

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #337 - Sides A/B/C/D

Subject: Helen Cowan - With Video

Place: Harney County Library - Burns, Oregon

Date: May 10, 1993

Interviewers: Barbara Lofgren & Dorothea Purdy

DOROTHEA PURDY: This is Dorothea Purdy along with Barbara Lofgren and today we are going to be visiting with Helen Cowan at the Harney County Library in Burns, Oregon.

The date is May the 10th, 1993. And following our interview, with Helen, we will be doing a short video which will be stored at the library along with the transcript and cassette tape, the number is 337. And we will start by asking Helen your name.

HELEN COWAN: My name is Helen Ann Cran Cowan.

DOROTHEA: And where were you born?

HELEN: I was born in Hilo, Hawaii.

DOROTHEA: What date?

HELEN: November 25th, 1923.

DOROTHEA: And what were your parent's names?

HELEN: My mother's name was Frances, and my father's was John, John Scott.

DOROTHEA: And what was your mother's maiden name?

HELEN: Wright.

DOROTHEA: Is that W R, or ---

HELEN: W R I G H T.

DOROTHEA: And what kind of schooling have you had? Where did you attend school?

HELEN: Well I graduated from the public schools in Hawaii, in Hilo. And then I attended

and graduated from Barnard College in New York City. That's the girl's school for Columbia University. DOROTHEA: Let's go back a little bit, do you have any brothers and sisters?

HELEN: I have one brother, he lives in Hawaii. He is a rancher.

DOROTHEA: And what's his name?

HELEN: Gordon. John Gordon.

BARBARA LOFGREN: What was the reason for your parents being in Hawaii? Were they also born in Hawaii?

HELEN: No, my father was an engineer, and he got to Hawaii --- was there as an engineer on a ship, he was from Scotland. Engineers in Scotland usually have an apprentice period after they finish college, and often times on board ship, as a ship engineer. And he was in the Pacific on these ships, and became acquainted with the islands. And lots and lots of Scottish people live in Hawaii.

And my mother --- and so he, when his work time was over, whatever, why he moved to Hawaii. And then five years later became a naturalized citizen, and --- of America, U.S.

BARBARA: Oh, he was a Scotsman then?

HELEN: Yeah, he was a Britisher, a Scotchman. And my mother came to Hawaii as a teacher, and they met there. She taught many, many years in the public school system there.

BARBARA: That's real interesting.

DOROTHEA: Tell us something about living in Hawaii. Are, compared to the climate and the locality of Harney County, how does it compare?

HELEN: Well there is scarcely any comparison except for the space I guess. I used to wonder why I liked Harney County, and finally one day decided that probably it was the

openness. Because while the islands are very green and lush with lots of growth, the big island, the one I lived on and grew up on, has a great variety of vegetation and desert, prickly pear, cactus and so forth, a real desert in one area where it's very dry. But the similarity I felt with Harney County and the islands was the space. That in Hawaii there is a sky that goes on and on and on. And there is the ocean that goes on and on and on. And there is nothing that interferes with your vision. And here, it's the same thing with sky and the desert that goes on and on and on. And it is just with a, I guess a sense of freedom and so forth.

Hawaii today is not like Hawaii that I grew up in, which is not to say that I am sad, because every place has changed, even Harney County. And I can say thank goodness to that, because now we have electricity and telephones, which we didn't have when we came.

But, so I grew up on a sugar plantation where my father was the engineer in the mill that got the sugar out of the, extracted the sugar from the sugar cane. And so that was a type of rural experience, although we were a mile from downtown Hilo. Still it seemed a long way, it really did. Roads were paved, we had cars in those days, we had lots of the amenities. It was a good life, it was a nice --- it was gracious living, very gracious living. There were, we had maids, everybody did. So that --- oh, there was household help, and we had yardmen and so on.

BARBARA: Gave you all the time to do the things you wanted to do.

HELEN: Yeah, a child could grow up being a child. And so my mother could do, when she wasn't teaching, for there were some years she didn't teach, then she'd go back to teaching. Ah, you know, lots of volunteer work and that type of thing. Gave her time for that, which when you're working you don't have time for.

BARBARA: What was the reason that you decided to go to New York to go to college?

Was there any family connection there?

HELEN: No, I had always wanted to go to New York, always, that was my dream. And I had skipped over a space of time when I skipped from Hawaii to New York. Because I spent my freshman year in Seattle at the University of Washington, and there I met a girl who had come out to the University of Washington from New York. And the war started that December, and I wouldn't be able to go back as we had originally planned for summer.

So she invited me, since she had learned that I had always dreamed of coming to, going to New York, to come home with her for the summer. So I did, and worked there that summer. I worked downtown, and she lived on Long Island. And we took, she also worked downtown, and we took a train in every morning, commuted you know, her dad did too. So that's how it happened.

And then the following year I went back to the University of Washington and wasn't happy there. The services had taken it over because of wartime. We couldn't live in the dorms as we had, and had to find housing somewhere else, anywhere off campus. And you didn't have the same feelings about the classes that you were taking and so on, because so many of the buildings were taken over by the military. So I went back to New York and lived with these friends and went to Barnard, that's how that happened.

BARBARA: And did you do graduate work also?

HELEN: After ---

BARBARA: At a later time?

HELEN: Yeah, the next year after I graduated. I went back to the islands, hadn't been home in four and a half years, and so I spent the year there doing social work. And went back the following fall to the University of Pennsylvania which had, was considered one of the three best social work schools in the nations.

BARBARA: We might ask you what your field of study was in college.

HELEN: History and government. I would have liked to have had --- no place had it then, oriental studies. I have always been interested in the orient. But nowadays they have it, you see, but not in those days.

BARBARA: So what was your dream of life work then when you finished college? What did you really want to do with your ---

HELEN: Well I thought I wanted to be a social worker, because during the summer, two summers then, I worked with what was called the, oh the New York Herald Tribune, it was a newspaper, fresh air camp, or fresh air something. Anyhow it was camps for under privileged kids from the cities, from the slum areas and the ghettos and so forth.

And we, I worked in an office there and helped coordinate the program and set it up, and so on. I thought well that sounds like a --- and working with people like that, it sounded like a pretty good idea, so I did that. That's why I went back and got my, to do graduate work.

And then Dick and I were married and I did a little --- I continued with that, working with children. It was called child welfare in the public --- public welfare at that time. I don't know what it is called, family services or something now. But that's not really --- Anyhow, that's what I did and ---

BARBARA: You mentioned Dick. When in the scheme of things did you meet and marry Dick?

HELEN: Well when I returned after the war, the war had just been over. It had just been -- a few days actually.

BARBARA: This was in '45 then?

HELEN: '45, uh huh. You had to go through the Navy to get to Hawaii. And I wrote the Navy and asked for clearance to get back home. And they said well it would be six

months before we can do that, this was in August, or maybe July. But in August I wanted to go. And so I went on out to San Francisco, I said well I'm going to wait there. I had a friend who had gone to San Francisco, having been told the same thing, and she got out within days. You never know, you know, they're taking people. And so if you are there in the city they can call on you, and that's what happened. I left New York, got to San Francisco, and stayed with a friend. The next morning --- and I went around, I was fortunate that on the train going out I met a woman who was going to the islands to teach school, because all the teachers see, everything was in terrible condition because of the war. So they were importing teachers just galore. And she told me exactly, this was just before we had gotten there, and she told me exactly what she had to do, and showed me her papers and everything. So I just remembered that and I did that.

So the next morning they called me and said, "We have a cancellation, can you get here?" Yeah I could. So from New York, to Hilo, it had taken me ten days, whereas the Navy said six months. So it was well worth going out.

Now Dick was there, and I met him a couple months later. I had seen him once, and for some reason, you know how that goes, you're very attracted to this guy. I had seen him from my office window and --- but there were so many men, I never thought I would ever see him again, and I didn't ever, you know think ---

BARBARA: Was this when you were in Pennsylvania or in New York?

HELEN: No, neither, this was in Hawaii.

DOROTHEA: Oh, in Hawaii.

BARBARA: Oh, I see, okay.

HELEN: He, yeah, see I had gotten there the end of August, or the first part of September. And he had just gotten there; he had been stationed on a little island in the Pacific.

BARBARA: He was there because he was in the service?

HELEN: Johnson Island. Yes, he was an Air Force officer.

BARBARA: I see.

HELEN: And so it was where I was working with the public welfare at that time, and I noticed that this man coming out of a home I could see from my office. And there was another little short man with him. And I thought, well you know, for some reason that was very enticing. And so, but as I say, I didn't think about it because there was so many, hundreds and hundreds of men.

And a few weeks later I was invited by a lady who coordinated, she was a dance instructor. I don't think that was her profession but certainly her avocation, and she took young single women to, where she was giving dance, a dance program you know, teach different kinds of dancing and so forth, and there he was. She had picked me up and took me down there, and there was Dick. And so he and I, he came and introduced himself and we danced, and then he asked if he could take me home. Obviously he was attracted as much as I had been attracted.

DOROTHEA: Was one of those things that clicked, huh?

HELEN: Just clicked. And it was --- well we dated most all that year. Well, you know, he left; he got his orders to be discharged in June. And in September I left the islands to go to Pennsylvania to go to, take graduate school. And he was in Chicago then, that was his home, the area. So I stopped off there and visited with his family, and then went on to Pennsylvania. And we kept in touch, and in June of '47 we were married.

BARBARA: Lots of telephone calls or letters back and forth?

HELEN: Letters, you didn't call much in those days, you know.

BARBARA: It's not like we just pick up the phone now.

HELEN: Yeah, yeah, uh huh. That's right. So ---

BARBARA: So you dated on and off then for two years before you were married, about?

HELEN: Well about two years I guess, I think of it as eighteen months. We met probably in October, early November, something like that. And then we were married in June of --- that was '45, and we were married in June of '47. But we dated a lot in the islands; we did all kinds of things. Climbed mountains, climbed Mauna Kea. Took the Koala ditch trail on mules, all kinds of things that made it interesting. So ---

BARBARA: So when you were married then, where did you go, what was Dick doing at this time?

HELEN: He was working; when we were married he was working in Phoenix, Arizona. He was working for a slaughterhouse. And then he, after we were married, he became a partner of a cattle buyer. When Dick was thirteen his father sent him to a, or gave him the opportunity to go to a working ranch in Wyoming. And the rancher took about five boys, I think, and they worked. It wasn't a dude ranch, it was a real ranch, and they worked all day, you know, worked. And Dick was so intrigued, he just loved it, so that he came home and that was what he was going to do. And his parents, I guess, humored him, you know, didn't argue with him. Well when he gets to be seventeen, thinking of a career or whatever, things will change in the meantime. They never did.

And so then after we were married and he became a partner with a cattle buyer, and we moved that following summer to a ranch in New Mexico, up in the Rockies, a summer place and put steers on. Ran steers up there for the summer. And then we came back in the fall after the snow began. The old timers said, "You've got to get out before the snow falls or you're not going to get out." Well it sounds crazy, but the day we planned to leave we had parked the car and the pickup, actually the pickup, the car was already down in Phoenix. But we woke up and it was snowing, so we just got out. And then we were in Phoenix, and Parker Ranch in Hawaii --- Dick had made contact when he



was out there with Parker Ranch, and its manager was Hartwell Carter, and had written a letter, this was, we were in Phoenix almost a year at this time. And the letter asked Dick to come to work for Parker Ranch. So we thought that was pretty good.

