

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #335 - Sides A & B

Subject: Wilma Dunten - 1993 Queen Mother - With Video

Place: Dunten Home - Drewsey, Oregon

Date: April 15, 1993

Interviewers: Dorothea Purdy & Barbara Lofgren

Release Form: Yes

DOROTHEA PURDY: This is Dorothea Purdy along with Barbara Lofgren and today we're at the home of Wilma Dunten who will be presiding as the 1993 Pioneer President's Queen (Queen Mother). We are at Wilma's home in Drewsey, the date is April 15th, 1993, and the interview number is 335. Okay Wilma, there we go, can you tell me your name? (Wilma Dunten's sister, Claire Newell, joins in the conversation.)

WILMA DUNTEN: Wilma Miller Dunten.

DOROTHEA: And when were you born?

WILMA: I was born in 1909, December 26th.

DOROTHEA: And what were your parent's names?

WILMA: William Wesley, and Frankie Ward Miller.

DOROTHEA: And what?

WILMA: Frankie Ward.

DOROTHEA: Ward?

WILMA: She was a Ward.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

BARBARA LOFGREN: Frankie, is that a nickname, or was that just, that was her name.

WILMA: No, that was her natural name.

BARBARA: Uh huh. And where were you born?

WILMA: Drewsey.

BARBARA: In Drewsey, okay.

DOROTHEA: Was there any special place, like Claire said she was born on the Miller place. Is that where you were born?

WILMA: Well, she was. But that's about, oh seventeen miles or so up the road.

CLAIRE NEWELL: They know where that is. She was born at the old City Hotel.

WILMA: Yeah, City Hotel, that belonged to my Grandmother Miller.

DOROTHEA: And it was located where?

WILMA: Right in Drewsey.

DOROTHEA: Right in Drewsey, okay. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

WILMA: I have two brothers and one sister.

DOROTHEA: And what did your parents do for a living?

WILMA: Oh, farming and ranch, cattle.

DOROTHEA: Cattle ranchers. When did they come to the country?

WILMA: My grandfather came in 1883 when the country was open for settlement. And then he brought his family; he came and built a house. Took up land and built a house. And then the next year he brought his family. And that was, I think there were three children. I'm not sure about that, but I think that's what it was. Anyway ---

BARBARA: Where did he come from before he came to settle in?

WILMA: They moved from California. They had property in ---

CLAIRE: Lookout, California.

WILMA: Yeah, Lookout. But then when this was open for settlement then they moved up here. And well, the next year, because he came and built his house and everything before he brought his family.

DOROTHEA: What year did you say they came?

WILMA: 1883 he came.

DOROTHEA: He came.

WILMA: And he did this building and things. And then the next year he brought his family up.

DOROTHEA: Did he come in a wagon then?

WILMA: Oh yes. I don't know just what kind, or anything about that.

DOROTHEA: Did they tell you any stories about how the country was when they first came here?

WILMA: I don't ---

CLAIRE: All I can ever remember them saying was that there was bunchgrass all over the hills. It was just like a hay field. Lots of grass, and that's all I can remember.

DOROTHEA: Kind of lush country then?

CLAIRE: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BARBARA: How did they happen to hear about this country if they were living in California?

WILMA: I don't know that, I just don't know. Anyway they ---

CLAIRE: They had a real nice place down there at Lookout. We went to see it when Uncle Lawrence and "Martie" (Margaret) was down there. And they just up and left it and come up here.

DOROTHEA: Well when my grandfather came, they said that there was a lot of the country that was real lush country to homestead. And that's probably what he heard.

CLAIRE: Yeah, I think so. I think he heard about it.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

WILMA: Just how or who told him, or anything about that, I don't know.

DOROTHEA: How were the Indians, or the Native Americans, in that area, in that time? Did they have any problems with them?

WILMA: I don't think so. Now to here, they had, before they left California they had some run ins with, what was it, Captain Jack or ---

CLAIRE: Yeah, the Modoc Indians.

WILMA: Yeah. And they came one night and surrounded the house, and my grandfather walked out and got a load of wood and brought it back to the house. And they finally left; they never caused any more trouble. We always thought it was because he didn't let them know that he was

afraid of them or anything.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

WILMA: But why, I don't know.

DOROTHEA: Well maybe they were more prominent and a little more destructive in the Harney area than out in this area.

WILMA: Well, that could be too, I don't know much about that.

DOROTHEA: Then when he brought the family, did they have any more children after they came?

WILMA: Well there were ten children altogether. I think they had three when they came here.

DOROTHEA: And then there were ten altogether.

WILMA: Yeah. And --- I didn't have their names down, so I couldn't tell you that. ... anything about them.

DOROTHEA: Well then when your dad struck out, what did he do?

WILMA: Well he bought, after my grandfather, I don't know just how it happened, but he bought my grandmother's interest in the ranch. And ---

CLAIRE: Well Granddad went to; Grandpa Miller went to Canada ---

WILMA: Yeah.

CLAIRE: --- then.

WILMA: And see he ---

CLAIRE: Papa run the ranch.

WILMA: Yeah. Well, he bought the interest. So that he was ---

DOROTHEA: So, then you were raised more or less on his homestead place?

WILMA: Well yes, until my mother died, and then I went to live with my grandmother in Drewsey.

BARBARA: Where was this ranch located?

WILMA: Well it's about oh, seventeen or eighteen miles from town, right on up this road.

BARBARA: Okay.

WILMA: And ---

CLAIRE: It's just about two miles above the Pine Creek School House.

WILMA: Yeah.

BARBARA: Okay. So that was the original Miller homestead then?

CLAIRE: Yeah.

BARBARA: Okay.

WILMA: Yeah. Well they bought, he bought it from ---

CLAIRE: Yeah, it had been taken up. They bought it from --- who did they buy it from?

WILMA: Yeah. And he bought, my grandfather bought the ranch, and they lived there for years.

DOROTHEA: Oh, he didn't homestead it then?

WILMA: Well no, not really. They had a homestead area, but that's all. I don't know just how it happened.

CLAIRE: I don't know either.

BARBARA: So, then your ---

CLAIRE: Now that's why, if we had Francis and them here they could tell you. They knew ---

WILMA: Well that Lawrence is our historian, so he has records of all these things.

BARBARA: So, your father then bought your mother's share of the ranch and ---

WILMA: My grandmother's share.

BARBARA: Your grandmother's share of the ranch. And then when your mother ---

WILMA: Then my mother, during World War I in 1918 she got the flu.

BARBARA: Oh, that terrible flu that went around.

WILMA: Yeah. And she didn't recover from that.

BARBARA: So, then you moved into town with your grandmother.

WILMA: Yeah, Claire and I. The boys stayed at the farm.

BARBARA: You mentioned you have two brothers, what are their names?

WILMA: Francis is the oldest one, and then Lawrence.

BARBARA: Then Lawrence, okay.

WILMA: He lives, Lawrence, lives down at ---

CLAIRE: Parma, Idaho.

WILMA: Yeah, out of Parma. He has a ranch there. And Francis lives at --- well tell me, I can't think right now.

CLAIRE: What are you talking about?

DOROTHEA: Where Francis lives.

CLAIRE: Oh, Tillamook.

WILMA: Tillamook, yeah. Him and his wife lives there.

DOROTHEA: Where did you go to school?

WILMA: Well, I started at Pine Creek. And then I went several years to Drewsey, and I graduated from the eighth grade in Drewsey. And then I went to school at Kimball Flat here for my ninth grade. And then I stayed in Burns for, graduated from ---

DOROTHEA: High school

WILMA: --- high school there.

