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Interview with Carmelita Martens Stokan on March 24, 1984.
Jeff Halsey Interviewer.
[Tape 117-1]

JH This is March 24, 1984, Jeff Halsey interviewing Carm Stokan. How do you like that "Sto-kan"?

CS I like that Russian name.

JH Yes, Stokanovich. Let's start with all the boring basics. All right, Mrs. Stokan, can you give us your vitals, where you were born, when you were born, everything else?

CS I was born in Sprague, Washington on April 26, 1913. My folks had a restaurant and a rooming house. When I was about six, we moved to Newport, Washington. They had a restaurant and a hotel, where I remember standing on a box, wiping silverware while other children were out playing. To this day, I hate silverware! So much for statistics. When I was almost eight, I went on a train from Newport, Washington to Helena, Montana alone to spend a year with my Aunt and went to school at St. Mary's school in Helena. At the end of that year I came back to Newport, and then we moved to Spokane, Washington. I went to Our Lady of Lourdes School there. At the end of that year, in the winter, we moved to Anaconda, Montana which was in February of 1922. I was supposed to be in the 4th grade. I already had had all the mathematics that they offered in the 4th grade so they put me in the 5th grade. I guess this is why I graduated from high school when I had just turned 16.

When I was a junior in high school, I went to work in a grocery store after school and all holidays and Sundays, and for two and one-half years I never had a day off. All this for 25 cents an hour! These were Depression Years people are talking about, but I had a job.

JH At 25 cents an hour, how many hours a day did you work?

CS Eight, every day, seven days a week. On holidays like Christmas and Thanksgiving, I got $5 that day. We needed it to survive, so you worked.

JH Who is "we"?

CS My mother. I had a brother four years younger than I, Stanley. I had a sister five years older named Theresa. A brother, who was the oldest, was seven years older than I.

JH You gave part of your wages to your family?

CS You gave all of your wages. There was no such thing as spending money. I've always maintained that I ran away from home when I was seventeen because my money hadn't been saved for a
year, money with which I was going to school. I had a place to work, a place to stay in Los Angeles and I was going to U.C.L.A. They hadn’t saved it; they needed the money. The following October I ran away and I never went back. My mother was Irish, she was direct from the Old Country, she was young when she came here. She had a very good business head, and to me, out of her sisters, except for one brother, she was smarter than any of them. She had a good business head. My father was German. It took me a long time to like Germans because he was one of the mean ones. When my mother put him out of the house finally, that was the happiest day of my life. I have never regretted having never seen my father again.

JH Now, that's something I didn't know. When did she put him out?

CS I must have been 13, a sophomore in high school. That would be in 1926.

JH For some reason, I thought he was around until your mother died.

CS Oh, no.

JH Did he live in Anaconda still?

CS No.

JH Where did he go?

CS We don't know.

JH You never saw him again?

CS My mother moved to Oregon years later and my youngest brother had a letter from him. He was originally a cook in the railroad camps. We moved to Anaconda because we had relatives there that got him a job in a carpenter shop in 1922. The last we heard of him, he was working on the highline someplace, I don't know where but he and my mother were [separated]. My mother died in 1936 and she was 59. My father was 59 in June before. We understand that he died approximately the same time.

JH How did you find out he died if you never heard from him?

CS My brother, Stan, had had a letter from him saying in the letter that our mother always wanted to wear the pants in the house. She should have; my mother was the only one smart enough to wear them. He was an absolute ....

JH You ran away from home at 16. How did you run away?
CS  I was 17 and my mother was very strict. We didn't have a radio, which other people had then. At the small store where I worked, one of my best friends worked the six to ten shift. I had come home about ten o'clock the night before. I was a block away at my friend's house, where her mother and father were, listening to the radio. My answers (to my mother) were questioned, like I was lying and I couldn't go out anymore, and I couldn't do this and I couldn't do that. My older brother was going to take care of me. So he came in and laid the law down (this was a week before I left). But anyway, he started to manhandle me and I picked up a chair and cracked it over his head. I ran down the street and he never did catch me. When I came back the next week, it was the same thing. So I said to my mother, "Well, I'm going to school anyway and all the notices were coming." Those days you didn't have to take an entrance exam.

