

Louise Dodson
Place: North Powder
Interviewer: Betty Hyde
August 28th 2002

Tape 1 Side 1

BH: Louise can I get you to start by telling me your full name?

LD: Yes. It's Violet Louise Parker Dodson.

BH: And your date of birth?

LD: January the 30th 1904.

BH: And where were you born?

LD: Where...which is now the elk refuge. Up on North Powder River. Anthony Creek really.

BH: And were you the oldest? The youngest?

LD: I was the oldest yes. Um...my father was the first forest ranger when this became Whitman National Forest. That was his headquarters. They built their own house and their own barns and everything. He used to uh...control this whole area with his packhorse and saddle horse. When I came along I weighed two pounds. They were very skeptical that I would ever make it. But I guess the Lord's been with me.

BH: It looks like it. {Laughter} And you had younger brothers and sisters then?

LD: I had one brother then that came along six years later. Then soon after he was born we sold the ranch up there and moved to town because of getting us to school. So the rest of my life we spent mostly here in North Powder and down on the ranch.

BH: Was your husband a life long North Powder person?

LD: No. He came here when he was about 12 years old. It was one of those migration deals. Where the family came from back east and kinda just hopped along. Staying a few years along the way. Finally they ended up in Washington. Then the father died and they came...the mother came to North Powder because one of the boys was here. He went to school in North Powder. That's how I knew him.

BH: You said after you finished school in North Powder, you went to college in LaGrande?

LD: I went to college at Oregon State. Oregon Agricultural College it was then. That's where I started and I went there two years. And then I decided that I was gonna run out of money. So to finish that course that I was on. So I transferred over to _____ [?] school. And took a year there. Then I taught school at _____ [?] for a year. And I taught for a \$130 a month. And I did the janitor work. And I had students in my room that were 6 foot tall. 18 of 'em. One of 'em was...I was less than a hundred pounds. And one of 'em was my cousin. I drove four miles to school; did the janitor work, carried in wood and made fires because we had to burn wood for heat. And that \$130 a month and then it was for only 8 months. So that was quite a difference in what teachers make nowadays. {Laughter}

BH: So you did that until you got married?

LD: No I just taught there one year. Yeah and then I got married. And I didn't teach anymore. Only doing substitute work. Up here. Until I went back then. Then when I went back to school I went to LaGrande. Took this...No I went back first to Monmouth and graduated. Then I come to LaGrande. And took a refresher course so I could go back to teaching.

BH: And then you went to _____ [?]

LD: I have a lifetime teaching _____ [?] that I could teach. If they would hire me. {Laughter}

BH: I think you still do a lot of that. And then you were in Vale for 20 years?

LD: Yeah. I went to Vale and I stayed there for 20 years. Then because of my age, I was 65, the ruling then was you didn't hire teachers older than that. They tried to get me in but they decided they couldn't. So then I was doing substitute work...We bought property up there, a home and everything and we were gonna stay there. And then _____ [?] do you know where _____ [?] is?

BH: Oh uh huh.

LD: _____ [?] is about oh 40 miles I guess from Vale. Out towards Burns. They'd lost their teacher at midterm so they called on me and asked if I would come out and finish the term for her. So that's what I did. Then I stayed another year and taught there another year. And then I thought well, I had better quit. {Laughter} So we came...We sold our property in Vale and came back home to North Powder. Home again. Been here ever since.

BH: Been here a long time. So your husband and family went with you to Vale?

LD: Oh no he passed away in '75. We just had a couple of years to play around. And then he passed away. He had oh...Where the blood vessels dilate yanno. What do you call that?

BH: Oh...oh gosh I can't remember. But your family has stayed around.

LD: Oh they've all stayed here yeah. My daughter married while we were up there. And then they came down here. They live down here too. This is my clan down here. From North Powder clear to where you go up the hill going to Union. That's all my...my son my son in law's and my daughter lives down there.

BH: Well they're glad to have you here then.

LD: Well they spoil me to death.

BH: Do they? {Laughter}

LD: Yes. I got a bee sting yesterday out here. And uh...it wasn't...well it wasn't a bad sting at first. But then it begin to get bad toward the latter part of the day. So I called up at the school. To the first aid place to see if they knew something for this bee sting. My grand daughter got hold of it up there. The guy called, here she comes. When...she no more than got here and here come my son. He found out. How they got word that I got a bee sting that fast, I don't know. But I just had to laugh at them.

BH: They watch over you pretty well then. {Laughter}

LD: They surely do.

BH: So you said your family moved into town from where you were born?

LD: Yes. We moved into town and then uh...we moved to Portland for a year. My father went into business in Portland. But um...the business that he went into failed and he lost quite a bit of money. And then um...He passed away soon after that. That left mother with the two children. My brother and I. So she went out here and...Her father had..._____ [?] Celtic...had given her when she married, 40 acres out. So she bought land adjoining and developed a ranch and raised two kids herself.

BH: Yeah women did those kinds of things.

LD: Yeah. She was very resourceful.

BH: Do you have any particular memories of going to school here in North Powder?

LD: Now?

BH: When you were in school.

LD: Oh...well my brother and I used to have to drive a horse and buggy clear out there to school or else ride horseback. It was a difficult job getting to school down here. But we did. We came to school down here.

BH: You came into town?

LD: Mhm. Came into town to school.

BH: Well you've had a very eventful life. It's been here in North Powder but it also took you some other places.

LD: Yes. And now some of my family...my daughter's oldest son is.. He just got his doctorate. That's pretty good for a small town boy. {Laughter} But he works for the Forest Service. He's at Wenatchee National Forest in Montana... Or in Idaho...Washington, I _____ [?] Um...he is the head of all the restitution for Wenatchee National Forest after the fires. But this year he's been spending all his time on the fires.

BH: Oh I bet.

LD: Even back east. Helping. It's been terrible.

BH: Well it kinda goes back. You said your father was the Ranger out here. So he kinda goes way back into _____ [?]

