

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #376 - Sides A/B

Subject: Velda Curry Cameron

Place: Hereford Cafe - Burns, Oregon

Date: March 23, 1995

Interviewers: Dorothea Purdy & Barbara Lofgren

DOROTHEA PURDY: This is Dorothea Purdy, along with Barbara Lofgren, and we're at the Hereford Cafe on March 23, 1995. And today we'll be talking with Velda Jean Curry Cameron, who came here from ---

VELDA CAMERON: Today I did. We make our home in Wamic now, just west of Tygh Valley.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

VELDA: But we have spent the winter in a motor home, down in the Valley.

BARBARA LOFGREN: And where is that, I don't recognize ---

VELDA: Tygh Valley?

BARBARA: I don't recognize Wamic.

VELDA: Okay, south of The Dalles.

BARBARA: Oh, okay.

VELDA: On the east side of Mount Hood, about 2000 foot level.

DOROTHEA: Okay Velda, why don't you give us your full name.

VELDA: Well you have it; it's Velda Jean Curry Cameron.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And when were you born?

VELDA: On my, on his mother's birthday, April the 6th, 1925, in Crane, Oregon.

DOROTHEA: Let's get what your parent's names were.

VELDA: Marvin Denman Curry, and my mother's name was Ilda Valmel Gordon.

DOROTHEA: Gordon.

VELDA: And his parents --- I don't know for sure, and I don't think anybody else does, what your father's name actually was. Everybody called him A. H., didn't they?

MARVIN CURRY: Alvie, A L V I E.

VELDA: And what was the H. for? In hunting family stuff, I think it might have been Hall.

MARVIN: I think so.

VELDA: Uh huh, I think there might be some Hall background. And I presume you have that Marvin was born in Neversink, New York, Sullivan County.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

VELDA: And that Neversink sunk. That's one of my favorite stories.

BARBARA: Oh. No, we didn't get that.

DOROTHEA: We didn't get that.

VELDA: Did you forget to tell them? Well they put a reservoir in, as they often do in places in the valley, and so Neversink sunk. He was, I thought you were 4 or 5 when you came out here.

MARVIN: I think so. I think 4, but I ---

VELDA: Well one or the other anyhow. And there --- one of the family backgrounds that I have found, that I find real --- his mother's name was Denman, which is where the Denman comes from for him. But her mother was a Van Benschoten. Right?

MARVIN: I think so.

DOROTHEA: And can you spell that for us?

VELDA: Which way? I've found it all ways.

DOROTHEA: Oh, okay. Well the closest.

VELDA: V A N B E N S C H O T E N, how's that Father?

MARVIN: Sounds good.

VELDA: Does to me too. (Laughter) So, and I --- one of his cousins --- 1981 he and Frances and Roy and I went back to New York. He wasn't interested until we found the barn where he remembers his mother milking the cows, and then he suddenly got interested, didn't you?

DOROTHEA: Yeah, he told us about that.

VELDA: Did he? Good.

DOROTHEA: He told us about the barn, and ---

MARVIN: Said the house was about to fall down, but the barn was in excellent shape.

VELDA: And they have since torn the house down. But one of his cousins gave me, to look at, a Van Benschoten family history. And my father is in it, and his younger brother is not. So I know that it was, his brother was born in 1907, and he was born in 1905. And his brother was born back there also, so they had to have come out here after that. Now where were we?

BARBARA: I think the newspaper article said 1909, wasn't it, that he came?

VELDA: I think so.

DOROTHEA: Let's go to your grandparents, and why they came to Harney County.

VELDA: Well I think because Dr. Homer Denman was the first one out here, wasn't he?

MARVIN: I believe so.

VELDA: And that's the --- let's see, that was Eva's father?

MARVIN: Yeah.

VELDA: Yeah. Eva Otley's father. Then your father came out and was here a year before Grandma sold everything back in New York that they had. They didn't have property, I don't think. They were on a rented place, weren't they?

MARVIN: No.

VELDA: Was that their place?

MARVIN: Yes.

VELDA: Well I misunderstood that. But anyway she, they had an auction and they sold everything. She must have been a heck of a woman, even as a young woman, before I ever got to know her. Because she brought those five little boys on the train out to Vale. And I'm sure he's told you what he remembers about that.

BARBARA: About running up and down the aisles in the train, and annoying people.

VELDA: Uh huh, as five little boys could, I'm sure.

BARBARA: What do you remember about your grandparents? Can you tell us maybe what they looked like, and what it was like to be around them?

VELDA: Yeah. Grandma had the most beautiful white hair, and if I live long enough, I'm going to have it all white too. She was a practical nurse, and a terrible patient. A very good nurse, but a terrible patient. Is that right? I've heard that.

MARVIN: Yeah.

VELDA: And Grandpa, I don't know too much aside from what Dad's told me, except I know he worked at the Mare Island (Navy) Shipyards.

MARVIN: My dad was a ...

VELDA: And he had his sourdough hotcakes at 5 o'clock in the morning, and Grandma didn't get up for that. She kept the sourdough going, but if you wanted sourdough hotcakes with Grandpa, you got up mighty early, and I did. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Did he tell you stories early in the morning, or was just busy getting ready for the day?

VELDA: No, no, he was not a --- he was not really a friendly type, was he? I loved him dearly, but he was not --- He taught me how to eat onion sandwiches, the first onion

sandwich I ever had --- camping out on Lake Tahoe.

BARBARA: But he wasn't much for telling stories about what had gone on?

VELDA: No. After I was married and had children, in 1945 was my last real visit with him. And he come down from Wallowa, and I was interested in genealogy and I just said, "Grandpa I had a lot of questions." He said, "No, I don't have any answers, you know." And so then I just slowly would ask a few questions. And he'd say, "Oh well I thought you wanted to know what happened yesterday. I can remember those things, you know." So I got a lot of starts on that side of the family from him that year, which of course is a precious memory.

DOROTHEA: And you were old enough too, to remember it.

VELDA: I wrote it down.

DOROTHEA: Oh, did you?

VELDA: I didn't, I wouldn't remember it. But I did, I was just writing as fast as I could. And a lot of the information, I've found since, wasn't exactly correct. But it gave me leads for tracking it further.

MARVIN: You remember when ... Atlas Way.

VELDA: Oh yes, and Roy and I were there two years ago, was it honey?

ROY CAMERON: What was that?

VELDA: Atlas Way?

ROY: Yeah.

VELDA: That's out of Nampa.

DOROTHEA: We ought to tell this is Roy Cameron, and this is Velda's husband.

VELDA: Correct.

DOROTHEA: He's also sitting here with us. So, along with Marvin Curry and Barbara Lofgren.

VELDA: Uh huh. And the house looks very much the same; they've closed in the front porch.

MARVIN: I was going to tell you about this though. Dad was raising chickens.

VELDA: Oh yes, this has to do with me.

MARVIN: Gordon and Velda was down there.

VELDA: It was when we had the whooping cough.

MARVIN: Yeah. And they come a running to the house, and they said, "Grandpa said get me out of this barn, quit you feeding my chickens to the grain."

VELDA: With me by the shoulder, giving me a good shaking. And boy, he'd never done that to me before or since. I've never forgotten. But I had probably killed several chickens by the time, with over feeding them.

There was something else --- Oh, and then that same time I remember you taking us, we had whooping cough, and you took us to Alturas between Christmas and New Years. I think I was in the first grade. And Grandpa met us there and took us on down to Napa, because we were not recovering. And it was, of course, deep snow winter, and I remember getting up on the grade going south from Alturas, and I don't think Grandpa was ever the best driver, was he?

MARVIN: I don't know.