JH  If you had the money, you could get in?

CS  You could get in. this was the money that I was going to take, that they were supposed to be saving for me. Well, they didn't have any money. This is why I've always thought that Old Country men or women - the only reason they want their children around - they can tell you it's love.... The main thing is, we needed that money to exist. To this day, my idea is that no child of mine should ever support their parents. If they can't support themselves, let me go hungry.

So then, I was crying and my mother said "You can't go out." I took a bath, packed a suitcase - you should have seen the old suitcase! I put in a couple of changes of underwear. We never had any clothes hardly anyway. I had the bedroom on the ground floor. I very quietly put it [the suitcase] out the window. My mother was in the kitchen reading. I went in acting very meek, and I said "Can I go to the store? (this is where I worked). I want an ice cream cone. Do you want one?" She said, "No, but you come right back." I said, "The store closes at 10, I'll be right back then." She said "All right."

I ran around back, got my suitcase and ran over to the grocery store where I had worked, and I signed a thing with my wages on it. I think maybe it was $10. My friend was crying; another friend of mine came in. I told her I was running away. She said, "What are you going to do?" I said, "I'm just going to walk west. Phillipsburg, Georgetown, Missoula, Spokane - I don't care, I'm not going to stay here." So I went home with her and she hid me out for a week. I had $40 in the bank and I told her that I could go to California on the bus, that I had a sister there. I wasn't going to tell her that I was coming, because she would tell me not to come.

So she gave me the money for the ticket, they took me to Butte late at night. I got on the bus and got to California. If you want to see a terrible bus depot in those days, 1930, in Los
Angeles. I look back now and wonder why something didn't happen to me. It was a terrible place. I finally found out that you could get on a streetcar to Ocean Park. Everybody in California, practically everybody, knows no directions of any kind. Where do you get this? What time? They don't know. "Oh, you're a stranger." "No, I've only been here two years." I got on the streetcar and I said to the conductor, "Will you please let me off at Kenney Street?" He said "That's one of the streets we don't stop at, we stop at every other block." And I said "Oh." He said "Where are you from?" and I told him. He was from Butte. The first thing I know, we stopped and he said "Here is your street." I said "Do I walk a block back or forward?" He said, "This is Kenney Street. For somebody from Montana I'll stop."

So I got off and went to the house. The landlady was surprised; my sister was outraged. For three weeks I looked for a job. I ran the beach every morning at six o'clock. Everybody in California, every woman, thinks that her old, pot-bellied husband is the apple of everybody's eye. This man and I talked every morning when I ran. I was 17, he must have been a man in his fifties. We'd talk, and I'd run the beach every morning. Every morning I'd see him. After about five days of this, I came one morning and a fat little old lady was with him; I said "Hi" and the man looked away. He didn't dare answer. He didn't look at me at all. And it dawned on me afterwards that everybody was afraid that somebody wanted their husband. I said, "Who wanted a husband, especially one that fat and old?"

I went to this place where an insurance man had told me. It was a Kress's store, like a 15 cent store and they had an opening there. She told me to come in and take an examination. I went in and she handed me this thing like a grade-school kid could do. If something is 20 cents a yard, how much will it be if you get 3/4 of a yard? All these simple questions. Took me about five minutes. I handed it back to her and she said "Are you finished already?" I said, "We had that stuff in grade school." It almost insults your intelligence. So I waited and waited and after about three or four days the insurance man came back and he said "Carm, did you hear anything from them?" I said "No, maybe she was disgusted by me when I said that an idiot could pass it." So a couple of days later he said, "May I say something to you, Carm. You were very bright, everything was fine. But you made one mistake. You must learn in this country, when you make out an application, and they ask you your religion, you just write down "Christian." You made the mistake of writing down "Catholic." There went my job.