And I had been doing social work in Phoenix. And you see, you know how that is, Phoenix, Arizona is the --- Arizona legislature had budgetary problems and so they were cutting back on the budgets of various departments, and one was the public, you know, the welfare department. And so we were being, the last of us were being laid off, you know, those they had hired ---

BARBARA: Last hired, first fired.

HELEN: --- yeah, right. So I was free to go too, no sweat. And so we went back to Hawaii.

BARBARA: What, where did Dick go to school, and what was his major in school, what did he train for?

HELEN: He went to school at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey, and he took up economics.

BARBARA: Okay, so now you're back in Hawaii, the full circle, before you met, and now you're married and you're working there.

HELEN: Yeah, uh huh. So, we were there about eight months. We decided we wouldn't stay. And so we then left and came back to the Northwest. Our car was here. We had left from Seattle when we went out. The plane went from Seattle to San Francisco, and then out. And so we had left our car in Seattle. Dick's brother was living there at the time.

And so then we started out, Dick's idea, because he wanted a ranch. I didn't! I never was, because my brother --- I lived with, all these years of him talking nothing but ranching. He wanted to ranch, and he did! But, so I decided ---

BARBARA: It really wasn't your idea?

HELEN: No, no, no. I decided I was a New York girl. But anyhow, we, he decided that we would start in the Northwest to look for a ranch. He'd looked in the Southwest, and he'd even gone back to Arkansas. Thank goodness, or we would probably be ... people now. But he didn't like what he saw in Arkansas. And the plots of land were too small. And they have copperheads there, and he said, "At least a rattler warns you." Copperheads don't, or moccasins, water moccasins also.

And so we started in Washington, contacted various realtors that we had been given the names of, and got down here. And Grover Jameson was a realtor we were to contact. And he was a wonderful man. And we didn't really care much about this area, you know. We were disappointed in the ranch he showed us, which was out there from the Gap Ranch up, back in the hills.

And so we went on, we thought well we'll go into the Prineville-Redmond area. There was a man there that we were going to --- And we were more disillusioned there, and we thought well, you know, this ranch that Grover showed us wasn't too high priced. And the rancher said he would finance us, we could get a contract and pay him.

And Dick was a captain in the Air Force Reserves, and we had gone to war with Korea, and they were calling up the reserves so we didn't know whether he would be called up or not. And we didn't think that we could get financed on those conditions through a bank or a lending agency. And so we decided to buy Juniper Hills Ranch.

BARBARA: Juniper Hills?

HELEN: Uh huh.

BARBARA: Okay.

HELEN: And otherwise known as Swamp Creek. But that was just one area. Juniper Hills was a much wider area. It has quite a history. And so we did, and it was a wonderful

place, it was beautiful, right on a meadow. And we became part of this community, and the community welcomed us with open arms. They couldn't have been nicer.

BARBARA: And when was this?

HELEN: 1950.

DOROTHEA: And did it have a house on it then, at that time?

HELEN: Uh huh. The house that Ed Laughlin had built.

DOROTHEA: Okay, did you want to tell us something about that home and some of the history of Juniper Hills?

HELEN: Well yes, I can do that. Ed Laughlin, his name, I guess from the records that I found in the county clerk's office, it was Edwin Laughlin. And he got a patent on that property in 1904, actually June 16th, 1904. And he got, the granter of the patent was the United States of America. It says all that right there in the records. And he got a 120 acres, and it was that little meadow, a little shoestring meadow. And he built the house; it was nothing much more than a homesteader's shack. But ---

DOROTHEA: Is that what you came to then?

HELEN: No, no, no. It had changed in the meantime. And that was 1904. He had been in the country before that, but I'll wait until we get to Suntex Ranch before I tell you about that. In 1939, B. B. Clark, did either of you know B. B. Clark? He was a character.

DOROTHEA: I knew him vaguely.

HELEN: Uh huh. He bought Laughlin's in 1939. And then it was B. B. Clark that combined the small, other small ranchers, ranches or plots of land with this one, Swamp Creek. Ollie, or Ollie Nordell had a little place south of Ed Laughlin. And then to the east there was a Winters, had a place, all of these people were settled a little bit on water. The Winters had a nice big meadow. But Nordell's wasn't really much of anything; he probably grew dry ryegrass and that sort of thing.

And then a little east and north of the Winters, well more north than east, was the Spencer, Charlie --- well Charlie Spencer. I --- talking to Carl, Mayo, Carl Mayo, I don't think that Charlie Spencer's father had that place, but I'm not sure, I always thought he did. And he ran, the father ran freight into this area. But --- so the Spencer place, the Nordell place, and the Winters were incorporated into what Laughlin originally had, by B. B. Clark. Then in 1945, 1945, E. W. and Bernice Crane came by and bought B. B. Clark's ranch. B. B. Clark had other ranches in Harney County too. But they bought that place and they ran it for about five years. They bought it actually for their son who was coming back from the war. They thought he wanted to ranch. E. W. Crane was an oil distributor down in Tillamook area I believe. So he had, you know, he knew not too much about ranching. He had a good hired man when we bought the place, and it was Jim Gardner. Do you know Jim?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: He lives at Drewsey now. And he worked for us too. B. B. Clark had also put in a dam above, in the meadow above where the house is, north of the house. So there was a pond of water there. This was called Swamp Creek because the meadow was literally a swamp. There were springs everywhere. You didn't dare get out with a tractor without knowing where the springs were because you could sink instantly. And so this dam collected a lot of those springs in the pond.

Well that's --- then we came along in 1950 and bought the ranch from E. W. Crane and Bernice Crane. And Jack Crane was the son who, for whom the ranch had been purchased, cared little for it. They had built a house, a little house for him there too. Well when they came, when Bernice and E. W. came they changed the house a bit. They put in a room in the back and that became the kitchen. And then they bought a huge generator, a huge generator, surplus, war surplus. And you couldn't afford to run it

twenty-four hours a day, so you just ran it at night. So we'd run it at night and pump the water into a pressure tank, and then you had water for the day if you were ---

DOROTHEA: Real careful.

HELEN: --- very careful, very ---

BARBARA: Conservative.

HELEN: Yes. But Dick's mother came out to visit, and she --- we told here, you know, you have to be careful and so on. But the --- that was pretty hard. And at eight o'clock in the morning we would be out of water. (Laughter) She couldn't conform, but we managed. And then of course the power came in '56 or '57. Dick was on the board, and we said to each other there is nothing more beautiful than the site of those power poles coming up the meadow to our house.

BARBARA: What was it really like for you having lived with all these ---

DOROTHEA: Luxuries.

BARBARA: Really, when you think of coming to a ranch with no power, no running water when you were accustomed to that. Was that really not very difficult for you to adjust to that?

HELEN: No.

BARBARA: It wasn't, huh?

HELEN: Huh uh, I loved Dick, I guess.

BARBARA: You do a lot of things for love.

HELEN: You do. Clifford once, a few years ago, he had lived in McMinnville, and he had come --- he'd moved here I guess and one of his friends from McMinnville came here, and he took them up to that place to show him where his early months were spent. And this guy said to him, "Your mother must have really loved your father to live here." (Laughter) Yeah, I loved it. And I don't know, I think people who have gotten around and seen other

things, and had an education, are much more able to be content out in something like that. I mean you enjoy reading, and you had lots of hobbies and crafts. And so I did an awful lot of stuff, you know.

BARBARA: You aren't bogged down with other things then, perhaps.

HELEN: Yeah, you have a lot more time to do that, right. That's true.

DOROTHEA: Did you start teaching school while you were there, or did you just help Dick on the place?

HELEN: I helped Dick on the place. We had one man, Jim Gardner. And I rode, and I drove tractor. He never would let me hay. And right now I'm just as grateful. After awhile, after I learned what haying was, I was very grateful. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Hard work.

HELEN: For some reason, I don't know why, but he --- And so it, what was your question?

DOROTHEA: I asked did you teach school?

HELEN: Oh yeah, did I --- at my school.

DOROTHEA: At this time?

HELEN: Yeah, okay. So after five years, and things were kind of tough, and Dick said, "You've got to go to work." So I said, "What?" And he said, "Why don't you teach dancing?" So I did. Every Saturday I came into town and I had, I taught hula, and I had a class of girls from pre-school to, well I think high school, maybe it just went through eighth grade. And I taught hula.

And we planned; I planned a recital then at the end of the year, which would have been into the summer. And it was nice; we had it up there at Slater School Cafeteria. And I decorated the stage with, oh interesting logs, you know, like a beach, you know, like driftwoods and whatnot. And other things, I can't remember now, maybe some rocks or

shells or something. But --- and then we had refreshments afterwards, because I, you know, get people there for a few minutes. Watching some girls dance, you've got to do something else for them. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Do something for them.

HELEN: But gee, they did very well. And so --- and then we had refreshments, and that was good. But then the following year --- and then that summer ---

I had, during the year I had made plans to go to summer school. I had been hired; both Slater, Mr. Slater and Mr. Baldwin offered me a job at teaching.

DOROTHEA: And this is, Mr. Slater was the principal of the grade school, and Mr. Baldwin was the high school.

HELEN: Right. Lee Baldwin and Henry Slater. And I did go to summer school then. I had been taking some classes after I had gotten here. I liked to take, I liked to learn, and so there would be extension classes given. And they were generally for the teachers, because those were the ones that would take the classes, and also had to keep up.

And so I took Oregon Law, that was a requirement for teachers. And I took a psychology class, which also was for teachers. So I had some things relative to getting certified. And I went to Portland State and I talked to the man who was in charge of the --- well the Department of Education anyhow, maybe he had some other titles, but he was Bill Cramer's father, see. And I had met him before.

And Portland State was putting in a new program for mature people. No wait a minute, that was this one, not this particular time. Scratch it, or check it as they say today. Because I went there two times to get certified. Okay, this was not the mature people one. (Laughter) That one came later when I wanted to get certified for elementary. But this was getting certified for high school, because I decided to go to the high school.

The superintendent of schools, his name was Sargeant at that time, and I don't

remember his first name, thought I would be happier with older kids. And so I went to Portland State and got certified.

BARBARA: And so what classes did you teach then at the high school?

HELEN: I taught all juniors, because all juniors had to take American History. And I taught American History, and then I taught World History, and I taught Spanish. And then, I taught there three years and then Cran came along. But the World History, I taught that three years, but Spanish I taught two years. And then I taught International Relations, which was a terrific class. And I enjoyed it, I enjoyed it so much. And that's one thing I was absolutely never going to do. My mother was a teacher; I would never be a teacher. That's why I went around about, you see.

But I turned to teaching at this time because it paid more than social work did. And there was one social worker here, if you can remember, if you can imagine, it was Craddock, Marie Craddock. And she was the only social worker, and they just had one, that's all they needed. And so if I wanted to continue in social work I would have to go to Bend and try to get on there. And that was too far away, so I went into education, and I loved it, it was just what I wanted. And so I stayed then.

BARBARA: Okay, so you were living at the ranch at that time, did you commute back and forth, or did you have a little place in town during the week?

HELEN: No. Yeah, uh huh, I went home on weekends. Sometimes during the breakup, it was ninety miles I went to get home, and then Dick had to meet me. He'd come down, I'd drive about, a few miles off the highway and then he'd come down and --- Oh, I could tell you so many experiences, but I would bore you.

DOROTHEA: How far was it then? You say it was ninety miles; you must have gone a way around about getting there.

HELEN: That's it, yes, uh huh; I had to during the breakup time. Juniper Hills was fifty-



two miles from Burns, that was as direct as we could go. And this ninety miles, that's when I would go to,

no ninety miles would be on that. And then when the break-up started I would go in the, what we called the desert route. The sign on the highway says Buck Creek, you might have seen that. And that takes you up to, through the desert and onto Swamp Creek.

