

**MAXINE CONLEY STUART**

**October 23, 2004**

Interviewed by

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[Unidentified woman in interview noted as "O" - audio begins]

MS: To \_\_\_\_\_ that year of 1873 from Kansas. See, from Fort Scott, Kansas. I-- I think it was pretty \_\_\_\_\_ from Illinois. Well, A. B. was born in Kentucky.

O: Yes.

MS: And then he married Joisa Hopper in Illinois. See, in 1858. So, they probably-- they might have lived there. And then moved to Fort Scott in 1868 ten years after they were married. And then in 1873, that's where they left from Fort Scott. See, they lived,--

O: Do you think--?

MS: but I don't--

O: So, they lived--

MS: I don't think--

O: So, they lived there for five years.

MS: Well, see I don't even know that because it's--

I: Written down?

MS: Written down.

I: Anna May took the wagon train to La Grande. Is that right?

MS: Uh huh. Yeah, they came-- they came down, I think, where the highway is now.

I: Mm-hm. And they settled in Cove?

MS: Yes. Well, no, I don't know. Well, out at the top of Medley Hills.

O: Yeah.

MS: It's the only place I ever heard they lived.

O: Let's see, it says he kept adding until the farm stretched along seven miles of that Highway 83 north of La Grande. So, I'm not sure if he lived anywhere else, you don't know.

MS: Because the old ranch, the house is \_\_\_\_\_ for Mama.

I: Right.

MS: Daddy came to first. \_\_\_\_\_ kind of \_\_\_\_\_. [chuckles].

O: See, I'm not sure where the original house was where-- where A. B. lived first.

MS: Well, don't you think it was the old house that burned out here where \_\_\_\_\_ at the top of the hill? Because Mama tells about--

O: Let's see, is that where-- see, I'm not sure that would have been the original house 'cause he originally-- I-- didn't he have ground? 'Cause it-- you see, it says, "In 1874 he bought a section of land and was a beginning he added to the acres until the farm stretched seven miles along Highway 82 north of La Grande."

MS: That would be up-- which that's the Imbler.

O: But then see-- but I don't, you know-- I mean, I wouldn't-- I don't know.

MS: Yeah, because there used to be two houses out there-- the old house and the newer house be up at the top of the hill. And so I \_\_\_\_\_ that's for the year.

O: It might have been.

MS: And then you've got all the out around acreage beneath the old ranch.

O: Yeah, well that's probably what it was then.

I: So, was it your parents that built this house, or built the original house that was here?

MS: Oh, this is my Mama's house when they got married.

I: Okay, you haven't lost it. Your parents built this house?

MS: Yes.

I: Okay. So, this-- okay. So, the ranch here--?

MS: But they lived while they were building it, you see they lived down there where-- on Cotton Pick Road in that-- in the house that used to be there. I can't even tell you where it is. I know where it is when I go by it.

I: It's not there-- it's not there anymore?

MS: No, and that \_\_\_\_\_ finally built this one from nothing. She said she was so thrilled that they was moving her to her own house. [laughs].

I: I bet that's true.

MS: Yeah.

I: So, what are your first memories about living in this house, or in the original house?

MS: [chuckles]. I was born here.

I: Were you?

MS: Mm-hm. The babies used to be born at home, [chuckles] back in the day.

I: And what year were you born in?

MS: 1918.

I: So, you're just a young thing then.

MS: [laughs]. Well, I don't remember. And I just remember playing in this yard. And-- and I-- I was in my favorite \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_, I was destroyed. I was riding my pony around the house. 'Course I probably was about five years old, and once I went around and Mama was out of the back door. And she says, "You do not shove off with the man so you can handle it alone."

I: [chuckles].

MS: "Come in for dinner." They would-- they would clap when I'd go by. [laughs]. So, that's about that. 'Cause I learned right that at the-- at the young age you don't show off for the man. [laughs].

I: And you're the youngest of how many children?

MS: Five.

I: Five children?

MS: And there's twenty years between my sister and me too.

I: Oh wow.

MS: \_\_\_\_\_ would be.

I: And your mother, she ran the house? She didn't work outside the home?

MS: No.

I: No?

MS: My mom stayed here 'cause they farmed, and they had-- and they had to cook for them. And then the laundries were huge! [chuckles].

I: Do you know if I'd tried to un--

MS: And I even grew up helping do that a lot. And--

I: And how was the laundry done? Was it done on machines or was it the scrub board?

MS: Well, she had an old machine that was a big thing, and it kind of went around like this. And then they'd boil all the clothes in boilers. And she'd come-- I remember how it was all set up. The machine was here, and then the stove was over here with the boilers. And the rinse tub was here and another rinse tub was here. [laughs].

I: Sounds like an all day job.

MS: Mm-hm. Oh yes.

I: So, your-- you ran-- so, there was cattle on the ranch, I assume.

MS: Yes.

I: And how big of a ran-- how many head of cattle, do you remember?

MS: I don't have any idea, but you'd probably know that better than I.

I: One of the larger ranches, is that correct?

MS: He'd \_\_\_\_\_ back in the old days, east ranch out of the \_\_\_\_\_, and just started out here.

O: Was it the \_\_\_\_\_?

MS: I thought it was. How big-- about what-- a thousand, maybe two.

O: But that's too big, so, I don't think it was that much. I think, let's see--

MS: Well see, my grandparents had already been to La Grande a year or two.

O: Mm-hm, I see.

I: And did he farm-- was your-- your father farm also?

MS: Hm?

I: Crops?

MS: They all did.

I: What type of crops?

MS: Wheat.

I: Wheat, mostly?

MS: And cattle.

