

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #358 - Sides A/B/C/D

Subject: Connie Corbet

Place: Burns, Oregon

Date: February 26, 1989

Interviewer: Paquita Garatea

(Note: Some portions of the following are summaries of the conversation held.)

PAQUITA GARATEA: Today is February 26, 1989; the interview is being conducted in Burns, Oregon, with Connie Corbet. Interviewee is Paquita Garatea. Okay, Connie, can you please give your name, date of birth, and where you were born.

CONNIE CORBET: Okay, my name on my birth certificate is Consuelo Clarice Osa, but I go by Connie. I was born on November 14th, 1927, in Burns, Oregon.

PAQUITA: And were you born in a hospital, or at home?

CONNIE: I was born at home.

PAQUITA: And do you know if there was a doctor there, or a midwife?

CONNIE: There was a doctor and a lady that assisted him that was a midwife, and she sometimes worked with him.

PAQUITA: Was she Basque?

CONNIE: No.

PAQUITA: No.

CONNIE: And the doctor was Dr. Homan.

PAQUITA: Homan, Dr. Homan.

CONNIE: Yes. Homan, H O M A N.

PAQUITA: And can you remember the name, or can you give me the names of your parents?

CONNIE: Yes. On my mother's side, or my mother's name is Margarita, her maiden name was Sesma, Osa. I mean Margarita Sesma I guess is what you are saying.

PAQUITA: Aramayo, okay.

CONNIE: Yeah, Margarita Sesma Aramayo. And my father's name was Marcelino Osa.

PAQUITA: And do you know what his other name was.

CONNIE: No, I don't think he had another one. On my dad's side of the family his mother's name was Juanita Urquiza.

PAQUITA: Urquiza.

CONNIE: Uh huh. And his father's name was Francisco Osa. And on my mother's side of the family, her mother's name was Vincente Dorotea Sesma. And her dad's name was Domingo Nemesio Aramayo.

PAQUITA: So did you, when you grew up did they tell you that, did you know those names?

CONNIE: No, I did not.

PAQUITA: Did she, did you know anything about your grandmother, did she talk about ---

CONNIE: No, just the little, very little that my mother talked about my grandmother, and when she did she always said she was ornery, so I don't know anything.

PAQUITA: And what about your father, did he talk about his parents at all?

CONNIE: No, he didn't speak of his parents either. They arrived in this country, and they were so busy just trying to raise a family, and I think fit into the community. And once they left Spain that seemed to be it. Coming to a new country they had everything they could do to just make it here I believe. They just didn't go on about their families.

PAQUITA: Could you give me the names of the siblings in birth order? Your siblings in

birth order.

CONNIE: Yes, I had an older sister, Paquita, who died I believe when she was around nine years old. It was before I was born, my mother was expecting me at the time Paquita died, so she was the oldest.

PAQUITA: So she probably died in 1927?

CONNIE: Yeah, I was born in 1927, so yes, and my mother was carrying me, so it was either 1926 or '27. I had a brother Marcelino, and a sister Margarita. I mean I came next; there was Marcelino and then myself, Connie, and then Margarita, and then Frankie. He was named Francisco R., Frank.

PAQUITA: Okay, can you kind of describe the family life, the house, you remember the first ---

CONNIE: Okay. Well evidently even at the time that I was born, and I don't of course remember it, but I think my folks had a boarding house then, but it was just a small house and I think they probably rented just a room or served meals. And then they built a place, a boarding house, and it was located behind the mortuary.

PAQUITA: What was the mortuary called then, who had the mortuary then?

CONNIE: The mortuary at that time was owned by Mr. Clevenger. Our boarding house was located behind the mortuary. I don't even know the street, at that time we didn't have street signs, so I don't know what the street was. But my parents, my dad had the place built. And it had six rooms upstairs.

PAQUITA: Upstairs, uh huh.

CONNIE: And some of those were very, very large rooms. Three of the rooms had two full double beds, and were very large rooms. A bathroom upstairs, and one downstairs. Downstairs we had five bedrooms, and we had a large kitchen, and what you would call a living room. We didn't really use it as a living room that much. Mom gave banquets and

things in that room. And then we had another little room that we used to call the dark room because it had no windows in it, and it was the room that led off to the bedrooms. I mean so you went out of the kitchen into this large, it was a good-sized room, and then the bedrooms kind of went off that. It was in the middle of the house and the only lights you had was overhead lights.

PAQUITA: The overhead.

CONNIE: So we always called that the dark room. And that really was more of our living room, because the other room that was called the living room was actually used for banquets and had big tables and things in it.

PAQUITA: Did you have other rooms?

CONNIE: There was another two rooms on another wing of the house. My parents purchased the lot with an older home on it, which included these two rooms and kitchen. They built on the large addition, which included the other rooms to accommodate the boarders.

(... Someone comes to door.)

PAQUITA: So you're describing the house.

CONNIE: This had another upstairs, which was part of this older part of the house, and up there, there was two rooms. One of those rooms Marce used, and then another room, we used it for all our linens. It was a storage room, it could have been a bedroom but we had closets in there and we kept all the linens and stuff in there.

PAQUITA: Is that the one that went up from the pantry?

CONNIE: Yes, straight up, above the basement.

PAQUITA: Yeah.

CONNIE: Yeah, off the porch, and then, you know, there was that basement.

PAQUITA: Uh huh.

CONNIE: It had the basement, the cellar, kind of what we called it. But this was above that.

PAQUITA: And who built it?

CONNIE: Well I'm not sure. I'm sorry; I don't know who built that house. And I don't think Claude Brown built it, but I don't know who built the ... hotel.

PAQUITA: Who Aititxa (grandfather) contracted to? Because at one point I thought it was Mary Salsbery's father.

CONNIE: Okay, Claude Brown then, maybe it was Claude. That's Mary Salsbery's grandfather.

PAQUITA: Grandfather.

CONNIE: Uh huh, Claude Brown.

PAQUITA: And, because I can't figure out, I'm trying to figure out who came up with the idea to do it stucco and kind of that Spanish style.

CONNIE: I would guess that it was probably the folks'. I would very much think that ---

PAQUITA: Think it was, they asked him to do it that way.

CONNIE: Yeah. But I'm, you know, I'm not sure Claude built it, but it could be possible.

PAQUITA: Did you share a bedroom; did you have to share a bedroom?

CONNIE: Oh, positively yes, we shared a bedroom.

PAQUITA: Marce had one by himself?

CONNIE: Yes, Marce had one by himself.

PAQUITA: But you and ---

CONNIE: And Margaret and I shared a bedroom.

PAQUITA: And did you have to, was it always the same room?

CONNIE: Yes, it was always the same room.

PAQUITA: You always kept the same room. Which one was that?

CONNIE: Okay, it was the one right after you go into the kitchen. Of course the house is different now, because they did some remodeling. But you went off that kitchen and went into the dark room, okay, the room to the right, the first bedroom was my mother and dad's. The one next to it was the one that was ours.

PAQUITA: Was yours?

CONNIE: Yeah, Margaret and mine.

PAQUITA: Did the boarders share the rooms too? Because you said there was those two big rooms.

CONNIE: Yes, some of the boarders shared the large rooms upstairs. Three of them upstairs were extremely large with the two double beds in them. And yes, they shared rooms, and then some of them had their own room too. It just depended on how busy it was. The ones who came first got the singles if that's what they wanted. Sometimes it didn't make much difference to them. They took whatever was available for them.

PAQUITA: And there was of course running water and plumbing and electricity.

CONNIE: We had running water, plumbing, and electricity. We didn't have a refrigerator; I know when we were younger. And I can remember when Mom bought our first refrigerator; my dad was really upset over it, really upset, electric refrigerator.

PAQUITA: How did she keep things stored, things that ---

CONNIE: Well, we had iceboxes.

PAQUITA: Oh, I see, right.

CONNIE: And the ice was delivered for iceboxes. Mom decided that she was going to get a refrigerator and bought one without my dad's approval. After she started using it, he was so proud of it. But at that time they were counting pennies. It was tough getting by, and I think he just felt that it was not necessary.

PAQUITA: Real frivolous.

CONNIE: Yeah, right. But, and he was more than pleased after he could see how useful it was.

PAQUITA: Was there a washing machine?

CONNIE: I think probably when I was younger, I can't remember, but I'm sure that Mom did the washing because I can remember the scrub board. I can remember a scrub board and washtubs and that. But later she did have a washing machine and it had the old wringer on it that you run the clothes through. And as far as ironing, we had irons but no mangles or anything. So we had to iron everything by hand. The Ramirez family had a mangle, but we didn't. We ironed everything.

PAQUITA: And you ironed the sheets?

CONNIE: At that time, I know we ironed pillowcases. Yeah, I think we ironed sheets then too. I can remember doing a lot of ironing.

PAQUITA: Where would she hang them to dry?

CONNIE: Okay, I can remember ---

PAQUITA: I mean in the winter.

CONNIE: --- winter, she still tried to hang them outside. They'd just be stiff, and I can remember bringing them in, and sometimes she'd have places in the kitchen where she'd hang them. We had that little porch and she'd try to hang some of it in there. And sometimes they would dry in that porch. Because that porch wasn't closed in, it was just a screen, big-screened porch. But just hang them in the house. And then in that little cellar thing, as I recall, she kind of had things kind of rigged up in there so she could dry the washing. It was difficult.

PAQUITA: And do you remember, like how many, did she change the bedding like once a week?

