LIDIE HAWKINS
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Interviewed by
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Transcription revised by Paula Helten (11/14/2011)

LH: I'm Lidie Hazel Hawkins.

I: And when was your birth date?

LH: October 22nd, 1925.

I: And where were you born?

LH: Susanville, California.
[recording clicks - 7 second interruption]

I: When did you family move to Oregon?

LH: Well, my mother was born out north of Elgin in a log cabin on a homestead nine miles north of Elgin. And my dad came here when he was fifteen years old, which was about-- oh, he was born in 1903-- 1918, I'll say.

I: What about your-- was it your mother's parents that came to Oregon?

LH: Yes, from Iowa, mm-hmm. And Grandpa taught school here in the Grange Hall on McAllister Lane. And then he decided-- why, I don't know. He decided to take up a homestead down by Elgin, and he packed the whole family up and went down there. Conditions were not-- you had to-- in order to take up a homestead, you had to build a house or whatever and do work on it. It was very, very rough for the family.

I: Did you raise cattle?

LH: I think he logged. They probably had a few cows for their own use, but he logged. In fact, he-- mother said he actually made railroad ties by hand.

I: Wow.

LH: Split 'em by hand.

I: How did you mother like homestead life?

LH: She didn't like it. [chuckles]. 'Course, she was so young. She was born down there, and she probably left the homestead when she was about-- near as we can figure, about five years old. And they moved up to Pine Grove at the top of Minam Hill where the little ole church used to be up there. And she stayed there 'til she was about fifteen. And that was better conditions, you know. It was better than livin' down there in a log house.

I: With no bathroom, I'm sure.

LH: No. Well, she didn't have a bathroom in Pine Grove, either. [laughs]. In fact, the schoolhouse at Pine Grove is still standing out there.

I: Really?

LH: Uh-huh, yeah. We're havin' a family get-together here the seventh of July, the ones that are left. The cousins there-- they want-- some of them have never been down to the homestead so I made arrangements to go down there.

I: Is the homestead still in the family, or has it been sold out?

LH: No, no, it's been sold several times over. And the buildings are gone. You can see where the rocks are still there where the house was and everything, but now it's been many years.

I: So where did-- did you grow up in Elgin, then?

LH: No. No, I grew up in Island City. I went to school in Island City. We lived in Fruit-- Fruitdale Lane now they call it. It was about, oh, I'd say three miles-- three or four miles. And there were some young families right there in the same area, neighborhood. And us kids all walked to school together. No school buses. We didn't have to take physical education. We got-- [chuckles].

I: You walked to school.

LH: [chuckles]. Yep.

I: What did your father do for a living?

LH: Well, he always had a small acreage, and he liked to grow garden stuff. He did during the Depression. He grew a lot of things and sold them to the stores in La Grande. And then he worked at-- down at a lumber company which is Boise Cascade now. And he retired there. And then they had a-- they moved from Fruitdale out to Pine-- in Ladd Canyon. That was after I got married. And they lived out there for several years, and then they sold that and moved into town. And they got too old to farm, I guess. [chuckles].

I: So you completed your education in Island City?

LH: Eight years in Island City, and then I went to La Grande High School. And I didn't go to college.

I: And the elementary school in Island city, was it one room? What type of condition?

LH: Well, it started out it was just a square building with four rooms. Well, then they converted one room to a kind of a recreation room. Tried to play basketball in it, but it was too small.

I: Oh no.

LH: But they did anyway, you know. And they had first through the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth, and seventh, and eighth, three teachers.

I: And were there outhouses, bathroom facilities in the school?

LH: There was a bathroom in the school, yeah. Yeah, we had a bathroom.

I: What did you do for lunches? Did you pack lunch to school?

LH: You carried your lunch.

I: No hot lunches, huh?

LH: No hot lunches. And later on, when I was oh, probably in the seventh and eighth grade, the mothers through the PTA organization-- each day a mother would bring something hot to school. You know, maybe two or three mothers. They'd take turns. Maybe it would be chili, or potatoes and gravy or whatever, something hot. But they had to carry it up there. They'd have to carry it in there, and then serve it to us. And that was a treat.

I: Yeah. You had the cold lunch every day.

LH: Yeah. And it was cold-cold, too. We had harder winters then. Then we do now. I remember one time we got snowed in or snowed out, whatever you want to call it. And our neighborhood down there-- my friend's father put some sled runners on a wagon box. And her older brother-- he was out of school. He took a team of horses, and loaded all the kids in. And well, that was fun! We didn't mind! [laughs].

I: [laughs].

