

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #55 - Side A

Subject: Ida Ward Howard

Place: Drewsey, Oregon

Date: May 1972

Interviewer: Pauline Braymen

PAULINE BRAYMEN: Well I usually start by asking how you happened to arrive in Harney County, or how your parents ---

IDA WARD HOWARD: I was born here.

PAULINE: You were born here. So I'd like to know how your parents happened to come to Harney County.

IDA: Well my mother came from Missouri when she was just a little girl, 9 years old. And my dad was born in Jacksonville ... and they were married in Baker City in 1882.

PAULINE: And what was your mother's name?

IDA: Sarah Davis.

PAULINE: And what was your father's name?

IDA: William Ward.

PAULINE: William Ward.

IDA: And my mother's mother came from Missouri. Her father was a slave owner, you know, and when the slaves were freed he came to Lakeview, Oregon, in Lake County. And all the Negroes that wanted to come with him came with him. Grandmother brought her family out. Harry Clark up here is related. His mother was a sister of my mother.

PAULINE: Oh, I see. I'm finding out a lot about how people are related to one another. I

hope to talk to Harry too before ---

IDA: Just a year younger than I am.

PAULINE: So your mother was about 9 years old then when they made the trip to Lakeview?

IDA: Yes, she was 9. Goose Lake they called it. ...

PAULINE: Then how did your father and mother meet?

IDA: ... My mother had some older brothers, you know, and they came down from Willow Creek, in Malheur County, and my grandmother decided to come out too. And my dad was, you know, a young fellow and they just happened to meet. And they came over here (Drewsey) because her sister that lived over here. My mother had a sister, Gearhart. You know this was a reservation?

PAULINE: An Indian Reservation? Nobody's told me about this yet.

IDA: This place was in the Reservation, and my aunt and uncle who also came up --- I stayed with her all summer --- started on this place, but he thought it was filled up so he went on up to Calamity it was called, and took up that place. So my grandmother finally wound up there with one of her sons.

PAULINE: So this was opened up for homesteading?

IDA: ... in 1881, I think Lee Williams told me. And Mr. Howard filed on it. He was from John Day.

PAULINE: Do you know about, what year your folks came here?

IDA: Well my older brother was born here. That was in '80 --- let's see, they were married in '82, '83.

PAULINE: About 1883?

IDA: Uh huh. But dad was a roamer, he liked to move around. When I was 4 years old we moved to California, down near Red Bluff. Then we finally got back to Klamath Falls.

Of course she was born and raised there in Jacksonville, Fort Klamath. And I can remember I was 10 years old when we came back. We lived up on Calamity until 1902, when we moved to Drewsey. My mother died when I was 17. She was 43, in 1904. I was married in 1905, to Edward Howard.

PAULINE: Do you remember seeing a lot of Indians around here when you were a kid?

IDA: There was a bunch of them. The Indians used to come over here and stay, you know, and camp around on the sunny side of the hills. And my folks ran the hotel in Drewsey and an (Indian) squaw did their washing every week. She'd come and do ... for my mother.

PAULINE: I guess this is doing all right. I thought it wasn't turning right, but I guess it is. You said they had a hotel in Drewsey. Did it have a name?

IDA: The City Hotel.

PAULINE: The City Hotel.

IDA: Of course I went to school in Drewsey. ...

PAULINE: Can you remember --- Percy Davis was telling me this morning that Drewsey was quite a freighting center, and a lot of people came. This is where they came.

IDA: It was. My dad used to, before he had the stable, he used to freight. He used to freight up there.

PAULINE: Freight with horses?

IDA: Freighter's horses. Freighters from Huntington was where they came from. And the stage came through from Ontario, and we had the stage drivers.

PAULINE: Well we've always had lots of dances in Harney County, and ---

IDA: Every Friday night we'd have a dance. The PLS Company buckaroos used to come spend their winters in Drewsey when they were laid off. Drewsey was quite a city in those days.

PAULINE: Do you remember the first car you ever saw, or the first car you ever rode in?

