can, because we need his abilities to lead our society.

BARBARA: To lead us on.

MARY: Does that say it?

DOROTHEA: Very good.

BARBARA: What are some of the major changes that you have seen in Burns since you came here? Or do you think Burns has pretty much stayed the same?

MARY: Well sometimes you think that, but it hasn't. One thing is that when I first started teaching in Burns the Indian kids were definitely off in the shadows. And I believe that they have really become a more integral part of our society in the schools, and I think that is very good.

I think we have much better library services than we first did, you know. I think Burns keeps working at getting better. We're part of the main stream whether we, I think sometimes we kind of like our isolation.

I think we need more --- I have seen some change in the attitude of women. They begin to include the rancher and his wife as the team who gets the awards at the Chamber. I think that there are an awful lot of women in Burns who have limited educational opportunities. I do believe that some of the programs from Eastern Oregon and the Ed-Net program are really giving women a better chance to develop to their potential. An awful lot of women here that could be teachers that are being teacher's aides for example. That's just one example I think. And I think there are some changes in that.

It's really a man's town, but I do believe there are some, they are accepting more --
- The women have always done a lot of things, but they've been volunteers, and they don't get equal pay and things like that. I believe that there are some changes for the better that way, and I'm, it's one of my --- always real strong --- I'll discuss woman's lib

anytime. However I always say woman's lib is to my advantage, I'll discuss it.

DOROTHEA: Do you think that our town will ever build up to what it used to be again?

MARY: I really don't know. It doesn't have the kind of climate to attract tourists on the year 'round basis, or retirees for example. I mean they may --- I think it is a nice size town that might have some, might have some potential that way, but I think the climate is against it. I don't know what we'll develop here as resources.

DOROTHEA: Do you think we'll ever get the younger generation to start coming back to this area, rather than moving away?

MARY: Maybe not. But you know what we do; we have kind of a trade off. We export our young people, but we get young people in here with the government agencies and with the teaching and so on. I think we need to; we need to accept them more readily. We need to accept them more readily, and say well my sons gone, but you're here, and let's work together on --- And then maybe our kids will come back after they have tried their wings some place else. I think a small town --- I wouldn't want to recommend to my kid to come here to teach for the first time. But after she teaches someplace else for four or five years, and knows who she is, other than that she is my daughter, then she can come back here and work. And we do get some people back like that. But we need to be more receptive to some of the younger ideas on the part of people that come in here.

BARBARA: I think coming in as government agency people, we were assumed that we were transient people, and that was just the way we felt coming in.

MARY: Yeah.

BARBARA: And oh, you're with so and so; you're just going to be here for a while, and then you're going to be gone again. And it was hard to become accepted by a lot of the local people.

MARY: Uh huh. That I think is something that we need to work on.

DOROTHEA: I think your ranchers have a big problem with this. I think there are a lot of -- not going along with new ideas and new people. And I think a rancher has a problem with this.

MARY: Yeah, but there are a lot of ranchers in this country that are educated, and have been out in the other world. Although they have, they may be --- well this is the kind of life I like, and don't bother me, you know. But, you know, we kind of need to be more open to new people because we need them; we need the younger people and their ideas. I don't know, do you think we're getting any better on that? It's really hard.

BARBARA: Yeah. What do you see as a lot of the pressures our young people are facing now as compared to when we were growing up? The stress that is put on our young people to succeed perhaps, or with the drugs and things that are involved?

MARY: Well you --- I think one of the things is that, you know, if you go to college that is it, you know, the American dream. How about being more encouraging to people to become good auto mechanics, and bakers and, you know, the vocational. And I think maybe the Vera Katz thing is, you know, okay let's recognize that this is an important, very important segment of our society and be more ---

BARBARA: We all depend on those services, so why not ---

MARY: That's right. Oh I have to laugh about Norman Schwarzkopf, and he said, "Here I was, a year ago I was in charge of five hundred thousand men that all did what I told them to do." And he says, "And I had the world at my command, and all the supplies, and all the air lifts." And he says, "Now I'm a civilian and I can't get a plumber."

BARBARA: Yeah.

MARY: You know, I mean --- yeah. Well, so I do think kids have more pressures, but I

think that they are --- I don't know, we need to do more. You know a really neat idea that somebody would just ---

BARBARA: Family communication maybe?

MARY: Yeah, but how do you get it done? And I'm really wrestling with this problem with youth services right now, you know, how do you make --- I think that Burns again is coming through quite well with the PRIDE committee, and the partners, Harney partners for kids and families. We are looking at this town. I've always said this is the ideal place to do the sociological experiment because you are not tainted by surrounding, you know, communities, suburbs. I mean, this is a good place to do the demonstration. I mean if you want to converge on a problem, you're going to get all points of view on it. And you can't say that our kids are being

--- to some extent you can, but you can't say that our kids are being influenced by the kids, you know, at the neighboring town. That we can't do anything because we can't get them to cooperate; you know we can really do it here. It's a place to write the great American novel, it's a place to do the great American sociological experiment, because the isolation is in our favor. That if we really, if we really want to do something we can.

