

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #419 - Sides A/B

Subject: Norma Whiting Curtis

Place: Harney County Museum - Burns, Oregon

Date: June 1, 1998

Interviewers: Dorothea Purdy & Terry Keim

DOROTHEA PURDY: This is Dorothea Purdy, and I'm along with Norma Curtis who will be the Queen Mother this year in 1998, for the Pioneer Days. The date is June 1st, 1998. We will be talking to Norma something about what she did in her lifetime, and getting some kind of information like this. Okay Norma, well start with you. Will you first tell us your full name, including your maiden name.

NORMA CURTIS: Norma Whiting Curtis.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And what are your parent's names?

NORMA: George E. Whiting was my father, and Ida Turner Whiting is my mother.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And do you remember when they came to Harney County?

NORMA: Well my father came up here when he was a year old, and it would be about 1873 (1874). And I don't remember when my, what year my mother came, but she was 11 years old when she came up, so it was the late, probably the late 1800's (1894).

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. And what did they do when they first came here? Did they homestead, or do you remember that?

NORMA: Well she was only 11, so they didn't even meet. I don't know when they met. She said the first person that she met when she came up here, and you know, met anyone was her future mother-in-law lone Whiting, who was the postmistress later. In fact I think she was the postmistress then. And there is a picture back there that tells the

dates she was the postmistress in your ---

DOROTHEA: Okay, we're at the Harney County Museum ---

NORMA: Emery and I were looking at it the other day.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and it is back in the back room, or back at the back of the room.

NORMA: Yeah, that one in there, yeah right, right.

DOROTHEA: Okay. So let's go back to your grandparents then, and can you tell us something about them? Where did they settle, and what did they do?

NORMA: Well they were just ranchers, that's about what anybody done around here.

DOROTHEA: Did they settle where you and I both know the home place is, where Grandma Whiting used to live, your mother, your mother?

NORMA: My mother. Well that was after the --- well in fact they didn't move out there until sometime between the time that I was born and Wayne was born; because he was born somewhere else, and I was born out there. I was born in that ranch house out there.

DOROTHEA: Okay, that's about probably, oh approximately 7 miles out of Burns.

NORMA: It's 3 miles out.

DOROTHEA: Three?

NORMA: Yeah, it's 3 miles out.

DOROTHEA: And it is on Highway 78, right? Anyway, like you're going to go out to Crane. I think that's Highway 78.

NORMA: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I'm glad you know the number, I don't go by numbers, I just go there.

DOROTHEA: Well kind of need some kind of a description here so we'll know what we're talking about.

NORMA: Yeah right, right.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And they first, then they lived around in the area, could you tell us

approximately where?

NORMA: At one time they lived down, let's see; Herbert was born in, up in Burns at Aunt Ella's place. And I don't remember where Lottie was born at. But Wayne --- or Hilton was born out in the Hanley Lane there someplace. There is a --- and I don't remember the name of the place. And then Wayne was born down --- no that's the Fry Lane, down the Hanley Lane, he was born. I finally got born at home. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Okay, so you were born in the house that I know, that is out next to Hilton's

NORMA: Yeah, that I grew up in, right.

DOROTHEA: That is out next to Hilton Whitings now.

NORMA: Yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: We'll we're talking about these people, Wayne and Herbert and Hilton, these are your brothers.

NORMA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And Lottie is your sister. So let's get their full names.

NORMA: Okay. I wanted to mention something else about the ranch house out there.

Alan Bossuot and his sister Julia Raymond was born out in that house too.

DOROTHEA: Oh, in the same house.

NORMA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Oh great, that's nice to know too. So okay, you have how many brothers?

NORMA: I have three brothers and two sisters; there were six of us.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And who is the oldest?

NORMA: Herbert was the oldest, and he only stayed home until he was about 16, and then he decided to roam. And he went, well he was all over. He got into the construction business and he has been all over, except foreign lands. But I mean like Alaska and

places like that. And once when he was working in Kentucky why he had Mama go back, and he took her to the Kentucky Derby, and that was a highlight of her life.

DOROTHEA: Oh wow.

NORMA: Yeah, yeah, she got to travel a lot more than I did.

DOROTHEA: Okay then you have ---

NORMA: Lottie, and she was Lottie Bossuot.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

NORMA: And then there is Hilton. And then there is Wayne and Audrey.

DOROTHEA: And your maiden name of course was Whiting.

NORMA: Yeah, right, right. And Audrey's name now is Olsen, and she lives in Klamath Falls.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Well where do you come in there?

NORMA: I'm next to the last.

DOROTHEA: You're next to the last. And Audrey is the youngest?

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And her last name is Olsen?

NORMA: Yeah. Grizzle, it was Grizzle, and it's Olsen now.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Let's get a little bit of your information. Where did you go to school?

NORMA: In Burns. We got to town any way we could. First three years why we had a buggy and old Ginger, one of those, just one-horse buggy and, for the first three years. Then we got, the folks got a Model-A Ford, because one of the boys was big enough to, or old enough to drive, you know. But we all, all of us went to school in Burns.

DOROTHEA: Now that was at the old Burns School ---

NORMA: Yeah, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: --- that was the what, three stories or whatever it was?

NORMA: Yeah, I think it was. Mr. Sutton used to look out the window and ---

DOROTHEA: And Mr. ---

NORMA: --- to see that everyone behaved themselves.

DOROTHEA: --- Mr. Sutton was the principal.

NORMA: Yes, indeed.

DOROTHEA: Who were some of your teachers, do you ---

NORMA: Well Mrs. Houston was the first one, and Annette Leonard was the second grade, and Miss McGee, Lela McGee was the third one. And Ruth ---

DOROTHEA: Shaw?

NORMA: No, she was next.

DOROTHEA: Oh.

NORMA: There was a Ruth --- Omahundra (sp.?) was her maiden name, and I can't remember what her married name was.

DOROTHEA: Do you know how to spell that?

NORMA: No, I sure don't.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Pronounce it again.

NORMA: Omahundra is what we used to --- as far as I ---

DOROTHEA: Omahundra.

NORMA: --- I'd have to check with Hilton to be sure on that. But the --- and then Ruth Shaw was the --- and then Neva Geer was my 7th grade teacher. And of course Mr. Sutton then was ---

DOROTHEA: How did you like Mr. Sutton?

NORMA: I got along fine with him.

DOROTHEA: Well I've had several people say that he was quite a crank.

NORMA: Alice and I was talking about that. We grew up with discipline at home, and so

discipline in school was not any problem for me, because it was just --- you did what you was told to do. I wasn't a very good student, I mean ---

DOROTHEA: Well we don't care about the --- as long as you went to school.

NORMA: I never had any trouble with him at all.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. And then you went to high school.

NORMA: High school.

DOROTHEA: And it was where the Lincoln School is now?

NORMA: Yeah, right.

DOROTHEA: And who was the principal?

NORMA: Bennett, William Bennett. Or was his name William? No, that isn't right, Mr. Bennett. He's back there, in the pictures back there. What was it?

DOROTHEA: Oh in the --- was that Jack?

NORMA: Well Jack, he was Bennett's uncle.

DOROTHEA: Oh, okay, Merle.

NORMA: Merle, that's it. Okay. See I told you I'd forget.

DOROTHEA: We all have Alzheimer's. (Laughter)

NORMA: This is not a good day.

DOROTHEA: So, okay, let's go on then to, say who are some of your classmates, and who were some of your close friends?

NORMA: You know you kind of change from time to time.

DOROTHEA: Oh yeah. Well I know Alice Shepard was probably one of them. But I don't know whether she was in ---

NORMA: Well she didn't go to school long enough to be very long, you know. Yeah, she was there.

DOROTHEA: But was she in your class, or are you ---

NORMA: No, she is younger. I'm older than anybody.

DOROTHEA: Oh no.