CONNIE: Once a week the bedding was changed.

PAQUITA: Did she have a certain day?

CONNIE: Unless, yeah, we usually did that on Saturdays because we were there working on Saturdays. Mom at first when we were younger, would have a Basque girl that would be living with us. Mom would be raising her and they would help with the work. Their parents would farm their kids out. When Margaret and I were little these girls helped her. Mom worked hard, she was doing all the cooking, had the rooms to take care of besides raise a family. Everything was so hard; we didn't have the conveniences we have now. She cooked on a wood range.

PAQUITA: The stove was not electric?

CONNIE: No, no electric stove, wood stove. Hot water was just a tank that was attached to the wood stove. This would heat the water so you didn't have much. Most of the time when you were taking baths you ran out of hot water and you ended up with cold water. No shower, it was a tub.

PAQUITA: Was there one tub; was there a tub in the upstairs bathroom?

CONNIE: Yes, there was tubs, there was a bathroom upstairs and a bathroom downstairs. Yeah, the bathroom upstairs, there was the sink that was kind of out in the open, and the toilet was closed in, and then back behind there was another room that had the bathtub in it. I can remember when we were older that she got a propane water heater. But that was when we were about high school age, or maybe eighth grade or something, she ended up getting a propane hot water heater for hot water. And boy we really thought we were lucky.

PAQUITA: Do you ever remember her getting an electric stove?

CONNIE: We never did have an electric stove.

PAQUITA: Never did.

CONNIE: That I remember.



PAQUITA: How about a phonograph or a radio?

CONNIE: We had one little radio I can remember, but you couldn't hear anything on it. I remember trying to sit in front of it, and we didn't get much, we didn't listen to the radio often. We were always so busy working, and the reception was really poor. And we didn't have that until I was about 12 or 13, something like that.

PAQUITA: And then what about a phonograph?

CONNIE: Phonograph, we had a phonograph. Because that was the one thing that Mom loved. She would get records when she could. She had Spanish music and Basque music. We didn't have any of the American songs, but we did have Basque.

PAQUITA: And is that how you learned how to do the dances and ---

CONNIE: Yes, Mom taught us, and she had these records and this is where we learned to do the dancing.

PAQUITA: And did the boarders participate, did they dance?

CONNIE: Oh, I'm trying to think.

PAQUITA: Did it depend on a holiday maybe?

CONNIE: Yeah, they would dance maybe when we would have those big parties. The boarders were usually, when they come to town, would be eating, and they'd play cards, and they'd sing. And I can remember the singing thing, but not really dancing, except maybe when we had one of those banquets or something.

PAQUITA: Did you eat with the boarders; did the family eat with the boarders?

CONNIE: Oh yeah, we got to eat with the boarders if there was enough room at the table.

PAQUITA: Did you eat in the kitchen?

CONNIE: Yes, we ate in the kitchen. And it was a large kitchen, although sometimes if there was a crowd we would be in the dining room too. So, I mean we would be in that other room; I'd call it the dining room. The one that served as a kind of living room, dining

room. The boarders and all would sit down first. The boys would all sit down first. If there was any other places at the table left for Margaret and I, then we could sit down with the rest of them.

PAQUITA: What about Marce?

CONNIE: Marce was able to sit down. All the boys, the boys were part of the elite, whatever. The boys would sit down at the table if they were there, you know, and then the boarders. And then Margaret and I, if there was any space left, we could sit down and eat with them. If not we had to wait until they were all done and then we'd sit down. The girls had to wait.

PAQUITA: And what about Amuma (Grandma)?

CONNIE: And Mom, I don't ever remember her sitting down at the table eating with us.

PAQUITA: Ever?

CONNIE: Never.

PAQUITA: So when did she eat?

CONNIE: If she sat down and ate afterwards, I never knew when she ate.

PAQUITA: Do you remember, did they have typical American breakfast like eggs and bacon, did she do that, or was it more like in Spain where they just eat fruit and ---

CONNIE: No not the typical American breakfast, you know. We would have, oh maybe she'd fix a chorizo, depending I mean who was there and what. But I'm trying to figure out what she had for breakfast. But there would be fruit; there would be cereal, coffee or hot chocolate. But I don't remember the ham and eggs type of route, they didn't eat like that.

PAQUITA: No. And then would lunch be at twelve like here, usually, or was it later?

CONNIE: When the shepherders would come in, they'd be gone during lunch. And then Mom would always have homemade soup every day of the week. I mean there was always soup and French bread, leftovers, this type of thing. But the real big dinner was in

the evening.

PAQUITA: In the evening.

CONNIE: And there was always soup with that dinner too.

PAQUITA: Could you describe a dinner, one of those dinners? Would she start out with, like courses, she'd start out with soup.

CONNIE: Yeah, start out with soup. And then there would be, she might have fixed some type of meat with a tomato sauce base, potatoes, salad. I remember the big treat with Margaret and I is, once in awhile she'd have pork chops, she'd fry pork chops. (phone rings)

Also she'd have garbanzos, or some kind of beans. Salad probably was a lettuce salad, you know, with that vinegar and oil. And always, let's see, I'm trying to --- I remember that there was a lot of, oh French bread definitely, a lot of bread and wine with the meal.

PAQUITA: And did she ever, she didn't make the bread, right, she had it delivered.

CONNIE: No, we always got it from the bakery.

PAQUITA: Or you went to get it.

CONNIE: Yeah, we made a hundred trips to the store for them. That was one of the things; Mom was always sending to the store, we didn't own a car. The grocery stores used to deliver then, so a lot of the groceries we kept calling in and had them delivered to the door. But Mom still had us make a lot of trips.

PAQUITA: How many loaves do you think you went through a day?

CONNIE: It probably depended on the number of boarders.

PAQUITA: Depended on the ---

CONNIE: Yeah, the numbers that were there at the time. I think just our family alone could eat three or four. I mean, you know, I just think, just with our immediate family we

could eat that many.

PAQUITA: And did you drink the wine, did you and the kids, with the meal?

CONNIE: Well Mom, she tried to get us to drink the wine, because she really believed it was good for us. She always used to say it's good for the blood. It would be a small glass of burgundy. It was the custom; just like of my friends had to drink milk because it was good for them. Margaret and I never wanted to drink it; we didn't care for the taste.

PAQUITA: So with your meal would you like drink water then?

CONNIE: Yeah, we'd have water with our meal. We didn't drink milk with any of our meals.

PAQUITA: Did she let you guys cook, did she teach you her techniques or anything?

CONNIE: No, absolutely not. We were the ones that did the cleaning of the rooms, and the bathrooms, and that type of thing. We did the dishes and we set the table, and we did all, a lot of the household chores. But I never cooked a meal --- well the only time I can ever remember cooking a meal is when I was in high school, and when they were both gone one time, and I cooked. My dad was an excellent cook, and if my mother was sick my dad did the cooking. He was a very good cook, so we never had to.

PAQUITA: Well so are you and Mom, so how did you learn?

CONNIE: Really, I didn't, Dick taught me, my husband taught me how to cook. I would want to fix a sandwich for myself. But I never cooked.

PAQUITA: So you don't use the traditional Basque way of cooking, like frying the garlic in the oil?

CONNIE: Oh yeah, I use some of the traditional Basque dishes, particular on recipes that I like.

PAQUITA: Take meats ---

CONNIE: Oh now another thing, you know, fish was a real big part of our menu, but living

here we didn't have access to fresh fish. Whenever Mom could get fresh fish, I mean, we had fish.

PAQUITA: Didn't she order that, the bacalao in the big crate?

CONNIE: We used to get the cod fish in the large crates, and they would be salted and frozen stiff, not frozen like it is now, but salted.

PAQUITA: Dried.

CONNIE: And we had that, and I loved it, that was my favorite. We could get clams once in awhile, my parents taste really leaned towards fish. And we had a lot of chicken, chicken fixed different ways. We didn't eat that much beef. Maybe she'd use it for a base in something, but not really a lot of beef. The pork was probably the more basic meat as far as our menu. My folks would butcher the pork and make the chorizos. Mom would cook tongue, tripe and those type of dishes.

PAQUITA: When you made the chorizos, did you help?

CONNIE: Yes, we helped with the chorizos. And that was quite a process to go through. When they were putting the chorizos in the casings our job after the sausage was made, we'd pierce them, you know, use a knitting needle let some of that juice come out. And then we'd, Mom would hang them to dry. Mom would hang the chorizos over the line down in that basement which was probably a real fire hazard, we'd have a big tub of hot coals and put them down in there. And those hot coals were in a little room that was quite small and she had lines wrapped across, and those sausage would be hanging on that. The coals would be in there and smoking, smoking the chorizos. But I don't know why we didn't have a fire. And then sometimes in the kitchen, you know, she'd have them hanging over, you know, kind of behind the stove they'd be hanging. She'd have some wires up across, and those chorizos would hang and dry there.

PAQUITA: So would like one butchering in the fall would last, the chorizos would last

until the next one, a year usually?

CONNIE: We'd probably run out before then. They'd be gone before then. And she rendered her own lard. We rendered, cooked all the lard and everything and had that. And then she got to where she would start storing some of the chorizos in that rendered lard. But I mean, they used every part of the animal. I mean, I said --- the only part they didn't use was the tail. And Margaret and I, our big joke was to take one of the Basques, one of them that we wanted to kind of get even with and we'd take the tail when we made the bed we'd stick it between the sheets. They would go to bed and find the pigs tail. We thought that was a great joke.