So I made the round of grocery stores. It was Depression of course. Everybody in the stores stiffened like you were looking for their job. I said to her, "I want to see the manager." She said, "I don't know if he's here or not." I said, "I'm not looking for your job, I'm looking for one of my own." You tell them that you can lift 100 pounds of potatoes, you can lift heavy cases, you can do all of this. "Well, we just don't
have any room for you."

After about three weeks of that, and I didn't like California anyway, I was given enough money to come home on the bus. I hitchhiked into Los Angeles; there was no streetcar that early in the morning. I rode halfway on a milk truck drawn by a horse. I walked the rest of the way. When I looked at the money in my hand, there were two dollars left. My sister had given it to me. She said, "this will get you home." In those days you didn't ride straight through, you had to stop in Salt Lake City. I had a Milky Way candy bar, that was all I had to eat. I had met a sailor that I corresponded with for a couple of years afterwards, who wanted to buy me coffee and I said no, I don't like coffee. I was hungry, I was thirsty.

We pulled into Salt Lake, we had to go to the hotel to stay. The man in front of me wanted the cheapest room and the clerk told him it was $2.50. I only had $2, I had no other money. My mother had always said, "Always stay in a good place because you never know what kind of characters you'll meet." I walked up to the desk clerk and said "I heard you say it's only $2.50 but I only have $2. I don't have another nickel. I don't even have anything to eat. If you don't give me a room, I'll have to sleep in the lobby." He said, "I'll give you the room." He did, then we continued on. We got into Butte at 3:00 in the morning. The paper bus was coming home to Anaconda. A young fellow I went to school with was driving the bus. Another girl that I knew was on it and I thought, "How was I going to pay this money?" It was 50 cents one way trip into Anaconda. I got off on all my travels, told them all of these, lots of funny, silly remarks in between. Finally Clinton Brown said, "Carm, I've got to get on my way. I've got to get these papers." I imagine he knew that I didn't have any money for a ticket. He never asked me for it. I got into Anaconda about 4 o'clock in the morning and went over to my friend's house. They answered the door and were delighted, of course. "Are you hungry?" I was always hungry. I could eat three men under the table. They had cold roast beef. I must have eaten half of what was left of that roast beef and I don't know how many slices of bread. As a result, I became terribly ill.

So I was back in Anaconda without a job, and my friend was taking a month off to have an appendix operation. I went to work in that small grocery store for her. There were no jobs. When this job was up, they told me a man down the street named Hunthausen needed a grocery clerk because his other clerk had stolen him blind. I went down there and worked seven days a week, ten to twelve hours a day for $50 a month. I paid $30 a month for board and room. You learned that every week you withdrew $10 because the man never had $50 at the end of the month. Then I left there for Mr. Johnson up the street. He said, "Boy, I'd like to have you in my store." So I went to work for Evald Johnson. I must have been 19 then. I worked for him until I was 25, then I got married.
JH  Let's stop here and go back. Religion on applications? I didn't know that applications asked for religion.

CS  Oh, yes.

JH  Why?

CS  They always did.

JH  They don't anymore.

CS  No, they are not allowed to.

JH  They didn't hire you simply because you were a Catholic?

CS  Yes. The first thing that I had noticed, I noticed before I had gone to California or ever heard of it. All these religions that are cults or whatever, they all start in California.

JH  Yes. Foursquare - Amy....what was her name?

CS  We called her Simple Amy McPherson. [laughter]

JH  I'd forgotten about that. The streetcars - they were the old Red Streetcars, right?

CS  Yes. They were open streetcars.

JH  One of my friends said that from where she lived in Hollywood, you could ride clear to the ocean and back, and it was only 50 cents.

CS  I think this was a nickel to get on. I was going to tell you Jeff; people talking about escalators. I went in, early in the morning. I walked down to this I Magnum [store]. Here was this wonderful moving stairway.

JH  Oh, they had I Magnin [stores] then?

CS  In Los Angeles. There was an escalator, we just called them moving stairways. I rode up three floors and down. this went on for about fifteen or twenty minutes, and finally one of the floorwalkers came and said "This had to stop. You aren't allowed to do that." By the time I was through riding those I went and caught the bus to Montana.

