

Dorothy Trice

8/7/02, tape 1, side 1

ES: Please give me your full name, including your maiden name.
DT: Okay, my maiden name is Dorothy Johnson and my married name Dorothy Trice.
ES: And do you mind telling me when you were born?
DT: I was born September 12, 1926.
ES: And where were you born?
DT: I was born in Veldasta, Georgia.
ES: Veldasta. Is that a small town?
DT: Yes. It might be larger now, though.
ES: Yes. [laughs]
DT: But it was a small town.
ES: Yes. How long did you live there?
DT: Let's see. Possibly about sixteen or seventeen years.
ES: Mm hmm. And then?
DT: Then I went to Lake Placid, Florida and was there maybe two years. And from there to Oregon.
ES: Mm hmm. Now, if you left when you were sixteen or seventeen had you been to high school?
DT: I went to high school, but I had not finished high school. I think I stopped in about the eighth grade.
ES: Was it a segregated school?
DT: Why yes.
ES: Most schools were at that time, weren't they?
DT: Oh yea. That's many years.
ES: Do you have any particular memories of what it was like in that school?
DT: Let's see. Just that's what you used to. You just go to school and this...you assume this is the way everybody doin'. Just go to school and learn.
ES: Now you don't have a trace of a southern accent now. I imagine you did at that time have an accent, what we call a southern accent.
DT: Yea. I guess over the years, I guess, you just sort of...like if I was living in Germany who knows, or New York.
ES: But some people when they're sixteen or seventeen tend to have the same way of speaking for the rest of their lives, but you don't. Now tell me about coming to Oregon. Did you come by yourself?
DT: Yes, I came alone after meeting my husband. He was stationed at Hendricksfield.
ES: I see.
DT: In Florida.
ES: He was an airman?
DT: Yes.
ES: Army or Navy?
DT: Army. I guess you call it Air Force base at Hendricksfield.
ES: Where's Hendricksfield?
DT: Hendricksfield is out from Seagreen, Florida.

ES: I see. And did you marry him?
DT: After I came here.
ES: Was it his idea to come here, then?
DT: For me to come here?
ES: Yes.
DT: Yes. He sent for me to come here.
ES: Now I guess you better tell me where he had been then before he was in the Air Force.
DT: Okay, he lived in Baker City and La Grande and he lived out Maxville and Wallowa, so he lived in this area.
ES: Had he grown up in this area.
DT: Really he was born, I think, in Pinebluff, Arkansas. So he came years ago to work at the mill out there. I think he called it Bowman Hicks Mill out there.
ES: Oh, yes, the Bowman Hicks Mill, sure.
DT: So then he was out, you know, livin' out here. So then he lived in Baker.
ES: Do you know what attracted him to work for Bowman Hicks?
DT: His dad and his brother they all was workin' for I guess a sawmill back in Pinebluff.
ES: Pinebluff, I see.
DT: And so whatever you workin' then then you see an opening, you know, coming from him, well, that's where you go. You know, they needed some men so then his dad and they all came.
ES: Did he say anything to you at that time about whether he thought that racial attitudes might be healthier in the West?
DT: You mean when I met him? Cause he's about twenty-two years older than I am. So then...
ES: I mean, at the time that he proposed that you come out with him did he say anything about what he had found concerning racial attitudes?
DT: No, not particularly. Just that he's thinkin' about a girlfriend coming out to Oregon there. [laughs]
ES: Sure. So you first came to what place out here?
DT: Here in La Grande.
ES: To La Grande?
DT: Yea, uh huh, to La Grande.
ES: Because he was living in La Grande in order to work at Bowman Hicks.
DT: Yea, you see he was living in La Grande and then he lived in Baker City so when he went to the military he went from Baker City. And his mother was livin' here in La Grande. So then when he came back from the army he naturally came back to La Grande.
ES: Do you remember your first impressions of La Grande?
DT: Yes, cause I had never seen snow and then I came here like in November of '45.
ES: How did you get here? What transportation?
DT: Train.
ES: Train?
DT: Uh huh. So and I got out I saw all this snow and cause I hadn't seen snow before.
ES: Did that please you, or displease you?

DT: I just thought everything exciting. You know, everything's different, you know, everything, you know. So we just sorta hadn't seen anything like this and just sorta, you know, looked at the snow.

ES: Now I think you said you were married after you arrived in La Grande?

DT: Yea.

ES: Where were you married?

DT: We got married in Baker. At that time it was just Baker. Now it's Baker City.

ES: Right.

DT: We got married in Baker.

ES: Why there?

DT: He used to live in Baker and so his friend, one of his friends...we married the court house, so one of his friends went to witness the marriage.

ES: And did he have a car to get you over to Baker?

DT: Yes. Of course he must have had a car.

ES: Yes. Although you could get to the train...by the train to Baker.

DT: Anyway I think he must have had a car.

ES: And then did you come back to La Grande right away?

DT: Oh yes cause we went there and he had friends there he used to live there. We got married and then we came on back to La Grande.

ES: And where did you find a place to live in La Grande?

DT: His mother...his mother's...either his mother's house on 1303 Monroe or either...I think that must have been the place, first place, we stayed. And then later we moved in apartment building on Fir. And that was over Dave's Market. Dave Hutchison, did you know Dave, market?

ES: No, I didn't.

DT: It was right on the corner of Monroe and Fir. Apartment there.

ES: This was one of the neighborhood stores. There were many of them in La Grande at that time.

DT: Uh huh. So it was a big building so we stayed in apartment up over there.

ES: And he continued to work at Bowman Hicks?

DT: Oh no. In fact, after he came back there was a lot of time in between there because he was entered in the military then he came back and then he bought Harry Patches shoe shine parlor.

ES: Harry Parcher?

DT: Patches.

ES: Pottress? P-o-t-t-r-e-s-s

DT: Pautres. He's a Greek. Maybe if I say he's Greek you could spell it.

ES: P-a-t-r-a-s maybe?

DT: I'm sure how to spell it. Anyway he bought his at 1212 ½ Adams Avenue. He bought a shoe shine parlor and he cleaned hats and he sold candy cigarettes and that.

ES: Why do you think he wanted to do that after having worked in the lumber mill?

DT: Let's see. That was...I don't know what was going on at the mill then, but after being in the military...okay, he was at the mill. Then he came to La Grande and he was in Baker then his mom's here then the military. Then he'd get out of the

military and he'd see these places for, you know, that Harry wanted to get rid of and so he just bought it.

ES: Was it maybe partly that he liked the idea of working for himself rather than for somebody else?

DT: Yea, that sounds like it would because before he went into the military he, living in Baker, he had something he called a car wash where he steamed out these big tanks.

ES: Railroad cars.

DT: No, no. You know, like the big...see, I didn't see this, this is what he told me. He would clean out the big tanks, you know. I don't know what was in the tanks, was it gas, was it gasoline or these big tanks he said. So then I just presumed it was a truck that had...

ES: Sure.

DT: So he was doin' that and also he worked at two or three jobs. Cause I think he said he worked at Lee's Chinese restaurant doin' dishes there. And also they had...I don't know if they call that a chuck wagon or something...he cleaned up there. So he was always doin' jobs like that. So then when he came back here, well, then here he bought this. His mom's here and he had the shoe shine place there and blockin' hats and the Greek person had agreed that he'd like to come in and spend an hour up there everyday. And so that's what was happening when I came. See, I came in '45 cause he got out of the service because, I guess, at that...it seemed like at that time...I don't know if he's about forty-two or somewhere that age was, I guess, was not needed into the military. How's ever that go. When a certain age they let them out. So then he came. And so that was what he did and so after that he just did all...anytime somebody wanted some work he'd have that and do ____.

ES: If you came in 1945 then had you lived the entire fifty-seven years in La Grande since then?

DT: Yea.

ES: So you have a lot to say, I think, about how you have experienced La Grande and Union County. You must because with that long a residence here you've seen quite a variety of events.