VELDA: Better with a team maybe, I should say.

MARVIN: Oh, yes.

VELDA: Anyhow, we ended up spinning around. And I remember my mother telling me, all you could say is oh goodie, we're going back to Daddy. (Laughter) But we spent about four months, I think, down there that year with Grandma and Grandpa. And that includes when Gordon got mastoid, my brother. Only, I think it was Paul that actually had mastoid. And we thought my brother had also, it turned out that an ant had evidently

crawled in his ear. And it did eventually come out his nose. But oh boy, we spent a long of time --- Do you remember anything about that?

MARVIN: No.

VELDA: You weren't there, of course, because you'd come back to Crane.

DOROTHEA: And this was where at, down in Alturas?

VELDA: Atlas Way, no, in Napa, California. On Atlas Way, as Dad says. They lived out on Atlas Way, which is --- they did for a long, long time, so that was an important address. And that house is still there.

BARBARA: So what do you remember about your Grandmother, other than her white hair? Can you tell us ---

VELDA: Uh huh, she did her hair in rags; she curled her hair in rags. And she had obviously five daughter-in-laws since she had five sons. And they all admired her very much. And she was the birthing agent, shall I say, for most of her grandchildren wasn't she?

MARVIN: Yeah, she was --- in Harney County she was the birthing agent for pretty near all ---

VELDA: For most of Harney County.

MARVIN: A lot of us. I remember Mrs. Jokish ---

VELDA: Do you know who she was?

MARVIN: --- her older son, and remember him coming out, just rode horseback with ... buggy. And she said, a baby was about to be born. I can remember what he said, he come in the house, he said, "Things are happening, we need somebody." (Laughter)

VELDA: I got out, somebody else get in.

MARVIN: She did that lots of times.

VELDA: Well I know she was there for the birthing of my brother, and for Asa, and they

were less than two weeks apart, weren't they? So she was having grandkids right and left there for a short time. Oh, and the other, what I started to tell you about, the five daughter-in-laws. I can remember she used to say, well girls I'm sorry, but I've just got to go take a ten-minute nap. And as a kid I remember thinking, what in the world good is a ten-minute nap, you know, why bother. The older I get, the more I appreciate what she was talking about.

DOROTHEA: My mother used to do a lot of ten-minute naps.

VELDA: Yeah, and it's surprising how valuable they are. They can really make a difference for me. Lots of people don't believe I only sleep ten minutes though. And my husband is keeping real quiet. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: I think he is reading.

VELDA: I don't think he heard me.

BARBARA: So was she a disciplinarian, you think?

VELDA: I don't remember her being real strict. I know I remember Dad saying that Grandpa always saw to it that the boys did as she said. She never had to be strict with you kids much, did she?

MARVIN: She was the boss. Dad very seldom ever threatened us at all. Because if Mother told us to do something, we better get to doing it.

VELDA: That's how I remember hearing about it.

MARVIN: Oh he'd say, "You heard what your mother said." I remember Denman, Mother told him to do something. I probably told this to you. He said, "No." Dad said, "You heard what your Mother said." "No." He grabbed him right around both arms and the shoulders, and stuck his head in the water trough. He come up said, "Are you going to do what your Mother said?" "No." Held him a little longer. The second time he come up, he said, "Yeah, I'll do it." He said, "You better."



I remember Mother, well it's not very funny, but it's true. We had to walk about a mile and a half, and in the spring of the year the low places would all fill up with water, you know, and of course we had to wade through all of them. Mother said, "I told you kids not to wade in that water." And she got after us; we had long hair back here.

VELDA: No comment. (Laughter) (Referring to Marvin needing haircut.)

MARVIN: Tip toed us around, and every little while she'd bob our heads together. That's child abuse now.

VELDA: Oh yes, definitely. I think we all have memories of what they call child abuse now. I just --- I worshiped the ground she walked on, but I can't remember what to tell you about her really. I never got to spend as much time with her --- Oh, I know one other story, that brings up Elsie Bennett. When you had smallpox, have you told them about that?

MARVIN: No.

VELDA: Dad having the service station in Crane, they --- I think it was a watch, wasn't it, that you got in exchange for gas? Somebody came through, or something, wasn't that it? That you figured is where the smallpox came (from), because you let Gordon play with the watch, or something? Anyhow, he and my brother both got smallpox. I still have the vaccination scar, but I didn't get the smallpox. But, and Grandma come up to help at that time.

MARVIN: Yeah.

VELDA: And she'd been back over there, something else, she'd been back to New York, because she bought those little maple sugar candies. I remember, and we kept them in the basement, and you had to be real good to get one of those, believe me. In the basement, yeah, in the cellar. And anyhow our birthdays being the same date, Elsie Bennett and me, and Elsie Bennett was a fabulous angel food cake baker. And we had

gone out to my mother's folks that day, I suppose Grandma Gordon probably had a birthday dinner for us. And when we came back, here is two beautiful, a little one and big one, angel food cake. If you experienced Harney County's rainstorms, we had one, he did tell us. Covered with sand, of course.

DOROTHEA: No, no he didn't.

VELDA: Beautiful angel food cakes, and sand just coated them. We weren't home, so Elsie baked them and left them on the back porch for us, you know. Anyhow, that's another memory. But I didn't get to spend very many birthdays with Grandma.

DOROTHEA: ...

VELDA: I'm glad somebody else has that problem.

DOROTHEA: Tell us what kind of a cook she was, and if you can remember some --- You don't remember?

VELDA: We have a saying in my husband's and I's family, that he lives to eat, and I eat to live. It's not that, food isn't that big a deal to me. I mean something like a special angel food cake or something like that I remember.

DOROTHEA: But you don't remember like a special meal that she cooked, or if you ate a lot of chicken?

VELDA: No, and if I lived with her for four months, I must have known. I think we probably did, but no I really don't. I don't remember ---

BARBARA: Was she loving, did she read stories to you in the evening, or ---

VELDA: She'd sing to me when I was little, very little. And I wasn't the snuggling type. And she, I understand, was a fairly religious woman. She used to tuck my head in here, and sing, "How Dry I Am," and I'd scream bloody murder, so I've been told. (Laughter) Is that right, do you remember that?

MARVIN: Yeah.

VELDA: I thought maybe that's where I had heard it.

MARVIN: She was --- I think I told you folks, she taught Sunday school for twenty some years there by Harriman and Crane. Then they had a, what they called a Community Church where every preacher or anybody that came there, could preach there. She went up there; she wanted to leave it a Community Church. One of them wanted Presbyterian, another Baptist, and Methodist. She got up and come home. She said, "I never heard people, I never heard my husband say the mean things they said about each other, because they didn't believe the same as they did." And they're still fighting about the same thing, religion. Every place in the world that you look, that they're fighting, it's about religion. And if you don't bow down and kiss the earth, or some other crazy thing. She never went back to church after that. I'll tell you that, she didn't go back there.

Her father was a Quaker, and they don't preach, you know. If you've got something to say, you stand up and say it, and sit back down. She went with him, that was the only other time. She got disgusted with the ---

VELDA: Well there is more than one kind of religion too, and that doesn't mean she wasn't religious.

BARBARA: Well can you tell us something about what you remember as being a little girl in Crane, what it was like, the area, the stores that were there? You say you started school there; can you give us a little bit of that information?

VELDA: Uh huh. I know I got frost bitten one time walking to school, from where, when we lived by the post office, because I forgot my mittens. I remember the ice-cold water that they dosed me with when I got to school. And I remember --- I'm still a good procrastinator. We were supposed to be making some kind of a health poster, and I think I was in Mrs. Weittenhiller's class, but it might have been in Frances'.