DOROTHEA: Did you go to college?

WILMA: I went one year to Ashland Normal School.

BARBARA: Did you get a teaching certificate then?

WILMA: No, no, I didn't go long enough.

CLAIRE: She never did go ...

WILMA: I'd have to have gone another year, and I didn't.

DOROTHEA: How did you meet your husband?

WILMA: Oh, more or less grew up together I guess you would say. Because he lived here in Kimball Flat, and I lived in Drewsey. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: What were the schools like, you mentioned here in Kimball Flat? What were the schools like?

WILMA: Oh, it was all eight grades. And ---

DOROTHEA: Can you remember some of your teacher's names?

WILMA: Well, Robert Currier was one that I went to school too. When he was teaching Pine

Creek, and I took first grade from him. And then I had the ninth grade in Kimball Flat and he was teaching ninth grade then.

DOROTHEA: Was he Currier? Do you know how to spell that?

CLAIRE: C U R R I E R.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

WILMA: Currier.

DOROTHEA: And his first name was Robert?

CLAIRE: Robert.

WILMA: Robert Currier.

DOROTHEA: And then who? Did you have a principal, or did the schools work under a superintendent or ---

WILMA: No, it was just the teacher.

CLAIRE: Well, but they had the superintendent in Burns.

WILMA: Well, they had a county school superintendent. But they didn't have any special one that time. They ... the county schools then.

DOROTHEA: Tell us something about some of the classes that were taught. And the recesses, what did you do at recess?

WILMA: Oh, I can't remember very ---

DOROTHEA: Did you play baseball, or ---

WILMA: Oh well, we played anti-over.

DOROTHEA: Anti-over.

WILMA: Over the schoolhouse. That's about all I can remember about that.

BARBARA: Did you put on programs or anything at Christmas time?

WILMA: Oh yeah, we had programs at Christmas, and the last day of school.

BARBARA: Did you have more men teachers than women during that time do you think, or was it about equal?

WILMA: I think probably we had more women than men. Because there was ---

BARBARA: Were they all single women that came to teach, or were some of them married?

WILMA: I think most of them were single, weren't they?

DOROTHEA: We've heard and talked to some of the people that have gone to the country schools, and they say they didn't have very much luck keeping a single woman, because they always got married.

Do you remember any of the ---?

WILMA: No, well let's see, when "Crissie" Sattgast taught in Drewsey she got married after school was out.

CLAIRE: Well, so did Oran, Clara.

WILMA: Yeah.

CLAIRE: Clara.

DOROTHEA: Are they still in the area, or have they moved away?

WILMA: No, they are all gone. Well I think Clara is, she passed away, I don't think she is living.

DOROTHEA: You mentioned a teacher's name there, Crissie?

WILMA: Sattgast.

DOROTHEA: You can't spell that for us?

WILMA: S A T T G A S T.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

WILMA: And I can't remember who she married now though. It has been so many years ago. Do you?

CLAIRE: Shoot.

WILMA: Be sure and get her name in on this interview, she is doing most of the answering.

(Laughter)

CLAIRE: Highsmith, I don't know what his first name was.

WILMA: Highsmith.

CLAIRE: Highsmith.

DOROTHEA: Is that the last name, Highsmith?

CLAIRE: Wasn't she the one that married Highsmith, or was she?

WILMA: Well I was thinking, no --- I just don't know.

BARBARA: Who were some of the other students that went to school with you during this time?

Do you remember some of the people that were in the community?

WILMA: That are still in the community?

BARBARA: Well maybe those too, but just in general, who were some of your classmates while you were going through school?

WILMA: Well there was Rose Drewett, Jessie Drewett, Wilma Drewett, and ---

CLAIRE: The Drewetts.

WILMA: Drex Williams and Delmas Drinkwater. Right now I can't think of anybody else.

CLAIRE: Cranmer's.

WILMA: Oh yeah, all the Cranmer's. How many were there, four or five Cranmer's. There was Jessie, and Josephine, and ---

CLAIRE: There was a bunch of them.

WILMA: I can't remember all of them.

DOROTHEA: Are any of them still around?

CLAIRE: Uh huh. Mary is the only one of them that is alive.

WILMA: Yeah, she is the only one that is living, I guess. And then, yeah, they live at LaGrande.

CLAIRE: Most of them is gone.

DOROTHEA: Now Drewitt, is D R E W I T T?

WILMA: E T T.

CLAIRE: E T T.

DOROTHEA: Two T's?

CLAIRE: Uh huh.

BARBARA: And how did you get to school? Did you ride by horseback, did you walk, or ---?

WILMA: Well when I went to Drewsey, I lived here.

BARBARA: Uh huh, right in town.

WILMA: And the year that I took ninth grade I walked. I stayed with my aunt and then walked. And that was Tom Howard and Ned Howard and Harold Howard that went to school.

DOROTHEA: And that was where, in Burns or right here in Drewsey.

WILMA: No, Kimball Flat here.

BARBARA: Did you ever go by horseback to school?

WILMA: Oh, not very much. When I went to Pine Creek, my dad built a little house there, we lived right there by the schoolhouse.

BARBARA: Oh. Did you ever keep any of the teachers in your home?

WILMA: Huh uh.

BARBARA: Did they have a teacherage, or whatever they ---

WILMA: They had a --- but I remember they had a teacherage right there too.

DOROTHEA: Did they ever have a time when you couldn't get to school, like in the wintertime? Most of these roads were probably still muddy.

WILMA: Well, when I lived there at the Pine Creek School, I was right there, just walked across the yard.

DOROTHEA: So, they didn't ever close the school due to bad weather?

WILMA: No, I don't remember ever being closed.

CLAIRE: I never remembered.

BARBARA: And when you went to high school in Burns then, did you live with another family?

WILMA: Yes, I lived with, I stayed with Mrs. McConnell.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

WILMA: You knew here?

BARBARA: Well, I've heard the name before.

WILMA: Yeah, well he was a lawyer.

BARBARA: C. B. McConnell.

WILMA: Yeah. And she was a teacher. She taught in Drewsey several years. I went to school --- what year was it?

CLAIRE: Oh goodness.

BARBARA: What year did you graduate from high school, do you recall?

WILMA: Oh, I graduated in Burns.

BARBARA: Uh huh, what year was that, do you remember?

WILMA: '30, I think, 1930.

BARBARA: Was it common for the country children to come in and stay with different families?

Was that just a generally accepted thing that people took the children in from the ranches?

WILMA: Well, yes.

BARBARA: Were there a lot of your friends that did that?

WILMA: There were some, all right. Most of the families lived there when I was in the ninth grade.

DOROTHEA: Well did more than one student stay with, like say with Mrs. McConnell or ---

WILMA: No, I was the only one that stayed with her. And it wasn't ninth grade; it was --- when I lived with her that was the last year of high school.

CLAIRE: Well, she stayed with our aunt there, Ida Howard. She had her ---

WILMA: Yeah, I stayed with her when I was ---

CLAIRE: And she kept some of the Sitz kids, and they had a house full of kids.

DOROTHEA: Did they have their own at that time?

CLAIRE: Uh huh.

BARBARA: What did you high school students do for fun when you were eleventh and twelfth grade for socializing? What did you do in those days? Can you remember any activities that you did?

WILMA: Oh, other than basketball or something like that, that's about the only thing.

BARBARA: Did you ever get together for parties and things like that?

WILMA: Oh, once in a great while, but not too much.

BARBARA: You pretty much had chores to do, and homework when you got home from school?

WILMA: Yeah.