IDA: Yes, the first one I ever rode in was from the Ford Garage in Burns. What was his name, Mr. McGowan? But the first car I ever saw came up through the country from the

...

PAULINE: Came in through Drewsey?

IDA: Yes.

PAULINE: I talked to Jane Drewitt at the nursing home the other day, and she was telling us, she said, and this might have been the same one. She said it came through and the Indians chased after it on their ponies. But this might have been another time.

IDA: Uh huh. ...

PAULINE: Did you live quite a ways from the schoolhouse?

IDA: In Drewsey? Well, no.

PAULINE: You were just right across the street almost.

IDA: No, but then of course they built a new schoolhouse since now. But the old one was right where the new one is, and right where the tavern is, was where the City Hotel was. And I always came home for lunch.

PAULINE: Did they usually have a school play at Christmas time?

IDA: Oh yes, they had a Christmas tree, uh huh. And Mrs. Hamilton she had her Sunday School every Sunday.

PAULINE: Was there a regular church here at that time, or was she just on her own?

IDA: No, there was a minister that came in. The Baptist that baptized a lot of people. He baptized a lot of people, but they never organized a church. He just baptized them in the river.

PAULINE: In the river?

IDA: Uh huh. In the river. Of course with a lot of them it didn't take.

PAULINE: That happens, that happens many times. Still happens today.

IDA: That was before we moved to Drewsey. My husband told me about it. The minister, Phipps, had someone down deep in the water, then somebody up above would push you down into the river.

PAULINE: Oh no. That added to the commotion a little bit I imagine.

IDA: I lived in this ranch house ever since I was married in 1905.

PAULINE: Did your husband build this house? Or have it built?

IDA: Do you remember Mr. Jordan?

PAULINE: Uh huh.

IDA: Well his father built it.

PAULINE: Dan Jordan built it?

IDA: Dan Jordan.

PAULINE: Well maybe you can tell me something. I've been looking for some information about --- Bessie Duhaime has a picture, I don't know whether you know her or not, but she lives over there at Rye Grass.

IDA: Yes, I know her.

PAULINE: She has a picture of the twin homestead, and they built the house on the property line so that half of the house is on one side, and half on the other, and they homesteaded both pieces of property. And she thought this was Jordan and Jordan, but she wasn't sure. Did you ever hear anything about that?

IDA: No, not that. I --- the only thing that I know anything about, you know where Temples live, well there used to be a twin house, and it was Jones and oh --- who was it, the daughter still lives there, Poujade.

PAULINE: Poujade.

IDA: One lived on one side, and one on the other. It was just a double house. And the

house is still there.

PAULINE: Well this might be the one. She wasn't sure who lived in it, but she had a picture of it.

IDA: Well I think it was at Harney.

PAULINE: At Harney. Well I'll check into that further then.

IDA: That's where Richard Temple lives. I don't know if they tore down some of it, but you know Alan Jones? Well it was his father.

PAULINE: Oh, uh huh.

IDA: And I think Mrs. Poujade is a sister to Jones. I think they were related.

PAULINE: Well I imagine that it must have been. You know for two families to live in a house that way, I'd imagine that they were related some way. That may be the one.

IDA: Well that's the one that I know anything about. It was quite a house at one time. ...

PAULINE: Well that must be, because I've been asking everyone I see about that, and no one has known anything about it.

IDA: Well I think Mrs. Bunyard would know.

PAULINE: Yeah, Ida Bunyard. If she comes, she's not here now, you know. She's with her daughter or someone in Medford, or Grants Pass, or Ashland, or someplace. So I'm hoping she comes back before I get through with this project so I can talk to her.

IDA: ...

PAULINE: Can you tell me anything about what it was like to cook for the hay crew, and do for the ---

IDA: I've cooked for the hay crew. We used to have quite a bunch of men at haying each year.

PAULINE: About how big a crew did you usually have haying?

IDA: Well there was generally --- its been so long ago --- Oh, 8 or 10 men anyway. We

always had two on the stack. About two or three cutting and raking the hay. And we had the Indians, the Indians helped us.

PAULINE: What kind of meals, what kind of food did you put on the table?