O: Okay, six hundred and forty acres which is-- that's-- yeah, that A. B. began by giving each of his grandsons six hundred and forty acres on their twenty-first birthday.

MS: Oh, but that's different than a thousand. I'd always told a thousand.

O: Yeah. Well, as I was thinking it wasn't quite that much because see that's--

MS: That would go too far.

O: That would be the original, but what Daddy got, see, too. You see, and that was why that was what he got directly.

MS: When \_\_\_\_\_ was down here.

O: Yeah.

MS: And moved over by \_\_\_\_\_ Hill.

O: Right.

MS: Did he offer for you to come down?

I: Mm-hm, come into town.

MS: That's that line on both sides of the highway right there. That's where it's found those sites.

O: Yeah, 'cause when she talked about the old plant, that's where it was where that place was out on the top of the hill, I think it says. I don't know what-- what it's called.

MS: Now, the--

O: But there's a sign right there. You've got-- well, do you work at Safeway?

I: No, actually I work for Unicom Phone Service,--

O: Oh,--

I: but--

O: Oh, I thought-- I thought--

I: I'm so glad I saved you.

O: Oh, because it's Bill McDowell. He's the founder--

I: Oh, okay!

O: of Safeway.

I: Sure.

O: Well, that's where he lives.

I: Okay.

O: And then the place she talked about-- when they talk about the old place it's just-- actually, almost on that road, but across the highway about five-- well, was it on this side? Was it on the--?

MS: It's on that side of the highway.

I: But the barn was on that-- the other side?

MS: Yeah, 'cause he used to come there, and the road went right by this \_\_\_\_\_ barn when it was so deep.

O: Right, but that was your barn.

MS: Yes.

I: Okay.

MS: So, uh, and that was a \_\_\_\_\_ that they found \_\_\_\_\_ . \_\_\_\_\_.

O: Which \_\_\_\_\_?

MS: What?

O: You go up-- well, right.

MS: Well, you turned right \_\_\_\_\_.

O: Yeah, mm-hm. You see that instead of that road where it makes that corner. It used to go down to-- used to go, like--

I: Okay.

O: came to the house. It used to be square, and so then that was there. And so then the house was on the south side of the road because-- but that was where when she talks about. And if she said the old place,--

I: At the old place.

O: that was where it was. And then I don't know-- when did it burn?

MS: We used-- I don't remember. [laughs]. But they figured it was a horrible fire when that-- it was a big barn. My dad had a-- raised those big horses, you know.

I: Oh, the--

O: The Percherons.



I: Okay.

O: Was that a big \_\_\_\_\_?

MS: I don't know. He had beautiful horses, I guess.

I: So, how old-- when you were-- so, then you married. What-- how old were you when you married?

MS: Oh, I was an old lady. [laughs]. I don't know. What was I, twenty-eight or something like that?

O: Oh, something like that.

I: And who did you marry?

MS: Eugene Winters. We went together. I mean, we were married thirteen years before we divorced. But my life's in the mountains, and so I don't--

I: Oh, yes it did!

MS: I don't dwell on \_\_\_\_\_. [chuckles]. 'Cause I always had a home to come back to because Mama was getting old enough she had us help her.

I: So, you moved back home then and helped her?

MS: I was usually \_\_\_\_\_, Bob Stuart. He was a doctor in La Grande.

I: And he had-- so, he had a practice--

MS: Her brother--

I: down there?

MS: and there's so \_\_\_\_\_ in that, and I seen he's an alcoholic. I said. "Oh no, he isn't!" He was. [laughs].

I: [chuckles].

MS: I should have listened to him.

I: And was he a general-- just then, a general physician doctor?

MS: No, he was a \_\_\_\_\_, eye, ear, nose and throat.

I: Huh?

O: Eye, ear, nose and throat. Dr. \_\_\_\_\_.

I: Okay. And how long was his practice up and running in town?

MS: His?

I: Yeah. How long did he practice medicine?

MS: I don't know, until he died. [chuckles]. Did he become a \_\_\_\_\_?

O: I think he probably did.

MS: But I didn't wanna-- he wanted to build me a new, big, house, and I didn't want it. Go through furnishing that and all, and I didn't want to move in where he and his wife had lived. [chuckles]. So, we fixed up one of the apartments on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, fixed up pretty nice too.

I: And how long were you married to him for?

MS: I was married to Robert about five years, but my life doesn't really matter.

I: [chuckles]. That's why I'm here to talk to you!

MS: [laughs].

O: You're not supposed to say that.

I: [chuckles].

MS: What?

O: You're not supposed to say that!

MS: Okay. [chuckles].

I: So, she'd led the--

O: Re-- remembering it though.

I: Right, right. Was it-- we'll talk about the ranch. Actually, in-- you attended high school in Cove. Is that right?

MS: No.

I: No? In La Grande?

MS: My sister had married Dr. Ross.

I: Okay.

MS: And I lived with them. Well, Virgil went to La Grande too, and my sister was a teacher. She taught in-- she taught in Union for a little while, and then she was in La Grande system when she taught for many-- many years \_\_\_\_\_ Ross \_\_\_\_\_. Then she married Dr. Ross.

I: So, you graduated from La Grande High School?

MS: So did my brother. My younger-- the older boys wanted him to go to a little bigger school because he's a football player. And he did get a scholarship to the University of Washington.

I: Oh, wow.

MS: And then he was playing ball up there. And he used the street. You know they have the grass down the side of. And he was caught in front of-- slipped and hit his arm-- and hit that car that was going by, and he cut the nerves.

I: Oh.

MS: So, he couldn't play football anymore, so he quit school. He was the only one that didn't graduate from college.