... (Interference on tape)

DOROTHEA: ... we have bits and pieces. I don't know if anybody really came right out and talked about ...

VELDA: ... very important woman in ... many, many people, I'm sure. But anyway, Frances, it was the middle of my third grade when Frances --- so it must have been, you know, ... I'm not sure, but that would have been '34 and '35, that would be what? (January 1934 when Frances started teaching the 1st-3rd grades.)

DOROTHEA: You'd have to be about 8 years old. Probably about '33, or '34, something like that.

VELDA: That sounds about right. Yeah, because I only went to school ... one year, the fourth grade (after that). So that would be ... Now what was the problem? Oh, about a poster. You remember the poster that you helped me make because I was so far behind? It was a health poster for 4-H. And I was so far behind that we ended up using my (paper doll) --- it was a sleep with your window open, you know. It helps ... It was a big poster, and I ended up using my paper doll, because I was so late. With Father over here like this, you better get ... He did help me too. But anyhow, had I been old enough, I would have gotten to go to State that year, except that I put the paper doll, and didn't draw her (the baby) myself. I remember that. I don't remember an awful lot about ...

DOROTHEA: Who were your teachers?

VELDA: Mrs. Weittenhiller for two and a half years. Frances Catterson for the finals (last half) of my third grade, and then Ethel Faull. Do you know much about her, remember much about her? (Ethel was sister to Judge Nelson B. Higgs' wife, Josephine, I think.)

MARVIN: ...

VELDA: Okay. ...

DOROTHEA: Yes.

VELDA: That's his sister-in-law. ... and she's still alive, and she's living in --- where is

Ethel living now, Sangor, California. Anyhow, just off of Highway 99 down in California. And a very interesting woman.

DOROTHEA: How do you spell it? Is it F A U L ?

VELDA: F A U L. (Corrected to Faull) I just learned that the last few years myself. I've just been in contact with her again. And she was a, the goat of many jokes. Right? She was such a gullible person. You guys just bedeviled her all the time. Didn't you?

BARBARA: Was she a young single lady at that time?

VELDA: Yes. And very tall, angular build type. And a very nice person, and put up with a --- and still does.

BARBARA: How many children were in your classes generally? Was it a large class?

VELDA: Well this would be the first three years, in the first class. And then there was fourth --- you having problems with it? (Tape recorder)

DOROTHEA: Well it's getting a lot of static in it (tape recorder). And so I think I'm going to hook up this battery.

VELDA: But no I don't --- Aletta and Ruby Oard were in some of my classes. I honestly don't know that either.

DOROTHEA: But you did have two or three classes together.

VELDA: We had three in the first --- there was no kindergarten, of course, in those days. The first, second, and third grade was in the room to the left; and fourth, fifth, and sixth was in the room to the right; and seventh and eighth (grade room) was upstairs. And then high school, of course, was also in the same building.

BARBARA: Were you living right in the town of Crane at that time?

VELDA: Always.

BARBARA: Okay. And who were some of the families that were living around you that had children?

VELDA: Higgs, Heinz, Oards.

DOROTHEA: We're talking about Nelson.

VELDA: Nelson ...

DOROTHEA: ...

VELDA: Uh huh. Eunice Lee (Higgs) and I were very close. And Geraldine Heinz, she just passed away --- that had the art shop. Starts with an S.

BARBARA: Schillinger.

VELDA: That's her. She and Eunice and I were together a lot, and Aletta Oard.

DOROTHEA: And now we have a roar. (Tape recorder)

VELDA: Oh.

DOROTHEA: I don't know. We're having a little bit of problems with it; I think we're going to have to get it cleaned. (Tape recorder).

MARVIN: I told you people about the time that they divided this county, didn't I?

DOROTHEA: No, did we? You mean from Grant, to Harney to Grant?

MARVIN: No.

BARBARA: I think with the schools, yes.

DOROTHEA: Oh, with the schools.

VELDA: The school districts.

... (Interference)

VELDA: ... was Aunt Mary and Uncle Gil's dog, remember they had the collie there, that's my mother's brother, Gilbert Gordon, and his wife Mary had the ... She was a telephone operator in Crane for a long time, wasn't she? ... kids also, Roman and Louie.

BARBARA: Clary?

VELDA: Urquiri. A Basque family. And the twins, I can't say their name?

BARBARA: Can you spell their last name?

VELDA: I doubt it. Yriarte, that's not right is it?

MARVIN: Sounds right.

VELDA: Does it, maybe it was. Twin girls, I know. Jerry Smith was also in my class, I think. Viola McClure.

DOROTHEA: Charlie Otley?

VELDA: Uh huh, Mary Ann's mother was the first one to ever let me drive. I remember that. They ended up buying my grandparent's car. But she had come in to; I think they were living just south of Crane. (Velda's note: This is all wrong, except I think Mary Ann (Brown) Otley's parents did buy Grandma and Grandpa Gordon's car. It was Ramona (Officer) Fitchett who let me drive through the gate.)

MARVIN: Carey?

VELDA: No.

MARVIN: Jay Carey?

VELDA: No, they lived out, across, didn't they live out across from the Hot Springs?

MARVIN: No, he had a place down in Crane Creek, Jay Carey did.

VELDA: No, that's not who I'm thinking of. Mary Ann's --- anyhow she had a younger brother, and maybe it will come to me.

DOROTHEA: Wasn't her name Brown, or was her name ---

VELDA: Yeah, I think it was. Yeah, Mary Ann Brown. Now what was her mother's first name? I can't remember that either. Anyhow, she had a brother. My brother is younger than I, and he was invited to his birthday party. Well there aren't a lot of celebrations going on in Crane in those days, and evidently I must have been drooling, because she was nice enough to ask me, an older child to go with her. And I got to drive through the gate when she got out and moved (opened) it. I've never forgotten that. That was the old Model-T.

BARBARA: What do you remember about the town of Crane when you were little? What was it like? Can you tell us where things were, and pretty much the businesses?

VELDA: And my boyfriend, that he never knew. Maynard Bennett, I still ---

DOROTHEA: Maynard?

VELDA: I still love redheaded men.

BARBARA: You had a crush on him, but he didn't know about it?

VELDA: Oh, did I have a crush. And that lasted all my life, or his life.

DOROTHEA: Who is Maynard?

VELDA: He is Elsie Bennett's oldest son.

DOROTHEA: Oldest son. Now is he gone now?

VELDA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Yes, he was married to ---

VELDA: Maisie.

DOROTHEA: Maisie, right.

VELDA: And Tom, of course, Tom and I, I think there is only a year's difference in Tom and I. Oh, and I have a scar that Tom, Tom did that. (Shows scar.) My uncle was a redhead too, by the way, and he used to tease Tommy. He was going to catch him and cut his ears off. Well that was the wrong thing to do, of course. But Tom decided he would cut my ears off one day, and I was running.

BARBARA: Oh dear.

VELDA: Well, I've had worse, but as far as that goes. And Maynard and I were the --- my brother had a speech impediment too, when he was little. And Maynard and I were the only ones that could understand our brothers most of the time. So we'd always have to translate for the two.

DOROTHEA: Well Tom is now living in a foster home here with Donna Pereira.



VELDA: He's still with Donna, isn't he?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

VELDA: Yeah, we were just talking about it a while ago. I think we'll go out, Tom always enjoys seeing dad and --- And we miss seeing Elsie, of course.

BARBARA: Okay, what were the stories that --- Your father had the service station at that time. Could you tell us what was the service station like? The garage, I guess I should say garage, rather than ---

VELDA: It was both.

BARBARA: Did he sell gas?

VELDA: Uh huh.

BARBARA: Okay.