But Dick would meet me there, because the breakup was as bad as in the desert, you know, you sink in the mud very easily. But one, during one period of one year, when it was very bad, I went down to the GI road and went in, and went in the GI --- past the GI, turned east, and up pretty close to where Buck Creek was. And Dick met me there and took me the rest of the way in a pickup, 4-wheel drive. Yeah. Well, you know ---

BARBARA: So you say you taught there three years, did you take a break then, you mentioned Cran came along?

HELEN: Yeah, uh huh. So then ---

BARBARA: You might mention your children.

HELEN: Well Cran, and then Clifford the following year. And so I didn't go back to teaching until they were, Cran was ready for first grade. And I --- Then I went to, met Dick --- or Bill Cramer's father in Portland, at Portland State University. It wasn't the University then. And then it was a mature, a class for mature people who had had career in other areas and wanted to go into education. And so we spent the mornings --- well all day actually, in this one classroom and different teachers coming in for different subject areas. And then we would go out towards the end of the week to other schools. And we would observe, and eventually during the term, teach.

BARBARA: Student teaching so to speak?

HELEN: So to speak, uh huh. Yeah. And so that was when I got certified for elementary. And then I taught out there at Suntex for two years.

BARBARA: Did you teach your children?

HELEN: Yes.

BARBARA: Did they go to school at Suntex?

HELEN: Yeah, Cran was there for the first grade, and I taught him. And Clifford for his first grade, which was the following year. And I taught him, I'm awfully glad I taught Clifford, because he had a different way of learning, and I think that had he got a teacher who was too strict, conventional wise, you know, to the rules, he might not have had as happy a time as he started out having. And, but he became too dependent on me. I was his teacher, his mother, I was everything, and he just had become so dependent. He wouldn't let me out of his sight.

And so we decided it would be a good idea to move to town, transfer to a town school, which we did. Went to Hines, and the boys were in second and third grade there, and I taught second grade. And we commuted, we commuted for four years. And then Cran was in junior high, and we moved to town into a trailer. So they could then have extra curricular activities, you know, it's important.

BARBARA: Oh yes. I hope we don't lose those for our children in the years to come. The situation now is kind of scary.

HELEN: Yeah, yes it is.

DOROTHEA: Education is kind of scary. I mean it just really scares you, because you wonder where your grandchildren are going to.

HELEN: That's true.

DOROTHEA: You know, where are they going to get their learning and education if we drop so many of these programs.

HELEN: Uh huh. Well, you know, it's up to us, if we ---

BARBARA: Have to fight for it.

HELEN: Fight for it, and if it takes more money, that's what we have to do.

BARBARA: That's right.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, it's going to take more money. The parents are going to have to supply a lot.

HELEN: Uh huh, uh huh. Well that, plus --- I don't know, it seems to me the most equitable tax is the sales tax, and then cut out the ---

TAPE 1 - SIDE B

BARBARA: How many years did you teach then, after you moved into town?

HELEN: Well I taught 19 years in Hines, so subtract four, fifteen.

BARBARA: So you, after, you did three years at the high school, then you did two years at Suntex, and then fifteen --- nineteen years at Hines Elementary.

HELEN: Nineteen. Uh huh.

BARBARA: And you taught second grade there?

HELEN: Uh huh.

BARBARA: All those years you taught second grade?

HELEN: Uh huh, yeah.

BARBARA: And after having taught the high school, did you enjoy the younger ones more? Or, was just a different phase?

HELEN: Well it's different, because your emphasis is different. In second grade your emphasis is on skills. And knowledge of certain subject matter is not --- it's not that it's incidental but in my mind it's not the most important thing. That reading and getting a decent penmanship and math --- but social studies and that is not the most important thing I think. And science, although we did it, I enjoyed the science very much. I enjoyed everything. And we did, we did everything, as closely as the state wants us to. The state

pretty well tells you how much time you got to spend on these things.

BARBARA: And more and more rigid all the time I understand.

HELEN: Yeah, oh yeah. But I think that still --- I gave two hours a day to reading. I don't think that was too much.

BARBARA: Well if you're not a good reader, then you are going to have problems the whole, the whole time.

HELEN: Uh huh, yeah, uh huh. And spelling, and math, those took up the main thing, the handwriting. So ---

BARBARA: How many students did you have in a class during that time? What was your class size?

HELEN: Well it varied so much. You know when I started there the Radar Base was up here, and there were lots of people connected with it living in that district, and in here. And the Job Corp was operating, and the people who ran the Job Corp, the administration and the teachers and that sort of thing had families, and they were around. So I think my largest class was 26 children. And my smallest was, I think, 13. It varied.

BARBARA: That must have been a luxury.

HELEN: It was a luxury, it was.

DOROTHEA: Did you ever have aides help you during these nineteen years of teaching? They have so many aides that are helping now. Did you have them at that time?

HELEN: Yes, I did. I had a few parents, but not really on a regular basis. There was a lady in Hines for a while who enjoyed working with children, so she'd come on a specific day and listen to them read and that sort of thing. And then the school hired an aide. There was a few years there where the school had hired an aide. So we had an aide for a little bit of time, you know, to help out.

BARBARA: I understand that you worked with the system trying to get aides into the

school system, is that right? Did you work with ---

HELEN: Yeah, I did, uh huh.

BARBARA: You felt it was necessary, or a helpful thing?

HELEN: Yes, I was very strong on having aides in the classroom. It's not easy, it's not easy because you not only have to plan for yourself and the children, but you have to plan for the aide too. And communication is very difficult I discovered. Because I asked an aide to do something, and she'd get an entirely different idea from the same words that I -- - I was using, that gave me the idea, I wanted, what I wanted her to do. And she'd do something differently. And so you have to be very careful. And perhaps after awhile if you'd worked, you know, quite a bit with one aide, you'd begin to mesh your ideas a lot better. So, but I did, I wrote a paper on it.

DOROTHEA: Well it's pretty tough to really get --- say if you have thirty students in a class, it's pretty tough to really get all thirty students to do their work and understand what you're trying to get across to them, isn't it, when you only have yourself as a teacher?

HELEN: Uh huh, sometimes.

DOROTHEA: So, an aide probably help you in this way.

HELEN: Yes, very much so. That's what I felt aides should be doing, not taking down bulletin boards and that sort of thing that many teachers have them do. But the working on a one to one with the children.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BARBARA: Someone need a little extra reading or a little help with this and that it would help bring them along to keep them up with the others.

HELEN: Right, uh huh, other group. And then I did use an aide for, we'd at one particular time, this isn't sequential or anything, I don't remember when, but we'd alternate reading groups. And I'd take, there were, usually you had three, and I'd take two and give her one

or something like that just so that there would be a variety, and give her a variety too.

BARBARA: Did you work with the unification committees at all?

HELEN: Huh uh.

BARBARA: In helping unify the district.

HELEN: No. I was on the school board, the high school board for eleven years. When I left the high school I wanted to stay with education, and I ran for the board. And we had on the high school board, I had put up unification two different times, and it was defeated each time. So, and then when Dick was on the high school board too, and they put it up one time. And it --- I'm not sure that that even got to a vote, because some kind of misunderstanding --- it didn't, follow through on it. Maybe it did, anyhow it too was defeated if it did.

BARBARA: So when did you retire from teaching?

HELEN: '87 I think.

BARBARA: '87.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And what did you do when you retired, did you stay home and help Dick? Or did you get involved in other organizations or volunteer, social work, or what did you continue doing to keep yourself occupied?

HELEN: Well I started writing. And then, oh it was tough; it was very tough to retire. Not to retire from teaching, I knew I had to do that because I didn't feel I was doing what I wanted to do for the children. It was just taking too much energy, too much time out of --- or too much time to do what I wanted to do, because I had slowed so. And so it was hard, because I moved home. And Dick and I hadn't lived together for fifteen years. And yes, he had been in, and I had gone home. But on a day to day basis, and so we needed ---

BARBARA: Get acquainted all over again.

HELEN: We had to start all over again, it was tough. And then I didn't want to give up, you know, I might have retired, but I sure didn't want to quit. I wanted to be up and dressed before breakfast, and this sort of thing, you know. It didn't work out, so I had to give up slowly, give up, give up, give up.

But then sometime during that first year, it was in the fall I guess, why I was encouraged to come to a group here that --- a man, Jim --- I'll think of it because it's --- and another man had come from Lewis and Clark and they worked with this program that sends people around to other areas of the state. And they go to libraries and promote reading and writing, and so on. And so I got started doing that. So I did that. And that's a full time job, I had no idea, that is completely --- to get anything done at all, you just devote full time to it. So that's ---

BARBARA: You have to set aside a certain amount of time each day.

HELEN: Each day.

BARBARA: And just do it. Otherwise it can slip, or ---

HELEN: Uh huh, every day, uh huh. And then I got more involved with the Cattlewomen.

DOROTHEA: I understand that you were a president of the Cattlewomen at one time. Can you remember what year?

HELEN: No, but it's out here in the scrapbooks.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

HELEN: No, well maybe, it was the year that I started teaching, if I knew what year that was. Let's see ---

DOROTHEA: When you were president?

HELEN: Uh huh. It was the, actually see the new president comes in, in October.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: So I had just started teaching in September, and I was finished with the

presidency in October. So it was that prior, that particular year.

DOROTHEA: And they were the Cow Belles then, rather than the Cattlewomen.

HELEN: Yes, uh huh, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: That's a full time job there too.

HELEN: Oh, it sure is.

DOROTHEA: It's a job that can keep you busy. What other organizations or things did you belong to, or do belong to?

HELEN: Oh, well Republican Party. At that time it was quite active here. I don't know what it does now; because once I started teaching I dropped that. I dropped everything. When you teach, you can't do everything. And I had a family, you know, so I quit that. And I can't really go back, there was a lot of stuff that, you know ---

Well out there at Silver Creek there was the community club, and PTA. They weren't at the same time, but when PTA kind of lost membership, then the community club was organized, or it was maybe, you know, off and on like that. And what are some organizations? I'm very active in my church, and that's the Christian Science Church. Now what are some other organizations around here, and I'll tell you.

DOROTHEA: Now you're a reader at the church?

HELEN: Not anymore.

DOROTHEA: Not anymore.

HELEN: I was.

DOROTHEA: But you were.

HELEN: Uh huh.

BARBARA: And what about music, were you involved with music with your children, or in the church, or for your own pleasure?

HELEN: Well I play the organ at the church now. But let's see, Cran had a band.



BARBARA: I remember.

HELEN: You remember that, uh huh.

BARBARA: Of course my sons were in school about the time that yours were too.

HELEN: Uh huh, yeah. I remember your sons.

DOROTHEA: My brother was in a band too, so I can relate to some of that also.

HELEN: Yeah, uh huh. And, well I was, I was very active with the Cattlewomen at that time. I was active in politics. I was president of the Republican Women's Club, and I was the precinct committeewoman. But, I don't know.

BARBARA: Let's see, I think you were, weren't you outstanding educator in '73 was it?

HELEN: Yeah. Well I've forgotten the year, but somewhere there I guess it was.

BARBARA: And did you not work with the, during the centennial have the dancers, the Scottish dancers?

HELEN: Dancers, uh huh.

BARBARA: What kind of an experience was that in teaching them to do this dance, and taking them around to perform?

HELEN: It was great, wonderful. Yeah, they had ---

BARBARA: You had how many girls?

HELEN: Four.

BARBARA: Four.

