

OPAL BURFORD

5/3/2005

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Transcription revised by Paula Helten (10/05/2011)

I: This is an oral history interview between Opal Burford and the Union County History Project. The date is May 3rd, 2005. Would you tell us your full name and birth date, please?

OP: Opal Irene Barnhart, born March 25th, 1919.

I: Where were you born?

OP: Preston, Washington.

I: Were you born at home?

OP: Yes, then the doctors came to your home. Dad had to go in with the buggy and bring the doctor out to our home.

I: And you were delivered there.

OP: I was delivered there.

I: Will you tell us who your father was?

OP: My father was Ray Barnhart. He was born in Minnesota.

I: And how about your mother?

OP: Uh, _____.

I: Ok.

OP: Minnie Simons.

I: Did she have a middle name?

OP: No.

I: And what brought your parents to Union?

OP: My dad, my grandmother and my uncle had a farm together, and dad realized it wouldn't support the three families. So, after he had a family, he decided he'd better get out and find something different. So, we moved to Grandview, Washington. Stayed there about a year because the climate wasn't suitable for my mother, and then mother and he went on a hunting trip, you might say, to find another place. And they came through Union County, and they liked the mountains and _____ fishing available. And they came here.

I: That would be about 1929, I think we discussed?

OP: Yes.

I: That you came to Union. What did your father do when he got here?

OP: He worked out for farmers. He worked in the orchards. Uh, they had an acreage. They raised fruit and vegetables and sold 'em to stores. And they had a business, you might say, of people that came to buy produce from them.

I: You had said that your father did some trapping during the winter?

OP: Yes, during the winter he trapped for muskrat, weasels, mink, coyote.

I: Ok. What did your mother do? Did she--

OP: She had found their place out there, and she worked in the orchards with him picking apples, prunes, whatever.

I: Now you told me that your parents lived out their life here in Union County?

OP: Yes.

I: Your parents did. Tell me about going to school. You said that you went to South School. Now you obviously transferred because you'd been going to school before.

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: Tell me about that school.

OP: Well, I started school here when I was in the fifth grade after we moved here. I went through the seventh grade at the South School and then moved on over to the high school at Preston High School beginning eighth grade.

I: And you went to high school there?

OP: Yes.

I: So you finished all of your schooling here in Union.

OP: Right.

I: And I have a note that you graduated in 1937.

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: Do you still attend the high school reunions or gatherings of your classes?

OP: Well, I was one of the beginning ones that started that. There was several of us went together, and at first we had a few people come, and it just kept growing and growing and growing.

I: Do you mean that they weren't having reunions before you got started with your group, or--

OP: No, there was about four of us decided it would be a good idea, and told a few people about it. It's progressed to quite a thing now.

I: When do you have that? Is it a yearly event?

OP: It's a yearly event.

I: In the summer?

OP: Memorial Day.

I: Memorial Day. Tell me about going to school at Union High. Did you have a lot of friends? Did you have to walk to school?

OP: I had to walk to school.

I: Was that a far walk?

OP: No, it was, we lived about a half mile out of town. And half mile in, and then if there was something you went to in the evening, well, you'd walk in again. We didn't have school buses then.

I: So you would walk back into town again rather than just stay in town?

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: How was that walk? Was it difficult? Was it on the regular road?

OP: Sometimes in the wintertime it was difficult, but it was something you did.

I: Would you walk with a regular group? Did you walk with friends or relatives, or--

OP: No, there was not many kids out there that went to school. There wasn't many, wasn't many kids around.

I: In that particular area?

OP: In that area.

I: I see. How about Union High? Was it different then than it is now? Were there things you particularly enjoyed about it? Going to school here?

OP: You didn't worry about the drugs and drinking and all. Anyone that drank or smoked, you, oh, it just wasn't approved of. Oh, it's a lot different now than it was then, I'm sure.

I: Did you take any particular classes or things that you really enjoyed, or activities at school while you were in school?

OP: Well, they had things then that they don't now like home economics; they called it for the girls. You learned housekeeping, cooking, sewing and so on. And one thing that I took was what they called manual training. It was woodshop work. And most girls wouldn't take that. But I found that quite interesting.

