

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #414 - Sides A/B

Subject: Helen Smith Felt - With Video

Date: June 19, 1997

Place: Harney County Library, Burns, Oregon

Interviewer: Dorothea Purdy

DOROTHEA PURDY: This is Dorothea Purdy, and we're at the Harney County Library, and the date is June 19th, 1997. We're going to be talking with Helen Felt who lived here, and was born in Denio. And we will now visit with her. We're in Burns, Oregon at the Harney County Library. Helen, we'll start by asking you your full name.

HELEN FELT: Okay, my name is Helen Elizabeth Smith Felt.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and where were you born?

HELEN: I was born in Denio, Oregon.

DOROTHEA: And who were your parents?

HELEN: My parents were Marie Anna Denier Defenbaugh, and my father was Irwin Edward Smith.

DOROTHEA: Okay, let's spell Denier and Defenbaugh.

HELEN: D E N I E R and Defenbaugh, D E F E N B A U G H.

DOROTHEA: Okay, what was your mother's maiden name?

HELEN: I really don't know.

DOROTHEA: You don't know? Okay.

HELEN: I don't. Must have been Denier.

DOROTHEA: Either that or ---

HELEN: Yes, yes, it would have been Denier, of course.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And do you know some of their history, where they were born, and approximately what year?

HELEN: Well my mother was born February 5th, 1896 in Cincinnati, Ohio. And my father was born in Lathrop, California on September 27th, 1884.

DOROTHEA: And what was his name?

HELEN: Irwin Edward Smith.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

HELEN: Called "Smitty" or "Mustang" in Harney County.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Tell us something about why they ended up in Denio, or this area in Harney County.

HELEN: Well Mother arrived in Harney County when she was only 2 years old, because her mother had come across the plains to her mother, Grandma (Mary) Adrian, and persuaded her husband to come also. But he did not like this country, and he returned to Ohio and they lost touch with each other, with communication such as it was in those days. So Mother remained in Trout Creek and ultimately married Del Defenbaugh. No, my mother didn't marry Defenbaugh, that was her mother married Del Defenbaugh.

DOROTHEA: Your grandmother.

HELEN: My grandmother.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: Mother was raised up on Trout Creek until 1908, when Grandpa Defenbaugh built the store in Denio, and it was there that she met her first husband, who was named Bohlander. And they returned to Cincinnati, but this young man wasn't ready for marriage. So they --- I don't know how Mom got back to Oregon, really, because my sister Barbara was born after she returned, and the husband never came back. So when my sister Barbara was 2 years old she met my father Irwin Smith who was driving a 20-

mule team freight delivery to Grandpa's store in Denio. And it was there he met my mother and married her, and adopted my sister Barbara, and then raised seven children.

DOROTHEA: Okay, that brings us to the fact that you have brothers and sisters. Let's get their names.

HELEN: My oldest sister was Barbara Beatrice; my second sister, four years younger than I, is Kathryn ("Dixie") Marie; my brother was Vern Lamar; next in the family is Ervene ("Venie") Lois; and then Irwin Earl ("Bud") (later changed to Earl Irwin); and my brother Milo Merle. We were all born on odd years. My sister in 1911, my oldest sister; then I in 1915; then 1919; 1921; 1923; 1925; and 1931.

DOROTHEA: Well that's really different, because usually in between someplace there is an even year. But ---

HELEN: Never one.

DOROTHEA: Not a one.

HELEN: And particularly the last boy who was born, even he got here on an odd year.

DOROTHEA: Right, right.

HELEN: Six years later.

DOROTHEA: That's what I was going to say; he was quite a lot younger.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: So what did your mother do while, when she first came back, while she was --- before she met your dad?

HELEN: Probably rode a great deal, because she was a cowgirl.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: And she didn't like the life of the Denio Store. And of course when she met my dad, who was a buckaroo by then --- my father was born to, my granddad on that side was a college professor at the University of California, Southern California. And his father

had died when he was only 16, so he had driven heavy equipment, which was heavy equipment in those days; the big combines, headed or pulled by what, 20 horses or whatever. And then rode horseback, and finally drove cattle from California for the PLS Company to Oregon. That's how he happened to be, finally get a freight team to Denio.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Well talk about something about what you remember of Denio. Tell us something a little bit about what was a town in Oregon.

HELEN: It was a town. It was a town bigger than Crane ever got to be in its original state. It had houses on both sides of the street, and a garage, and this general merchandise store. And a hotel, and residences all up and down the street, and a school. And a bar of course. And the house where I was born was on, in Denio, and was standing up until the time they moved everything away. And they moved everything away out of Denio, Oregon to become Denio in Nevada because of Oregon taxes. It was much more profitable to operate a business on the Nevada side. There was an interesting house, view --- I guess it was probably --- it was not the original hotel. The original hotel was a big hotel on the Oregon side up by the creek. But then they built a hotel later that was half in Oregon and half in Nevada, so they could drink on one side and eat on the other. The hotel rooms were divided between Nevada and Oregon. That hotel, I think, still stands.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. So in other words Denio was more or less on the Oregon-Nevada border.

HELEN: Exactly, yes. Went right through the town. No, no, everything was on the Oregon side when I was a child. There was nothing on the Nevada side until they moved everything to the Nevada side.

DOROTHEA: But what I meant was it sits right on the Nevada and Oregon ---

HELEN: Right, oh yes, it was very easy to move it. It wasn't a quarter of a mile to move

all the buildings, whatever buildings that they were.

DOROTHEA: Now where did you go to school?

HELEN: I went to school up Trout Creek. My dad and mother moved to Trout Creek in 1927. No, they lived there until 1927. I was a baby, probably; I probably was 3 or 4 years old when they moved up Trout Creek. So I went to school always from 1st grade through 7th in the original Trout Creek School, which is an old stone building, and I think dates from at least 1908, maybe earlier than that. And then I went to Winnemucca and graduated from the 8th grade in 1926. Was in Battle Mountain from 1927 to '31, which would have been my freshman through junior years. Then I came to Burns and went to high school in 1931, and graduated from Burns Union High School in 1932.

DOROTHEA: Do you remember any of the teachers that were in Trout Creek?

HELEN: Oh yes, very well. My first teacher was Mary (Mrs. William) Huffman, who taught me 1st and 2nd grade, the first year; 3rd and 4th grade the second year; and then she took a school elsewhere and Opal (Mrs. Frank) Seaward was my teacher until I left in, to go to Winnemucca.

DOROTHEA: Winnemucca.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: So in other words your teachers taught more than one class.

HELEN: Oh it was a, very much a rural school. And never did we have all 8 grades. Because I think probably our biggest attendance would have been about ten kids.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: I had one classmate, Arlene Seaward.

DOROTHEA: Now did you have, what kind of best friend relationships did you have?

HELEN: Well Arlene, of course, was practically my only friend. They was, probably the only child within a radius of 40 miles my age.

DOROTHEA: Well having so many brothers and sisters, did you ever go to school with any of them, or were they ---

HELEN: Oh yes, my sister Barbara and I were always in school together. And then my sister Dixie started school in Trout Creek. And let's see, if I was in 7th grade, Vern probably got to go to first grade in Trout Creek as well.

DOROTHEA: Well why did you go to Winnemucca from there?

HELEN: My dad was a hay contractor, and that's how we made a living, because those little ranches up Trout Creek would scarcely support a family of our size. So he did hay contracting on the Alvord and clear over to the P Ranch. And ultimately ranched down in the Humboldt area, and that's why we went to Winnemucca. At one time my dad had a, 100 head of horses under harness.

DOROTHEA: Under harness?

HELEN: Under harness.

DOROTHEA: Oh my goodness. And what did he do with all of these horses?

HELEN: Hayed.

DOROTHEA: He hayed.

HELEN: He harvested hay.

DOROTHEA: He must have hired help to work under him?

HELEN: Always.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. So now they traveled all over that end of the valley to do hay for different ---

HELEN: That's right.

DOROTHEA: --- to contract hay for different ranches.

HELEN: Uh huh, uh huh. The lower Trout Creek, he always hayed the lower Trout Creek Ranch. And he also, as I mentioned, hayed the Alvord and the P Ranch and that far

north.

DOROTHEA: Well yesterday we were talking, and the Whitehorse was brought up. Now where did --- is that where your grandparents first came?

HELEN: No, they first came to Trout Creek.

DOROTHEA: Trout Creek.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: So other than ---

HELEN: Where Dad drove cattle for the PLS Company to the Whitehorse Ranch earlier on, but they never lived there.

DOROTHEA: They never lived there.

HELEN: No.

DOROTHEA: In that area?

HELEN: No.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Let's talk about your family a little bit more. What did you kids do to entertain yourselves?

HELEN: Oh, it was a wonderful life. We had a tremendous child-hood, because we were the people on the last ranch up the creek. We made our own entertainment. We built wagons and harness, and worked the dogs. We always had a lamb, a leppy lamb. We always had a favorite calf. We worked hard, we worked very hard. My sister and I milked 16 cows night and morning when I was a child going to school, and fed leppy lambs. We had as many as 125 leppy lambs at the ranch at a given time.

DOROTHEA: Now did all these lambs nurse off of a bottle, or ---

HELEN: Yes. My dad was an inventor type of a man, and he built a stall and broke the end out of the base out of whiskey bottles, or wine bottles, whatever, that would hold at least a quart size. And he would slope those so that you could take a dipper and dip the

milk into that. And then you would fasten the nipple onto that bottle, and we would lift those lambs into these, each respective stall and they'd get their fair share of the milk. Then you lifted them out and put in some more.

DOROTHEA: So that is quite a chore in itself.

HELEN: It was, it was.