LD: Then my daughters other son is system manager of the fish hatchery at Estacada. So that's another branch of forestry really.

BH: Now does your son that lives here in North Powder. Does he farm?

LD: Yeah. He's a rancher. And then Dale was the merchant up in...He's retired now.

BH: Is he.

LD: But uh...oh he's there most of the time helping. His son took over yanno.

BH: Well you pulled out so many things here to show me. I see you have one there that....

LD: Well this is sorta the preface that I wrote. _____ [?] in that book. So uh...but uh...I especially like this poem that I wrote. Seems to fit my mood. It's called Dreaming. It was written in February of 1992.

*I wander down a country lane
The air is cool and sweet
The wild roses grow by the fences
And the dust clouds are at my feet
I dream of times of yesteryear
When wandering I would seek
The busy anthills, _____ [?] and the birds nest by the creek
Each tree was there for me to climb
It's coolness I embrace
The gardener snake that slithered by would hardly leave a trace
The winding old rail fences seemed to lead me on my way
The pioneers surely put them there for me to walk and play
The strangely, strongly scented choke cherry blooms
The swaying goldenrod
The pink wild roses and the columbines brighten the path I trod
The gray squirrel sat upon their mound and chattered as I passed
The frogs would croak merry chorus saying: Summer will not last
Those wonder dreams of a country girl
Riding her horse to school
Mulling the secrets of the birds in the trees
And the teeming life in the pool
Thus passed those golden years
Leaving so little trace
While exploring the beauty and grandeur of every lovely place
I still do seek when'er I can a dusty lane to roam
For in the quiet country side
My heart comes truly home*

BH: Oh that's very nice. Is that in your book here?

LD: Mhm.

BH: I thought maybe it might be. Very nice. I read your preface there. Could you tell me anything about the town of North Powder in your memories? I know there used to be quite a bit more business in town here than there is now.

LD: Yes. North Powder started out to make major growth to begin with. But I think after the railroad came through. And Baker and LaGrande began to develop; it sorta capped the migration to North Powder. But I think at one time North Powder probably had...600 people that are here. But it hasn't been that many for quite a while. But there was lots of business here.

BH: The picture you've showed me of the hotel. It's a pretty good-sized hotel.

LD: It was a nice hotel, yeah. But um as I explained in that book. The water system here for so long was nil. People got their water from wells or...some had artesian wells and some had pump wells. There wasn't a water system as such. And when they had a fire there was little means to combat it. At times there were whole blocks of the town that would burn yanno. I don't think there's a block in town that hasn't had yanno houses that burned down. Some of them would build back up and some didn't. So...but it used to...They had a nice flourmill here and that was a booster. Then they had the ice plant that gave people employment. So things were pretty busy for a while here. Now it's mostly just an agricultural community that buys emergency things here yanno. Rather than depending on the stores here to...

BH: Well you used to be able to do your shopping. Groceries and that kind of thing.

LD: Mhm. We still have a grocery store here. And uh... sometimes we've had two. We have the post office of course and...but uh...

BH: Not a lot of reasons for the young people to stay here.

LD: No, not really. Not unless they are engaged in agriculture. Some branch of agriculture. Uh it seems to me that now the town is kind of becoming more of a retirement center.

BH: Oh really?

LD: Yeah. Most of the houses that are being sold here, or rented; being rented to people that are retiring. They want to come to a place like this, where it's kind of country. They want to get away from these cities where the traffic is so condensed and where they're getting so that one house is right bumped up against another yanno. They like to get out here where it's kind of a rural community. You would be surprised how many houses in this town are being filled with retirees.

BH: Is that right?

LD: This man right over here. The one right next to him are retirees. Then the one right up here next to me...I guess everyone almost on this block are retirees.

BH: How does that affect your schools? Is the population down?

LD: Well it makes the fluxuation. But we have pretty good school turnout. Now my grand daughter, she was just telling me that she had 26 people in her 7th grade room. So that's about as many as they can handle in each room. In fact we draw a lot of students from Haines area. Because Haines doesn't have a high school and we do.

BH: Oh that's right.

LD: So we draw a lot of high school people because we have a good athletic program. They want to get into athletics yanno. We even draw some students from Baker.

BH: Is that right?

LD: Yeah. Just because they think they get a better chance to shine if they come to a smaller school. We've had real good luck with having good coaches and...My grand daughter that teaches up here; her husband and her oldest son both help with football.

BH: Do they?

LD: Mhm.

BH: So many times as the population gets to be older you don't have children in the schools.

LD: Yeah well it seems like it holds up pretty good. And I think probably that's the reason is so many are coming in from other outlying districts.

BH: And there's still probably families out in the farming areas that it draws from.

LD: Oh yes. And then there aren't any country schools anymore. Like where I went out to _____ [?] out there. It's been gone now for quite a while.

BH: There used to be quite a lot of country schools. So you had quite an experience teaching in a country school didn't you? {Laughter}

LD: Yes I sure did. That first year was a real experience. {Laughter}

BH: Well especially if you had those great big boys. I'll bet you handled them.

LD: Well I got by with it all right. But sometimes I wondered. Sometimes I hated to think about going back. {Laughter} But I got through it all right.

BH: So now how long have you been back here in North Powder; once you finished teaching in Vale.

LD: Since I've been back home? I came back in '70.

BH: Oh did you?

LD: Mhm. We never sold our place here. We've had this since '36. We bought this place in '36. Well that was right after the Depression. That terrible Depression that we had. The...well from '28 to '40's. We were ranching. But that put us out of ranching. We never did get back into ranching. My husband worked for the railroad. Then he worked at the ice plant and various places. But then after my son took over my mother's property that was down here on _____ [?] and he began to buy a lot more too. We've been deep in the ranching business. All the rest of the family.

BH: So did you go out and ride and _____ [?]

LD: I used to, yes. When we were...yeah I used to ride. I haven't been on a horse now for some years. {Laughter} Probably fall off on my head like I did once coming from school. Yeah I told in that book.

BH: Did you.