NORMA: I'm older than everybody.

DOROTHEA: Okay, then let's go, since you are older than everybody, let's go and see if we can find out when you were born.

NORMA: 1918.

DOROTHEA: What month?

NORMA: April the 7th.

DOROTHEA: April the 7th, 1918. Well you're not too much older than Alice.

NORMA: Yeah, but I am a little bit. She is in between Audrey and I somewhere, I think.

DOROTHEA: What were the dances like, and how, what kind of entertainment did you have?

NORMA: Well that was about the only entertainment we had, was when we got old enough to go to the old time dances. Up here in the, well they called it the Tonawama at that time. And sometimes there was dances out in the country. Then after awhile there was dances out at the Grange Hall. But yeah, really that was just about it.

DOROTHEA: At that time, of course, you listened to radio programs maybe, or did you have a radio?

NORMA: Yeah, we did get a radio at home. It was operated by battery; it's an old Atwater-Kemp. But of course later on why there was probably radios. Really, back then things were kind of a little bit dim, because we just kind of ---

DOROTHEA: Well you know like me, we did a lot of playing outside.

NORMA: Well that's what we did too.

DOROTHEA: And where we had the big families we had lots of games that we played together, and played anti-over, and I imagine you did.

NORMA: Yeah ---

DOROTHEA: A little bit of baseball.

NORMA: --- up to a point. I had a cousin, Doris Peabody that we paled around with, and yeah we just played outdoor games for the most part. But I had strict parents; we didn't do anything that was, got too rowdy.

DOROTHEA: And in our day we also had chores. Can you tell some of the chores that you had to do?

NORMA: Oh, there was always cows to milk. You couldn't, we couldn't go any place because we had to be there to milk the cows. My mother sold butter, and cream, and eggs, and chickens then. So there was no vacations, we had to be home to milk the cows.

DOROTHEA: Summertime also came, and along with milking, in the wintertime you packed wood.

NORMA: Oh yeah, that was the fall deal though. In the summertime why it was haying.

DOROTHEA: It was haying.

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: What part of the hay crew were you?

NORMA: I was the net setter.

DOROTHEA: The net setter.

NORMA: When I got big enough to work there. And then after we got, Dad started using a motor, the truck, why I was the Jim driver. I graduated to the back end. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Tell us --- instead of pull-up you were ---

NORMA: Yeah, right.

DOROTHEA: --- you were back up. Tell us something about, so many people don't understand net setting, and that hay, kind of hay stacking, let's put it. Tell us kind of

something about that, how the operation went.

NORMA: Well there was a slide, that they called a slide, and my father used slips because he liked to --- he had mostly alfalfa hay in the valley. Although when he hayed, wild hay wise he had the hay bucks. And I never got into that too much. Well I did with my net setting, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Now they were run with horses?

NORMA: Horses, yeah.

DOROTHEA: How many? Was there two or four?

NORMA: I think he only used two.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

NORMA: Yeah, he didn't --- and Harley Hotchkiss, he had four. Well, and Harley had power bucks. I worked for him too during the war.

DOROTHEA: What did you do there?

NORMA: I was the Jim driver.

DOROTHEA: So, and you were still haying in other words, yeah.

NORMA: Yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: When the haying started, how long did it take you?

NORMA: Oh, ours was only a small operation, so probably the stacking, which is all I got into, was a week.

DOROTHEA: Just a week or so?

NORMA: Yeah, because we only had 80 acres.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Well I know some of the bigger, bigger crews; it probably took them a couple of months to get theirs ---

NORMA: Oh yeah. Well when I was working for Harley, he worked all over, yeah. Of course I was in the whole operation then. I run a rake, had four horses on that. He used

mostly power, power bucks.

DOROTHEA: And you're talking about a power buck. What are, we call --- what, describe kind of what this is. I know what all this is, but somebody else listening might not.

NORMA: I wouldn't know just exactly how to describe it. They put, it was run backwards, you know, you had to --- you were running backwards all the time. But of course you were running forwards, but the motor was backwards.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, you had to learn how to change those gears all backwards.

NORMA: Yeah, yeah. I never got to do that. But, yeah there was kind of a funny thing about that. I wanted to do that one year, I think the last year. Well the Howser girl, that was about all that she knew how to do, and so I got a raise in wages because --- I wanted to do that and he wanted me on the Jim driver, and he didn't want to put her there, pull everybody off the stack. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Okay, that's something else that is kind of comic --- what is the responsibilities of a Jim driver?

NORMA: A lot, a lot. Okay, you have to keep on your toes.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

NORMA: I did pull Hank Glerup off one time. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Okay, you're saying pulling him off of the stack. What happened?

NORMA: Well if you don't stop quick enough, why they slide off. Part of, part of, I think of that was the, the stack fell apart; I think part of that was. But anyway Harley used to --- when he raised a pitchfork well we was supposed to stop and trip it. Well he kept batting flies with his pitchfork --- you know what happened?

DOROTHEA: (Laughter) Okay. And so off he went.

NORMA: No, I tripped too soon. Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Okay, kind of describe, because you know I was the net setter, I didn't know how they unhooked those bunches of hay up there. Tell us how they ---

NORMA: Oh it was kind of, it kind of unhooked by --- well it was on tension, you know. And when it was tripped why it just fell apart.

DOROTHEA: But what tripped it?

NORMA: The Jim driver.

DOROTHEA: How did it work that way? I always thought it was when they waved that thing that they tripped something, see. So when they waved that pitchfork, well that's when the hay quit.

NORMA: Yeah, that's right.

DOROTHEA: So I thought, well they must do that up there with the pitch fork.

NORMA: No, no, the Jim driver --- see the cables, and it is a cable, or we used a cable anyway, and it's on a tight tension because the hay is heavy. And so when it's tripped, when they trip it, the Jim driver, why that releases the tension and it just all falls apart.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

NORMA: Sometimes it clung, but maybe one ring, but seldom. And then the stacker unhooked that, and then they pulled it on off.

DOROTHEA: Now then ---

NORMA: In fact I've even helped stack a little bit, but that was too hot work.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, yeah. Then the pullback, or whatever you call that.

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: He pulls the net and the chains back, and then the net setters they set this all up again.

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: And then the buck, the power buck brings the load of hay in and dumps it

off on these chains.

NORMA: Yeah. Well when they used the power buck, of course, see I didn't set net for Harley. But, so I didn't have to worry about all that. But when I did out to the ranch for Hilton, why --- you have to, if you're bucking it in, you have to clean out the net hole; I mean you have to be fast.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

NORMA: Have it all straightened out for the ---

DOROTHEA: Straighten all these chains out, and clean out this net hole because it always gets full of hay.

NORMA: Yeah, every load it gets full of hay.

DOROTHEA: Okay. So then all of you ---

NORMA: Working with a slip was a lot easier.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, yeah because that brings it up.

NORMA: Yeah, it come in on the side.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

NORMA: Yeah, it was really, not quite so fast.

DOROTHEA: Okay, lets go back kind of to, kind of skip around here and go back to when your parents first settled on the home place, what we'll call the home. Did they have milk cows and chickens and all this? Or what did they --- just buy a piece of ground and homestead it, or ---

NORMA: It wasn't a homestead, it was --- the homestead was up in the hills.

DOROTHEA: Oh, okay.

NORMA: They each had a homestead up there.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And approximately that's up on Poison Creek?

NORMA: Yeah, that's what they call it, yeah.

DOROTHEA: And what did they do? I mean, you know, what ---

NORMA: Well, when I was little they milked cows as long as I can remember. You know Grandma, before she came to Oregon; she worked for a Swiss dairyman in California. And he taught her how to pack butter, how to milk, the whole bit, because she didn't know all that either. So when she came up here why that's what --- he kind of taught Mama how to do this. And so they just went ahead and done it. But Dad, he had his horses and cattle, he wasn't much interested in the cows. Only had sold --- he supplied, he always supplied us, you know, because that was the living really.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

NORMA: You didn't make much money, just horses and cows.