I: Were you teased about that?

OP: No.

I: No?

OP: No.

I: What sort of things did you learn in that class?

OP: Well, we learned how to saw and hammer and measure. I could-- oh, I made several wood projects, corner shelves, stools, um, chests. And I learned how to hammer a nail, which I don't know how to do.

I: The boys don't know how to do that either?

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: Did you find those skills helpful to you in life, then, after that?

OP: Oh, yes. I still think they should have homemaking for the girls.

I: What kinds of things did you learn there that you wouldn't necessarily have learned on your own?

OP: How to sew.

I: Was there quite a bit of that?

OP: Oh yes.

I: Did they show you how to do that, like, from beginning to the end of the project?

OP: Cut out things from patterns, and. There's some of the girls now that don't know how to sew up a rip in clothing, sew on a button.

I: Could be very helpful to them. What-- anything else stand out? Did you play any sports, or were you in any activities, or clubs?

OP: We all had to take gym class and get exercise. And that made you play basketball, or whatever.

I: But did you play on a team?

OP: No, I didn't play on a team.

I: How about any clubs? Were you involved with any clubs or other activities at the school that you enjoyed?

OP: Well, there wasn't that many clubs to be available then.

I: So you graduated in 1937. Now, what happened then after you got out of school?

OP: Then, I guess looking forward to being married in September.

I: Now you told me that you had met your husband in high school, but he was already out. Is that right?

OP: He graduated the year before.

I: Is that the year before you graduated?

OP: No, the year before I started the high school.

I: I see. And so, is that the only boyfriend you had then through?

OP: Well--

I: Go ahead. So now, his name was Alvin Burford?

OP: Alvin Burford.

I: And he was pretty much the one, then, huh?

OP: He was pretty much the one.

I: Now, tell me about going with Alvin Burford then. Was that unusual to date somebody who was either that much older or that far ahead of you in that time?

OP: I suppose it was. I imagine we was the talk of the school, but--

I: Your parents didn't object, or?

OP: Not after they got to know him well.

I: Now, where did you live when you were going together?

OP: He lived with an aunt and uncle in High Valley.

I: And how far is that from Union?

OP: Oh, probably seven miles from the Valley.

I: Was he able to drive to come see you?

OP: After a time he got a Model-A Ford coupe, and he drove down. But before that he would walk down over the hills to see me. And I-- it must have been pretty miserable for him sometimes because in the winter time it could be cold and snowy and all, but he did it.

I: How often would he do this, once a week?

OP: Probably once a week. Sometime if the weather was real bad it would be a little longer, but--

I: What other ways would you get to see him during this time before he got the car if he couldn't walk in? Were there other opportunities to see him?

OP: Not unless he went to town with somebody.

I: I see. So you went together for four years. What kinds of-- when he got that Model T, what sort of things?

OP: Model A.

I: Model A. Excuse me. When he got his Model A, then what would you do together?

OP: Oh, we'd go for rides, go on picnics, over to Roxie Theater. _____ here in town.

I: Is that what it was called in Union?

OP: Roxie, mm-hm. Just uh, typical boy-girl things, I guess. Well, not the way they are anymore, but--

I: Sure. Then you decided to get married after you graduated from high school. When did you marry him?

OP: On September 19th, 1939.

I: I have a note that says '37 here. Did you graduate in 1937?

OP: Oh! 1937. Excuse me.

I: That's fine. That's fine. And what happened after you got married? Where did you first live?

OP: We lived in a little house by the, what was then Hess' Sawmill.

I: Here in town.

OP: Here in town. He worked for the saw mill, and then our son was born while we lived there, so he was born in '39. And then my Alvin's father had surgery, and he couldn't farm the place that he lived on in High Valley. And so we decided to move up there to help him out.

And we rented the farm about a mile from where he lived. But he lived with us then for awhile.

I: Now, did you say his father got better and went back to work on his own?

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: And then, what did you do? What things did you do on this farm? What were you involved in up there?