LD: I was coming to school, horseback. I was loping along up there and my horse decided to go one way when I wanted to go the other way. _____ [?] right up against a big electric light pole. She just jumped to the side real quick and missed the light pole. It unseated me kinda and I hung on for a ways and I fell off right in the middle of the road, right on my head.

BH: Oh no.

LD: The rest of the day I sat in school. And I'd do like this and the sand would just fall out of my hair. {Laughter}

BH: So did you...you came into town to school so you weren't in the one room school?

LD: Yeah we come into town after my father passed away. My mother and I went out...it was only four miles out here. But that was a long four miles in those days. Especially in the winter. Many's the time...the horse we drove, Old Mable; she'd have an ice sickle hanging on her eyelashes and on her nose when we got to town. We'd be so cold we couldn't...our hands would be so cold we couldn't even unhook the harness yanno. Kids didn't have it so easy then. You took a cold lunch and it was a far cry from the warm buses that come pick them up nowadays. {Laughter} But we made it.

BH: Yeah sure ya did. I don't know if you have other things there you wanted to share or...

LD: Since you have so much in that book. That I had down here...About everything I have is in that book.

BH: Ok.

LD: And it was in '62.

BH: Oh was it really?

LD: They came from Canada. _____ [?] Canada; which is over by the Great Lakes. The way they got their way out here...all they had was their saddle horses. So they hooked up with a wagon train that was coming west; over the Oregon Trail and they herded the cattle and took care of the stock. To pay for their way. And I suppose some of the people in the wagon train fed them. And um...so they had lots of adventures. They got here to this valley in '62 and said there wasn't a house in sight around here. No one had stopped in this valley because of the Indians. These crazy Indians _____ [?]. And uh... it was most interesting because the valley must have looked like paradise to those early settlers that had come over that barren country of Idaho yanno. Out on that brink...Have you been to the interpretive center?

BH: Yes.

LD: Well you know...I never go up there. I think how that valley must have looked to those immigrants yanno. Those beautiful mountains with timber on them; and they had been seeing nothing but sagebrush and dirt.

BH: For thousands and hundreds of miles.

LD: And to look over that valley where I know he said that when they struck that valley up there; that you could ride a horse through there and just...The native grasses and things were clear up to your stirrups yanno. The water running in those streams in all directions; it must have looked like paradise to them. But they couldn't stay here because they were afraid of the Indians. Then Doc Anthony and Riggs's, some people named Riggs's; I guess they probably wore out their teams or some of them even were riding oxen yanno. And they were just worn out and they just had to stop. So they went way up there to the foothills where they camped. Took up property. And they made friends with the Indians. It was pretty lonely lives for them I guess for a while. But he...I can remember when he was...See then my folks took up the homestead right next to his, just above his. Where _____ [?] When I'd come by, why old Doc he'd come out and want to know if I had some candy left in my lunch pail for him. I can remember him real well. He claimed to be a doctor; but everybody thought he was kind of a fudge. {Laughter} But I don't know, nobody ever proved it. They played a lot of tricks on him and everything.

BH: So then they stayed.

LD: Yeah they stayed here. Then they began to...Other people began taking up. When my other grandfather came, quite a bit later from Utah. They came over the Oregon Trail from Utah. And they bought land here for \$1.25 an acre.

BH: Oh really. {Laughter}

LD: And the Wilsons...The Wilson family _____ [?] They came in that same wagon train. And later see, when my grandmother died. My grandfather married a Wilson. He married these boys' aunt.

BH: Oh is that right.

LD: Yeah she was a Wilson. My stepmother. My mother was only two years old then. You know it used to be that the women died young. Those frontier women they just couldn't hack it. It was no wonder; they didn't have anything to go by yanno. No water in the house. NO refrigeration.

BH: They worked so hard.

LD: None of the shortcuts that we have today.

BH: No. {Laughter}

LD: They had to all their laundry yanno in an old washtub, washboard.

BH: I was never very familiar with the Ice House that was out here.

LD: My husband used to work there when he was still in school. Then after we were married he took his team and worked on the pond {?} It was a good paying job. About the only good paying jobs there were around here. Because working on a ranch in those early days. You were lucky if you got your board and room sometimes. Without any extra pay. It tells in that book how they used to pay.

BH: Did they ship the ice?

LD: Yes.

BH: On the railroad?

LD: That was in my memory. It belonged to the railroad company. The cars...see they didn't have refrigeration like they do now. So the refrigerator cars were made just special to put blocks of ice in. They would go on....

Tape 1 Side 2
blank

Louise Dodson

6/26/03, T1, S1

- ES: This is an interview with Louise Dodson at her home in North Powder on Thursday, June 26th. [recording paused]
- LD: ...more than he did, no doubt. The way of transportation then was by horse only, you know. And there was only one or two major roads up into that area. So I know he build a lot of roads a lot of trails and he also fenced areas for their horses, you know, so when their pack horses and their horses weren't in use, why, they'd have a place to graze and not get away.
- ES: Was he doing this work by himself or did he have a crew?
- LD: He usually in the summer...he didn't work in the winter, he was laid off during the winter months, you know, he just kept records and things. But in the summer when there was heavy work to do he had a helper. And then, of course, if there was a fire, why, they called in extra help. They had one fire that I can remember about. It was up there in the Grande Ronde watershed area. And the wind came up suddenly while they were eating their supper, I think it was, and the firefighters were kind of laying low right then, and the wind came up and it just started booming. And it was coming...the wind was blowing it right toward where they were. So he had to manage to get all that crew of men out of there and what equipment they could and their horses and everything before it finally engulfed the area where they were. And it was really a pretty close call because when he got home the...the hair was all singed off of his horse's legs, you know, their ___...their ___ were all burned off 'cause of course he had to be the last one out, you know. And he had to through some of the fire in order to get out. So I can remember that because I was a little older, you know, and that was... And especially I felt so bad about the horse. Really it didn't hurt her any. I guess it was a blister probably, you know, but it wasn't major damage or anything.
- ES: There was nothing they could do to stop a fire, was there?
- LD: Not very much because all they had they had to...all the equipment they had they had to transport on horses, you know, pack horses into a place like that because there was no roads in there. The only tools they had were hand tools, you know.
- ES: Sure. Do you remember what your father said about the experience of being close to that fire?
- LD: No, I can't remember what he...his reaction was, but I know it was...it was a pretty close call anyway. And of course...
- ES: It was frightening.
- LD: ...it was scary for him because he was in charge and it was up to him to get his men out of there. It was...they lost a lot of their equipment, the ___, tools and things, you know.
- ES: What exactly had they been trying to do there at that time?
- LD: They tried to make a path, you know, fall some trees if they have to or clean a path maybe the width of a road or something like that at least around so that when the fire eats it's way to it, you know, it...if there isn't a wind that carries it overhead, why, it'll stop it.