PAQUITA: Did you get in trouble?

CONNIE: Huh? Oh no, they'd just tease us. One thing I remember growing up in a boarding house when we were young, and these Basque --- they were either bachelors or their families were still in Spain, and they really spoiled Margaret and me. They loved children and they played with us, and teased us, and really, you know, we were, we had a lot of attention, a lot of attention.

PAQUITA: Do you ever remember any bad experiences with any of them?

CONNIE: Well the only time that used to maybe bother me a little bit is, once in awhile, and you didn't find very many, but there was one particular fellow that used to get so god awful drunk. And I just, I didn't like the way he acted. But the most of them would, you know, would have a few drinks and they would be happy. I don't know, that one I just didn't care for. There wasn't any bad experiences with any of them. The one we didn't particularly like we just stayed out of his way, avoid him.

PAQUITA: What age did she expect you and Margaret to start working and doing household chores?

CONNIE: You know I can't remember how old we were, but I think we started very, very

young. I think once Mom's help left then we just gradually worked into it.

PAQUITA: Took over.

CONNIE: Because I really don't remember not having some chores or some work to do. And Margaret and I used to carry in the wood, besides doing all the housework.

PAQUITA: Well what did Marce have to do?

CONNIE: Well Marce, after, when he got into high school, I think he did it when he was younger, but then he went out and he had a job, and he had an outside ---

PAQUITA: Outside of the home.

CONNIE: So Margaret and I were doing that. And, you know, not only that the wood, we didn't have a furnace so we had three wood stoves in the house. We had the wood stove that we cooked on, and then this dark room that I'm talking about had a stove in there which heated the bedroom area downstairs, and then upstairs we had a great big wood stove that actually heated, you know, was in the hallway that heated, where the heat went to the bedrooms. So we had three stoves that we were trying to keep going.

PAQUITA: What was used for fire escape?

CONNIE: We used mahogany. Oh, for fire escape, the bedroom windows, right below the bedroom window there was great big ropes with, that were hooked into, well a big eyebolt that was in the wall. And then these big heavy ropes were tied to it.

But I never, Mom was just one of these, had the fetish for the neatness. Everything had to be in its place, and she'd have these ropes tied in such knots that if there had ever been a fire there would have been no way in the world that you could have gotten those things untied. And I mean they'd be huge, they'd be as big as a, oh I'm trying to, I don't know the size of them, they'd probably, what would that be --- 20 x 20, I mean this great big knot that would be all tied together.

PAQUITA: And each room had them?

CONNIE: Each had it by the window so you could go out the window with it. I don't know if they ever came and did fire inspections or anything, because those things stayed in knots like that all the time we were there. There was a fire alarm upstairs, just a glass one, you know, where the bell rang.

And because I remember when I used to go upstairs, the alarm had a little metal hammer, and it was in the hallway, and every time I would dust, because we were dusting everything, above the doors, above the windows, around the corners of the floor, I mean there wasn't anything you didn't dust.

And of course that thing I had to dust, and I'd dust that thing, and every time I'd just pick up that hammer and just kind of tap it like, oh I wish I could break this thing, you know. I mean it just had a fascination.

And I remember one day I was dusting it and I went and just tapped it, well it didn't break the glass but it set off this alarm and it just scared the daylights out of me. I was afraid I was going to get really blistered, but they got it stopped. But it did have the fire alarm.

PAQUITA: Did the floors have rugs, or was it all ---

CONNIE: It was all wood, and it was pinewood that was polished to a, they, we, those floors were waxed and shined; I mean they were waxed at least once a week and shined every day of the week. I mean we used to with our foot, you remember we would take the rag and use our foot on the floor. And that was the hallways, the, all the bedrooms, there wasn't any carpet in any of those floors. The only linoleum we had was in the kitchen and bathrooms, and the rest of it was all wood, except the stairways had the rubber treaded, you know. But no rugs in any of those rooms.

PAQUITA: And she waxed all of the floors. You guys waxed all of the floors once a week?



CONNIE: Yeah, yeah, I think, it might have been once every two weeks, but they were always shined. And when that shine was gone then we waxed her again.

PAQUITA: And did you have to, before you went to school, when you started school, did you have to do, like the beds before you went to school, make the beds?

CONNIE: Not always, sometimes we would, you know, naturally we'd do our beds, or the beds that we had time to do. But there was always work waiting for us when we came home at night. There was always, either ironing to be done, or stairs to clean; I mean she was absolutely immaculate. And like even the floor of the stairways, I mean I can remember coming home from school and I was thinking I'd have to do the stairways. And it was those rubber treads, and you know she didn't want any dirt in between the little liner, you know, the treads. And then I'd have to go and scrub those out and dig them out, and dust and shine, and there was always work. There was never a day that we came home that there wasn't work waiting for us to do.

PAQUITA: Did you, do you remember in comparison to say for instance the Commercial, which you probably spent time in, because the girls were your age. Was she a fanatic too, is this a Basque trait, I mean, that these women would keep ---

CONNIE: No, I think they were all very clean, but I believe Mom was fanatical in her cleaning. I think they kept their places very clean, but they weren't fanatic like that, and she definitely was.

PAQUITA: Did you ever go to The Star, was there a comparison, I mean could you see a comparison?

CONNIE: Yeah, I mean, you know, it was, I always felt more --- Yeah, they just --- I don't know what the, okay the situation ---

SIDE B

CONNIE: I don't know if she, I think they hired someone to do the cleaning. I can't remember the girls doing the cleaning. So that might have been --- and then with Mrs. Urizar she, you know, the boys were the oldest and the girl, by the time the girl came along there was, you know, quite a period of years later. But they just, they were not fanatical, their houses were nice, they kept them nice, but they were not the fanatics about the cleaning.

(... Phone rings)

I think that was enough on what we did, don't you think? There was a lot more, went to the grocery store every day.

PAQUITA: Okay, so was Basque spoken in the house?

CONNIE: All the time.

PAQUITA: All the time. So when did you start really speaking English?

CONNIE: Well I think we started speaking English just when we started school. And part of the reason for that was that when, of course I said there was only three Basque families in Burns at the time that we were there. And when we would go to school we would bring our friends home, Mom of course was always talking to us in Basque and our friends would sit there, you know, what is she saying, what is she saying? And Mom had not learned to speak English, she was speaking Basque. And we'd say, we'd tell her to speak, and Mom speak English, speak English. And so we'd answer, we refused to answer her in Basque and Spanish, and so consequently we, you know, I don't know, I just, I don't know what happened. Because when we were little evidently we were both speaking Spanish and Basque at home all the time. But we got her to speak English, and I just lost, I wasn't able to speak. Although I could understand everything, and she would still talk to us, I mean there would be Basques in the house all the time, and we could understand it. We just didn't speak, we refused to speak in anything but English, so we

were speaking English around the house. We did get her to speak English.

PAQUITA: But you dad at this time spoke English?

CONNIE: Yes, my dad spoke English. But when he was home, yeah, he spoke his English, he was able, you know, he spoke quite well. But she really didn't get to speaking, or even trying until, you know, she might say one word or two words.

And in fact she used to go over to Boise, if we would go over to Boise once, not very often we were able to make the trip, but if we did everybody, all the old Basque families were just, was amazed at the way my mother could speak English. Because they didn't, some of those women never learned to speak English. They spoke, you know, but there was a heavy concentration of Basque families there, so they could go to any store, and lots of stores and find someone working with them, you know, a descendent working in the store that spoke the language. So they were able to get around it, just, you know, here there wasn't that much ---

PAQUITA: So if you and Mom did, Margaret did all the shopping, then she really didn't even get out of the house within the community to learn?

CONNIE: No, no, she didn't. She didn't at all.

PAQUITA: She was ---

CONNIE: Just, you know, I mean she, that was the one thing living in a boarding house it was seven days a week, from the time you got up in the morning until, she worked from the time she got up in the morning until she went to bed at night. And didn't go anywhere, I mean there was, vacations were not anything that she had an opportunity to take. Or my dad, they were both, both of them, he was working full time, and at that time he owned, bought a Pastime Pool Hall and he worked every night. So, and he worked during the days too. He'd get up and go in the mornings, and he had another partner, but he'd do the cleaning. And he put in long, long hours, both of them put in long hours.

PAQUITA: Did the boarders ever help out? Did they ever take their dishes off the table, or ---

CONNIE: No, no, no, we did all that.

PAQUITA: Never?

CONNIE: Never, never, they just got up and walked away from the table. No ---

PAQUITA: Do you remember, have any idea what they charged?

CONNIE: Oh, that I can't remember. But it had to be, I don't know, I don't think it could possibly been more than a dollar or so a day, I really don't. That part I don't know, we weren't involved in ---

PAQUITA: Were you and your sister expected to, for instance when the men would be sitting around playing Mus the card game, and if they wanted a shot of whiskey or something, were you expected to serve them too?

CONNIE: Oh, I think we did. And I think, I don't --- yeah we were expected, if she was busy and couldn't do it, she'd usually do it, but if there was, you know, something that she was doing and she couldn't. We liked doing it, we thought it really made us, you know, feel grown up. Yeah. But I don't really remember actually, well I'm not even sure we served it, maybe we poured it or something. Because I don't remember that, doing that too often, but I'm sure there were times that we did. And, you know, I never even thought anything about it.