VELDA: Yeah, and he also drug a rattlesnake out from behind the bookkeeper's counter, and poured gas on it and set it on fire.

BARBARA: Oh gosh.

ROY: He had the bulk oil too, didn't he?

VELDA: No, that was in McDermitt, honey.

ROY: Oh.

VELDA: He can help usually, but that time we got it ... Well I can darn near draw you the floor plan. The Denman Hotel was on one corner of the main street, on the east corner we'll say, the northeast corner.

MARVIN: The southeast corner.

VELDA: Well I'm going to put the railroad station in.

MARVIN: Okay.

VELDA: It went across the end of the street. And the Crane Merc across the street on the other corner.

MARVIN: Vale Trading Company.

VELDA: Okay, you're right, and I'm wrong on that one. And the garage, there was a big solid board fence --- I don't know what had been between the Denman Hotel and the garage. It was just a solid board fence there as I remember it, and then the garage and service station. And then there was --- yes. There was an empty lot kind of between there and the house, beside the post office, wasn't there?

MARVIN: Yeah, I think so.

VELDA: Uh huh. But you know I can't remember exactly where the dance hall was. Was it beyond the post office?

MARVIN: It was north.

VELDA: Of the post office.

MARVIN: The Majestic Hall.

VELDA: No, the old wood one on the, wasn't the Majestic, isn't that where the theater was too?

MARVIN: No.

VELDA: No, it was across the street?

MARVIN: Yeah.

VELDA: Okay.

MARVIN: One time, I'm not sure of the name, but Dewey Robinson used to play the piano, and he could get more music out of a piano than any --- he'd wear one out in a short time because he'd beat on it so hard, you know.

VELDA: But he had rhythm.

DOROTHEA: Did he stand up to play them?

MARVIN: What?

DOROTHEA: Did he stand up to play them?

MARVIN: Sometimes.

VELDA: Did he?

MARVIN: Sometimes. Most of the time he didn't. But I remember one time; I think it was Hungry Smyth, and Bill ... both of them big men, strong powerful men. Dewey was playing, we was dancing, Dewey kept right on playing, and we kept right on dancing. Bill fought around there for quite awhile, finally he said, "Well I guess we can't either one of us whip." They just shook hands and walked off.

VELDA: Just a friendly fight. My brother and I used to be able to go over behind the Majestic Hall and make pretty good money for Sunday school, on Sunday morning early. They used to always lose money in the fights, out of their pockets. I remember that.

DOROTHEA: What kind of walks did they have, did they have just sand walks or ---

MARVIN: They were wooden.

BARBARA: Boardwalks?

DOROTHEA: Boardwalks.

VELDA: Did we? I don't remember wood, in my time?

MARVIN: Yeah.

VELDA: I thought we had sidewalks.

MARVIN: Did later.

VELDA: Cement.

MARVIN: Did later.

VELDA: Clear up to the corner where the Buchanan Station was, or did we (they go) that far? Maybe not. Maybe it only went past the post office. But I think we had them when I was a kid.

MARVIN: Yeah, probably did.

VELDA: And when I, the first time I took my husband back to show him the big city where

I was born, and I wanted to, Frances to take a picture of us in front of what had (been my last home in Crane) --- and it had all burned down by this time. But in front of (where) the house, and the post office had been. And so she was standing out in the middle of the street, and we're standing on this side of the sidewalk, and a jackrabbit ran through between us. And he was quite impressed. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Well you were talking earlier about you were born in the same house that --

-

VELDA: No, my brother was born in the same house as another cousin, down in California. My brother was born on the 12th of February, and he was called Abraham Lincoln Pinochle. Well he actually wasn't, but that's always been teased. Because they were playing pinochle when he decided to make his arrival. And of course the 12th of ---

VELDA: The house I was born in is ---

MARVIN: I think it's still there, isn't it?

VELDA: Uh huh.

MARVIN: It's fixed up a lot nicer.

VELDA: Yeah, it does look better.

DOROTHEA: Who lives there now? Do you ---

VELDA: I have no idea, no I don't.

DOROTHEA: Can you tell us approximately where it sits?

VELDA: Well that's what I was trying to think how to tell you now. Well it used to be in the first street to the left as you went into town. But I think there is --- is there another street. There is a feedlot, I mean somebody ---

MARVIN: A person has got a bunch of horses, I think, there.

VELDA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Is that where Don Opie lives? That's the first, and it's a trailer there. But

the first house, house ---

VELDA: No, it's the last house on the left hand side going north, on that street off of the --

-

DOROTHEA: In Crane?

VELDA: Coming into town, the way the road used to go into Crane, the first road in, and it would be the last house on the left hand side.

BARBARA: The street that goes down there, was that where Mrs. Presley lived on that street, was it?

MARVIN: I don't know.

VELDA: It used to be Company houses on it, didn't it?

MARVIN: I think so.

VELDA: The Otley kids grandma took my mother's --- Mother and Father took care of the four Otley boys there in the winter one year, in one of those two Company houses, I know. And Tony Modovich lived in a little bitty house over here, and he made all of my dollhouse furniture. And I still have a blanket chest that he made for my mother too. And

---

BARBARA: Can you tell us a little bit about your mother?

VELDA: They didn't --- my mother's family was from, where we're living now. She was born in a granary, right Roy? She always said she was the same as Jesus Christ. He was born in a manger, and she was born in granary. They didn't come to Harney County, they moved to the Catlow Valley in 1914, I think, from Wasco County. And she had two brothers, and one that was killed out on the Hunter Ranch, what we call the Hunter Ranch. Where was Uncle Walter --- he lived in the Burns Hospital for three or four days. Where was he taken (injured), was it up at the Hunter Ranch, or out at the Billy Gray place?

MARVIN: Hunter's.

VELDA: Up at the Hunter Ranch.

MARVIN: He was riding, breaking horses, and a real good rider. And Jim Green, and what's his wife's name?

VELDA: Nellie?

MARVIN: Yeah. They were up there. He was kind of working for them. And he was riding this horse, and he was sun fishing. I don't know whether --- you kind of go like this, and then like that, you know. And the front feet missed the ground. He rolled right over the top ...

VELDA: The saddle horn went --- he lived up, about three days up here in the hospital.

MARVIN: He's buried up here.

DOROTHEA: And what was her maiden name?

VELDA: Gordon.

DOROTHEA: Gordon.

VELDA: Uh huh. George Franklin Gordon was her father. And her mother was Frances Oattie Farlow Gordon. And all three of the kids were born before they came to Harney County. I was about --- I must have been about six years old when Uncle Walter got killed, huh?

MARVIN: Something like that.

VELDA: Yeah, something like that. So that would be about 1931. There was quite a write up in the Burns papers, and that on him, that I have clippings from. He was only 16, 17 years old when this happened. And Uncle Gil was janitor at the Crane School. He and his wife, Mary Vinson, herded sheep on their honeymoon.

DOROTHEA: On their honeymoon, herded sheep?

VELDA: Uh huh. You and my mother took Ethel Faull, wasn't it --- no it wasn't Ethel

Faull, who was it up to Fish Lake, on their honeymoon.

DOROTHEA: Let's kind of refresh our memories, and I'll change this tape and turn it over.

VELDA: Fine.

SIDE B

DOROTHEA: How did your parents meet?

VELDA: I have no idea, do you remember Dad? They just really, just grew up together.

They worked on the ---

MARVIN: It was over in Wamic wasn't it, or Tygh Valley or ---

VELDA: You didn't meet there. How did you and Mom meet?

BARBARA: In school?

MARVIN: I think so.