ES: I mean what was his purpose of going there before the fire started?
LD: Oh, I suppose a lightening storm.
ES: No, why did your father need to be in that area?
LD: That was part of his...his ranger. He had the area from where the Grande Ronde watershed is clear to Baker.
ES: What...
LD: All the...
ES: What job did he need to do?
LD: He was the...he was the head forest ranger.
ES: No, I mean on that trip into the Grande Ronde watershed what was he going to do?
LD: When he found there was a fire up...?
ES: No, before the fire. He must've had a purpose for being there. Was it to build trails or roads, or surveying?
LD: I don't know whether he was there when the fire started or not. He was...probably wasn't. It was... There was probably an electric storm and they saw the smoke over there and he...that...he just got there, you know. They didn't have a... They didn't have walkie-talkies and these things...
ES: Oh sure, sure. I think you said one of his jobs was to survey forest land?
LD: Yeah.
ES: Was he doing that regularly?
LD: Oh yes. That was...he could always...was always doin' that, you know,...
ES: Was the purpose...
LD: ...surveying different areas.
ES: Was the purpose of the surveying to make maps?
LD: Make maps and also so that when people went...buyers bought forest timber, you know, for cutting and everything, why, they'd know where it is. He made...I can remember him making just dozens and dozens of...what did they call them...blueprints.
ES: Blueprints, uh-huh.
LD: Blueprints.
ES: Yes.
LD: He made blueprints and then they made the maps from the blueprints. I never understood quite what it was all about, but whenever he was home he had an office building, a little building that was built in our yard just for his office and his equipment and everything. And so when he was home, why, he was busy most of the time in it, you know, writing up reports and planning where trails should be and they shouldn't be. Then he also was the...he was also Game Warden so he had work in that capacity always look out for, too.
ES: What did he have to do for...in that part of the job?
LD: If someone was fishing without a license, why, he was just like any game warden.
ES: Do you think, though, at that time there were fishing licenses?
LD: Oh yes! You bet!
ES: Are you sure? I thought at that period people would just...did what they wanted to in killing animals and fishing.

LD: No, they...and there was a certain length for fish and things, you know. You couldn't...you couldn't keep fish if they were too small.

ES: This was as early as 1910?

LD: Mm-hmm. Yeah, he was... And I know he used to laugh, tell about...it was kind of joke for him, their headquarters at that time...the Forest Service Headquarters was in Sumpter at that time. And so he had to go to Sumpter to all the meetings and everything. And my mother took my little brother and I and she went over and stayed one weekend with him. And he was telling this story about the day before, he said he'd been eating in the restaurant there and the, oh, a couple of fellas came and sit down and they were talkin' about different things. And he...this one was ___ he had Forest Ranger equipment on, you know, but he didn't have anything on that said he was a game warden. [laugh] This guy was telling him these stories about catchin' these fish where he wasn't supposed to be and everything. So after he got through, why, my dad said, well, he had no other recourse than to fine him for breakin' the law. We all got kind of a kick out of that.

ES: Tell me more about that homestead. You mentioned a building that your father used for an office. And I have a picture...or at least I have a painting of the house that you lived in, a painting that you did sitting on the wall over here. Isn't that the house you lived in?

LD: No, no.

ES: No? Which house is...

LD: That's my Grandfather Kelsey's house.

ES: Oh, I see. This is on page two of the transcript. That was somewhere else?

LD: That was my grandfather on my mother's side. That's the old Kelsey house up here on the river. These are our buildings.

ES: Yes.

LD: Now here's the...here's his...this is the building right back here...

ES: In the center of that photograph.

LD: Right there, yes.

ES: Mm-hmm.

LD: And that's me on the horse there.

ES: Yes.

LD: And this is the woodshed. Now these buildings are all gone and the new house was built over this side of that.

ES: When was the new house built?

LD: Oh, a long time after we left it there.

ES: Okay. I was just interested in it when you were there.

LD: Yes.

ES: Do you remember the inside of the house?

LD: Oh yes.

ES: Can you describe it?

LD: It started out to begin with when they...when they just first took up... See, this was one of the very last homesteads that was available. And I don't know how he happened to find out about it, but anyway they took it up as a homestead before... He was a postmaster down here at that time. [mic getting knocked] ...decided

that he wanted to build probably ranch up there. I don't know whether had any aims at the Forest Service at that time or not. But anyway, they went up there, he and my mother, and together they built a two-room log cabin there. That was... Then they built some fences and fenced it in. My father was a meticulous person, everything had to be just so. [laugh] If he may have built somethin' it had to be the very best he could possibly build. Anything he did was he was very meticulous about it.

ES: Was the log cabin in use before you were born or...?

LD: No...yea...oh yes.

ES: You weren't... You didn't live in it, did you?

LD: I think they were up there about five years before I was born. Four years, I guess, 'cause I...I was born in 1904 and I think they went up there in 1900 or 1901.

ES: How did the larger house that you lived in get built?

LD: They just kept building onto it.

ES: Oh, they added to the cabin?