DOROTHEA: Did you and your sister do this by yourself? Because I know in my family we each had our own chores. So were ---

HELEN: My sister Barbara and I were pretty much of a team. Because my sister Kathryn, Dixie, was 4 years younger, and so we were pretty much assigned these --- but Mother was always not very far behind. Because when a lamb was too big, Mom was there to help us to lift it, or whatever we had to do. Those lambs got so smart, that all you had to do was touch the back of their head and they would leap into those stalls, because they were after that milk.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Yeah, we had lambs too, so I know what you're talking about. Of course we didn't have that many. I think the most we ever had was probably about ten, and that was a lot for us.

HELEN: Because you held the bottle.

DOROTHEA: Right, right.

HELEN: But you see we didn't, we had so many we didn't hold the bottle.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, yeah, that's what I was going to say. I didn't know how you would feed that many, but now I understand. What did the other kids do, what were their main chores?

HELEN: Oh, as each one got big enough in a family of that size, you probably, your first chores were to wash the dishes. And then if you got a little bit older you helped scrub the floors. We all were assigned to carry the water up for washing. Because the water for

washing had to be carried from Trout Creek up a pretty good hill. I'd like to know how far that was. Seemed to me a mile when I was a kid. And I always had a bad back, so I never could carry my share of the water. My sister Barbara would pick up two 5-gallon cans and carry her water and dump it into the tub. I would have to have somebody help me get up the hill with one 5-gallon can of water. But Dixie and I then became a team, and we had a stick that stuck through the can, bail, and it would be more on her side so that it would level the load, and the two of us would labor up the hill with our share of the water.

DOROTHEA: So I know what this is like too, because we had to pack water for washing, and doing dishes, and drinking, and everything.

HELEN: Absolutely.

DOROTHEA: Until we got an electric pump, which we didn't have for a long, long time. But I remember one time in particular my grandmother was scolding us because we weren't doing it fast enough. So I can remember this so plainly because I was slopping my water, and you know kids, that's not smart. But I was slopping my water so that it would make the bucket lighter. And then I'd say I hope this freezes and she falls and breaks her neck down that ... (Laughter) Never thinking that I was going to have to make four more trips for every bit I slopped. But yeah, we packed a lot of water. So ---

HELEN: We had some difficulty. Dixie and I had some difficulty from time to time about whether she had her share of the load or not. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Yeah. So I imagine you did your share of packing wood and everything for the stove.

HELEN: Oh absolutely. That's why the dogs were hitched to the wagon, because the dogs had to pull the wood into --- there, for the house.

DOROTHEA: You went to Klamath Falls then for your 8th, 7th and 8th grade, or just the

8th?

HELEN: No, I went to Winnemucca.

DOROTHEA: I mean not Klamath Falls, I meant Winnemucca. What was the difference in the schools?

HELEN: Well actually I was better equipped than any of the Winnemucca kids. I don't know --- all of us children were richly blessed because we had good family support in learning school lessons. And we also had wonderful support in my dad putting education number one, so all of us did well in school. And we had the reputation of those damn smart Smith kids. Because we'd always out-distance somebody that they thought they should be doing as well as we. So I did well in Winnemucca, I graduated high in my class in Winnemucca.

DOROTHEA: And also at a younger age.

HELEN: Right, right.

DOROTHEA: Was that 11 or 12?

HELEN: They were, yes, I graduated when I was only 11, and was 12 that summer. And most of the kids in that class was 12 and 13.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. And then you came, where did you go to high school?

HELEN: Battle Mountain.

DOROTHEA: Battle Mountain.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And what were those classes like, and did you have more than one teacher, or ---

HELEN: Yes, it was an average high school curriculum that we, like we would experience today, and like we experienced in Burns when I came here.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And then from there you did come to Burns to finish out your high

school year.

HELEN: Right.

DOROTHEA: And that was for the senior year?

HELEN: Right.

DOROTHEA: And do you remember who the principal was at that time?

HELEN: Merle Bennett.

DOROTHEA: Merle Bennett.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And also, let's see if you can remember some of your teachers.

HELEN: Well Marjorie Wilson was our class advisor that year, and Dick Witzel was one of our teachers. Of course Dalton, Ches Dalton was the commercial teacher. Oh, I can see her really well --- can't remember right this minute what her name was, the English teacher. Social studies was Marjorie Wilson.

DOROTHEA: Okay, what did you do after you graduated? Now did you go on to school, or what was, where did you go?

HELEN: Immediately upon my graduation I was asked by Tom Dufurrena to come to the McGee Valley Ranch, which is now part of the Sheldon Refuge, to teach his children. And I taught a rural school with five grades there, for one year, with no other certification, no other education except a high school diploma. Had a wonderful experience, and just was fun. I had a first grader and a ninth grader in that school.

DOROTHEA: Oh, quite a difference in age there. I think maybe we got to go back and spell Tom's last name again, Dufurrena.

HELEN: D U F U R R E N A.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Because when Barbara types this up, well she won't know how to spell these names, so --- I'll probably have to get your telephone number so she can call

you if she has any problems.

HELEN: Okay.

DOROTHEA: Let's go on then, and then that was the first year out of school, then what did you do?

HELEN: I immediately went to Oregon Normal School with the intention of taking a summer school, and perhaps taking another Nevada school. But when I got there I qualified for several scholarships because I had straight A's that summer term, and they gave me a school loan so that I could remain in Monmouth. And I stayed then in Monmouth until I had graduated. And at that time Monmouth was a two-year school. But because I went there in the summer and stayed through the subsequent summer at the end of the two years, I was really almost qualified for the third year certificate. And then I secured a position in Hines and returned to Harney County.

DOROTHEA: Well what were your other brothers and sisters doing besides going to school? Did they, what did Barbara end up doing?

HELEN: When we were going to school in Battle Mountain my sister Barbara married and left home and raised a family.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and your other sisters and brothers?

HELEN: Vern, no my next, well my next sibling is Dixie, Kathryn, went to high school in Crane. Vern went to high school in Crane, or Ervene ("Venie") went to high school in Crane, and Bud went to high school, Bud Earl went to high school in Crane.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and so they all graduated from Crane?

HELEN: Uh huh. Then my brother Milo went to high school in Winnemucca.

DOROTHEA: In Winnemucca.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: By then had your folks sold the store, or were they still running the store or

the ranch?

HELEN: My dad sold the Trout Creek Ranch when we left there in 1927.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

HELEN: Then they returned to Denio in 1931 and lived out their lives in Denio, and at the Red Point. My dad bought the land, a ranch at the Red Point, which is this side of the Grove property in southern Harney County. And my mother had inherited a piece of property from her mother, which was at that time, and always known as the Poer Farm. And so they lived there for a number of years.

DOROTHEA: And where is that, is that ---

HELEN: That is this side of Denio about a mile and a half or two miles.

DOROTHEA: Okay, okay, so it doesn't have any, like Trout Creek or any special name?

HELEN: No, it was just called the Poer farm.

DOROTHEA: Poer Farm, okay.

HELEN: And it was a fairly poor farm.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Then after you graduated then from your two years of college in Monmouth, you came back here to teach in Hines, what grades?

HELEN: I taught 5th and 6th my first year, which was 1935 and '36. The following year '36, '37 I also taught in Hines.

DOROTHEA: Were you one of the first teachers that was hired? I know Reatha Dunn was ---

HELEN: Reatha was not there yet.

DOROTHEA: She wasn't there yet.

HELEN: No, not ---

DOROTHEA: So then you were one of the first teachers.

HELEN: I am the only person that was in that original school. Roscoe Anderson was the

principal; his wife Sarah was the first grade teacher. His sister, and for heaven I can't remember her name, his sister Marie was in high school with me, but he had another older sister who taught out at Hines. Then Ella Mackey was the 4th, the 3rd and 4th grade teacher. And I was the 5th and 6th grade teacher, and Mr. Anderson was the 7th and 8th grade teacher in that original school.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

HELEN: Before I went there, the teacher who preceded me was called; her name was Ruby Koonst, who had the 5th and 6th grade. She was never, she was not successful, and, because she couldn't handle those children. And the Hines School in that day, we had kids straight out of the lumberjacks, really. And they were pretty difficult kids, and they managed to run Ruby Koonst out. And Mr. Anderson was dead set against another beginning teacher. And I was able to persuade the school board that I was their best candidate, and they elected me over his opposition. And I will always be grateful to Tony Oas and Mr. Gibbon, his name was Erwin (corrected to Clarence) Gibbon, and who else? Can't remember the other schoolman's name.

DOROTHEA: Well let's go back to Mrs. Koonst name, how do you ---

HELEN: Miss.

DOROTHEA: Miss.

HELEN: K O O N S T, Koonst, Ruby Koonst.

DOROTHEA: Okay, so that's another spelling, see we have to get all these names spelled right. How many years did you teach there?

HELEN: Two.

DOROTHEA: And then where did you go?

HELEN: To Burns, Burns Grade School.

DOROTHEA: What ---

HELEN: In the old building.

DOROTHEA: In the old building that we don't have a picture of in the museum, I mean, we don't have a picture of it. And we'd love to have a picture, but I don't know where we are going to get it.

HELEN: I hope I can find one.

DOROTHEA: What grades did you teach?

HELEN: I taught 5th grade only when I came here.

DOROTHEA: In Burns?

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: How long did you teach there?

HELEN: I taught in Burns from 1937 and '38 school year, and the 1939 and '40 school year.

DOROTHEA: And then what did you do?

HELEN: I married Chester Felt.

DOROTHEA: How did you meet him, and what was his reason for being in Burns, or was he born here?

HELEN: No, Chester Felt came here as a jeweler, and bought out Ed Gemberling, anyway Mr. Gemberling, G E M B E R L I N G, and started a jewelry store here in 1936.

DOROTHEA: In 1936?

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And so how did you meet him?