BARBARA: You had responsibility to do things to kind of help pay your way if you were living with another family?

WILMA: Well yes, yeah.

BARBARA: Did your family have to pay the McConnell's for you to stay there?

WILMA: No, no, I worked.

BARBARA: You just kind of helped out the family for your board and room then, really.

WILMA: Yeah.

BARBARA: Uh huh. Okay.

DOROTHEA: Then you went to, or you more or less grew up with Turen, and you married Turen Duntten.

WILMA: Well, after I was through high school, we went together for a long time before we were married. And then I went to normal school, and after I came home we were married.

DOROTHEA: And what year was that?

WILMA: 1932 I think, wasn't it, yeah?

CLAIRE: '32.

WILMA: Yeah, I think so.

DOROTHEA: And where were you married?

WILMA: In Burns.

DOROTHEA: Tell us something about your courtship. Was it a ---

WILMA: Well, we just went together whenever there was anything to go to. We went to ---

BARBARA: Did you go to dances?

WILMA: Oh yes, we went to dances. And ---

DOROTHEA: Did you have church socials, or anything like that?

WILMA: Not too much.

DOROTHEA: Not too much.

WILMA: Once in awhile the church had something, but very seldom.

DOROTHEA: What kind of a wedding did you have?

WILMA: Oh, we just went to the minister's house and we got our license, and we went to the minister's house and we were married. That was all there was to it.

DOROTHEA: Did you have to have some witnesses?

WILMA: Yeah, I can't remember. Well, one of the McPheeters boys was a witness.

BARBARA: Did you go on a honeymoon?

WILMA: No, only back home.

BARBARA: No.

WILMA: We went back ---

DOROTHEA: What kind of car did you have?

WILMA: Oh, he had a car when we were married, but I can't think what it was.

DOROTHEA: Did you drive?

WILMA: I learned to drive.

DOROTHEA: Tell us something about how you learned to drive, and what kind of an experience it was.

WILMA: Well, I really didn't have too much trouble learning. Oh, one time I hit a slick spot and scooted around a bit, but that was the only time that I remember that was a little bit awkward.

DOROTHEA: You don't remember what kind of car it was?

WILMA: Oh, I think it was a Ford but I'm not sure.

DOROTHEA: Most of them I think in this area were Fords.

CLAIRE: Yeah, old Model-T's.

WILMA: Did Katie go home?

CLAIRE: Yeah, she and Carol Ann left.

DOROTHEA: Where did you live?

WILMA: Well, after we were married my grandmother went down to ---

CLAIRE: Vancouver.

WILMA: --- someplace in Washington and lived with her daughter. And then we were there; we stayed in her house for a while. And then ---

DOROTHEA: Was it on a ranch, or where was it?

WILMA: No, when she was still running the hotel.

DOROTHEA: Oh, in the hotel in Drewsey?

BARBARA: The hotel.

WILMA: Yeah.

BARBARA: Did you run the hotel then for a while?

WILMA: Oh, not really.

BARBARA: Or just lived there?

WILMA: I mean there wasn't much call for rooms or anything like that at that time.

BARBARA: How big of a house was it? How many rooms did she have to rent out?

WILMA: I don't know, twelve or fourteen.

CLAIRE: Well, there was about fourteen rooms, wasn't there?

WILMA: Fourteen or something like that.

BARBARA: Oh, that's a lot; a lot of cleaning to do then, wasn't it?

WILMA: Yeah. Well when they were building the road through Stinkingwater Mountain, and the highway I mean, through there and over the mountain, I did keep roomers. And it was ---

DOROTHEA: Tell us something about Drewsey when you were a child and when you first got married. It was a lot larger than it is now.

WILMA: Yeah. I don't know just how many people, but there were a lot more families in Drewsey than there used to be.

DOROTHEA: Did you have more stores then?

WILMA: Huh?

DOROTHEA: Did you have more stores, like grocery stores, and ---

WILMA: Oh yeah, the stores.

CLAIRE: Just the one store.

WILMA: But it did a big business, because lots of people from all around came in.

CLAIRE: Saloon.

WILMA: Now we don't even have one.

DOROTHEA: You had churches and saloons and, how many ---

WILMA: We had two churches, the Catholic, and ours was the Presbyterian.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Did they have barbershops and something like that?

WILMA: Yeah.

CLAIRE: They had a barbershop, but it was long years ago. I guess you were going to school when there was a barbershop.

WILMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: About when did the town start getting smaller?

WILMA: Well, it seems to me like it started in, oh I don't know.

DOROTHEA: After you got married?

WILMA: Oh no, it was before that.

DOROTHEA: Really.

WILMA: There was activity in the way of people coming in, where the people that were working on the highway, building, when they built that.

CLAIRE: That was something you did, you fixed the rooms, some of them, and made apartments out of them.

WILMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Did they have families that would come and stay then?

WILMA: Yeah, some of them did, some of them didn't. I remember one time; one fellow was living in a room and he almost caused a fire. I don't know how he did it, but he had it so hot that it scorched the wall.

DOROTHEA: How were the rooms heated?

WILMA: With stoves.

DOROTHEA: Stoves.

WILMA: ... If they were heated, that was the way. A lot of them weren't heated.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Did they have plumbing, or did they have outdoor plumbing?

WILMA: Outdoor toilets.

DOROTHEA: Outdoor plumbing.

WILMA: Oh no, no plumbing.

DOROTHEA: Did you have indoor baths or ---

WILMA: Yeah, we had a bathroom.

BARBARA: What about electricity? When did electricity come to Drewsey?

WILMA: Well, what year was it?

CLAIRE: '46 I believe.

WILMA: '46, yeah, that was ---

BARBARA: Must have been quite a deal then, wasn't it?

WILMA: We were here then; we were in our house over there.

DOROTHEA: What was the first appliance you bought? Can you remember whether it was a refrigerator, or a stove?

CLAIRE: I think it was a refrigerator.

WILMA: Probably was, I can't remember right now.

DOROTHEA: Did you have an icebox before that?

WILMA: Yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Where did you get your ice?

WILMA: Well, they put it up in sawdust blocks, you know, and then kept it in sawdust all summer.

Oh, we had ---

DOROTHEA: How long would a block of ice last?

WILMA: Oh, a day or two. I don't suppose it stayed longer. It depended on how well it was covered I think in the sawdust.

DOROTHEA: When you started getting a family, and probably before, did you start a garden?

How did you get ---

WILMA: Oh yeah, we had a garden every year after we moved on the ranch.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Did you learn to milk and raise chickens?

WILMA: No, no, I raised chickens, but I never learned to milk.

BARBARA: That was a good thing.

DOROTHEA: You were smart. (Laughter)

CLAIRE: When she come, or moved to the ranch, she told them she wasn't going to milk, and she never did. (Laughter) She stuck with that.

DOROTHEA: Did you have a milk cow though?

WILMA: Oh yeah, we had cows.

CLAIRE: The kids milked cows.

DOROTHEA: Tell me about it.

WILMA: Yeah, I never did learn to milk.

BARBARA: You say you got married and then you lived in your grandmother's hotel in Drewsey. For how many years were you there before ---

WILMA: Probably a couple years I think. Then we bought the ranch.

BARBARA: Maybe two years and then you bought your --- whose ranch was it that you bought?

WILMA: I think it belonged to Chester Stallard when we bought it. That's who we bought it from.

DOROTHEA: Stallard?

WILMA: Stallard, yeah. But --- hum. I was going to say who homesteaded it, but I can't remember now.

DOROTHEA: Is that the house right over here?