I: And then did he move back to the ranch then?

MS: Oh, yeah. And he always-- he never married, and he always lived there.

I: So, did you live here with your brother then?

MS: Mm-hm, 'til I got married.

I: When did you move back to the house, back to this house?

MS: When did I come back?

I: Mm-hm.

MS: [chuckles]. See that other place again? I didn't hardly leave!  
[chuckles]. I'm sorry, when did Daddy work for 'em? I don't know.

O: Mm, \_\_\_\_\_. You know, I'm not really sure. That's-- I think that's when I was-- when did you get married? I-- see, I'm not really--

MS: I was married from-- um, when I left him and came home Virgil said-- we were living in that-- we fixed up the \_\_\_\_\_.

O: Yeah, and I do know where you lived there.

MS: Now, tell me what the dates are. [chuckles].

O: See, and I'm not really sure either because it-- it would have been in the mid '60's because I think that's when I was goin' to school.

MS: I kinda think it was, too. And Virgil said-- um when-- when I left Bob-- I left him in Los Angeles he was drunk as usual. And so, I came home on the train, and Virgil said, "Did you know \_\_\_\_\_ partner? He was on the racing horse \_\_\_\_\_. You know the Oregon racing horse. I'm not-- there's a reason I can't see as well. And so we had to go down to the \_\_\_\_\_. And so, I \_\_\_\_\_.

I: When you moved back to La Grande, what did you-- did you work, or did you just--?

MS: No, I-- I never worked any place but here.

I: But here on the farm?

MS: Mm-hm.

I: And what were your jobs? What were your duties?

MS: Was helping her think of some, cleaning house and help cook and can, just-- just helped any way my mother knew how.

O: By the time she came back, her-- her mother-- because yeah, she had-- had a-- stroke.

I: Wow.

O: In what? In-- in about '58, something like that.

MS: I can't remember it's been so long.

O: Well, because it was a couple of years after the house burned because that's what kind of caused all that. Wasn't it?

I: And we did find-- what did cause the house to burn?

MS: What's the matter?

O: No, I was just-- no, I was gonna get that book \_\_\_\_\_. I saw that the-- well, here's that \_\_\_\_\_. Oh, because that was the one I thought of because it talked about when the house burned. And so, I thought well, if we want to know anything we'd probably find it in here.

MS: I read that a lot last night because that remembers--

O: Oh! Okay, she asked you when the house-- how the house burned. We did find that was--

I: What-- What caused it to burn?

MS: We don't really know, but we just thought it was-- it was a high wind. There were two possibilities, but we never talked about the second one because you can't accuse somebody unless you prove it, you know.

I: Yeah.

MS: But the man that worked, he'd been caught smoking in the woodshed which was connected to the house--

I: Oh!

MS: the day before. And we \_\_\_\_\_ found out about it, and there was a terrible wind. So, we don't know if the wind with the electrical, but it started-- all the wires came in over the old cellar which is a storm cellar, and it was open over the woodshed. And we don't know whether he had been smoking in there or the storm started it on that wiring.

O: Did it? Because I always thought it was the wiring because didn't it start up by--?

MS: Yeah, at this hour.

O: On this side right up here, wasn't it?

MS: Yeah.

O: And that was kind of what I had thought that was the-- was the start of it.

MS: I think it was. We don't know, but we always said that it was the-- the wiring. 'Course, you know--

O: Yeah, I mean the house was built in 1901 or 1900.

MS: Yeah.

O: Now, because the picture in there says the house in 1901, [chuckles] that's why. And-- and that was when it had first been built. And so, isn't that right?

MS: I guess so. [chuckles]. Honey, I don't know.

O: Well, I'm thinking that it was built in just about--

I: 1900.

O: 1900. Well, 'cause Aunt Vina wasn't born here.

MS: No, she wasn't. She was born down on the other place.

O: Right. And her-- she was born in '98. And then Uncle Grant was born in '02.

MS: Was he?

O: So, it-- and I think he was born here, and so that's why I--

MS: Because all the rest of us was born here.

O: Yeah. Because he was born in 1902, wasn't he?

MS: Isn't that-- yeah.

O: And so that's why I'm-- and that picture in there says 1901, and that's why I'm sure that probably kinda in that--

I: In that--

O: It was in that time that I'm thinking it was--

MS: I forgot about that picture hangin' up there. You gave it to me.

O: Well, yeah. It's with the Century--

MS: Yeah.

O: Farms,--

MS: Yeah.

O: and so we got an old picture.

I: Oh, okay.

O: It's just right in here on the wall. You can go look at it.

MS: Yeah, look at that.

O: Are we confusing you?

I: No, not at all.

O: Yeah, things--

I: It's very \_\_\_\_\_--

O: very disjointed. I don't know how you--

I: Well, the transcriptionist, she's amazing. She will make everything--

O: \_\_\_\_\_?

I: The woman that does the transcribing, she puts everything at least in an order. If we jump around, she kind of sets it up that it all makes sense. So--

MS: Well, anyway, I-- it's been an interesting life.

I: I'm sure. It sounds like it's been very interesting!

MS: Yes, and we still \_\_\_\_\_. What's in there now?

O: Gekeler.

MS: Gekeler. And you see we still have our mom back here. And I-- and I'm a Courtright here 'cause we still found. I-- I really don't know



what mom was at anyway after she had triplets that were born up here. And I thought I want to, but I wasn't allowed to go in because they just were born at home and-- and later on we had to bury them because \_\_\_\_\_ in with them.

I: What kind of changes have you seen in Cove in your lifetime? Has it changed tremendously?