LD: Yeah. Then when I can remember, why, it was...they had built two other rooms on it. And they was one big front room and then there was a bedroom and the kitchen and sort of a dent on the side for a bathroom where the water...he had the water piped from a spring up there and it run through the house all the time, you know, you just hear it running in there. It run right through that and then out, you know. Of course that was before the days of electricity, no telephones, no TVs, no radios, not even phonographs. No communication from up there at all. He send signals by whether...by how high he put the flag on the pole. I think you'll see that...see the flag pole here?

ES: Oh yes. It's in the picture.

LD: And when he was there he always had the flag up and if he was gone, why, then he took it down. And if he was...well, it was something else, I can't remember other...it was halfway for something, but anyway that was the way he send signal. 'Cause down the road, oh, at least two or three miles you could see that flag pole from down the road, you know.

ES: Who was he expecting to see the flag?

LD: The other officials or somebody from the Forest Service might come up there looking for him. Someone might come wanting to get licenses for something 'cause he had those, did a lot of that, you know. And if they were gonna take timber from the forest, why, he had to go and blaze all the trees that they could take out. There's a lot of work to it.

ES: What do you remember about the days when you were, let's say, five, six, seven, eight years old? What did you do around that house?

LD: You see, my...I was the only child for six years. My brother was six years younger than I. And I had a little...they had a little dog for me. Her name was Queenie and she was a little fox terrier. And she was just like another child, you know, I talked to her, I played with her and she a constant companion. And then I learned to ride a horse when I was just could straddle one, I think. [laugh] And I had a good gentle saddle horse. Toys and things like other children to play with, but it was a lonely childhood for me because I can remember always looking forward to about once a week or maybe once in two weeks we'd come to town.

And my aunt lived just a mile out of town here and she had a big family of girls that were some my age, you know. So I looked forward to those trips to town 'cause my mother'd put...let me off there and I'd just play with the girls while she'd come to town and did the shopping. But she would make butter and bring eggs to town to sell. We always milked several of the cows. Everybody was busy. They had a big garden and they planted an orchard up there.

ES: Were there duties that you were supposed to do everyday?

LD: I was kind of spoiled that way. I was such a little scrawny kid, you know, that they...they did pretty well if they kept me amused.

ES: I see. [laughs]

LD: No, I never... I never had much to do. The hardest thing for me was when school started and then I had to ride a horse to school. There was a country school up there, Mt. Carmel, that I went to. And that was about three miles and when it got real cold I couldn't even go. That's the reason they sold the ranch and left it.

ES: What kinds of books and magazine do you remember being in the house?

LD: About the only one I can remember is *Ladies' Home Journal*. We didn't take any papers or anything, you know, because...I think the mail only come about every other day, you know. And then we had to go clear down to the...where the crossing is to cross North Powder River, you know, over there?

ES: I don't know it, but...

LD: It's...we had at least three miles to go to where they left the mail. That was as far as they came up there so sometimes it'd be a week before we even get our mail.

ES: I would've thought maybe you learned to read early and would've had a lot of books around the house?

LD: No, my mother told me lots of stories and she read to me a lot, but I didn't...I was pretty active. I always wanted to be out and doin' somethin' outside. [laugh]

ES: I see. I see.

LD: I learned to ride a horse when I was knee-high to a grasshopper they said.
[recording paused] One year in Portland while we were there in Portland my brother had what they called emphazema, it was a gathering between the lung and the ribs caused from a cold, I guess. And so he was pretty sick all that winter we were down there and that was the winter that they were...it was a business that had to do with travel script, you know...

ES: Travel script?

LD: Travel script, you know, like you get...used to get stamps, you know, that come-ons to buy different things. It was quite the fad then. So they...this company formed, it was my uncle that lived down there and some of his friends. And they got the idea that they would start this company and it would be travel script. You bought...when you bought something at the store, why, you'd get so many a tickets and then you could use it for traveling on the railroad. And the thing was the business just got going where it begin to make money for them when there was another green stamp business or something like that, you know, that came in and it was a big, well-established company and they just put 'em out of business. I don't know what the ins or outs of it or anything, but I know they just...they just had...they just had to just dissolve their business entirely. And he was the one that had the money to invest to get it started so he was the one that lost the money.

So then he didn't want to come back to North Powder after that and he went up into Montana, got into several different businesses up there. Mother and I we stayed here in North Powder ____.

ES: Where were you living in North Powder at that time?

LD: Oh, up here on Third Street, the end of Third Street up there.

ES: Were you renting a house?

LD: Uh-huh. We stayed in several different places.

ES: Would you have been about nine or ten years old at that...?

LD: Yeah. I was ten...ten or eleven.

ES: Could you tell me more about what it...what it was...exactly what it was like to live in North Powder at that time?

LD: North Powder was a booming little...busy little city then. We had...as I was growing up we had three churches here and of course we had the school. We had a laundry, we had at least two garages that were busy garages. And there was about three stores, just general stores, three stores in North Powder. There was a drugstore. There was a meat market with a grocery attached to it. And it was a laundry there. There was several different places to eat. There was always a pool hall or two. I was just thinking about that the other day how...how it's shrunk. There isn't anything down there now.

ES: Oh yes. You were living close enough to town so you could walk, couldn't you?

LD: Oh yes. Always lived right here in town excepting when we lived down after I was married I lived down on Sunny Slope area.

ES: And you'd walk to school every day?

LD: Oh yes, I could walk from where we lived here in town.

ES: Can you remember...

LD: And then after we moved out...see, after my father passed away then we went out and lived out here in the country on this property that my mother had. And then she added to it until she had a big ranch out there.

ES: So does that mean that you weren't living in town for very long?

LD: No. No, we didn't live in town very long. We moved out there right after he passed away.

ES: And what sort of a ranch was it?

LD: It was just...there wasn't anything there. It was...it was just meadow, wild grass meadow, on her forty acres and then she bought a hundred-and-sixty acres that was adjacent to it. And that was cultivated land.

ES: What was she intending to do?

LD: Huh?

ES: What was she intending to do with that land?