LH: He'd take us to school in the sled, and then he'd come back at night and pick us up and take us home. We thought we was real smart, because the kids in town, they didn't get that fun thing.

I: So how many kids were in your class then? Was it-- or in your grade?

LH: There was eight of us in the eighth grade at Island City, four girls and four boys.

I: That's a nice even number. So did you move together to the high school then in La Grande?

LH: We all went to high school, and most-- well, one of them didn't finish. But then we got in high school, and there was a lot of the boys. You see, the World War II broke out in '41. I graduated in '43. And a lot of the boys was gone to service. They had incentive programs to make it attractive for 'em to join. And they still graduated, but they didn't-- they weren't there for graduation. When we had our first class reunion, we had to go back to the sophomore list--

I: To get the whole class?

LH: to pick up the whole class. And there was about a hundred and twenty-three of us in high school. 'Course that was La Grande and Island City, and I don't know-- well, some of the rural area out from Island City too.

I: Where was the high school located at that time?

LH: It was where-- it's been torn down. It's kind of where the junior high is now.

I: And what kind of courses did you take in high school?

LH: Mostly bookkeeping. 'Course you had to-- it was mandatory to take English and Geography and that sort of thing, but I always leaned toward bookkeeping.

I: Were there any extra activities after school, dances, clubs--?

LH: Well, there was lots of athletic activities, but I never did participate in 'em because you lived out in the country and it was too hard to get-- I had a drive to go home every night. And the kids in town _____, a lot of 'em, but I never did. [phone rings]. Oh dear.
[recording clicks - 5 second interruption]

LH: So where were we? [chuckles].

I: High school.

LH: Oh.

I: Let's see. The sports we talked about.

LH: Yeah.

I: What about dances? Did you have any high-- any dances out there?

LH: Oh yeah, they had dances, but they were mostly on weekends. And they had ball games. I'd go to the football games and stuff like that.

And as far as participating in any of the sports, I didn't do much of that.

I: Now how did the Depression affect your family?

LH: Oh it was very hard on everybody. That's why everybody grew a-- usually had a pig or a cow and had a garden. And they canned everything that they get their hands on. And it was difficult, but we managed. Money was hard to come by, and I worked. I didn't work out, but I worked at home.

I: And what were your chores at home?

LH: Pickin' strawberries. [chuckles]. Dad grew a lot of strawberries. And then in later years he grew a lot of, oh radishes and cucumbers and things like that. Mother and I'd sell 'em. And radishes, oh, mercy! I can't eat radishes _____.

I: Really?

LH: He grew these big icicle radishes you know? We pick 'em in the late afternoon. Every night we'd sit there washin' those. You tie 'em in bunches, you know, all by hand. And then we'd wash 'em. Take a brush and scrub ‘em. And then the next morning you'd head for town, and try to beat the neighbors to the grocery stores to sell your-- [chuckles]. 'Cause everybody was doin' the same thing, you see. Not everybody, but a lot of 'em. You'd have to get there first so you could sell your produce.

I: Did you sell just to the groceries in La Grande, or did you make--?

LH: Mostly to La Grande grocery stores. There was a lot of grocery stores.

I: Was there?

LH: Oh yeah. There’s been so many grocery stores shut down because of the big supermarkets, yeah, a lot of little neighborhood grocery stores.

I: And did the-- 'cause I know during World War II there was a lot of, you know, rationing of sugar and that type of thing. How did your family deal with that?

LH: You just dealt with it. You just went without. Everything was rationed. Of course farmers-- if you lived on a farm, you got extra gas stamps. But you just-- no, you just dealt with it.

I: Did without?

LH: Did without. And it wasn't that bad. Paper was hard to come by, toilet paper and stuff like that.

I: So, what did you use for toilet paper?

LH: Well, we used it sparingly. [laughs].

I: [chuckles]. But you had it! [laughs].

LH: When you'd find it in the store, well-- [laughs].

I: You'd buy it up, huh?

LH: Well, you couldn't. They'd ration it to you. And-- yeah, it was-- but you got by. I can't help but think that if we were rationed a little bit on some of these things right now it would make more people conscious--

I: Of what they're wasting?

LH: Yes. Of-- of the _____-- make more people conscious of what's going on. And there is some people that's suffering-- that is suffering from this war. But people have everything, anything they want! They aren't denied anything.

I: What else were your chores at home, inside chores? Baking-- did you guys bake bread on a certain day, laundry on a certain day?

LH: Oh, no, not-- mother baked bread. I always helped her in the house. And of course you had a wood stove. You carried wood in. You--

your water was not convenient. And it was more of a chore to get things done. And then you walk to school, you walk home. When you find you got everything done, why, you was ready to go to bed.