DOROTHEA: No, no. So then let's go back to --- I understood that your dad did some farming out on the lake. Do you know ---

NORMA: I don't remember that.

DOROTHEA: You don't remember that.

NORMA: No, I don't remember that. That's all kind of vague, yeah. Hilton remembers about that, but I don't. See I was home; I didn't go out there. Had to stay home and milk the cows.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. So did you ever go to any movies?

NORMA: Oh, that was about --- yeah I forgot that. Movies, you know, we could get in for ten cents or so. But then three miles out, you didn't do that very often either.

DOROTHEA: Yeah like Daddy said, he rode his --- he could get in for ten cents, but it took him two hours to get to town because he had to ride his horse, so ---

NORMA: We had to walk when we come in. The --- Mama didn't drive, and Dad he was off someplace doing what he done, and so if we wanted to come into the movie, why we --
- But then of course there was other people that would take us once in awhile.

DOROTHEA: Kind of ---

NORMA: But it wasn't a regular thing. You know you read about these town kids that, that was their entertainment, they would go to the movies every week maybe. But maybe if it was every two months or so for us, why ---

DOROTHEA: Well I think when we first started going, we used to go twice a month, and that was our big treat, you know. If we were good, we went to the movie. Always Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Hopalong Cassidy, you know that.

NORMA: Well that's what I went to after I got older, so I could drive. After I could drive why then we went more often.

DOROTHEA: Well once you started driving, what did you do? I mean did you drive to school, or ---

NORMA: Yeah, sometimes. But then a lot of times we walked.

DOROTHEA: Okay, you went to Burns Grade and High School. You got out of high school, then what did you do?

NORMA: Well I stayed home a couple of years and got married.

DOROTHEA: And who did you marry?

NORMA: Howard Curtis. And he come from Washington.

DOROTHEA: And how did you meet Howard?

NORMA: Well he was Vern Bossuot's nephew, that married Lottie. So Lottie became my aunt.

DOROTHEA: (Laughter) Okay, I'm my own grandpa, huh!

NORMA: Yeah, right.

DOROTHEA: Okay. He is Vern Bossuot's ---

NORMA: He is Alan's father.

DOROTHEA: Is Alan Bossuot's father. And Howard was Vern's ---

NORMA: Nephew.

DOROTHEA: Nephew.

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Did he come out and work --- let's go to Vern Bossuot, what did he do?

NORMA: Well Vern was a rancher too, that's all he done.

DOROTHEA: And he grew up here?

NORMA: Vern?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

NORMA: Oh no, they come from Washington.

DOROTHEA: Oh they did?

NORMA: Yeah. His father and, he come down here one time to work in a sawmill up, well they called it Mill Canyon up the --- I think Robert F. has it now, Senator Bob (Smith). And they, even Howard was down here for a little bit at that time.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. And worked with Vern?

NORMA: Well no, he was only 5.

DOROTHEA: Oh, oh I see, yeah.

NORMA: Because his sister --- well, and the sisters and her family came down too. They were all up there for a little bit. And then they all went back to Washington.

DOROTHEA: Okay so you ---

NORMA: But Vern stayed here.

DOROTHEA: You met Howard then through Lottie and Vern.

NORMA: Yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Okay. When did you get married?

NORMA: In '38, May '38.

DOROTHEA: May 1938.

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: And you had four children. Can you tell me what their names are?

NORMA: Well Roy is the oldest, and Patrick --- and we lost him here in '93. And then Gayle lives in Bend, and Kelli lives in Umatilla.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And so that means that you also have grandchildren probably.

NORMA: Yeah, and I've got two great-grandchildren.

DOROTHEA: Oh, and two great-grandchildren. And what's their names?

NORMA: Well Troy's is Destiny. That man that was in here the other day, he said his little girl's name was Destiny and I didn't know it, I thought that was a weird name. I didn't know anybody else used that. And then Tracy has a little one, and her name is Cleopal.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And your what's --- your daughter's names, one is Gayle, what are her children's names?

NORMA: Keenan and Kevin Hoar.

DOROTHEA: How do you spell that?

NORMA: H O A R.

DOROTHEA: H O A R. Okay, and your other daughter's name is Kelli.

NORMA: And her name is Hendon, H E N D O N.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And how many children does she have?

NORMA: She has three.

DOROTHEA: She has three. And what's their names?

NORMA: Christopher, Travis, and Megan.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Now Roy's children are the ones with the, with the great, the babies.

NORMA: Yeah, yeah. Troy, his boy has one, and his youngest daughter has one.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and how many children does he have?

NORMA: Three.

DOROTHEA: He has three.

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: And so there is Troy and ---

NORMA: And Tammy and Tracy.

DOROTHEA: And Tracy. Okay. And they live in the Portland-Gresham area.

NORMA: Sandy.

DOROTHEA: Sandy.

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Did Patrick have any?

NORMA: No.

DOROTHEA: He didn't have any.

NORMA: No, he didn't have any.

DOROTHEA: So what do you do now, spending your time? You've got your kids all raised.

NORMA: I come up and bug you. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Bug me, you come up and help at the Museum in other words.

NORMA: And I watch after Hilton and Eva a little bit. But I got a pretty big yard down there, so there is a lot to take care of down there. I should be down there mowing the grass, but it will get done.

DOROTHEA: Well today is a nice day finally, hey.

NORMA: Yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: We have had rain forever, now we're going to have ---

NORMA: Yesterday why I just went out and pulled weeds. I didn't feel like mowing.

DOROTHEA: Well with all this rain we have had, there is lots of weeds. I did that a little bit yesterday too.

NORMA: And they grow so lush.

DOROTHEA: Oh boy, don't they.

NORMA: And I've cut the grass once, and its just mile high.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, I had to cut twice. I cut it at the high level, and then I went through and cut it at the lower level. So I spent most of the day yesterday mowing lawn.

NORMA: I bought a new riding mower, and I couldn't get the blade off so I had to have John McAllister come down and take the blade off and put on a --- I'd already ... the new one.

DOROTHEA: I do that good too. I noticed I was having a strip going along behind me; I had to go and pick it up.

NORMA: I don't like a dull blade.

DOROTHEA: No, I don't either.

NORMA: I couldn't get it off. I'm not that --- my hands aren't that good anymore.

DOROTHEA: You have some hobbies that are kind of different from most ladies. You repair vacuum cleaners, and sewing machines --- how did you get into this kind of a ---

NORMA: Well because I like to take things apart. That's it, I just like --- and clean them up, put them back together and see if they will run.

DOROTHEA: Have you always been this way?

NORMA: Oh, in a way, yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: So, well do you sew?

NORMA: Not much. I mend. Yeah, I can sew, but I don't very much.

DOROTHEA: Did your mother sew?

NORMA: No, she didn't. But she was a very good mender; otherwise we wouldn't have had anything to wear. So I leaned to mend very well. But as far as making things from scratch, I don't remember she ever did.

DOROTHEA: Now did you?

NORMA: But she had a sewing machine, and she let us use it.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. So did you learn to sew in school?

NORMA: Uh huh, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Did somebody teach you?

NORMA: Yeah. For the --- and Lottie and Audrey are both very good seamstress.

DOROTHEA: Now Audrey comes up once in awhile for class reunions, and --- does she come up often?

NORMA: Well she says she'll be --- yeah, about four times a year.

DOROTHEA: Oh she comes that often.

NORMA: Yeah, oh yeah, they come up about twice in the wintertime, and she said she'd be up for Pioneer Day.

DOROTHEA: Well good, good.

NORMA: Said she would.

DOROTHEA: And your girls probably will be here?

NORMA: Yeah, yeah. And Sonny too, if he can get off that long.

