

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #334 - Side A

Subject: Margarita Osa's Grandchildren & Great Grandchildren

Place: Burns, Oregon

Date: May 13, 1989

Interviewer: Paquita Garatea

PAQUITA GARATEA: Today is May 13th, 1989 and we are in Burns, Oregon attending the funeral of Margarita Aremaio Osa. And now we will hear what the grandchildren, what her grandchildren have to think about her. Okay, could you please state your name and how old you are?

BRETT LAMBERT: My name is Brett Lambert and I'm thirteen years old.

PAQUITA: And how was Mrs. Osa related to you?

BRETT: I was her great-grandson.

PAQUITA: And what, can you tell me what you remember of your great-grandma, your Basque great-grandmother?

BRETT: Well I'll always remember that she was always busy nagging. And when she wasn't nagging she wasn't feeling good. She was a tough woman, and I'll never forget her.

PAQUITA: You'll never forget her, how come?

BRETT: She has just got the lasting personality that sticks with you.

PAQUITA: Thank you Brett. Could you please state your name and how old you are?

CHRISTY CORBET SKOLD: Christy Corbet Skold, forty-two.

PAQUITA: And how are you related to Mrs. Osa who just passed away?

CHRISTY: She was my grandmother.

PAQUITA: And can you tell me what you remember about your grandmother, your Basque grandmother?

CHRISTY: Well what I can remember is she instilled pride in me. I always thought it was very special to be Basque.

PAQUITA: Christy can you tell me how Amuma, your grandmother, instilled this pride in you and kept the culture going?

CHRISTY: I don't know, I just think through her actions, and Paquita I can't even express myself, I feel stupid. She, probably by just her example. She was so proud of her family and friends. And I don't know, she just passed that pride along. I mean at times like all of us with grandparents and family, or whatever, you know there were times that we didn't see eye to eye on things. But a lot of the times she had such an open mind. She could adjust to anything, especially after "Aitauchi" (Aittitte) died. You know, not even handling a checkbook or anything else after so many years, she just adjusted, and she went on. And I think she became more youthful instead of older. She kind of, she was our good friend.

PAQUITA: Uh huh. What kind of Basque customs and traditions do you remember her teaching you?

CHRISTY: Of course the dancing. Cooking especially.

PAQUITA: Do you still use her method of cooking? Did you learn it or anything?

CHRISTY: Oh, no. I did not learn it at all.

PAQUITA: Do you, but you remember the food, and did you like it?

CHRISTY: Uh huh, yes. And I also remember the family; I think the family gatherings and how important family is. And the closeness of our family. I think that was passed along. And I think it's a special, Basques have a ---

PAQUITA: It's okay; it's normal to be tongue-tied, especially at this kind of trying times.

Do you remember ever being in the boarding house, any Basque boarding house in Burns?

CHRISTY: The only ones that I remember were Lucy Garatea's. That's the one that I remember.

PAQUITA: And what do you remember about that?

CHRISTY: I can remember the meals, the rooms. I remember us cleaning, and I can remember us playing in the house, and pretending that some day --- you know it was our house that we were running.

PAQUITA: So you wanted to run a boarding house some day, huh?

CHRISTY: Oh yeah, I don't know. I just remember us playing, good times.

PAQUITA: Yeah. Do you remember the boarders at all?

CHRISTY: Gosh, I mean I can remember the men. I can't --- not very many of them.

PAQUITA: Not very many of them. Do you remember any of the language, any of the words left?

CHRISTY: That's one thing I didn't learn. Yet, I mean, I could probably sit, I can sit and listen to conversations and slightly pick up on what someone is saying, but that's about the extent of it.

PAQUITA: Uh huh. And what will you miss most about Amuma leaving?

CHRISTY: Her crocheting. I don't know, the things she has made. Her sitting there crocheting.

PAQUITA: Did she ever make anything for you?

CHRISTY: Yes, a beautiful afghan.

PAQUITA: Did she ever make anything for your sons or your husband?