I: How was laundry done? Did you have like a washing machine, or--?

LH: Early on mother washed it on a board, scrub board. And then she got a washing machine. And just a wringer washer, you know. She never had an automatic 'til she moved to town.

I: My grandmother had one of those wringer ones. I remember that, my great-grandma. It's in our basement. So, did any of your brothers or sis-- or--?

LH: I don't have any brothers.

I: No brothers, huh?

LH: I'm the only child.

I: The only child. Well, you were busy at home then, weren't ya?

LH: Yeah. [chuckles].

I: And how did you meet your husband?

LH: At the Stock Show Dance. [chuckles].

I: What a great place to meet him!

LH: [chuckles]. He had just got back from the service. I didn't know him before he went in the service. And I was over at the Stock Year Dance with a friend of mine, and he was there, and we got acquainted. That was the way it happened. I guess he was lookin' for a cook or something. [chuckles].

I: [chuckles].

LH: That was in 1940-- ’46. And it-- we only knew each other about six months before we were married. That's one of those marriages that isn't supposed to last, you know.

I: And here you are today.

LH: Fifty-nine years.

I: What was your early married life like? Where did you live?

LH: We lived in La Grande in an apartment. Sherman worked for the railroad, and we lived in an apartment for about six months. And then we bought ten acres out in Fruitdale. There again, it was very-- no bathroom, a very small house. And we lived there for five years. I was workin' out-- workin'. I worked for Consolidated Freightways for nine years, and six of those was after we was married. And we lived there for five years, and then we moved out to Gekeler Lane.

I: Okay.

LH: Out just east of the Grange off of McAllister. And we lived there for five years. And then we bought this place, just this house and the ground here. And moved out-- well, we didn't move out here when we bought it. We bought it in '55. And then my husband leased, or rented his mother's place. His father passed away. And he rented her place down the road here. And we decided he was out here more than he was over there, so we decided we'd move out here. We moved out here in '56. So it would be fifty-nine--

I: Wow.

LH: or forty-nine years.

I: That's a long time.

LH: And we sold eleven at the house and eleven acres over there, and then kept the rest of the ground. And we've been here ever since.

I: So you worked for that-- for the company. What was the company's name you worked for?

LH: Consolidated Freightways.

I: And what did you do for them?

LH: Office work, office work. We had-- I was office manager. We had three girls. Well, three besides myself.

I: And what type of business was it?

LH: Freight, hauled freight.

I: Okay.

LH: Freight company, and there again it's different than it is now. They had more trucks. In fact, they aren't even in business anymore. They had more trucks. And the trucks that go from place to place, you know, lettin' the freight off and unloading and loading and so forth.

I: What type of freight?

LH: Anything, and meat-- 'course most of these companies have their own trucks now. They don't ship that stuff.

I: And would you quit working for them after you were married?

LH: Six years after I was married, mm-hm. And then I quit in '52 to start my family. And our son was born in '53, our oldest son. And he was about three years old when we moved down here. And we lived in Gekeler Lane when he was born. And then we-- our second boy was born in '57. And that was after we'd moved out here.

I: And your husband farmed, didn't he?

LH: He railroaded.

I: Railroaded.

LH: He worked for the railroad. And the steam engines-- he worked on boilers on the steam engines. And of course the diesels came in. Well, that put him out of work. And this is, "Sorry, we don't need you

anymore." And it sort of irritates me these people now. They get laid off, and think they have to be trained for something else.

I: Something else.

LH: They didn't do that with them. They-- he just had to go find something else to do. So he worked in a machine shop in La Grande. And then his-- he rented his mother's place, and we had bought this. So then he started farming full-time, but he'd go to town and get a job in the wintertime. We didn't have very many cows or anything. So he'd go to town and get a job in the wintertime.

I: And then farm during the summer?

LH: Uh-huh, yeah.

I: And what did he farm?

LH: What?

I: Did he farm wheat?

LH: Yeah, mostly wheat. And we'd gradually build our cattle herd up, little by little, wheat and hay.

I: And did you have farm hands, or was it just your husband?

LH: Just my husband and me for a long, long time.

I: So, I'm sure you were responsible for some of the farm--?

LH: Well, I didn't run tractors or anything much, but yeah, I was-- I helped him a lot. I was there, you know, he needed help.

I: And your boys helped out?

LH: When they got older, yes, very good, very good help. Our oldest boy, when he got out of high school he went to college and got with the state police. He just retired a few years ago. Twenty-nine years with the state police.

I: A long time, isn’t it?