HELEN: I met him at a --- in those days they had showings of the new cars, and Bennett Motor always had a dance. And when they showed off their, made their presentation of their new car. And we met at this dance, and we danced the rest of our lives away.

(Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Tell us something about your courtship.

HELEN: Oh, it was interesting. When I first went --- I took a watch in to have it fixed, I thought. And I had said to my friend, I'm going up and look over this jeweler; they say he is not married. So a couple of days later she said, "Well what did you think of the new jeweler?" And I said, "Oh, he is a funny man. He has a ski slope nose, and he wears a monocle on his eye." (Laughter) And I came to regret that. I married the ski slope nose man. We lived together for 40 years. We lived and danced together for 40 years.

DOROTHEA: And you spent most of that time in Burns?

HELEN: Uh huh, all of it. We had a store for 39 years together.

DOROTHEA: So tell us something about your life together. And how many children do you have, and what are their names?

HELEN: Our life together was very good. There were many times, and I want to inject this, and so that maybe it will have some influence in future generations. No marriage is 50/50. There are times in a marriage that you have to give 90%, and the other times that you will take 90%. You're very lucky if everything is just even Stephen. And Chet and I established that kind of relation-ship. I kept the books at the store, did all the posting, mailed the statements, and worked in the store every Saturday to help him. He in turn did his share of the dish washing at our house. Whatever else, whatever there needed to be done he shared. And that I think is what makes a marriage.

DOROTHEA: Before we go on to how many children you have, did his parents ever come out to Burns?

HELEN: Chet's father, Axel Felt, came here to live with us, because he had a bad heart and he survived better, which is amazing, in this high altitude, because their home was in Astoria. And Chet had grown up in Astoria. But --- what was I going to add, what was your question?

DOROTHEA: I asked you if his parents ever came to Burns?

HELEN: Oh yes. And then Mother Felt stayed in Astoria until she could sell their property there. Then they moved to Burns and we bought the house at 1246 at North Broadway, where they lived for probably ten years maybe. And they brought their two children, Gloria, who graduated from Burns Union High School, and Axel Jr. who didn't graduate from Burns High School, but who attended Burns. He came here in 8th grade, and graduated from the 8th grade at the old school. And then had some high school before he grew up enough to go live with a brother, another brother over at Grants Pass.

DOROTHEA: Okay, let's go back to Chet before we go any further too. You mentioning that he had brothers and a sister. Let's get their names.

HELEN: He had 11; there were 11 in Chester's family. His oldest sister was Beda, B E D A; the second, and Chester was the second child; then there was Ruth; Doris; David; Eleanor; Gloria; Gladys; and Axel.

DOROTHEA: Now what did his parents do?

HELEN: Dad Felt came to Oregon from Minnesota to be a grain inspector in Astoria.

DOROTHEA: And the mother was just a housewife? Well I should say a homemaker.

HELEN: I should say not "just", if you have 11 children.

DOROTHEA: Right, right.

HELEN: She was a wonderful house --- mother, and homemaker. I know if there are angels in heaven, Mother Felt is up there.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. I believe that about my mother too. Then he came to --- what, how did he get interested even in this area? Had he been here before, or was it just that -
--

HELEN: No, he was able to find a jewelry store that was for sale for a song over in Prairie City. And he had a jewelry store in Prairie City, I think, for probably, he could have been

there five years. He was there at least when the Prairie City Mines were operating. He bought the gold nuggets from the miners that came out of that, those mines at Prairie. Then when Mr. John Gemberling was that man's name, that jeweler here.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

HELEN: And when Mr. Gemberling was going to retire, Chet came and bought the end of his stock and set up here. Because there were more potential buyers, he had a better market here than he had in Prairie City, but not a lot.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and then when were you married?

HELEN: We were married on Christmas day 1938.

DOROTHEA: 1938. Then we'll go on to, did he hire anybody to work at the store, or did he more or less take care of it with your help, himself?

HELEN: Up until our children --- I stopped teaching when I became pregnant with Curtis, and I just finished out that year. And so then I never taught again until the children were up in school. I went back to teach in Hines Grade School when, in 1953.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Now you say your son's name was Curtis. Give us his full name and date of birth. Curtis' name is Curtis Robert Felt, and his birthday is May 31st, his dad's birthday as well, 1941. Then my daughter Sharlene (Walker), S H A R L E N E, was born on February 25th, 1943.

DOROTHEA: Okay. They of course did most of their schooling in Burns.

HELEN: All, in fact.

DOROTHEA: Where did they go from there? Did they go on to college?

HELEN: Yes, both of them graduated from college. Sharlene from the University of Oregon with a Master's degree. And Curtis from Linfield College with a Bachelor's degree.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and do you have grandchildren?

HELEN: I have six, Curtis has three, and Sharlene has three.

DOROTHEA: Can you tell us their names?

HELEN: Yes. A M O N, is Curtis' oldest son, Amon John. His second child is Lasha, L A S H A, Lasha Helen. And his third child is Lehua, L E H U A. And they were all born in Hawaii. Then Sharlene's children are Jeffrey Robert, born in 1968. Raelene, R A E L E N E, born in 1969. And Brady Robert born in 1970.

DOROTHEA: I don't know whether I should ask this question or not, but I'm going to. Sharlene was married to Jeff Walker.

HELEN: To Raymond Walker.

DOROTHEA: Raymond Walker, right, and Jeff is their son.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And Curtis married who?

HELEN: He married a girl from Sacramento; her name was Cynthia, Cynthia Gray.

DOROTHEA: Okay, Gray, okay.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: What, you said that his children were all born in Hawaii. What enticed him to go there, was he in the service or ---

HELEN: He was in the service, and it was a warm place to go where he could finish out his enlistment. So he went to Hawaii two months after he graduated from college, never has returned except to visit.

DOROTHEA: He still lives there?

HELEN: He still lives there.

DOROTHEA: Oh, so he is just up here doing a little, Mama a favor.

HELEN: Right, right on.

DOROTHEA: And we had better tell what he is doing.

HELEN: What, Curtis has always had limited vision, and so he was really never able to put his college education to work. He had to do the things that he was physically able to do. First he farmed, he had a macadamia nut farm and built a factory to crack those very, very hard to crack nuts. Then when the big island became a state, the big industry moved in on the big island and he couldn't compete, so he went to commercial fishing, which he could also do. Which was better for his eyes because he was out in the fresh air, clean air. He is a, skilled on the farm, he became a skilled electrician, plumber, everything. Built, he built the factory actually out of stainless steel, welder. But he never earned a journeyman's license, which was very foolish. Because now in middle age none of those skills are saleable, because he has to work for a minimum wage. So presently he is in electronics doing computer's repair. That's where he changed his life work.

DOROTHEA: Well that ---

HELEN: Oh, in the meantime he did commercial fishing, I think I said that.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. That's a big need though, computers are the age now. So it's a big need for keeping those things going all the time.

HELEN: Right. But it's not easy for a middle age man to compete in the marketplace.

DOROTHEA: No, no it sure isn't. And I find that myself, because my husband is trying to retire, and I wanted to --- I had that, what do they call it, empty nest syndrome, and I needed to do something, and I still do. So, and I can't find work because I'm too old, so that's why I'm doing what I'm doing.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: So I'm working in the museum which keeps me full time. But let's go on with Sharlene then, what does she do?

HELEN: Well Sharlene has been most successful in education, following in her mother's footsteps I guess. Because presently she is the head of the consortium of all agencies

that profit, the adult education field. Her immediate responsibility is adult basic education. But all of the, those services have been amalgamated under one head, under her tutelage which took, as, she and a co-worker eight years to really energize and put in place. But now all of those agencies, the prison education for young adults who have to be re-trained, better business bureau, oh, welfare, all are under her direct supervision at the State Department of Education in Oregon. She travels extensively. She works untold hours, far beyond the call of duty, but she is a successful person. She is a people person.

DOROTHEA: Now how old are your grandkids now?

HELEN: Oh, my oldest grandson is Jeffrey, and he calls himself the number one grandson, and he is 29. So let's see if that is right. If he was born in '65, '68, that would make him ---

DOROTHEA: Well he will be 30 next year.

HELEN: Right, so he is 29. So then Raelene is 28, and Brady is 27. And Amon, Curtis' oldest child is 26, his sister is 24, and his little sister is 18.

DOROTHEA: So they are all out of school now.

HELEN: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Are any of them married?

HELEN: Curtis' middle child, Lasha, is married, has two boys.

DOROTHEA: And so you are a great-grandmother as well.

HELEN: I am a great-grandmother two times.

DOROTHEA: And what are their names?

HELEN: Garion, G A R I O N, and Taelen, T A E L E N. All of Curtis' family come up with very strange names, very individual names, I guess I should say.

DOROTHEA: Does she live in Hawaii yet?

HELEN: Yes, she lives in Hawaii.

DOROTHEA: So they like that warm country. Does Curtis feel like he is really shivering around here?

HELEN: He has been cold ever since he came. He was not cold up there doing the roof yesterday.

DOROTHEA: Oh he wasn't. No, I don't suppose. That was probably a nice place for him to be. Let's go back to, now that we have got all your in-laws and out-laws done. Let's go back to ---

HELEN: I don't know if you want this on record or not, about their divorce.

DOROTHEA: You should put it down, whatever you want to do.

HELEN: Sharlene has raised these children from age 12, 11, and 10.

DOROTHEA: I knew she did.

HELEN: And has put them through college and med school, because Raelene has graduated from med school in Columbia University in New York, and is now a resident physician in Children's Hospital, Oakland. Brady is a resident physician in Salt Lake City, and is specializing in urology, will be there 5 years. And Jeff is in big industry, and very successful there.

DOROTHEA: My goodness, she has got some educated kids.

HELEN: Now Jeff is the one of her three children who didn't elect, as she says, to go to school forever. But she has seen those children through that.