MS: Well, it's growin'-- growin' bigger [chuckles] all the time! I went to school. It was at this \_\_\_\_\_. It was \_\_\_\_\_.

I: Was it a one-room schoolhouse?

MS: Yeah, it was, yeah.

I: And how many years did you attend school here in town?

MS: Well, then I went to La Grande. I lived with my sister, and I went to high school in La Grande. And then--

O: But what-- when did you go in? You said you went eight years here.

I: Okay, eight years. Is that building still standing?

MS: Mm-hm.

I: Is it?

MS: Mm-hm.

O: It has a-- it has a sign.

MS: I think they've taken the sign off of it.

O: No. Well, I don't think so. 'Cause they re-- put another one up.

MS: Put another one up?

O: Yeah, so people would know--

I: Where it was.

O: where it was.

MS: [audio issue]. And they didn't make up because we went to school. I think they all did, didn't we?

O: Everybody did somehow. [chuckles].

I: And how many students were in class with you?

MS: There were never more than three. And then most times it just the two of us, -- \_\_\_\_\_ and myself. And then Dean Coburg, he-- he was in our class. But I think \_\_\_\_\_ teacher went and Verd-- they held Verda back so we'd go to school together. And I think they sent her on one ahead, grade ahead of him. And I don't think there was ever more than two. Might have been three sometimes. Two is all I remember.

I: All you remember?

MS: Uh-huh.

I: For the-- I'm not very familiar with Cove right now. Was there a grocery store?

MS: There was. There used to be a row of brick stores where the post office is. It was across the street down on Orchard Street. There were about were four stores along in that row.

I: And one was a grocery store. Is that right?

MS: Yeah. They had groceries, and they had dried goods and things like that, too. And there was a-- now there's um, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. He had a shoe store and sold shoes, but it took care of 'em. And the post office was down there, down-- down on Orchard Street. And over here, \_\_\_\_\_. Then \_\_\_\_\_ Restaurant. They built a new-- no, \_\_\_\_\_ is the \_\_\_\_\_ where the-- that was the grocery store for years. Uh, where the fire engine came up to is where that is. Then Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ built the one

across the street. And I'm not sure when those \_\_\_\_\_ brick building.  
One that--

I: That burned?

MS: Yeah, Cove burned twice.

I: Really?

MS: Every-- if you're headin' down that way there's a Greek Hall where we'd go to programs and everything like at Eagle Hall, and then it burned.

I: What type of programs, like concerts and--?

MS: Oh-- [chuckles]. I don't know if they're called programs.

I: Was that plays and that type of community events?

MS: Mm-hm.

I: And did you attend church in town?

MS: Yes, I went to the Methodist Church always in Cove.

I: In Cove?

MS: Then it burned.

I: Oh Cove, it's burned a lot, hasn't it?

MS: They burned the Methodist church.

O: In 1965 is when the Methodist Church burned.

MS: Yeah, 'cause you were gonna be married there.

I: [chuckles].

MS: They had to go down. She was married in the Episcopal Church, and it was so small, but we all got in!

O: Yeah.

MS: We were kind of crowded, but-- [chuckles].

I: So, were you very involved with the Methodist Church? Did you teach Sunday School?

MS: No. I just waited tables when we raised money. [laughs].

I: That's good, though! So, you're-- were you involved with the Women's Club then, or with the women's groups at church?

MS: Well, you might say I was. I always worked here, so-- [chuckles]. And we served a lot. They'd be a lot of little extension, and we-- we used to serve the school teachers and lot of banquets. We had the mothers and daughters banquet and the fathers and sons banquet. I helped with all those things. I always was there.

I: Always?

MS: I remember because they built on \_\_\_\_\_. And there was a huge, big, stove in the back. And her father, they had their cats back there. And one year they brought outside. It was the nice weather. And somebody had \_\_\_\_\_. And I was-- before the young man caught that was me sitting in the room. I hadn't gone out with all \_\_\_\_\_. [chuckles]. So he glanced over at my hair, and I could see my hair. I sat-- they all sat in a circle, and I was in the center. [laughs]. ... Isn't that silly?

I: It's funny. \_\_\_\_\_ got stuck in there a little.

MS: I think I was kind of spoiled, don't you?

I: I think we all-- I know I was. I know I still am. [chuckles].

MS: [chuckles].

O: [chuckles].

MS: Yeah. But I always remember that because somebody went inside and saw me. [chuckles]. And the minister who had gone across the street, and I-- so, I always worked for the Methodist Church.

I: Always busy with the church? And have they rebuilt the church?

MS: Yes. It's farther out now. I don't go to church now. She's still goin', but I'm-- but I'm too lazy now.

I: [chuckles].

MS: It takes so much effort to get ready.

O: But when it's early like that, it's--

I: Oh, it's hard.

MS: Yes. Hard to get dressed and--

I: So, what other stories do you have about the ranch? You've just got to be full of 'em.

MS: Well, I helped raise cattle all the time. And, you know, we'd take lunch to the fields for the men out here sometimes. Late-- that was later though. They used to come in. I think there was fourteen at the table when the men were all working especially during haying. And I started waiting tables at some of the-- [chuckles]. Reach up for it.

I: And what type of meals did you cook, big meat and potatoes and--?

MS: Yeah. And some actually-- some of them lived in those-- what'd they call it? Because it was back was-- well, I like a--

I: \_\_\_\_\_ house?

MS: Above that. It-- it was above that. It was up above. We used to have two or three living up there. They were here all three meals.

I: And were they here all year long, or just during--?

MS: Some of 'em were because they helped milk cows. We had a hired man almost all the time. Then they got several-- they-- people didn't have cars then. You know, everybody didn't. So, they'd come and stay and then go home on weekends sometimes. It was a busy place!