LH: Mm-hmm. So he returned, and he leased part of our property, our farm. So he's back farmin' too, now.

I: That's good.

LH: He lives in Island City, has a wife and a daughter. She's married. She was just here last week. Her husband is starting to dental school in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

I: Wow.

LH: And they flew back Friday. And then our youngest son, he had one little boy, but he's not little anymore. But he passed away in '98. He got a very rare liver disease. They don't know what causes it. And it's-- if you have it long enough, your cancer cells attack your bile duct in your liver.

I: Wow.

LH: And he had a combination of-- he had the cancer along with the-- he lived for about a year and a half after he took down sick. And his boy lives in Stanfield.

I: Okay.

LH: He's about thirteen years old now.

I: Wow.

LH: He was six when he lost his father.

I: He's young.

LH: Yeah, mm-hmm, yeah.

I: So did you ever work outside the home again?

LH: Nope, nope. I thought about it. When the kids got in school I was real active at the school. And then they was in 4-H, both of 'em, and in Scouts, Boy Scouts. And I was den mother for the Cub Scouts for probably eight or ten years.

I: And what were your duties as the den mother?

LH: Oh, plan the meetings and organize and you know, activities and everything. It's a job, but I enjoyed it. And our youngest boy-- our oldest boy didn't-- well, I don't know-- remember what rank he was in Boy Scouts. But the youngest boy really, really climbed the ladder. He was an Eagle Scout when he was thirteen years old.

I: Wow.

LH: And he took a real big interest in it. He liked the outdoors and that sort of thing.

I: What type of activities did you plan?

LH: Oh, hiking and crafts, you know, woodworking, and just all kinds of boy things. [laughs].

I: [laughs]. And for 4-H, did your sons raise animals then?

LH: They had uh, cattle, usually a heifer. Now Carl, let me see-- yeah, Carl showed in the stock show and over at the fair, and Craig did too. But they didn't get a herd _____ or anything.

I: What type of things-- did you do volunteer work at the elementary school?

LH: No, I-- well, PTA and room mother and-- oh, in-- over here in Union, not so much anymore, but they used to have in high school, they had feeds. They would have spaghetti feeds, pizza feeds and everything. I always helped in the kitchen with that.

I: What was the big difference between when you went to school and your sons went to school?

LH: Well, they had a school bus, for one thing.

I: And didn't have to walk to school.

LH: Didn't have to walk to school. They had modern facilities, and there's a lot now. It's been a lot of change, even when my boys were in school and school now. It's unbelievable how many kids have cars up here. When our boys was in school, they didn't have-- nobody had cars. Maybe they'd get a car when they was-- toward the end of their senior year or something, you know. But my goodness, they turn sixteen they've got to have a new car!

I: How-- with the education system do you think that your boys received a better education than the children are receiving today?

LH: I don't think so. I can see from what I've experienced with it, I think they're getting a different type of education. But they're getting more-- more education.

I: More education.

LH: Seems to me like they are. But the schools are leaning too much toward athletics.

I: Than academics?

LH: They're getting away from the reading, writing, and arithmetic.

I: What are some of the major changes that you've seen in your lifetime in this area? How much-- I'm sure when your husband started farming, there was a lot more farms out here?

LH: Yes. Yes. There was a place down here, this place. There was this house here, down here, and one just across the fence from it. There was houses, you know, people. This place down here had forty acres and one couple, and they made a livin' on it. And yes, a lot more farms. There's bigger farms, and fewer farms.

I: So, do you think it's harder today to make a living farming than it was when you were raising your boys?

LH: No.

I: No.

LH: People think it is, but it wasn't. We didn't have air-conditioned tractors. We had open-air tractors. There was a lot of-- Sherman bale-- when he got a baler, he baled hay. He'd hire kids or our kids to buck bales, what they called buck bales. They were small bales, but they'd do it all day long.

I: And what is bucking bales?

LH: Hay hooks. Put 'em on a wagon. And you'd have an elevator, and it'd put it up on a stack. And there'd be somebody at the top that would stack 'em, all hand work. Now you just don't touch it!

I: Machinery takes care of it.

LH: Machinery takes care of everything now. There was-- we've hired a lot of kids. We've, well-- just numerous kids up here in Union. The kids nowadays wouldn't do that!

I: _____ work? So, what else would you hire the kids for besides--?

LH: Well, mostly haying.

I: Haying?

LH: Mm-hmm.

I: And when did haying season start? I mean, did the kids work all summer, or was it just a--?

LH: Well, we usually hired a high school kid, at least one good high school-- some of them-- sometimes more as soon as they got out of school in the spring. Your haying season starts about right around _____, about June.