DOROTHEA: Yes, but my gosh what great professions. I mean even industry, you know, is a good one.

HELEN: Oh, Jeff got a job, and he was earning more than his mother at the end of the second year in industry, and she had been in education for 14 years.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, uh huh.

HELEN: So it speaks not too well of America's priorities.

DOROTHEA: Okay, is Curtis still married then?

HELEN: Curtis is divorced.

DOROTHEA: He is divorced too.

HELEN: Yes, he is divorced.

DOROTHEA: And so then he more or less has to take a vacation in order to come and visit. And then you get him to work. (Laughter)

HELEN: I tell him it is time for me to lean on you son.

DOROTHEA: Right. Back to what he is doing, we might mention that you still own the store in Burns.

HELEN: I still own the building, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Or the building.

HELEN: Right.

DOROTHEA: And this is what he is doing for you, is repairing and painting, and just plain maintenance.

HELEN: Just plain maintenance.

DOROTHEA: How often do you have to do that?

HELEN: I have been over here every year since I moved away 17 years ago, and there is always something. Re-roof, put a new front on, put in a new sidewalk, repairs here, do this and that. Curtis came three years ago and re-wired the space at 443 North Broadway.

DOROTHEA: And right now this is owned by Trent Tiller, and Trent's Floors to Go.

HELEN: Is rented, not owned, but rented.

DOROTHEA: Run, yeah run by. You --- how many stores there do you own? I know that

HELEN: Two, just the two.

DOROTHEA: It used to be Ereno's Men's Store was one of them too.

HELEN: Ereno's Men ---

DOROTHEA: You still have that one also?

HELEN: Now that is the one that is now presently occupied by Tammy's Thrifty Threads.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

HELEN: It was the shoe store. It was Mosley's Shoe Store for 10 years.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: But now we don't have a shoe store, we don't have a clothing store, we're really ---

HELEN: Hurting.

DOROTHEA: Uptown, aren't we?

HELEN: Yep.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, we're all ---

HELEN: I can't see why they can't make one of them work.

DOROTHEA: I don't either. I mean, you know, everybody needs clothes.

HELEN: They do.

DOROTHEA: And Farm Store, which used to be in the Penney's building is now, and Sprouse-Reitz building, they're selling out too because they say they can't make it.

HELEN: I wonder why.

DOROTHEA: I just don't know.

HELEN: Must be poor merchandising. Well all through the years now, we had Felt's Jewelry Store for 39 years, and it was tough. There were years that we didn't make a living. If I had not taught we would not have made a living. And there were times in that interim when that mill would go on strike --- one time when we were having to pay excise

tax the federal government came and put a lock on our door because we couldn't meet that excise tax. It was just tough. And we would get out on top, we extended lots of credit. When we sold the store out we had over \$20,000.00 of unpaid bills in that store that I never got a nickel on after he was retired.

DOROTHEA: Well that reminds me that you had said something about you sent out the statements. And I know for a fact, because I think I was one of them that charged at your store. What, how did you get started in charging?

HELEN: It was about the only way people could buy. They couldn't afford the whole price of something, but they could pay on an installment plan. And we didn't send statements if somebody had obligated themselves to pay \$10.00 a pay day, which was largely where our business had to come from, because that was the only real payroll in Harney County then. Since, government employees are the biggest payroll in Harney County. But until that time when the mill was down there was no money.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: And at that time the mill workers were pretty greedy. They really destroyed the lumber industry. The workmen, in my opinion, destroyed the lumber industry.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: Because of their --- the sweeper in the mill made almost one and a half times the money I did, teaching in Hines Grade School.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, they made good money. And I think that's why there were so many -- and they weren't happy with it, you know. That's the reason they went on strike all the time.

HELEN: Never. They had two cars, a boat and a trailer, in every yard in Burns and Hines. But that wasn't enough, they wanted more.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, yeah. And this is where us, as ranchers today look at so many of

the younger people, and we say you know, how can they afford --- I drive an old '83 car, I can't afford a new car.

HELEN: They do.

DOROTHEA: But these young kids drive a new pickup, a new car. They have boats, they have trailer houses, how do they afford them?

HELEN: Credit.

DOROTHEA: Just by credit?

HELEN: The plastic card.

DOROTHEA: Well I guess we're too frugal, I guess.

HELEN: And then they take bankruptcy.

DOROTHEA: Which hurts us.

HELEN: When it gets too deep, when it gets too deep.

DOROTHEA: And the rancher in, when Clinton and I was married in 1956, I sold a 4-H calf to my brother for 48 cents. We sold, 48 cents a pound.

HELEN: Right.

DOROTHEA: And I think the people call it 48 dollars, but that isn't what I'm going to say, because they misunderstand that. But last year we sold our steers for 42 cents.

HELEN: Right.

DOROTHEA: So in these 40 some years the price of cattle has not really come up. And yet they say that the rancher is the richest man, you know. If they only knew the truth.

HELEN: They are not, they are not.

DOROTHEA: No, no, we barely make it. And of course then all the activists are trying to make it worse for us, you know, so it really isn't --- it's not a life to be real big in because you have a lot of problems.

HELEN: Except for the quality.

DOROTHEA: Oh yes, yes.

HELEN: The quality of life.

DOROTHEA: I wouldn't give that up.

HELEN: I wouldn't either. I wouldn't give up my childhood having --- well when my dad, when we got old enough, my dad gave us the option of helping mother in the kitchen, she always cooked for the hay crews, of helping mother in the kitchen or working in the field. And we worked in the field. We raked hay, and bucked hay, and had a wonderful life. And rode horses and ---

DOROTHEA: And our grandparents lived with us a lot. I don't know about yours, but my grandparents lived with us a lot, so they got to help in the field, and we got to pull weeds in the garden, and do the cooking and baby sitting.

HELEN: Of course we had, until we, until we'd go in the summer time; we had all those chores to do as well.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, uh huh.

HELEN: Oh, I must refer back to my early childhood. My dad was more interested in horses than anything else. We raised cattle for what they would bring, and for the meat to eat, but he raised horses because that was his love of his life. That's how come he was "Mustang" Smith. And we gathered wild horses, and I have trailed 125 head of wild horses combined with tame workhorses to Winnemucca when I was 9 years old.

DOROTHEA: So you always had a horse to ride also.

HELEN: Right, always had a horse to ride. One of my earliest recollections is how my father influenced my life. He, I had a horse that would buck me off, and I would come quickly, come home, and crying, and I --- bucked me off again. Dad said, "Sister, you will have to learn to ride that horse. If you are not smarter than he is, he will hurt you one of these days." And he said, "And don't whine. You will be bucked off many times in life, but

you've got to get back on and ride." And I have needed that guidance all my life, because life bucks you off.

DOROTHEA: It sure does.

HELEN: And if you haven't got enough stamina and intestinal fortitude to get back on and ride, you will not win the battle.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, that's right.

HELEN: So I have been ever grateful for that tutelage.

DOROTHEA: And you know, this is what I think is wrong with our children, and their children today, is they don't get back on that horse and ride.

HELEN: No way.

DOROTHEA: Nope.

HELEN: No way.

DOROTHEA: That's the big truth.

HELEN: And so, and I don't know why. Now my kids were able to take that kind of training from me. Sharlene had to give that kind of training to her children, because life was very difficult for her when they were babies, when they were very small children. And they have that as part of their ethos. That's what they believe. You have to take the good with the bad. But for the, so many times I see if it was tough for me when I was a kid, I'm not going to let that happen to my child. I'm going to make their life better. And there is where they mistake.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, I did the same thing with my kids. My mother, I milked cows, and we sold cream. My mother sold chickens and eggs, and you bought her eggs. And that was our income mostly.

HELEN: That's right.

DOROTHEA: So I had one pair of shoes, two skirts, and three blouses for the warm

weather, or for the cool weather. And for the warm weather I had two sweaters and two skirts, and that's what I went to school with for 12 years.

HELEN: My senior year in high school I had one dress, one lousy dress, two skirts and a hand me down coat from my Aunt Helen. That's all the clothes I owned.

DOROTHEA: Well that's --- if it wasn't for my grandmother, Daddy's mom that sewed, we kids probably wouldn't have had what we did. But every fall she would go to Idaho, Emmett, where she had some relatives, and I don't know whether you remember Myrtle Howes or not.

HELEN: Yes, very well.

DOROTHEA: Okay. She would go and she would buy fruit and then, and yardage, and she would bring it back and my mom would can the fruit and she would sew the clothes. And she was a real good seamstress, so ---

HELEN: Uh huh. I used to envy Mary Bird, Mary Byrd Graven, because her mother was a seamstress and Mary had pretty clothes. I didn't envy her because my mother had taught me that you do not envy anybody. You may wish you had something like they had, but you never envy. Because you are another individual, and that is the lesson my mom gave me to live by, and I appreciate that as well. But Mary had lovely clothes. And she -- - of course her mother had extra yardage left over, and she could make things that were just lovely for Mary to wear. But most of the rest of us in class didn't have much to wear, so it didn't, it was not too hurtful.

DOROTHEA: Well I imagine, yeah, that's the way it was too. And I mean, you know, you weren't the only one with only two pairs of stockings, or whatever.

HELEN: Whatever, no.

DOROTHEA: So ---

HELEN: You didn't feel deprived.

DOROTHEA: No, no you didn't.

HELEN: And not only that but your parents didn't let you feel deprived.

DOROTHEA: No, but you know, life was so simple then.

HELEN: Right.

DOROTHEA: And so much fun.

HELEN: Right. Everything, you made everything fun.

DOROTHEA: Right.