WILMA: No, no. There was a house down there that --- part of an orchard left, and we ---

CLAIRE: That's where they moved into though.

WILMA: Yeah, that's, that was there when we bought it.

BARBARA: You say with trees, did you have apple trees and did you have fruit on your ---

WILMA: Yeah, apples.

BARBARA: --- on your homestead, on your first place then, the old Stallard place?

WILMA: Well that was this, and the only one we've ever owned.

BARBARA: I see, I see.

DOROTHEA: So you've lived here all your married life then?

WILMA: Yeah, oh yes.

CLAIRE: Until, but a couple years they was in Drewsey.

WILMA: Except the two years we were in Drewsey. I don't think we lived over two years there.

BARBARA: It's unusual for people to stay in one place that long anymore. It seems like people flit around from one place to another.

WILMA: Well we ---

CLAIRE: Some of them can't stay still; they just have to be moving.

BARBARA: You say you did have some milk cows; did you ever sell milk and cream?

WILMA: Oh yeah. Well, we sold cream. It was shipped out on the stage.

DOROTHEA: I think that's what a lot of the old ranchers did.

CLAIRE: Most of them around here sold, that's the way they made their money, or they wouldn't have had much.

WILMA: Yeah, I think most of them ---

DOROTHEA: There was a stage or something that came through and picked it up.

WILMA: Yeah, it was a regular mail ---

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. How many children do you have?

WILMA: I had five, the first one was stillborn. And then I had four, and my youngest daughter was killed in a truck-car accident when she was about eighteen.

DOROTHEA: Can you tell us their names?

WILMA: Yeah, I've got it all written out. Well Alfred Duntten is the oldest. Helen was the second.

BARBARA: Can you tell us when they born then, do you have that down?

WILMA: No I don't.

CLAIRE: You should be able to tell them that.

WILMA: And then Raymond, and then Karen was the one that was killed.

DOROTHEA: Alfred lives here?

WILMA: He lives down, right down the road here.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And Helen lives in?

WILMA: Well, right now she is living in Lyons.

DOROTHEA: And Raymond lives in?

WILMA: He lives in Ontario.

DOROTHEA: Ontario.

WILMA: And he has children. Alfred has two; Tad and Anne are their names. Anne married a Johnson.

DOROTHEA: That's Seth?

WILMA: Tad isn't married.

DOROTHEA: Anne married the news reporter, right?

WILMA: Sargent.

CLAIRE: Yeah, Seth Johnson.

DOROTHEA: Seth, yeah.

WILMA: Oh, Seth, yeah.

DOROTHEA: And Raymond married Kathleen Arntz?

WILMA: Right. And then ---

DOROTHEA: How many grandchildren do you have altogether?

WILMA: Seven.

DOROTHEA: Seven.

WILMA: There is Katie, and then Andy who was, were the two, Helen's children. And then Alfred had Tad and Anne. And Raymond had Amie, Taresa, and Jason.

DOROTHEA: And what does Raymond do?

WILMA: He is ASCS for all of Malheur County.

DOROTHEA: And Helen is a ---

WILMA: I don't know what they call it.

BARBARA: One of those government workers?

WILMA: Yeah, they keep ---

DOROTHEA: One that helps the poor people once in awhile. And Helen is in nursing.

WILMA: Well she is teaching nursing, or teaching some kind of nursing, I don't know just what right now. She has done several different things. But she ---

DOROTHEA: Helen has also done a little bit of traveling. Didn't she used to live in Chicago someplace?

WILMA: Yeah, she lived in Chicago and she lived in Maryland. When she was in Maryland she was doing actual nursing. Oh, I think she did that in Chicago, too. And then they went to; she and her husband and family went to ---

CLAIRE: Saigon?

WILMA: What?

CLAIRE: ...

BARBARA: So what did her husband do?

WILMA: Well, she is divorced.

BARBARA: I understand that.

WILMA: She was --- oh he was working for the government in some kind of a deal, I don't know just what.

BARBARA: And has she not ever re-married?

WILMA: Huh uh, no. No, she has been teaching for the last few years, a year or two. I don't know just how long.

CLAIRE: Well she got, her back got to bothering her, she had to quit nursing, so she started teaching. Well when she was in Chicago she taught.

WILMA: Yeah, she --- well she also did bedside nursing there.

CLAIRE: Well, she probably did. That's where she started teaching.

WILMA: Yeah. And then I have the great grandchild, Carol Ann Tracy. Don't want to forget her.

DOROTHEA: And that's the only great grandchild you've got so far?

WILMA: The only one I have so far.

DOROTHEA: Is Andy married?

WILMA: No. Well, Andy is married yes. I thought you said Andy, yeah, yes he is married. But they don't have any children.

BARBARA: Did you ever have 4-H out here, did you have 4-H Clubs?

WILMA: Oh yes.

BARBARA: Were you a leader in any of those?

WILMA: No, no, I never was.

BARBARA: Were your children involved in any of those things?

WILMA: All of them.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

WILMA: They were all involved.

CLAIRE: They had animals.

WILMA: Huh?

CLAIRE: I said they had animals.

WILMA: Yeah, mostly animals. Starting with the --- let's see, they started with hogs I guess. And then they had lambs, or maybe it was lambs first, I can't think now. Anyway then they had calves, and just about --- every year they had something.

DOROTHEA: Where did Helen go to school at?

WILMA: You mean college?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, college.

WILMA: Ah ---

DOROTHEA: In Oregon someplace, or did she go out of Oregon?

CLAIRE: Well she went to ---

BARBARA: To go to the Portland Nursing School?

CLAIRE: The nursing school in Portland. And then she went to Minneapolis to school.

WILMA: Yeah.

CLAIRE: But I can't tell you the hospital where she took her training.

WILMA: Well, she took the training in Portland.

CLAIRE: Yeah, well I know, but I can't tell you what that was. Can't remember which one.

WILMA: Well, let me see, I wish I had thought about it.

BARBARA: Good Samaritan Hospital, was it?

WILMA: No, don't think so.

BARBARA: Or the Veteran's Hospital?

CLAIRE: No, no.

WILMA: No, it wasn't that.

BARBARA: Oregon Health Sciences Building, or whatever.

WILMA: No.

BARBARA: One of those.

CLAIRE: One of those hospitals is where she took her training.

WILMA: I can't think right now.

BARBARA: There is so many there, Emanuel, St. Vincent's.

WILMA: St. Vincent's, I think that she took her ---

CLAIRE: I didn't know she did. Evelyn (Howard) went to St. Vincent's.

WILMA: Yeah, but I think she did too. Well, I won't say.

BARBARA: One of those.

CLAIRE: Yeah, one of them.

WILMA: Yeah, it was one of them, I can't remember.

DOROTHEA: Your husband was quite musically talented and played the fiddle. Did he play for dances?

WILMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Did you play?

WILMA: Yes, I did with them for several years.

DOROTHEA: What did you play?

WILMA: I played the piano.

DOROTHEA: And did you have lessons, or did you just pick it up?

WILMA: Oh no, I had lessons. Studied, I don't know, quite a lot.

BARBARA: Who was your teacher, who was your music teacher?

WILMA: Well I started with Mrs. --- Dr. Hedge, wasn't that it?

CLAIRE: Hedges.

WILMA: Hedges, yeah. And then ---

BARBARA: Was that here in Drewsey or in Burns that your lessons were?

WILMA: No, it was, they lived at Juntura.

BARBARA: Juntura.

DOROTHEA: Did they come here, or did you go there?

WILMA: I don't know, he was a doctor. And they lived around for several years.

CLAIRE: They --- she'd go down sometimes, and they'd come up too.