I: About now.

LH: Mm-hmm, yeah. And then you'd have the second cutting. And then you'd get into harvest. And if you had a good dependable kid, you-- he could drive grain truck, you know. And your combines were smaller.

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I: A lot smaller?

LH: Uh-huh, and just one. And Sherman was doing it himself. And he'd hire a truck driver to drive truck. Somehow-- I've done it, and after the kids got old enough to be on their own. But, no, it's pretty convenient now, pretty convenient. And, you know, just your conveniences in your house and your electricity. And people complain about their electric bill. You could stop and consider all of the things that you're getting off of that electric bill. It's a bargain.

I: Because I'm sure many of your homes growing up, and in your early years of marriage, did they not have electricity, or--?

LH: Had electricity, but we didn't have two refrigerators and two freezers and a dishwasher, and automatic washing machines. We had washing machines, but we didn't have automatics when we were first married.

I: What kind did you have, the kind that you--?

LH: The wringer washer.

I: So did you hang your clothes to dry?

LH: Out on the line, winter and summer, and if it-- you'd bring 'em in, and they'd be frozen stiff. Then you'd hang 'em in the house. You know, we didn't have a clothes dryer. Now, we've got it so much nicer.

I: Easier.

LH: Yeah, mm-hmm.

I: Alright, back up a little bit and talk about when your grandfather came over. You told me a story about the fact that he took the train here.

LH: That was my mother's--

I: Your mother _____.

LH: They moved out from Iowa. And Grandpa came first, and he got a house to live in. And then Grandma came on the train with four kids. Can you imagine, four little kids?

I: And it wasn't the luxurious Amtrak we have now.

LH: No. [chuckles]. And they lived at a-- in a little old dinky house where the sale yard is now. And then they had another daughter who was born there in 1900. It was about 1898 that they moved out there. And 1900 she was born. And then they moved out on the Foothill Road--

I: Okay.

LH: just out from La Grande, you know. And they had another child born out there. And then they moved to Elgin. He took up this homestead. He was teaching school at McAllister Lane, the Grange Hall. And I guess he would walk from Ladd-- Foothill Road, either ride a horse or walk. And then they took up this homestead. And the two oldest boys, they had worked awful hard. You see, he taught them in school when he was teaching at McAllister Lane. We had a neighbor in Gekeler Lane that went to school. He's gone now, but he went to school there to-- Grandpa was his teacher. And my two oldest uncles was in school. And he said Grandpa was very, very, very tough on his two boys in school. That's probably-- you know, I think he had a tendency to be that way.

I: With your own kids. What brought your grandfather out here from Iowa?

LH: I don't know. I just real-- I don't know what the incentive was. But you see he was quite a bit older than Grandma. And he actually taught her in school in Iowa.

I: Oh, wow.

LH: And I understand he was a friend of her dad. And he knew her dad, and I don't know what-- he had no relatives out here. I don't know. But everybody was a miner. They thought they could make a fortune.

I: Out in Oregon.

LH: But move west. Everybody was movin' west. But I don't know why he picked La Grande, never heard that story.

I: _____ story_____?

LH: I never knew my Grandpa. He died the year I was born.

I: Oh wow.

LH: And Mother said he worked away from home so much in the logging camps, even down north of Elgin, that she can't-- she says "He was gone an awful lot." And of course in those days you didn't go back and forth. If you worked in the logging camp, you stayed there and come home on weekends. And then Dad _____ when they moved to Pine Grove, why Grandma would go out in the summertime in harvest season and work on the cook wagon.

I: For the men?

LH: Travel around, you know, and she'd work on the cook wagon. And the older kids stayed home and took care of the younger kids. Can you imagine what a riot that would be?

I: No [chuckles]. Imagine the trouble they got into probably?

LH: But you had to do what you had to do.

I: Yes, you had.

LH: Grandma worked very hard. She really had quite a tough life.

I: And she did not enjoy the homestead?

LH: No, no. 'Course, _____, and she make hot biscuits every morning. And when she got older, you couldn't get her to make a biscuit. She hated biscuits. They didn't have toast and all that stuff then, and hot biscuits. She just hated biscuits.

I: Do you have any other family stories that you remember?

LH: Oh, I can't recall any right at the moment, but there's probably a _____, I think.

I: Do you remember Hot Lake? What was Hot Lake like when you were growing up?

LH: I never did-- well, I've been past there, but I didn't. My husband can tell you more about Hot Lake when he-- he was raised out here.

I: So, you don't have a lot of memories of Hot Lake?

LH: Yeah, uh-huh. He used to play over there.

I: Really?