IDA: Oh, all kinds of vegetables, we raised our own garden. Meat and potatoes, and gravy, some vegetables, and some kind of dessert. Until I got my children I did it by myself. After that why I had help. And my mother-in-law ...

PAULINE: How many children did you have? There was Tom.

IDA: Three, Tom, and Evelyn and Ned.

PAULINE: And Ned?

IDA: Edward was his name.

PAULINE: Now what about Evelyn?

IDA: No, she's in Portland.

PAULINE: In Portland. Did she marry someone from Harney County?

IDA: No. She's on her own, and she's an R.N. She's in the ambulance business now. Her husband had it when he died, and she never had any ...

PAULINE: And what about Ned?

IDA: He lives over in Boise. He married Mrs. Miller's daughter, youngest daughter, Marjorie. And Tom is married to Eleanor Joyce. She's a teacher at the Drewsey School.

PAULINE: Joyce.

IDA: Joyce.

PAULINE: Have you always raised cattle, or did you have sheep or horses too?

IDA: We raised, we always had cattle. They had cattle when I came on the ranch, and horses. But my husband got the sheep, just a small bunch of sheep, you know, for our own mutton, and added to them. We don't eat much mutton anymore ... In 1912, or '11 we got our Kimball Flat School District. And they put me in as clerk, and for 44 years I

was District Clerk until we moved, con

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PAULINE: Consolidated?

IDA: No, we didn't consolidate. We, what is the word? Anyway, we connected up with the Drewsey District. Let's see, oh, we annexed with the Drewsey District.

PAULINE: Annexed.

IDA: And then I was 20 years, Grange secretary.

PAULINE: Well that's a long time too, to be secretary of something like the Grange. Forty-four years of school clerk, I'll bet that's a record.

IDA: Yes, it is.

PAULINE: How many children did you have usually in the Kimball Flat School?

IDA: Well one time we had 32 pupils. It was a larger school than Drewsey. But we always had just ... Kimball Flat area. And I always boarded the teacher. I was clerk to the board. I kind of like to do that kind of work.

PAULINE: That is interesting to be involved in something like that. And you can see it grow over the years, and change.

IDA: And now days it is so different. They've got so much.

PAULINE: It's a lot more complicated all right.

IDA: Oh, lots. I know when I got down there at the school meeting this year ... for everyone in the district she had a difficult job. ... Of course they have their free lunch every day. They don't handle their students like they used to. I believe that the schools in those days, the children did better than they do now. But they take so much stuff that they'll never use. ... as soon as they get out of school, that's it.

PAULINE: Yeah. Well has anything else that happened that you can remember that you think is important in Drewsey?



IDA: We used to have the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs Lodge, you know, of course we ran out of members. I started the Rebekahs. We've still got the old hall.

PAULINE: Is that the building that's right across from the store there, is that the old Odd Fellows Hall?

IDA: That great big thing was built in 1900. And the Odd Fellows, they can't tear it down, because it belongs to the head lodge. It's going to fall down one of these days.

PAULINE: Yeah, it's beginning to look pretty rickety all right.

IDA: They don't use it anymore for anything. Because it's not safe. No, I've belonged to the Rebekah Lodge --- but since we moved to Burns, I couldn't climb those stairs.

PAULINE: No, a lot of our members are in that position. But you know what they've been doing? A couple a times a year they've been, they got permission from the state assembly to have lodge up at the club rooms. A couple of three times a year they have lodge at the club rooms, and you know there's no stairs and that way some of the members that can never go any other time can go. I think that's really nice.

IDA: I don't know if she died before you --- Mrs. Sizemore, she fell down those steps.

PAULINE: Yes, I know. Well that was down at the Masonic Hall that she fell.

IDA: It wasn't at the Odd Fellows there in Burns?

PAULINE: No, the Odd Fellows is above where Sandy's Shoe Store is, and the Masonic's is above Corbett's, and she fell --- but it could have just as well of been. I mean it's six of one and half a dozen of the other, because they're both ---

IDA: Both are killers, because I've been up them.