JH  The first escalator I ever rode was in Woolworth's at Lloyd Center in Portland. I must have stayed on that sucker for half an hour!

CS  When you come home and tell the farmers this, they're
nothing but big hicks you know. I was just a country hick. You tell them about the [escalator] - "What?" They thought "There's that Carm, and she's making up some wild stories."

JH When you first moved to Anaconda when you were a kid, was it depressed? Was it still a good town? Were there still many people and money?

CS It was after the shutdown. The smelters had just opened up [in 1922] I imagine it was my mother's sister who brought us there. Her husband was Car Foreman at the BAP.

JH What is the BAP?

CS Butte-Anaconda-Pacific Railway that Marcus Daly built. At one time he intended to build this to Hamilton, then on to Spokane.

JH Over [Skalkaho] pass?

CS Yes, but it ended at Silver Lake. That is as far as it went. We're back to politics and men with big money fighting over this. I can remember coming in [to Anaconda]. Spokane had a mild climate, although we did have snow. They kept telling me about "God's Country." We came in, it was about February 9th. You couldn't see the fences for snow! And it was cold. We didn't get off at the depot. We rode the train right up to the roundhouse, because my uncle lived a block away. We were going to a little house in the back that they had. I kept saying to my mother "Where are they? This is God's country, I haven't seen any yet!" She said "What are you looking for?" I said "If this is God's Country, where are the palm trees?" Here were the fence posts covered with snow. It was a terrible country.

I went to school at St. Paul's school. The teacher put me in the fifth grade. I'd always been a loner, because I was a child whose folks always worked. My mother waited tables, and my father was a cook in all these businesses. I was pretty well much on my own. Everything I learned or picked up was from being around people. My older brother and sister didn't realize how belligerent I was, because I didn't have anybody to be belligerent to. The first day out in the [school] yard, all the little girls dressed up. Our clothes weren't very good, we were poor. Finally, somebody said "Where are you from?" I said "Sprague Washington." This one kid roared, he said "Look at the hayseed!" I didn't know what a hayseed was, I thought he was swearing at me. I hit him square in the jaw, he hit the ground, I jumped on him and the kids ran and told the Sister. She came out and said this was a very poor start for me on the first day of school in Anaconda Montana. That was the rest of my life; fight and stand - be ready to take them on. Nobody bothered you. That's the way my life has been every since.
JH You left Anaconda in 1930 when you were 17?

CS I came back in a month.

JH I'm trying to get dates together for history. Did the smelters close down before 1929?

CS No. They closed in 1920, and we came in 1922 when they had just opened up. That's why they sent for my father and gave him a job. My older brother went to work on the BAP too. He didn't get to finish high school. [long pause]

JH This is a pregnant pause. Just waiting for something to burst forth.

CS They are supposed to be full of meaning, but this one is empty. Anyhow, my mother always threatened me. "If you don't behave yourself, I'm going to take you out of high school." I loved school. You would too. No matter, summertime, every hour of the day my mother found something for you to do. You were never idle. That's why you went swimming, you played ball out in the street. You did everything. Hurry up and get your work done so you can get out of that house. One thing I used to always say to her, "The state of Montana says that every child has to go to school until they are sixteen years old." When I was sixteen years old, I was going to be out of high school. It was always a threat to me that somebody was going to take away my education. That's what's wrong now. Kids take this for granted. We're paying them to go to school. I don't believe in all these grants for college for some of these kids. These kids couldn't even get out of the 8th grade.

JH That's the level some of them are writing at.

CS They are wasting time. They should have given it to the children who were capable of going to school. As a result, I never went back because there was never any money. You were just lucky to pay your board and room. I hear all these people talking about the Depression and all; it was the most wonderful time of my life after I ran away from home. We would skate from 8 o'clock at night until midnight. I didn't go to work sometimes when I was working for Johnson's until one in the afternoon. I never played tennis until I was 19. I could go out all morning and play tennis and then come back and go to work. I went around with cardboard in my shoes; but that was all right.

JH Why cardboard in your shoes?

CS We had no money to get them half-soled.