HELEN: My folks took us to dances in Denio, and we were 30 miles away and had to go in a wagon.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: And she, they would let us dance, the children danced.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: When we got tired they put us up on a platform bed, bench, on the side of the building, and we all, we laid there like little cordwood. Maybe, all the kids, maybe 20 kids lying up there. We'd have a nap; wake up and dance some more till daylight and then go home.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. Well my little light is blinking (on the tape recorder) so it means I'm supposed to turn this tape, so we'll do that right now.

SIDE B

DOROTHEA: Okay tell us more about your childhood. Let's go back again and talk about some of the things that happened during your growing up years. Perhaps what happened when someone got sick.

HELEN: My mother was known as the doctor of Harney County in that Southern Harney County in that day. If anybody really got sick on a neighboring ranch they'd probably

come by horseback to get my mom. So she doctored everything we had. And I remember when we all had chickenpox; our whole family had chicken pox. We were, Mom put us to bed and kept us warm, and saw us through everything that there was.

I was born with one flange off of a vertebrae in my back, and so I always had a bad back. And as a youngster going to school we rode four miles to school from our ranch to upper Trout Creek to that stone schoolhouse. And Dad sometimes had to lift me onto the saddle, and the teacher would lift me off, because I would be so lame in my back. Outgrew it to a degree, but it was really bad when I was carrying my children, I had such back trouble that I thought I wasn't going to survive. And I early on taught my children to climb, not be lifted, because I couldn't lift them, never have been able to lift heavy loads.

But referring back to our childhood, digressing back to our childhood memories, Mom was always alone with us children because my dad was away working for wages somewhere, either contracting, or gathering horses, or helping other ranchers gather their cattle, helping with branding, wherever. And so really Mother had the major part of the, not only the child rearing, but the physical labor of a ranch, and did discharge that with such equanimity. Really she was a tremendous lady.

She was pregnant with Vern when I was 6 years old. And so, I mean she delivered Vern up Trout Creek with the help of my grandmother, Kate Defenbaugh. And a, what did they call them, midwife.

DOROTHEA: Midwife.

HELEN: Molly Mink, a midwife. And when she knew Vern was expected she put Dixie and me on a horse and sent us to the neighboring ranch, three miles away, to stay until the baby came. And she delivered that baby, and he was breach, and a dry birth, and she lived through it, and so did he. (Laughter) He was a battered little cuss.

DOROTHEA: You know the doctors tell you now that there is no such thing as a dry birth,

but I for one know better.

HELEN: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Because I had two of my children that way. What happened in the wintertime, did you still ride your horses to school, or did they home school you, or ---

HELEN: No, we rode our horses to school through, and we never missed a day. We had perfect attendance at school, all of us kids. As I said, even when I had to be lifted off of the horse, I went to school.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: And sometimes my back would hurt so badly I would have to lie on a bench until I could, until I felt better after we'd get there, and until I got warm. That cold doesn't help an arthritic back, and I suspect I had rheumatoid arthritis from a very tender age. Because I can remember my mother hearing me groan, and coming into our bedroom and slide her hands under my hips and turning me over when I was just a wee small child. So I must have had it all my life.

And so Mom had all kinds of things to be confronted. Probably one of the most impressive things that she had to do, was there was a mad dog came to our house, with rabies, and fought our very beloved pet all night long. They pushed the back door open, got even into the house, and our dog fought that thing out, back to the outside. And Mother was there alone with all of us children. I was just, I was always such a coward, and I wasn't the best of --- my sister did much, everything on the ranch better than I did. But --- and I had to blame it on my bad back, of course. But I held the lamp, my sister, and eventually was delegated to pull the baby; the crying children back from the door, because here they were pulling on Mama's skirts. And Mother was scared to death one of us would get bitten. And finally got a gun, and was able to shoot the dog. She had an awful time doing that because the, she was afraid of killing our dog as well as the mad

dog. And the dog did not die. Went down to the creek, but retreated and went down to the creek and died with his head hanging in the water, which of course he wanted, with rabies, they want water.

Then Mother had to keep, our dog's name was Jim, and she had to keep Jim tied, praying that my father would get home to make the decision, because the incubation period is 14 days for rabies. And she was so afraid that Jim would get the rabies and bite one of us kids. But she did not want to have him destroyed, because he was such a valuable dog. And ultimately she found my little brother Vern, who was only 2, lying with his head on old Jim, out where she had tied him. And she knew she had to do something, so she had him killed and hauled away.

When my dad came home he wept bitter tears, and told her, "Oh Marie, we could have done something." But what is she going to do? Where are you going to have that dog treated, a 100 miles from Winnemucca?

DOROTHEA: Well in that day too, you know, where were the vets?

HELEN: That's right.

DOROTHEA: You know there wasn't ---

HELEN: If he ever got it in Winnemucca, would they have been able to treat him? He said, "I would have taken that dog to Winnemucca." I can just hear him yet. Because, of course us children were heart broken. But Mother was equally heart broken, but she had that kind of decision to make for her family, always.

DOROTHEA: And that is always tough.

HELEN: You bet.

DOROTHEA: I mean ---

HELEN: And those kinds of decisions were hers, because Dad was away so much. In fact is when Vern was born; my father did not get home until he was two weeks old. He

didn't even know the baby had arrived.

DOROTHEA: Well there was a lot of dads and mothers that lived that way though.

HELEN: They had too.

DOROTHEA: Because Daddy and my mom did too. And, because Daddy was always away, and my mom run the place.

HELEN: Uh huh. So did my mother.

DOROTHEA: You know, and fed the hired hands. We always had hired hands.

HELEN: We didn't have any hired hands up Trout Creek. The only time we had other people around was during the time we were running the horses, or gathering the cattle. And everybody from Whitehorse to the Lower Trout Creek Ranch would all have livestock mixed in together, and so they were big. Then we would have people around, buckaroos around.

DOROTHEA: Well Daddy, I don't know why, but Daddy was always the kind that, he had to work out, so he would hire some men to come in and do his job at home. How he paid them I don't know. But it must not have been big wages, because ---

HELEN: No ---

DOROTHEA: Probably a dollar a day or something, room and board. But it seemed like that all my growing up years, until I got to be a --- well even then probably out of school, Daddy had a hired man.

HELEN: Is that right?

DOROTHEA: Well I was telling Clint, we have never been able to afford a hired man, how did Daddy always have them? But he did!

HELEN: Isn't that interesting.

DOROTHEA: But all the families lived like that.

HELEN: That's right.

DOROTHEA: You know I mean, you know, the mother was the mother-father breadwinner.

HELEN: Right. Whoops, what did I do, I scratched my arm. I dug it, a mosquito bite, isn't that silly.

DOROTHEA: I do that all the time. In fact I have scars all over me, as you can see. So what did you do then after you had to kill, did you get another dog? You can never replace a special pet, but ---

HELEN: Well we had, we really had another dog who didn't get in the fray, so Trixie did not have to be eliminated. And so we had her. And then it was really very difficult to have a good stock dog, because Trixie ran to the head, and not to heels.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: And the next dog we had was named Beans, and Beans would follow her example and he was, as a pup, and he was beginning to go to the head. And Dad picked him up, he was just so mad at him because he'd been, you know, trying to get him trained properly. And he picked him up and swung him over his head by his two hind legs, and banged him on the ground. And Beans got up and staggered around awhile, and believe it or not, he never ran to the head of another cow. He was a bit hard headed, but he learned when he got his head bashed on the ground, that was it.

But we, oh you asked a while ago for things that were funny. We rode the milk cow's calves. We set up barrels and did barrel racing. We always had a horse race at least once a day. And we always had to ride after the milk cows at night. And we always had to gather the calves in the morning, because the cows were fastened at night and the calves were fastened in the day, corralled in the day. So there was always things to do, we were busy.

DOROTHEA: Play anti-over and ---

HELEN: And you, but you made it be fun.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, uh huh.

HELEN: And my sister Barbara was much more adept at that than I. I'd get to whining about the wood I had to carry, and Barbara would go out there and have a ball. So then I'd think, it has to be me. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: (Laughter) Yeah, like me and my water bucket. But were some of your games in school baseball and basketball, and did you get on any of the teams or ---

HELEN: No, we never had enough children for any kind of team sport. We had kick the can, and hide and seek, and that kind of game.

DOROTHEA: Anti-over.

HELEN: Anti-over, oh yes indeed.

DOROTHEA: What was that name we used to do in school, red rover, red rover, and send such and such red over?

HELEN: Uh huh, we played ... Red rover, right, we did that.

DOROTHEA: We did a lot of that too.

HELEN: We did that in Burns Grade School when I first started teaching up here.

DOROTHEA: Well that's probably where we got it all, is ---

HELEN: Yeah, we did, we did those games in school.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, we did too. That was our winter fun really, you know, because you can't do much of anything else.

HELEN: Well we didn't have a gym when I first started teaching in Burns or Crane, or Burns or Hines either one.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. And didn't all --- I think we spent a lot of time fighting with the teachers and the principal on that. Remember the old grade school had a fire escape on it.

HELEN: Right.

DOROTHEA: What was it, three floors?

HELEN: Right.

DOROTHEA: And it was, we fought that, I mean we always had to have people come and say, "Get out of there, you know, that's not a plaything."

HELEN: You cannot play on the fire escape. When I first started teaching up here one of your monitor jobs was to keep the children off of the fire escape.

DOROTHEA: And so (Laughter) ---

HELEN: I taught up here with Ruth Shaw, and Neva Geer, and Harryman, Bob Harryman was my principal at first. Didn't he take, who was the first principal? Oh, I said his name last night.

DOROTHEA: Our, my first principal was Harriman, so I can't ---

HELEN: Was the one who preceded him. And he was here longer. I always thought ---

DOROTHEA: Yeah, he was here a long time.

HELEN: I always thought the school should have been named for him and not Mr. Slater, because he was the one that was here for 30 years or so.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, yeah.

HELEN: I don't know how long Mr. Slater was principal of this school.