I: Sounds like it was a busy place.

O: 'Cause you had milk cows too, didn't you? And so--

MS: Have what?

O: Did you have milk cows?

MS: You know, just a cellar. You know, just like they did now.

O: But didn't they milk cows, though?

MS: Oh yeah. We-- we usually milked about about seven or eight.

O: Yeah, mm-hm. So that's why the hired man was--

I: Here.

O: here most the time.

MS: And I remember when Melvin lived here like he lives in High Valley. And he would walk down too. He didn't even have a horse to ride. And then every-- often had a hired woman, but she usually was Mama's-- run around Mama's cousins. [laughs]. So, you know, it was kind of our family.

I: It sounds like your family still is quite large.

O: And tell about like-- because like, the family dinners. I mean, these are some of the things that I know are really-- you know, like how on Sundays--

MS: Oh, there was always a crowd on Sundays. And when they first got a radio, why, the boys loved to listen to the games, you know. And Mr.-- Mr. Slater was a relative, and he was a lawyer in La Grande.

And he and his wife would always show up on Sunday dinner, and [chuckles] then the boys could listen. They'd eat down in the dining room. [laughs]. 'Cause Mrs. Slater was deaf and she talked loud. [laughs].

I: Oh, did she?

MS: [chuckles]. They were welcome, but they-- she came so often for Sunday dinner.

O: But then didn't like the cousins and-- and--?

MS: Oh, yes. They all came here for dinner. Holidays, Christmas, Thanksgivings, all the dinners were here in my \_\_\_\_\_.

I: Just because it was bigger, because it was the larger home?

MS: And Mama was the oldest of her family. We socialized more with her family, the Grays, than we did the Conley's that's going around this than on a social visit, you know. 'Cause my grandparents-- I sat on his lap. As I'm picturing that I can remember as a little girl probably taking \_\_\_\_\_ from that pitcher he used here. I had a good time with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ back then.

I: So both of your family then were in this area.

MS: Oh yes. The Grays lived down there under Mt. Harris.

I: Okay.

MS: Most of them. And they had the-- and she was a Jasper, Grandma Gray was. And we had Jasper Reun-- it was how many years did you have to do something with? And it all-- our mother started that way. [chuckles]. Every \_\_\_\_\_, and we had them. She'd call to go some \_\_\_\_\_. That's what we needed then in the first part of their springs because some of them lived in Walla Walla and on that side. And one that lived down-- down in the Portland area. They would usually come up and stay, but then the Walla Walla people could--

I: Go home?

MS: So we went to the springs. That's the answer that is halfway for everybody. And we had those for years. [chuckles]. It was kind of interesting.

I: It's very interesting. Was your family involved in politics at all in Cove?

MS: Not many of them, but my brother was in most. When he had \_\_\_\_\_-- well, I don't think he ever one any.

I: Not a very political family?

MS: Yeah. Always on the school board things and things like that, but not that very often. It was a \_\_\_\_\_ political year, isn't it?

I: Boy, isn't it?

MS: [chuckles].

I: I'm tired of it, but--

MS: I said, "I'll be so glad when that's over."

I: I think we all will be.

MS: 'Cause it seems to me that the \_\_\_\_\_ come through this year.

I: Tends to go that direction.

MS: I don't think that speaks very well for every--

I: Trying to think of what else to ask. I'm just sure you're full of stories.

MS: [laughs]. We went to the Minam camping every summer. Rode back with backpacks, put 'em on the-- huh-- put that thing around the pack was just--

I: You back in the license of fun?



MS We went different places. Sometimes I thought just where the Horse Ranch is called Conley Camp. But we-- we camped different places. We didn't always camp there because as the folks got older that turned out to be the most convenient. [chuckles].

I: Mm-hm, easier to get into?

MS: Hm?

I: Was it easier to get to when your folks were older?

MS: Yes, and then they could go down and call out from the Horse Ranch if they needed to. And then my brother lived over-- he learned to fly, and he got so he flew in.

I: Oh wow.

MS: And I would come home-- we'd come home and get a bath. [chuckles]. Couldn't we?

O: And then that's kind of how-- then they started going in. And then the-- the hay crew could stack \_\_\_\_\_. I mean, this was even though in the '50's that the-- 'cause there were probably at least ten boys that would come and work during the summer and then kind of at the end of the hay season. 'Cause back then, you know you had the little bales, so you had to mow and rake and bale and stack bales, and everything was, you know done by hand then. Even though it was-- you didn't use horses. But then at the end of that season, that was about when we went into the-- to the Minam. It was usually between haying and harvest.

MS: Yes, it was.

O: It was kind of that weekend there. And then the boys, the-- the hired boys, would go in also, and then they would put up the hay on the air strip.

I: Oh?!

O: And so they-- that was kind of their vacation because they did that for quite a few years.

MS: I'd forgotten that.

O: And when we would go, we'd be camped up at-- wherever our camp was. But then the boys, they would stay at Red's, and they would help Red do the-- do the haying. And of course then they had to kind of do it with-- oh, they had like a horse. And he might have a little tractor in there, I'm not--

MS: I don't think so.

O: I don't think he's probably-- I think that it was a mower with horses. And so the-- the boys always-- yeah, they always thought that was fun, the-- to get to do that. And to, that was kind of part of it because--  
-

MS: And they'd pick huckleberries. [chuckles]. Yeah, it was good helping Mama clean huckleberries. [chuckles].

O: So, we went in-- and they went for a long time. And then I--

MS: 'Cause I remember going--

I: On in?