It was a really kind of an interesting thing because we grew up, you know, around liquor, and we didn't, we didn't drink. We grew up around smoking, we didn't smoke. And actually I can remember my dad when he was little, he used to tell us, you know, you want a puff of this cigarette; do you want to puff it? And we'd say, I took, I'd say, "Oh no." I tried it and didn't like it. And it was the same way --- and like he'd offer us, if he was drinking a beer or anything, he'd say, he'd always offer you a taste of his beer, whiskey,

"You want a taste, you want a drink?" And we'd say no, and it would just tickle him to death. So really we never had that fascination with drinking and smoking that a lot of the kids went through when I was in high school. And, you know, it wasn't anything that I felt that was any great, and we didn't, we didn't, you know, we didn't feel like it was anything special so we never did.

PAQUITA: So were most of your companions, your friends and Margaret's, non-Basque then when you were growing up, most of them were?

CONNIE: Uh huh, yes, very much so. We had the Ramirez family that, when we were younger I was very; we played together and were close. But as they were different ages, and as they got into school, they were in, they were into high school and, there was that separation. And so most, yeah, our close friends were non-Basque.

PAQUITA: When you started to school was it hard because of the language?

CONNIE: Very, very difficult. I had a very hard time. And Mom, like I said, she was so, with the work and everything, when we came home she --- I couldn't read a book. She felt that if you were sitting there reading a book, that you had time to waste. And she wanted you to work, and I mean, and so I can remember going to bed at night and getting a flashlight and trying to read books, school work in bed with the blankets up, and with the flashlight. But she just could not stand to see us read. I don't know what it was, but if we sat at the table to study she felt, no, you've got time to do that, you've got time to work, and she'd find something else for us to do. She had a different attitude about education.

PAQUITA: What about your father?

CONNIE: He was gone see, in the evenings. And he didn't, I know he felt that education was very, very important. But I think my mother saw it as something that was taking us away, taking some help away from her. I mean she just wasn't that, I guess she didn't feel it was that important, because she didn't really encourage us at all. I mean we went,

and if we said we didn't want to go to school the next day, fine, she would have plenty of work for us.

We got to the point where school, we liked it a lot better than we did staying at home, because we didn't have to work at home. I think she had this attitude more when we got into high school. Now I don't remember this as, other than the studying, I mean she just didn't, we weren't allowed to study in front of her. If we did any studying we had to go somewhere where she didn't see us.

PAQUITA: Well did she ever give you a day off? Did you ever have like, Saturdays I know you worked all day, and then ---

CONNIE: Yeah, we worked all day Saturdays. And we had Sundays, we had, we worked every day but it might not be all day like on Saturday. You know we were able to go to a movie at night. But there was always dishes, and always the meals that we had to do that all the time. But, you know, we, and then we were going to school during the day, there was always work when we got home at night.

But I can't say that we worked all day on Sunday, because we had friends that came over. But the thing is she put our friends to work. I mean if I brought a friend home, that friend might be helping me carry in wood, or they might be doing something. But she worked everyone. And if I brought a girlfriend home she'd send that girlfriend up to the grocery store to do, get something for her. And a lot of them, and they liked to come to the house, they really enjoyed coming. They liked being around, I think all the activity and ---

But yet it was kind of, but we had freedom too in a way, we really did. We had, we were able to go to a movie by ourself. We were able to, she let us go, I mean we didn't just sit there and work around the clock. But ---

PAQUITA: Did your friends ever eat there?

CONNIE: Yes, a lot.

PAQUITA: And did they like the food?

CONNIE: They liked the food; they ate there a lot. And we always had kids. I mean they came to our place and we might be cleaning or doing, and they were with us while we were doing this, if nothing else, watching it. Because we were going to, as soon as we got this work done we were supposed to be able to go and do what we want. And that was always --- when you get this done, and you do this, then you can go. And they'd be waiting for us.

PAQUITA: When --- did, for instance when you started menstruating, did she explain it to you?

CONNIE: Absolutely, no. I remember there was a lady that happened to come to the house, and I don't know why she stayed, she spent a couple days there. And I guess my mother was getting worried about the fact that I was going to start my periods, and she had that lady talk to me. And I can remember that, because my mother didn't know how to explain it to me.

PAQUITA: Was it, so was it a Basque lady?

CONNIE: No.

PAQUITA: Oh, it was an American?

CONNIE: She was American.

PAQUITA: Do you remember who it was?

CONNIE: And it really bothered me, I didn't like this woman. I thought I, I didn't like here, and I didn't like her telling me all this. I remember I resented her telling me all this. Although, you know, I'd heard a lot of this from school or from, you know, your friends. And I was much slower, you know, starting my periods so I knew about it. But I remember at the time I just, I just didn't feel comfortable with this woman.

PAQUITA: This stranger.

CONNIE: A stranger telling me.

PAQUITA: But Amuma didn't ---

CONNIE: She didn't tell me, huh uh.

PAQUITA: Now she tells, told on her, when I interviewed her, that any time if they were making chorizos and you or Margaret were on your period you couldn't help, because it would spoil the meat.

CONNIE: Well I thought it was when we were stirring; also she used to use that, when she was making a pudding or an Natilla.

PAQUITA: Natilla.

CONNIE: It wasn't chorizos, I thought it was Natilla. I don't remember the chorizos, maybe Margaret, but it was the Natilla, you didn't stir that. They had their superstitions.

PAQUITA: Well see because she got hit in that house that she was staying in when she was fourteen, and ... for stirring the pudding. And the chef, the cook found out she was on her period and she got knocked out, that's why she left that job right before she came here. But she still believes that.

CONNIE: Yeah, because it was the pudding I can remember. I don't remember the chorizos, but I remember the pudding.

PAQUITA: And Mom remembers the chorizos because she remembers hating to make them anyway, so she said she was glad.

CONNIE: (Laughter)

PAQUITA: If she was on her period she wouldn't have to touch it because it would spoil the meat.

CONNIE: Uh huh.

PAQUITA: And Amuma really believes that to this day.



CONNIE: Well I can remember that with the pudding.

PAQUITA: She said it on her interview, that it spoils it.

CONNIE: Yeah, uh huh. Did she mention chorizos or the pudding?

PAQUITA: She mentioned the pudding, because it happened to her.

CONNIE: Yeah, well see and I can remember with me and the pudding, I don't remember, and that probably might have been the case. But maybe I, by that time I had had the pudding and I probably wasn't surprised by the chorizos. So I didn't, I don't remember that, I do remember the pudding.

PAQUITA: So then did you in turn explain everything to Margaret?

CONNIE: Yes, uh huh. I told Margaret as soon as this woman had told me this I went and told Margaret. I was, I just, I didn't like it at all. I didn't --- but she couldn't explain it, and she was trying to at least, you know, prepare me.

PAQUITA: She was concerned about it.

CONNIE: Yeah, she was trying to prepare me. Of course this woman just gave me the basics, but I just didn't care, I didn't care for her. Of course, you know, we, I didn't want to accept growing up. I really didn't, I mean that wasn't anything that I was looking forward to. I thought it was ---

PAQUITA: So would you say that your mother was the disciplinarian?

CONNIE: Uh huh, right. I don't ever remember my father spanking me, I do remember my mother. And the one time, I can remember my father took a switch and hit the back of my legs, I had done something. But she did all the discipline.

PAQUITA: Did he ever try to interfere and maybe stick up for you or, you and Margaret?

CONNIE: He, like I said the worst of it is he was gone so much at night, so if we were in school and we'd come back, you know, we'd be home and he'd be gone. He'd be home for dinner, he was always there for dinner, but then he'd have to go back. I mean he was

always home for the meal. But he, you know, but the thing is he was pretty fair, he was fair. But he had certain things that he was strict about.

PAQUITA: Such as?

CONNIE: Oh, I think you know, even with Margaret and I, you know, we knew. I think --- well how a lady should act, how a lady, very strict at the table. Manner wise he was, you know, exceedingly just proper. If we were eating at the table he was very strict with the manners. And he wanted us to be ladies, and he wanted us to act like ladies.

PAQUITA: Did you have any, after you --- what was the last grade of school you went to? You went through high school?

CONNIE: Went through high school.

PAQUITA: And graduated?

CONNIE: Right.

PAQUITA: Did you have any other training?

CONNIE: No, no, that was it.

PAQUITA: And then what was your, can you remember your first job outside of the boarding house?

CONNIE: Yes, first started out cleaning the mortuary. And we were, when we got that job, yeah we cleaned the mortuary.

PAQUITA: You and Margaret?

CONNIE: Yeah. I can't remember if I started first and then Margaret afterwards, or we did it together. I think it was, seems like, I can remember doing alone, or we traded off. Because Mom needed us at the house so we were, you know, we couldn't both go out and work. Somebody had to be home to help her.

PAQUITA: How old were you at that time?

CONNIE: Oh, I think we were in grade school, somewhere in there, in grade school.

That's the first job that I got. And then when I went in high school, and then of course at that time, you know, it was during World War II and the jobs, the men were gone, so it was easy to find a job. And I worked in a grocery store after school.

By that time Mom's boarding house, things had changed to where she didn't have the place full all the time with boarders. And, you know, so that kind of, she kind of, that kind of wound down a little bit. And so I was able to work after school. And I don't, Margaret stayed home then, and then I think she did a lot of the work that --- oh no, no, I take that back because by that time when I went to work at the grocery store Mom had sold the boarding house. That was it, she'd sold the boarding house and then we were just living, you know, in a private home. And that's when I went to work for Wenzels.

PAQUITA: When she sold the boarding house, didn't some of the boarders just go with you?