LH: Yeah, he _____ all around this area.

I: Tell me about the Cowbelles, the Cattle Women.

LH: Okay, that was later on. My kids were still in school, I guess, in high school. And I joined the Cattle Women. And, oh I was treasurer for several years. It was a fun thing.

I: What'd you ladies do?

LH: Oh, we had fundraisers, and we had a meeting once a month. And we either went to a restaurant or had a potluck. Yeah, a potluck at people's houses, you know. And beef promotion is what we did. They have their state facilities, organization, and they'd work under them. And you had your president and secretary, treasurer. It was-- I miss it.

I: It's no longer around?

LH: Well, they just don't function anymore. They don't have any meetings anymore. I was treasurer for many years, and then I was president for two years. And we had a fun time. And we'd raise money. We'd cook hamburgers for different auction sales, bull sales and whatever. When we had those sales, hamburger; we'd serve hamburgers. And then we'd make homemade pies and sell the pies. And of course the people enjoyed those. And we had a lot of fun.

I: What did you do with the money you raised for the fundraising?

LH: Beef promotion. And now they give scholarships every year. But they don't function. They don't have meetings as a group anymore. And I don't know. I really-- I don't know what's going on.

I: When you say beef promotion, what do you mean by beef promotion?

LH: Oh, advertising. We put on beef demonstrations in the grocery stores. Like on Father's Day, we'd give a beef certificate. Have a drawing for a-- we'd go to Albertson's and Safeway and all the bigger-- Hyde's Groceries when they were open. And we'd serve a beef dish, you know. And pass out recipes, and that sort of thing. They don't do that anymore. They haven't for a long time.

I: And how many women were part of the Cowbelles when you were?

LH: Oh, I'd say probably forty or fifty maybe. They didn't all attend. I remember when I-- they-- it was kind of goin' downhill having problems getting people to participate. I didn't feel-- I really wasn't that crazy about being president, but they couldn't get anybody else. So I thought, "Well, to heck with it. I'll just take it." So, I was treasurer. So, I had to give that up and took over the presidency. And my goodness, we had thirty-two people at the first meeting! [chuckles]. I guess maybe they wanted some new blood or somethin'. I don't know!

I: What were your duties as president?

LH: Well, you had to appoint your committees and see that things worked along.

I: Until things got done.

LH: Yeah. I enjoyed it. It was-- had a good group of people to work with, and they helped you. But you just had to dedicate the work. You couldn't do it all yourself. And I guess I was good at doing that.

I: At delegating?

LH: [chuckles]. Mm-hmm.

I: Now the Stock Show just ended here this past weekend. And you-- were you very involved with the stock show then?

LH: I cooked hamburgers for years in the hamburger's van. And there again, some of the Cow-- Cowbelles is-- we-- there's several of us worked over there. Different groups would take different days. And I usually worked on Friday. And one of the Cowbelles, two of the Cowbelles-- and they was in charge of the hamburger stand for the stock show. And so, they got some of us girls over to help 'em. And that was a fun thing again. You worked! I mean, it was--

I: Hard work?

LH: Hard work! It was hectic! And you were just-- I-- if I'd wanna do something, I like to work. I don't like to stand there and hold my hands, you know. And so I liked it on Friday 'cause that's the parade day, big crowd. And you could fry hamburgers just as fast as you could fry hamburgers you could get 'em out. And, oh that one lady I know she didn't like to work out front. And she peeled onions. I don't know how she stood it. She just peeled onions. [chuckles].

I: All day?

LH: Fifty pounds of onions. [laughs]. But we had fun doing it. And of course over there they fried their hamburgers and the onions were fried too, you see. But we had fun. It was hard work. And you'd just be grease.

I: I can imagine by the end of the day.

LH: End of the day your hair was just [chuckles], but it was a fun thing.

I: And your boys were involved with the Stock Show then?

LH: Yeah, they showed their cows, uh, heifers. But I don't think I worked there 'til after they quit showin' their animals.

I: Has the Stock Show changed a lot over the years?

LH: I don't think so. Not the-- the 4-H and the FFA is really the big thing at a Stock Show. And it-- and they've improved it a lot. I mean the buildings. We went over just to look at the animals here a couple years ago. And my, the buildings are so much better than they were. They were pretty crude when our boys was showing. They've got some nice buildings over there now. I don't know how their attendance is, but we always buy tickets. But we-- last-- we usually give 'em away, give the tickets away.

I: Now how has the town of Union changed since you've moved here? I mean, has it changed at all? I mean, substantially?