LD: Oh, ranch. That's all she knew. That's all she wanted to do. There...others tried to talk her into, you know, doin' other things. She had been working at the post office. No, she wanted a ranch. That's what she'd like to do and that's what she knew and so she went at it. She milked cows, she sold the cream and separated the milk. She bought a couple of little houses that was up here in town. One was a three-room...little three-roomed house, dwelling house, and then there was another one that was...that this man that owned it used as an office. He had...I think he was a carpenter. And she bought those two buildings that were up here

on the corner and had 'em moved out there. And drilled a well, it was an artesian well, drilled a well. Built a barn, all the corrals and all the outbuildings and everything. Nothing she couldn't do. She could handle it.

ES: [laugh] She apparently had a fair amount of money, also.

LD: She didn't have much money to start with, you know.

ES: She earned all of it.

LD: She just made it herself.

ES: Did you have jobs at the...at the ranch?

LD: Not much. I...of course I did quite a lot of cooking because she was outside, you know. And I did quite a lot of cooking, but any of the hard labor she...she always did it herself.

ES: How did she dress?

LD: She wore overalls and sunhat. When she dressed up she looked just like any city lady. [laughs]

ES: But for working, I mean. What kind of...

LD: And of course it was the time before cars, you know. And so she bought a real-blooded trotting horse that some of the other Parkers that lived up there by Baker... This Carl Parker he was one of the Parkers that came with my father's father when they came here from Canada. And they had a ranch up there by Baker. And he had this horse and it...he was gentle as he could be, but, boy, you just pull the whole rig with his teeth, you know. He was a goer. He'd just zip down that road about as fast as a car. She drove him, but, of course, we kids couldn't drive him. When we...we needed a horse we either rode one, always had saddle horses, you know...we either rode a horse or else we drove a...Old Mabel which was a...bless her old heart. She was a faithful old horse. She used to take...carry us to school all the time. We had a little buggy. But it'd take about two hours just at the very best, you know, get the four miles to school in a buggy or on horseback, wherever way you went. It was a job getting us kids to school, nothing else, but we made it. You know, got through school and I finished college.

ES: What do you remember about the ice plant and the people who worked there?

LD: I remember that it was a very active business at one time, you know, because that was before they had refrigeration for cars. And that was the only way they had to keep things from freezing, you know...

ES: Did you ever go inside it?

LD: Oh yes. There wasn't much inside the building except...well, the big building where they stored the ice, you know, why, that was...no, I never was in it. But my husband as he was growing up he worked there from the time he was probably, oh, ten or twelve years until he...after we were married. He used to work on the ice with a team and they'd take a team and a saw and go out on the ice and cut the ice, you know, into blocks.

ES: Where did they go to get the ice?

LD: Oh, they had ponds right there.

ES: I see.

LD: Big ponds and they just flooded with water and it froze. And then they'd...when it...come time to put up the ice, why, they'd go out on that ice with those horses

and they had saws that cut...cut the ice into blocks. And it's be, oh, the blocks'd be about that deep.

ES: About two-and-a-half feet.

LD: About eighteen inches. And they'd run it...they run those on kind of chutes, you know, and they run 'em up into those buildings.

ES: A conveyor belt?

LD: Yeah, in those buildings. They would put...store it there in sawdust, you know, and then it'd just stay all summer and they used it all summer to ice the cars with it.

ES: Were they getting the sawdust from a mill?

LD: Uh-huh. Yeah, they'd get regular sawdust.

ES: And did you ever watch the process of getting the ice from the warehouse to the railroad cars?

LD: They had trams that...there was two decks, one above the other, and there was...the ice was stored underneath in one layer and then upstairs there was another layer. And they had a rolling...what would you call 'em...

ES: Were they carts?

LD: No.

ES: Wagons?

LD: No. They were cables and they had cross pieces on 'em, you know, and they rolled. They just kept rolling up, they just kept going like this. And they'd run the ice onto 'em and those cross pieces'd catch the ice, you know, and take it up. When it got to the top it scooted it off, you see, and then the men were there to grab it with...they had a kind of tongs that they'd reach out and grab it and yank it off and shove it into the mill, you know, where there was...there was a tramway above and below and men working below and above both.

ES: Now are you talking about the part of getting it into the storage place?

LD: Getting it into storage, uh-huh.

ES: I was wondering about the part where they're taking it out and putting it in railroad cars, for example.

LD: I don't know. I never was right there when they were icing the cars. But what they did was just go in there and shove 'em out, you know, onto the tramway and then I don't know what...they would... I would think they would be covered with sawdust, wouldn't you? But I know they weren't when they went into the cars so they must've had someway along in there somewhere to wash that off.

ES: Or maybe it just fell off. I'm wondering about the cars that came in to be iced. Were they...

LD: They were just railroad cars...

ES: Yeah, but were...

LD: ...like we see today.

ES: ...were they full of...

LD: ...but they had...

ES: ...fruit.

LD: ...they were full of fruit or perishable things underneath and then the top of them...see, they had a top and they had an opening in the top, on the top of 'em

and they would slide those doors open and just shove those big chunks of ice right in...

ES: Do you think this fruit had been raised in the Baker Valley or was it coming from other places?

LD: The ice never got down to where the fruit was.

ES: No, I know that.

LD: The fruit was down below. But being up there and insulated around it, see, it kept it all from melt...or...

ES: Maybe the cars had been loaded somewhere else?

LD: Oh yes!

ES: But they needed more ice by the time they got here?

LD: Yeah.

ES: Is that it?

LD: Yeah, that...see...[end tape]

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6/26/03, T2, S1

LD: At one time when we first came to town, or a little before that while we...I was growing up anyway, the...there was as many as four and five saloons here in town. But then the times that I can remember there was a pool hall that the young people could go and play pool in, you know, and just visit with each other and then they had card tables in there. And it was more just a fun place to go. There weren't so many salons.

ES: You didn't hear about fights and other drunken activity? [laughs]

LD: Yes, there used to be a little jail down here. And we'd have a celebration there, there was somethin' special goin' on, and some of the guys couldn't hold their liquor very well, why, they ended up in the little jail. But they didn't mind, they just...