VELDA: Evidently. I have pictures of them when they were quite young. I have pictures of them sitting on the roof at the Round Barn. And, well they worked hay crews, you know, working hay crews and that. I know I have a picture of you and Uncle Gil, and Mom, and maybe Walter up on the roof of the Round Barn.

MARVIN: Someplace, I've misplaced or lost those last pictures that ---

VELDA: That Patty took?

MARVIN: Yeah.

VELDA: Oh, this is my oldest daughter. They're there somewhere, I'm sure.

MARVIN: Yeah.

VELDA: I have copies of them too.

MARVIN: Yeah, they --- I got a kick out of her, she come up and said, "I want you to go out to the Round Barn with me." She said, "I was out there when I was just a kid." Well I said, "Well it's been a long time, I don't know whether I can find it." By golly we drove

quite a ways, but we finally found it. ... we was driving around there, I told them, I said, "Now as I remember that," I said, "they could drive in the front door, and drive around the rock part of that barn and feed the horses on the inside, and then come out the same door." It was that big a barn, it was ---

VELDA: And still is.

MARVIN: Pete French.

BARBARA: We went out and videoed the barn.

VELDA: Good, good.

DOROTHEA: With Marcus Haines. We've got a narration of it.

VELDA: Yeah, he was real good with the history.

BARBARA: So what else can you tell about your mother?

VELDA: Let's see, about my mother. Well she run, I know she ran a rake someplace out on the lake one summer, in a field that it took all morning to get around, I mean made one round, and then you had lunch. That's one story.

MARVIN: That was a notorious field; I think it was the Red S Field.

VELDA: Red S?

MARVIN: Red S.

VELDA: Uh huh. I don't know, I don't remember that name.

MARVIN: I think so. I know they used to take their mowing machines, and they'd start in the morning there, and they'd have about nine or ten mowing, horse drawn mowers. And they'd just make one round and stop for lunch. I know the mowing machines did.

VELDA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And this is down by --- Where is the Red S Field?

MARVIN: Well I think you go, you know where Wright's Point is?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.



MARVIN: You go over Wright's Point, and I think it's out there on the left hand side.

DOROTHEA: Behind Island Ranch?

MARVIN: I think it was part of the Island Ranch.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. I know we hayed that one time. And one time, to about two years in a row. And you're right; it takes forever to make one round.

MARVIN: Yes.

VELDA: And my grandmother cooked a lot for the hay crews.

BARBARA: You said your mother was a teacher?

VELDA: No, that's my stepmother.

BARBARA: Oh, you stepmother, okay. Did your mother have any job outside of the home at all when you were growing up?

VELDA: Oh no, huh uh.

BARBARA: Just a --- I never like to use the word "just" a housewife.

VELDA: I heard the "just".

BARBARA: It ticks me off too. (Laughter) She was a homemaker?

VELDA: Uh huh.

BARBARA: Okay.

VELDA: Well there weren't very many other jobs in Crane.

DOROTHEA: Well women mostly were homemakers at the time. They didn't, a lot of them work out of the home, unless it was like a schoolteacher or something.

VELDA: Which brings up something, where was Mr. Weittenhiller? I don't remember a Mr. Weittenhiller.

BARBARA: A Clyde?

VELDA: Well no, that's ---

DOROTHEA: That's the son.

BARBARA: The son?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

VELDA: What happened to his father?

MARVIN: I don't know. I just don't know.

DOROTHEA: I never knew of a Mr. Weittenhiller either.

VELDA: No, I've never heard --- I never thought about it.

MARVIN: I should but ---

VELDA: Because she is one of the married women who taught, you know.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

VELDA: And Mrs. Jokish, is that how you say that name? Now do you have much on her?

BARBARA: Little bits and pieces, just like Mrs. Weittenhiller.

VELDA: Uh huh. Well I never knew her, but I've heard of her all my life. Was it Mrs. Jokish that took Uncle Austin out to teach him how to spell, or to pass what test?

MARVIN: Brother just older than I, he had a hell of a memory, but he couldn't spell cat. And at that time you had to take a county examination. Well he could pass them all, but he couldn't pass spelling.

BARBARA: Spelling.

MARVIN: Mrs. Weittenhiller was teaching school out by Buchanan, you know where that is?

VELDA: It was Mrs. Jokish, wasn't it?

MARVIN: Mrs. Weittenhiller I think. Anyway, I think you will agree with me in a minute. She told Mother, she said, "He can commit things to memory, and I've give enough of those county spelling tests that I'll have him commit enough words to memory that he'll be able to pass." And that's the way he got out of it.

VELDA: And passed.

MARVIN: Yeah.

BARBARA: Did your mother ever help in the garage out there, bookwork or anything like that?

VELDA: I don't think so, huh uh. No, Ilda Oard I know, that married Clyde Weittenhiller --- right? No, now I'm getting some-thing mixed up. Who is Thompson?

MARVIN: Well there was Leon Thompson, and Norm Thompson, and ---

VELDA: And that --- Orrin Thompson is where I got one of my dogs, I know him.

MARVIN: Yeah. Grant Thompson, Mac Thompson.

VELDA: Mac is who I'm thinking of, and Ilda.

MARVIN: Yeah.

VELDA: Okay. Now I've got the two Ilda's mixed up. Three Ilda's, and that's not that common a name, is it? There is Ilda Oard, and Ilda Thompson, and my mother, right?

MARVIN: Yes.

VELDA: And they were all ---

DOROTHEA: And your mother's name was Ilda?

VELDA: Ilda. And it was Ilda Thompson that worked bookkeeper in the garage, wasn't it?

MARVIN: And she married Mac Thompson.

VELDA: Who was she before she married?

MARVIN: Oard, wasn't it? Ilda Oard, yes.

VELDA: That was Ilda Oard married Mac Thompson?

MARVIN: Yeah.

VELDA: Okay, maybe they ... Then what was Clyde's wife's name?

MARVIN: Bertha, Bertha Weittenhiller.

VELDA: No, that was Mrs. Weittenhiller's first name, wasn't it? The schoolteacher?

BARBARA: Oh, Myra, Myra Weittenhiller.

VELDA: Okay.

MARVIN: Yeah, I believe that's right.

VELDA: Clyde and Bertha. Who helped get the horse out of the well?

MARVIN: I was the one that got him out.

VELDA: Well I know you were one of them, that's for sure. (Laughter)

MARVIN: Come and woke me up and got me out of bed.

DOROTHEA: What kind of a story is this?

MARVIN: Well his horse fell in a septic tank, Clyde Weittenhiller's septic tank, and I don't know why they didn't go ahead and get him out, all they had to do ---

VELDA: I think they were partying, if I remember this story.

MARVIN: They did those things then too.

VELDA: And you didn't.

MARVIN: No. Anyway, by golly they come and woke me up. God the horse fell, and ---

VELDA: Nellie and Lloyd were there too, weren't they?

MARVIN: I think so.

VELDA: Because Nellie reminded me not too awful long ago.

MARVIN: Anyways I said, "What's the matter with your shovels?" I said, "Shovel the dad gum --- slope it out there, and let the horse walk out." "God, never thought of that." Pretty hard for them to think.

VELDA: Middle of the night ---

MARVIN: A lot of whiskey in them, it's pretty hard to think.

VELDA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Now Nellie and Lloyd, are you talking about Hill?

VELDA: Yeah, that's my other parents. I was blessed with two sets of parents.

MARVIN: She used to go out there and she'd go and stay for weeks at a time.

VELDA: And leave my music so I had to go back. Awful! So you see I lied a little bit when I said I lived in Crane all the time. Whenever I could I was out at, with Lloyd and Nell.

MARVIN: What was the name of that horse you rode?