LH: Well, there's a lot less stores. There used to be a variety store over there. And there was more filling stations. And well, the drugstore is still there. In some respects it's better, and some it isn't. Now they have a health clinic over there which they didn't have when we moved here which is a real asset to Union. And they have some good, how about nurse--

I: Practitioners, uh-huh.

LH: practitioners. And there's people come from La Grande over there. They're really good. And they're in connection with OHSU, which is good. If there's any questions, why, they just get on the phone and call 'em up, mm-hmm, yeah. We've gone-- I've gone over there. Sherman's' gone over there. And you can usually get in. Where in La Grande--

I: Good luck? [chuckles]. How have things changed for-- I don't know if worse is the right word, but you know, just the closing of the stores?

LH: They used to have a clothing store over here. A variety store, a clothing store, and kind of a western store, but they don't have any of that anymore.

I: And why do you think that is?

LH: Well, I don't know. Just too hard for 'em to make a living, I guess. We don't even have a good clothing store in La Grande!

I: I agree with you there, we don't. Did you attend one of the local churches?

LH: My husband was LDS, and we went to the-- when the boys were in school or in home. Why, we went to the LDS Church over here. And in fact Carl, that's where he was so active in Scouts was at the church there. They have a good Scouting program, or did. I assume they still have. I'm not connected with it. And his-- he had a good Scoutmaster.

I: So, are you pretty involved with the church then, or just a--?

LH: Somewhat when the boys were home. I guess we could be yet, but [chuckles].

I: _____. It happens though.

LH: Mm-hmm, yeah.

RW: Can you think _____? [Unidentified, except for the initials.]

I: Can you think of anything else we haven't talked about that you think people would find interesting?

LH: Oh, not really, not offhand.

I: Not offhand?

LH: Mm-hmm.

RW: We still have a lot of family history.

LH: What?

I: Did you still have a lot of family history?

LH: Yeah. My grand-- it would be my great-grandfather. He was in the Civil War. Well, actually on both sides.

I: Really?

LH: Dad's-- Dad had a-- my dad's-- it would be my great-grandfather was in the Civil War on my dad's side. He's buried up here in La Grande too.

I: Really? What brought him out here?

LH: Well, Dad's family came out, and I don't know what brought them out here. My grandpa had a sister that came first, and then Grandpa and Grandma came. 'Course Dad was fifteen when they came out. And they took 'em thirty days to get out here from Colorado.

I: And how did they come out, by wagon train?

LH: No. They had an old touring car, and they camped out. And it was, uh, 1918. And Grandma-- I found a diary that she had made every day where they camped.

I: Wow!

LH: It's handwritten. And it-- they got here. And Grandpa-- he had worked in the mines in Colorado and farmed too. And then he got out here and he did-- he did cement work. I don't know, some of the family I guess. And Dad did a lot of cement work, uh, plaster. That was for the sheet rocking. And he was a plasterer, and that's what he did in California when I was born. And then he-- 'course the Depression came along. And it-- work was hard to come by. And they came back to La Grande. Oh, he worked out at La Grande, too. He worked on a lot of buildings up here in La Grande.

I: Really?

LH: The Union Pacific Railroad, the first building up at the college.

I: Inlow Hall, probably.

LH: It's the one that was built in 1929. He worked on that, and he-- Sacajawea Annex. The one they tore down.

I: Okay.

LH: He worked on that, and the first underpass. They put a second one in, you know, a few years ago. Well, he worked on the first one, and several of those buildings. A lot of cement work around La Grande and plaster work. And then he worked in Walla Walla for awhile when I was a tiny baby, and he worked in Salem. And you just had to go wherever the work was.

I: So, he went where work was. Did his family stay here, his wife and--?

LH: No, Mother and me as a baby went with him.

I: Oh, okay.

LH: And Kelso, Washington. He worked on a lot of theaters down-- several theaters in Kelso and Longview, up there. Mother went down there. She talked about her and me goin' on a train when he got work down there, and then they-- they in Walla Walla. Then they came back to La Grande. I guess they got tired of trompin' around. And he had his little acreage over there, and just scrounged work wherever he could find work. And then the sawmill opened up, and he got on there and stayed there.

I: Wow.

LH: I had lunch last week with a girl that I've known all of my life. She lived-- neighbors in Fruitdale. She's just-- I can't even remember. I've known you so long. I can't even remember--

I: Life without you! [chuckles].

LH: [chuckles]. I remember when we got acquainted. Well, we grew up together in Fruitdale. There's just a alfalfa field between us. We had a beaten path and had some fun times.

I: What'd you do for fun as a little girl?

LH: Imagination. [chuckles]. You didn't have organized things to do. You just made your entertainment.