CHRISTY: Things when the boys were a baby. Not sweaters or anything like that. Or some sweaters, but nothing for Roscoe that I recall. And sweaters for me, of course, I

can remember all through the years. I still have a lot of them.

PAQUITA: Thank you very much. Could you please tell me your name and your age?

DANA OSA: Okay, I'm Dana Osa, and I'm thirty-three.

PAQUITA: And can you tell me how you are related to Margarita Osa who just passed away today.

DANA: Okay, she is my grandmother. She is my father's mother.

PAQUITA: And Dana, can you tell me what memories you have of Amuma, or what sticks out in your mind the most?

DANA: Someone who was pretty full of life actually. She was talkative and she was always busy. She was knitting, cooking, she was pretty driven.

PAQUITA: Driven ---

DANA: Active.

PAQUITA: Active, until her, she died at 92. Do you think she was active up until then?

DANA: No, she wasn't as active as she was probably --- I think in the last two years I've seen her slow down. But she was still able to knit, and I think that that was the good thing, is that she was able to still knit up until the moment she died. Because she did say once that she would die if she couldn't knit. So it's nice that she was able to still do that until the very last.

PAQUITA: Do you remember any Basque traditions or customs that she, that you learned from her?

DANA: Different cooking techniques, as far as with fish, I've picked up from her. And ---

PAQUITA: Can you, can you kind of tell me about those?

DANA: Well the basic thing is, was bacalao, which is, you know, codfish.

PAQUITA: Codfish.

DANA: And just doing the garlic and the olive oil, and browning and then dipping the

codfish stripped. Usually cut into small pieces and putting it in flour and then egg, and then flour again and then frying it in the oil until it was just brown and then baking it in the oven with pimentos on it. And different, just little preparation things that she did that were different in her cooking.

There were so many things that, of course, you know, could have been, that I should have learned from her that I never did as far as knitting and handwork things, that I'll be sorry that I didn't learn more from. But she was hard to learn things from. Because she was pretty, she expected you to be perfect, and that was just the way she was, you know.

PAQUITA: Did you ever learn any of the dances?

DANA: Just the Jota. I wasn't very much; I didn't ever dance very much as a child. We didn't, you know, you, the older cousins and my sister did. And then when I came along she wasn't teaching it anymore. And, not like she did the older kids, you know.

PAQUITA: Uh huh.

DANA: And I never really learned from her, you know, just by watching her. And no, not the dancing. I mean just watching her and the others, but not directly from her I didn't learn the dancing, no.

PAQUITA: Are you passing any of these traditions down to your children?

DANA: Uh huh. They belong to the Basque dance group in Ontario. They've been, let's see, this is their fourth year that they have done that, and they do well. And they practice what, one-day a week, seven, eight months out of the year. And they both do that. I think Brett is starting to get to the point where he thinks he is too old for it; he is thirteen, my son. But I don't want to force him, but I, you know, and then they have a Basque music camp this summer in Boise, and I hope that he can go to that. I do want them to be able to, you know, carry on certain things like that. Yeah, it's important to me.

PAQUITA: Do you ever remember Amuma serving meals and ever sitting down and eating?

DANA: No, she never did, she always served everyone else. And I tend to sometimes do that myself, I've noticed. It's kind of strange. But when there is other people eating, you don't sit. But she never did. And as she got older maybe that was something I kind of enjoyed, was being able to sit down at a table, because she wasn't always, she wasn't able to do as much as she used to be able to do, so she could sit down at the table with you.

PAQUITA: Uh huh.

DANA: And you could have a conversation with her. And, you know, that was always, there were times, you know, you could have great conversations with her because of her memory and things.

PAQUITA: Was always in tact.

DANA: So it was really entertaining, she was entertaining is what she was. So I appreciated that.

PAQUITA: Do you feel like, for instance her daughters, everyone has said that did most of the work in the boarding house and helped her. Do you feel like you are raising your children in the same way as the Basque tradition where the women do most of the housework and take care of the men. Or are you changing these roles at all?