OP: Well, we had-- raised grain, had pasture-land. But that was about it. We farmed two places and typical farm work.

I: But those were the main activities of this farm that you were--

OP: We acquired some cattle and raised pigs.

I: So you did have livestock as well as the grain farming. Was it wheat that you farmed out there?

OP: Wheat and barley.

I: What happened next? You had said you'd been out there for awhile, and what happened that brought you back to town?

OP: Well, he was drafted, or got called to report for draft to the service, and we sold off what livestock we had and prepared for that. And then he got word that he didn't have to go.

I: Now that was after you basically sold or re-leased half the farm and came back to town and?

OP: Right.

I: After all of that, how long do you-- was that a hurried venture? Did you have to dispose of what you were doing out there in like a matter of a couple of weeks, or--

OP: Oh, no. No. It was longer than that.

I: Was it?

OP: But we found a place to live here in town then because the owner of the place had already leased it to somebody else.

I: So where did that take Alvin next? He went to work after that.

OP: He worked for his uncle doing farm work for awhile. And then he started working for the Union Sawmill. And he worked there for years.

I: Now, you were-- I think you told me that you were renting for a short time, then, when you came back to town?

OP: We rented about a year. And neither one of us liked to rent. We would rather put that money into owning something. So we cashed in what bonds we had, and put money down on the place that I'm in yet.

I: Now you said that that was a very, very expensive house for that.

OP: It was.

I: How much was your house?

OP: We paid seventy-five dollars a month.

I: So that doesn't sound like a thirty year mortgage, then.

OP: No, it wasn't a thirty year mortgage. Then, private parties bought your contract, and you gave the money to them.

I: Until it was paid off.

OP: Until it was paid off.

I: So this was before the way they do mortgage sales, then, like they do them now. And you've been here ever since?

OP: I've been here ever since, mm-hmm. We've done quite a bit of remodeling, and the house doesn't look like it used to.

I: Does this property encompass this entire block here?

OP: No, just a half block.

I: I see. Because Mamie had told me, I think, that her house took the entire block up at first when they got it. So I see that a number of these houses look like they were on that same sort of scheme. So you tell me you never were employed. You never worked on your own out of the house, and that's not to say that homemaking wasn't important or anything like that, but--

OP: No, Alvin didn't want me to work anyplace else.

I: And so you always worked at home or took care of the home. How long did Alvin work with the flour mill? I mean, basically that was his main job he finished out his career with.

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: I think you said he did some contract mail work, as well? No? Sorry, I got my note wrong. Let's go back and talk about some general things. Now your husband's been gone for awhile, but I want to go back and just cover some main areas that we had discussed about together. When you first came to Union, we know it was the Depression. And you must have felt some of those hardships. Can you talk a little bit about that?

OP: Well, my father worked out for, I don't recall what he was paid, how much and how often. And he did tree pruning and fruit picking _____, but I remember he worked for a farmer out here, worked probably eighteen hours a day for thirty dollars a month.

I: That was the going wage, or going salary for the time?

OP: Yep.

I: Did you have any particularly-- were the struggles tough?

OP: Until the folks got started with chickens and hogs and they always raised their own beef. They bought calves and raised their own meat.

We always had plenty to eat other than perhaps the first year or so we were here. Things must have been pretty tough for them.

I: Have a note here that said you ate a lot of pork and beans.

OP: Pork and Beans in the can. I still don't care for Pork and Beans.

I: Is that right? So your parents were really kind of getting back on their feet, perhaps, and that didn't make it any easier with the-- Let's talk about living on the High Valley. You were telling me, when you first moved out there this house had no electricity or running water.

OP: No. There was no electricity or running water. We had a well up above the house and we had to pack water from the well.

I: Tell me about this. You said you hauled water to a boiler. What's a boiler?

OP: Well, that was the metal boiler that you set on the stove to heat your water and wash clothes.

I: Ok. So it wasn't another device?

OP: Oh, no. No.

I: Ok. And you did washboard laundry out there?

OP: Oh yes.

I: What was that-- how did that work?

OP: You don't know what a washboard looked like?