WILMA: Yeah, they came up and give lessons. Several people around took lessons from them. She was quite a pianist.

BARBARA: And about when did you start taking piano lessons? How old were you?

WILMA: Oh ---

BARBARA: Real young?

WILMA: Fourteen or fifteen, or something like that.

BARBARA: And did you really take to it; did you really enjoy it?

WILMA: Oh yeah, I liked to play piano.

DOROTHEA: Do you still play a little bit?

WILMA: Oh, not too much anymore. My fingers are too --- just too stiff. I don't play much anymore. I even stopped playing for church. I played for church I don't know how many years. Can't do it any more.

CLAIRE: All the kids' play.

WILMA: Huh?

CLAIRE: I say all of your kids play.

WILMA: Yeah, they all play.

BARBARA: Did you teach them?

WILMA: Well I taught ---

BARBARA: Sort of?

WILMA: Sort of. Helen plays, she is a beautiful pianist.

DOROTHEA: Does she also play the accordion?

WILMA: Well yes, she played the accordion, and she played the guitar.

DOROTHEA: Did she play the violin?

WILMA: Well, she tried to learn on that, but she never kept it up. She had too many other irons in the fire by that time. Yeah, she tried to play the violin.

DOROTHEA: What does Alfred play?

WILMA: He plays the guitar, and --- mostly guitar I think. He never did learn the violin.

DOROTHEA: Now does he play with a band too?

WILMA: No, no.

BARBARA: Did you have family get togethers where everyone would play some instrument and you just have some little jam session going did you?

WILMA: Yes, we used to do that too. (Laughter) Yeah.

CLAIRE: We used to have lots of those, but they don't do anything anymore.

DOROTHEA: I know it. It's sad.

WILMA: Yeah, we even had it at the church sometimes.

BARBARA: You would perform at the church.

WILMA: Well, I mean some of the ---

DOROTHEA: Jam sessions at the church?

WILMA: Jam sessions.

BARBARA: Well, that's really nice. It's nice that the children have an appreciation for the music then.

WILMA: Oh they all have it. And all of Ray's family is learning to play the piano, so they couldn't carry a tune. Anne learned to play the piano, but Tad, well he learned the drum. He is fair on that,

but he didn't care too much for music. He is the only one of them that didn't.

BARBARA: Okay, we talk about Turen being a fiddler in some of the early bands that he played for. Was there a Gearhart or someone that played for ---

WILMA: Well he played with John Gearhart quite a bit.

BARBARA: Did they play for the community dances at the Grange, or whatever here in Drewsey?

WILMA: Yeah. Well around, where they, they played quite a few years together.

BARBARA: And when he was out playing, did you go along and play piano, or did you go along and listen, or how did that work?

WILMA: Well it depended on who was playing. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Whether they would let you or not?

WILMA: Well, I played some, but ---

BARBARA: Would you mostly just sit along the sideline and listen, or did you dance with some of the other men that were there?

WILMA: I danced, I loved to dance.

BARBARA: Uh huh. Well if your husband is up there playing, you've got to have something to do too, right?

WILMA: Well I played, I played for the ---

DOROTHEA: Played the piano for a while.

WILMA: When John Gearhart played, I played with them quite awhile.

DOROTHEA: Well, let's stop for a moment and turn our tape over, and gather our thoughts and we'll be back.

SIDE B

DOROTHEA: Tell us something about some of the things that your husband did. Did he just ranch, or did he do anything else?

WILMA: He, we had cattle mostly, and haying. Sometimes he did, for other people he ---

DOROTHEA: Custom work?

WILMA: Yeah, that is what I'm trying to say. But mostly it was our own.

BARBARA: Did he do Cat work or anything for government people, or anything like that?

WILMA: Yeah. Well, he worked with his Cat on dams and things like that.

BARBARA: On the forest or anything?

WILMA: No, I can't remember whether he ever worked for the forest service or not. Mostly it was

BARBARA: What about fires, when they had fires did they ever use him to make a fire line or anything with his Cat?

WILMA: Well there was one time the fire got over in here, in these ... and he had a Cat out then. But that's about the only time I remember him doing anything like that.

DOROTHEA: Did you spend most of your time as a mother and house worker then?

WILMA: Oh yeah.

DOROTHEA: Garden keeper.

WILMA: Yeah. Well I ---

DOROTHEA: Good provider. Did you belong to Grange?

WILMA: Oh yes.

DOROTHEA: What did the Grange do?

WILMA: Oh they did lots of things.

DOROTHEA: Did you go through the offices?

WILMA: Yeah. We both did that. And Pomona Grange was the next degree after our home Grange.

DOROTHEA: What was your Grange out here called?

WILMA: Drewsey Grange.

DOROTHEA: Just Drewsey Grange.

WILMA: 738.

DOROTHEA: Because I know the one in Burns was Poison Creek. Did you ever go into Burns and have --- is that where you had state meetings?

WILMA: Oh yeah. Pomona Grange was held in Burns, let's see, I think twice a year, and our Grange held it the other two times of the year.

DOROTHEA: Now explain Pomona Grange.

WILMA: Well it is the next degree after you get through with your local.

CLAIRE: There is four degrees.

WILMA: Yeah, there is ---

CLAIRE: And then the Pomona Grange is the fifth degree.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

WILMA: And then there is ---

CLAIRE: And then you can go on to state Grange.

WILMA: Then there is state, is sixth, and national is seventh degree.

DOROTHEA: So if you're a, what do you start as a secretary or something, and then you work up to the master?

WILMA: No, no, you don't do it like that. The first degree you just take a ---

CLAIRE: Well, she is talking about the chairs and things.

DOROTHEA: Chairs, and yeah ---

WILMA: Oh, you're elected to the different chairs. And I was secretary for oh, I don't know, a number of years. It must have been twenty years. (Laughter)

CLAIRE: I know it was a long time.

DOROTHEA: Well, explain to me kind of, what the different degrees are. You said that ---

WILMA: Well, you take the first four degrees in your local Grange.

DOROTHEA: Now what do these consist of, I mean what are your, what is a degree?

WILMA: Can you explain it?

CLAIRE: Not very easy.

WILMA: I can't either. Anyway, you're ---

BARBARA: Kind of like a president of the Grange counts as a degree? Is it something like that?

CLAIRE: No.

WILMA: No, no, no.

BARBARA: So much work that you do?

CLAIRE: You have to go and take your first four degrees before you can hold an office in the Grange.

BARBARA: So it's kind of an educational part thing to it.

CLAIRE: Well, it is something like Rebekahs and what not. Like that.

BARBARA: I just never had realized that it was set up that way. I thought a Grange was just a place for meeting and conducting business and all that. So there is a lot more to it than just that.

WILMA: Oh yeah.

CLAIRE: They try to; their aim was to help the farmers and ranchers.

WILMA: Yeah, it was organized after the Civil War to get things moving again, started for the farmer. And it's gone on now, how many years?

CLAIRE: Oh, I don't know, 1880 something I think that the first Grange was organized.

BARBARA: So over a hundred years they have been active?

WILMA: Oh yeah, it's an old organization. I think it is the oldest farm organization there is.

CLAIRE: The Grange has done a lot of good, too.

WILMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Some day I'm going to have to find out what that is, because I've always been interested. I've heard them talk about degrees and Pomona, and state, and I've never ---

CLAIRE: I don't know how to explain it to you, except somebody will have to do it for you.

WILMA: Somebody that can do it.

DOROTHEA: Then they also had dances and socials?

WILMA: Oh yeah.

CLAIRE: Oh, they used to have them here too.