DANA: Well, you know it's funny, because --- well when I was married, you know, I did the womanly chores. I did the housework and the cleaning and took basically most care of the kids. And I've been a single parent for a while, and of course that's all fallen onto me continually, but I do delegate a lot more duties out to my kids. I mean I feel that instead of the woman having to do everything that it should be more of a shared thing.

I do enjoy cooking for them, and I enjoy doing certain things for them, but I do think

that it's nice since I work, to have it a little bit fairer, you know. When women could stay home all the time maybe that was different. But when you are working all the time, it's better to have everyone kind of help out a little bit. Because you just get to feeling, you know, like you don't have any free time, and you know, that's where it's sad where Amuma, you know, never really could do a lot of the things I think that maybe we can do because of that, you know. She didn't see where she had a choice, and we can see that.

So ---

PAQUITA: And you have a son and a daughter?

DANA: Uh huh.

PAQUITA: And do you expect them to both do equal chores, or is your daughter expected to do the beds and the cleaning or they both ---

DANA: No, I don't have any real set --- and Brett, the boy, does the dishes. She's not really, you know, and she'll empty the garbage. I mean I don't have, I probably, it's probably simpler to have them each have their specific duties, but it's just a daily thing that what I need done, I'll ask one to do one thing and another to do another. You know, and they both keep their rooms, their own rooms clean.

PAQUITA: So our grandmother was very well known for her fanatic cleanliness.

DANA: Uh huh.

PAQUITA: Do you feel that you got that also, down to you?

DANA: Well I have a tendency to be that way. But I'm not so much that way now. But I was at first when I first had my own home I was real bad about being clean.

PAQUITA: Uh huh.

DANA: But I just, it's not ---

PAQUITA: By bad, you mean you were a real fanatic?

DANA: I was, I didn't want people coming in on my floor with muddy feet. I'd look at their,

you know, I was finding myself looking at their shoes and things. But I'm just not like that anymore. I just, it's better not to be. You just get too --- but I'm not, you know, it's just like I said; I think that those are the things; she just never saw another way. So ---

PAQUITA: Uh huh.

DANA: Maybe that's where we're lucky, you know. But, you know, I could be that way, that's for sure.

PAQUITA: So what are you going to miss most about her? I know that's a hard question for all of us.

DANA: Just everything. She could be difficult, but she was, like I said, she was entertaining and she was interesting. And she has just always been here, you know. She's always been there, so it's just, she'll be missed.

PAQUITA: Like an institution.

DANA: Right. That's it.

PAQUITA: Thank you Dana.        Okay, could you please state your name and how old you are?

PATTY (PATRICIA) YRIARTE: I'm Patty.

PAQUITA: Last name.

PATTY: Yriarte, and I'm thirty-eight.

PAQUITA: And what was your maiden name?

PATTY: Osa.

PAQUITA: And can you tell me how you were related to Margarita Osa?

PATTY: I am one of her granddaughters.

PAQUITA: And can you tell me maybe one of your fondest memories, or what you thought of your grandmother, or something about her? What comes out, sticks out in your mind the most, her personality?



PATTY: The thing that I remember --- when I think of my Amuma I always think of red velvet on our dancing dresses and gold rickrack whirling. And that smell, and crocheted slippers with sequins on them. We were, because of her, we were the closest thing to feeling like a queen. We got to dance, we performed, we learned, we socialized. She taught us so much, and she just worked so hard and she has fed half this country. And cleaned, and laughed, and her biggest thing is, is that she wanted always for us to have fun. We would say she got cranky or whatever, but her biggest thing was, is, "Honey, are you happy?" And that's what I love about Amuma because she is real, and she is Amuma.

PAQUITA: Okay, can you give me your name and your age?

JULIE OSA: I'm Julie Osa, and I'm twenty-two.

PAQUITA: And how are you related to Margarita Osa?

JULIE: Her oldest son Marce is my dad.