DT: Of changes, uh huh.

ES: Do you want to mention any particular event that stands out in your mind, either good or bad?

DT: You see, after just asking questions cause maybe I could...

ES: Sure, I was just giving you a chance to tell me anything that you thought was significant about your experience here. [pause] Okay, I'll ask you questions then.

DT: Alright.

ES: Now if you were in the apartment above the grocery and Lucky...is that what he preferred to be called always?

DT: Yea.

ES: What was his actually name?

DT: His name was Lafayette so you can see why.

ES: Lafayette. Wonderful! I love that name! It's a good southern name.

DT: Who was that James Lafayette was he French, or was he something in the history book?

ES: Lafayette was French, yes. He was a good friend of George Washington's. He liked the United States very much. In fact, I think some of the ideas for the French Revolution might have germinated in his mind because of what he saw from the American Revolution. There's our long tradition with that name.

DT: Oh yea.

ES: Lafayette Trice. Did he have a middle name?

DT: No, they more or less called him Lucky. Because he liked to, I guess, play poker so I don't know whether they name it that in the poker game or what, but they called him Lucky.

ES: So other people thought up that name, he didn't?

DT: All I know is, you know, Lucky. Even on his shoe shine place there they had "Lucky's." On his furnace cleanin' truck they had "Lucky's."

ES: They made it a well known name around La Grande, I think.

DT: Uh huh, not Lafayette.

ES: Right. [laugh] What did you do with your time during those first few years after you were married?

DT: Let's see. We have seven kids, so that's the time...

ES: I see what you were doing with your time.

DT: Yea, that's the time I take with kids.

ES: And what spacing with those kids?

DT: Some of them were two years apart. Cause I guess...my oldest was born in '48 and '49 and then '52, '54, '56, '58, '60. So, you know, there's kids.

ES: Now with that many children I don't suppose you stayed in the apartment very long?

DT: No, we didn't stay there. I don't know how long we lived there. But then we bought our first home on this street which is Madison, but it was two blocks down. So we bought our first home. That was...let's see, I can't hardly remember that. It seemed like it was in the 1300 block. 1309, I think.

ES: Did you decide to buy a house there because you particularly wanted to live at that place, because of the price, or because you might have been unable to purchase anywhere else in town?

DT: Let's see now. My mother-in-law was already livin' in that block. And the block like we were livin' in the apartment that was in that block. And so when this house came available my husband knew the people that owned it. And so they weren't livin' here so that's...he's the one made the deal for the house. 'Cause even the house next door the people didn't live...wasn't livin' there and they bought that through, you know, somebody else. The people that owned the houses was, you know, was livin' someplace else. My husband even knew them and he just felt like this is a good deal. And he bought the house.

ES: Were there a number of other black families in that area?

DT: Let's see, two. Let's see. Yes, I guess maybe at that time in that area there that was in the 1300 block on Monroe and the street right behind it was Madison. So, yes, we had a few blacks, yes.

ES: One of my interests is whether or not at that time even though several people have told me that the Ku Klux Klan didn't make much of an impression in La Grande...in fact, one man told me he thought they were "a bunch of damn fools"...I've sensed from talking with a few other people that as in many American cities and towns there was all the way through the '40s and '50s racial discrimination as far as housing was concerned rather commonly. Do you think that was true here?

DT: I would say that I believe it to be so, but then in our case, you know, like this house was available and so we got it. And so we made the down payment what's ever it was and then we paid it monthly until we got it paid out.

ES: So in that case, apparently, you didn't feel any discrimination because you weren't trying to buy a house in someplace else in La Grande.

DT: Right. 'Cause my husband had never owned a house. He'd always just figure all he'd need is a car. You know, he doesn't need a house because he didn't have a wife then didn't have any kids. So we got that place. And later years then we moved up here. So those would be, you know, factual that I know about.

ES: During those years that you were bearing children rapidly where did you do your shopping for food and clothing and other things you needed?

DT: I more or less went to the corner store, which was Hub City Food store. 'Cause we went and got food and my husband paid them once a month.

ES: Now Hub City Foods, is that where the Presbyterian Church Friendship Hall is now, or was that another place?

DT: Okay, that's part of it. At first they were down here where Achilles is.

ES: Achilles? I don't know that.

DT: The deli.

ES: The deli?

DT: Achilles...

ES: Oh, Achilles, oh yes.

DT: At that time Hub City Food was there and then they moved up toward Chris's Foods used to be where Hub City took over. And then we...since we would...after Hub City moved we moved. Our account at Hub City. And so we just trade there 'cause then we would...anything we wanted I went and got it and he paid monthly for it. And then we did shop at Safeway, you know, too. So that's where. And then like the, you know, clothing stores you'd go to, you know, the clothing stores. There's J.C. Penny's and Ward's.

ES: Montgomery Ward, sure. Was his income sufficient, in your opinion, to maintain a large family?

DT: Really, I guess I wasn't...he took care of everything. I was just like one of the kids. I went and got the food and he went and paid them. And even with the light bill, the water bill he would go every month and pay them himself. Ours and then even pay his mother's bill. So then like we had the shoe shine place up here on Adams and then we got janitor work that was, let's see, West and Sigrest, I think that was his name. West Jacobson building. Do you know what that is?

ES: Yes, yes I do.

DT: Anyway, we cleaned that building.

ES: At night?

DT: Yes and clean it every evening. At that time Carl Heldon, even the older Carl Heldon, know he was in there and Sid Burley and those guys. And so we would clean that every night and then on the weekends.

ES: Would you tell me a little more detail about exactly what you did when you cleaned that building?

DT: Okay, we'd go up every evening with a dust mop and do the floors and empty the garbage. And wipe around what's ever, I mean you don't bother...you don't disturb their papers, but then you just sorta tidy up.

ES: Dusting?

DT: Yes, dusting, okay. And then on...

ES: Windows?

DT: Yes, he would do the windows. He did them for a while until he decided he wasn't gunna go out there anymore and do the ledges till he was upstairs.

ES: He had to climb out the window?

DT: Yes. He'd be there and somebody would be there, you know. Anyway, that's what we would do every night. And then on the weekends we would buff the floor, you know. And all of them had the same restroom so he'd do that. We'd do that. And we got paid once a month. I don't know what we got paid.

ES: How long did it take you each night to do those jobs?

DT: I don't remember.

ES: Two hours? More?

DT: Really, really, I don't remember. Been so many years ago I had forgotten we had done that work there. Anyway, that's what we did.

ES: What happened to the children when you were both gone?

DT: Usually when we go then we take the kids with us. 'Cause we didn't have 'em all at one time, you know. We did the work until they would find somebody else to do their work or either somebody else would move. They eventually all of 'em moved out of there.

ES: You'd just find a room to put the children in to play while you worked?

DT: Usually they'd be in the hallway, that long hall there.

ES: That could be fun, running up and down there.

DT: Yea, well, anyway that's what we did.

ES: So you must have had keys to the building?

DT: Yes, he had keys to the building.

ES: And did you carry all of your cleaning equipment with you each time, or did you have a place to leave it there in the building.

DT: No, they furnished the cleaning. They furnished the cleaning.

ES: I see.

DT: They even had the vacuum and a buffer. They had all that. All we did __.

ES: Were any of the people who used the offices there around when you were doing the cleaning?

DT: Sometime they'd come, but usually we would schedule it to go in the evening. And usually in the evenin' they glad to get out of there.

ES: Usually. Some of them might have had work they needed to do, though, into the evening.

DT: And sometime on Saturdays when we'd go up there we'd go after one o'clock and then we'd go up there. Sometimes somebody would come up. Maybe someone's workin' a little. We just work around up till they leave.

ES: Do you remember having any conversations with those people?

DT: No, not particular. My husband, he knew everyone so he, you know, he knew 'em, but then I didn't have any conversation with 'em.

ES: What did he tell you about why you should go and help him do that work?