I: I know what it looked like, but--

OP: I heated water on the stove, and rubbed clothes clean on the washboard, and washed. And then when it came down all your clothes had to be ironed. And you heated your irons on the wood stove.

I: So you cooked and did your housework using this wood stove oven that was in the house.

OP: Oh yes.

I: And you ironed off of that. Did you have an icebox or-- I take it no refrigerators then if there was no electricity.

OP: No refrigerator. And finally someone gave us an icebox, and that was very nice. Otherwise, you had a little pantry. They call it a cool room, where we kept milk and kept—

I: Other perishables?

OP: Yes. And I had a cellar, a stone, above-ground, cellar.

I: Was that as cold as the cold storage?

OP: Oh no.

I: Could that be colder?

OP: No. The cellar wasn't as cold as cold storage. It was cooler.

I: So what kinds of things did you store in there?

OP: Well, I canned a lot of stuff, fruit and vegetables. And then we kept our potatoes, and we could keep carrots and squash and cabbage and all for quite some time in our cellar.

I: Now did you say this was an above-ground cellar? What does that mean? That means it wasn't built into the house?

OP: Well, a lot of the cellars then were built down in the ground. And--

I: Is that what you meant is above?

OP: No, this was just a stone cellar like another building.

I: But it didn't go underground.

OP: No, it didn't.

I: I see, ok. I'm understanding now. Did you have ice for this icebox?
How did you acquire ice?

OP: We would get ice when we came to town. And have your bucket of
ice that put in the icebox. And that was--

I: Could that last until the next trip to town, or--

OP: Usually not. Not really.

I: Then, then, then what? When the ice ran out, that was that, huh?

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: Ok. You talked about churning your own butter. Did you do that out
there?

OP: Oh yes.

I: How did that work?

OP: Well, you go out and milk your cow and then separate. We had what
they call a milk separator that puts your cream in one side and your
milk in the other. And churn that cream.

I: Did you have to add anything to the churning device to make it turn
into butter, or you simply had to churn it?

OP: Churn it, and a little salt.

I: That was it?

OP: That was it.

I: How about-- we've talked about canning food, and that you had
routinely done this over the years. Anything-- did you can meat as
well?

OP: Canned meat. Yes.

I: Was that any different from any other type of canning that you did?
Other than of course it was a different product, but--

OP: You can-- or, you cooked your meat as if you were going to eat it.
And you put it in your jars with hot grease, processed it then.

I: So these items were pre-cooked.

OP: Oh yeah.

I: Before they went into-- that way you—

OP: The meat was. We had lockers in-- down at the meat market that we'd
use too.

I: Would that have been here in Union?

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: They have the meat-lockers here?

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: Ok. How about some things that-- a couple of items we don't see here
anymore. You talked about there used to be a bowling alley here in
town?

OP: No. I don't think there was a bowling alley. There was a skating rink.

I: Oh. Did you ever go to it? Did you know--?

OP: I didn't, no.

I: How about the bus station? Was there a Greyhound station here?

OP: I think it stopped at Waters in Shanks to pay, where The Hut is now.

I: Anything else in town that isn't here today?

OP: Oh yes. Yes, there was a shoe shop, dry-cleaners. Of course, when I was in school there was a telephone process where they-- all your calls you had to call in there. And she would punch you in to where you wanted to call.

I: Is that right? Where these crank phones then?

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: Did you have one of those out at High Valley?

OP: Yes we did.

I: Was that a party line?

OP: Oh yes. Yeah, you were careful what you said to somebody, might be rubbering, they called it.

I: What's that mean? Listening in?

OP: Listening in.

I: Uh-huh. How did that affect your conversations?

OP: You were careful.

I: Did you talk in code, or--

OP: Oh no. No. We

I: Quick as you could?

OP: didn't worry about it. Only sometimes you would know somebody was listening. You could tell by the sound on the phone.

I: You could tell from that somebody else was on the line. Did people really care about that, apparently?

OP: I don't think it's too much, no. I don't think it worried many people.

I: Did that make news travel faster through your community?