MS: Yes. I remember I thought he'd left to follow me. And he didn't get there. And we were going up above, to the upper camp. And we laid out on the mountain on \_\_\_\_\_ Minam River. And we were-- sometimes they'd go up there and cut over. And then we'd camp up above the dam, the old dam. And we laid out [chuckles] that night. [chuckles]. We just tied the horses to the trees, and we-- and I woke up and there was Virgil's hand over against old Buck's. But he-- he scared me because he hasn't-- couldn't say anything because it might startle, you know. I never forget how scared I was.

O: But the horses were always pretty good usually. I thought he was a horse you'd had for a long time, so yeah, he probably knew he couldn't move--

I: That's right.

O: that way. [chuckles].

MS: Yeah, but these were only-- you had to have a strong bridle on him because he would run away. I mean, he liked to race. That's why he scared [chuckles]-- old Buck did. And-- and I was kind of a \_\_\_\_\_, and I got in his face. And then \_\_\_\_\_ even a little scarier \_\_\_\_\_. And I had ridden him. I was a Princess at the Round-up one year. And I rode him, and I had to have this strong build 'cause the way he got the best of-- everybody was screaming. He just stood on his hind legs. [laughs]. We jumped and he just-- I was tryin' to stop him, but he just reared up. [laughs]. Everybody was screaming.

O: Maxine, you can tell her about being on the Phantom.

MS: About several years.

I: Yeah, don't be in--

O: To-- to being on the Phantom. When were you that?

MS: [chuckles]. I don't know what year it was.

I: How old were you, do you remember? You must have been a teenager. Early '20's?

MS: Probably when I was eighteen.

I: That's when she-- it would have been in the '30's.

MS: 'Course, then with those girls were just a little bit older. Yeah, I don't remember any-- obviously it was in the--

O: But it was before you went to college thought, wasn't it?

MS: I think so. [chuckles].

O: Yeah.

MS: I don't re-- remember that.

O: It was probably about--

I: Probably about?

O: 1936, maybe?

MS: That's when I graduated. I graduated from Stevens in '39 and then graduated from high school in '36. I do remember those

O: So maybe it was '37. Was it the next year that you were on the court?

MS: It probably was. And then I graduated at Stevens. That was just a three-year school. And now I have no idea how much it was then.

I: And where was Stevens at?

MS: Reminded me of the military.

I: A lot, you know, amazing, what a school--

MS: It was a good school.

I: Was it a finishing school?

MS: Mm-hm. And I just loved it! [laughs].

O: Tell her why you were going to go there.

MS: I don't know why I wanted--

O: [chuckles]. You just read that up. What--?

MS: I don't know what I was reading. [chuckles]. Why, was it? I don't know what I was reading the other day.

O: Something I was reading, the reason you wanted to go to Stevens was because they had a great riding--

MS: Oh, that!

O: Yes, oh that!

MS: I get it! [laughs].

O: And so, she wanted to learn to ride English style.

I: Oh, my!

O: And do the jumping.

MS: And I hated it. [chuckles]. We'd go out and when it was raining and no matter what. Go out a little-- it's raining in the barn! [chuckles]. 'Cause I'd been riding after cattle and riding around here for a year in the mountains and I was bored with it.

I: I bet you were having to ride all proper.

MS: I only stayed in that class one semester. [laughs].

I: It was long enough.

MS: Yes.

O: But she still has friends that she communicates with and has taken--

MS: That I went to school with.

O: trips with. But when she went to school there, so.

MS: My dad was probably the one that urged me to go to New York with 'em that one time. You know, Stevens went to the-- I mean, that group did.

O: Yeah, they took spring vacation trips--

MS: Yeah.

O: to New York.

MS: Yeah, I said, "Well, you're gonna go!" I think my brothers had a lot to do with what I did. [chuckles]. So anyway, it was a lovely family to grow up in.

I: Oh, it sounds like it was wonderful.

MS: Everything was fine except my husbands. [chuckles]. I didn't get along with them. [laughs].

I: Oh well.

O: And another thing they always liked to do were the picnics.

I: Oh.

MS: You could ride for a picnic.

O: Well, just like the Catherine Creek.

MS: Yeah, we went to a lot of 'em. On the Fourth of July we'd go and make breakfast.

I: How big was-- how big were those picnics? How many family members did you know?

MS: Well, these up here-- at the Jasper reunion up at-- they would have about a hundred in them.

O: \_\_\_\_\_.

MS: And we went for over fifty of 'em.

I: Wow.

MS: Mama was the secretary. [chuckles].

I: Your mom sounds like she's a busy lady.

MS: [chuckles]. So--

I: Keepin' all you kids in line.

MS: He isn't-- I-- I-- you knew that I had \_\_\_\_\_ from that girl? And here's-- he was a cousin, and they had all these children.

I: Was it them that had nine children?

MS: Your brother.

I: So, your-- did your brother stay in the area then?

MS: Stay here?

I: Yeah, your--

MS: Oh yeah.

I: rest of the family?

MS: Mm-hm, yeah.

I: Did they all ranch? Were they all part of the ranch?

MS: Yeah! Well, yes. My brothers, yes. Yeah, Grandpa always farmed separately, and-- and the oldest boy. He raised them young and Virgil always tryin' to come. I guess my dad didn't always have to wait on me. And then they-- they always farmed together, and they farmed \_\_\_\_\_ too. And now they're farming mine.

I: Now they're farming yours?

MS: The \_\_\_\_\_, my \_\_\_\_\_.

I: So the land remained in the family then?

MS: Mm, yes. It's like a--

O: It's-- well, they call it Conley Farms. And so then everything is all--

MS: And now you're-- you're-- you're-- you-- you farm even \_\_\_\_\_. Yes, he came back into the family too, and 'cause his wife's dead. Why did she beat-- he'd be anything to you? [chuckles]. Well, I said that would be a \_\_\_\_\_ now, every place now.