DOROTHEA: And picnics?

CLAIRE: Like every community.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, and the ladies did all the work.

CLAIRE: Yeah.

BARBARA: What did your day consist of when your, say when your children were in school, and what was your day like? You got up in the morning and what faced you for the day then?

WILMA: Will it depends on the season. Sometimes in the fall it was canning, getting everything in for winter. And during the winter it was just mostly meals and regular housework.

DOROTHEA: How many times did you go to the store, or how often did you have to go to the store for groceries?

WILMA: Oh, probably once or twice a month. Maybe oftener than that depending on how quick you run out. I don't know.

CLAIRE: Depend on what you run out of.

DOROTHEA: Did you raise your own grain and things like that?

WILMA: Yeah, we had grain some.

DOROTHEA: Did you use this to grind?

CLAIRE: Yeah, Turen, what do you call it? I can't think of anything.

DOROTHEA: Thresh?

CLAIRE: Thresh. He had a threshing machine, combine.

WILMA: Oh yeah.

DOROTHEA: Well, my folks used to raise wheat and my mother would grind it up for flour. Did you do that?

WILMA: Oh no, we never did anything like that.

DOROTHEA: You didn't do that?

BARBARA: Were your kids pretty good at helping with the garden and helping --- Helen with the canning, did she help you can and put up vegetables or not?

WILMA: Well, I don't think she did too much of that.

CLAIRE: Helen liked to get out.

WILMA: Yeah, she liked to do outside work. (Laughter)

BARBARA: She went with the boys, huh?

CLAIRE: She'd rather be out in the hay fields than in the house cooking.

DOROTHEA: She was a typical farm girl, wasn't she?

WILMA: Yeah, oh yes.

DOROTHEA: The boys liked in the kitchen, and the girls liked it outside.

CLAIRE: Well, I wouldn't say that either.

WILMA: No, I don't think the boys wanted in the kitchen. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Did you have much help at all during the early times; did you have to feed any ranch hands besides your own family? Did Turen have people in to help at certain times?

WILMA: No, he wasn't much of a hand to be in the kitchen either.

BARBARA: No, but I mean when it was time to harvest, did you have people come to help you, did you have to feed help, ranch help at all?

WILMA: No. We had ranch help, but not too much for cooking.

CLAIRE: They tried to help each other.

WILMA: Yeah.

BARBARA: So just mainly in the community you kind of helped each other. You didn't have anybody come and live on your ranch to help out then?

WILMA: Oh no, huh uh.

BARBARA: Okay.

CLAIRE: Once in a very great while they'd hire some people.

WILMA: Yeah, once in a great, great while.

CLAIRE: When they got through with that job why they ... gone.

WILMA: But ---

DOROTHEA: Did they have a newspaper in Drewsey?

WILMA: At one time, well it was before my time really; I can't think what year maybe they had it.

CLAIRE: Oh, and I'd say around 1915.

WILMA: Something like that.

CLAIRE: They had it. I don't know when they --- because they had two papers there for a while.

WILMA: Yeah. But ---

CLAIRE: But I don't know when the ---

WILMA: ... Myrtle has some of those old papers. I don't know what the dates are though.

BARBARA: I know that Eunice (Jordan) used to write for the Burns paper, the Drewsey news column. Did she ever come around to you and ask what was going on so she'd have news for her weekly articles?

WILMA: Oh, she'd put anything in that she could find. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Well you know in those days people were interested in what everybody did.

WILMA: Yeah, yes.

DOROTHEA: Now they think that is stupid to write such things.

CLAIRE: Yeah, what do you want to hear that old stuff?

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

BARBARA: I know when we first moved to Burns, we always enjoyed reading the weekly column that, you know, that she had. So and so came to town, we thought, you know, it was kind of fun to see who was coming and who was going, and who was doing what. I mean we didn't know any of the people, but it was just interesting to follow that.

CLAIRE: It was interesting.

WILMA: Yeah, it was a newsy column.

BARBARA: And when it was over, we were kind of saddened by that.

CLAIRE: Yeah.

BARBARA: But I just wondered how she got about getting her little information?

WILMA: Oh, I think over the phone.

BARBARA: Oh, did she do it on the phone, or did she drop by for coffee and visit awhile and that sort of thing?

WILMA: She ran the stage three times a week; she went by, she got her news then.

DOROTHEA: We used to have that old party line telephone that we listened on too, and learned a lot through that.

CLAIRE: They had one of those here too.

WILMA: Well not very much anymore.

BARBARA: Did you have a doctor at one time in Drewsey, or did you always have to go to Burns for bad illnesses?

WILMA: No that was, the last one was this Dr. Hedges that I was telling you about. His wife was the music teacher.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

WILMA: And before that, it was Dr. Harrison.

CLAIRE: Dr. Marsden.

WILMA: Marsden. They were some relation to the Marsden's who used to live at Silvies, if you know anything about them.

DOROTHEA: No.

BARBARA: Were there any, you mentioned that your mother died in the flu of 1918, was there anything like that again that happened that really took a lot of people from that time?

WILMA: I don't remember of anything like that happening after I was big enough to remember.

BARBARA: Uh huh. Did you have any close calls with your children while they were growing up, emergencies or anything, or were you fortunate?

WILMA: Only, I guess Alfred had appendicitis.

CLAIRE: Well now, Alfred run over Karen, that was ---

WILMA: Over her foot, over her ---

CLAIRE: Yeah, her legs, she broke her leg.

WILMA: Her legs. Oh yeah, when she was about ---

CLAIRE: She was in a body cast for a long time. She was eighteen months old.

WILMA: Yeah.

BARBARA: Oh dear.

DOROTHEA: With the car?

WILMA: Yeah, he backed over her.

CLAIRE: Uh huh, he backed up and backed over her.

WILMA: And she was right behind the hind wheel, and he didn't see her. Yeah, I remember that. I had forgotten about it.

CLAIRE: I thought you had.

WILMA: Yeah, well other than something like that, I don't remember any contagious ---

CLAIRE: Oh no, I don't remember anything. Had diphtheria and what way back when.

WILMA: Yeah, but it was way before our time.

CLAIRE: Yeah.

WILMA: I just don't know.

DOROTHEA: Did they have PTA's and things in Drewsey?

WILMA: Yeah they did, in the last few years that the kids went to school, they had a PTA organization. And I don't know just what they ---

CLAIRE: They never had any when I was going to school here.

BARBARA: Did you ever serve on your school boards here in Drewsey when your children were in school?

WILMA: I never did, Turen did.

BARBARA: Turen did.

WILMA: I never did.

DOROTHEA: Did you have gatherings of ladies, like to build quilts or anything like that? Did you go to each others houses or---?

WILMA: Not very much. We had a ladies' organization in the Grange, and they had different --- meet at different places. But we haven't done anything like that for several years.

DOROTHEA: What do you do now to entertain yourself?

WILMA: Crochet and knit.

DOROTHEA: Do you make everybody's Afghans?

WILMA: And I cook.

DOROTHEA: Cook.

WILMA: Oh, we ---

CLAIRE: That's more than I do, I don't even cook.

WILMA: Well ---

CLAIRE: I just have to eat it by myself. But she's got the kids come in and eat with her lots.

WILMA: Yeah, we have our lunch together. And then I go over to Katie's for supper.

BARBARA: Well that's wonderful. Well that's nice to share, that really is, so that you don't have to be alone then.

WILMA: No, no, and she lives close enough, I get lonesome I can go over and play with the baby a little while.

DOROTHEA: So you cook the lunch and she cooks the dinner then?

WILMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Well that's nice.

BARBARA: Did you and Turen do any traveling after the children were grown?

WILMA: Well yes, we went to his brother and his wife. They had a trailer and we got a trailer and we went to ---

CLAIRE: You went to Death Valley, that's all I can think of.

WILMA: Well, we went to Death Valley too, but we went to ---

CLAIRE: Yellowstone.

WILMA: Yellowstone, that's what I'm trying to say. We went one trip to Yellowstone.

DOROTHEA: Was this when the kids were little, or after?

WILMA: No, that was after.

DOROTHEA: After they all left home?

WILMA: Uh huh. And oh, we took several short trips. And those were the longest ones I think.

CLAIRE: Turen was always ready to go.

WILMA: Didn't have to coax him.

BARBARA: Well that's nice.

DOROTHEA: Did Turen have lessons, or did he just like to play the fiddle so he just played?

WILMA: He played by ear. He never had any lessons.

DOROTHEA: Did he belong to the Fiddlers in Burns?

WILMA: Yes, he belonged to the Fiddlers.

DOROTHEA: Did you play with them?

WILMA: No, I didn't play after that. By that time, I was getting pretty well crippled up, so I didn't play then.

BARBARA: So when did he kind of retire from ranching --- at a certain time, or ---

WILMA: Well he developed ---

CLAIRE: Alzheimer's.

WILMA: --- Alzheimer's disease, and had that several years before he died.

CLAIRE: He worked for, running the ranch when he did get that.

WILMA: Yeah.

BARBARA: Right up until that time he did?

WILMA: Yeah, yeah. Even then he tried to, but he got so bad he couldn't do anything.

DOROTHEA: Did you ever have problems with him leaving and getting lost any place?

WILMA: Well just around to the ranch here. Several times he got out and wandered around.

BARBARA: They become disoriented don't they?

WILMA: Yeah, it's bad for them.

CLAIRE: He come to Burns one time.

WILMA: Yeah, that was right after he begun to get bad. He drove up to her house, and I rang the telephone to see if she had seen him, just as he stopped.

BARBARA: Oh, that was lucky.

WILMA: Yeah. Yes.

CLAIRE: I don't know how he found the house.

WILMA: I don't know.

CLAIRE: He couldn't go any place else, but he come right to the house.

WILMA: Well, he drove down and ran out of gas someplace out behind you.

CLAIRE: Well, he wasn't out of gas, it stopped and he couldn't get it started.

WILMA: Well, I don't know what happened.

CLAIRE: He had to come around.

WILMA: Yeah, he got out and walked and found it.

CLAIRE: But he made it, he come in the back door. I said, "Where is the rest of them?" "Well, I don't know, aren't they here?"

WILMA: Yeah, he was all confused.

CLAIRE: ... but just me.

WILMA: Helen got him then and brought him back.

BARBARA: It's a sad thing to happen to people.

WILMA: I met him in Buchanan and brought him on home.

CLAIRE: I called her and couldn't get her, she was at a meeting, and I couldn't get her. So I called Carol, I tried to get Wilma. Called Carol and she said, "Well, I'll see what I can do." Then she called Helen finally, and got him.

WILMA: Yeah, he was getting pretty bad then.

BARBARA: And how long has he been gone now?

WILMA: He died in 1990.

BARBARA: '90.

WILMA: On the 10th of October 1990. But he was, he was real bad before that for a couple of years I guess.

CLAIRE: He got pneumonia, that didn't help.

WILMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Well, can you think of any other stories that you would like to tell us that happened maybe to you or to some of the family while you were growing up?

WILMA: I don't know.

CLAIRE: You know, I told Katie that I couldn't think of anything. She wanted me to write something up for you.

WILMA: Well right now I can't think of anything either.

DOROTHEA: Did you get along like most brothers and sisters and have your quarrels?

WILMA: Oh, not too much.

DOROTHEA: Not too much.

WILMA: We got along pretty well together.

DOROTHEA: You had too many chores to do or something.

CLAIRE: I think she and I lived down with our grandmother.

WILMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: How old were you when your mother passed away?

WILMA: Well that was in 1918. It was just before the World War, overseas, I think wasn't it?

CLAIRE: World War.

WILMA: One.

BARBARA: One.

CLAIRE: One, was just over.

WILMA: Yeah.

CLAIRE: And she died in January 1919.

WILMA: Yeah, that's right, 1919.

BARBARA: Can you describe your Grandmother Miller, what did she look like, what was it like living with her?

WILMA: Go get that picture.

BARBARA: Was she a big woman, a small woman?

CLAIRE: Well, she was a big woman, and she was kind of heavy set.

WILMA: Get her picture in there, and Grandpa's too. Right in on the dresser.

CLAIRE: Oh, I know what you mean. You mean the ---

WILMA: Those little ones, those little framed ones.

DOROTHEA: Can you get through?

CLAIRE: Uh huh.

BARBARA: What was it like living with your grandmother?

WILMA: Oh, she was so ---

BARBARA: Was she fun, I mean did she do fun things?

WILMA: She was real good. She was good to us.

BARBARA: Was her husband still alive at that time that you went to live with her?

WILMA: Well not Miller, she was divorced when they went to Canada, when he went to Canada.

BARBARA: And she stayed here then and ran the hotel?

WILMA: Yeah, in Drewsey.

CLAIRE: Here she is.

DOROTHEA: Well, Kim looks like your mother.

CLAIRE: That's their grandmother.

DOROTHEA: Grandmother. Your grandmother, yeah.

WILMA: Yeah, that's ---

BARBARA: Oh, that's a nice picture.

DOROTHEA: Now who is this?

WILMA: That's Harold.

DOROTHEA: Your grandfather?

WILMA: Yeah. Grandfather and Grandmother Miller.

DOROTHEA: Those are nice pictures.

CLAIRE: Katie sang a song at State Grange, what in the heck, about your grandpa and grandma.

The picture stood upon the shelf, I know you've heard it?

DOROTHEA: Probably did, uh huh.

CLAIRE: I can't think what it is called.

WILMA: I can't think what it was either.

CLAIRE: Anyway, she had those pictures there, and she showed them.

BARBARA: How did she come about starting a hotel in Drewsey?

WILMA: I don't know how it started.

BARBARA: You don't know.

WILMA: She bought it.

BARBARA: It was already a hotel when she bought the property?

CLAIRE: She bought it from our other grandmother and grandfather.

WILMA: Yeah, I guess that was it.

CLAIRE: Grandma Ward.

WILMA: Yeah, I guess that was the way she got it. So I don't know how she made up her mind to do it, but she did.

DOROTHEA: So now are you related to Jim Ward?

WILMA: Cousins.

DOROTHEA: Cousins.

WILMA: First cousins.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

BARBARA: So is everyone in the valley here pretty much related to each other?

CLAIRE: Well just about, some way or other.

WILMA: Yeah.

CLAIRE: Yeah.

BARBARA: What do you think about the weather changing over the years that you have lived out here in Drewsey? Did it used to be really hard winters maybe compared to what we had this last year?

WILMA: Yes, anything, I don't think it was as hard as it was this year.

CLAIRE: Well not every year. Once in awhile they'd have a bad one.

WILMA: But we've lost more calves, and so has everybody else in the county.

BARBARA: Uh huh. Well it has been such a long time since they've had the kind of winters here.

WILMA: Yeah, I think that was, but ---

DOROTHEA: But I think it was the snow this year, you know.

BARBARA: It stayed so long.

DOROTHEA: Usually, we have a January thaw.

WILMA: I know we do.

DOROTHEA: And we never had that this year.