DOROTHEA: Sonny is a long distance truck driver, so he ---

NORMA: Yeah, yeah. Well he's, he delivers trucks is what he does for Freightliner. And of course they go all over.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

NORMA: And when he come through the other day he was on his way to Indiana. Then he had to take one down to North Carolina. And he takes them up into Canada. He takes them down to Mexico, but he doesn't go into Mexico with them, which is kind of strange. But he only has to take them to the border. Of course for a while they were buying a lot of them. I don't know how their money situation is now, whether they are going down there

anymore or not.

DOROTHEA: And these are just the tractors?

NORMA: Yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: So he hauls the, delivers the tractors.

NORMA: Boy they are a palace though, some of them are made --- you could live in them.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, they have TV's and microwaves, and everything in them anymore.

NORMA: Well there is places in there, yeah, to put it, yeah. Double bunk.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

NORMA: Yeah, he brings those through once in awhile. Of course they got a factory in North Carolina too, that makes the small trucks.

DOROTHEA: Have you ever gone traveling with him, sometime, would he ever be able to take you with him?

NORMA: Probably not, because it is against company policy.

DOROTHEA: Company ---

NORMA: No, yeah. I used to go with Howard once in awhile in the truck.

DOROTHEA: And Howard worked for ---

NORMA: Oatman.

DOROTHEA: Oatman.

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: And that's called what now? East ---

NORMA: Yeah, what is it? Eastern Oregon Fast Freight.

DOROTHEA: Eastern Oregon Freightline, or Fast Freight, or something, yeah.

NORMA: Fast Freight, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Fast Freight, or something, yeah.

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Howard worked with Lloyd Pratt, was it?

NORMA: Uh huh, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: How many years did he work for the Outman's?

NORMA: Boy, that's hard, until they was bought out by Bend-Portland. Bend-Portland bought them out.

DOROTHEA: Well that's right, I forgot about that.

NORMA: Yeah, Bend-Portland bought out Oatman, and then System, System 99 bought out Portland, Bend-Portland. Then they went broke, but Howard was already retired by then.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

NORMA: So he was, he was, he got his pension, you know, every-thing, yeah.

DOROTHEA: So how many years altogether, probably 25?

NORMA: Oh boy.

DOROTHEA: All through your married life?

NORMA: Nearly.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

NORMA: Except the time he was in the army. Pat was born in '45, and he come home when Pat was a year old, and he went to work for Bill Oatman right after that.

DOROTHEA: Okay, so Bill Oatman was the owner of the Oatman Truck Company ---

NORMA: Bend, Bend, at that time.

DOROTHEA: What was that called?

NORMA: Oatman.

DOROTHEA: Oatman, just Oatman Trucking?

NORMA: Yeah, yeah. And then of course he died, and then George took it over, you

know.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, yeah. Well Terry Keim is here with us also. Do you have any questions that you'd like to ask?

TERRY KEIM: Yeah, if you're up for it, or we could always do it tomorrow if you don't want to do it. If we can go back to, you talked about your grandmother who was in California, and she learned about packing butter. Do you know where she was in California?

NORMA: Plumas County. But, you know, it was mostly just, you couldn't call it towns. There was post offices around, but Plumas County, we always just said Plumas County.

TERRY: And that was your grandmother on your ---

NORMA: Mother's side.

TERRY: Mother's side.

NORMA: Yeah.

TERRY: So she would have been --- what was her name?

NORMA: Julia Ann Hunter. Julia Ann, oh dear, Julia Ann Broyles Turner Sylvester. (Laughter) You don't have to put all that down.

TERRY: Where did she get all those names?

NORMA: She married them.

DOROTHEA: She was married a few times.

NORMA: She was married plenty of times.

TERRY: Sort of the, family tree then, what was your grandmother's maiden name on your mom's side?

NORMA: Broyles.

TERRY: Okay.

NORMA: B R O Y L E S.

TERRY: And so then your mother was ---

NORMA: She was a Turner.

TERRY: Turner.

NORMA: Yeah, for the first one. That was all the kids that Grandma had, she had three. Arthur Turner was one of them. And then one girl Lillian that stayed in California. And Mama was four years --- see after she and Turner separated why Grandma had to go to work then, you know around, to support the kids. And she put them in a convent.

TERRY: Oh wow. Down there in California?

NORMA: Huh?

TERRY: Would that have been in California?

NORMA: Oh yeah, yeah. And so Mama was four years in a convent. They called them convents.

DOROTHEA: I suppose a girl's school, or a private school.

NORMA: It was kind of, I'd call it an orphanage is what I'd call it.

TERRY: Yeah.

NORMA: But then ---

TERRY: That was somewhere in Plumas County probably?

NORMA: I don't remember where. Yeah, Plumas County, but I don't remember where. It was a bigger place, like Marysville or some-thing.

TERRY: And your mom's first name again was?

NORMA: Ida.

TERRY: Ida. So she would have been Ida Turner.

NORMA: Yeah.

TERRY: And so her mom brought her up here with a new husband?

NORMA: Yeah, yeah. And Arthur might have come with her too. She had married

Sylvester by then, and --- But Mama, I don't remember if she ever talked about Arthur coming up, but surely he was --- let's see, is he older or younger. I think he was a little bit older, so I would think he would come along with them. But she was 11 anyway when they ---

DOROTHEA: Okay, you're talking Turners, is this some relation to Alan and Dorman and ---

NORMA: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Arthur was their father.

DOROTHEA: Oh, okay.

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: So he must have come around here sometime, because they lived here for a while.

NORMA: Oh yeah, we've been here --- well they were, it would be before the turn of the century I imagine. And they never went, they never went back. Mama never went back, and --- well she stayed up here with Grandma. She had a more exciting life than I did.

TERRY: Do you know, did they come right to town, Julia and her husband?

NORMA: No, no, they had --- People ranched then, they weren't town --- None of us have ever been town people except me, I'm a "townie".

TERRY: Okay. And would that have been Sylvester, was she Hunter by then?

NORMA: His name was Porter Sylvester.

TERRY: Oh, the last name was Sylvester.

NORMA: Yeah, because, you know, people did that.

TERRY: Okay.

NORMA: Porter Sylvester.

TERRY: And so they came up and ranched or farmed up here.

NORMA: Well ranching, I don't think anybody farmed. Now there is a difference between

ranching and farming. You understand that part?

TERRY: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Grandpa farmed, so somebody did farm.

TERRY: A few people.

NORMA: People come from over on the coast and call us farmers over here, and we're not farmers.

TERRY: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: That doesn't go good.

NORMA: Yeah, we're not farmers, we're ranchers.

TERRY: You don't know what year your mother was born then?

NORMA: No, I can't remember right now. I could find out, Hilton knows all that.

TERRY: Because then we'd know the date that Julia and Porter came to town.

NORMA: Yeah, he might know when they came to Oregon too, yeah. He is pretty good with dates.

DOROTHEA: We did an interview with Hilton, and it might be in that.

TERRY: Okay, I can check at the library, and then I'll get the dates and plug them in.

NORMA: Yeah, I think it's a ---

TERRY: Okay.

DOROTHEA: Also, tell us something about your mom. Now I think that she was on the election board, and I think that she was on---

NORMA: No, she never done that.

DOROTHEA: She wasn't on the election board?

NORMA: Nope, never was.

DOROTHEA: I thought she was on the election board.

NORMA: She never did that. I'm the one that's been there forever.

DOROTHEA: Okay, you've been on the election board. Okay, well see that's something else that you do.

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: She, I know though, was, belonged to the Sagebrush Club.

NORMA: Oh yeah, the clubs, yeah.

DOROTHEA: And probably was ---

NORMA: VFW, she belonged to that. And you remember the girls that, oh can't remember what they were now. But Mary Bennett started it, you know, that they had the -- The older ladies met, I think, once a month or something and had a potluck or something. Sunshine --- it wasn't Sunshine.