DT: I don't know whether...I don't know whether he even said why. We just had to work and you're partners and sometime you just, you know, you get this and you just go and, you know, just like you decide that you might...maybe your husband might decide its your job to cook. And I might feel like you could help, too. But what's ever, you know, we just, you know, work together.

ES: I suppose, then, that you had the feeling that you really needed to do it because you needed the money?

DT: I suppose that was it there 'cause he was payin' all the bills and takin' care of the business, writin' the checks. It was later years that I got to write the checks.

ES: Ah, yes. You're ahead of the times there, don't you think, because now almost all man and wife couples work, they both have jobs? It was less common then, but very common now especially in larger cities. Now you said Lucky knew everybody. Tell me about his personality. He must have been a very likeable man.

DT: Yea, anyway he knew people sometime without askin' 'em. You know, everybody "Hi, Lucky. Hi, Lucky" and I would say "Who's that?" 'Cause really I don't know his name, but I know where he worked or something. So they just, you know, since he had the shoe shine they were...everybody didn't get shined, but people coming in or he'd go into the store. It seems that's how they know ya. At that time...let's see Red Cross Drugstore was in there it was Graham's Drugstore and then they was sometime have coffee in the mornings or something like that. He'd cut through there, the building. So everybody, you know, he went there.

ES: Did he open the shop by eight o'clock each day?

DT: Really, I don't know. Possibly, possibly did.

ES: Do you remember how many shoes a day he said he might have shined?

DT: No, no I don't remember that, but I do know it changed because he bought it, you know, during the time after he got out the military, well, everybody's gettin' the shoes shined. Everybody wore shoes. They didn't wear tennis like they do now. And so there was times that I would come in while he's cleanin' hats I would shine shoes. And then there was times if he went someplace or something or go clean furnaces I would go open the place. After Harry leave I would go in and shine the shoes. And I do know that during the summer when the kids got big enough maybe one or two of 'em they stayed there and shined the shoes and then the other went to work with him on the truck. And I do know...so I don't know concerning the bookwork 'cause he did all of that. I do know that as time passed, I mean, less people were getting a shoe shine 'cause they wore tennis.

ES: And what else besides hat cleaning and blocking did he do in that shop?

DT: Beside, you know, having candy and cigarettes and things like that. He would block the hats at night. Then people'd come in there while its open the day to pick up the hat or whatever. So he did that for a while. And then some fella, Frank Thomas I think it was...he let Frank Thomas move in there with a barber shop. Barber shop in there for a while. I don't know how long it was.

ES: Was Frank Thomas a black man?

DT: No. He was Austrian or Greek or something. He was there for a while, you know, with the barber shop.

ES: Now do you remember how long that store...how long Lucky operated that store?

DT: Let's see, no 'cause I came here in '45 it was goin' on then. And then we had...let's see...no, I don't know how many years ____, but I do know that he started taking motorcycles and ordering the Kalasaki motorcycles from somewhere and then selling them, you know, a couple from there. And so I don't know how many years that was and I don't know why he to move from there. But then I do know he moved from there to on the corner of Fir and Jefferson and rented that. I think it was from Zimmerman, I think, there. And that time he had gotten slot car track. You know those little cars. So he had the slot car track there and a snooker table, a pool table and he still had part of the shoe shine there. So I don't know what year this was, but from this one building he went to that.

ES: What did you do for entertainment or recreation?

DT: Let's see. Not much. Just we went fishin' with the kids.

ES: Where did you go fishing?

DT: Uh...

ES: Grande Ronde River?

DT: No, we'd go to...[end tape]

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ES: ...Oweye?

DT: Yea, I guess Oweye dam. ____ just over there. Sometime we during the week some ladies and I would go to the sloughs like 'round Alicel. We go out to go fishin' out there.

ES: Now Gertie Hibbert told me that there were a lot of suckers in the sloughs. Is that what you got?

DT: No, we...I'm quite sure some was caught, but then we'd get perch. Maybe they called those suckers too, but I don't think so.

ES: I don't think so either. [laughs]

DT: And so we know, you know, besides church you go, you know, go to church and then...and then the movie.

ES: Which church?

DT: I've always gone to the Baptist church and this is like 'round about like Fourth and Washington.

ES: Where is that? Does that still exist?

DT: Yes.

ES: Where is it?

DT: This is on 'T' Avenue, 1300 'T'.

ES: I see.

DT: Back when I came here it was going and so then I, you know, that's the way I've gone most the time.

ES: Has the congregation increased or decreased in size?

DT: Decreased.

ES: Decreased?

DT: Yea. 'Cause when I first came here the group I was about the youngest adult and now its down to zero almost and I'm the oldest. And many have died, moved away. And so. . .

ES: There are fewer black families living here now then when you came, aren't there?

DT: Oh, yes. And there are people that I don't even know, you know, younger people. But anyway, when I came it was quite a few and they have moved away and then a lot of the people that moved away the people that old people they've died out. You'd get word that they died.

ES: At the time that you first started going and maybe for the first few years did they church have a regular minister, full-time minister?

DT: No, every since I've been here they've had a minister, we have that would come twice a...once or twice a month. And that time it was Reverend E. Banks and he lived at Walla Walla.

ES: I see.

DT: It was either he or he would send another minister to come. And it's either Walla Walla or Hermiston or Pasco.

ES: What's the situation now with a minister?

DT: The last minister we had lived in Hermiston and he would come once a month on Sunday. And he was as old as we are, or older and so he had vision problems. He'd lost one eye so he didn't have...anyway, so he doesn't come anymore. He, you know, realized that he wasn't going to fill it so then we have another women here that comes, lives in La Grande, she will come once a month here. And so really we don't have enough to hold, but anyways just sort of like keeping the doors open. Sort of like a mission there.

ES: Are there any other activities during the rest of the month?

DT: No, usually every Sunday we meet for Sunday School and, you know, have Sunday School, devotional and...but then just on Sundays there. And then that third Sunday this Rebecca she would come. And she I think is a 'ssociate pastor to Bread of Life church on Cove, off Cove Avenue there.

ES: But in the earlier days were there other activities?

DT: Yes. There was, let's see, at least three nights a week 'cause we used to have mission group prayer and choir rehearsal. Plus we'd have Sunday school in the morning and eleven o'clock service and then young people service and sometime we'd had a speaker that night. But most of those people are they're gone, died.

ES: Were there any events that you'd call purely social, like dinners?

DT: Yes. Usually once a month there...occasionally we would go to Baker...not to Baker, we'd go to Pendleton, Hermiston...they called it the Helping Hand. Our group would go be at this church and then that group would come and help sorta like that. Then we was...we had some friends at Mountin Home and the whole

group once came a bus load of them just to sing and just have, you know, good visit, fellowship. So like the Wilthongs they were fellows of the church, well, he died. So then when the old people come again, you know, not interested in church. Because with some of my kids, I guess three of them, they would go the other vacation Bible school. And then they started attendin' the First Baptist church downtown. And then I would take them, my kids, to that church in the mornings and pick them up after it's over with. And then I would go to my church over here.

ES: Why didn't you want to go to the First Baptist church also?

DT: I really...I don't know. Because really my membership there. I was baptized in that church, First Baptist church. And I had friends up there. And then with my kids in the other vacation Bible school up at the First Baptist and then so then we just said now you guys go to school. It was my idea you guys go to school with these kids so then they have summer school with them. So with me with the older people 'cause I know a lot of little things. 'Cause someone had said to me, you know, that I shouldn't be sending my kids to school, Sunday school up there. You know, what's wrong with the Sunday school over here? But anyway...

ES: What did you say to them?

DT: I don't remember, but I can understand the feeling there too. But then, like I said, they had...they went to school with these kids and then over here, well, that was my...there wasn't a lot of kids my kids age. So usually here at the Sunday school was adults. And so they didn't mind it so then I sent them as long as I could. Then after they got through and they'd say, "Why do we have to go to church?" I said, "Just in that one hour. See, you go there that one hour and then after that you can hang out, you know, do all this other stuff. You're not gunna be doing that much ___."