HELEN: Uh huh. Started with five, but one felt I picked on her and told her mother, and the mother read me the riot act and took her out.

BARBARA: It happens.

HELEN: And you know, her father who was conducting the, he was master of ceremonies of the wildlife, not wildlife, Wildfowl Festival --- Waterfowl Festival Banquet that night. Now who was the head of the refuge before Forrest Cameron? It was he.

BARBARA: Constantino was it?

HELEN: Constantino. But he said, and we chuckled, the mothers of these girls and I, after he got through announcing them, because they were performing for that banquet. And he gave a little brief history of it, and he said there were five. And I don't remember whether, you know, he didn't mention that it was his daughter. But then he said, but now there are four, one wasn't able to take the rigors of it, or some such thing, as if he was kind of sorry, you know.

But then I was glad it happened that way because she was, you know, hadn't had any dancing, and these others hadn't either but they'd been in --- oh their bodies were more pliable. She had a difficult time, and naturally I would try to encourage her and she took that as criticism. So ---

BARBARA: Criticism.

DOROTHEA: Well I think dancing is something like tumbling or any other activities, unless your body is agile and workable, there is a lot of things that some of us can't do that others can.

HELEN: That's right. And you have to discipline your body. I mean your legs have to do what you're telling them to do. And control, you have to have a lot of control.

DOROTHEA: I have two daughters, one is a beautiful wonderful dancer, and the other one can't dance a lick. So it's really amazing to see that there are two types of people. Now the youngest daughter was a real good tumbler, jumper, she could do all these kinds of things. Where the oldest daughter is a very nice, very wonderful dancer. And has taught dancing and things like this, so it's strange how different bodies have different capabilities.

Back to the place that you live. Can you tell us something about --- I think you've changed residencies or something, have you not, or acquired more places? You

mentioned on the telephone something about a Best.

HELEN: Best, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Was he an owner of one of your places, or ---

HELEN: Uh huh. Woodie Best, I always thought that Woodie must be short for Woodrow or something. But I see that in the records, the county records, it's Woodie. And then I went to Dorey, the little reception for Dorey ---

DOROTHEA: Burden.

HELEN: Burden, Burden's 80th birthday, and on that table where they had a lot of memorabilia, her high school diploma had been signed by Woodie Best, he was on the board then. And so his name

--- well he didn't say Woodie though, he said W. L. But up here, it's Woodie.

So yes, he came, I don't know when he came to the country but he bought what we named Suntex Ranch. It had no name, just Best Ranch. And in March 19, 1896, and he was, he bought it from Martha and Edmund Baker, and there were Bakers out there. And he was in partners with Edwin Laughlin at that time. And it's kind of interesting because we acquired the Best Ranch, and that's what I was going to look up, and I forgot, in 1961, the fall, and Clifford was 8 months old. And we had the Juniper Hills, did I tell you that was the name that E. W. Crane and Bernice Crane had given to that particular ranch that B. B. Clark had put together after buying it from Laughlin?

And so we, by buying this ranch, were tying the two ranches together that Laughlin had been instrumental in operating with Woodie Best. And so then this now is a story that I don't vouch for its veracity, but its source is fairly good I guess. But Woodie Best was married I guess at that time, or shortly thereafter, but along about 1905 or something like that, why his wife left him. She was getting unhappy, or she was unhappy, so the story I get is in 1904 he built a big house for her. And it, whether it was ever painted on the

outside, one would never know, but maybe it was. And she, or he built this house, had what, eight bedrooms and a big living room, and a dining area, dining room, and a kitchen of course. But no running water, they didn't have those, or no power or anything in those days. But it was all wallpapered, and when we bought it, the wallpaper was faded, and in spots --- and I wouldn't say it was dirty, but it was, you could tell that it was a very nice wallpaper at one time. And --- but that apparently didn't help the situation because she left.

And in about 1914 I was told, I think Mabel Best told me that, he married Mabel who was a schoolteacher at Suntex School. And so she was there, and he --- they never had any children, and I don't think he had any by his first wife.

BARBARA: With eight bedrooms, he was anticipating a large family perhaps?

HELEN: I don't know. Barney, what is it, Grant Barney who worked for him, and subsequently got his own place over there, said that it was where the help lived. They didn't have, you see, right there.

BARBARA: Didn't have a bunkhouse or anything.

DOROTHEA: With all the --- oh.

HELEN: No.

BARBARA: They just all lived right ----

HELEN: He lived up there, and it was during the, it was during the depression that Barney worked and lived for Woodie Best. And he got paid with meals and cigarettes, that was his pay during the depression.

DOROTHEA: And his room.

HELEN: His room, room and board and cigarettes. And so then Woodie filed on a property of --- that was down west and up against those west hills. And he filed on the rights of the water in Chickahominy Creek. Now that creek just runs on the runoff, you

know, but it flowed through that area. And he built a big house down there. And I kept wanting to get a picture of it, it was so unique. I felt the roof was very unique, the roofline. But I didn't, and one day I was riding along in the pickup with Dick, and the house wasn't there. Of course I was working, you know, so I wasn't there all the time and I didn't know what was going on. Oh, Dick says, "It burned down." "How did it burn down?" "Well we were burning weeds."

BARBARA: Oh dear.

HELEN: And I know darn well he didn't try to put it out. (Laughter) Good riddance or something. So ---

BARBARA: I understand you have had several experiences with fires on the ranches out there.

HELEN: Oh don't tell me that. Uh huh, it's very scary.

BARBARA: With no fire department to call to come and help out, how do you take care of things, just let it go, or try to put out with water from wells or whatever as best you can?

DOROTHEA: That's when the neighbors come to your assistance and do what they can, I think, isn't it?

HELEN: The first one was when that big house that Woodie Best built burnt down. And I have a picture, I brought some pictures.

BARBARA: Wonderful.

HELEN: (Looks at pictures) Let's see, this is the front. Here, that's the big old house right there.

BARBARA: This was Woodie Best's eight-bedroom house?

HELEN: Uh huh, that's right, that's right. There were six upstairs and two downstairs.

BARBARA: Oh my.

HELEN: And a big living room, do you see the bay window right there?

BARBARA: Uh huh.

HELEN: Right there, big living room all across here. This was the front door, but of course nobody used it. There was a balcony up here. And then everybody came in this door here. Now we --- there is another view of it. And this is Mabel Best, and that's her brother Clyde Gibbon, Gibbons. I don't know whether it is Gibbon or Gibbons. And he came out and filed on a patent, with a patent, for a patent on the same area, only east of where Woodie Best did on that Chickahominy Creek. And then this is the, an aerial view of how it looked when we purchased it. We had a couple of rooms in this big house right here. One was Dick's office; it had my baby grand piano in it. And the kitchen, oh it was so dirty. The walls were black, and we just had the Foster Brothers board up the walls, you know, just put panels over the walls.

BARBARA: And start over.

HELEN: And started over and made that over into a guest bedroom.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

HELEN: And then we put this mobile home in here. And we stayed in it, we had a storage room here, and then our utility room was, the storage room was one of the bedrooms downstairs, and then the utility room was one of the other bedrooms downstairs. And the utility room was the post office when Mabel Best was postmistress there. And people would come in, this was the dining area here, people would come in here to get their mail. And right next to it was the post office. And there was seventeen buildings around here that Dick took down, most of them.

BARBARA: Okay, now this ranch is located, like you're at Riley, where do you go from ---

-

HELEN: Well this is Best Lane, and you take the Silver Creek road, past the state houses, you know, where those three houses are?

BARBARA: Uh huh.

HELEN: Four houses.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

HELEN: And stay on the pavement.

BARBARA: You turn, you turn right, north, where the state houses are, and go back up there to this property?

HELEN: North. Uh huh, yes, you go up; oh lets see, how many miles? Probably seven or eight on the pavement.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

HELEN: Nowadays, it didn't used to be. And then there is a road going west down the hill, a little incline that takes you across the meadows. And see now it's all named. It was always Best Lane, but now it has a sign there, and it's road 140.

BARBARA: I see.

HELEN: It's also a rural road, another sign tells us that. And so that's the road that you go. And then Chickahominy is down here, the big reservoir. So lots of fishermen come by here.

BARBARA: Uh huh. Okay.

HELEN: And then this burned, all of this burned right here.

DOROTHEA: The trailer too?

HELEN: It was just a twisted mass of metal they told me.

DOROTHEA: So you lost your piano?

HELEN: Lost the piano, everything.

DOROTHEA: Everything.

HELEN: Everything, we just got out. The dog, the kids, and Dick and I.

BARBARA: Oh my. Was it an electrical fire, or lightening, or you don't know?

HELEN: No, I think, see our dryer was a gas dryer, I think it was, we think it was the dryer.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

HELEN: Out here, I'm not sure you can see it, but anyhow out in this area there was the tank for the propane, the propane tank.

BARBARA: I see, uh huh.

HELEN: And I had put the kids to bed, and I was adjusting the windows and I left. And then I came in their room, and I left, and then I thought well maybe that's too much, or maybe it's too little air, I don't know what, but I came back to readjust, thinking how you do, and I saw a flash of flame go straight out. And I called to Dick, "Are you burning something?" This was in the fall see. And he leaped out of his seat and he ran to this old house, and he came back and he said, "Call the emergency, ring the emergency call." And so our phone was in this house, the old house, and I went in there and it was six rings, six short rings. And you get everybody on the line then, and I called them and they all came.

BARBARA: Was there a big explosion then because of the propane tank?

HELEN: No, I don't remember one. Maybe there was, but I don't remember. And this was the bunkhouse here. At that time there was a bunkhouse. And so there was a storehouse, I'm trying to see where that was. They were able to save the storehouse, the bunkhouse went. They were able to save the storehouse by, they tell me, the door was just, you know how the wood, wood smokes before it starts to combust, and the door was smoking. And they, by hand with buckets, they poured water on it. We had a lot of things stored in there, and they were all saved. You know, things you don't use for daily living, so they weren't of much use.

BARBARA: So you were living at the Juniper ---



HELEN: No, we were living here.

BARBARA: No, but before you moved to this ranch, you were living at Swamp Creek Ranch? And then when you purchased this property, you moved down here to live?

HELEN: Uh huh.

BARBARA: Okay.

HELEN: Uh huh, yeah. But we worked that ranch.

BARBARA: You worked the other ranch also?

HELEN: Yeah.

BARBARA: So how many acres of property were you working during this time? And I assume you had cattle, is what you had.

HELEN: Uh huh, yes. Frankly, I don't know. We had, when we purchased Juniper Hills we had, it seemed like a lot at that point, fourteen thousand acres I think. And we were in three counties in the Juniper Hills Ranch. It was, actually we had property in four counties. Harney, and Crook, and Deschutes, and then there was a big gap there, and how this happened I don't know, but in Lake county there was a little bit of property. And what became of it, I don't know.

DOROTHEA: It seems like you cross Lake County, and Harney County, and Deschutes all in one little strip, and I don't know how they do this.

HELEN: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: But that's what happens.

HELEN: Yeah. Well we subsequently sold, let's see there was in Crook County there was five thousand acres, the whole pasture was deeded, and it was five thousand acres, and we sold that. And then Dick bought the Shields place, which was down there by the highway. And ---

DOROTHEA: Now is that where you live now, is on the Shields place?

HELEN: No, Suntex.

DOROTHEA: You still live on Suntex.

HELEN: We didn't keep Shields. I didn't care much about that purchase, but we finally sold it to --- oh, Rudy Hagglewald, Rudy Hagglewald. He was a lumberman from Washington, and he retired and had a lot of money and he came and bought Green Valley, and then he finally bought Shields Ranch which was right next-door. So Hoyt's have all that now.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BARBARA: So how many cattle did you run on your ranches?