CONNIE: Yeah, we had Frank, let's see; we had a couple that went with us, that stayed.

PAQUITA: So how did you get prepared for the job that you ended up having, that you just retired from? How, I mean what kind of schooling, or was it on the job training?

CONNIE: Well I just, no, just from what I got, you know, in high school, I took the business courses. And then after I graduated from high school I went to work at the Burns Grade School and I was a secretary there. And then of course I was married during that time and quit.

And then I just ended up filling in for your mother then, she worked for the city hall when you kids were born. And then she ended up, I think it was the time that she ran that needle in her hand, and she couldn't work. That was, it was a part time job then, and you put out water bills at the end of each month. This happened when it was time to put out the water bills. And of course in order to keep, she wanted to keep the job, so I went and worked in her place to get those water bills out that one-month. I know I covered for her

one time. And then when she ended up getting a full time job, they asked me if I would take the job, and so I did that just once a month, to get out the water bills. Then when we moved back to town, we were living on the ranch then, we moved back to town, my neighbor next door, Lee Baldwin, ... came over asked me if I would be interested in the clerks job at the high school. So I applied for that job. By that time I think Chris was probably seventh or eighth grade. The kids were big, and it was a part time job when I started, which was what I was looking for, something that I could be home, you know, when the kids were home. So that's how I took it, and just, you know, it evolved with the bookkeeping background, and kind of a self-taught, I mean I attended a lot of workshops and whatnot. But just experience, just work into it.

PAQUITA: And what was your title when you retired?

CONNIE: I was the deputy clerk, business manager.

PAQUITA: Business manager. When, what age did they let you start dating? Or would they allow you to, or was it just more like a group thing that you all went out?

CONNIE: Yeah, it was really a group, we always had kids around, and it could be boys or --- I don't, I can't remember, we were in high school. I had a boyfriend when I was a freshman; he used to walk me home every night. And we'd meet in the theater. But, you know, not, I don't know that we really had any, oh I guess, yeah, once in awhile they'd take you to a movie or whatnot. We were in high school.

PAQUITA: Did they pressure you to go out with the Basque boys if there were any?

CONNIE: Oh, if there had been any available, that was, the pressure was always to marry a Basque boy, not from my dad, from my mother. Always marry a Basque, very much so. But there wasn't any here, I mean there were several but, you know, they had other girls, no one that was interested in us. And the only Basque that were really available, just like Margaret and I said, we always look back now and see all these good

looking young Basque guys, but they were all forty years old when we were ---

PAQUITA: Young.

CONNIE: --- young.

PAQUITA: Yeah, so your age there was ---

CONNIE: We really didn't have a ---

PAQUITA: But there still was that pressure, that underlying pressure, go to Boise to find one or something, I don't know.

CONNIE: Well just marry a Basque. They just ...

PAQUITA: And so then when you didn't marry a Basque, how was that handled?

CONNIE: It was, I don't know if it was so much the Basque, or if --- that was a blow I'm sure, because I was the first to get married.

PAQUITA: And how old were you?

CONNIE: I was 20, 19, 20. I'm going to take this back Paquita, I got married at 19, 19 when I got married. And I don't know if the pressure, it was a combination, I did a double no, no. I married a non-Catholic and that was not taken too well.

PAQUITA: By her, by both parents?

CONNIE: No, not my father, not my father, by my mother.

PAQUITA: Did they like him though; I mean had your husband spent any time at the house before you got married?

CONNIE: Oh yeah, he came a lot. And I don't know if Mom liked him or not, she treated him all right. But she just didn't --- didn't want me marrying him. And my dad, now Dick I know went to, when he asked me to marry him, and I told him yes, then --- No, before he asked me, I didn't know that, before he asked me he went to see my dad and asked him if he could marry me. And my dad said, "If it's alright with her, it's alright with me." But my mother, in fact Dick says he remembered that.

At that time Dick was on his dad's ranch, he was working there, but he was also working part time delivering, working for a dairy, it was the Alpine Creamery. Well in addition to it, that creamery had a beer distributorship, and Dick delivered beer to the bars in town, the big kegs. And he went in there to deliver beer and my dad was, it was early in the morning, my dad was putting change in the cash register. Well when Dick asked him he dropped his change all over the floor. And Dick says, and that was, I remember Dick saying that he dropped the change. But he was fine; it was my mother that was very, very upset.

PAQUITA: So did you have a ---

CONNIE: I think it was, not a Catholic, and not a Basque, it was a combination.

PAQUITA: Did you have a traditional wedding, or did you just ---

CONNIE: No, we ended up getting married in Reno.

PAQUITA: And then how long ---

CONNIE: Turn that off.

PAQUITA: Do you remember who took care of the bookkeeping in the boarding house?

CONNIE: Well I don't remember anybody ever doing any bookkeeping.

PAQUITA: Do you remember a register, like where people sign in, or ---

CONNIE: No, no.

PAQUITA: So everything was kept in the head?

CONNIE: Yeah.

PAQUITA: Total, to total the bills and ---

CONNIE: Yeah, yeah, I don't ever remember seeing a bill, anybody add things up. Now I'm sure my dad did probably with the, you know, pool hall he had. But he never did any of it at home that I saw.

PAQUITA: Where was the cash kept to make change and everything for people that were

buying drinks, or buying dinner, or ---

CONNIE: Well Mom just kept it; I don't know what she kept it in. She kept it in her bedroom, that's where she kept it, in the bedroom. She had a closet that she kept her money hidden in.

PAQUITA: Because I notice that tradition still in Spain, you know, you go into a bar, especially in those small towns like Ondarroa, there is no question asked about how much it is.

CONNIE: And then they didn't want to --- right, and they didn't come in, I don't remember seeing money laying around, like they're paying for this drink, and paying for that. I'm buying you, and I'm buying this. Maybe if someone happened to just come in and was going to leave right away, you know, and bought a drink, they just talked for a while or whatever, and then they left and maybe paid. But if they were there, you know, all evening and stuff --- see I'm buying you a drink, and I'm buying you a drink, and I don't remember ever seeing anybody writing anything down, or keeping track of anything at all.

PAQUITA: So it was all kept in the head?

CONNIE: Uh huh.

PAQUITA: And did you ever see any discussions about who might owe what, or did you ever see any ---

CONNIE: Huh uh.

PAQUITA: Because I never did either.

CONNIE: They'd just say, you know, what do I, you know, what do I owe.

PAQUITA: What do I owe, right.

CONNIE: Uh huh.

PAQUITA: Because that is the same way in the Basque country. I notice there is no cash registers, and it's just, what do I owe at the end.

CONNIE: Yeah, and that's what I remember.

PAQUITA: And they always would laugh at me when I'd try to pay for something right away. They'd go, just wait, you know, until you go.

CONNIE: Yeah, no I don't, I don't remember any of that. They just, when it was, what do I owe.

PAQUITA: So when you got married did you, what kind of --- since your husband wasn't Basque, isn't Basque, what kind of, how did you keep the Basque traditions going in your family? Or was it unconscious, or ---

CONNIE: I'm sure that I did. I really, you know, I'm not sure that I did. Other than the fact that the kids seeing their grandparents, I mean just automatically ---

PAQUITA: Just through them.

CONNIE: Yeah. Because I really think, and it's true, probably Mom said I want to be an American. I really wasn't, really into this Basque tradition. At that time, and I don't know if Margaret sees it this way, but this is the way I felt. That there were so many prejudices in those years, you know, they have prejudices, Catholics, Irish, and all these different --- The foreigners that came over from the old country. I'm not saying all of it was that way, but a lot of people would kind of look down on you. It made me feel like some of them were trying to kind of hold you down, or they didn't respect you. And I can remember hearing comments, thing about, you know, oh those dirty black Basque. And I don't mean, we weren't treated very nicely by a lot of people. But, and I think if we'd have been raised anywhere but in Burns, it might have even been worse.

But I still knew that we were different, we weren't the traditional American, you know, and I wanted to be an American. And I think, maybe Mom says that's the reason we quit speaking the language. I don't believe that was it, but she might be right, I don't know. But I wanted to be an, you know, I wanted to be an American.



PAQUITA: Well there were those immigration quotas, you know, in the 1924's where they kept, they tried to keep the Spaniards and the Southern Europeans and the Eastern Europeans out.

CONNIE: Yeah, and I wanted to be, you know, like anybody else, and treated like every -- And I wasn't mistreated, but there were remarks made by certain people, and they weren't friends. But they hurt, and I'm sure it's just like a black family or whatever feels; it was never to the degree like that. But I can understand how they hurt, because even those little remarks hurt me.

PAQUITA: Uh huh.

CONNIE: And as a kid, you know, it makes you feel inferior. It made you feel kind of lacking. And so I'm not sure that when I married Dick that I was really trying to keep the tradition alive. I wasn't denying it either, but I wasn't, you know, saying okay this is your heritage, this what --- I took it for granted and that's what it was.

But one thing I did feel, and the thing that surprised me about marriage to Dick, is marriage was so much better than I thought it would be. And it was because of the way he treated me. Because he would ask my opinion on things, and I just don't remember Mom and Dad doing this, and I mean, the man had his position and he made the decisions on all the major things. And I can remember, of course Mom was one of these people that went ahead and did it herself, but it caused problems between them, it caused friction between them.

PAQUITA: Uh huh.

CONNIE: And I don't think my mother was the usual type of, you know, Basque wife. She was pretty, you know ---

PAQUITA: Independent.