VELDA: Taps.

MARVIN: Tam.

VELDA: Taps.

MARVIN: Taps.

VELDA: Lloyd gave it to Nellie as a wedding present. And he was --- he raised a lot of kids, particularly my brother and I, and Harold Hill, and Lila. Shirley come along a little late, so I don't know too much about her except she was a beautiful baby.

BARBARA: If Mrs. Weittenhiller, Myra, had a son Clyde and was married, was she an older lady when she was teaching you then?

VELDA: Uh huh, yes.

BARBARA: If she had a son of that age ---

VELDA: I think of her kind of like his mother. I mean I remember white hair, kind of a bosomy type ---

DOROTHEA: Busty lady.

BARBARA: About 45 years old, maybe?

VELDA: Oh probably.

BARBARA: 50 ---

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

VELDA: An old woman.

BARBARA: But I mean if she had a son, maybe was he 20 or something at this time, or was he older?

VELDA: Oh no, he was older than that.

BARBARA: Okay.

VELDA: I'm sure, wasn't he?

BARBARA: So maybe she was in her 50's then when she was teaching out there?

VELDA: I would guess so. Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Now who is the Weittenhiller boy that burned up in the school, when it burned down?

VELDA: Ask Dad, I don't know. That's before my time.

BARBARA: I can't say his name now.

MARVIN: ... hitting me at the wrong time.

VELDA: Lost that one for a moment, huh?

DOROTHEA: Was that Herman?

VELDA: We'll come back to it.

MARVIN: Maybe I'll think of it.

VELDA: And what school was it? I don't even remember that.

DOROTHEA: Crane.

BARBARA: It was the boarding ---

VELDA: Well it was the first ---

DOROTHEA: The first, right.

VELDA: See when I went to school there, the dormitory was built.

BARBARA: But the grade school still --- the children did not stay at the boarding school.

VELDA: No, no, no, no.

BARBARA: Just the high school.

VELDA: Yeah, right. And --- I'm confused about, evidently it was before the brick building that this happened that you're talking about. See I don't know that school. I don't know that building or anything there.

DOROTHEA: Well I'm trying to think how long Mrs. Weittenhiller might have taught school out there. Because I know, I remember her as an older lady. Robust kind of a lady, probably in her late ---

MARVIN: County school superintendent.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. --- late '50's, and early '60's, that old at the time. So ---

VELDA: But this was after she quit teaching at Crane.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, she was just the superintendent at that time.

VELDA: That's another just that you don't mean too, isn't it?

DOROTHEA: Right, right. (Laughter) I mean at that time she was the superintendent and she wasn't teaching.

VELDA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Let's put it that way.

VELDA: I know she quit teaching --- that's when I lost her, and that's when I felt about --- when she left teaching was --- she could have waited at least another six months.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, right.

BARBARA: Well what did your mother like to do?

VELDA: Loved asters and baby breathe.

BARBARA: She was a gardener?

VELDA: She had some beautiful gardens, didn't she Dad? Some beautiful flower gardens. I always think of that. She would have been 90 last Tuesday, and daffodils down in the valley are just so yellow you just can't see anything else. So she has been on

my mind this week quite a bit. And she has been gone; it will be 20 years in October.

MARVIN: Isn't that funny, I can't say that young Weittenhiller's name.

VELDA: It will come to you. Because I can't help you with that one, we'll just have to ---

DOROTHEA: I knew it, but I can't think of it.

VELDA: I just vaguely remember having heard about it. There was

--- wasn't there an Oard boy that died too, kind of drastic? And I remember my mother telling me something about diabetes, which I had never --- You know before they had insulin. And I can't remember if that was the Oard boy. I'm going to pull it towards you a little bit more, Father (ashtray). Careful --- no I really wasn't trying to protect myself. Go ahead hit me --- I dare you. (Laughter)

BARBARA: So your brother, how did you and your brother get along? What are some of the things that the two of you did?

VELDA: I was the big sister. And after Mom and Dad divorced, why he had more women than he needed, poor guy. In fact I remember ---

... (Static on tape)

MARVIN: Went back and took my wife and I back to where I was born in New York state. Went up to Niagara Falls and into Canada, and Yellowstone Park. Oh, it was a beautiful trip. And I hadn't smoked for 15 years. ... I was sitting there, and here my wife, and Roy and Velda, and they was all of them smoking. I said, "Give me a cigarette in self protection." All three of them quit smoking; I'm still at it.

BARBARA: That was unfair.

DOROTHEA: Thank you very much. (Roy gets batteries.)

ROY: You betcha.

BARBARA: Do we have some wrong information? (On Marvin's transcript.)

VELDA: A little bit. Well I see in here that you have got just one Doc Denman, and



actually Uncle Austin, Dr. Austin Denman was out here awhile too, wasn't he?

MARVIN: Yes.

VELDA: So there was two Dr. Denman's.

MARVIN: When they went back east, his first wife passed away, Bertha. And he went back there ---

BARBARA: One went back to Minneapolis, wasn't it? Isn't that what you said?

MARVIN: To that clinic.

VELDA: Mayo.

BARBARA: The Mayo Clinic.

MARVIN: They found out he --- you know buckaroos break a leg, break a leg, and he was an expert at setting those legs. And they got him to go back there. I think that's right. My daughter contradicts me, I'm wrong.

VELDA: Well if she knows better, she'll contradict you. You can depend on it. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Well we always say ---

VELDA: I'm not his daughter for nothing.

BARBARA: We always say that it's as the person remembers at the time.

VELDA: That's right.

BARBARA: And two people will remember a same event different ways, you know.

VELDA: Right, yes.

BARBARA: We don't have anything that's gospel.

VELDA: No, and we don't either. Something I ran across that I'll bet you girls would enjoy having is an old poem about --- before my time that some cowboy wrote. Remember Dad, I sent you a copy of it in the last year or so, I just found it. And my mother had identified most of those old cowboys in that, like Jim Green and

--- And I know my uncle is one of them.

MARVIN: ... Paul Stewart.

VELDA: What was it?

MARVIN: Lep. (Note: Presume nickname came about because he drank milk like a leppy calf.)

VELDA: Lep, okay, okay.

MARVIN: Lep.

VELDA: And bringing up Paul and ---

MARVIN: Jim and Fred Green. Fred Green was Mr. Craven's chauffeur. They had a bank, and the Swift and Company owned all these ranches from, well New Diamond, Old Diamond, Round Barn, P Ranch, Roaring Springs, Three Mile, XL, and Spangleburger, all kinds of --- they owned a whole string of ranches out there. They had a Chummy (sp.?) Cadillac, and Fred Green was the chauffeur. And those guys were very sanctimonious, you know. So we got down to Denio, and the bedbugs never would, they didn't like the smell of me, they just passed me up.

VELDA: And I inherited that, but my brother didn't.

MARVIN: They were on the move, the bedbugs just moved someplace else, they were on the move. So Mr. Craven said, "Fred," he said, "she's broke down." So, there wasn't a thing the matter with it, he wanted to bed him down in those bed bugs.

VELDA: He was not a vicious man, very!

MARVIN: Anyway, we got the Cadillac out and drove all over the country, that evening after it got dark. But he went over and said, "Mr. Craven, we can't, we got to stay there all night, I've got to send to Winnemucca to get some parts." Which was a lie! Anyway Mr. Craven asked --- (people) here, come on in. Anyway, we drove all over the country. Then the next day he come up, why there wasn't any pavement between Crane and Princeton at that time, he just made another road out in the sagebrush. It got to wash ...

VELDA: Go see what Ellie wanted.

MARVIN: And he --- but he got about, I looked back and I saw this train of dust a coming. I said, "That must, has to be Fred Green."