OP: Probably.

I: Now you would call in on the phones to the central place in town and they would place the call where,

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: where you were gonna be making that call to. Did you get electricity or running water out in High Valley before you _____?

OP: No, they had running water but they did have electricity. They put in electricity

[END OF SIDE 1]

I: We're continuing the interview with Opal Burford on May 3rd, 2005. So you were telling us that they never got the water pump, but they did get electricity out there _____.

OP: We had a well all the time. But they did get electricity.

I: So I take it that means that bathrooms were outdoors. Was the outhouse--

OP: Bathrooms were outdoors, oh yes.

I: How about bathing? How did that happen?

OP: The galvanized was to heated water on the stove and used a washtub.

I: By then did you have all of your children? Were all three of them born by then before you_____?

OP: No, two of 'em [coughs].

I: Let's talk a little bit about-- before we go anywhere else, lets-- I want a couple of your perspectives on the communal threshing crews that came through. And my understanding is that this was a communal effort.

OP: Well, it was the High Valley people got together.

I: Your neighbors in that?

OP: Mm-hmm, the neighbors, and they helped each other.

I: Do the threshing?

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: Did you have appointments for that? Did they work? Did they start on the North end and work their way back, or--

OP: Whose ever crop was ready first. They would go to that place and then proceed.

I: From there.

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: So they get to your place now. And we do have the detail from another interview on what threshing is and how that sort of took place. How would you be involved in this operation when it came time for them to come and thresh your crop?

OP: Well, I remember you did your place, and after prepare a meal. I always-- we had our own chickens so I would have to clean chickens and fry chicken. And the neighbor lady helped me. I had the two little kids, and for my part, I remember we made angel food cake. _____. And uh--

I: Was that so you could make a bigger one for the size of group that was there?

OP: Mm-hmm, it about filled the oven with the pan.

I: How long would the threshing crew be on your property?

OP: Probably have to prepare two or three meals.

I: By meals, you mean one meal a day or three meals a day?

OP: Well, one meal and maybe breakfast and dinner another day.

I: So they'd be there maybe two, three days tops?

OP: Two days.

I: Two days?

OP: At least.

I: So was there a lot of other preparations for that as that time came around every year?

OP: No, you just knew you were going to have to cook a lot of food. And that's something we always wanted to have, an abundance of food.

I: So really, this part that you played in it was being played out on other ranches and homesteads in the area all over. So your neighbor would come and help you. Was there more than one neighbor that would come and help you?

OP: No.

I: No?

OP: Just one lady.

I: Then you would end up at her place next and help them?

OP: No, no, no.

I: Were you aware of how the operation worked? Oh, let's skip back. Now tell me about learning to drive. You said that Alvin had a Model A and that he taught you to drive. Can you tell me about that? Where did you learn? How did it work?

OP: On good old country roads. And that was a stick-shift which I hate to drive anymore. But I don't think it took me long to learn to drive.

I: Now this Model A, is that beyond the crank, the crank start,

OP: Oh yes.

I: the crank start? It was electronic, or an electric ignition by then?

OP: Oh yes.

I: Did you have to take a driving test at that time to get a license?

OP: You got me. I don't remember.

I: But you learned how to drive out on the country roads.

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: And was it a trial-and-error thing, any adventures to tell?

OP: ____.

I: In other words you picked it up pretty good.

OP: Pretty good.

I: So let's talk about-- let's talk about World War II then for a little bit, and your experiences. You've shown me a ration book that you have here. Tell me how rationing worked. How did that work for you? You've got a complete book for your whole family, it looks like in here.

OP: ____, you had to have ration stamps for it; for gas, for shoes, for flour, sugar, most things.

I: Now if I understand this right, every member of the household had to have a ration card.

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: Now you have ration cards for children as young as-- it looks like just toddlers there.

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: During the war-time. So say you went to buy items like sugar, did you pull sugar stamps from your book as well as the children's to get it?

OP: I think so. Yes. Yes.

I: And what would you do if you ran out?

OP: You would do without.

I: Did you do any trading or anything like that with other--

OP: I don't recall. Some people may have, but I don't think we did.