O: It was divide-- his part was divided up. The fact that he had gotten from his grandfather--

MS: Yeah, that came back.

O: then that came back in because it had been original Conley ground. And so then that part, it changed back in here. And then the part-- then what he had bought on his own, then it was--

MS: After he was \_\_\_\_\_ right.

O: And then-- and then he had a kind of a partner that he worked with.

I: Okay.

MS: So, they would've farmed for years. And he was a relative too. [chuckles].

O: So now this-- there's about five thousand acres.

I: Okay.

O: Is what-- with the farm ground and there is some timber ground. So, that's what--

MS: Now see, she knows those things. I don't.

O: that's what it consists of now. Right now the-- the underproduction is about thirty-six hundred acres.

I: Okay. Keeps 'em busy.

MS: Mm-hm, yeah. Now my husband and son are doing that now. So anyway, I kind of miss-- miss the canning. We used to can so much more than now.



I: What did you can?

MS: Oh, all the fruit. That was our garden out there. And you know, you can corn and string beans and--

I: Do you do jams and jellies?

MS: Jams and jellies and everything like that.

I: So, it was really--?

MS: We really worked hard in the summer, and we had everything on hand.

O: When you fed so many people, everything-- you were pretty much self-sufficient because you really knew how the-- you milked cows, so you had milk in which you made butter--

MS: And cheese.

O: and cheese. You did that. And then you had beef, and so you butchered that and then your pigs.

MS: Yes, yes.

O: And so-- and then like with what the big garden that you have everything was so, you know canning was a--

MS: There was a big, ole, building right back out there that was full of canned stuff in the winter.

O: And it was called the apple house.

MS: Yes. And it had lots-- it had lots of apples in too. They weren't canned, but it-- the one wall was solid with canned things.

O: It was kind of like a cellar so it stayed--

I: Cold.

O: Kind of just cool. They had the temperature that way.

MS: And then now at this house, why, the old cellar opened up, and I could-- it's called the family room down there. But I still call it the porch because it was a porch, and it went into the cellar. And it had one wall that was just shelves of containers, like the \_\_\_\_\_ in there.

I: So you basically were just buying dry goods from-- from the grocery store? Your flour and sugar and--?

O: The flour and sugar and things like that, so really-- 'cause back then like you say where you were cooking for that many people, and-- and you know, kind of as you were saying like what you did. By the time you cooked breakfast because I remember talking about breakfast was everything was done kind of on a--

MS: It was always steak and gravy!

O: Yeah, on a wood stove. And so it was steak and gravy and biscuits.

MS: Yes.

O: And-- and you did have-- when you had hired men that lived here, then they would come and eat. So by the time you did that, cleaned up from that, maybe did a little bit of baking, then pretty soon here came--

I: Lunch crew.

O: Your lunch which was probably--

MS: It was dinner really.

O: Yes, then it was--

MS: And breakfast, yeah, and--

I: Supper.

MS: supper.

O: And so by the time you finish that, and clean up [chuckles] the dinner, you had like a couple hours to--

MS: Just kind of rest. [chuckles].

O: rest. And then it was time for supper, but then supper was usually smaller.

MS: It would be soups and things like that. Kind of-- sometimes it'd be vegetables that would become dinner.

I: So when did you find time to do the laundry and--

MS: Whatever took--

I: clean house?

MS: Every Monday was laundry day! [laughs]. And then it took several days to get the ironing done. [chuckles].

O: We have to give her a bad time about the laundry because she did laundry like that until just about--

MS: Since I've had my stroke.

O: Yes, which is probably about six years ago. And finally we said enough with the wringer washer, and the boiling coil--

I: Oh, my!

O: and the tubs because it was getting way too much for her! I said she was going to have a heart attack when she did it, and it was very difficult for the help. They almost refused to do it. So probably about six years ago, she bought an automatic washer and dryer.

MS: And you know it kind of bothered me because it didn't feel like my clothes were clean.

O: But we told her they were clean, and she looked--

MS: [laughs].

O: just as good as she did before. And it was a whole lot easier!

I: On everybody.

O: On everybody.

MS: That's not completely--

O: Is she already up? [laughs].

I: I think they work great. I can't imagine boiling my clothes and--

O: Neither can I.

I: wringing them out.

O: Well, as I said, I think back when cotton clothes-- but now you have so many--

I: Wow, mixes and--

O: mixes that probably-- but life issues and the powers that was what-- but anyway, we finally said that progress has-- has arrived. And-- and she didn't--

MS: I thought--

O: really have a choice. I think we finally just said, "This is the way it's going to be."

MS: Yeah, they did say that.

I: You sound like my grandma, a little set in your ways. [chuckles].

O: [chuckles].

MS: And I was raised the other way.

I: That's right. How did the Great Depression affect your family?

MS: Well, as far as I-- living, it didn't make much difference here.

I: Well, 'cause for you--

MS: Did it?

O: You can't ask me those things! [laughs].

MS: [laughs].

O: See, she not-- I think that she forgets that I'm not that old. [chuckles].

I: And I'm sure you were self-sufficient as far as food was concerned.

MS: Yeah.

I: But did it affect people buying your cattle or your crops?

MS: Well yes, it probably all did. But it seemed like life just went on here the same because you had to be a little more careful about buying new equipment, you know and everything like that. You didn't have any extra money to spend. That was for sure.

O: I think it probably affected them like it did most people of that generation. You've always been very conscious of what you spend. I think sometimes from the outside, you know we can see this.