DOROTHEA: Quite a while, even so --- Can't remember his name.

HELEN: Oh, I can ---

DOROTHEA: Everybody ---

HELEN: Oh, he was such a tradition.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, everybody talks about him.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: I can't remember his name.

HELEN: West, Mrs. West was one of the other. Wanda West was one of the other teachers.

DOROTHEA: Right Wanda West was another teacher. Lila Langdon, was she there then?

HELEN: No, no, Lila Langden came to Hines to teach, she didn't ever teach in Burns Grade School.

DOROTHEA: Mrs. Whitney.

HELEN: Oh yes.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, she was a first grade teacher. Agnes Stallard.

HELEN: Yes, Agnes Stallard was there then.

DOROTHEA: What was that one lady's name? Can't remember her name either. Everybody was ---

HELEN: Sutton, Mr. Sutton was the principal.

DOROTHEA: Right, Sutton, that was him.

HELEN: He was the tradition.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, he was the one, yeah. That's the one.

HELEN: Right.

DOROTHEA: Some of the other --- Breckenridge, I don't think ---

HELEN: That was later.

DOROTHEA: That was later, yeah. I was going to say, I don't know whether they were there when you were still there or not, I can't remember.

HELEN: Oh, Sandberg.

DOROTHEA: Oh yeah.

HELEN: Mr. Sandburg was there when I was there.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Of course I ---

HELEN: I think that's about it, that was about eight grades. We each had a grade, and I think that we named about eight of them, I think.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, except Briggs, Mrs. Briggs.

HELEN: She came later.

DOROTHEA: She came later too?

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Well she was there when I was in ---

HELEN: Mildred Briggs came later. She was one of my kid's teachers, I think.

DOROTHEA: Nobody liked her. (Laughter)

HELEN: Little tough lady.

DOROTHEA: She was a little tough, yeah.

HELEN: Yeah. Well she didn't have the personality to win children.

DOROTHEA: Right, right.

HELEN: You know you have to love children.

DOROTHEA: Even, you know, what was her name, Lila McGee?

HELEN: Oh Miss McGee, Lela.

DOROTHEA: Lela.

HELEN: Oh she was darling. Now she was one of the original teachers in Burns Grade School under Mr. Sutton.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, uh huh, yeah.

HELEN: And most of the teachers, except Mr. Sandburg, had taught under Mr. Sutton when I came to teach in Hines, or in Burns.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Well there was quite a few after ---

HELEN: And do you know what caused all the trouble between Burns and Hines?

DOROTHEA: No, never did know.

HELEN: Mr. Anderson applied for this Burns Grade School when Mr. Sutton retired, and he didn't get. And from that day on he harbored such a grudge. He taught, he truly taught the hatred of Burns Grade School.

DOROTHEA: Really.

HELEN: And he would teach the children ---

DOROTHEA: Because I knew there was a lot of --- man, when we'd get together to play games, I mean, you know, like baseball or whatever.

HELEN: And then you had to go to high school together.

DOROTHEA: Right.

HELEN: I never will forget when Beryl Stampke came back to me when I had come back to Hines to teach, and she said, "Mrs. Felt the kids" --- and Leonor Thornburg said, "The kids in Hines Grade, or in Burns Grade School, there is nothing wrong with them." And they had been taught not to have anything to do with them.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: But they were all mad.

DOROTHEA: When we went into the freshman year, the boys, there was only boys in the 8th grade, and so they were competitive in all sports.

HELEN: Right.

DOROTHEA: The boys in Hines, and the boys in Burns, and they never did get along until about the last two years.

HELEN: Right.

DOROTHEA: Because they had been taught to hate each other.

HELEN: But I never did feel that it was, when I taught here in Burns, the subsequent

years, I never heard the administration or a teacher make a disparaging remark about Hines Grade School or Hines kids.

DOROTHEA: But somehow or other it got into the sports.

HELEN: Well it couldn't have helped, because Mr. Anderson taught that hatred. He did, he would, he never forgave the Burns Grade School, or the Burns people.

DOROTHEA: For not hiring him. I had often wondered because like I say, you know, we didn't have any girls come into our class. But I couldn't figure out what the animosity was. You know why were --- we ---

HELEN: Because Mr. Anderson was the coach as well.

DOROTHEA: Oh, that's probably why.

HELEN: He taught all the P.E., and he was a big man, and taught the basketball. And he just taught them that animosity. It was too bad, it was really sad. I went to Mr. Anderson after I had been, after my kids were going to Burns Grade School, and I said, "You know Roscoe, you have done an injustice to this community, to teach these children that there is any difference between kids, it isn't fair."

DOROTHEA: Yeah, and --- but there was ---

HELEN: And he by that time was pretty mellow in his old age. And he said, "Oh, I never did." Oh fiddle-de-de, he did.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, yeah. Well, you know, for a while there was the same feeling of Crane. Now I don't know what happened there either. But they always felt like the underdogs.

HELEN: I think that was just kind of school rivalry.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: And they were the underdog, because there weren't very many of them.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: And the Burns High School kids considered the Crane kids hicks from the sticks.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, uh huh.

HELEN: And so they categorized them as less socially acceptable people. And I think that was the, and probably still is to a degree. The Crane Mustangs ---

DOROTHEA: Well see they don't play each other now.

HELEN: No. But the Crane Mustangs, well if they achieve, it's because they are just a little school, or whatever, you know. They don't get --- I think there is a natural animosity between communities sometimes. And maybe there would be some animosity between -- - but it should not have been, because all the base, the economic base was in Burns. And the Hines Mill, we were totally dependent on the Hines Mill, the Burns community. And it should have been all one community.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, it really should have been. But it never was, and probably never will be. Although they are expanding to where we're just about driving into, out of Burns into Hines, out of Hines into Burns. It's just, you know ---

HELEN: To do everything. Ultimately the two communities are going to go together.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, yeah.

HELEN: And now that they have the two schools together, it probably is a good thing.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, they have them all together. I mean you don't care where you are; you go to the same school in certain classes.

HELEN: Right, right. The year I got my Master's Degree from the University of Oregon, my daughter Sharlene got her Baccalaureate Degree from the University of Oregon.

DOROTHEA: Oh really? Well that was kind of fun.

HELEN: Yeah, that was fun.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. So back to your life, we're kind of skipping around here, but that's the way conversations go anyway. With Chet, what did you do for entertainment there,

besides dance?

HELEN: Our life, oh, fishing, hunting, Harney County things. The fair, anything that happened in Harney County, we were a part of. And we had in our early married life --- first it started out as a bridge club of four couples. And then the bridge club became a bridge and dance club. Then the bridge and dance club became a supper club, and it still is alive today. And we were charter members of that supper club. There was Hazel and Leonard Graven, Truxton and Sue Dalton, and one other couple. We were the originators of that, what is now the supper club in Burns.

DOROTHEA: Now, yeah, and they're still doing it yet. Because I hear Dorey Burden talk about it, and they love to go to her house because she cooks such good meals. Yeah, I hear her talk about it. So I do know that it is still going on.

Let's go back to raising your children. Today, can you see a difference in the way children are raised?

HELEN: I see, when I have been substituting, or not substituting, but volunteering, because I vowed never to substitute after I retired. Because I had always loved every day I ever taught school, all the whole 30 years. And I loved every kid I had ever taught. But I knew how ornery the children are to a substitute, and I thought I will not ever put myself in that position. I don't want any bad memories of teaching. So now I volunteer, because schools have been burdened with such things that never were a part of our lives. They have to teach all the handicapped, they have to teach the drug babies; they have to teach the autistic. And they really are, need help. There is no way a teacher could teach as I did the first year I came to Burns Grade School, I had 32 children. And no help, and no mimeographing that date either. You really came up with the kinds of games that were learning games out of your head, and instructed children. But children came to you wanting to learn. And they came to you, and respected you whole-heartedly. They loved

you.

DOROTHEA: Right.

HELEN: My kids loved you, and I loved them. And their parents were so supportive. In today's world the parents are not supportive. I find that when I visit with young people who are raising children, many times their conversation will resort to, that lame brain teacher who did this and did that, that I don't approve of. They are teaching their children not to respect and admire their instructors, but to go their --- you make me learn, and I don't want to.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, uh huh. And I think a lot of, there is not respect taught in the home, number one. Both Mother and Dad work, so there are a lot of, they are at home a lot by themselves, doing what they want, rather than what they should. And also, do you see a lot of difference in the intelligence of children?

HELEN: Honestly, I think they are smarter today than they were in that day, because they are exposed to so much knowledge.

DOROTHEA: Well that is what I was getting at really, because my grandchildren are doing things, were doing things in the second grade that I didn't do until the fifth grade.

HELEN: That's right.

DOROTHEA: I mean algebra, and ---

HELEN: Concepts.

DOROTHEA: Concepts.

HELEN: That are very difficult, and abstract.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: And so maybe that's why children sort of burn out. They aren't allowed to be children and just play, and just live with and for Mother Nature, and being alive. Being glad to be alive. They are expected to do sophisticated kinds of things at an early age,

and I don't think they are ready for it.

DOROTHEA: Well just like my oldest grandson, he started to school at 3 years old.

HELEN: That's right.

DOROTHEA: He's 11, he's in the 11th, or junior grade now, and he hates school. He is a straight A student, but that doesn't make him like school any better.

HELEN: He is not thrilled with what he is doing.

DOROTHEA: No, no, he isn't.

HELEN: And as children we were delighted. I mean each new concept was a whole new wonderful world to explore. These kids today are exposed to so many stimuli, and the expectation is so great for that little mind, that they soon turn off to the stimulus.