BARBARA: Jean Cain was telling us about that too. She is going to get, this town is going to be it, you know.

MARY: Well it can be because it is small enough, and it is isolated enough that whatever we do is going to be ours. You can't either give anybody else the credit or the blame for what happens. We should probably take advantage of this more than we do.

DOROTHEA: I think one thing that PRIDE has done for us, and from what I'm understanding, I'm sorry to say that I'm not a member, but it has brought our communities closer together. Now I may be mistaken, but I think that this is, we've included the

Diamond area, the Princeton, the Frenchglen areas, and included them more in our county, where I think they felt as outsiders before. Now I mean, I mean that is how I feel. Now whether this is right or how other people feel or not, I don't know.

MARY: Well there is definitely a need to cooperate, and always probably has been. But I think there is a greater need for it now, because of the economics. See I kind of believe that is the way it is anyway. I said to a friend of mine twenty years ago, if we have a depression I don't mind if everybody is in the same boat, but I don't want to be in a depressed state and have somebody up here living high on the hog, you know. Well that is what is happening in this country. That's exactly what is happening to this country.

Right now we've got a deal where we've got a grant for childcare. There is going to be more money for childcare. Kind of balking about letting a private person apply for it, or get it. But, you know, this is --- and I can understand why they are, because that is what's happened with ---

Look at housing, and it is happening right here, the person can get low cost loans for low cost housing. You know they can --- but that reverts to private ownership in ten years, and then they kick the lost cost, the poverty people out. You know this isn't fair, I'm liberal.

BARBARA: What are some of the organizations that you belong to now that you have retired, and what do you see with filling your time in five, ten, twenty years from now? What is your goal, what do you want to become involved in, or do?

MARY: Well I'll probably continue with Chamber Music because I enjoy the music, and I feel that it does a lot for the community.

Well it does --- we're not getting five thousand people like you do at a country western, but I think there is a, I think there are people that ---

BARBARA: Not everybody likes country western.

MARY: Well no, that's true, and I think we ought to pay attention to those who like something else also, you know. I don't feel that that is the only thing. But that's, I think it attracts, well I know it. When they recruit doctors, nurses, teachers, lawyers, professional people, that is something that --- one of the things. The Historical Society is another one that, and a good library service and good educational service, and they all like ---

And I think Eastern Oregon College has done quite a bit for us too, so that people that come here can go on with higher education, and that's really important. I decided that finally that I would be more committed to youth services, because I think there is opportunity to, really one of the mandates to that commission is to get more cooperation among the state agencies that get the money so that you can get more coverage with the amount of money you have by not having little dubs here and little dabs there. That was one thing that Neil Goldschmidt tried to do with providing services, state services. I would really like to see that happen more. More coordination of services so that you don't have a little bit of money here for parent education, and a little bit over here in some other agency, and a little bit here, so that you can't hire anybody in any one place. I'd like to see more --- this is really visionary, isn't it? Like to see more, less efficiency in state government or county government, or schools, whatever. So I'll probably continue with that.

You asked the question about involvement in politics. I might get more, because you have to be, and I can see it. I know more about what is really going on than I ever could while I was working. And I, so I might be moved to tackle something more, but I don't know yet what it is going to be.

BARBARA: Whatever comes along and sparks your interest at the time, huh?

MARY: Well like you, I feel PRIDE, I haven't really gone to PRIDE because I, I've got a lot of --- I need to clean my house before I take on too many other things. I put that off for twenty years while I worked.

BARBARA: Well there is always first things first, right?

DOROTHEA: My problem is that it meets too early. I'm not a morning person. (Laughter)
If --- we're getting down to almost, we've been here two hours, and we don't like to take all the afternoon up. Is there any other stories that you would like to tell us about? Or Barbara, do you have any more questions?

BARBARA: Well, maybe not.

MARY: Barbara did her homework; because she knew more about me than I knew anybody knew, see. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Well I ask a few questions here and there.

MARY: I think you're getting to be quite expert at this. Well I think the Oral History Project is really a good one.

I'd like to, I'd like to get my mother more involved with the Historical Society in Klamath Falls because she has a lot of stories about her early days there, like getting to Klamath Falls via steamboat mind you, train and steamboat across Klamath Lake. That was the way you got there, you know, when she moved there. And she, really now she is getting older and I have sense enough to ask her the right questions, you know, a lot of things I would like to know about her. The first year she lived in Klamath she, they lived in two tents. Can you imagine going through a winter in Eastern Oregon in tents? But then a lot of people did. But I didn't know that about her until just the last year.

DOROTHEA: You know we tend to be so, we don't learn enough about our parents and their early days until after they are gone, and then we wish we had asked them about it.

MARY: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: So it is good that you are being able to do this.

MARY: Yeah.

BARBARA: Well this has been a very enjoyable afternoon, and we thank you for sharing some of your life story with us. And we'd like to do just a short little video so we can get you, get a picture of you, and we'll just kind of skim maybe ten minutes, fifteen minutes or so on that, so if you would agree to that.

MARY: Well I felt quite flattered to be asked to be interviewed, so --- thank you.

BARBARA: Well we thank you very much.

DOROTHEA: Thank you very much.

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