CONNIE: Independent, a little more so. And enough that it caused, I think it caused

problems with them.

PAQUITA: And so you were surprised when your husband ---

CONNIE: Yes, and I thought all husbands, you know, just ordered their wives around. I don't remember my dad ordering, but expected of you. They just didn't ask your opinion on how you felt about something. Or, you know, business wise or any of that type of thing. Dick respected my opinion, allowed me to have my independence. I guess that's what it all boiled down to.

PAQUITA: You could work outside the home if you wanted to, or you could stay home.

CONNIE: I could, you know, if I wanted to go and do, I did, I wasn't tied to that house, I wasn't tied, it's what I wanted to do. He just allowed, I felt like I was far more independent than a lot of the, you know, ... the wife's role in the home.

PAQUITA: And if you would compare it to your sister's marriage, where she married a Basque.

CONNIE: Well, and I can't, I shouldn't say, I don't know, ... was independent too though, so I don't know. It's just that I really appreciated that. And we (turn that off).

PAQUITA: The Basque men that married American girls in Burns, did you notice a difference?

CONNIE: Oh yeah, it was a whole --- the ones that married American girls, these girls, the culture they were raised in, it wasn't that they could not --- how am I going to try to say that, they adapted more to American ---

PAQUITA: American.

CONNIE: --- yeah, culture, the American ways. If they married a Basque, the tradition just, you know, kind of perpetuated itself.

PAQUITA: Your children and their age, the order of your children.

CONNIE: Okay, the oldest is Christy, the second one, my next one was Mark, and the youngest was Ross.

PAQUITA: And what years were they born? Christy was born ---

CONNIE: Oh my god, I was afraid you were going to ask that.

PAQUITA: Well Christy must have been born in '47.

CONNIE: '47 I think, yeah, '47. Mark is ---

PAQUITA: '51.

CONNIE: Yeah, '51 and then '54, yeah.

PAQUITA: So when you raised the children did you and your husband both discipline them, was there, or was it just your role?

CONNIE: Yes, both of us disciplined.

PAQUITA: And did you discuss ---

CONNIE: I probably a little more, you know, a mother being home with her children would naturally be more --- yes we, you know, we discussed it. Because I can remember, I didn't know how to handle Mark. And, you know, I just like --- then, well I can tell you about the time that he was so bad and I spanked him so hard. And I just felt terrible, because it was, I spanked him and he just looked at me and said that didn't hurt. And I, boy I really turned around and spanked him. Really much too hard for a young child. And I think Mark was probably about four years old, and I was just feeling terrible. Dick came home and I was, I was crying, and he said, "Well what's wrong?" And I said, "I had just given Mark a spanking that no four year old should ever have." I said, "I just don't know what to do with him. I think we are raising another John Dillinger." And I can remember I was crying, I didn't know what to do with him. He just was so, I couldn't handle him. And Dick says, "Well, you know, don't spank him anymore and just take him and put him in a

room and close the door. Make him stay in the room until he is ready to behave himself."

And that worked for Mark, it really did. Like you could take Ross and just, take your hand and just pat him, you know, just slap him across the bottom once and he acted like his heart was broken. And Christy is the same way. But Mark was just; you just didn't handle him that same way. He was stubborn so we always did it that way with him.

And the one thing that I didn't do, that I did see happen while I was being raised, is that if we would ask our dad if we could do something and he said no, then we'd go ask our mother and she'd say yes. And I made up my mind that I would never do that when I raised my own children. So whatever I said, or if whatever Dick, if one of us --- we stuck to what the other, we never went, we never went around the others --- whether we thought it was right, wrong, or otherwise, we never did. So, and but I did that because I could see that happen when we were --- and naturally being kids we'd choose the one that we liked, if it was something we wanted to do, whoever said yes, that's the one. And we did that to our dad a lot, because my mother would say you could do that if you'll do this work, and you get this done, then you can go. And so we used that, and it was really unfair to him. But being kids, you know, we was going to do what we want.

PAQUITA: Saw the opportunity.

CONNIE: Uh huh, yeah.

PAQUITA: And so in raising your children, did you treat the girl different from the boys?

CONNIE: Yes, I realize, I expected the same thing, I expected her to do, help me with the housework. She did the dishes, she cleared the table, she made the beds --- I mean she helped in the house, and the boys never lifted a finger as far as housework is --- They never made the beds, they never did the dishes, they didn't, they weren't expected to do anything as far as in the house was concerned.

Of course by that time we didn't have wood, so they didn't have to carry in wood.

We happened to have one son that was very, the oldest boy was very industrious and he, I never had to ask him to shovel snow, or do --- he liked to do those type of things. But I never ever happened, never, you know, asked him to do it, he liked to do it. Mark was kind of hyper I think, and had to be doing something all the time, so he did a lot of things around outside. And they did mow the lawn. Now, you know, they did those type of --- they did men's work you might say, you know.

PAQUITA: But Christy was expected to do the same thing you and Mom were?

CONNIE: Yeah, right, right.

PAQUITA: So that Basque tradition did carry on?

CONNIE: Uh huh, right, it did, it really did. I never thought it did, but it did.

PAQUITA: And was she expected to like make Ross and Mark's bed too?

CONNIE: Oh yeah, she made the boy's bed. I never made the boys make their own bed.

PAQUITA: Did she complain about having to make their beds?

CONNIE: Yes, I'm sure she did, and I probably ignored it. I just, I'm sure she did.

PAQUITA: Did her friends ever comment that she had to do a lot more work than they did in the house?

CONNIE: They may have, I don't know.

PAQUITA: You don't remember?

CONNIE: I don't know, I don't remember. But, you know, I, yes I expected Christy to, and I was as hard a task maker as my mother, I know that. I see those things, you know, everything had to be just done right.

PAQUITA: And did she have to spend a certain amount of time like if she was dusting, if you thought she did it too fast?

CONNIE: No, no, no.

PAQUITA: You would make her do it over again?

CONNIE: No, that part.

PAQUITA: Not that bad?

CONNIE: No. She had to do it, but there wasn't a time thing like you can't get done in a certain amount of time.

PAQUITA: Did you expect her to cook, or did you teach her to cook?

CONNIE: She didn't, no, no I didn't. See I followed the same thing, I did the cooking. She could have if she wanted to. But she didn't want to, she had other things --- I think by the time, I had her cleaning house and helping, and she had other things she wanted to do. So cooking wasn't anything that she was too interested in.

PAQUITA: Do you remember what the kids thought of their grandparents, their Basque grandparents?

CONNIE: Oh, they loved the, they loved them. Their grandfather just especially. I mean, you know, they just, of course he took them a lot. He played with them all the time, and so I think all the kids, their Aititxa they really loved him. Because he just, he spent a long time playing with them. And I think probably as far as my mother was concerned, the girls were closer to their grandmother than the boys were. So, but all the kids were close to their grandfather.

PAQUITA: Uh huh. Did you, and what about religion? Now you married a non-Catholic, so what did you do about your children, did you raise them Catholic?

CONNIE: Well I, no, I didn't raise --- but I think it was the influence of the grandparents being there, because they ended up, you know, going to the Catholic Church, and that was really, that was my religion too. But I was not a ---

PAQUITA: A practicing Catholic.

CONNIE: Yeah, I was not a practicing Catholic, and I was very, very pleased that they did go. And Dick didn't have, you know, any, he didn't, didn't make any difference to him one

way or the other whether they went or not. And, you know, he wasn't somebody that was violently opposed to it. So Christy and Mark were very, you know, they went to mass all the time. Ross, I think, when he was about the seventh, eighth grade, seventh, eighth grade then he quit going. But it was kind of a thing that evolved. The girls, the boys went because --- excuse me. I think seventh or eighth, seventh grade or something is when he quit; he just quit going to mass altogether. And we never said anything to him, but his brother tried to get him to go. But ---

PAQUITA: So it was, you feel like it was mostly your parents, actually your mother that got them to start going?

CONNIE: Yeah, right, very definitely.

PAQUITA: What about Margaret?

CONNIE: And yeah, and I think, you know, cousins and everything.

PAQUITA: Cousins and everything.

CONNIE: And I was pleased, but I wasn't going to, I never discouraged it or, well I might have encouraged it. But I never said are you going to mass today, are you going --- I never did that, that was up to them. So I never said you have to go to mass.

PAQUITA: And what was your, your position on education obviously must have been just the opposite of your mother.

CONNIE: Yes, very much so. But, you know, and I look back at my mother, but I think ... some of hers, she just didn't see the, she needed us so much, she had so much to do, and she needed us so much to work, that with her it just wasn't that important. I really feel my father felt that way. But with my mother it just, she, she really wouldn't have cared I don't believe if we hadn't even graduated from high school. I think I felt as far as, she definitely wanted us to get through the elementary years, but I don't think when we got into high school it would have been a blow to her if we hadn't of finished. She had a

different attitude.

PAQUITA: Do you think that might have been because they only went, most of them, through the third grade there? The women ---

CONNIE: Oh yeah, and she hadn't, but I still, you know, a lot of them I think came over and really saw the value of it. But I don't think she got out in the world enough to really, she never, she spent like I said, she lived night and day in the boarding house. And I don't know that she could really see that there was a lot out in the world that was any different.

PAQUITA: Uh huh.