JH They had worn all the way through?
CS I probably ran one hundred more miles than anybody else in the course of a month. This is how I lived, working, playing tennis, volleyball or baseball. I think it's good. My oldest brother, every time he sees me, said "Didn't they shoot you yet?" I say "They didn't shoot you." He said "My God, if she lived in Russia they would have shot her by the time she was seven. Here I am almost 71 and nobody has shot me yet.

JH Not yet!

CS Not yet, but I'm waiting!

JH They might have to get a silver bullet first. I need to ask something. The main reason Claire [Rhein] wanted us to interview was for your Union activities. So, does that come before your marriage or after?

CS This is before.

JH Let's start on that subject then. Then we'll come to everything else. I've always told you not to tell me anything about it, because I've been waiting until now.

CS We didn't have Unions in those days when I worked from dawn until dark. When I went to work for Johnson's Grocery - he was one of the finest men I ever knew. He was a Swedish gentleman and his wife. I had gone to school with his son. Anyway, we were going to have Unions. Everybody objected, but Mr. Johnson said to me, which is the nicest thing anybody has ever said to me, "Carm whatever wages they demand that we pay you, sign it for me, because you are worth it." It was the first time at that age when everybody appreciated my work. I don't remember what the wages were. I think instead of 25 cents an hour they went to forty cents an hour. After I was in the Union for a while, I was also a delegate to the Central labor Council. I think one woman had been there before, from the Waitress Union. A delegate to the Central Labor Council.

JH What was the Central Labor Council?

CS This is where they took care of general grievances.

JH Did you meet in Helena?

CS No, the meetings were held once a month in Anaconda. every town had a Central labor Council. There was a representative from every union there. I say now that Unions have outlived their usefulness. They are more or less Mafia. To me, they're stealing the clerk's wages. In Anaconda, a grocery clerk - I guess any clerk - gets more than a regular
clerk in a drugstore or anywhere.

JH My sister was making $9.00 an hour in Los Angeles [in 1979]

CS Just Imagine! It's ridiculous. They get a little over $5.00 an hour in Anaconda. They have pensions. You have to be ther fifteen years or before you could get it in case you quit. I retired, I worked ther for eight years. All my life I'd been in the Union - secretary, president, delegate to Central labor Council. They don't want to pay you any pension. I was out [of grocery work] for seven years. I was eight years at the garage. They didn't recognize my other hours.

JH So they didn't put both times together at the grocery store?

CS Yes, it's a racket. All of this was done in California.

JH That's why you quit the Union?

CS I retired when I was 65 in 1978. Even before that time, I said that we really don't need a business agent. Wee don't have one in Anaconda, he came out of Butte. We do not need a business agent. I said [to him] "What do we need you for?" That was ten years before I quit working. He said "Why?" I said that I go out and tell my boss. What Unions were good for - they got us down to six days a week, eight hours a day. That was fine, that was in 1932 or 1933. Then it got us to five days a week. That's fine. Outside of that, we don't need them. I asked why we needed them, and why we're paying all this money for them. He said "In case you have an argument with your employer, we'll step in and take care of it." I said "I've never been embarrassed to fight with my employer. I'll fight for my own rights. I always told it like it was. They don't like me; but they will say she's reliable, she works like two horses. She's reliable, so you keep them dumb kind of people and let them talk." [laughter]

JH We're back on side two, after getting some "refreshments."

CS That hot tea certainly does revive one.

JH It's amazing how it foams in the glass.

CS I was raised on beer.

JH Being German and Irish, no wonder. I didn't think the Irish had sense enough to drink beer.

CS No, the Irish drink whiskey. That's why I'm not very keen about it. The year I spent in Helena: my uncle was a Scotchman and he made home brew. Every night before bedtime I had a real
small glass of home brew and a piece of hard dried cheese.

JH Did you sleep?

CS Oh yes! Of course I always slept, I never had any trouble. When I came home, we had company this night for dinner. We had friends that came in at night, and my mother always served tea. She said it was time to go to bed. I said "What? No beer?" My mother was trying to look very [calm]. I said "Uncle Jim and I always had beer and hard cheese before I went to bed." She said afterwards that I wasn't really Irish. I didn't like the whiskey and I didn't like my drunken relatives. That's another reason why I left home.