ES: Slept it off.

LD: They just slept it off and somebody...some maybe would have to pay their fine, but that was all in the game. We had a big dance hall down there, real good dance hall. We had lots of dances. And we had the big Fourth of July celebrations, but that's all in that other thing.

ES: Yeah. What can you tell me about church activity in North Powder?

LD: There was at least three churches. There was a Baptist church and a Catholic church and a Methodist church back as far as I can remember. And they all had pretty good attendance.

ES: Do you remember some of the activities they had besides their regular Sunday services?

LD: No, only their Christmas programs. They had Christmas programs.

ES: Some times...some towns would have revival...revivalists come through once in while.

LD: I can remember once in a while, but not very much. A lot of the social activity centered around the school.

ES: Yes.

LD: And things went on school that... I was in the seventh grade when I...when this new schoolhouse was built ___ the schoolhouse that's up there now.

ES: Was the old one in the same place?

LD: Yeah. There was an old one there. It first begin as a one...it was a two-room and one-deck building and it went on for probably five or six years. They outgrew that and they begin to have to have some classes in other buildings here in town. So then they put another deck on it and made an upstairs part. And that's the way it was when I moved to town, we had...I was in the second grade then and it was a two-room...a four-room schoolhouse then. And the outhouses were out...out in the yard. And also an artesian well was out there in the yard where the kids could go out and get a drink. And then they didn't have a gym or anything like that.

ES: Do you think that the money for building schools came entirely from local taxes?

LD: I suppose. I don't know how else they'd get it. I don't... I don't think there was anyway to get money to build it, only by...

ES: Do you remember discussions among people who lived in North Powder about taxes?

LD: No, I don't. I wasn't very interested then.

ES: Later, though, you were...you lived here while you...earlier when you were an adult, didn't you?

LD: Yeah. Taxes weren't...it didn't cost as much to run the city then as it does now.

ES: No.

LD: Because everyone had their own well and so there was no water system, no sewer system, everything like that. And most every place they had...now this place had a dug well out there in the back. And that one over there had an artesian well that run water all the time up until, oh, we'd lived here quite a while. We came here in '34, bought this place. That was right in the depth of the Depression.

ES: Right. I suppose every house had it's own garbage hole. You didn't have garbage pick-up, did you?

LD: No. You had to dispose of it yourself. I don't know what they did with it.
[laugh]

ES: I remember when I was a little boy we had a garbage hole out in back of our house.

LD: Yeah.

ES: I went out...

LD: I can remember everybody'd throw their dishwater usually right out the door.
[laugh]

ES: Sure.

LD: Life was pretty simple then.

ES: Can you remember shopping in grocery stores and drugstores?

LD: You could buy almost anything you needed in North Powder then. We always had a drugstore. And we...most of the time in my growing up years we had a doctor and a dentist here in town. All those things are gone now. There's only

two businesses that are alive and that's the post office and the grange hall. There isn't anything else in North Powder now. One little store.

ES: There's a restaurant, or café.

LD: Yeah. It's on and off.

ES: Oh. Is it off now?

LD: No, it's on now. It's really good food. But the one that just went out of business there they just...they just run their selves out. They didn't have anything. [noise like a goose] My clock. [laugh] No, we always had a butcher shop, you know.

ES: I was wondering what...what it was like to shop in the 1930s setting?

LD: You could buy most anything you needed right here in town.

ES: But you didn't go in...

LD: If you didn't you had to get on the train and go to Baker or La Grande.

ES: Right. You didn't go in and take a basket on wheels and go around and put things in, did you?

LD: No. I... When I graduated from high school I went to work at the Huddleston's, that's the store that's vacant down there right across from the post office now. I went to work there and worked there for a year before I went to college.

ES: Yes.

LD: And the...they had ladders...the ceiling was so high and their shelves were from the floor to the ceiling and they had those ladders that run on kind of a tram, you know. And you'd have to climb up that ladder and give it a push and get whatever you want up there. So that was a lot of fun.

ES: And the customer would stand at the counter and tell you item by item what he or she wanted?

LD: Yeah.

ES: How long do you took...do you think it took most people to do their shopping?

LD: Half-an-hour?

ES: People never seemed to be in such a hurry to get things done as they are now.

ES: Right.

LD: When they came to town they came to town mostly to visit, probably, as well as shop. So they did visiting along with the shopping.

ES: Sure, sure.

LD: Now where I worked there they had dry goods and they had farm supplies, they had shoes, they had bulk stuff, just about anything you want you could buy there.

ES: Was it your job to wait on the customers?

LD: Yeah, well, he hired me to do the bookkeeping for him, but that was...it only took me about two hours every morning to post up, you know, what had been charged and various things. So then I...they...then I clerked the rest of the time.

ES: Did you enjoy that job?

LD: Yes, I did. I enjoyed it.

ES: You like to visit, don't you? [laughs]

LD: Yeah.

ES: I suppose that way you knew everyone.

LD: Oh yeah. Yeah, I lived in town and I had an apartment so I didn't have to drive back and forth in the winter. I had an apartment over here in the lady that gave

music lessons building. I went to the dances and various things with all the other kids, same as __ been goin' to. Wasn't very much to do.

ES: Was this a room in the woman's house?

LD: Yeah.

ES: How did you...what did you about cooking?

LD: I'd cook for myself. I had a little...I had two...I had two rooms. I had a bedroom and a front room and the front room and kitchen was all one.

ES: I see.

LD: And she was a music teacher that owned the house. She gave music lessons. She had a family. They lived...it was two-story, the big house that's still over on...over there.

ES: Did she have many students?

LD: Yes. She was a wonderful musician.

ES: All from North Powder?

LD: Yes. I guess most of 'em were, yeah.

ES: Was she teaching...

LD: She gave piano lessons and she also...she was a beautiful singer. They had...her name was Laughlin, Mabel Laughlin. She had three children she was raising alone. She and her husband separated. She was a very talented person. I never had any musical ability.