DOROTHEA: Sunshine, yeah.

NORMA: Is that what it was?

DOROTHEA: I think she was a Rebekah.

NORMA: Yeah, she was a Rebekah.

DOROTHEA: And I think that was the, then I think Mary Bennett started the Sunshine Club.

NORMA: Whatever they called it.

DOROTHEA: And they got together and had potlucks.

NORMA: Yeah, she really enjoyed that.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

TERRY: Did you already describe where, do you remember where Julia and Porter first settled?

NORMA: Out in the valley, and that's all I can tell you. Back then everything was opened, there wasn't any roads, no nothing, all open.

TERRY: And they would have been around in that Peter French era of ---

NORMA: You know it might have been, but you know Peter French was a long ways away. Communication was not that good.

TERRY: Yeah.

NORMA: So ---

TERRY: You didn't get any stories passed down on your ---

NORMA: Even when my father worked for that ranch down there, it was after Peter French was killed.

TERRY: So your father, now he came when he was one years old.

NORMA: Uh huh.

TERRY: And his parent's names?

NORMA: They were Tom and lone.

TERRY: Whiting.

NORMA: Whiting, yeah.

TERRY: Okay.

NORMA: That's where you, Tom Whiting gets him. He's Tom the second, Hilton's Tom.

DOROTHEA: Tommy. We call him Tommy.

NORMA: Tommy, yeah Tommy. Tommy is coming up too.

DOROTHEA: Oh is he, great.

NORMA: Yeah, yeah, he hopes to if he can.

DOROTHEA: Okay. I do know that Ida was a Queen Mother at one time, right?

NORMA: No, she wanted to be, but the time they asked her, I mean the time they asked her she didn't think she could handle it. I'm pretty sure she was close to 90 by that time.

DOROTHEA: Okay, because I was thinking that she ---

NORMA: She --- too many ahead of them.

DOROTHEA: Right. Because, how are you chosen? Let's see if we can find out how ---

NORMA: Well when your age comes up, see Fay was supposed to have been before me, but she didn't want to take it.

DOROTHEA: Fay Smith?

NORMA: Smith, yeah. And Freda ---

DOROTHEA: Well Freda Sword, she was a Scheckle.

NORMA: Yeah, she would be ---

DOROTHEA: She was going to be, but her health won't permit that.

NORMA: Well her daughter didn't think that she could handle it. And I'm sure that with some help why she could ---

DOROTHEA: Oh yeah. All you got to do is sit up there, I think.

NORMA: Yeah. And I don't know why Fay couldn't do that, but she didn't want to.

DOROTHEA: Well yeah, she probably just didn't want to go to the trouble.

NORMA: Yeah, it is --- and she'd had an 80th birthday party before that.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. And all of her kids and everybody was here, yeah. And so then you were the third in the line.

NORMA: I don't know where I was in the line, Twyla didn't say.

DOROTHEA: She didn't say. But you were next in line, apparently, somewhere along the way.

NORMA: Yeah, yeah, somewhere. I was the one that accepted. Then I said I wasn't going to until I talked to the girls, and they said they'd help a little bit.

DOROTHEA: No, Mom, do it.

NORMA: But they haven't been much help so far.

TERRY: Does it have to do with age, and if you were born here, is that part of it?

NORMA: You know you don't have to be born here. You have to be here 30 years.

TERRY: Okay.

DOROTHEA: But sometime or other you have to --- if you moved into say like, I moved into here in Harney County in 1940, and sometime in my life I have had to lived here for awhile, but I don't have to completely live here for 30 years.

NORMA: That's what they say, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. So I mean ---

NORMA: If you kind of register, if you kind of register --- and yeah, and they know that you came in here, but it doesn't have to be continuous.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. But I, now see I didn't register when I was probably, I don't know how long I've been registered, but my time will be way long into the future, I'll never make it. So, but ---

NORMA: Well Twyla says there is a lot ahead of her, and she's not that much younger than I am either.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, yeah.

NORMA: Yeah, I was kind of proud to be a pioneer, so when I, the day I turned 30 why --- the first time, why I come up and ---

DOROTHEA: I had to be almost 40, but you know I didn't get to do it because I wanted the rest of the family to do it with me, and they said no, we're not going to do that.

NORMA: Well Mama was always, she always, when she could, come to Pioneer Day. So I don't know, when I turned 30 I was just tickled to come in and ---

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

NORMA: I had one gal in there thought it was weird that I, you know ---

DOROTHEA: Why, because you were young?

NORMA: Well I guess so. No, because I wanted to register, and was a pioneer.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, yeah.

NORMA: On my 30th, well I was a little past 30, because my birthday is in April, and then

the next June when the Pioneer Day was. And it used to be over here at the courthouse, and that's where we registered also. So it was convenient.

DOROTHEA: Okay, let's get on to that, because I want to know something about when it was at the courthouse, and how it happened. But I've got to turn the tape, so we'll come back to that.

SIDE B

DOROTHEA: Okay, we mentioned your kid's dates when they were born, and Roy was born in '40, and Gayle was '45.

NORMA: No, Pat was '45.

DOROTHEA: Pat was '45.

NORMA: Yeah, was born in '45.

DOROTHEA: And Gayle was '54.

NORMA: '54.

DOROTHEA: And Kelli was '63.

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, there was a few --- you did have four families.

NORMA: Yeah, I kind of strung them out.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

NORMA: But, you know, I always had a baby sitter.

DOROTHEA: Right.

NORMA: I did, I really did. Except for Sonny, and Mama raised him up in time, until he could take care of Pat. She kept Pat some too.

DOROTHEA: Well let's get back to when they had the Pioneer Days on the courthouse yard, I understand, and the good time. Everybody brought kind of a basket lunch.

NORMA: Oh boy, there was some good stuff then. They had benches and tables out on the lawn. A lot of Drewsey people. I remember one year some people from Drewsey brought strawberries, a big crock of strawberries. It's amazing how you remember little things like that.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, uh huh. How many people would show up at these Pioneer Days?

NORMA: Well I have no idea how many, but the yard was full.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And that courthouse is not the courthouse that stands there now.

NORMA: No.

DOROTHEA: I think we have some pictures here in the Museum of it.

NORMA: No, it hadn't, no I'm sure it wasn't.

DOROTHEA: Probably that white one that had the trees in front of it. Well I think this courthouse was built in 1939.

NORMA: Well, maybe it was then.

TERRY: Same site?

DOROTHEA: I think it was the same location, wasn't it?

NORMA: I'm pretty sure it was, because the clerk's office where we registered, I can remember going in there. So I think it might have been.

DOROTHEA: Might have been the same courthouse?

NORMA: Yeah, that's up there now.

DOROTHEA: Well I'm not sure about this.

NORMA: See when they changed the yard, the yard is different now, they got it built up, and lawn and everything.

DOROTHEA: But Emery Ferguson was telling me that he thought it was built in 1939.

NORMA: Well if it was, why --- because I'm pretty sure --- Well I know one time that I remember that we was there, it was when Sonny was little, and so that was in '40

something. So yeah, it was probably that one.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

NORMA: And as far as when I was a teenager, I don't remember the Pioneer Days too much. The folks went, but I don't remember too much about them at all.

DOROTHEA: But it's always been kind of a real celebration in Harney County, right?

NORMA: Yeah, it always has. And it kind of is, still is.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

NORMA: It's amazing how many people take the trouble to go down.

DOROTHEA: And in the earlier days, probably in the '40's, I read somewhere where it said there was probably 273 people registered. And they used to list all these names in the Burns Times-Herald. They don't do that any more, so you don't know who comes. But it was kind of interesting.

NORMA: And I don't remember that part either.

DOROTHEA: You don't?