PAQUITA: So she is your grandmother, was your grandmother? Julie, can you tell me your memories of Amuma, or what stands out the most about her in your mind?

JULIE: She is just, I don't know, everything. She was, I can't wait --- I got to ---

PAQUITA: Okay. Well how about, did she; can you remember the Basque customs, or dances, or food or anything that she taught you?

JULIE: Of course we will always think of the food and her singing and dancing. And just how she was. She was always different. I always thought every grandmother was like that, then come to find out she was one in a million. And I think what stands out most about her is just that, we all love her, and she didn't always make that easy for us, but we did.

PAQUITA: And what Basque traditions did you learn from her?

JULIE: Well, some dancing and singing. Always songs, and learning to count, just

whatever you're willing to learn she would want to teach you.

PAQUITA: Did you ever learn any handwork?

JULIE: Yeah, I learned knitting.

PAQUITA: You learned knitting. Did you learn any cooking techniques from her?

JULIE: Yeah, a little bit. I've never tried it on my own without her. So that will be a first.

PAQUITA: What are some of the things that ---

JULIE: First the cod, and the natilla, and the codfish.

PAQUITA: And the natilla, the pudding.

JULIE: Yeah. I think that's, that's all I can think of.

PAQUITA: And can you tell me Julie, what are you going to miss the most about her? It's the hardest question.

JULIE: Just her being there, you never knew what to expect.

PAQUITA: And she's always been there.

JULIE: Yeah. It was always something new with her, it didn't matter.

PAQUITA: When you said that she was so different from your other, from other grandmothers you knew, can you kind of say the difference?

JULIE: Oh, well she just, she always, always her age, she always seemed old ever since I was little, but how she acted, she had more energy in life than --- not just grandmas, anybody.

PAQUITA: What kind of things do you remember her doing?

JULIE: She was just always active, she was never one to, even when she was sitting down she was doing stuff with her hands.

PAQUITA: Uh huh. Thank you Julie.

JULIE: Okay.

PAQUITA: Okay, could you please state your name and how old you are?

ROSS CORBET: My name is Ross Corbet, and I'm thirty-five years of age.

PAQUITA: And can you tell me how Margarita Osa, who just passed away, was related to you?

ROSS: Okay, she was my grandmother; she was my mother's mother. My mother's name is Connie, also known as Consuelo, and also known as Maria Consuelo, and also known as Consuelo Maria. That's one thing Amuma had, if she didn't like a name she kind of had the habit of changing the name, and she did that with my Mom's name a couple times.

PAQUITA: She did? I didn't know that.

ROSS: Uh huh, she changed the name, yeah.

PAQUITA: And can you tell me Ross, some of your memories of Amuma, what you thought of her, what she left you as far as the Basque culture, or whatever?

ROSS: I have thought about this a little bit and so, when I think of her, I kind of think of three things. And I think for Amuma the three things are probably her real strengths, and in some ways they were her weaknesses also, which is common for most of us to have, real strengths and real weaknesses.

Like one thing I think that she was a real strong willed person. And that was, I think, evidenced that just the fact of her coming over from the Basque country as a young girl, and one thing, memory I have is of riding on a train when she was over in the Basque country I think it was in 1978 or '79, and riding on the train with her and listening to her talk about her experiences coming over on the boat, and riding the train from New York to Boise. And I think that is an example of her strong will. Am I going on too long here?

PAQUITA: No, no. So you admit that coming as a single woman, with no father or ---

ROSS: Right, right. And in those days I think, I think anyone who has ever traveled and lived in a foreign country for awhile appreciates the courage that it took for anyone to

leave their native country and go to a country they'd heard about, but they didn't really know that much about. I mean it was a real risk, and it takes a pretty strong person to be able to do that.

I think another example I think of her strong will is one of my favorite stories that my mom, Connie, and Margaret tells about is one time I think my mom did something wrong. I think maybe she didn't make the bed right, the way Amuma wanted it. And my mom instead of standing there and taking her punishment decided to run. And ---

PAQUITA: That's smart.