HELEN: Well that too varied, because as we got more ---

BARBARA: First you started out small?

HELEN: --- and we worked together, together see we --- and then we began shipping to California in the wintertime. So I don't know, I suppose we had what, 800 or so cattle, cows. And so ---

BARBARA: And did you have many horses to ride with, or just several cattle, or several horses just to ride with? Or did you have ---

HELEN: You mean when we had the cattle?

BARBARA: Uh huh.

HELEN: Well I don't know how many, how many, fifteen. I don't know, you've got to have enough so you can ---

BARBARA: Round up, or whatever, brand or ---

HELEN: Have other people ride too.

DOROTHEA: Ride too, and there is a lot of miles that you have to travel, and you've got to have more than one horse.

HELEN: You have to change your horses regularly, they get pretty tired.

DOROTHEA: I know there were times when we was changing three a day. We would come in, they'd start out in the morning, and then they'd come in and have a cold drink or something and change, and then go back out. Those were the days when I didn't like.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: You ride until seven and eight o'clock at night, and I said --- we only do this twice, two horses a day now.

HELEN: Uh huh, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Well our tape is getting a little on the --- closer to the end. We've got some tape left yet, but let's cover some of the area where you moved to where you are now, again, and go from there.

HELEN: I don't quite understand, you mean when we got there, after the fire?

DOROTHEA: Well you say the Best, yeah, after the Best place burned.

HELEN: After the fire, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Where did you go?

HELEN: Well that particular night I went with a friend, a neighbor, the boys and I and the dog to her house. And Dick stayed with the men and others at the fire. And then at that time the Green Valley, it wasn't called that then, but was owned by a man called Simmons. And he had, oh I can't think, a young man and his wife running it, and they had twin boys. And that young man, his name will come to me, but I can't remember it now, asked, came and told us we could stay in one of the apartments. They didn't have any crew or anything, and they had --- Earl Bush had built up that place, as far as the buildings went, and had put in apartments for help, and so we moved to one of those apartments and stayed there. And oh, after Christmas, this happened on, I think it was November 19th, just before Thanksgiving, the fire. And probably the beginning of January we started thinking about building a house. And we, first thing we did was each

of us made a list of what we wanted in a house. And then we started looking for plans and couldn't find anything that suited the items we wanted, and the site. And so I began drawing plans. And we had looked at enough so I had some ideas, putting some of these plans together, you know. And I had done five, and was started on the sixth one when I handed the five to Dick and I said, "Look these over and see if there is anything there you think will do." And he picked number five, so that was it.

And then we started looking at other new houses to determine the kind of heat we wanted, and all these details, you know. And then we took it to a designer and she put it to scale, and then we took it to an architect and he put a vault roof on it, ceiling, vault ceiling. And then we started looking for contractors.

The Foster Brothers were just starting out, and so they had built one house and they gave us a good deal, and they said they would be our contractors, but we wouldn't pay them as contractors, but we would be the contractors, and we would --- they would buy with us as the contractors, and therefore they would get the, you know, the deals that contractors get, the discounts and so on. Well anyhow, it worked out fine. And that's normal, especially for young kids getting started.

DOROTHEA: Getting started, right.

HELEN: And they did a good job.

BARBARA: This was Bill Foster, and what was his brother's name?

HELEN: Dick.

DOROTHEA: Dick.

BARBARA: Dick.

HELEN: He was killed in an automobile accident. And so we, in October we moved in. Hatch, remember Bill Hatch, he painted it, Lou and Bill. And so we moved in, in October and ---

DOROTHEA: So it was almost a year later then that you moved into your new home.

HELEN: Uh huh.

BARBARA: Was it in this same location as where your other property had burned?

HELEN: Uh huh, yes, the same place, the same site, there it is. That was the way it looked the day we had the housewarming.

BARBARA: Oh, look at the snow.

HELEN: Snow.

BARBARA: Oh, wonderful.

HELEN: Yeah.

BARBARA: You have a natural finish on the outside, or ---

HELEN: It's stained, uh huh, yeah. It's a different stain now. That was called Hawaiian coral. We have something called sand something on the outside now.

BARBARA: That's wonderful.

HELEN: That's what's --- these were the inside pictures, no furniture yet.

BARBARA: Oh, yeah.

HELEN: And then those were the flower bouquets that had been sent for the open house.

BARBARA: Lots of windows to look out?

HELEN: Oh, big windows, yes. Anybody --- I don't try washing them anymore, and boy ... This man ---

BARBARA: Well give them the stuff and let them have at it then.

HELEN: I do, they bring their own stuff. Yeah, so ---

BARBARA: Oh, these are the boys.

HELEN: Yeah, that's when we first --- we had the first all electric home in Harney County.

BARBARA: I see. All electric home.

DOROTHEA: This has appeared in the Ruralite in September 1964.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: That was before you moved in.

HELEN: No.

DOROTHEA: No.

HELEN: No.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

HELEN: We were living there, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Oh, must have been a year later then.

HELEN: Yes, a year later.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

HELEN: See we moved in, in '63. The fire was in '62. We moved from Juniper Hills to Suntex in '61, fall of '61. And the fire was the fall of '62, and we moved in the fall of '63. And this was, yeah, this was the fall of '64. And then there was a --- were you around when there were grass tours?

DOROTHEA: Yes, I was.

HELEN: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: I don't know whether Barbara was here yet or not.

BARBARA: We didn't move here until '75.

HELEN: Well there was a grass tour, and they came to our house, and that was written up here. No, it was this. That was put out by the home extension agent, and things to look for as you toured the house, and so on. So ---

BARBARA: That's a wonderful album.

HELEN: Yeah, my mother put it together. Hazel Gibson, do you know her?

DOROTHEA: Yes.

HELEN: She made the album and gave it to us as a housewarming thing.

BARBARA: Well isn't that nice.

HELEN: My mother came by once and spent, one of the summers she spent with us she put it together; I mean put the things in it.

BARBARA: Uh huh, put the things in it for you. That's wonderful.

HELEN: Yeah. So ---

BARBARA: So that was one of the fires, have you had other major fires out there since then?

HELEN: They are all major when you are living out there.

BARBARA: Well I --- yes I shouldn't put it that way. But have you had others since that time?

HELEN: Well the next one I was working in the house, I was on the high school board, and I was writing the policies. I had been dinging on that board all the time for policies, written policies.

BARBARA: Policies and procedures.

HELEN: Finally they said, "Okay Helen, you do them." "Alright." I don't think they knew I was going to do them.

BARBARA: If you suggest, always be prepared to do.

HELEN: Yeah. Well I intended to do it, but I wanted the authority to do it.

BARBARA: Right.

HELEN: And so the kids were taking their naps and I came to the door, a knock on the door and it was the hired man's wife. And they were out behind the barn fighting fire, she and her husband, and she wanted more buckets. I didn't even know, Dick wasn't there. But I don't --- I guess, I don't know how it got started, but the fire was in little clumps of manure. And it was jumping from one manure plot to another, and it was coming close to

the barn and they were dumping the water on it. So I went out and tried to help, and that was the second one. The third one was ---

BARBARA: Didn't burn any major structures then?

HELEN: No, they got it out, thank goodness they got it out. And the second one was the hired people, there was a house there they lived in, and the burn barrel was very close to the picket fence, and it got the picket fence on fire. And I kept smelling this, and Dick and I investigated and the fence was on fire. Well fortunately it was early enough so we got it out, no problem, but the picket fence was gone. And it could have caught the whole house on fire. And then, what's that, that's three. Now what was another one, can't think of it at the moment, but we'll go to the fifth one then which was the last one. And that was really scary. It was two years ago, and in the spring it was in March, and I was home alone, there was nobody at the other house. This was when the ranch was sold and Taylor's had it. And they weren't there, but they had a young kid working there, kind of a teenager. And I saw him go past the house ---

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HELEN: Gary had been burning, a few days before had been burning old hay piles from ... and so on. And it was a, you might remember it was a beautiful calm day, a few days there. But this day was a windy day. And I began to see smoke in some of those hay piles. And this kid walked past carrying a bucket of water. So I looked where he was walking, and it looked to me like we had fires.

So I leaped in the pickup and got out there. I did that instead of running to get there fast, and said, "Let's get the hoses out." And I have a lot of hoses, and since building this house, our water pump is in another house. We had discovered that when the house burned the first time there that the water pump was in the house, and that was



a disaster. So this was a separate pump house. And we gathered up hoses and we hooked them together and we got them out there to the road where the fire was. And it had jumped the road by that time. And the wind was just fierce, and embers were being carried by the wind and landed here and there and so on.

I ran into the house then, and I called, began calling neighbors. Now this new phone system isn't all that good for emergency, because you have to call each person. The last time it was one call got all. And then I called, after calling about three why I called the store and they said they would take over. They offered to, and they began calling, and I went on then.

And I had called Dick Raney a neighbor down there, and I knew he had a water truck. And he arrived; he was the first one to arrive without his water truck. He had brought his hired man up, and come up to see, you know, how bad things were. Well I guess they were pretty bad in his eyes, because he went back. And he left the hired man to help us, and gradually --- I had said to people, and to the store, asked them to bring hoses and shovels. And Dick went back and we didn't see him again, and didn't come. And I wondered what in the world was the matter.

In the meantime people were arriving and we were getting the water where it belonged. It started burning the picket fence, or the fence around Taylor's house, and that was put out. And then it burned some of the fence down by the barn, and that was put out, that old barn was saved. And various other places around the corral that was starting, and people were getting at, and shovels, and hoses, and I'd go back and check my house periodically because the wind and the embers, nothing landed anywhere near it.

And then Dick Raney arrived with his water truck, and that naturally, once that was there why things began to look up. We were just, these spot places we had to take care

of, but where the big fire was down there by the road and was moving with the wind, why this water truck could take care of that.

So I found out after that fire that he had been in the process of taking his water truck apart see, it was, he was fixing it up I guess for the dry summer or something, so he had to get it back together again.

BARBARA: Oh dear.

DOROTHEA: Real fast.

HELEN: Oh real fast. So that was a Saturday, and it took several hours before anyone left. I think it was around six o'clock, five-thirty, six o'clock. It was early afternoon when the fire started. And I decided I wouldn't come to church that Sunday because I just thought I ought to stay. Gary came home late then, and that poor kid he was in the room, and he couldn't get his car going, and he worried about his gas, his pickup, I didn't know, he didn't tell me, I could have helped him. But it was stalled out there on the road, and he was in a state of shock or something when Gary got home.

And so the next day I stayed home because the wind was still gusting, and then I noticed the smoke again. So I called Gary, I don't know what he was doing, but I called him, he was home. And he went out, and I got out, I dragged the hoses out --- or no, the hose was left out there, and nobody had moved it. But he went out and ---

So I turned the hoses on and gathered up some buckets. It was a little, where the hose didn't reach as far as the fire, so he'd come and I'd fill up the buckets, he'd come get a bucket and run out to the fire, and we got it out alright. So ---

BARBARA: So it was a good thing that you had stayed home that day.

HELEN: I know, I know it was.

DOROTHEA: So fire has kind of been a life history of yours.

HELEN: Yes. Now that was, yes, exactly. No that was the fourth fire, the fifth one was

this, that house burned down, the hired man's house.

DOROTHEA: Oh. And it was ---

HELEN: No, maybe it was the fourth one, and that was the fifth one.

DOROTHEA: And it was all in that same area there.