DOROTHEA: My oldest daughter went to college, the only one of my three, and she would not allow herself to get under a B, because, or over a B, because she said I want to prove to myself as well as to Dad that I'm not the person that he thinks I am. That I'm smarter than he thinks I am. Now my grandkids wouldn't have any problem with that. She really had to work hard at it. But the boys, like you say, I think they are smarter. They have gotten straight A's all the way through school, and hardly worked for it.

HELEN: Yeah, and couldn't care less.

DOROTHEA: Right, yeah.

HELEN: And there was a time when I was teaching that children didn't want to get straight A's because they wanted the rest of the kids to like them.

DOROTHEA: To like them.

HELEN: Like them better, because you're a brain.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, uh huh.

HELEN: And I never will forget the families that I would have to counsel about, don't put an emphasis on grades, simply put an emphasis on your child's application. Whether

they are working to their capacity, and whether they are satisfied with what they are doing.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, uh huh. And now I think parents expect those kids to bring home the good grades, and if they don't then, you know, you're not going to get this, or I won't buy you a car, or you can't have your name brand shoes, or ---

HELEN: I have a friend in our church who pays her kid to go to school. Pays him!!

DOROTHEA: It's the difference between us and them.

HELEN: He gets X number of dollars each day he goes to school, just like he was working for wages. I --- then when he got to be a junior in high school, about I think, he kicked over the ... he was in trouble with the law, he was everything. And she says, oh she came to me, just crying, she said, "Oh, we have done every-thing, we have just been such good parents." And I had to be honest. I said, "No, that's not parenting, that's bribery. You taught this kid to expect something for nothing. And so now he is demanding to do whatever he darn well pleases."

DOROTHEA: Well I thank goodness about my grandkids, and you probably have the same kind, because your children has had to work so hard to get their kids where they are. My grandkids work for their, they work on the ranch, so they work. And Nick is working at Alan's Repair now.

HELEN: I think that's a bad thing for society, to have made it so children can't work. Because had you not a ranch, nobody could hire your grandkids.

DOROTHEA: That's right.

HELEN: And that's a mistake in today's world, in my opinion.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, but I mean, you know, both of them, there is not much they can't do.

HELEN: Right.

DOROTHEA: Where they have friends that come out, and my youngest one says,

"Grandma, he doesn't know how to rake the lawn. He doesn't know how to pull weeds."

HELEN: Well he doesn't ---

DOROTHEA: So he says, "I have to show him how to do this, because they had to pull the weeds in the garden or something, you know." And he said, "I just can't believe he doesn't know how to do that." So this boy has been coming out to visit with him. Oh, he comes out a dozen times a year and spends four or five days.

HELEN: Loves it.

DOROTHEA: Loves it, just loves it.

HELEN: Because he has something constructive to do, and a learning experience.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: So that's why schools are having to provide hands on things for youngsters, because they do not have a concept of having hands on anything.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: Except to play. And then parents feel guilty --- are we still going?

DOROTHEA: Yeah, we're still going.

HELEN: And parents feel guilty if --- they'll say, my children are bored, I have to provide them with some activity. Fiddle-de-de. The child needs to make his own activity.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: And then be satisfied because he created something.

DOROTHEA: I'm so glad that I'm talking to you, because you remind me of my own childhood, and that's such a wonderful experience that so many people, even my age, have never had.

HELEN: That's right.

DOROTHEA: And it is, is just one of the things that you look back on, and you say, you know I had the most wonderful growing up years. A lot of them, you know, you say oh,

you know, I'm so --- I have to work all the time, but now you realize what a ---

HELEN: What a privilege that was.

DOROTHEA: Right, what a lovely life you had led.

HELEN: That's right. I tried to create that for my family. And Chet had been raised with this great big family of 11 siblings, and so we had acreage here in Burns always. And I had a horse, and the kids learned to ride the horse. I had a cow, and the kids learned to water the cow. And I had chickens, and they had to have 4-H animals. And they had, I never will forget, Curtis was to feed, or to water, feed and water the chickens, take care of the chickens. They were his 4-H program. And he was negligent, and he went out and he hadn't watered the chickens, and when he set the bucket down to fix their pan, the old hens poked their heads clear in the bucket they were so thirsty. They didn't just give a dip of water, they were --- He came back in the house and had tears in his eyes, and he said, "Oh Mom, they were so thirsty. They stuck their heads in the bucket." (Laughter) And I thought what a wonderful lesson for a little 7-year-old boy.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: He needs to know that somebody else depended on him. And if you neglect, then somebody else hurts.

DOROTHEA: Right.

HELEN: And it was when the, that was my way to teach them value. But he grew up thinking he had been abused. He says, "Don't you remember when ---" We drove down home yesterday, he said, "Do you remember when you used to make me take care of those 4-H chickens?" I said, "I certainly do, because I wanted you to learn the lessons they had to teach you." And he said, "I guess you're right."

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: Took him to his middle age to think I was right. Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Well I know that you have enjoyed your kids, and I imagine you don't get to see enough of your grandkids. And of course, do you ever get to see your great-grandchildren?

HELEN: I make it a point to go over to Hawaii once a year.

DOROTHEA: Once a year.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And you fly.

HELEN: And I want them to know that I am person. I'm not just a grandma name.

DOROTHEA: A name, uh huh, a name. Well I'm glad you're able to travel, and you are so young for your age that I think that ---

HELEN: Yes, because I'm going to be 82 this ---

DOROTHEA: Right, yeah.

HELEN: I can't believe it.

DOROTHEA: You had a, your daughter and children gave you a ---

HELEN: I think probably you have seen this, but that is my retirement thing.

DOROTHEA: This was in the *Burns Times-Herald*, right?

HELEN: Right.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: I imagine we have a copy of that. I ought to make another copy, if we don't. We're talking about an article that was in the *Burns Times-Herald* in 1997, or 1977, when Helen Felt retired after 30 years of school teaching. So yeah, I'll see if Peggy (Sitz) can't get us a copy of that, and we'll put it with your ---

HELEN: My story?

DOROTHEA: --- story. What are we skipping, and what do we want to jump back to, or

what do we want to include?

HELEN: Probably the reason I left Harney County, because I left a great deal of myself when I left Harney County that will never leave. And that I left because Chet and I had originally planned that when we both were retired we would go to a milder climate, and we would go nearer a center where we could enjoy some of the better plays, the symphony, kinds of things that I so thoroughly enjoyed. Although Burns has good music, we do have good music, and always did have good music here. And in the very early days they had Chautauqua in Burns.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

HELEN: And we have had culture, good cultural things here. But to expand that horizon I wanted not to have to travel 300 miles to do.

DOROTHEA: Right, right.

HELEN: And so, because Sharlene lived in The Dalles, and urged me to come. Providential that I did go, because I have helped raise her children, and, in a supportive sense. And then in turn, my life has been so enriched because those children are; oh they are so good to me. They put me first in many respects, and help me in every way possible, because I have known them since they were little kids. And I've had an opportunity to share their lives. And I think that it's awfully important for grandparents to share the lives of their grandchildren. Because they have a different perspective, they're of a different generation, they have, they can enlarge the scope of that child's understanding that no one else can. And this business of retired folks thinking they want to go to a retirement home so they don't have to be surrounded by young people, I think they are robbing today's society because I don't think we should have retirement homes. I think that they, that each generation should be a part of that community, and make their contribution in that community. I have striven to do that since I went to The Dalles, and

become a part of that community. And it is still Eastern Oregon, and we still are dry enough that it's okay, because I have been out here so long.

But, and my life there has been very rich. I have taken painting lessons, and I have volunteered in that community, to make a contribution in that community. And it's now pretty much home. Sharlene thinks I should come closer to Salem so that it isn't so hard for her to be supportive, but I will never do that for two reasons. I also do not believe that I want to ever have to live with either one of my children because it robs them of some independence when you become dependent upon them. And I hope I'll never have to do that.

I had Chet's father with me from the time he was 80 till he was 83, or 79 until he was 83. And probably the most rewarding thing I did was to have that old man, and see him through his later years. And I think he made such a tremendous contribution to my children. But we built him separate quarters. He was not robbed of his independence, and he was never in a position where the kids were a nuisance to him. I gave him half of my yard, because he too was a gardner, and I didn't want him messing in my garden. And he didn't want me messing in his. But I also taught my children that if Dad Felt said jump, they were to say how high, and never be rude to that old man. And they have gone through life respecting older people. And I think that is the reason that I believe that each generation should be part of a community, and I think they should be a part of the extended family as nearly --- and in as near a proximity as that is possible. In today's mobile society that's not possible a lot of the time.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

HELEN: They live too far away.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, that's right.

HELEN: And if Sharlene had small children, I would move to Salem so that I could be a

part of their lives. Not with them necessarily, but nearby.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, uh huh, yeah I can understand that, yeah.

HELEN: And as I say I have taken painting lessons, and I've done some nice oils. And unfortunately I have not had all the best of health, although I had a --- this is just about, what probably a month ago, and the doctor said, "You know, there is not a single part of your body that is not in good condition. You probably will live another 10 to 15 years." I'm not sure that I want to do that, but if I didn't have arthritis I would want to. But arthritis is painful.

DOROTHEA: Yes, it is. I've got it already, so I know what you are going through.

HELEN: And I don't, I think one of my dearest friends, and I would like to pay her tribute while I'm speaking, was Dera Welcome. I think that's the bravest person I have ever known.

DOROTHEA: Man, she suffered a long time.

HELEN: Yes she did, and she was so delightful. I visited her just a year ago, and she was upbeat, and yet I could tell from her face that there was not a second that she was not in pain. But she did, she did not complain. She was, had something positive to contribute to my life, just when I came to visit her. And that was, what I think is, we're called upon to do in this life. She was a wonderful person.

DOROTHEA: Well where did Chet pass away?

HELEN: He died in Burns.

DOROTHEA: Was he still here?