I: Now did you tell me that you were-- I might be-- I'm starting to confuse things with your neighbor Mamie across the street, but were you set up already with your canning and the like when the war got started, or did you tell me you were short on sugar?

OP: Well, sometimes that's what you worried about most, was running short of sugar, and canning. But I don't think we ever hurt too badly about it.

I: Did you have a garden? Did you have this Victory Garden, or were you gardening before?

OP: No, not in High Valley. Most of our garden stuff we got from my parents, 'cause they had an acreage and they raised all sorts of garden stuff.

I: So you didn't need to do that?

OP: Well, we didn't have the water to irrigate a garden up there.

I: I see. So this was-- the war was before you came down? Actually, the war was going on after you came down to--

OP: No. The war was going on while we were in High Valley.

I: But if you moved back to town so your husband could go and then you-- then he didn't have to go, was the war over?

OP: I think shortly after we moved to town, yes.

I: I see.

OP: Because I don't recall him-- in High Valley we had to be sure we didn't have a light showing after dark.

I: Let's talk about that blackout. This is called "B for the Blackout: Our World That Took Place." What did that mean? What were you supposed to do?

OP: Well, we just after night after dark you didn't have a light showing anyplace. You had blinds that you pulled if you had a light on in the house. Then they had people to watch for any plane, or if they had any plane they had to report it.

I: Did you have plane spotters in this area?

OP: Oh yes.

I: Did you know any of them?

OP: I think in High Valley, Alvin's dad was a plane-spotter.

I: We've been given to understand that a lot of women performed this duty of plane-spotting out there. Did you ever hear of a plane that got spotted that caused any problems?

OP: I don't recall that we did, no.

I: Now the blackout was regulation, did people enforce this? I'm sure that people wanted to cooperate.

OP: I don't think there was much problem about being enforced. People just realized that's something that had to be.

I: Did that mean that people could not drive after dark?

OP: Well, I don't recall. I don't suppose they could.

I: Or was that some special precaution? Did you ever have to stand in line for anything? If you really-- were there any things that you really--

OP: I don't think so, not here. I don't recall having to stand in line for anything.

I: Did you or others do anything special on behalf of the war effort? Did you get involved in any sort of activities with either alone, or with other people to help out?

OP: No, we were up there rather isolated in town, and no, it wasn't.

I: Let's go back to the farm just a little bit and pick up some additional things here. You talked about-- you did have neighbors that you would socialize with, but it wasn't formal?

OP: No. You stopped to see somebody for just a little while, and maybe somebody would come to see you. But it wasn't a call and come over thing. Just went to visit.

I: So very informal. Were you church-goers? Did you attend church out-- did you have to attend church out there, or--

OP: There wasn't a church out there, no.

I: I know that some legion-- or Grange programs had some things like that-- was your husband or you a member of the Grange?

OP: No.

I: Let's talk about some other things that-- now, you said that you got to move up a notch from the washboard laundry. You had a gas-powered washing machine?

OP: Yes.

I: Now this would have run on gasoline?

OP: Mm-hmm. Yes, a gas motor, and I could never start it. My husband would have to start it for me. And then eventually it had an electric motor put on it, and that was really uptown.

I: Now describe how that would that take place. The motor's purpose was to agitate?

OP: Not just to agitate.

I: Did it run the wringer portion?

OP: Oh no.

I: That was a hand-crank for that?

OP: Mm-hmm. Right.

I: So was there-- I assume you added your own water to that and put your laundry in there.

OP: Mm-hmm. Add your soap and agitate it, and then wring it into a galvanized wash tub and rinse it. And then another wash tub, and rinse it again. And wring it out, and hang 'em on the line to dry.

I: Did you have a routine for that? Did you do this on a particular day of the week?

OP: Monday was always wash day.

I: Now I've heard this all over the county so far in my interviews. Was there any particular reason that Monday was, or is that something you just grew up with knowing?

OP: That's something I think you just grew up with. That was the routine.

I: Did your mother do laundry on Mondays?

OP: Oh yes.