ES: Did you tell them that you thought that being in Sunday school would be good for them?

DT: Yes, I had told them, well, at least you're putting in an hour at the church and you learning about the Lord. And so then if there something come up where your dad's gunna go fishin' or something then you don't have to go that day. You go with dad. Or if he's gunna go hunting than you go with him.

ES: Do you mean Lucky wasn't much on church?

DT: No, no he wasn't. Occasionally he'd go there... I think one of the kids, a daughter, was baptized or something he'd go. Other than that...

ES: Just special events.

DT: Yes, special events. But before he died he just layin' around thinkin' and he just...a friend would come by and talk to him about the Lord so when I came back from where's ever I was that day here this he was all feeling low and stuff there. And this friend had talked to him about the Lord and he accepted the Lord. So after that we just sorta, you know, talked about, you know, the Bible to him then. But sometime he'd, you know, wouldn't want to hear it.

ES: Was he ill for a long time before he died?

DT: I would say he was because he had asthma. It was bronchal asthma is what he had and oh... Then he with glaucoma he had lost vision in one eye. In fact, he...I would just sorta have to lead him around. Take him where's ever he'd have

to go there. So he'd just bother...sometimes the bronchial asthma was just sort of, you know, you really sorta get ya, that gets you down there.

ES: Was he getting medical attention?

DT: Oh yes. He was takin'...yes, he took medicine. Definitely last year.

ES: How did you handle the need for a doctor? I don't suppose you had any kind of health insurance.

DT: He uses...he was on Medicare.

ES: I mean earlier with the children medical costs usually are fairly high and if you didn't have a health plan how did you manage?

DT: I'm just tryin' to think now. We had...one thing the kids was never sick.

ES: Oh good! [laugh]

DT: Really the kids was never sick and then with...it seemed like the only insurance I was...that we had he had it on me, maybe, or hiself, like hospitalization, I think. But then on the insurance we had on the kids was just regular...he called it a burial, you know, just in the event they died, you know, or something like that. I don't remember him...we didn't have a lot of insurance on. The kids was never sick.

ES: And how about you? You've been healthy all the time?

DT: No, I've had sickness there.

ES: Requiring hospitalization?

DT: Yea, several times there. We had Beneficial Insurance there. So we...and then with him being on Medicare then that took care of him.

ES: Were you satisfied with the treatment you got in the hospital?

DT: Yes. Every time I, you know, was at the hospital I was, you know, satisfied with the treatment they gave me.

ES: Now your children, during the elementary school years did they go to Greenwood?

DT: Yes, all of them went to Greenwood.

ES: Tell me what you remember about what they said about school, or what you knew directly about that school.

DT: Really, let's see...I guess there wasn't any problem, you know, at the school as I can remember. You know, they just went to school. No big deals.

ES: Did they ever complain about how they were treated? Any more than any kids ever do?

DT: No.

ES: A lot of kids don't always like to go to school.

DT: My kids have always liked to go to school. And it's possibly because if they stayed home they had to work. Even they was sick they'd try to get outta here and go to school. So I guess the school was pretty good. I had told our...my daughter that, you know, that there might be some kids, you know, little girls that won't want to play with her, you know, because she bein' different. I said, but then if that one don't wantta said there be always somebody else that wantta play. So she didn't seem to have any problem then. Because everybody, you know, as far as I know they just got a long okay.

ES: Do you suppose that Greenwood had the largest population of all the city schools of black children?

DT: I believe so because right in this area there, you know, is where the most the blacks lived.

ES: Maybe that made it better for them?

DT: I don't know. Because like with, you know, with havin' the kids there usually they, you know, have friends, white friends and just add black friends.

ES: Were there ever, during the times that your children went to Greenwood, any black teachers?

DT: No. And I don't think there's any there. It's like I remember there. So...

ES: You mean that school at or at any other La Grande school?

DT: It was...I remember it was a man, African man, that was at the high school, it seemed like when my kids was going there. So really they haven't have any...many, I'd say many of any black teachers. 'Cause really they would have to come from someplace else 'cause, you know, I don't know where there...you know, I think if they had lived here, you know, you would have heard 'bout it.

ES: Probably. Did you ever hear anything about black teachers in Baker or Pendleton or Hermiston or Walla Walla or any other places around here?

DT: No, I've never heard of any in Baker. I don't know if there was and not Pendleton, either. I would know about, you know, those places. And course sometime in areas, you know, like this I know some fellas that came here. Let's see, they was workin' for the Forest Service. And they're usually from Alabama or somewhere and they come here and they just wonder. "What do you guys do?" You know. "How can you guys live here? There are no other blacks." And so I guess maybe the people that live here they just makin' a livin' and takin' care of their families and goin' fishing, you know, and they got a job. So that's what sometime or they come out this way far and maybe get better work to take care of your family.

ES: And it that what you think? That that's the way it worked out for you?

DT: Yea. I came out here and 'cause my man was here and then we had kids. And that take up all of the time. And so once when you know anything a year's passed and then five years. And so you still, you know, still hitting it. 'Cause I still work, even now.

ES: What do you do?

DT: I work with my brother-in-law at Wisks and equipment. We clean that building every night.

ES: Who is your brother-in-law?

DT: Phil Robertson.

ES: Oh really?

DT: You know Phil?

ES: I know who he is and I want to interview him.

DT: And you know Neil, his son Neil, that worked at Albertson's?

ES: Yes, I do. Now your brother-in-law, let me understand how that. I thought maybe your brother-in-law would be named...so is it Lucky's sisters?

DT: No.

ES: Explain to me.

DT: Phil was married to my sister.

ES: Oh, your sister!

DT: Phil was married to my sister.
ES: Was she living here also?
DT: She lived here, but she lives in Walla Walla. So he has another wife now, Lillian. So he and Lillian they are together. They've been together more than twenty-somethin' years.
ES: Your sister died?
DT: No.
ES: Oh, you said she moved to Walla Walla.
DT: 'Cause really at one time my sister and Phil was livin' right next door to me. So sometime it seems like if you're living in a place and that place is available, a vacant, then you let, you know, ...
ES: Certainly. So they must of divorced?
DT: Oh yes, they divorced. And so, like I said, I work every night there. So I'm on, you know, Social Security and so then you work extra to have extra.
ES: Does the name Joann Douglas mean anything to you?
DT: No. Joann Douglas. No. Was is Joann Douglas?
ES: According to John Turner, a man who's lived in La Grande for a long time, she was the madam at a brothel.
DT: Joann, Joann, Joann, Joann, Joann, let's see. Yea, I didn't know her last name. Joann. Yea, I know where that was 'cause my mom worked with Joann.
ES: When was that?
DT: Let's see.
ES: I'm finding out more about family, your family, coming to La Grande than I'd suspected.
DT: Yea, well, anyway, my mother...my husband sent for my mother to come here because they lady that they had workin' for her wasn't workin' for her anymore. And so my husband sent for my mom. Which my mom was livin' in Lake Placid, Florida. My mom came out here to work for her. And it wasn't open too long before they closed it down again. And so when they closed it down again, well, then that way my mom had to get work. It seemed like another woman came and tried to run it a little while and they closed it down for good.
ES: Would it embarrass you to tell me what you heard about what it's like to work in a brothel? If it would embarrass you, don't tell me.
DT: Yea, well, really I guess maybe my mom didn't know that much, but what's ever she was paid to do. I mean she did it and she...'cause she was living here with me and she'd do their laundry. She'd bring the laundry and do the laundry here. And then I'll take it back up there. It was upstairs. Really, so I really don't know too much. See, she's the one that worked there and I don't remember her talkin' that much about it, though. She just said they're nice people, you know, Joann. And so Joann knew, you know, workin' a place like that she knew everybody in town.
ES: Yes. [laughs] Joann was white.
DT: Sure she's white. There was times some of the girls...I don't know whether this was...see Joann had it and then I don't remember the other woman. It seemed like something just happened and another woman tried to run it a while, or something. But at that time you could, maybe you still can take a plane...go out

here and take a plane... 'cause where's ever they lived they'd just go there and take a plane, you know, go home. They could do...the girls do the work and then they have families. And then they'd just go out...I guess I must would have to take 'em 'cause my mom didn't have a car then. Take them to the airport and they'd take a plane and go back home where they lived in the area. So I don't know how long it was here, but I do know that it was here because I knew...before my mom I knew another lady that had worked there.