MS: I'll tell you what work really is exactly for the Depression.

I: Let's see, in 1929, Black Monday, that's when the markets fall, and they-- this comes in-- you just come out of the Depression to after World War II was completed, and you finally got the--

MS: But that's why I can't figure out how come they suddenly-- they were used to ours because you see, that was during the Depression. But we-- we would--

O: Well, it would have been after. Well, yeah, because see you didn't go until the '30's.

MS: I've been ready to-- um, I think I'm ready the boys do, you know found a little money to send me. [chuckles]. I paid money to Mama. They did everything for her anyway, and that's just half of this farm.

I: And when did your-- how-- why-- I mean, what-- about what year did your father pass away \_\_\_\_\_?

MS: I [chuckles] don't know that year.

I: How old was he? Was he a young man, or a--

MS: No.

I: older?

MS: I think he was sixty-five or--

O: Hm. See, I don't-- I'm not really sure, but--

MS: I probably think he was.

O: he died in 1940. Yeah, see.

I: Well, we've got your list here, don't we?

MS: It was right here.

I: On your parents.

MS: \_\_\_\_\_ here. This-- this is the one that she copied off.

O: Okay.

I: Yeah, 19 of March of 1940?

MS: Yeah, that would be 1940, yeah.

I: Okay.

O: And see--

MS: Well, in '65. Right.

I: Okay, 1865.

O: Now see, it says here-- see that was also the difference. He was thirty-two and her mother was nineteen.

MS: Thirteen year difference.

I: So, there's a big age difference from um--?

O: So, there was a fairly big age difference in the--

MS: They were thirteen years, I know that.

O: Yeah, and so he was older when--

MS: She-- she-- she-- she copied off it off of that database.

O: Mm yeah, I did.

MS: Yes, you did. And from-- 'cause they left Virgil out of-- of this one. So, she filled that in. [chuckles].

I: It's a big family.

MS: But you know our social life, it just went on the same. I mean, 'cause our social life was just family dinners and camping and--

I: Family things?

MS: other and workin' in the church and, you know. Virgil's the only one that-- he was back here to go to college, but he never-- he's the only one that didn't graduate.

I: Wasn't everyone pretty much ended up back working on the ranch?

MS: What?

I: So, did most everyone end up working back on the ranch?

MS: Oh yeah, uh-huh.

I: When about your sisters got married? Did they stay in the area?

MS: In La Grande. She married a La Grande doctor.

I: Oh, that's right, okay. So, you had one sister and--?

MS: And I lived with 'em when I went to high school. 'Course I did it. It was just fine. It was personal. Then she had Virgil because there weren't-- I did for about-- he was-- she got married when she-- must have been.

O: Well, I think so because she talked about living there on N.

MS: Yeah, and-- and see there-- there were no-- and that was there for company. Then they built the new one.

I: And this was the sister that was-- there's a twenty year difference between the two of you?

MS: Yeah, and then I went to Whitman. I live in La Grande now, but the oldest one-- yeah, I went to take my-- and Virgil had a scholarship to Washington. And then after he got hurt, so he quit. Cut through a muscle, and he fell into the car-- moving cars. So then I went up there, and my mom got sick. She was probably sick from-- from about the summer-- about-- well, just let me go with that. I didn't live at the sorority house. My \_\_\_\_\_ had my own bedroom and so I could rest. And I was there when the war started.

I: Did you come-- so, but you graduated from there, you said?

MS: Mm-hm and Mama seen the graduation. But I remember we were living at Mrs. Cooley's when that war started. And then there were all of us kids sat around on the floor in the-- in the living room, and I heard this knocking.



O: So, that was what?

I: World War--

O: '42 or '45?

MS: \_\_\_\_\_.

O: When they'd get home, did--?

I: Pearl Harbor got bombed in '4-- December 6<sup>th</sup> of '44?

MS: '42, I think.

I: '42?

MS: Yeah, because I always think Grandma came--

O: Yeah.

MS: Just where the '50 at-- just happened at--

O: I guess so, yeah. Well, no-- that came out in the '60's.

I: Cause it was the early '40's.

O: Yeah?

I: Because my grandfather fought in World War II, so.

MS: I liked her coming home. He was responsible about the \_\_\_\_\_. He'd been gone five years. He was so thin! You remember how thin he was, and he'd go across the \_\_\_\_\_? He was all yellow, you know.

O: I was one. [laughs].

MS: You were? [laughs]. Show you how you'll be remembering things. You say, I remember, and no, I wasn't! I was either not born--

O: Or too young to remember!

MS: [laughs]. I don't know what she had! It was just sad to see him.

O: Yeah.

I: Yeah.

MS: And he was so glad to be home. I mean, the fact you know that-- I have to clean a spot for dinner yet. [laughs].

I: Well, that was just quite the place for meals.

MS: The kids all came home for dinner as soon as he's home, you know. Playing kids, you don't know. We all got together that Sunday. There was \_\_\_\_\_. I heard him comin' in. [chuckles]. So did somebody else. [chuckles]. Some might be runnin' \_\_\_\_\_ off the main run, but you forget that they can't-- you have nobody else can call. [laughs].

[audio clicks - no delay]

MS: What? Let's see-- I can't remember. I'd have to listen to it.

I: He doesn't listen to it?

MS: Yeah.

O: But it-- it kind of told about the family coming out and the-- kind of the beginning--

[audio clicks - no delay]

of that.

[audio clicks - no delay]

I: Suddenly, I'm offering a mouth--

[audio clicks - no delay]

ful.

O: And then what to say if I only listened to it once. And uh-- but now I do have, you know quite a lot-- I don't--

[audio ends]