I: Uh-huh. But no particular reason why.

OP: I have no idea.

I: Would you-- do you think they would have-- do you think your neighbors would have known if you were doing' laundry on Wednesday? That's a silly question. We won't even go there, but. You got this washer, then. You said you got the electric motor on it next. Did that-- was the only difference, then, was that you could start this washer without having your husband there?

OP: Probably.

I: Would be the main difference? Because it still involved you had to crank to wring your own wash. It wasn't automatic.

OP: Nope. There was no automatic washers then.

I: Tell me about-- you said that you-- you used kerosene lamps. And then went to a Coleman type. Tell me about that.

OP: Well, it was just a gas lamp that you had to pump up. It had little _____ on that the light would come from. And if you had millers or bugs around, they were always breaking the _____. They were very fragile.

I: How about the light itself? Could you read by this?

OP: Oh, a big improvement over the ordinary kerosene lamps. Yeah. Yeah, we close the shade and read books. I started to crochet a bedspread when I was in High Valley. And I don't know why a person didn't go blind immediately.

I: Because they were so dim?

OP: Yeah. And now that work you had to do after you were through with your day's work. You had to have artificial light.

I: So the Coleman lamp then must have been a Godsend.

OP: Oh yeah, it was a big improvement.

I: Did your children have to walk to school from out there?

OP: Oh no. No, the oldest boy started to school on the school bus down here, probably in High Valley. But the schools up there closed before we left. There used to be a school in North High Valley and a school in South High Valley. When my husband was in-- but he went to school-- his school had been closed before he went to grade school or not. I think he lived down here with his aunt and uncle and went to grade school down there.

I: But there used to be schools up there in High Valley? Do you mean like one room schoolhouses.

OP: One room school.

I: So your children didn't go through that before they--

OP: No.

I: Let's talk about-- back on the farm again, and talking about other gadgets that you would have used out there, so. By having livestock, the livestock that you had out there on the ranch, did that mean you didn't buy meat then? That you processed your own meat?

OP: Oh yes. Yes.

I: And how would you do that? Was that a team effort too like the threshing, or--

OP: I think the fellas went together to butcher hogs. There used to be a place out at Hot Lake that the water was hot enough for them to dip the hogs to be able to scrape the hair off them. If you're familiar with that, they'd butcher hogs.

I: I did know a little bit about that.

OP: But several of them went together and did that on the same day. And then we would have the meat cured, hams and bacon at the meat market. But with the beef we would maybe butcher-- my parents and

I would butcher one together and half it. And a lot of the meat was canned and some maybe put in the locker.

I: So the lockers were available to you at that time. You wouldn't have a way-- or an unused portion of it and at that time. And you could can the meat?

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: You talked about canning deer also.

OP: Oh yes.

I: Was there a regular hunt that took place for deer, too?

OP: Oh yeah. In the fall they would have the hunting season, and they would get deer, and-- I don't know whether we had to put meat in the locker, or can most of it, I think. We always had plenty to eat.

I: Now you talked about having an original canner or steam cooker when I was here. Have you always had that?

OP: I've always cooked with that steam cooker, mm-hmm.

I: And are they different today? Or is it essentially the same item when you buy one today?

OP: I don't know whether a person couldn't get a steam cooker today. They're all pressure cookers anymore. This was different type cooker.

I: Do you know what made it different than the others, or what was-- why was it unique?

OP: Well, a lot of people canned with what they call a hot water bath, where you would immerse your jars in a big pan of water, but this you had the water in the bottom of your cooker, and it was two-- mine had two places where you could put jars on. And it could hold twelve jars above this water, and have your cooker on your stove and your food would be cooked by steaming the boiling water in the bottom of the cooker.

I: So it wasn't pressurized?

OP: Oh no.

I: Did it take longer?

OP: Yes. Yes, it took longer than pressure cooker by far.

I: Did you prefer yours over the newfangled ones, then, as they came out? Never got over the habit?

OP: Well, I was familiar with the way I did it. And I don't think I even cared about another way.