NORMA: No. No, I don't remember the ---

DOROTHEA: And then they went from the courthouse to where? I know for a while they came up here to the clubrooms.

NORMA: I think it was up to the museum. Yeah, yeah. For a few years there why I had to quit, I didn't come. I didn't go to the

--- it just seemed like there was something else that had to be done that day. But, and then, I just don't remember after that.

DOROTHEA: Well I think that they probably still had --- I remember coming for one Pioneer Day over here in the clubrooms. And there was a lot of people there. And they had a big spread of food, so apparently they were still bringing lots of food.

NORMA: I think when Aunt Ella, I'm pretty sure Aunt Ella was Queen Mother one time,

and I'm pretty sure of that, because I think the picture that I got of her is over here in the club room.

DOROTHEA: And Aunt Ella was, Ella Whiting Luckey.

NORMA: Luckey, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Approximately then, after the big dinner, Racine's opened their theaters for movies.

NORMA: Well over at the courthouse, when it was over there, they would go over to the high school for the programs.

DOROTHEA: Oh.

NORMA: And the theater was kind of in there, you could go to the program, or go to the theater, or whatever else. I never did get to, so I don't remember. But I do remember that they always had a ---

DOROTHEA: And then a dance that night at the Tonawama.

NORMA: Yeah, yeah, we got to go to that sometimes.

DOROTHEA: And I also understood that you, the bands that played for the dances were more or less volunteer bands.

NORMA: It was more like just old-time fiddlers.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

NORMA: You know, it wasn't, you couldn't call it a band, it was more like an orchestra. It wasn't band type music. It was old time fiddlers.

DOROTHEA: And then they went from there, I think, to the Senior Center.

NORMA: Must have.

DOROTHEA: Because I know it has been there for quite a few years.

NORMA: It was always kind of strange they didn't go out to the grange hall, because that's a big place. But I can't remember if it was ever even mentioned to go out there.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. Now they don't have the basket socials like they did at that time. They just bring potluck, is this right? And everybody gathers and has a nice big dinner.

NORMA: Yeah, they just set in on there and then you help yourself, yeah. And it's all good food.

DOROTHEA: Then they have the program, and we talk about your life, and my life, and their life. And this year's president is going to be Carroll Bennett. Now do you think he is going to be

NORMA: I was going to call him last night, and I was too tired. So maybe I'll call him tonight and see how Marian is coming along.

DOROTHEA: And Marian broke her ---

NORMA: I hope she recovers enough so she can be here.

DOROTHEA: Now she broke her hip, or ---

NORMA: Oh yeah. And then they done a replacement, so I understand.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

NORMA: But that was such a traumatic experience that she has been awhile getting over it.

DOROTHEA: I understood that Carroll met the ambulance on the, at the highway, because they were up in the hills at the time. So he had called down somehow or other --
- and so ---

NORMA: Evidently he discovered her. But yeah, unless he had a car phone or something, because he don't have a phone up there, I don't think.

... (Telephone)

Oh, that's right --- well I was wondering how much I should say.

DOROTHEA: Well I ---

NORMA: I hate to open my mouth about somebody else.

DOROTHEA: Well yeah. Just the fact that he probably was going to be president, we think, and probably part of his family will be here.

NORMA: The last I heard of it he was excited about it. And when I called him, when he was still over at Bend, and he was ---

DOROTHEA: While Marian was in the hospital.

NORMA: Well she was in that recovery place over there.

DOROTHEA: Oh, oh, uh huh.

NORMA: She was out of the hospital. And then he was going to Cascade Locks the next day with her. And I haven't called up there yet to see how --- But I don't know, you know, you can kind of do that in the evening, and in the evenings I've been tired and didn't want to talk, so I haven't done it. So, I really should. He was supposed to be here last weekend, and he was going to get in touch, so maybe he didn't come.

DOROTHEA: So well, anyway, we understand that he is going to be the president, so there will probably be a lot of Bennett's there.

NORMA: Well, I hope so.

DOROTHEA: Bennett's are quite a large family, and they have lived here for years and years, so ---

NORMA: Yeah, and I knew all of them.

DOROTHEA: I'm running out of questions.

NORMA: Good. Have you run out of tape yet? (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Did you have something else, Terry, that you wanted to

TERRY: I keep wanting to go back to the very beginning.

DOROTHEA: That's okay, that's okay.

TERRY: Tom and lone Whiting came from; did we decide where they came from?

NORMA: Well they came from Grass Valley, California, and I don't know whether that is in Plumas County or not. I'll have to look it up.

TERRY: ... Grass Valley. They had more children?

NORMA: Oh yeah. They had lone, George was born, my father was born down there. And then Aunt Ella Luckey was born up here. In fact she was born out at Camp Harney, Fort Harney, during the Indian uprising. You probably remember hearing about that. Yeah. And this uprising came about, and so they were all loaded in the wagon and taken out there. I don't know how long they stayed, but while she was, they were there why --- can you imagine riding out there ---

TERRY: Pregnant.

DOROTHEA: Pregnant.

NORMA: Yeah. I'd think about that.

TERRY: And did they have more siblings, George and Ella?

NORMA: Skylar was the oldest. No, Lizzie was the oldest, Elizabeth, she was also Elizabeth lone. And then Skylar Colfax, and Frank. I don't know what Frank's name was. And then my father's name was George, and then Ella. Ella's name was Ellen, believe it or not, but they always called her Ella.

TERRY: So there was Skylar, Colfax, Frank ---

DOROTHEA: No, Skylar Colfax.

NORMA: No, Skylar Colfax was his name.

TERRY: Oh, okay. What a great name.

NORMA: Yeah, must have been.

TERRY: And they, is that where you were talking about where the Whiting homestead is?

NORMA: You know the Whiting, when they first came here they lived in a dugout right

over the hill. And of course this was all open, so you can imagine what it would be like. But where they ranched at, I think it's out there where Alan is now.

DOROTHEA: Around out in that area.

NORMA: Yeah, yeah. In fact I'm pretty sure one of the houses is where, or one of the places anyway, was just south of there too. It was evidently part of it. Yeah, Alan's place out there is one of those hundred year ranches, because it started in with the grandparents, you know, Tom and Lone.

DOROTHEA: And he has a Whiting ---

NORMA: Ranch.

DOROTHEA: --- ranch, yeah.

NORMA: Yeah. And then even after that, why it seemed like Withers had it. But they were still part of the family.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, uh huh.

TERRY: You said that's out off the highway towards, that goes to Crane.

NORMA: No, it's out here past the Indian Camp.

TERRY: Oh, okay.

DOROTHEA: And that's Alan Bossuot, one L.

NORMA: Yep, one L.

DOROTHEA: A L A N.

TERRY: That now owns it, and lives on it.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, uh huh.

NORMA: And Ethel.

TERRY: Okay.

DOROTHEA: Also, now Skylar I think, was the one that had the home-stead that's up in the Poison Creek area, on the ---

NORMA: Skull Creek area.

DOROTHEA: Skull Creek area.

NORMA: Dad's was in Poison Creek. His was over on Skull Creek.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

NORMA: In fact Alan was telling me that Dr. Fitz was trying to get that so that he could have a --- I hope he does.

DOROTHEA: And I know that there is a place up --- now I know it's on Poison Creek, because, or is that Trout Creek. It is up where the railroad used to go through?

NORMA: Well, no, that's not Trout Creek. I think that's ---

DOROTHEA: Silvies?

NORMA: You know I don't know what that --- we'd have to check with Hilton to see what that is. That was Frank Whiting's place.

DOROTHEA: Oh, that was Frank's. Okay, yeah.

NORMA: And the tunnel was, and the railroad went right through their place, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

NORMA: Yeah, and the tunnel was ---

DOROTHEA: And Frank Whiting had Ellen, Ethel ---

NORMA: Let's see, let's go back. Olivia, I think, was the oldest.