ROSS: Yeah. And so she ran, she ran outside and as she ran outside Amuma ran outside after her, outside, and behind Amuma was Margaret. And my mom was running, crying, Amuma was chasing her barefoot, with no shoes on, she was barefooted. And behind Amuma Margaret was running, yelling to my mom to stop, to stop, and was crying because if she didn't she knew that it was going to be worse because she ran. And so that kind of gives you an example of that.

I think the second thing I think; I think she was a real proud woman. And that could be both a strength and weakness. I think she was real proud of her Basque heritage. And I think just in terms of herself she was real proud. And it had some bad aspects at times, I think, tied into my family that, because my father wasn't Basque, that there was some tough times when they first got married. And I think it was her pride got a little carried away because he wasn't a Basque person. So I think in the strength and weakness.

PAQUITA: Uh huh.

ROSS: And another thing I think, for me, the third thing when I think of Amuma the image I get is of energy. She was always a high energy individual. And I think the best symbolism of that energy is the dances, her love of dancing. She loved to sing also, but

to me more the dancing. And when it came to dancing Amuma wasn't really a bigot in any sense. I mean it didn't matter if it was a hula, if it was a Basque dance, if it was a Mexican dance, if it was an Irish dance, or whatever, but when she was dancing I think there was always a sparkle on her face. And I think that is one characteristic that is really been passed down to the kids, and also her grandkids, and even her great-grandkids. I think it is fairly symbolic that at the wake, that here great-granddaughter Iona did a hula. And I think Amuma would have thought that was totally appropriate because she loved dance, and it wasn't that important whether it was a Basque dance or whatever kind of dance.

So kind of those are the three things that when I think about Amuma are the strong willed, and the pride, and the kind of the high energy level.

PAQUITA: And what Basque traditions or Basque customs do you think you learned from her?

ROSS: I think --- one thing that, my whole image of her really changed when she came over to the Basque country and we traveled around together. And I think that I saw her, I think one thing, I saw her as having a much greater sense of humor than I ever saw before. And was a much more witty person than I had ever seen before.

PAQUITA: Uh huh.

ROSS: And that's because she was speaking in Spanish and Basque, which were her native tongues. And so, maybe --- go ahead.

PAQUITA: Maybe less stress because of no, it's a vacation and no work here.

ROSS: Right, right. I think Amuma, I don't know if this is so much a Basque trait, but I mean she was obviously a semi-perfectionist and I think that is something that has been carried down through the generations also. (Laughter) Both good and bad, it has good and bad points of it.

PAQUITA: Do you feel like you have gotten part of that?

ROSS: Oh definitely, definitely. And I know my mother has, and I know I definitely have. And I think the three things I named before I've got that also, in both, and good quantities.

PAQUITA: Good. And what are you going to miss the most about her?

ROSS: I think probably, maybe more her energy level. Relating to the dance aspect I think. I think entertainment was important to her, and whether you came over to her house and she loved to cook for you, or to give you a drink, or just the people. I think maybe the most, the sense of --- also I think I will miss the real sense of history that she provided. I was thinking personally, you know, I've never known any of my great grandparents. And just the fact that in a family, in the America of 1989 that there is a family where great grandchildren were there, and grandchildren, and children. And I think that's probably most, just the tide of the past, that's probably what I'm going to miss the most.

PAQUITA: Great. Thank you Ross.

ROSS: You're welcome.

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HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #334 - Side A

Subject: Jonas Marcel Parlor

Place: Portland, Oregon

Date: January 9, 1990

Interviewer: Paquita Garatea

PAQUITA GARATEA: Today is January 9th, 1990 and this interview is being conducted in Portland, Oregon. The interviewer is Paquita Garatea; the interviewee is Jonas Marcel Parlor. Jonas can you tell me how you were related to Margarita Osa?

JONAS MARCEL PARLOR: I was her great-grandchild.