WILMA: Huh uh. No, we had another snowstorm on top of snowstorm.

DOROTHEA: Just more snow. Yeah.

CLAIRE: And not just once, it just kept a snowing.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

WILMA: Yeah. No, that's what I mean; the snow just kept piling up, and piling up.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, and then it would freeze, and then it would pile some more. But we used to have January thaws and I think that is where we got into trouble, you know where we ---

CLAIRE: Yeah, that's what I said too. We didn't have our January thaw this year.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BARBARA: Do you remember the winters as being hard as when you were a youngster? Lots of snow too?

WILMA: Oh, when I was a youngster I can't ---

BARBARA: Or a young married person?

WILMA: I don't think anything compared to this.

CLAIRE: That's just because you don't remember. I remember the snow being way up, you couldn't see the fence posts.

WILMA: Well, it was almost that this year.

CLAIRE: I know. But that was way back, it wasn't just one year, it was every year.

WILMA: Yeah. But ---

CLAIRE: I think that was the reason you was used to it back then.

BARBARA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: The wind blew a lot more then I think than it did this year, even though it blew this year. Used to have the snowdrifts over the fences.

WILMA: Yeah, I remember that too.

DOROTHEA: And that's where the --- it gets so hard that you could drive your tractor out to feed your cattle right over the top of the fences and everything. This year it wasn't quite that hard.

WILMA: No. But I never have seen a winter that was so hard on stock ---

DOROTHEA: Yeah, it was really ---

WILMA: --- before.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. It stayed cold for so long.

WILMA: Yeah, oh yes. And it --- when it snowed it would probably turn into rain for a while.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, the elk even moved down to our place, and that's the first time in who knows how long.

WILMA: Uh huh. I know there were elk feeding in the fields down here below the road, well above the road in Rick's field.

DOROTHEA: Tell us something about some of the games that you played with each other. Did you have special games that you liked, or, like pinochle?

WILMA: Oh yeah, we always played pinochle.

DOROTHEA: Old Maid, or did you have any Monopoly? Did you get into any of those kind of games?

WILMA: Yeah, we had Monopoly, and we had pinochle.

BARBARA: Chinese marbles?

WILMA: Yeah, we had Chinese marbles. I still got my game. Yeah, the family liked to play that.

BARBARA: This year you are going to be the Queen Mother for the Pioneer Day Celebration. When did you find out that you had been selected?

WILMA: When we got back from ---

CLAIRE: Mississippi.

WILMA: --- Mississippi.

DOROTHEA: Why did you go to Mississippi?

WILMA: I found out before we got back because Katie talked to Baron, and Baron had answered the phone. So he had called and told her, and she talked me into it. He'd found out about it.

BARBARA: Darren, you said?

WILMA: Baron.

DOROTHEA: Baron.

BARBARA: Baron.

WILMA: Her husband, Katie's husband.

BARBARA: I see.

DOROTHEA: And his name is Baron ---

WILMA: Tracy.

DOROTHEA: Tracy.

WILMA: Uh huh.

BARBARA: B A R R E N ?

WILMA: No, it is B A R O N.

BARBARA: Oh, okay.

DOROTHEA: And Tracy is ---

WILMA: That's ---

DOROTHEA: C E Y, or just C Y ?

WILMA: C Y.

DOROTHEA: C Y. Why were you back in Mississippi?

WILMA: Well, Andy's wife had been in a terrible accident on ---

CLAIRE: Thanksgiving.

WILMA: No, it was before that, Halloween.

CLAIRE: Oh yeah.

WILMA: And she was, she is still in the hospital for that matter. She is in the rehab hospital now, has been for two or three months. And we went down in February to visit them. He is in the service now.

CLAIRE: She was in a coma for over a month.

DOROTHEA: Oh really? Is she okay now?

WILMA: Yeah, yeah, she is going to be all right now.

DOROTHEA: She got to learn to walk again?

WILMA: Yeah, that is what she is doing in the rehab. She had to talk, learn to talk, and learn to walk, just about do everything. But her memory is coming back good, so she is going to be all right.

DOROTHEA: Did they have any children?

WILMA: No, no. And ---

BARBARA: So anyway, that was a nice surprise for you then to learn that you had been selected.

WILMA: Well we, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Do you know how they select you? Are you the oldest person registered for this year? So many years ago or ---

WILMA: I think I might have been; I don't know whether there is anyone any older than I am or not. Because I was 83 in, last ---

CLAIRE: December.

WILMA: Yeah, last December I think.

DOROTHEA: Okay, so how long do you have to have registered before that you had a chance?

WILMA: Well, I don't know really.

CLAIRE: I don't know just how they do that.

WILMA: I don't know either. But I think it is the oldest, because every year it is the oldest one registered.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

WILMA: At least that is what I have always thought. I don't know if I'm right or not.

DOROTHEA: And Turen was President in 1978, is that what ---

BARBARA: '83.

DOROTHEA: Or '83?

WILMA: Something like that, I can't remember.

BARBARA: Uh huh, I think it was '83. Yeah, '83.

WILMA: '83, ten years ago.

BARBARA: And so are you going to have a big family gathering? Are all your relatives going to come and help you celebrate your day?

WILMA: Well, at least the family is. I don't know how many of the others can come. But ---

CLAIRE: I talked to Martie this morning, and she said they had to come to that.

WILMA: Yeah, I thought they would. That's my sister-in-law.

BARBARA: I see.

WILMA: No, not my sister-in-law --- niece in-law.

CLAIRE: Who?

WILMA: Martie.

CLAIRE: Sister-in-law.

WILMA: Well she is, isn't she. I was right the first time. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Had it right the first time.

WILMA: Yeah, I got all mixed up.

DOROTHEA: What all do you have to do now, just go up there and sit that day?

WILMA: All I do.

DOROTHEA: That's all you do, huh?

WILMA: The family is supposed to put on the program. I don't know what ---

DOROTHEA: Do you have to prepare some dinner or something for it?

WILMA: Oh yes, we always have potluck.

DOROTHEA: Potluck. So you just take a dish then?

WILMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Do you get to choose kind of what you'd like to have, or ---

WILMA: Oh yeah, you go along --- everything is put out.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

WILMA: Just a regular potluck.

BARBARA: Will your family have a get together here at your home later on, or are you going to have any kind of planned celebration or anything here too?

WILMA: I don't know what, we haven't planned anything, so I don't know just what we will be doing then.

BARBARA: If you have family coming in, you'll have to get together and tell your stories, won't you? Don't all families do that when they get together? Do you remember when?

WILMA: Well they usually ---

DOROTHEA: Remember when?

WILMA: Something like that.

DOROTHEA: They all do these remember when's, I'm sure.

WILMA: Oh yeah.

BARBARA: Well this is going to be real exciting for you, and we're real happy for you that you're going to have a day to celebrate.

WILMA: I never dreamed that I would be Queen Mother. I didn't realize that it was coming up even, until they called.

BARBARA: Time slips by in a hurry, doesn't it? June will be here before we know it, it seems like.

WILMA: I know it.

BARBARA: The grass is starting to turn green, and the birds are starting to sing, so maybe it's a good sign.

WILMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Well if you can't think of anything else, I think probably we ought to close and do our little video. Are you prepared for that?

WILMA: Well I don't know; you have to take charge of anything like that. (Laughter) I don't know.

BARBARA: This has been really enjoyable, and it has been a pleasure to meet you and visit with you this afternoon.

WILMA: Well, I'm glad you came.

DOROTHEA: Okay, thank you. We'll get on with our video then.

(END OF TAPE)

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