HELEN: Uh huh, uh huh. He died in our home down on 1248 North Broadway. And he elected to die at home. In fact is, Chet died a wonderful death. He knew he had a terminal illness. He knew he was approaching death, and he asked me not to take him to the hospital. When he got pneumonia, and he stayed right there and had the dignity of

dying in peace, and able to say goodbye without drugs.

DOROTHEA: Well that was good. You know so many people now don't have that opportunity.

HELEN: No, that's right, that's right.

DOROTHEA: Because the health departments demand so much of us any more.

HELEN: But the beautiful part of Oregon is you do have a right to die with dignity.

DOROTHEA: Right.

HELEN: You can make out this living will thing, and they cannot put you on --- and I have a doctor now who has agreed that if I get pneumonia, she will treat me for three days. And if I have not responded so that she thinks that I will regain my full health that I had before I contracted pneumonia, she will pull the plug. And I --- pneumonia is your best, an old person's best friend, because you can die from pneumonia.

DOROTHEA: Right.

HELEN: And so she has agreed that --- and of course my doctor grandchildren say, you know I left a living will, I have a living will that I will not, forbidding resuscitation. And my doctor grandkids say, "Grandma, we don't want to do that. We don't want to have to say that if, you know, we're going to let you die." And I said, "Yes you are going to let me die." And they said, "But if you have something like pneumonia, wouldn't you allow to be treated?" And at first, you see, I had refused any treatment, because you have to be many times put on a resuscitator with pneumonia because your lungs can't handle it. And I said, "No, I don't, I refused any resuscitation." But now I've granted them permission for three days, that's all.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. In three days with today's medications and things ---

HELEN: It will determine whether you are going to recover, or you're not.

DOROTHEA: Right, right.

HELEN: And then they're going to maintain your life less than, and you're going to come out with some permanent damage.

DOROTHEA: Right.

HELEN: And that I do not want.

DOROTHEA: Me neither. My husband and I both have ---

HELEN: And I like that living will thing.

DOROTHEA: --- living will, so, yeah.

HELEN: But you have to have it where it is immediately obtainable. They tell me, the doctor told me the other day, he said, "You have that with a magnet on your refrigerator. Because if they call 911, they have to resuscitate you.

DOROTHEA: They told us that we should have one with the doctor, one at the hospital. And with each doctor, as far as that goes.

HELEN: Right.

DOROTHEA: That we attend, you know.

HELEN: But none of them may be available, and you call 911 and the fire department, or the ambulance crew have got to resuscitate you by law. And so you have to have that, really, available so that whoever calls 911 hands it to them right now. Because it might not get to the doctor, and it might not get to the hospital until they have already revived you. Then you may have to live as a vegetable.

DOROTHEA: And you know, that is the sad part of it. Fred Fine went through a little bit of this, and now he is having a hard time adjusting to his life, because he can't remember things. He knows your face, but he can't put a name to it, or he can put a name to somebody that he doesn't see. And he may call you Dorothy, you know, and all the time he knows you are Helen. But

HELEN: And that has to be living in hell.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. And he has to have somebody around all the time, telling him if he can eat certain foods, because he doesn't know.

HELEN: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And that's what they did to him.

HELEN: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: They kept him alive, but I don't know which is worse.

HELEN: No, they kept him breathing.

DOROTHEA: Right.

HELEN: They did not keep him alive. Because life has to have quality, as well as quantity. And this is the selection Chet made. I do not want to be kept alive just to be breathing, Helen, I don't want that. And so I respected that. It was very difficult, but I did.

DOROTHEA: So he is buried here too?

HELEN: Uh huh. And my grave is out here too, with my name already on the headstone. Open for the date whenever it's going to be. (Laughter) And you know what Curtis said to me ---

DOROTHEA: So when you pass away, then you're going to be back here, huh?

HELEN: That's right, that's where I'm going to be. Curtis said to me the other day, he said, he looked at that headstone and he said, "Mother, if and when you go, you really want to be put there?" And I said, "Curtis, if and when I go, everybody is going to go, don't ---"

DOROTHEA: Those are two things we can't keep from, and that is taxes and death.

HELEN: "If and when you go ---" He said, "Well I expect you to live another 20 years." I said, ---

DOROTHEA: Yeah, he hopes.

HELEN: I certainly don't want this leg that has been acting up, just the last two weeks. My, I just came back from a cruise, and I was fine, climbed 88 steps.

DOROTHEA: Well talking about a cruise now, we haven't covered that. Have you taken vacations besides going to Hawaii?

HELEN: Regularly.

DOROTHEA: What do you do?

HELEN: And I persuaded Chet Felt to take vacations before he died. I persuaded him to go to Europe as had been planned with his father, before --- and Dad Felt expired because he had to have the shots to go abroad. And so we followed that itinerary and went to Europe and visited Chet's ancestor --- family were still living in Sweden. And we had an entire summer traveling, drove 7,000 miles in Europe. And in so doing you crisscross Germany about five times. Because Germany is right square in the middle. No wonder the Germans have been defensive and fighters all their lives, they have been overrun.

And then I persuaded him to take a holiday in Alaska, and we spent an entire summer in Alaska fishing. I caught a 50-pound king salmon on the Kenai Peninsula. And we had to beach it, because it was too big to get in our little aluminum boat.

DOROTHEA: Oh, really?

HELEN: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Oh, that was exciting.

HELEN: And he caught a salmon in the waters of one of those fast flowing rivers that gave him the fight of his life, and he had the thrill of his life. Ad he was in the last few years of his life at that time, when they had told him that he couldn't live very much longer.

And we traveled, we traveled extensively. Oh, I left out a very important chapter of

my life, and that was Eastern Star. My father was a Mason, and when I was 18, well when I was 16 I became a Rainbow Girl. I was a charter member of Burns Assembly #25. And then I joined Eastern Star when I was 18. I was an officer, or somebody, all my life. And still have, and now enjoy a sixty some year membership in Eastern Star.

DOROTHEA: Oh, wow.

HELEN: And Chet was Worthy Grand Patron of the Eastern Star for the State of Oregon. And we were in every Masonic Hall in the State of Oregon in our lives, in our travels.

DOROTHEA: Well that is a special thing.

HELEN: And he also presided at General Grand Chapter, which was held in Philadelphia. And both children and I were with him when he was back there, and the big shot with the gavel.

And we took regular trips --- I have been now in every section of the United States, and in almost every state in the United States, except the Deep South. We went to Virginia on one occasion, on one of our trips, and --- but I've never been in Mississippi and Alabama, and Louisiana. But we did go to Texas; we also traveled to Mexico in our lives.

We celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary in Hawaii. And went back several times to visit Curtis after he went over there. So we made regular treks to Hawaii.

DOROTHEA: Did you ever visit the states of New York, Rhode Island ---

HELEN: All of them.

DOROTHEA: All of those.

HELEN: Took our travel trailer, and were caught in a tropical storm in --- and we were parked, our travel trailer was parked in Boston, and we had the alert to get out of there because we would, not be blown away. And so we had to travel inland, directly from Boston, so we could be safe from the tornados.

DOROTHEA: Oh wow.

HELEN: Not tornados, that's not what they have out there. What do they have?

DOROTHEA: Hurricanes.

HELEN: Hurricanes, right. And yes, we went --- and we traveled clear across Alaska, or I mean clear across Canada into the Maritime Provinces, and then drove south. That's when the time, on that trip was when we went to New York, I mean to Virginia, far south as Virginia.

So we went, we traversed the American, the northern route through North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, etc. And then we also went the middle route through Salt, or through St. Louis. And one time we went a little farther south by following the Santa Fe Trail. But we came back up into the Midwest and didn't do the Deep South, and that's how come I've never been through the Deep South. But I thought all those trips, we did that with a travel trailer, and drove, and that was the only time we were ever away from Felt's Jewelry.

DOROTHEA: Did you ever have a hard time finding a parking place?

HELEN: Well there were no parks in the East in that time. We would have, yes, a very difficult time anything east of the Mississippi. We'd have to go --- when we were in New York we had to go down into New Jersey or somewhere that was more rural to find any place where we could park a travel trailer.

And then of course after Chet's health was not as robust, we had to take, we did get a motor home, we had a motor home in our later years. And then we had, his health, when his health was failing the last, last part of his life, we went every winter to Arizona so that he could have warmer air to breathe and so on.

DOROTHEA: Did he have emphysema at that time?

HELEN: Yeah, he had emphysema. Of course emphysema takes your heart away from

you.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, because it makes it work so hard.

HELEN: That's right, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. Well my little light is blinking again, and believe it or not we have arrived at the end of the tape. And it has been, we've been almost three hours in here.

HELEN: Have we really?

DOROTHEA: Yeah, we have.

HELEN: Been the nicest three hours I ever spent, I loved it.

DOROTHEA: And I would like to thank you very much for your visit, I've enjoyed every second of it. We also would like to have a video, if you would consent to that. My helping partner has moved to McMinnville, so I'm not sure how this is going to turn out, because she is the one that ran the video. So I'm going to try it and see what happens. It will be very short, they're only 30 minutes, and probably we will take about 15 minutes of it. So, but I'd like to thank you again for your time. I've enjoyed it greatly.

HELEN: Well this is --- I feel that it's a compliment to me to be asked.

DOROTHEA: This will be stored here. As you can see all of our videos up there. We have as many tapes, and these are all typed out, and they're stored in the files in there. So we have a transcript, we have a cassette, and we have a video. So anybody can get any information on the Smiths, or whoever that they want.

HELEN: Isn't that great.

DOROTHEA: So, we are very fortunate to have been given the money to do this. So back to thank you again, and we'll close now and do our video.

HELEN: Oh, I'm not very pretty.

DOROTHEA: Oh, that's okay, that's okay. We want you ---

(END OF TAPE)

bl