ES: You mean did cleaning work.

DT: Yes, not actually doing the servicin' the fellos. No, she'd just do the cleaning.

ES: What was the location at that time?

DT: Of the place that they ran?

ES: Mm hmm.

DT: We'd have to go in the all-...let's see, it was on Adams Avenue. So you would go in Depot Street and, let's see, you go into Depot...you on Depot Street and there is Red Cross Drug and that alley. You know where that is?

ES: Mm hmm.

DT: Okay, you turn there and then you just go right around and park your car. Then they'd go up the stairs.

ES: The stairs entered from the alley?

DT: Yes.

ES: Do you think that at the time that this was going on that prostitution was known about, but might have been fairly respectable?

DT: Do I think it was known about? They had to know about it for it to, you know, for 'em to stay in business. And they had to know about it for 'em to close it down. So just my hearing, you know, just my hearing about it that I don't know whether who they're doctors was, but my husband was sayin' really those women are safer than a woman you meet on the street, say, 'cause they have to go to the doctor. So I don't know who the doctor was. Anyway, they...I don't know.

ES: You think those women had families elsewhere?

DT: Oh sure they did! They had families elsewhere like all, I guess, all that you see on television there they have families somewhere. They go, when they get done they go home. And they make money and take care of their families with it there. Some of them have husbands, too.

ES: Do you think that most of these women who did the servicing, as you put it, were white?

DT: I know they were here, up here, 'cause if there had been black women up there my mom would have said something about it. But they were, you know, all white girls.

ES: Let's switch subjects a little bit. The railroad goes right by your place here. Since you've lived in this area you have at least heard, if not seen, railroad activity during the whole time, haven't you?

DT: The trains goin'? And hear? Yea.

ES: Yes and everything else that happens at this place. It used to be a major servicing place on the railroad. By 1945 I think it still was, so what memories do you have of what was associated with the railroad as far as you could see it?

DT: Oh just, really it was just there and carried freight and at one time, why, they carried the mail and at one time passengers there.

ES: Oh yes.

DT: One time Amtrak was special. And so...

ES: Did you just tend to ignore the trains that were going by all the time?

DT: Yea, I guess so. You know, you hear them. It's just like you could have kids out there, out here, you hear them as long as, you know, you don't hear them then you wantta...you go to the window "I don't hear those kids." So with the trains 'cause like I've gotten used to them and sometime it will wake me up durin' the night and so, you know, it's just the train and you just go back to sleep. And but I've had people to come over and it just wonder "How do you sleep with that train?" I say, "Well, I've gotten used to it." And then I've had grandkids that lived elsewhere and they come and when they small there that's just they wake up screamin'. But then once they're here a while then it doesn't bother them anymore either. So it's something you get used to.

ES: You'd have to cross the railroad tracks often to shop for food and clothing and go to Lucky's store and so on, wouldn't you?

DT: Yea.

ES: Were there any...was there anything going on among the people who worked on the railroad that caught your attention?

DT: No. No more then they out...different time they had flaggers, you know, out there before they had the crossing. And the train is switching, you know,...in fact I have a son that still works for the railroad. Just doin' there job for the railroad.

ES: What does your son do with the railroad now?

DT: He's a brakeman. So he goes to Hinkle and sometime he goes...east he goes to...___ what's the other place...

ES: Huntington?

DT: Nampa.

ES: Nampa, mm hmm.

DT: So I've seen them, you know, be switchin', you know and train goin' to an fro and they in there switchin'. And like years ago when the kids would go to school sometime that would be their excuse. They're late because they train was there. They were "can't you leave early?" Well, sometime the train's there, or later the trains there. 'Cause I used to get...sometime I would get up about six-thirty and go a-swimmin' there and just about six-thirty that train was always...it would be blocked so you have to go around it.

ES: Where do you go swimming?

DT: Up at the college. I don't swim now. I go water aerobic now.

ES: Have you done that for many years?

DT: Yea, well water aerobic, yea.

ES: Either swimming or aerobics.

DT: Yea, for a lot of years. I try to go to water aerobic everyday even now.

ES: What got you started on that?

DT: I guess a lot of years I couldn't swim and so then I took my kids out to the pool here in town, municipal pool, and so for some of 'em they learned to swim. And then when they had adult class then I got up there and I learned somewhat. And

so then when they had the college here I went with a friend up there and after I knew where to go then I just start goin' up there and just, you know, goin'. I'm not a good swimmer, but then I could swim across and then rest and then swim back across. [laugh]

ES: Has that been a friendly place while you've been there?

DT: Yes, 'cause really it's one of the friendliest places I know of 'cause I usually like to be there 'cause we talk about everything from recipes to losin' the phone and can't find it or getting these marketeer calls and all of that. It's just sort of like most of us the same age group, some young women, sometime college kids. So usually the things I go to are mostly friendly 'cause then I go. Years ago I bowled and so then I started back bowling again with the seniors there. And then I go clogging and this another women I...[end tape]

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ES: Where does the clogging take place?

DT: Right now its takin' place at the gal's house that teaches us. And she lives, I think, at Fruitdale Lane. Donnel and Steve Wilson. Anyway its right by the park. But before that is was where they...it was back in the alley behind Hair Gallery where they have square dance and round dance in there. We have it there in the wintertime. In summer then we have a different place.

ES: What made you want to get started on clogging?

DT: I had a friend that was doing it and she'd do cloggin' and then she talked me into it. After I got into it so. I've just enjoyed the country music and stuff. And later she got out and I'm still going!

ES: Good.

DT: It's just the part...you know, 'cause if they weren't friendly then I wouldn't go. 'Cause sometime I'd go to...many times I'd go to something and then I wouldn't even say anything to anyone. If they don't talk, I don't talk. Then as I've gotten older then I've gotten away from it. 'Cause I know my daughter when she was goin' to school she had said, "Mama, why don't you sit and talk with the ladies?" And so I said, "I'm okay." And so part of this, I guess, was coming from the South. You know, when you in Rome, you do as the Romans do. And so you in the South you...different ballgame. Then, I don't know how it is now. Because that's a lot of years ago. But then, pretty soon you know, people start talkin' you start talkin' back and you find that it's easy, you know, out on we all on neutral ground. If you don't want to talk. And then if you talk to someone you can tell whether and if they talk back or you just. Anyway...

ES: Were you concluding then, I guess you were, that if a white man or a woman didn't talk to you that that probably meant that he or she didn't want to have anything to do with black people?

DT: If they...I guess living in the South if people talked to me then I would talk. If they didn't I wouldn't start a conversation. But now...

ES: But is that like knowing your place?

DT: Maybe. 'Cause then...maybe. 'Cause I know when I first came here my husband had these friends, white friends, at Union. We'd go out there to visit and, you know, he was talkin' his head off. If they talked to me I would talk to them. So then...and see, everybody's different because then I had this other black friend, Marian, she just talked to everybody. And so then once they were discussing me and then "Dorothy doesn't talk that much." So Mary said once she get to know you, you know, she will. And so that's what happened. Once you get to know the people are friendly. And sometime you just play it safe. You go a place sit you sit where you feel comfortable. 'Cause maybe might be a group of Japanese over there and you might feel like, "I'll sit over here." Might be a group of blacks sitting there and you might...I might not sit by them. But if I saw somebody my age, you know, then I'd probably sit by them, you know.