VELDA: Turned them loose, didn't they?

MARVIN: They said, "Would you tell your man to slow up?" Mr. Craven said, "I'm sorry, when he gets this close to town I can't do a damn thing with him." Boy you talk about dusty people; they were really covered with dust.

VELDA: How about the bootleg that you helped with?

MARVIN: What?

VELDA: Have you told them the story about the bootleg, the time you --- somebody run out of liquor?

MARVIN: Oh, I don't know if I did or not.

ROY: Yeah, it's in there.

VELDA: Yeah, it's in there. Okay.

MARVIN: It's in there?

VELDA: Yeah, it's there. Okay. I wanted to be sure you got that one. Picking on everybody else.

MARVIN: Old Charlie Turner and Juan Redon, bootlegging. Run out of whiskey, and I went up to get some more, lived up in Oregon Canyon, and Juan was driving. Turner had an arm off I think about like that. And old Juan drove up in front of the hotel, turned around and said, "By god I lose him." He thought he would be crippled up. Went up there, he was coming down the road, swinging that stub arm, a cussing that Mexican ---

VELDA: He was mad.

MARVIN: Throw a man out and wouldn't even stop and let him get back in.

VELDA: But I was remembering about that poem. Do you remember the poem at all?

What I'll have to do, I'll make a copy of it and send it to you, because I don't remember it. Dad has a copy, or had anyhow. But it's a nice, fits in with the history of the area. Of course it also includes my mother's brother who was a whole year --- oh no, not quite a year older than she was, huh?

MARVIN: I don't know.

VELDA: You did know, you forgot. He was the oldest.

MARVIN: Oldest what?

VELDA: Gilbert was the oldest, wasn't he, of all you guys?

MARVIN: I think so. I think Gilbert ---

VELDA: And then you, and then came ... Father. And then came --- no, Aunt Mary and -- - yeah, then Aunt Mary, then my mother, and then Roy's mother. And that's all within two years. Roy and I really got blessed with a bunch. (Laughter) And we still have this one and Roy's mother.

BARBARA: And so how and where did you meet Roy?

VELDA: I was a barmaid in a --- nights.

MARVIN: Some dancing place, I know that. You was dancing and Roy ---

VELDA: I was not!

MARVIN: You was in ---

VELDA: It was a bar.

MARVIN: Yeah, but there was ---

ROY: Nightclub.

VELDA: It was a nightclub, yeah. But I was working, I wasn't dancing.

ROY: I was dancing.

VELDA: Yeah, he was. And I was serving him, and it wasn't until after I married him found out he was too young to be served. (Laughter)

BARBARA: I think a lot of that happened early on, didn't it?

VELDA: Yeah. '48, 1948. So we're getting close to fifty years now, and they said it would never last a year. And I'm not sure if we'd had the money if it would have or not.

(Laughter)

DOROTHEA: And how many children do you have?

VELDA: I had two at the time we were married. And he adopted them, and then we had a third one. So we have three only children.

DOROTHEA: Three only?

VELDA: That's what I had to explain to a teacher one time. "Oh, I thought that was an only child." I said, "She is. I've got two more only children at home." And let's see, where were we now? Who knows, huh?

DOROTHEA: See we were talking about the poem, now what is this poem about, and how did you acquire it?

VELDA: It's one that my mother had, and it was from the days of the haying crews and that, and the cowboys.

BARBARA: Is it something she wrote, or just acquired?

VELDA: No not she, it's one of the crews, one of the cowboys, on one of the ranches they worked or something. But my uncle is --- it was a little verse about, like Jim Green's the size of his boots, and things like that, you know. I mean it was just a --- We didn't have TV.

BARBARA: A local.

VELDA: Right, uh huh. And Mother, the only thing she had to do with it, is for my sake she told me who, you know; it would be nicknames about the different people.

DOROTHEA: Right.

BARBARA: Who the poem was referring to, the people.

VELDA: Uh huh. I think it --- It's a part of Harney County history.

MARVIN: I remember they called Paul Stewart Lep, I know that.

VELDA: And I think that's in there. And why can't I think of Paul Stewart's wife's name?

ROY: Mary.

MARVIN: Ruth.

VELDA: Ruth, that's better. I knew it was common, but I couldn't think of it. I remember Ann, their daughter, was an only child, and I thought was terribly spoiled, and she probably was. More only children. But I remember Ruth one time, when we were staying there. Usually we stayed with Lloyd and Nell Hill when we came back. After Mom and Dad divorced, we ... Well not every summer, but most summers we'd spend here, or down --- After you and Mother were divorced, I say we spent most of our summers in this area, down to Denio, or McDermitt, or ---

But we always spent time with Lloyd and Nell Hill. And this one time Nellie had, I think it was the time Nellie wrecked the car out there at the corner going to Crane, and she broke her tail bone. And so we were at Stewarts, we didn't usually stay there. But this time Nellie was in --- Wayne Johnson, good lord this isn't getting us anywhere is it? His mother made horseradish. He was cooking for Lloyd and Nell that summer. Anyhow it was raining and I was out in the hammock in a swimming suit at Stewarts, and the hammock broke, and I broke my tailbone. So Nellie and I ended up with Mrs. Johnson waiting on us in two beds. I think it was at the Sod Ranch, Sod House, that they were haying at that time.

And then I remember when my father caught us smoking. That was down at the lake, my brother and Harold Hill and I. And we had been smoking tules, and my brother went to the house to get a drink of water, and Lloyd and Dad were talking there, you know, out by the well. And my brother found a can of Prince Albert. And he asked the

men if it belonged to them, and of course they weren't paying no attention to the kid, and so he high tailed it for the sheep shed where Harold and I were waiting. And --- not waiting, we were smoking tules there. And now we had newspaper and Prince Albert! And finally my dad went to fill his pipe and he didn't have any Prince Albert. And he kind of remembered Gordon asking, so high tailed it where we were. And he was very disappointed in us. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Disappointed, or angry?

VELDA: Well he always made me feel like he was disappointed; I'd really let him down that I'd do such a thing. Anyhow I never smoked another cigarette for a long, long time after that. I promised him I wouldn't.

DOROTHEA: What kind of punishment did you get?

VELDA: Oh no, the talking.

DOROTHEA: Just the talking.

BARBARA: The hurt feelings was quite enough.

VELDA: Oh you bet, oh you bet. No that was, that always worked with me. I could be about that big.

BARBARA: So what type of things did you do when you would come for summers, if you would come over here ---

VELDA: Ride old Taps. And one of my favorite memories is up at the Hunter Ranch, and Eunice Lee had gone up with us. And she'd never been away from home, and of course I was just, you know, anybody that would get homesick at Lloyd and Nell's had to have rocks in their head.

BARBARA: What was her first name?

VELDA: Eunice.

BARBARA: Oh, Eunice.

DOROTHEA: Eunice, and she's a Higgs girl.

VELDA: Uh huh, yeah. JoEllen was just older.

DOROTHEA: And Mary.

VELDA: And Mary Rachel (Higgs Preston), and Harold DeWitt (Higgs), whom we heard from not very long ago, huh?

BARBARA: So did you have chores to do, or was it mostly just fun when you came for the summers, you and your brother?

VELDA: Oh, there might have been chores, but they were fun. I don't remember ever, chores. Huh uh. I took care of kids in McDermitt when we went down there. Begged my dad for a nickel so that we could buy a kid an ice cream. I remember that.

BARBARA: Get on your horse and roam around?