HELEN: Yeah, that was the fourth one. Yes, the hired man's house was right there. And it was when Dick was still here, now this last one Dick wasn't here. But I kept saying, what is that noise, and it was the beginning of hunting season. And he says, "Oh I guess that some guns, you know."

BARBARA: Oh, the crackling from the fire, uh huh.

HELEN: It was the fire.

BARBARA: Oh dear.

HELEN: So it was pretty far along before I went and looked, and yelled at him that we had a fire. And I called the neighbors again.

BARBARA: That's what neighbors are for though.

HELEN: The dear neighbors, those dear neighbors. And they came and got things out as much as they could. But then the fire marshal, the insurance investigator of fires is the one that came after that. Decided that a sofa had been pushed too close to a baseboard heater or something. And that the baseboard heater had turned on because the day was kind of chilly. Well, anyhow, that's what that was.

BARBARA: It happens.

HELEN: It happens, right.

BARBARA: So you've had fires, what about floods in that area, have you had experiences with that also?

HELEN: Oh yes.

BARBARA: Go from one extreme to the other.

HELEN: Yeah. Right, yeah, I was gone for three weeks from my house this year.

DOROTHEA: Was that, that wasn't the flood, though was it, or the heavy snows?

HELEN: No.

DOROTHEA: The floods?

HELEN: Yes. Snow didn't stop me. I was fortunate Bob Johnson would come over and he would, you know, he'd grade out some, and then Andy Root would come by and he'd grade that out. And so I always had a path to get out. I had panicked, well not panicked, but you know I got to thinking gee, the snow is getting so deep, and it was deep at the back door where the car was. I wasn't sure, and something, I couldn't use the pickup. Anyhow I won't --- the pickup wasn't there I guess, must have been in town. I wouldn't be able to get out if I had to leave. So I thought and decided, finally I decided I'll call Bob to see if he would come, and he did, and dug me out.

And then from then on a couple times more he came, and Andy Root came once, and we managed that all right. But no, the year after we moved into the new house, there was this Christmas flood, and that marooned us for a week. Because it washed the road, Best Lane out, and it washed the bridge up there at Mayo's out, no way of crossing Silver Creek. And you couldn't get out the other way to the highway because that road would be too muddy and rocky.

But that's what happened this year. Bob Johnson came down, I had just come from town, and at five-thirty he came, and he said, "Helen, I think you had better leave." And I had paid attention to the water on the road when I came in, but it hadn't gotten over the road yet, it was lapping at the edges. He said, "By morning it's going to be over the road." And so I got some, I had my broken arm, so I got some people to help me, and loaded up my pickup. Yeah, I took the pickup at that time, and got down to Marie's, Marie Macomber. I hadn't been able to get her on the telephone and nobody knew where she

was. So my dog, and my cat, and myself went down and were sitting in her living room, the three of us, when she arrived from town. It was about ten o'clock at night.

DOROTHEA: Luckily her door was open.

HELEN: Yeah, she always leaves it open. And some of her neighbors there use her phone. And so we were there, the three of us, for two nights. And then the levee broke and the water came cascading down. That's when it went over the highway. And so it became evident that we were going to have to leave. And we began picking up things to go in our little bag, you know. There were three of us in the house, but Caroline didn't leave, and she wanted to stay with her dog. And so since she was staying with her dog, why I said, "Do you mind staying with my dog too?" So my dog stayed. And the water was in Caroline's house about two feet. She lived next to Marie. And then the house on the other side it was in. It got into Marie's --- it didn't get into Marie's house but it was within about a half an inch, an inch, a half an inch of getting into Marie's house. It was in the little vents, you know, from the furnace that are under the floor. And it was in -- - we could measure, it was moving up, up, up.

And Hoyt's, one of Hoyt's men, Hoyt's were up there with big tractors about half a mile, a third of a mile from Marie's house, and getting some of the hay out that was going into the water. And so one of them came down with this huge tractor, Jim Smith, and he carried us out. He came in and picked me up. First he took my cat. Marie had a birdcage, and we put the cat in the birdcage.

BARBARA: Oh, not together.

HELEN: Without the bird. She probably was wondering well where is this bird that is supposed to be in here. I'd like to meet him. But she was scared. And he put her, he took her out and he put her in the cage on, down, you know, on the lift of the tractor, and sitting down there, a little above the water. Well the water was up to his hips as he carried

us out.

BARBARA: Oh gosh.

HELEN: And he took me first, and then he took Marie. And I said, "Well she can't ride down there, we're going to have to put her somewhere else." Well there wasn't any room in the cab, and Marie was having to stand outside anyhow. So we put the cat and the birdcage on the hood of the tractor, and Marie hung onto them. Her eyes were so big, poor little thing.

BARBARA: Oh, I can imagine.

HELEN: So we got out and each of us to our car. And I went on to bum a bed from another neighbor. So I was there four days. And then I had to do some work in town, and I was in town for two days with Clifford, two nights. And then I remembered that when this whole thing started Vera Hotchkiss had said to me now you can have the key to our place if you need to, they have the Mayo Ranch. And so I had thought I would call her, which I did, before I even left the second place I was at. And she said, "Oh yes, just come and get it." And so when I was here with Clifford I came and got the key.

In the meantime then I had gotten, I had been back to Marie's house the next day, and my dog swam out to me. And Caroline came with her dog, and a neighbor had come down and gotten her and took her to his place. But she wasn't happy there, she had to sleep on the floor, and she had, he has two little girls and she felt he kept his house so cold, and he didn't like her dog, and so on. And so I had told her I would pick her up when I came through with the key to Mayo's and we would all move up there. And Marie was welcome too, but she didn't come. And so we moved into Mayo's and we were there ten days.

DOROTHEA: And now what is Caroline's last name?

HELEN: Boon.

DOROTHEA: Boon. B O O N. No E on the end?

HELEN: Uh huh. No, she contracted pneumonia from that experience, and was very sick and I had to bring her into town. And then the Red Cross took care of her. We didn't even know we had a Red Cross in town. They had just gotten started.

BARBARA: Well that's wonderful to know.

HELEN: Yes, yes.

DOROTHEA: I think that they have probably started and disbanded and started, because I remember when the --- John --- he used to live out on the Highway 395 in that little red house, "Slim" Baugh. I don't know whether you know him or not, he carves these horses and things. He sometimes goes to the Waterfowl Festival and sits there and carves. He is quite a crafty old man. And they helped them, because I think they flooded or burned or something, and they were --- they are quite an organization, you know, in times of need. So I'm glad to hear that they are started again.

HELEN: Yes they are, in fact I got a notice from them. There was an announcement of their, or a beginning --- and I thought maybe they were asking for funds, but --- they are I guess, but they weren't in so many words. But they put Carolyn in, Caroline, her name is Caroline not Carolyn, she wants people to remember that. And they put her in Motel 6, and she could get up to the clinic easily, and she could get to Jerry's for food. And she was pretty sick, and I felt that she probably wouldn't be going out too much to get food, but she managed somehow to get that worked out. And so that was --- That was the flood.

Then I had called the Judge, Judge White, and he didn't give me any promise about getting the road fixed. I called him then, called him shortly after I left. And golly, it had been almost three weeks, and I called the county road master, Kerry Landers, and couldn't get him, and left a message for him. ...

So I called the next morning, and she said, "Well he'll call you." And I said, "Well I'll be home all day here at Mayo's." "But oh," I said, "I'm going down the back way to see if that road is passable so I can get down to my house that way." And he called within the hour. They don't like you running around like that. Even though it's not their road, they really --- even the Judge said that to me, because I told him, I could get in that way if it would dry out. And he said, "It's not a good idea."

Well anyhow, so I said, "Well" --- He said, "We'll get your road fixed, I'm getting equipment from Drewsey." And I said, "Good, good, when are you going to do it?" "Tomorrow," he said. I said, "Oh, how many days will it take you?" "One, we'll be finished tomorrow." "In fact," he said, "we'll be finished by noon." (Laughter) So the road, the water was still going over the road, you know, where there was a big hole. And so I went down, and I said, "Well I'll be down there by noon." I went down at eleven thank goodness, because they were all through, and the last workman was leaving. He stopped and talked to me. So they had dumped a whole lot of rock in, I'd say that big. So it's all right for my pickup, but I go gingerly, about two miles an hour with my car if I have to take it.

DOROTHEA: Well I know, you know, you were saying you called this one and that one, when our road washed out we called the telephone company, because that's where it washed out. They had put in a new line and when the water got so high, that ditch that they had dug of course had loose dirt in it, because they had done this during December and January. And so it washed out a real good hole, about five feet wide, and about four feet deep, or maybe just the opposite.

HELEN: Just like ours, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: So Clint called the telephone company, he called the county, and we called the state. And they said that's not our property, and you do it yourself. That's a private



road. But it really isn't, it's a county road. So, but we didn't get any help from anybody.

HELEN: The County didn't help you?

DOROTHEA: We went out finally and, Tim and Clint filled it full of big rocks, and then they dumped some dirt and gravel and sand on top of that. Although since then it has washed out a little bit more. Well it packed, I guess, and they brought in some blue gravel. And I don't know where this comes from but this is the second time that the blue gravel has showed up. So somebody does take care of it apparently, but we've never seen who it was.

HELEN: Oh for heavens sakes.

DOROTHEA: But that was a case of do it yourself.

HELEN: Well, yeah. Well this morning when I drove in I noticed they were, they had started down at Marie's place. Now whether it was the state or the county I don't know. I think in this area down there where it's so close to the state highway they probably work together, because as you can see anything that runs over the highway is state. But somebody was down there building up the shoulders and putting in --- see the water took out the approaches to those three houses there.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: And they were building the approaches up so you could get to those houses.

DOROTHEA: We might mention that 1993 was a year again of bad weather, heavy snows, and lots of moisture, and lots of road damage. Probably the most we have had in I don't know how long, in how many years.

HELEN: I've never seen it, I've been here since '50, and I've never seen this much damage.

BARBARA: Now that we are at this time --- what do you do on your ranch now? Are you still running numbers of cattle, or raise hay, or what are you doing there now?

HELEN: No, the ranch was sold in '87.

BARBARA: Is that right? Oh, okay.

HELEN: And I just bought it back last Thursday.

BARBARA: Oh really.

HELEN: Uh huh. So I don't know. I can't answer that. (Laughter) I bought it back and put it up for sale again.

DOROTHEA: That's what I was going to say, are you going to put it back up for sale?

HELEN: Yes it is. In Craddock Blackburn's hands. I was going to stop and give him some information; he should still be there.

DOROTHEA: Well it is getting later, and if you have another appointment.

HELEN: I don't have an appointment.

DOROTHEA: You don't, okay.

HELEN: No, huh uh.

BARBARA: Maybe you can tell us a little bit about why you sold your ranch, and why you decided to buy it back, and why you are going to sell it again, and what you are going to do maybe in the years to come. What you have planned to do, if you want to share it with us.

HELEN: Oh yeah, uh huh. Well the ranch, Dick really should, was ready for retirement. Oh, he was 68, something like that, and we --- and I was retiring, and so we put the ranch, Juniper Hills and Suntex up. I had hoped, we both did, that they would sell together, sell as one ranch because they worked so well together, you know.

And so they didn't, this Gary and Vickie Taylor bought Suntex. And it puzzled us, because we know they didn't investigate it, you know, they didn't go to the BLM and check up on the AUM's and the permits, and didn't go to the Forest Service to find out anything.