CONNIE: So, because if we even ended up going to Boise, it was usually other Basque, you know, that had boarding houses. Oh, I had an aunt that didn't, you know, have a boarding. But Mom's whole exposure was to boarding, you know, Basque families that were in boarding houses in this country, pretty much so. Until later years, you know, until they finally sold their boarding houses, and by that time she was out of it too.

PAQUITA: Did your kids ever express a desire to learn the dances, the Basque dances or anything?

CONNIE: Oh, you know, Mom of course taught us, and oh well I don't know if they had a desire, it was just something that happened, you know, just having a grandmother that was so interested in all that. So they all, you know, when they were little danced.

PAQUITA: Even the boys?

CONNIE: Yeah, even the boys danced. Not a lot, they, you know, they did, she had them do them. The girls most definitely, and the boys, you know, not. They weren't really that great a students for it, so I think it probably wasn't worth the battle.

PAQUITA: What about, you know, now she does all that handwork. Did you ever learn or have the desire to ---



CONNIE: No, she tried, no, when we were little that was one of the things she felt we should do. Shoot, by the time we got done cleaning and working all the time. We wanted to have fun, we didn't want to sit there and do hand work. And I have never been interested, and I'm still not interested. And her work is beautiful, but she didn't have time to do that.

PAQUITA: Yeah, she told me she didn't do it until ---

CONNIE: She didn't do any of that. She made our clothes though, on top of everything else she made our clothes until we got into high school and then ---

PAQUITA: Did she have a sewing machine?

CONNIE: She didn't at first, she finally got one. And that was another thing; with my dad he thought that it was a waste of money. She finally got an electric one. I know my dad was so upset about that. That she bought this sewing machine on time, and we just ---

PAQUITA: And before that she sewed your clothes by hand?

CONNIE: She did, and then I think she did borrowed, you know, like somebody else had a machine and she'd go over and maybe --- I don't know if Ramirez's or whatever, that she was able to go over and use their machine.

PAQUITA: Did you feel like ---

CONNIE: She made our clothes, and I mean, on top of everything ---

PAQUITA: Did you feel like your clothes fit in to this society, or did you ---

CONNIE: Yeah, my mother was very conscious of ---

PAQUITA: Fashion.

CONNIE: Yes, very conscious of fashion. We always looked nice, and our clothes were very much in fashion. I mean we did not, as far as, we always had plenty to eat, and we always looked nice, we were always well dressed. You know, and then with the Basque living there, we always had the spending money because to just go to a movie or what,

so, you know, we didn't really feel that we were, did without anything as far as the comforts and things that we wanted. You know we never had a car, we walked everywhere.

PAQUITA: How did you learn how to drive, who taught you?

CONNIE: Frank Ynda taught me to drive.

PAQUITA: Frank Ynda?

CONNIE: Uh huh. I used to sit on his lap and drive the steering, you know, drive it. And then he did, he taught us to drive, and I think he taught Margaret to drive too, because he had the car. I think my dad had probably one time, maybe there was a year there he might have had a car, you know, when, after we left home then. So ---

PAQUITA: So you strive for your children to do good in school, and you expected them to get good grades?

CONNIE: Yes.

PAQUITA: Pushed it more?

CONNIE: Yeah, I mean, I let them, they knew it was important, and they knew it was important to me. And, you know, I probably could have gone on to school, but it wasn't any big thing. And by that time I met Dick, and I wasn't interested. But I did, I mean, any work as far as school work was concerned, if I couldn't get it done at school, then I just didn't get it done because I couldn't do it at home. That's about what it amounted to. And I can even remember, if we didn't want to go to school that day, fine you stay home because you've got plenty of work to do. And I can remember that the only thing that would happen is when mother would have us write a note for us to get back to school, and I can remember when I was in high school --- I didn't miss any school at the time. And sometimes she'd just keep us home because there was something that had to be done. So it wasn't always needed, sometimes she'd say, you know, I need you to do this.

And then I remember that was the case, and I asked her to write me a note, and they had told me that I was absent so much, the next time I came I had to have an excuse. She refused to write that excuse for me. And I can remember being out of school two weeks, she would not write an excuse.

PAQUITA: Why?

CONNIE: Because she just wasn't going to write it. And, I mean, we'd write the excuse, all she did was sign it because she didn't know how to write anyway. And she refused to sign it. And so I thought well I'm never going to get back in school. But finally after two weeks I went back without the excuse, and I guess they figured anybody that is out two weeks must really be sick, so they never did ask me for it. But she, I mean to her, we could stay home a month it wouldn't have made any difference.

PAQUITA: So now that you're retired and kind of reflecting on life, what do you think was the happiest most fulfilling time of your life so far?

CONNIE: Oh we had, I had a happy time growing up. Because there was always, I mean it sounds like it was work, but they were happy, and we had a lot of friends. And I think maybe, even though the one thing we learned to work, and I, as terrible as I might have thought it was at the time, we all learned to work. And I thank them for that, because it's, you know, I think it was something that was instilled in us, and I think it was a pride. And also they wanted us, both of them, a pride in doing a good job. And they did instill that, I mean they instilled that in us, and I think that helped our attitude as far as work was concerned. We wanted to do well. And they wanted us to do what we did; they wanted us to do well. And so, that was a real --- we had a happy time. And there was a lot of singing and a lot of laughter in the house. Even though --- so we had a lot of fun.

But we had the freedom too, in ways that, you know, because you're not --- We

were allowed to go to movies, and we're allowed, you know, if I brought a friend home, or a boy home or anything he was there, and Mom might be having him do something. But it was a, you know, there was moments too where we felt we were really being mistreated. But there was a lot of happy moments when I look back on that. And I don't, you know, we were lucky we have our dad. He showed his love and pride in us.

There must have been something there, because we sure attracted other kids to our home, so there had to be something there that the --- spontaneous. And like I said, and of course we showed our emotions, everybody, and there was, that was shown. I mean we showed love, and we were a close family, really the brothers and sisters. My sister and my brother, and we're still very close.

PAQUITA: Very close.

CONNIE: A very close, there has never been that, you see families that grew up and there is that break or that jealousy or whatever happens, but we have always remained, I think, very, very close. So I think we got somewhere in our rearing that tradition or culture that came through.

And yet marriage had the real, you know, I really feel like I have been very fortunate. I've had a happy life, satisfactory. Maybe I would have, you know, liked to --- oh I think probably if things had of been as they are now, I might have gotten in to, you know, maybe I would have gone on to school or done some things that --- there wasn't a lot of things open for women at that time. You couldn't go into nursing or teaching, you know. I kind of tried some different types of jobs or different careers.

PAQUITA: But that is about the only thing you would have, do differently?

CONNIE: Yeah, that's the, that's the thing I would have done differently, I think. How I feel about education, or opportunity to try some different fields, I'm sure I would have.

PAQUITA: Did you ever have the desire to get out of Burns, move, or leave?

CONNIE: I was very, very happy here. I never really wanted to move, but I think I would have been willing to move if Dick, if that's, you know, what he --- He always, his goal in life was the ranch, and this was here. But that would offer him that opportunity. Yeah, I think I would have left, but I was perfectly happy here. I had a lot of close friends. Grew up, you know, I have friends now that are ones that I went to school with when I was, you know, little. Maybe my world is small, I don't know, but I have been happy with it.

PAQUITA: Well that is more than a lot of people can say. So the boarding house experience then, you feel like you came out with a

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CONNIE: I do, I mean I sit there and I'm telling you that it's hard, but there was a lot of happy times. And I think we had a lot of love. And I think a lot of it too, and I think it was, we had the boarders there, and the Basque men, and I think women too, but we were around more men, loved children. They loved children, and we had a lot of attention. And maybe we had to work, but we also had a lot of attention. So I think we came out of that for the better, for everything. We had a lot of love, and we had, we learned work ethic, and, you know, I just ---

PAQUITA: But also how to play and have a good time.

CONNIE: And how to play and have a good time. And so I think we had a really ---

PAQUITA: Were your parents affectionate?

CONNIE: No.

PAQUITA: With each other?

CONNIE: They never, no, I never saw any affection. And I, I don't know if that was the case or not. But they weren't.

PAQUITA: Were they affectionate with you?

CONNIE: Very. My dad particularly, my mother wasn't. My dad was very affectionate.

And all of us, we were always on his lap even when we were ... we would be, thirteen years old and sitting on his lap.

PAQUITA: I can remember sitting on his lap probably that age too.

CONNIE: Yeah, you know, and it just, he was very affectionate with us. And we'd hug him, and he was just, you know, just very loving. We were, well you know what he was like, Paquita. He loved children and I think it came through. That's one thing, I think it came through. The two boys in the family are very much like him. They love, you know, they are the same way around young kids, they love children.

PAQUITA: Marce and Frankie and ---

CONNIE: Both of them, yeah.

PAQUITA: Yeah, they do.

CONNIE: They do, and I think that's the example that he set. And it's not, and it wasn't just, it wasn't just his own children but it was everyone's children. He just was that way with, he just loved them.

PAQUITA: Remember when he took the whole carload of us all the time out to the Chicago (that's what he called the gravel pit.)

CONNIE: Right, uh huh. But you know how he was, he liked all children. Well Peggy, you know, how she loves him still. You know he just, he was just a warm loving man. And he had a sense of humor that was just really delightful. And gentle, he was a gentle man ...

No, I really, if I look back, and I'm glad I'm doing this tape, because I'm looking back and seeing things, and I'm remembering some real hard times. But as I go through this, I can see all the advantages we had too. So, it really helps.