ES: Come back to the school arrangements for a minute. All of your children went to Greenwood and then they all went to La Grande High School, I suppose.

DT: Right.

ES: Was there a junior high school or a middle school that they went to in the meantime?

DT: They had a junior high.

ES: And that was...what building was that?

DT: They've torn down the junior high building that they went to.

ES: Was it previously called the Central School? Located where the Middle School is now?

DT: All I know is it was junior high and it was on Fourth Street you'd walk right in to go to that building and that building's not there anymore. I think they have that hothouse there. They had a hothouse there.

ES: A hothouse? You mean a greenhouse?

DT: A greenhouse, okay, greenhouse. 'Cause it was a building there where the kids used to go in. And so they have...what is that middle school on the corner over there. And see, they didn't have that there. But anyway, where the kids go in its not there anymore. They'd walk up that little step and go and walk into the building. And it was, I guess, up steps on in the building.

ES: So how did your children...I suppose it varied with the child, but how did they fair in junior high and senior high?

DT: Let's see, each one was different. So then it seemed like with the boys they always had friends and they'd be with their friends. But when it come to girls, you know, boys and girls like each other then there was sorta a boundary there, you know, white and that their parent then, you know, they get on the phone and the call and like this, but then...it was always there. Then with the girls, my oldest daughter that she went to Greenwood School then she went to junior high there and she was into 4-H and things and then she was up to junior high she was with Future Homemakers, I think that's what it is. The teacher's husband was the manager at Payless. Detrick...somethin'.

ES: Detrick?

DT: Somethin' there. Now it's two people. Anyway, he was Gene. Did you know him? Gene?

ES: I've heard the name.

DT: Okay. His wife was the Home Ec teacher. And so with my daughter she was...usually the girls they'd printed, they'd sew and have competition and all of that. And it didn't seem to be any problems there. She was just all outgoing and she'd spend the night with some of the girls and girls would spend the night with her. But in some cases it was a difference. 'Cause my niece I guess, she lived next door, Phil's daughter, she'd spend the night, I think, the doctor...I can't think of the doctor's name...Vanderbilt I guess it was. They lived out in the country someplace. This girl would come spend the night with her. And then yet there was another girl, my niece was tellin' me about, I think she was Seventh-Day Adventist, and her parents had different ideas, you know, about associating, being too close with the black men. What the people would say. Some will say... 'cause I know with one of the girls my daughter was...she was in cheerleading, started at Greenwood. She said that if my daughter got some part of this that she couldn't be in it and that her mom had told her that anytime she want to come at your house it's fine, but you can't go to her house. And 'cause it didn't mean anything to Jackie, my daughter, 'cause she was telling me about this, but it did me. 'Cause I knew where she was coming from and my daughter didn't. And so I still remember it today. 'Cause later I was talkin' to my daughter about it and she didn't remember anything. So that's the way it was with her just off the top of her head.

ES: How did it make you feel at that time?

DT: Just like it did when she started to school that all the kids, all the parents, gunna feel this way. And so I know...I know it's there, you know, because history, you know. So you can't deny, you know, that it wasn't there and...

ES: Have you gotten to the point that you simply accept that that is the way some people feel?

DT: Sure. And they can't help the way they do like I can't help the way I feel, though. But maybe some things I, you know, could learn about that, but anyway, that's still my feeling. So if I don't like somebody you can't make me...you know, I'll treat them nice, but that's all you can do is just treat them nice. I can't make them like me and, you know, sometimes something do happen to change that person, but then I can't do that.

ES: Is resentment a part of your feeling?

DT: No, I don't feel like I have a resentment about...right now about anybody.

ES: You seem very accepting.

DT: Yea, 'cause like a survival or something you go around it. There and you don't like everything, you know, to go on but some things you don't have...a few years not gunna make any difference whether that change or not. So you say, "Well, big deal." But everybody, you know, don't feel the same. You see a lot things that they...

ES: Has your son who's the brakeman talked about any kind of discrimination he's experienced on the job?

DT: No. No, really he's not a talker either so really he doesn't. But he did talk to his daughter to let her know. 'Cause he married...my son Doug married a white woman. They have their daughter. And so he just was letting her know about life, you know. And that everyone's not gunna feel the same. So that's what you

do you just educate them and that so they won't be shocked. So if it happens, okay, if it don't you can just go another avenue there. And so you don't want everybody to be so naïve they don't know what's going on there.

ES: Yes. Is the white woman that he married from La Grande?

DT: No, she lived at Salem. They're not together now. They were together about seventeen years. She still lives here, of course, but she's from Salem.

ES: Does he live here also?

DT: Yes.

ES: Did he remarry?

DT: No and even she. They had the couple a kids so they still live here.

ES: When the boys were in high school did they participate in athletics?

DT: Yes. They...let's see...anyway I guess the first was sorta like Little League ball and then they were in track...

ES: Baseball?

DT: Yea, and track and football and basketball.

ES: Were they good at all those activities?

DT: Not necessarily good, but they were in there.

ES: They were on the teams?

DT: Yes, they were on the team. I think with Doug he made varsity and maybe Doug and David did maybe. They, you know, they took part in sports because they liked, you know, activities.

ES: How did they do academically? Variable?

DT: Yea. 'Cause Doug went to West Lynn, Oregon. Monmouth, that's where he went to school. He graduated from there.

ES: With a B. A.?

DT: Possibly?

ES: If he graduated from college it was a B. A. I suppose.

DT: A what?

ES: Bachelor's degree.

DT: I said possibly. 'Cause he was into Recreation or somethin' like that. Or Recreation Coaching or something. Because he never did really...he was offered a job in math and he wouldn't take it. I think it was in The Dalles or somewhere.

ES: Teaching?

DT: Yea, teachin' math and he wouldn't take it. And they...the people knew him because they had gone to school with him. And they agreed to help him, but he wouldn't take it 'cause he said, "I don't know math and I'm not gunna go in there." And so he didn't. And so really all he did was student teach. And so what he did he on the railroad and he's still on the railroad. Then after a while you, you know, you don't go back to school then you are not eligible to...I think you call it student teaching...

ES: Yes, that's...

DT: Sub, sub, sub.

ES: Oh, substitute teacher, yes.

DT: Substitute teacher, yea. And so he went and my son Arthur he went to Eastern just for little while and he dropped out. David didn't go 'cause he was gunna go to Walla Walla. And really, I guess, mostly to play ball and so he was there one

day and decided he didn't want to go. But my oldest son went to Oregon State and later he got into ROTC. So he just retired from military. So he is still in Kansas, Leavenworth, Kansas where he retired from. He's still there.

ES: Did he become an officer?

DT: Oh yes. He went in as an officer.

ES: I see.

DT: And so...but then he...after so many years, I guess, I think he say you either go up or you go out 'cause they didn't need him, so that was what he did. 'Cause he, you know, put all those years in there. So he was, you know, a major. That was the route he took, you know, military. So he...and then one of my daughters she just got her Baccalaureate degree, Bachelors degree just in June. And so she had been...she was into nursin'. So she'd been workin' to the Veteran Hospital seemed like fifteen years. Anyway, she'd been there a long time over at the Veteran Hospital so she decided that she was gunna get...go farther. And she said she hoped that she could get a Masters in this. And she lives in Seattle. In fact, I have three that lives in that area. David lives there. He drives the bus for the...what is it, Metro, or whatever the bus company in...

ES: Mm hmm, called the Metro.

DT: He'd drive bus there and my daughter worked at the Veteran Hospital. I have another daughter lives at Renton. She worked at Boeing for about twenty years. So she got laid off just, I think, December. So now she's goin' to Bellevue, I guess. This is what they do when they lay you off they sort of give you somethin' to help you retrain ya.

ES: Has reading been an activity you've enjoyed?

DT: Uh, sort of, sort of.

ES: Do you read *The Observer*?

DT: Oh yea. I take that and read that. And then I read...