And it just, that to us is not the way people buying a lot of property acts. But anyhow, so when he came, when they came they had also two young men also were with them, and I guess partners. I suppose they had put some money in, not much, but something, and none of them being ranchers. Gary thought he was, and Vickie I guess, they both liked it. And Gary liked to ride horse. I think that's what his idea of being a cattle rancher was.

And so it was obvious, Dick was getting very --- Oh, and we had retained in the contract, this was part of the whole deal, we retained a life estate in the house. We didn't ever intend to stay there forever, but I had just retired and I hadn't lived in the house, you know, really I'd been living in town for all these years, or commuting. And I just wanted to enjoy the house that we had designed and built for a few years before leaving it. And so we put that in, and anybody who bought the place knew that that was part of the conditions.

(... Unrelated Conversation)

BARBARA: So do you still have the other ranch then?

HELEN: No.

BARBARA: You never did put it up for sale?

HELEN: Yes, it was altogether, but then Taylor's just wanted this Silver Creek, the Suntex Ranch. The other one was bought by Bettencourt, Manuel Bettencourt. And I think he, he too was a Californian, Manuel, Dick told me. Don't, he's a Portuguese, and I always say it the Spanish way, Manuel, and it's not. And he says its Manuel, whatever. And so he bought it, and then he sold it shortly after that to a man in New York who works through, it used to be GI Management in Bend, and this man in New York is just buying up ranches in Central Oregon, as many as he can get apparently. So he's got that one, and he owns not a hoof as far as I know, that New Yorker. But, and this one, the Juniper Hills Ranch he leases it back to Manuel Bettencourt. And so he runs his cattle there.

BARBARA: And so when you re-sell your Suntex Ranch, are you going to continue to keep your home there as you did before?

HELEN: Well for a while anyhow. I don't know how long, but it will just depend I think on what kind of deal that we ---

BARBARA: What kind of conditions you can get for it?

HELEN: Yeah, right, right.

BARBARA: Would you then move into Burns, or do you have any ideas of going other places or traveling?

HELEN: Do you think I'm going to leave Andrea and Anthony?

BARBARA: Probably not. They are beautiful children.

DOROTHEA: Talking about Andrea and Anthony, we've never asked you if you have any grandchildren.

HELEN: Well yes, Andrea Marie Cowan, four years old, and Anthony John, or Richard John Cowan, five months old.

BARBARA: And Cliff married Kathy Weeks.

HELEN: Uh huh.

BARBARA: And they reside here in Burns now.

HELEN: Uh huh.

BARBARA: And Cran is in California, is that right?

HELEN: Yes.

BARBARA: And is Cran married?

HELEN: No, no, he is a bachelor.

BARBARA: Uh huh. And what does he do?

HELEN: Well he is an electrical engineer, and he works for what is called, well SRI, Stanford Research Institute.

BARBARA: He went to Stanford University, is that right?

HELEN: Uh huh, uh huh. But they are not connected, they were originally but Stanford broke away. And when Stanford decided it wasn't going to do any defense work, that's what this is ---

BARBARA: So he's a happy bachelor in California?

HELEN: Right. I don't know, he is happy I guess. But I would be happier if he would find a girl, and I think he would be too. I think he would be.

BARBARA: One of these days perhaps.

HELEN: I think so.

BARBARA: And Clifford works for ---

HELEN: His grandfather-in-law.

DOROTHEA: Grandfather-in-law.

HELEN: Ray Weeks.

BARBARA: Ray Weeks, uh huh. And they were in McMinnville before they came here, before Jerry died, is that right?

HELEN: Right, uh huh, yeah. He worked for Colvin Ford there, it was a Ford Agency. Uh huh.

BARBARA: Now they are Harney County people again.

HELEN: Yeah, again, uh huh.

BARBARA: And so getting back to what you have planned for the future.

HELEN: Oh, my future.

BARBARA: Having home base perhaps in Harney County. And would you like to do more traveling? I know you have done traveling. You addressed our Sorority (Epsilon Sigma Alpha) one time about your trip to China.

HELEN: China, yeah.

BARBARA: That was wonderful.

HELEN: Uh huh.

BARBARA: Do you have plans to do some traveling now?

HELEN: Oh, I suppose. I've done what, I did my burning desire to do, and that was to go to Asia, to China. And then I was in Southeast Asia a year ago last fall. And then last summer I went to Europe. And there is just one area that I really, that would be next on my list, and that's the, oh the Middle East, the Holy Land, and areas down there, maybe Greece, not Greece, Greece, yeah Greece. I would like to see that.

BARBARA: But in other words, you're pretty content with being here and being a grandmother and enjoying those, and doing your writing.

HELEN: Uh huh. Yeah, if I can ever get back to it.

BARBARA: So what fills your days now?

HELEN: Well yesterday, no I was in town yesterday, Saturday, all day, I'm cleaning out. All day I was sorting one drawer of a file cabinet that Dick had, and I'm not through yet. But I found some old papers of Best's. And I found, that's where I found that he had filed on Chickahominy Creek water rights and so on. But that all needs to be done.

BARBARA: Well there are so many things about the history of the ranch and things, I'm sure that you have probably been able to dig up over the years now. And probably pretty interesting to have for the history here too. And I know that Dick was doing a lot of research on Bill Brown, and had intended to write a book at one time, is that right? Or was it just for his own information?

HELEN: Well I think he intended to write a story.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

HELEN: Not as ambitious as a book.

BARBARA: A short story.

DOROTHEA: Well you have donated these tapes that Dick did these interviews on to the Library, and we have, to the history project, and we have transcribed most of them, or all of them, and found them very interesting. And have gone on to try to find out more about Bill Brown. But he has found out more than we ever have been able to. Our history on Bill Brown is very limited. We don't seem to find many people that can tell us too much about him.

What are some of the changes that you have seen take place in the county? You mentioned electricity and telephone since you came to the county. Can you tell us how much has really changed?

HELEN: When we came there was one paved road into the county --- into Burns, that was Highway 20. To go to Ontario you had to go over a dirt road, a gravel road. To go to John Day the road was gravel, to go to Lakeview, down to Frenchglen, so the roads for one thing have been upgraded a great deal. And of course TV, there was no TV. The radio station, that has been since we were here. I was teaching in the high school, and for the first year I was teaching World Culture, and got up a little program for United Nations Day, which we broadcast on the radio, which was only a year or two old at that time. Maybe a little longer, I don't remember when it came.

But all those very important things that helped to tie the community together. And of course the, well the buildings, the high school was up here, and it's now --- not new anymore, but yeah it burned down and had to be rebuilt. So, and the Lincoln School then, that was a new concept. I was on the board when that took place, the high school board. And we sold it, we had to get rid of it, wanted to, had to, you know, you can't have a building like that sitting around. And Mr. Baldwin insisted, we were going to force Mr. Slater's hand, he didn't want it. And so we made it public that we were offering that building to the Burns Grade School, District, it was a District 1, I think, Burns 1 for a dollar,

and he took it.

BARBARA: I think Gene Timms told us a little bit about that.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: He must have been working on the board or something, or with the political system at that time too, to help get that through.

HELEN: Yeah. And of course there is unification now, education.

DOROTHEA: And it's all known as District 3.

HELEN: Uh huh, District 3. When we came the hospital was new. Up to that time it had been the stone building up there.

DOROTHEA: Valley View.

HELEN: Uh huh. And what other things, oh the Armory and it has come since we have been here.

BARBARA: And the library.

HELEN: Definitely the library. You know where it used to be, yeah?

BARBARA: Uh huh. So you have seen a great many changes in the community.

HELEN: The museum and the clubrooms, uh huh, yes.

BARBARA: What do you see for the future for our community?

HELEN: Oh please. (Laughter) If I were an oracle I would know. Oh my goodness, I see nothing but good. But I don't know.

BARBARA: That's always nice to hear.

HELEN: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: You came; also you mentioned during the Job Corp session that we had here. The Air Force had an air base up here. We have now lost all of that, and they have all moved away. Our mills have closed, most of them.

HELEN: Yeah.



DOROTHEA: So we are back down to a small community.

HELEN: We did at one time have a regular airline in here too, United.

BARBARA: We used to have bus service too.

HELEN: And we used to have bus service. That just is what disturbs me, distresses me the most.

BARBARA: There is no way for some people to get out of town unless someone helps them.

HELEN: That's right, that's right.

BARBARA: And it's very sad for some of the older people that they can't go anymore.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Well we're coming to the end of our tape again, so I think probably we had better close off; it's getting four-thirty, and thank you for the afternoon, and the time we've shared with you.

HELEN: Well you're very welcome. Thank you.

DOROTHEA: Is there any other stories that you would like to share with us, because we've always got the other side of the tape.

BARBARA: Is there something that you had planned on telling us, that we didn't ask the right questions?

HELEN: Well something that's always intrigued me and probably won't intrigue anybody else, but you know this is the Great Basin. This is the northern part of the Great Basin. Well we, and that means that all the water that flows in the creeks, flows into the Great Basin. There is no way it can get it. And it just seeps into the ground, it gets someplace where it just seeps into the ground or builds a big lake as it did a few years ago. Well on Juniper Hills Ranch, that water goes west into the Crooked River, and from the Crooked River to the Deschutes, and the Deschutes into the Columbia, it goes into the ocean.

There is one little range of mountains, or hills, between our two ranches that divides the two ranches from --- into one side the Great Basin, Silver Creek and Chickahominy, and the other side Bulger Creek which is on our property, and Swamp Creek into the waters that flow out to the Pacific. And so this little range is a Great Divide.

BARBARA: Isn't that interesting.

HELEN: I find it interesting.

BARBARA: Oh yes.

HELEN: I can remember when my --- I was seven, and my brother was three, and we were on our way to Michigan, and the train stops in Montana or Wyoming, Wyoming I guess. Everybody got out of the train, and we were going to see the Great Divide. And I didn't know what it was. I didn't know the whole concept of the thing. But that was where the water, and you saw the water went to the east in the Rockies, and the water went to the west in the Great Divide. And I guess that made a real mark on me, because I just --- when I got this figured out I was just thrilled to death on our property ---

BARBARA: That you're part of something big too.

HELEN: Yeah.

BARBARA: Right.

HELEN: That this happens. I've always liked geology anyhow.

DOROTHEA: So you've lived in the Great Basin of the Great Divide.

HELEN: Yeah.

TAPE 2 - SIDE D

BARBARA: I was asking you if you knew how Riley got its name, and you mentioned that it was a man named Riley.

HELEN: Yes. And it was not down there on the highway. Of course there was no

highway then. It was --- oh around that intersection, you know, where you turn off the highway on the Silver Creek road and go north, and then you go two miles and there is an intersection, one going to Green Valley Ranch and one on up over the hill to, oh I can't remember, but Macomers live up there. And the other one, the Silver Creek road keeps going. And one of these corners was the Riley Store, the original Riley Store. Then when the highway came in, it was moved down there on the highway.

BARBARA: I meant to ask you when you were telling back about teaching at the Suntex School, where exactly was that school located in relation to your ranch?

HELEN: It is southeast, and it is 4.6 miles from where we lived. I had to know that when the boys went to school so we would get reimbursed.

BARBARA: Mileage back and forth.

HELEN: Mileage, yeah.

BARBARA: Is that school still operating at this time?

HELEN: Oh yes, very definitely.

BARBARA: And how many students are there in that, do you have any idea?

HELEN: Six or seven.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

HELEN: Oh, this starts a whole new area, and let's not get started on it.

BARBARA: We may have to do a whole new thing.

HELEN: It's interesting. Suntex School is very interesting.

BARBARA: We might do something on just Suntex School sometime.