I: Didn't matter. You just stuck with your routine then. We're talking about visiting a doctor in this time period. You were telling me that you conducted a trade with your first one?

OP: With my son I'm sure we-- our doctor could use the grain and we had the grain, and not money, and we made it a trade. He accepted grain for payment.

I: But even in spite of this, Charles was delivered in the hospital by then?

OP: Oh yes.

I: Was there a routine about that that--

OP: Well you stayed in the hospital, I think for nine days, no matter what. You didn't get up.

I: Even if you felt like it?

OP: Certainly different than nowadays. Get up and go home the next day.

I: Was it this way for all of your children that you had at that time?

OP: Pretty much. The second child was-- he still stayed in the hospital for nine or ten days. And then I had that Caesarian with the last daughter, and they made me stay in the hospital for sixteen days!

I: I see. But you were able to conduct a trade of the grain in place of the bill?

OP: That was just for the first one.

I: Was it difficult to see a doctor living out there on High Valley? You said there was a doctor in town, so you must have been able to see one out there from time to time.

OP: Mm-hmm. Oh yes. But then you didn't see it-- you didn't see a doctor very often, either.

I: Did that require appointments a long time in advance, or could you basically walk in?

OP: I think it was a walk in. No, I don't think in time, but we had to have an appointment.

I: An interesting thing that you were telling me was that in the time that you got married, you had to have a complete physical. Is that right?

OP: Oh yes. You had to have your physical exam before you could get your marriage license.

I: Did that include blood testing as well, or some sort of testing, or was it just a pure physical?

OP: I think it was just a physical exam.

I: Was this doctor-- did you see this doctor? Was he the same doctor you would have seen in town if you got sick, or was he a special doctor for this purpose?

OP: No, he was the only doctor in town you saw for anything.

I: I see. And then did you have to present proof of that to get a license, from that _____?

OP: Oh, I'm sure.

I: That's what happened then? Did they-- during the time that your children were born, was there a doctor in town for them to see, or would you have had to go all the way to La Grande?

OP: Well, we saw the doctor in town. And he was supposed to be at the hospital, and I had problems. And he came-- called in another doctor to assist, but--

I: So when your children were growing up, was there a doctor in Union then, for them to see if necessary, or did--

OP: Part of the time.

I: So they didn't always have a steady doctor in Union.

OP: Not always.

I: Now you were telling me about this-- your four-cylinder rig, which we're looking at. It has a certificate of _____ in the ration book for a 1941 Ford pick-up half ton. You were telling me about a hill that you would drive-- would this be on the way to High Valley?

OP: No, from our place going back to the main road to High Valley. I'd have to go up this quite a little hill. If I didn't get a good start, I would have to shift into lower gears to make it up to the main road. And in the winter time it was-- well, I just didn't enjoy it.

I: You never got stuck there, I hope.

OP: Oh yes.

I: Oh you did!

OP: Oh yes.

I: Now, would that be because you didn't get into a lower enough gear or it was too slick?

OP: Rocks in the road or too slick, mm-hmm.

I: And then what would happen?

OP: Well, it would be rock back and forth and hopefully get un-stuck. But a lot of times in the winter on the way home we would have to stop the car and pack a couple of kids over to our place because of the snow and snow drifts and ruts in the road or whatever. That was not an improved road then.

I: This would have been the road you used to get off of your place to go on the main road to the highway.

OP: Mm-hmm.

I: I see. And so you could still get back to your house, but it was an ordeal. You said that you thought that High Valley had its own phone line or phone company. And it's ok if you don't know that much about it, but people were responsible for their own phone line?

OP: They were responsible for their own phone line.

I: And so you mentioned your father-in-law would take care of his. Did you have to take care of yours, as well?

OP: No, I think he took care of if there was a pole down or wire down. I remember watching him climb the pole with his-- what do you call 'em, spiked boots?

I: Right.

OP: And they had their own-- they put in their own telephone line, I'm sure, but what year I don't know.

I: Oh, that's fine. So did you-- that means that your phone would have been in that High Valley operation, then, too?

OP: Mm-hmm.
[END OF TAPE]