I: You ever find yourself in trouble?

LH: What?

I: Did you-- did you ever find yourself in trouble?

LH: Yeah, we tried to teach-- Dad had a _____ hen with some little baby chicks. We decided that-- her and I decided the little chickens should learn to fly.

I: Oh no.

LH: And Dad was down at the barn away from the house, and he heard that old hen just carryin' on something terrible. He come up there, and here was Helen and I teaching the-- trying to teach the chickens to fly. Oh, we got a-- we got a terrific spanking. [laughs].

I: [laughs].

LH: And Helen run for home, and she got a spanking when she got home. [laughs].

I: That's funny.

LH: And the chickens never did learn to fly. [laughs].

I: No.

LH: That's like our boys out here. They pulled a few ornery tricks too. They decided they was gonna teach the-- we had a water trough, big long water trough. Well, they-- they had taken swimming lessons

over at Cove. I took 'em over every day all that one summer. I think I could have drove to Cove blindfolded. And so they decided the cats-- we had some cats. They decided those cats should learn to swim too. They learned to swim, so they de-- they put the cat in the water trough and made it swim to the end. [laughs].

I: That's so mean.

LH: And they think _____, you know. They should learn to swim!

I: That's understandable! Oh, that's funny.

LH: And then one time our oldest boy-- we had some chickens out here. The settin' hens would get on the nest, you know, and set. They don't do it anymore. They bred motherhood out of 'em, I guess. And heard a big commotion, and Craig had heard that his grandmother say that a settin' hen was setting you could dump her in the water trough or do something and it'd break her out, you know, from setting. Here he come out of the chicken house with this old hen just squawkin' and squawkin', and he was gonna take her out and dump her in the water trough. [laughs].

I: Just like Grandma said.

LH: Grandma told him it would work.

I: [laughs]. Were you involved with politics at all in the area?

LH: Not too much.

I: No.

LH: I was on the election board over here for about-- in Union for probably fifteen years.

I: What does that entail being on the election board?

LH: Well, they didn't vote by mail--

I: [laughs]. No!

LH: then. They had a whole crew of women. First of all, I started out on the counting board. And they-- the counting board would go in, oh, quite a while after the election, the voting. We'd go in at ten o'clock or so, and you'd have to sit and count all those votes by hand. There'd be four women. One of 'em would call them off and three of 'em would mark it down.

I: And they would be compared to make sure your--?

LH: Yeah, you come out the same. And we-- I had-- us-- oh, we'd set-- been over there 'til three or four o'clock in the morning.

I: Well, what happened if you didn't come out equal, if you didn't match up?

LH: You usually matched up pretty well. You'd double check every so often, you know. And so it usually came out.

I: Wow.

LH: Now that was a long process, but you felt it was accurate when you got done. You weren't depending on machines. And 'course, the election board itself was open from eight o'clock in the morning 'til eight o'clock at night. But then after it closed, why, then you'd have all these buildup of ballots that you'd have to count. And then you'd have to take your results over to the courthouse, usually that night. The chairman of the election board would take it over.

I: The courthouse in La Grande?

LH: Mm-hmm, yeah.

I: And if it was a-- would you do presidential elections and that type of thing?

LH: Everything, school board, special elections, primaries, everything. It would be about-- well your presidential-- your primaries are every four years, I guess. Some of 'em are every two years. And then your school boards and all the different districts and everything would come in there too.

I: Wow. It's a pretty important job.

LH: Yeah. It was kind of time consuming, but it-- I don't know. 'Course they vote by mail now, so.

I: Was it a paid position or was it volunteer work?

LH: Paid, but not very much. I don't remember what we got, wasn't very much anyway.

I: Would be enough to _____ money?

LH: Mm-hmm. Well, that was just the town. If you was on the day board, what we called the day board, you usually work from eight o'clock 'til-- oh, they usually get through about nine o'clock by the time they balanced their books out and everything. But the counting board, that was a long--

I: I can imagine.

LH: Mm-hmm. And after you get so late at night you'd get--

RW: A little rummy.

LH: Yeah, mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm. Yeah.

I: I don't know if we left anything out. I'd love to see your picture.
[recording clicks - no interruption]

LH: Yeah, he started up this little grade school band, and that's a picture of it.

I: And what did he teach? I mean, was it _____?

LH: He taught the seventh and eighth grade. But he-- he-- most of those kids were-- well, there's some young ones in there too. And oh, they had violins, they had everything. And I played the trumpet in-- and uh-- in high school I played one year in the band.

I: In the band?

LH: Mm-hmm. Here's our schoolhouse in Island City.
[END OF TAPE]