PAQUITA: Well I think from listening to other women, interviewing other women, and interviewing your mother, Amuma, the work, I mean it seems to me it would create a

situation where a woman would be cranky a lot of the time. I mean that was a lot of work, and a lot of responsibility. Where, and in a home, stuck in a home, where Aititxa could go out into the world and talk with other people and, you know ---

CONNIE: Yeah

PAQUITA: I can see now why she was kind of cranky.

CONNIE: Yes, and she was, she was cranky. And, you know, demand, and she was as far as the house was concerned, she really was a perfectionist, as far as the way she wanted the house to look, as far as the food she served. And, you know, if my mother had been raised in any other time I think she was capable of accomplishing, really, she taught herself to read. Now I don't know how anyone can teach themselves to read, but she did. And she is really a woman; she is a woman with a lot of ability. And I think part of her, she was kind of hard on us in ways, but I think she was frustrated, and very frustrated in many ways. Because there was a lot she was capable of doing, she was a smart woman.

PAQUITA: Uh huh.

CONNIE: Really a smart woman. And no education, as far as just a couple three years. And here, came to a country where ---

PAQUITA: Alone.

CONNIE: Alone, and could only grow so far, so much. And I think that's probably some of the problems that she and my dad would have. Because I think she was ready for, to try other things and he was the old staid, you know, that the wife is in the home. You know, she was far advanced as far as ... I think she was into, trying to get into women's lib before they even thought of such a thing. She went out and did things. She bought the first refrigerator, bought the sewing machine, did ---

Another thing she ended up, like she gave those, that's another thing, on top of the

boarding house my mother gave banquets. And we had, like people from the lumber company, like Hines, Edward Hines would come, and she would give these large banquets and cook the whole meal on top of just having the boarding house. There would be --- and I can remember serving for those banquets. But she just, I mean, she'd do things that a lot of women --- I can't think of what it is now, but she was progressive.

PAQUITA: Uh huh. Did she have a reputation, do you think in Burns for her cooking?

CONNIE: Oh yes, very definitely, she is a good cook. She did have a reputation, and people would --- Well, you know, we just didn't have boarders; we had people, local people from town that would just stop by and have dinner with us, or lunch with us. They'd just come in and say, you know, "Can you take one more today?"

Oh yeah, you know, she'd have enough. I don't ever remember her knowing for sure, and this is the thing that amazes me, I never, she never knew the amount of people that she was going to have sitting at her table. Because people would drop in at night that were not boarders. And there was always enough food, I don't understand how, never could understand how she could do that. But there was always enough for everybody to eat. And I don't remember ever turning anyone away.

PAQUITA: You know I was wondering what butcher shop did she go to, was her favorite? Did she have one?

CONNIE: Well a lot of them. You know like we'd butcher a lamb. That's another thing, I never mentioned lamb, that lamb was, or you know mutton, so the meat was usually --- we just didn't have beef, Paquita, very much. To get back to that, it was usually mutton or pork or --- But I don't remember, I remember we butchered all the meat. She might have bought at Charlie Schroder, she probably bought our meat, or our, you know, whatever. Our groceries, I remember we used to buy groceries there a lot.

PAQUITA: And where was that?



CONNIE: It was down where the Pine Room is, right attached, the Pine Room was part of, there was a grocery store there, we bought there. And also there was a little place on the corner up there where the Elks Club is, there was a market and kind of a butcher shop there. We, you know, bought groceries there. And then I think when that closed, then there was another, right there where the Hilander is now there used to be a grocery store. I can remember shopping there. And it seems like as one closed then we naturally, you'd go on to another. But there were some that even I don't remember; I know that Mom used to shop at.

PAQUITA: Uh huh. So she didn't really have a favorite, or someone that knew exactly what to do for her?

CONNIE: No, no. If she found someone that gave her a soup bone with plenty of meat on it, we'd go back a couple of times, because I can remember going back and getting soup bones. But like where she would shop, you know, like I can remember when Wenzel's then delivered, she'd --- but wherever they delivered to, you know, that she would get. She was pretty particular about it.

PAQUITA: Did she can, did she do her own canning?

CONNIE: You know, no, I don't, she did some but not a lot. Because living here, you know, we didn't have the access to the fruits. And as far as garden, oh we had chickens, I can't remember a garden. Of course my dad was working all the time, and so I don't --- she might have had a garden some, but that wasn't generally a --- Oh yeah, I think we did have a garden, we did, I remember we did, but not a big one.

PAQUITA: Did the boarders work in it, or did she work in it?

CONNIE: She did, anything, you know, like the house and everything to do with the house outside, inside, Mom was in charge of. I mean she was responsible for. Well I'd say pretty much, I mean my dad liked to do chicken feed, check on them and feed them.

But pretty much with this work, in his work, he pretty much took care of it. ... But we, you know, we didn't have a big garden.

PAQUITA: What kind of desserts would be served?

CONNIE: Oh, she'd serve maybe Natilla. And she'd serve rice, rice pudding. And she'd bake the apples with the wine.

PAQUITA: With the wine.

CONNIE: And then she made, and she is the one I think, I can remember here she is the one that made baked Alaska's. And I didn't know that was, you know, that is what they ended up naming them, but we had that before anybody had ever heard of a baked Alaska. That was part of her, and she'd make different types of cakes. Not much, we didn't have pies, I mean I don't ever remember pies ---

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CONNIE: --- after we had our breakfast, she would start cooking dinner. And that dinner, that evening meal she'd prepare, start preparing for that in the morning and that meal would be cooking, you know, simmering, or cooking all day. And it was just a process that, I mean, I don't ever, you just didn't throw anything on the table, you know. The only fried meat that I ever remember having was like the pork chops. We never had anything fried, it was always ---

PAQUITA: In a sauce.

CONNIE: Uh huh, in a sauce, stewed, maybe roasted, or whatever. But we never --- well okay, a chorizo, you fry a chorizo. But lots of times that was cooked in the food too. But, you know, if you just wanted to eat a chorizo ... You know, like you could mention breakfast, sometimes you know like Mom would fix the French toast. But it wasn't a traditional bacon, eggs, steak, you know, type of breakfast.

PAQUITA: They don't do that in Spain either, it's usually fruit and that's it. And then a big, big lunch about two, two-thirty. Speaking of that, have you, do you have the desire to go back to see your family?

CONNIE: Yes, I'd like to. I never thought I did until our youngest boy Ross went back there to study, and then of course becoming, you know, he met the family and he came back, you know, talked about them and everything. And it really made them, we felt like they were part of the family. Because my dad never went back, and he used to say, we'd say, you know, even after we were grown we'd say, "Well why, have you ever thought about going back?" He said, "I never left anything back there that I want to go get." And that's the way he felt, even though he had a brother that was still living, and I think a sister still living, he just --- He liked it here, he really liked it here and he just never, he just didn't want to go back. And, but, and of course my mother went back then after, even the grandkids were grown.

But it was really after Ross ended up going back and meeting the family and looking them up, and the treatment that they, they just treated him so well. They were so warm and loving, they were just, became a family then. I just didn't, it was like you had relatives you never heard of, you didn't know and ---

PAQUITA: Well they're your first cousins, you know.

CONNIE: Yeah, you know, but I never wanted to go back until then, until Ross went and, you know, came back.

PAQUITA: And they say they're never going to be satisfied, they said it's nice all of us go, but they're never going to be satisfied until you and Mom and Marce go.

CONNIE: I'd love to have us go, I really would.

PAQUITA: That's all they say, every one of them. It's fine, we love "Mateo" Matt, and Ross, and Gloria, and you, and Jonas, but we want our first cousins.

CONNIE: Uh huh. So, I mean, but that, it took that, it really took ---

PAQUITA: Took your son going, to be coming back.

CONNIE: Right, it took that. And I'm trying to remember the sequence. I think maybe Mom, she did go back, that trip that we sent her back, the first one, I think that was before Ross went, wasn't it?

PAQUITA: Yes, that one, that shorter one.

CONNIE: And that, she came back and was telling us. But I don't know why, it still is just having Ross go, and come back, that really did it for me. And I don't know about your, I don't know about Margaret, I assume that Gloria going made a lot of ---

PAQUITA: And me, yes.

CONNIE: Yes, that made a difference.

PAQUITA: And Fernando coming here.

CONNIE: Oh yeah, and that was, having Fernando come here was a real treat, really a treat. And then I finally knew a ---

PAQUITA: A first cousin.

CONNIE: A first cousin, because I never had one that was here.

PAQUITA: So do you think you'll do it?

CONNIE: Oh I'd love to. Yeah, Dick says that, you'll go if Ross goes back. And I'd love to have Ross go with us. So I don't know, yeah ---

PAQUITA: Because of the language.

CONNIE: Yeah, and I think, well I don't know what he is worried about, I can't speak it either.

PAQUITA: Well you can understand ---

CONNIE: I can't understand very well, Paquita. I've been away from it, and I don't ---

PAQUITA: I bet you it will come back.

CONNIE: Oh I hope so, I really hope so. Because I could kick myself, I mean, you know, I say we tried to get, we got Mom to speak the --- but we lost it all.

PAQUITA: But Dick does want to go if Ross would go with you?

CONNIE: Yeah, you'll go, you said you'd go to Spain wouldn't you if Ross will go with us?

DICK CORBET: Yeah, I thought I'd go to Hawaii and stay for a year.

CONNIE: Oh yeah, what are you going to do with your sheep?

DICK: Turn them over to you.

CONNIE: Oh bull.

(END OF TAPE)

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