DOROTHEA: Olivia.

NORMA: And Ethel.

DOROTHEA: And Ethel. Ellen.

NORMA: And Delphine.

DOROTHEA: And Delphine.

NORMA: Yeah. I got a picture down there, and I don't think it's in that order, but that's pretty close.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And they were Whitings.

NORMA: Yeah, they were Frank's bunch.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

TERRY: Do you remember when George and Ida got married?

NORMA: No, I don't. Right after the turn of the century, I expect. I'd have to ask Hilton about that. I know I've been told, but I don't remember.

TERRY: I'll look in Hilton's ...

NORMA: I'm not good with figures at all. Dates, I'm not good at. I had the awfulest time in school in history. I liked history, but I never could remember the dates.

DOROTHEA: Now I didn't like history.

NORMA: Oh I like history, I still like history, but I could not remember the dates. I could remember the, tell about the events, but I couldn't tell you when they happened.

DOROTHEA: Well tell us something also about your family, and what did you do for electricity, telephones.

NORMA: ... didn't even know that happened. I was telling Emery, you know, when we used to ride to school in the buggy, why the power plant down here where the Powerhouse is now, that was the power plant. And there was a chimney there, big old chimney like this; I guess they burned diesel or something. But on a cold morning when we'd ride into town, why that old chimney would be shooting rings. That always fascinated me, and it only happened in cold weather.

DOROTHEA: Huh.

NORMA: In winter weather.

DOROTHEA: But you used kerosene lamps. What did you use for light?

NORMA: Oh yeah, yeah, kerosene, yeah.

DOROTHEA: I remember studying a lot by kerosene lamps.

NORMA: And then when we got real upper crust, why we had gasoline lamps, but that was not until we got into high school.

DOROTHEA: You never did have a plant, or ---

NORMA: Yeah, Dad tried to fix a carbide plant one time, but it wasn't very successful. We just went back to kerosene, and it was too expensive to run.

DOROTHEA: Well how about ---

NORMA: There wasn't any money back then.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. Were you still at home when the electricity did come in?

NORMA: Not out there, no.

DOROTHEA: So you didn't have telephones either then?

NORMA: Well we always had a telephone up in the hills, that was one thing we always did. But out here, it just wasn't that necessary. And anything that wasn't necessary, cost too much money, you know you didn't have. But we always had the telephone up in the hills.

DOROTHEA: So you had the big long board telephones, like the box telephones.

NORMA: Yeah, yeah, it was just like the one you got up here on the wall.

DOROTHEA: Can you remember what your ring was?

NORMA: A long and three shorts.

DOROTHEA: A long and three shorts.

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: I can remember a party line, and --- (Laughter)

NORMA: Yeah, yeah, that was what it was, a party line.

DOROTHEA: And snooping, listening into the conversations.

NORMA: The Baker boys that lived up there, Fred and Harold, and sometimes we all got on the line together, but not too much. Yeah, that was about the only entertainment was

the party line.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. We'd even get on and play jokes, and bad things like that.

NORMA: Well as I say, Mama didn't allow that.

DOROTHEA: Oh we didn't do it when my folks was home.

NORMA: Well, you know, they were always there. That was one thing about it, one of my parents was there, we weren't left alone very much.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

NORMA: I do remember one summer when Audrey and I --- you know the big high point of my life, I don't know whether Audrey liked it so well or not, is when school was out we got to go to the hills. And we were up there six weeks until the hay grew down here, and then we moved the cows back down. Well one summer why Mama wanted to stay down here and take care of the place. We about starved to death because neither one of us would cook. (Laughter)

TERRY: You were up there?

NORMA: No, we were out here.

TERRY: You were down there with your Mom?

NORMA: No, Audrey and I were alone out here at the ranch.

TERRY: Goodness.

NORMA: I was probably about 14, and she'd have been --- no, I was probably 16 or so. And, because I was old enough, I could have cooked, but I didn't cook, and she didn't either. So when we got hungry enough, why we would go over to Aunt Frankie's where Myrtle and her, you know, no it's Verda, where Verda lives now. That was the Miller place, and Aunt Frankie lived there then. So we'd go over and get ---

DOROTHEA: That's, you load up on food.

NORMA: Get something to eat.

DOROTHEA: Talking about food, did you have a garden?

NORMA: Always had a garden, yeah, always had a garden.

DOROTHEA: So also then in the fall you would do a lot of canning?

NORMA: Yeah, yeah. And Dad would go to John Day, of course this was when I was a kid, he'd go to John Day and get whatever they had over there, apples and pumpkins and so forth that weren't grown here.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. So did you kids have to weed the garden and ---

NORMA: Oh some, yeah some. I don't remember that that was much of a chore.

DOROTHEA: My mother didn't let me. I went out and weeded the garden and hoed up all the peas and the corn.

NORMA: Well I can remember one night we were going to the show, which didn't happen very often, and I ate all the green peas and got so sick I couldn't go to the show.

DOROTHEA: Oh. But green peas are so good when you press them out of the hull.

NORMA: Well these were peas right out of the garden.

DOROTHEA: That's what I mean.

NORMA: Yeah green peas.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, you just pick them right out of the hull and ---

NORMA: In fact that's the only way I eat them. I don't even like peas anymore.
(Laughter)

DOROTHEA: How about strawberries.

NORMA: I couldn't grow strawberries. I don't know why, but it was just too cold out there.

DOROTHEA: A lot of times ---

NORMA: Corn, all the vegetables we managed, except of course tomatoes. And poor Mama she tried tomatoes every year, because she loved tomatoes. But most everything else.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. And we always had that snow, or that freeze in June, and the snow in the Fourth of July and ---

NORMA: I can remember one Fourth of July when it snowed. It snowed enough so that we had to curtail the haying.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, yeah.

NORMA: Wayne got to come to town and help celebrate. We never got to celebrate the Fourth because we were haying, you know. Well that was one time he got to come in. Because we used to do that.

DOROTHEA: Did they have a big celebration on the Fourth?

NORMA: Well yeah. I don't know how big it was, because I never have got to go. But yeah, they'd do things, but I don't remember what they were.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. But you don't remember fire works or any of that kind of thing?

NORMA: No. They probably did, but as I say we weren't there, so I don't know.

DOROTHEA: I don't remember fireworks at all when I was kid.

NORMA: I wonder if they even had them then?

DOROTHEA: I don't know.

TERRY: How old were you when you first started haying?

NORMA: When I first started working? Oh dear, who knows. I was packing water by the time I was old enough to toddle. (Laughter) One never ever --- you just kind of work into it. I don't know.

DOROTHEA: That reminds me of the subject of Saturday night baths. Did you get to pack the water for that?

NORMA: No, we each got our own water, by darn.

DOROTHEA: You did.

NORMA: Yes sir, we did. It was in the tub, but we each got our own water.

DOROTHEA: How did you heat your water? Did you have a hot water on the ---

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: The home comfort, we'll call it.

NORMA: Yeah, the old home comfort. And it had, when we got the second one, the newer one, why it had reservoirs on the side. And then there was always the teakettle a boiling.

DOROTHEA: Now when Daddy fixed ours, we had a great big tank that hooked onto these coils on the back of the ---

NORMA: On yeah, he put coils in it, yeah.

DOROTHEA: --- stove, and that's how we heated our water.

NORMA: Yeah, when I moved to town why that's, the first thing we had was the coils in the stove, in the tank.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. And the tank that hooked off of it.

NORMA: Yeah, uh huh. And then when we got electricity, when I got an electric stove why then I got an electric hot water tank.

DOROTHEA: That's the first thing, I think; my mother got was a hot water tank. Yeah.

NORMA: And that wasn't until Howard come home from the army.

DOROTHEA: What years was he in the service?