HELEN: Or on schools, yeah.

BARBARA: That would be very good.

HELEN: Yeah, uh huh, I think schools are interesting, right.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: Of course there is probably a lot written on schools already. I think that, what is it that, that book, it's a white book, it is Lee and Jackman, or Jackson or something, wrote and did churches and schools and they were --- with references to how accurate --- or what did they call it? The integrity of the buildings, it was about buildings, the integrity of the building to the history of, it's history. In other words how close does the building resemble when it was constructed. Or how has it been altered. They were interested in that.

BARBARA: It might be interesting to visit with you a little bit, perhaps at a later time, about how it is, teaching in a one room schoolhouse.

HELEN: School.

BARBARA: I don't know that we have ever talked with a teacher who has done that. And if you have some time, sometime, maybe we could just talk a little bit on schools, and what it's like, and what the future of one room schools are in Oregon.

HELEN: Uh huh, uh huh.

BARBARA: If you might be willing to do that with us sometime.

HELEN: Yes. But bear in mind, each teacher has probably a different opinion or different experience.

BARBARA: But that is what it all works into, you have to get all kinds of opinions.

HELEN: Yeah.

BARBARA: Well this has been very informative, and I truly enjoyed this afternoon, learning a little history about the ranches.

HELEN: Thank you.

BARBARA: And your part in teaching and everything.

HELEN: That, what intrigues me also about --- that's not going is it?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: Oh is it? About the Juniper Hills place, Swamp Creek was, is, that it is a microcosm of a pioneer's life. Because in this there was the house. Then there was a cave, we called it. It was a cellar that had been built into the hillside behind the house. And then there was the icehouse with its very thick walls that are packed full of sawdust. And then there was the woodshed. And then the outhouses, and then the smoke house. And then the blacksmith's shop. And all of this within a very narrow area. You could see just how the pioneers lived. And there were the forms they used to make shoes. I can't imagine anyone having a foot that long, any woman.

BARBARA: They truly had four and five, size four and five shoes at that time.

HELEN: They did.

DOROTHEA: And real narrow.

HELEN: Very narrow.

HELEN: Very narrow, uh huh.

HELEN: My goodness.

BARBARA: But the ranchers then had to provide everything that they needed.

HELEN: Everything.

BARBARA: So they had to learn how to do everything in order to survive.

HELEN: Uh huh.

BARBARA: There was no store to go to get these things, or buy these things.

HELEN: No, once a year or something.

BARBARA: You had to do them yourself.

HELEN: Uh huh, yeah. And so it just --- there is a complete unit there of how you lived, and it's still all there. More dilapidated, because nobody has lived there since we left. So you know how things fall down.

DOROTHEA: And deteriorate, and it seems like the younger generation --- they are

getting back more to saving this kind of thing, but more my age generation didn't care about it, because they worked with it. Like my husband was saying last night, he says, "I've gone through quite a time in my life, I went from horses, to tractors, to automobiles, to trains, to airplanes, and here I am again back to horses." You know it's ---

HELEN: Oh yeah, yes indeed.

DOROTHEA: So, you know, there is quite a, we really have gone through quite a change in our generation.

HELEN: Yes, yes. And that's true as far as when we came here we got teams.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: In 1950 you hayed with a team. And we never put up with a --- put hay up, you know, with a loose ---

DOROTHEA: Stackers or bailers?

HELEN: Well we didn't bale, you didn't do that then. We did have a Farmhand with a loader on it.

DOROTHEA: Loader, yeah.

HELEN: We loaded. We put the stacks up that way. Well what's the other way, with the slide?

DOROTHEA: It's a slide and a hook --- what do they call it?

HELEN: Sling or something. But throws the hay over, or something.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, yeah.

HELEN: Anyhow, but no, but yes they were doing that still. And now these great big bales, the round, big huge round bales and so on, it's ---

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

BARBARA: I meant to ask you too, with Clifford and Cran, did either of them ever have any interest in ranching for their father, with their father?

HELEN: Well Clifford liked to think so, but I didn't think so. Because he was far more interested in motorcycles. He was more interested in the machinery. He loved to do the haying. And when we went to China, he was what eighteen, nineteen, and we left him in charge of the haying. He did a beautiful job. So he, people thought he would come to the ranch, but he wanted motors.

BARBARA: Of course sometimes when they get out to go to college, they're not so apt to come back again.

HELEN: Uh huh, uh huh, yeah. Dick liked to say he took him down to Lane Community College and got him enrolled. Because that's where he wanted to go, Kathy was down there, instead of going to one that's more in agriculture, like Treasure Valley. But --- so got him enrolled in the agricultural part. And Dick says, "I no sooner, I barely got home when I got a call from him and he had changed to the auto body painting." (Laughter)

BARBARA: The truth came out.

DOROTHEA: The mechanic part of him came in.

HELEN: Yeah.

BARBARA: And Cran never had any interest at all?

HELEN: No, Cran loves animals. He just loved his sheep; he had a little band of sheep.

BARBARA: 4-H projects?

HELEN: Yes. And he was good with animals. But Cran loved his music, and he just --- he's an engineer or scientist of some sort. He had to go to do that.

BARBARA: Well it's important to do what they really want to do, or they're going to have a miserable life if you are forced to come back ---

HELEN: That's right.

BARBARA: --- and do something that their heart really isn't in.

HELEN: That's right, uh huh.

BARBARA: You have to let them spread their own wings.

HELEN: That's right, you do. And they have, and I'm happy for them.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

HELEN: And your son ---

BARBARA: They're both doing quite well.

HELEN: Sons. I'm thinking of Jeff.

BARBARA: Right.

HELEN: I know, he was written up in the paper recently. (F-16 Fighter Pilot)

BARBARA: Oh yes, uh huh. He is doing really well.

HELEN: That's great. And where is the other boy?

BARBARA: (Eric) He's over in Gresham, by Portland.

HELEN: What does he do?

BARBARA: He is an EMT/Fireman.

HELEN: Oh is he?

BARBARA: So both boys have high-risk professions.

HELEN: Yes they do, yeah.

(Addition to the interview)

DOROTHEA: Is there anything else, Helen, that you would like to talk to us about?

HELEN: Well I'm sitting here thinking that I could be more explicit about where the original Riley Store was. I have been told, just what corner it was on, and that would make it not only two miles north of the present Riley Store, but also one mile west of the present Riley Store.

And oh, you were asking me about volunteer work and so forth. Well when I taught, I didn't really get too much into volunteering. I was on the high school board at that time, and that took up a lot of time. And then, but I did do considerable work with the



Oregon Education Association when I taught in Hines School. And worked on negotiations, for salary negotiations and teaching conditions and so forth, several years. And then I did write the contract with one or two other teachers, we went to a workshop, an OEA Workshop, and that gave us guidelines for the kind of contract to establish that would give us some protection in the system, in the school system. And what conditions we brought up were the size of class load, and the opportunity for personal leave. And the need for emergency leave if the occasion arose, and that kind of thing all had to be negotiated. So I was one of the group that did that. It was a big job.

And then too, our kids were little, and they were in school, and so they had a lot of activities that parents go to, and keep you hopping. And while the boys and I lived in town from 1972 on, we had a trailer, a mobile home at a trailer park just south of Hines Lumber Mill, now Snow Mountain.

DOROTHEA: Do you still have that, or have you sold that?

HELEN: No. That was sold the day school was out when I retired. A man came along and was looking for a trailer, and this one --- I'd had Jack Gerould come in for several days and just, oh take care of little odds and ends that needed to be spruced up a bit, a nail here, and a screw there, and that kind of thing. And it happened that the very day that was the last day at school, the ladies that I had come to clean came in, that was Donna Root and Glenna Lawson, and oh the place looked so special. And I had brought, I had been given by a child a pretty flowering plant, so it was sitting on the coffee table, and he walked in and he looked around, and he thought it was wonderful, and he bought it right then.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. Just right then, huh? So you just packed your suitcase and went home.

HELEN: Well a lot more than that. We had a moving sale.

DOROTHEA: Oh.

HELEN: To get rid of furniture and --- Oh, you know, I had duplications.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: Well another vacuum cleaner, an ironing board, and an iron and all that sort of thing.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Now when you live in two homes you do this, we did this when we lived in Silvies and in Burns.

HELEN: Yes, yes, you know what it is.

DOROTHEA: I know, yeah.

HELEN: Uh huh, yeah. And then there was one other thing that I remembered. When I was speaking about the water that flows to the east and then the water that flows to the west, and as a child I walked up with other passengers on this train. I believe it was a Union Pacific train, and it had to have been in Wyoming. And to see what was, I said Great Divide, but it was called the Continental Divide. And there, it's not just one, you know, that particular site was easy to get to and see up in the mountains. And for some reason I was impressed. Probably because my mother was so impressed.

DOROTHEA: I told my husband about this, and talked to him about it, and he was telling me that that's what they did in the Silvies Valley area at the Black Rock. That's how the water divides.

HELEN: At Black Rock.

DOROTHEA: Goes in, up in Black Rock on that mountain by Calamity.

HELEN: Oh Butte, Calamity Butte they call it.

DOROTHEA: Calamity Butte, only it's further this way.

HELEN: Oh.

DOROTHEA: And he says that the water divides and goes in different directions there, as

it does as you come on down to Cow Creek, and Rattlesnake, and then it goes out to Drewsey.

HELEN: Uh huh, yes, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: So there is probably several of those.

HELEN: Yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Divides, more or less.

HELEN: Well there has to be, because it's just not in one place. But that particular water is in one place.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: But then there are other water areas.

DOROTHEA: But that's amazing to me that water flows, and can end up in the ocean. That's amazing to me how it divides and goes nowhere, or to the ocean.

HELEN: Yeah, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Is there anything else that we can think of, or that you wanted to add to this. I was asked later about, and we're going to include this on this, but if you could tell us anything about Bill Brown. Did you know anything about him? You talked about him going to the Judge Shields house, and admitting to the murder that he did. Could you tell us something about that on the tape?

HELEN: No, I'm sorry, I can't. Because I heard about it, and I heard what it was. I don't know whether he had threatened Bill Brown, whether there was an altercation over some sheep. I really don't know, and I should know. And Dick did all this research, but I was working, and I had a family, and I had to take care of two places.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: And I just didn't --- I went with him a couple times when he interviewed people, and listened to them talk on the tape. He'd take his tape recorder and so on. And they'd

interrupt each other, and I don't know how anybody ever was able to transcribe those tapes. But you know, you get some old people together, old pioneers, and they are just full of information. But I can't help you. I can do the research on it, I could find out. But he came and turned himself in, but that was one of the stories we first heard when we came here.

DOROTHEA: And that was probably what got Dick's interest in Bill Brown, more or less.

HELEN: Well that, and he said, he said, "You know, these old pioneers, the fellows that had the big outfits around here and started things, and had a vision, you'll always hear something bad about them too."

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: But he says, "I've never heard anything bad about Bill Brown. I've only heard good things about Bill Brown."

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: That's what inspired him.

DOROTHEA: Was inspiring, yeah. So --- Well if that was all that you wanted to say, then we'll close for now, unless you have something else that you'd like to say.

HELEN: No, I just was curious about the road, and I'll find that out.

DOROTHEA: The roads to Ontario and Bend?

HELEN: Yes, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Well I sure can't remember.

HELEN: From Burns to Ontario.

DOROTHEA: We'll find out and maybe make an amendment or something again, and add it too.

HELEN: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: So, well thank you Helen for the afternoon, and we have enjoyed your time

and your visit.

HELEN: Thank you.

(END OF TAPE)

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