VELDA: Not, no not with Dad. Of course we didn't have a horse. McDermitt is a big town, you know, almost as big as Crane. I don't know what we did in McDermitt besides -- we had some chores, I know, but --- I remember passing out making a meat loaf at the kitchen. Do you remember that? I was at the age where my way of getting away from pain at that time of the month was --- I'd faint.

BARBARA: Oh dear.

VELDA: Real convenient. I did it one time down on Fifth and Taylor, I think, in Portland. On the streetcar tracks.

BARBARA: Oh gosh.

VELDA: But anyhow, I remember --- and it was hot, oh lord it was hot. I can remember that real well. And I can remember beating those eggs, you know, for the meatloaf. And the next thing I knew I was laying on the floor, and Dad and Frances were pouring water all over me. And I had eggs all over me. Do you remember that?

MARVIN: No.



DOROTHEA: Oh.

MARVIN: I tried to forget that.

VELDA: Well those are the kinds of things I can't forget. And, I don't know, I think we're rambling now, aren't we?

DOROTHEA: Well we're just kind of trying to put things together in a round about way.

VELDA: Uh huh. I remember --- I am remembering names that I have forgotten for years. We used to walk a lot. I remember we girls used to go for walks in Crane. And I remember one time I wanted to go out to the Hot Springs. And we got out as far as the road that goes up to Harney, and Eunice Lee and Geraldine decided that that was enough. And I wanted to go on, and I remember pitching a temper tantrum in the middle of the road, and they ignored me. (Laughter) I remember that.

DOROTHEA: Well Roy, what did you think about Crane when you first saw it, what was left of it?

VELDA: I told them about the jackrabbit.

ROY: There wasn't much there.

VELDA: Of course there wasn't.

ROY: There is more there than there is now, I guess.

VELDA: Not much.

ROY: Not much, no. We didn't spend a lot of time there. Went out and saw where his garage was. There was something left there at that time.

VELDA: There was a service station there, but it wasn't the same building.

ROY: Wasn't the same building?

VELDA: Huh uh.

ROY: Of course she showed me where they used to live.

VELDA: We used to live --- I remember living in three houses in Crane. Up on the hill

next to Clyde, and behind the garage. Oh, I started to tell you a while ago, one thing I remember about my father's garage, children are not supposed to run through it. That was another talking to I got. I think I might have gotten a report card that was pretty good or something, but that wasn't the place to tell him. And behind the garage we had an outside toilet, because I have a real good picture of me sitting on the back stoop with a chamber pot underneath. Very attractive! (Laughter) My mother loved purple and lavender.

DOROTHEA: You said she loved gardening?

VELDA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Did you have a lot of vegetables and things, or just flower gardens?

VELDA: Flowers I remember. My dog slept with me while Mom and Dad were gone. But I'd hear them come at night, and I'd lay him very carefully on the rug beside the bed.

DOROTHEA: That's what you were going to talk about, your dog.

VELDA: Oh, and Orrin Thompson had a dog, and he lived what, was that about three miles out of town, five miles? Three?

MARVIN: Three or five, something like that.

VELDA: And Dad never let us have a dog, we didn't have pets. Well Orrin, this dog would come in the back of the pickup or something, you know, and of course I made a big fuss over this dog. And it got so Orrin would come to town with his dog, and then he'd go home and his dog wasn't there. And if he did take his dog home, the dog would come back. And finally Orrin says, "Well it might as well be your dog." So I got Orrin Thompson's dog, and his name was Sport. And then, oh Stub Currey, what was his dad's name, Clinton?

MARVIN: Nolan.

VELDA: Nolan, okay. He worked for Lloyd and Nell Hill, and he had a female that had

pups out on the lake. And they were, of course, were awful sweet. And Nolan gave us a dog. And no amount of Father's talk could talk us into giving it back. And his --- oh it was a smart dog. His name was, "Snowball With A Little Mud On Him". And when we left Crane --- I said good-bye to my father without any tears, but I sure couldn't say good-bye to my dog. (Laughter) I always displayed my father's tears for when he came to town. I always could handle the separation; it was the excitement of seeing him. But D. E. Clark, the principal at Crane, as I say this was a real smart dog. And he just loved that dog, didn't he?

MARVIN: ... (He had got letter from Jane, Clark's wife.)

VELDA: Yeah, from Jane?

MARVIN: Yeah, you see that ...

VELDA: Yeah, I --- In fact I wrote to her. So he got my dog, which of course as long as I had to part with him, that was a wonderful place for him. But he, wasn't D. E. (Clark) running the service station then too? That was after you had gone down to Denio.

MARVIN: Yeah, I think so.

VELDA: And ---

MARVIN: Then they moved to Baker.

VELDA: Uh huh. Which is now called Baker City again, I guess. And, but he didn't, he only had him about a year or so, and there was some kind of a circus came to town, or so I was told. If it was sadder than that, I never heard about it anyhow. He was such a smart dog that they figured the circus stole him. That's the story I got. So that was my dogs.

BARBARA: So what, was your father working in his garage all the time that you were in Crane, or was he on the mail routes at all during, any time?

VELDA: Huh uh, not when I was a kid.

BARBARA: Okay.

VELDA: No. No, he did that after he went down to Denio.

BARBARA: I didn't quite remember whether it was after.

VELDA: No, it was after he went down to Denio.

DOROTHEA: Now was Harriman and all of those other towns still in existence when you were a kid?

VELDA: Huh uh. No, in fact the only time that I know that I've been to Harriman as such, or at least the homestead where his parents were, was oh about 15 years ago when that (cousins from California and Oklahoma were visiting and Dad took us out there)

--- Anyhow we had a grand trip out there. He has taken my oldest daughter out there since. But --- and we found the old cellar, and I found one of those black ebony buttons that was, as far as I know was off my grandmother's clothing and so forth. But that's the only time I've ever been there, knowingly.

DOROTHEA: But there isn't anything left anymore?

VELDA: No, they moved that Denman Hotel from there. My first memory of Crane, probably one of my first memories, is standing at the foot of the bed in the Denman Hotel when --- and my mother put me, warm clothing on me, so Mary Rachel (Higgs) could take me over there with (to watch them ice skate in front of the depot at the south end of Main) --- It was probably a year like this with a lot of water.

... (Unrelated conversation)

DOROTHEA: ... Well we're about to the end of our tape again. And if there is anything that we have forgotten, I can't come up with it. But we would like to thank you for the time.

VELDA: Well thank you.

DOROTHEA: And if there is anything, later that you would like to add on to it, we could sure ---

VELDA: I need some names and addresses.

DOROTHEA: Okay. We could sure add it on or, you know, we could put in a little postscript and add it into this. And like I said, I think this is what we'll do, is we'll just kind of continue this, or put it in as an addition to your dad's history.

VELDA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And don't you think that will work? Or it's going to make an awful long one, but ---

BARBARA: When we get it typed up, we can see how it fits in. We weren't real prepared today for doing this.

VELDA: Well neither was I.

DOROTHEA: But I think we've kind of filled in a few empty spots anyway. But we'd like to thank you for the afternoon. And we're glad to have met you.

VELDA: Well it's nice to meet both you gals, and I hope I see you again.

BARBARA: Thank you.

VELDA: And I'll look forward to reading this, and maybe I will have some --- Obviously my husband has found something here, so we'll see what we can do about that.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

VELDA: What did you say hon?

ROY: Are you taking that home with you? (Marvin's transcript.)

VELDA: I don't think so.

BARBARA: No, no.

VELDA: This is their own. Barbara would just love it if we took it. (Laughter) I'm going to give it to her right now, with the promise that she ---

ROY: You use a computer or typewriter?

DOROTHEA: Thank you.

(END OF TAPE) (Poem included in transcript #369 - Marvin Curry)

bl