ES: There was your opportunity to develop some. [laugh]

LD: Yeah. I never...never really wanted to take music lessons. But I loved to dance, danced up a storm. __ try to sing.

ES: Can you tell me what went on when there was...would be a community dance?

LD: About every Friday night we would have a dance. It was at the Bungalow...we called it the Bungalow. It was a big dance hall down there and it wasn't...it was rather primitive on the outside, but it had a wonderful hardwood floor in it. And there was a company of...a band of musicians here. There was a lot of musicians in North Powder then. There was one family that lived up here on the hill, the Olson, and they had...I think they had about eight children and they were all musicians. And at one time the family toured and played, one year they did. But two of 'em were girls and the rest were all boys. They were...Olsons was their name. They were all very talented musicians.

ES: Did all of them play for the dances?

LD: No, not all of them. Then some of 'em played sometimes for the dances and then they all were in the band and things like that. And then the man that...the Dray business here, that was the Walter McGrath, maybe you've heard of him?

ES: No.

LD: He lived up here. And he and his wife were both musicians and their two children, a boy a girl, were musicians and they were the ones that played for the dances mostly, but some of the Olsons would play with 'em a lot of the time.

ES: Can you... Can you say what kind of music it was?

LD: Oh, it was old-time waltzes and two-steps.

ES: Yes. Polkas?

LD: Just waltzes and two-steps. I think they did some three-stepping for a while. Then they had round dancing, too.

ES: What time would the dance begin? About seven...seven or...

LD: It'd usually begin about eight o'clock and go until...well, it was supposed to...I think they were supposed to quit about one, but manys a time I've seen 'em take up a collection and give 'em a little extra so they'd play for another hour or two. People were always...they enjoyed dancing so much. And families would go and take their little kids. And there were several extra rooms. One of them they often served din...a lunch at night. Someone that had a good warm lunch at night and they'd eat that. And then there was room there where they put their coats and things that was warm and little kids'd wrap up in their parents' coats or somebody else's and sleep it off, you know.

ES: How much would it cost to go to one of these dances?

LD: I think about a dollar, probably, or a dollar-and-a-half, something like that. Or, that is for a ticket. Women didn't have to pay, men paid.

ES: Oh really?

LD: Men had to pay. I think their ticket was probably a dollar, a dollar-and-a-half.

ES: Did most of the men not bring a woman with them? They just danced with whoever was available?

LD: Pretty much. Pretty much. They always enjoyed those what they call round dances where the music it'd stop and then the men went one way and the women went the other way and then you took whoever you stopped with.

ES: Oh yes.

LD: They were a lot of fun. And the older men they'd dance with the young girls so that they could learn to dance. Usually family affair ____.

ES: And you said you really liked to dance.

LD: Oh land yeah! I said I never saw a dance till I was about eleven years old and I never missed one after that. [laugh]

ES: So you must've danced with many, many men.

LD: Oh yes. Lots of men, lots of boys, you know, all the boys.

ES: Were some of them people you didn't know before the dance?

LD: No. No, it'd mostly just be local here or Haines, you know. And then we'd go to Haines...when there wasn't a dance here we'd go to Haines for the dance up there. Sometimes up to Muddy Creek. They had dances at Muddy Creek out... We'd go up there. I can remember one wintertime we...the boys took...the snow was about four-foot deep and it took four-horse team and sled and a whole bunch of went up there to dance. And that's when I was working down here in the daytime. I got back at six o'clock in the morning and had to go to work at seven. [laughs] So I didn't get much sleep that night.

ES: Weren't these dances on Saturday nights?

LD: Yes, usually. Friday or Saturday.

ES: So you didn't have to work on Sunday, did you?

LD: I think they're mostly was Friday night, probably, more than Saturday.

ES: Oh, and then you had to work on Saturday?

LD: Yeah, I'd have to... I had to go back to work then. I remember just thinking...[laughs]

ES: Was there any problem ever with liquor at these dances?

LD: Oh yes, a lot of time. There was one family here that always kind of were kind of itchy to have a fight with somebody. There was...there was lots of...but whenever anybody started drunk that's why...there was always a city cop here. You always had a marshal.

ES: And a jail.

LD: Yeah, and they had the jail so if they started a ruckus, why, they'd...they went outside. If they wanted to go outside and have it out, okay, but if they caused any disruption then or anything, why, then they...he'd arrest 'em and send 'em...put 'em in the...let 'em cool off in jail. [laugh]

ES: I wondered whether North Powder ever had a newspaper?

LD: Oh yes. We had newspaper. In fact, the *Record Courier* people started their...I think their first editing here in North Powder.

ES: Is that the Baker paper?

LD: No, the *North Powder News*.

ES: Oh, the *Record Courier*.

LD: *Record Courier*.

ES: Was it just in North Powder or did they publish elsewhere too?

LD: No, I think... I think they just...their first office was here in North Powder as I remember.

ES: Was this a weekly newspaper?

LD: I think so. ____

ES: You read it regularly?

LD: Oh yeah.

ES: Was it mostly town news?

LD: It was just about the same kind of paper it is now, you know, just local news and...

ES: Where is... Where is it published now?

LD: It's published in Baker.

ES: That's what I thought. Yeah.

LD: *Record*.

ES: I thought it was the *Baker...Baker Herald* now.

LD: The *Record Courier* is...it's...just comes once a week.

ES: I see. So it's...

LD: And it still has, you know, news from North Powder and news from Haines, news from ____.

ES: So you think that that newspaper hasn't changed much over, what, sixty, seventy, eighty years?

LD: No. They advertise and I can't see that it has changed very much.

ES: Do you think it's as good now as it was?

LD: Oh, I wouldn't...

ES: There's less going on in North Powder now to report, isn't there?

LD: It probably... It probably had more... You know, I have some copies of, oh, some of the old North Powder...in fact, this is probably a piece of one right there...right here. It was just like that. Advertising, local news. [recording stopped]