PAULINE: Yeah, and I --- we were up there the other day and my grandmother was up there, and I just walked all the way down with her, because every time I think of Mrs. Sizemore falling. That was really terrible.

IDA: ... and she was about 80. When you think that --- We always had two teachers in

Drewsey at our school.

PAULINE: What was it like going to Ontario when they first thought --- when they first had automobiles? What was the road like between here and Ontario?

IDA: Well it passed through by Beulah and then over the Bendire Mountain and down.

PAULINE: Now this is a little bit different route than what they had originally.

IDA: Down Bully Creek into Vale. That's where the freighters used to run. The first year that my husband and I were married we went to Vale, on the Fourth of July with our ... to get our supplies. We took in the Fourth of July down there, and got supplies too.

PAULINE: At Vale or at Ontario?

IDA: At Ontario.

PAULINE: At Ontario.

IDA: Vale wasn't very much of a place, but it was a town to see.

PAULINE: Well it still is.

IDA: Still is. You know my husband had been home with; no it was before Tom was born. They had a big voting, and Ontario tried to take the county seat away from Vale, and Vale beat them. And they had a big celebration, and we just happened to be there. And they had this great big feed, you know, and so we took that all in. ...

PAULINE: I'll bet.

IDA: And Ontario has never tried it since. No, we went down from Juntura by train, that time we went down the river ... my two younger ones ... Tom went the four years of high school in Burns, and Evelyn went three years, and then she graduated from the Inter-mountain Institute at Weiser. And Ned took all of his four years at Weiser, Weiser High. And I remember when we first took her down, we went down the river, but it was just as crooked as going the other way, and narrow. It was scary. But now it's straighter. You look off down the road at the river. It was a dirt road and narrow. This was 1931-32.

PAULINE: This would have been about 1932, 1931.

IDA: 1936. She graduated from nurse's school in 1936. Several years ago she was ... I saw the picture a while ago.

PAULINE: Let me get out of your way so you can --- (Ida gets album). I didn't realize that, and I wished I had paid more attention.

IDA: I don't know what this is.

PAULINE: Well this is the story about Crane.

IDA: Oh, yeah.

PAULINE: Here's one that says every farmer should become a stockman. Wonder when this was? 1913, Burns Times-Herald.

IDA: I've been taking the Times-Herald ever since I've been on the ranch since 1910, course I'm a Democrat. Here's the Crane article. This is Alfred ... my nephew. Well, maybe it isn't in here ...

PAULINE: Well here's the ---

IDA: This is her, she was going to school.

PAULINE: And here's Julian Byrd.

IDA: Yeah, and there's the picture --- Cassie Drinkwater.

PAULINE: Well here's an article about your daughter too.

IDA: Yes, she was, an ambulance. You know they had the baby ...

PAULINE: Uh huh.

IDA: This is the --- one of those. I have a Times-Herald.

PAULINE: Oh, these are nice. I like this kind of --- I read him every day for so many years (Dick Fagen).

IDA: I did too. And I felt kind of sorry when he died. His cousin was my doctor in Portland.

PAULINE: Oh, really?

IDA: At St. Vincent's, he fixed my leg. Chuck Fagen was my doctor, Chuck Fagen. He was very comical.

PAULINE: Let me put this back in, I was reading it.

IDA: And you know the O'Toole boys out here, the twins, and one of them is dead now. Then there was Mrs. ... she was the matron. And the whole schoolhouse burned down. And all their ...

PAULINE: Well this is a nice scrapbook.

IDA: I've got a lot of things to put in it. There's Abe Lincoln. Course I cut them out, and then I kind of go through them. Dr. Marsden, we were married in Dr. Marsden's house. He was quite a friend of my husband's family.

PAULINE: This is one about Crane School.

IDA: This is the last school. They never had school there.

PAULINE: This is a beautiful building. They built back a very nice building. Well I sure thank you for taking time to talk to me.

IDA: I've got all the time in the world since I live by myself, with my dog.

PAULINE: You've got a lovely house to live in too. I think these older houses have a lot of charm. ...

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