We had an uncle, who about every six months went off the wagon. We would get home from work. We lived on Park street, and he'd be maybe crawling up the steps. I didn't need that. If somebody offered me $100.00 an hour to council an alcoholic, I could not do it. I'm sure I'd smash him in the face. I remember my childhood; I don't need it. I do not believe it is a disease. I believe it is up to the individual. I think they're copping out on their responsibilities and taking that way out. I may be wrong, but you can't prove it to me otherwise.

JH If it's not a disease, what? You seem to have had a lot of alcoholics in your family.

CS Yes. I had a brother that was. He was in Butte, and his cigarette set a hotel on fire.

JH That was your younger brother?

CS Yes.

JH He just died recently, didn't he?

CS About four or five years ago. Rotten spoiled kid. We all worked, and I said I always think....I must tell you this story Jeff. I came home from work, I was a hard-worker like my mother. The landlady was sitting there having tea and cakes and I said to my mother that I had dumped the ashes, I chopped up coal, I broke up coal and brought it in, chopped wood and brought it in, and I said to my mother "Now I'm going out to clean the sidewalks." We lived in an old house, we called it the house of the seven gables. The Winthrop Apartments in Anaconda stand there now on the corner of Third and Locust. As I was going out to shovel the walks after doing all my other duties, our landlady said to my mother "Boy, where did you get her? I bet they threw the mold away when they made her." And my mother sighed and said "Thank God, I couldn't stand another one like her." [laughter]

JH Let's get back. We might be done with the labor. Are we
CS When I went to California, through the Schnelling [agency], I had gotten this job keeping books just as part-time.

JH This is later, when you went to California?

CS This is later when I was 56. [in 1969] I went back to California. I stayed a year and then I came back to Anaconda. If you think it isn't fun trying for a job when you are 56! Of course that didn't bother me at all. She asked me [the agent] if I wanted to go to San Francisco. After they all helped me, looking at these terrible places that were all expensive - (these are the days of Haight-Ashbury) I said "Just get me a paper, go away and leave me alone. I'll find a place on my own." So I called this man. I told him how old I was, what I was doing there, I had a job. He was so glad I was there. I paid all of $75.00 a month. Everybody in San Francisco was paying $200.00-$300.00 a month. I lived in a bad area, I guess it was. It wasn't bad to me. It had Cubans, Blacks and Hispanics, it was just a poor area.

JH Did you live in an old row house?

CS It was an old house, three stories tall. There were two apartments on the ground floor, one on the second and one on the third. I had felt earthquakes. I said, where would you go with this narrow street? You might as well stand in a doorway, because the street is so narrow, and these tall, huge, narrow old houses. You would just stay inside, you wouldn't run into those narrow streets. Then when I went there, I had to join a Union. My boss said to me, "Carm don't tell them you are keeping books. They never want bookkeepers. They are looking for votes, that's all they want." I went over, it was across the street from there. He said "How come you can come from Anaconda Montana?! Where's that?" I said "It doesn't make any difference." He said "We've got women who need jobs." I said "I've got this job. How much are the dues?" I've forgotten how much they were, but I earned $500.00 a month, which was more than anything I'd ever earned. It wasn't much for somebody paying big rent, but I wasn't. So it was wonderful for me. I walked eight-nine blocks through a bad area. Of course, if you come from Butte and Anaconda, what's a bad area?

JH The whole town is that way.

CS What's tough? You are just as tough as they are. Or else you talk that way. I finally said "So you are the business agent. Please don't come bothering them in the store to collect my dues." He said "Well, we do this." I said "We don't need you business agent. This is just another drain on the Unions. In
fact, I'll take over your job for collecting the dues from our girls at work, and then you won't have to come in at all. Then we won't need you, and pretty soon every store can start doing the same thing. " This is what we're back to, the money always ends up with the big shots with the big wages. We don't need them.

JH A middle man?