ES: Magazines?

DT: Yea, *Reader's Digest* and *Guide Post*. And I can get that in the big print which makes it better.

ES: So your eyes keep you from reading comfortably?

DT: I think they're gunna be better 'cause I just had cataract surgery like a couple a weeks ago. And then next week I'm having ____.

ES: That should help a great deal.

DT: Yes. So I don't know how many years ago it was that I got my GED. I guess...I started in '85, '86. Anyway, I got that 'cause I was thinkin' after my husband died that "I'm gunna have to get a job." So my daughter said, "Well, you don't have a high school education." I said...and you gunna have to have it. And I just figured that I could...she had worked at telephone company here. At that time we...you know they had a switchboard and all a that. But since then we don't have it here. And so then I though, well, I'll get my GED. And so I did get it, but then I really didn't go after a job. And so after I got this, got my GED, then this friend talked to me and say, "Hey, let's sign up for a class at the college." After you're sixty-five you can take this learning without...you know, you won't get any credit, you don't have to have any credits. And so that was what I did I... 'cause that was what I sort of think, well, I'll take...improve in the vocabulary,

reading improvement and also writing. And I knew I shouldn't a been in the writing class, but anyway, that seemed like the easiest and so that was what I took. And to me it was just a fun thing, you know. My husband had gone and the kids were gone so that I could just sit here and...after I finished the, you know, with the GED, you know, 'cause they have a place here you can go and, you know, get your GED.

ES: Tell me a little more about that process.

DT: The GED?

ES: Mm hmm.

DT: At the time I went to GED they had it up here at the Joseph Building. And so the first time I went in there I...they give you a little book, you know, to check so they'll know where to place you. And I saw all this stuff like fractions and I remembered this was what they was doin' when we last...when I left high school. 'Cause I went as far as... went to the eighth grade is where I went to school. And then after lookin' at that I thought, "Some of this I don't even remember." And so I thought, "I don't have do this. I could just take this paper back up there and walk out." And I thought about it a long time. I say, "I don't have to do this." Anyway, I did it.

ES: Were you a little afraid?

DT: Yes. 'Cause I had...anyway, you just sorta "I don't have to do this. I don't have to study. I don't have to do this now. I could just go home and not worry about this."

ES: I'll bet part of it was, "And I don't think I'll be able to do it, either." Was that part of what you were thinking?

DT: I don't know. I just... 'Cause I just remember havin' that in school. That's what we were doin' in school, these fractions there. But anyway, I went ahead with it and got the little book and she said, "You take it home and then work on, do what you can and then you bring it back and then we'll work from there." And so that was what I did. And we worked a while and then on channel 13 they had a broadcast that came on concernin' the GED. And so I saw that a few days and said, "If you're havin' problems, call this number." 'Cause see with this class you have to read sometimes ten or fifteen pages be ready for the next day. And then they had this math and I wasn't getting that. It was simple, but I wasn't getting it. So then I called this number. When I called this number then they connected me up with a person that would help me with this. And so after I got acquainted with her we've been friends ever since then. So then we...I got...I did get my GED. And then on top of that she was a volunteer for the ____ so we went that route. And then the phonics and all that. And 'cause me I didn't know anything about the phonics and so I just stopped the studyin'. So I'd go to this gal's house two hours we'd go twice a week. First it was one hour. And so anyway I got through with that so that was when she suggested, "Why don't we take this class." At that time I wasn't sixty-five. And I say, "I won't be sixty-five 'till next year." And so I jumped into that. And to me it was just...I didn't have, you know, here alone. So then nothin' keepin' me from studyin'. I could sleep all day and study all night if I wanted to. So anyway, after getting that it just sorta... 'cause I guess some of the teachers, "Really we don't know where to place you when we were

with some of this root there. She said, "Because you know this, but you don't know this so you fell through the cracks somewhere." So anyway I went along with 'em till I got this other person that was, you know, the tutor.

ES: Yes, that was a better arrangement for you.

DT: Yes it was, really. 'Cause that way I had...if I didn't understand I could just ask "Show me this. What do you do?" And then like on the TV to be able to read that many pages and be ready the next day. That's much.

ES: The GED includes some...

DT: Do you want to turn that off? I think I hear my bell. [tape pause]

ES: The GED includes some science and history subjects, doesn't it?

DT: Yes.

ES: How did you make out with those?

DT: I passed it. I passed it 'cause then we had to go over to Island City where they had it then GED and then to test me on. I don't know if I was there two or three times 'cause I don't know whether they had the math at one time and the ... but anyway, I passed and we got a certificate there. And some on the television say, you know, it's good you got it then because they've added something else to it. You would have to write a paper, you know. And so I guess if I had to write a paper I would have got some help and wrote the paper.

ES: Now that reminds me to ask about this computer you have over here. Why do you have a computer?

DT: My daughter gave it to me. The one's in Seattle.

ES: Do you use it?

DT: I'm learnin'.

ES: To write letter, or what?

DT: E-mail.

ES: E-mail.

DT: Uh huh, e-mail, uh huh. 'Cause she got it at Boeing. They were... I think she said they...whatever they do with...delete them or whatever.

ES: Upgrade.

DT: Or something. They had all these and they were sellin' at a price. So she said, "Nothin' was in it." She said, "I put the guts in it and everything." So she brought it from Seattle and set it up and she said, "When you learn this then I'll put another unit in it." So anyway, she showed me a few things and so then when my son was here he took it down, took it apart and said, "This is the motherboard and this is..." 'Cause I think, "Why is he tellin' me all this stuff? I don't need to know that." But anyway, he said, "But it doesn't have a modem in it." And I didn't know what that was. He say, "So you have to have to have a modem in it before you can send e-mail." And so anyway, he said, "Next time I'm here," 'cause he still have to come at Fort Lewis that he still is in, he said, "I'll bring one." So he put it in there so my son and my friends' been, you know, helping me too. You know, send e-mail and do stuff like that. Lot of other stuff on there, but I just say, "Wait a minute. Let me learn this first." 'Cause they got all this information they know and want to show me. I said, "Not yet."

ES: Are you at the point where you feel confident in using the computer?

DT: Yea, with what I know. 'Cause I, you know, learn how to type a little on my own with the high school book and just some that. So really, I pick and I peck to get the, you know. And so I have a dictionary handy for spellin'. And 'cause it also has a spell check, but then ... and I send them a letter said, "Don't be tellin' that I've spelt the word wrong. Just take it." [laughs] So I guess it's been since June that he had the modem in it there. But ___ is comin' over 'cause he has one. And the other friend, which was my tutor, she has one and they update you with all this information.

ES: Is this a way of perhaps feeling less lonely?

DT: Well...

ES: Or maybe you don't ever feel lonely?

DT: But they're different feelings, you know, a person have when ...oh yea, there's different feelings. 'Cause like with my schedule on Mondays at nine o'clock I'm at the bowling alley for a couple a hours. And then about two-thirty I'm at the water aerobic. And I come in and eat a snack and then I go to work. And if it's on a Monday then I go practice clogging. And then on Tuesday I've been playin' tennis maybe from eight till ten and then still go to water aerobics and still gotta go to work. And so even sometime when you do that you be glad when you say somebody have a cancellation. And then, you know, I got to nursing home. I have an older friend up there and sometime meet her and whosever sitting next to her. And so really...really I guess it's not too much loneliness.

ES: Apparently not.

DT: No, no. Sometimes be glad when people don't call ya. You say just sit here and eat and then you watch TV and you wake up and you, you know, you go to sleep.

ES: How did you happen to meet Gerta Brouten?