NORMA: Well it was before Pat was born, you probably --- see Pat was born in '45, so he probably went in, in '44 and got out --- Pat was a year old when he got out. So from '44 to '46, I expect.

DOROTHEA: Did you stay here the whole time he was in the service?

NORMA: Yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: You never went with him?

NORMA: Yeah.

TERRY: Were you living in town at that point when you married?

NORMA: Yeah the same house is now, only it was littler then.

TERRY: So you got married and moved into that house?

NORMA: Oh no, we lived all over before that. Yeah.

TERRY: When did you move to that house?

NORMA: Well it was before he went to the army, so it would be about in '44, I suppose.

TERRY: When you say you lived all over, do you mean in the county?

NORMA: Yeah.

TERRY: Because of his work?

NORMA: Oh yeah, yeah.

TERRY: Did you ever live as far away as Fields or anything like that.

NORMA: We lived at Drewsey for a while. We moved down to Silver Creek for a winter and he fed cattle for Harley Hotchkiss, or for Don Hotchkiss out there. And then he worked for, then he went to work at the mill, and he worked there until he went to the service.

DOROTHEA: That was Edward Hines?

NORMA: Yeah. But we kind of moved around then. Didn't get very settled until --- he wanted me someplace permanent when he enlisted, so he, we bought this place down there, \$1100. Can you imagine? It wasn't much of a house, it was only about worth that too, but it was a roof, even if it did leak.

DOROTHEA: Did it have electricity then, or did you get that later?

NORMA: Yeah, yeah. The old spools, you know, they had wired it all right.

DOROTHEA: Oh, and it was --- yeah.

NORMA: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: So the wiring wasn't between the walls?

NORMA: Well here and there, yeah. But the stove still had tank and coil. So even in the summertime to take a bath you had to have --- it was pretty warm.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

NORMA: Cold in the winter, and hot in the summer.

DOROTHEA: You still live there by yourself?

NORMA: Yeah, and I still live there by myself, and got that big old yard. We acquired more property, of course, and got a bigger house. No, you know, I'm perfectly satisfied there, it's home.

DOROTHEA: Serves your purpose in other words.

NORMA: It serves the purpose, yeah.

DOROTHEA: So, you come to our historical society luncheons, you help us with the museum. We are going to be trying to go on some tours; you're planning on that. What are your plans for the summer after the Pioneer Day?

NORMA: After this?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

NORMA: Well one thing I'm going to do is go to the, get an appointment in Bend to see about my eye. I don't know, I'm just going to wander around, I guess. I don't make plans, really.

TERRY: Do you miss haying?

NORMA: I don't even miss the ranch. (Laughter) When I became a "townie", why that was --- And I didn't hate it either. I didn't mind it out there, but I --- it's still a lot of responsibility, and things that I didn't want anymore. I didn't care when we left the ranch. Of course I was back out there all the time, until I couldn't --- until Hilton changed --- Then my kids took over, they took over for me, and they worked out there.

DOROTHEA: Well Hilton is the only one actually of the six of you kids that is a rancher,

isn't he?

NORMA: Lottie and Vern were. They always were, even though they lived in town.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

NORMA: You know they had all these places around. They had one at, out here at, past the Bell-A, and then one at Skull Creek, and at the Horse Spring Field. Then there was a field up here, and then this field that Alan's on out there.

DOROTHEA: Cherry Creek, or something like that, Skull Creek.

NORMA: Skull Creek and the Horse Spring Field.

DOROTHEA: Horse Spring.

NORMA: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, so they, yeah they always ranched too.

DOROTHEA: Well that's right, I forgot about them. They're both gone, so ---

NORMA: Yeah, yeah so you see ---

DOROTHEA: Can't think about ---

NORMA: Yeah, and then ... and Alan and Shirley got the property and they carried on. Shirley is the only one that doesn't, didn't. Judy did until she passed away.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. And Alan still is in a ---

NORMA: Yeah, Alan still is out there. He's got his little bunch of cows.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. So I guess it has kind of stayed in. But actually as far as, it was just Lottie and Hilton that continued with the ranch.

NORMA: Really, yeah.

DOROTHEA: And Hilton more or less lives on the home place now, right?

NORMA: No. No, he don't. The home place just sits over there. He bought the Cavender place, and that's where he built his house.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

NORMA: And that's the field this side of it.

DOROTHEA: Now is that Cavenger, or ---

NORMA: Cavender.

DOROTHEA: Cavender.

NORMA: Yeah. I used to know his name. He had a little tiny cabin there that he lived in. And then I don't know where he went. And I don't know how Hilton acquired the property, except maybe by taxes, or something. Because that man didn't have any family. I don't know how he acquired that field.

DOROTHEA: So your mother lived at the home place then until ---

NORMA: Yeah, until she, yeah died.

DOROTHEA: Died, yeah.

NORMA: Until she had to go to the nursing home, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. So, but Hilton more or less runs his cows there yet doesn't he. Or I should say probably Ron, because I imagine Hilton ---

NORMA: Yeah, Hilton, poor Hilton he don't even get --- he stands and looks out the window and bosses. (Laughter) You know Ron was still so good. He comes in and asks Hilton yet, how things, how he would like things done. And I know it is just courtesy. Eva thinks he don't, he's not sure how to do anything. And I said, "Eva, he does that for courtesy, he knows, he can run that."

DOROTHEA: Oh I'm sure.

NORMA: You know.

TERRY: When did your mom die?

NORMA: When did my mom die? I have no idea. It was before the girls; no it wasn't, because she did know.

DOROTHEA: No, I was going to say it's ---

NORMA: Kelli, yeah it was after Kelli was born.

DOROTHEA: I was going to say like it was '68 or '69, but I may be mistaken.

NORMA: Yeah, she was 96 years old, so it hasn't been that long ago.

TERRY: Is she buried in the Burns Cemetery?

NORMA: Uh huh, uh huh.

TERRY: Is there a, is it a Whiting plot?

NORMA: Uh huh, uh huh.

TERRY: Does it have, do they have the kind with the curves around?

NORMA: No, no, but there is a big stone there as I remember it, it says Whiting on it. Of course there is two bunches of Whitings there too, the Frank Whiting family, and yeah --- so ---

TERRY: The brother?

NORMA: Yeah, yeah.

TERRY: Okay. And your dad died, how old was he?

NORMA: I know when he died. He died in 1940, in December in 1940, because he died the same year Sonny was born.

DOROTHEA: Now how did he die? Did he ---

NORMA: Heart trouble.

DOROTHEA: Heart trouble.

NORMA: Yeah. That's a family failing.

DOROTHEA: How old was he?

NORMA: 68.

DOROTHEA: He was only 68.

NORMA: Yeah. Yeah, you know, that's what we think about now, yeah.

TERRY: Is Sonny, Roy?

NORMA: Yeah. Yeah, sorry about that. But in Burns he is Sonny.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, he was always Sonny to all of us. It's funny to call him Roy. Well Terry, unless you've got something else ---

TERRY: No.

DOROTHEA: --- I'm run out.

NORMA: That's all right with me, I'm run down.

DOROTHEA: So, did you want to have a video, or you don't want --- okay, well that's fine. I said I didn't know whether you would want one or not. So ---

NORMA: What would you do on the video?

DOROTHEA: The same thing, only it is about 5 minutes, or 10.

NORMA: No, no, no I've been videoed. If you want a video, why get my daughter.

DOROTHEA: Okay, all right, as long as she tells us something about your history, that's what we need. But if you don't want one, well we don't --- because I don't have one fixed, really.

NORMA: Yeah, you got that ...

DOROTHEA: Well I'd like to thank you for the afternoon, and thank you Terry for being here.

NORMA: Well it was nice visiting with you ladies. Terry didn't say much, but then ---

DOROTHEA: Terry. I'm going to get that name right yet. I had it right first. Okay, thank you.

NORMA: Okay, okay.

(END OF TAPE)

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