PAQUITA: On which side of the family?

JONAS: My mother's.

PAQUITA: And what do you remember the most about your grandmother, Margarita, Amuma?

JONAS: The meals, the food, and playing cards and stuff, just having fun.

PAQUITA: Having fun, what kind of fun?

JONAS: Just, you know, playing cards and stuff, and talking to her.

PAQUITA: So she was a lot of fun, even when she was old?

JONAS: Yes.

PAQUITA: Do you ever remember her visiting us, or visiting you?

JONAS: Yeah, she visited us in Eugene, Oregon when I was about five or six. And she wanted to go to the coast because she was born on the coast. So we went to the coast and she saw the tide was out, so we went down because she wanted to look for clams under the rocks. I went wandering off and looking at rocks and stuff. And my mom was out there, and then she bent down and the wave came up and swept her out. And she floated away, and I turned around, and so then me and my mom had to come out and get her. And my mom was ...

PAQUITA: You had to go out and get her? She was floating in the ocean?

JONAS: Yes.

PAQUITA: So she never found any clams?

JONAS: No.

PAQUITA: And what happened after that, how did she feel, or how did she act?

JONAS: Well she was just laughing and stuff, because she thought that God was trying to take her back to Spain, but she forgot that we were on the Pacific Ocean.

PAQUITA: Oh, and then she was from the Atlantic Ocean.

JONAS: Yes.



PAQUITA: Have you ever met any of her family from Spain?

JONAS: Yes, I was in Spain in the summer of 1989 --- '88.

PAQUITA: Where in Spain?

JONAS: Ondarroa.

PAQUITA: Ondarroa. And what about Ondarroa?

JONAS: It was, she was born there, so me and my mom went there for a summer. I stayed there for a month.

PAQUITA: And what did you think about the Basque country?

JONAS: I had a lot of fun. I got to see a lot of my relatives, and they were real nice and stuff. They were real generous and everything.

PAQUITA: What did you like the most about Ondarroa?

JONAS: The ocean.

PAQUITA: Why?

JONAS: Because I just had a lot of fun there. I swam and everything, and laid out on the beach.

PAQUITA: And what, can you tell me if you, if you saw any similarities between the Basque country in Spain, and the Basque people in Oregon, in Burns and Boise?

JONAS: Yes, we, in the Basque country I came around when festival was going on. And like in Boise they have like Basque picnics and stuff. And sometimes, why in 1987 they had Jailldi, and it was kind of like a festival, and it was kind of just like the Basque country because they was dancing and everything.

PAQUITA: Basque dancing?

JONAS: Yes.

PAQUITA: And what else was the same?

JONAS: The food.

PAQUITA: The food. What about costumes?

JONAS: Yeah, they were the same.

PAQUITA: The costumes were the same. Language, did you hear the Basque language?

JONAS: Yeah, I heard it a little bit. Most people speak Spanish though.

PAQUITA: Where?

JONAS: In Ondarroa and in, you know, in Boise and Burns and other places.

PAQUITA: They speak Spanish; the Basques speak Spanish, or Basque?

JONAS: Basque.

PAQUITA: So you heard Basque more?

JONAS: Yeah, but I just understood Spanish better. I asked them to speak Spanish because I don't know any Basque.

PAQUITA: What will you miss the most about your great-grandmother Amuma Osa?

JONAS: Just the food and stuff, and having fun with her.

PAQUITA: What kind of food?

JONAS: Basque. I mean like txurros, that's Basque pastries.

PAQUITA: Txurros.

JONAS: Yes.

PAQUITA: Were there txurros in Ondarroa?

JONAS: Yes.

PAQUITA: Did they taste the same as hers?

JONAS: Oh, almost, yeah, just about.

PAQUITA: Just about the same. And you'll miss, so you'll miss the fun and the food, and her personality, is that what you said?

JONAS: Yes.

PAQUITA: Thank you Jonas.

JONAS: You're welcome.

(END OF TAPE)

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