DT: In a meeting...in some meetings. 'Cause some years ago they had...it was a group of women that was starting classes and I saw...I knew some of the women. It seemed like it might have stemmed from the mental health clinic or something there. 'Cause I think Donna Sans she did some and also some other women. They was workin'...it was counselin' doin' things. So then I got involved by goin' to some of the meetings. And then we had a group called Omigos, I think that's what it was, helpin' the chronically ill or somethin'. We'd come once a week. So anyway, these different peoples at the meetings, Donna Sans, Maurice Earnest and ...[end tape]

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DT: ...because her husband, you know, was a lawyer, a judge, too. So...you see you read about these people in the neighborhood and what they doing and all of this. 'Cause I 'member one particular meeting we were in and we were talkin' about if you could go anyplace in the world where would you want to go. And I was trying to think of a place. And I know Stelma whether she said skiing or something. She said...I don't know whether she said the Alps or where, but it seemed like... I would be comfortable goin' somewhere if I knew someone, but she didn't have to know someone to go there. And I thought, "Wow! People just

- different.” And so I just remember that even to today, you know, that when we were tryin’ to think of if you could call anyone in the world. So those were some of the exercises they were doin’ at the meetings. I guess I sorta start goin’ ‘cause I think I had one or two kids that was into marijuana drug or something like that so by...you’re reachin’ out for help, you know, when you’ve got these things. So that was the group I was reachin’ to. And so you meet all these different people. ‘Cause I guess before that I didn’t know Donna Sans.
- ES: Speaking of wanting to travel somewhere, has it ever been part of your desire to return to Alabama or Florida for a visit?
- DT: No. Let’s see, I was born in Georgia then later moved to Florida. And I guess I did go back. I took my son. After I was married and had a son I took him and he was about ten...before he was a year old. I went there because my mother was there and visited. And usually...and then I had Grandmother that was in Jacksonville, Florida. And so by later my grandmother came here ‘cause her daughter was here. And lot of other people they die off, you know. And then the people...the young people you know, you know, they were young, they got husbands and, you know, and so the interest is not there. ‘Cause I had a brother who lived in Tampa, Florida then he came. My sister came here. So then the close...no I wasn’t...I don’t know, no, I would be interested in, you know, anybody back there now.
- ES: Do you remember any particular reaction to returning to the South. Did it seem much the same as when you had left?
- DT: Really, I don’t know because when I went there I went by train. You know you was there on the train I guess. It seemed like I did go back after...where I went when my brother was there. We did fly there. But usually whenever...if you ever lived there, you know, the customs there so you just go by the customs there. You know, the bus station they...the big sign that say “colored” and you know that’s where you go and look for. So you see all of the colored people there so that’s where you go so you don’t go blundering into the other one. And say, “What’s wrong with you!”
- ES: And that’s the way it was when you came back to visit?
- DT: Yea, I’m quite sure it was colored when I went back by train.
- ES: That was still the 1940s, wasn’t it?
- DT: Yea, __ was born in ’40 so that was about ’49 or the year ’50 or something. It hadn’t changed that much.
- ES: The South started changing in the ‘60s.
- DT: Uh huh. ‘60s. I went ...let’s see, I went to Tampa, Florida, I think, in ... I guess, I don’t know what year I went there. My mom and I went to see my brother ‘cause my brother had a nervous breakdown. So we went to Tampa. We flew there. And some of this friends picked us up and so we stayed at a friend’s house. So usually when you go there you stay around with people you know.
- ES: Sure.
- DT: And whensever they drive you or take you, you know, they gunna take you where you need to go.
- ES: Later in the ‘60s when you heard or read about Rosa Parks, for example, how did...did you have any reaction to what she did?

DT: I guess not 'cause livin', you know, livin' back there that I do know that the signs there, you know, "the color to the rear." And so you go there and that's where you sit.

ES: Yea, but she said...or she decided she wasn't going to go by that.

DT: She was tired, uh huh. And so sometime that can happen. You just said, "To heck with it. There's whatever happens, happens and you just, you know. And course for people, the trailblazers or whatever you call...the pioneers, sometime some people have to be talked into it and some just said, "I've worked all day and I'm gunna sit here." 'Cause you could be sometime on the...not only the rear seat, the other seats, you know, the other. They have a long seat in the bus and then there's the one next to it. And so there, but if they're taken then you stand. And so one person...like in that case one person did make a difference. But then everyone don't think like she did.

ES: From what you've said I guess if you had been living in the South all the time you wouldn't have done what she did?

DT: I probably wouldn't have.

ES: But do you think it's a good thing that she did do what she did?

DT: Yes, it is.

ES: Because it did make a difference.

DT: It did make a difference.

ES: Make things better in the whole, would you say?

DT: Sure. Sure because after that there was, you know, just reading about a lot of things there it gave people the courage to stand.

ES: That's exactly it.

DT: Uh huh. And so...like you said sometime it might cost something. And many times, like when they decide to boycott and since they couldn't ride as first-class citizens, let's carpool or do something different. And like with a lot of people sometime if it's gunna hurt you and you workin' for someone then you try as long as you can not to take part in it 'cause you need that job.

ES: Don't rock the boat.

DT: Yea, right. Don't rock the boat. And so people take that stand sometime. So and so really in some cases it's survival. And there somebody say "I'm not gunna have any part of this. I'm ___ this thing. It just me and my wife and I don't want to get hurt." And so they take another route. And people like that now.

ES: Sure.

DT: You go home where you belong. Even like sitting at the counters there. And so by doin' that now then the people see that everybody is...you know, not alike, like you said, "I don't wantta..." They're troublemakers, they're some...there can be troublemakers in every corner. And so you have to decide, make a decision. Everybody's not alike 'cause you might meet someone said, "I didn't know they were like that." So you even take a chance. Same thing with me. But I can't say everybody's like that and neither can you.

ES: Do you expect to live the rest of your life in La Grande?

DT: Let's see...probably, probably.

ES: What would make you want to go elsewhere?

DT: I don't know. I guess 'cause I've been, you know, content here. 'Cause I know my nephew had said, you know when my husband died, why don't you leave La Grande come to Seattle? Get out of that place and get a place in Seattle. So I listen to him talk because he's been sayin' that for years ever since he went to Seattle. 'Cause he lived there... Robert Terry. So he got a job teaching so he moved there. And so he was sayin' "You oughtta get those kids out of La Grande" ever since he been there. Anyway...

ES: I'm going to interview him on Saturday this week.

DT: Each person have a different point of view.

ES: Nothing he said persuaded you?

DT: No, I guess I was just content here 'cause one of the youngsters had said to me, that was when my daughter was living in Portland, says, "I thought you had moved to Portland with Jackie." I says "No." I says "And it's a good think 'cause Jackie is not in Portland anymore. Her husband is in the military so she's not even there anymore." So anyway, I'm still here and I guess since my son been to Kansas I've visit from there. And when he was in Germany I visited them and stayed about a month. That was after my husband died. Then since then I went on a tour and I would need to go another time to really enjoy what's there. But then I'm not, you know, dieing to go to anyplace. There they showed you all these tombs and these cathedrals and all of that and these things. That's interesting too, but then whenever you go on a route like that that's what they key it on. 'Cause a lot of people I guess are interested in that.

ES: Where is Lucky buried?

DT: Up Island City.

ES: Why there?

DT: I don't know. He had...I think he had gotten five plots there 'cause he buried his mother there and his brother and his sister too. So really, so then naturally you...where you have the ground you just enter them there.

ES: Is you're mother there?

DT: Yes, uh huh, my mother's there, too.

ES: And you said your grandmother was here too. Did she die here?

DT: And my brother. Yes, they died here. They're too at Island City.

ES: Are they all together in the same place?

DT: No. My mom and some of the other people is on one side of the road and then...so they don't have a special for the black and for the white. It is just they... 'cause my husband had bought this years ago. 'Cause while he was here talked once about to really invest in it where you'd have a whole plot where everyone. But then it made sense to him, but it didn't to me.

ES: Is that where you expect to be buried?

DT: I guess. Not unless they have some other idea about cremating me and put my ashes somewhere.

ES: You don't have a preference?

DT: Anyway, I don't think about it. Whatever...I haven't told 'em what to do yet and I should have. [tape stopped]