CS A middle man. We don't need them. We really don't. We should get back to this: every employee stand up for yourself. If you are not guilty of goofing off or stealing or something, you have a right to stand up. They should respect you. They didn't like me, but they respected me.

JH My boss in the grocery store back in LaGrande [Oregon] keeps telling my great-aunt that he wishes I would come back. I have a job anytime I go back. He said that I had a big mouth and was a pain in the ass, but I was there every day, I was always on time for work. I got everything done, and he never worried. Of course, he's too cheap to pay decent wages, so he doesn't get decent help.

CS This is a reason, I find, where people don't get good wages and they keep saying "I'm worth more than this." I always say, get out of here, quit. Because, eventually, if they think they are worth more, they are going to steal their boss blind. I've seen it. I've seen it happen in the garage where I worked. This is too bad. This tip business for waitresses: My mother always tipped, it used to be 5%, then it was 10%. To this day I tip 10%. This is a crook that we should have to tip at all. A tip is the wage that an employer should be paying the employee. There's no reason that there should be any tips. The year we went to California to bowl in the World Bowling Championships in Los Angeles - it was Depression, nobody was working. We went to this place to eat. There were about eight stools and maybe three booths. There was a big sign over this, it said "No tipping allowed." They had two waitresses, very nice, just wonderful service. I said to the man, "That's a wonderful idea." He said "I've the same waitresses for the ten years that I've been here. Except one, she took a tip. I fired her." He said "Why should somebody come in that tips very well, and the other guy not at all? Maybe they don't have any money, maybe they don't want to. Why should the person with the money get all the service? The person without any [money] doesn't get any." What a great idea. Then the IRS could keep track of the wages.

JH That's the way it is done in Europe, a 10 or 15% tip is added to your bill.

CS This is the way to do it, let the employer pay it. Or pay her more money and let her pay her tax like the rest of us
have always done.

JH  For some reason I was sitting here thinking about earthquakes: I don't know why. Maybe because you mentioned it. [Note: we had a small earthquake at this time. I read about it the next day]

CS  It was about 8:30 one night, and I had gone out. The San Francisco Chronicle came out at night, it was a real thick one. I was sitting on this couch, it was a real cheap one like this. I could feel like somebody was kicking the couch. I stopped. I got up very quickly and started for the door. Then it stopped. So Monday morning, when I went to work I said "We had an earthquake Saturday night at 8:30." "No we didn't. There's nothing about it in the paper." We had an earthquake. Maybe just in that area. It wasn't the neighbors acting up and there were no parties, nothing. It was an earthquake. Well, it finally came out in Tuesday's paper, little tiny print.

JH  Nothing like we had here last year.

CS  The Chamber of Commerce doesn't want it in the papers. There was a fellow with a big police dog in the house next door. They were Hispanics. Oh, he was a vicious looking thing. I had to walk a block and a half, or two blocks to the laundromat. It was pretty scary, those empty places in there. This dog would come out, and I'd pet him, talk to him and scratch him behind the ears. One day he came out after me, and his owner followed. "You're not afraid of him?" "No" I said, "Why should I be afraid of him? If he bites me, I'll bite him back." He laughed and said that I was the only one that the dog had ever made friends with. Dogs know meaner people than they are. Somebody said "Aren't you worried about being in that area?" I said "No. We're all so poor down there, the robberies were never in that area. They were up on Valencia where the rich people lived.

JH  Rich people-why steal from the poor?

CS  What used to amaze me were the winos with a sack around a pint bottle of wine. We saw a lot of them. I said to my employer Mr. Walsh, "How can they live?" I saw so many of them every day. He said it was protein. The sugar. It softened the brain. This is what keeps them physically walking. Down in San Francisco with all these huge old buildings, eight and ten floors, and here were all these old people living in these cold water walkups. Nobody cares about them. Nobody cares. The clerks aren't even nice to them. I had one little old lady who used to come in all the time. She came in this one day, and it was after the first of the month. She said she wanted a pair of stockings. I said "All right, what color?" they were 99 cents and we had a 5% tax. She said "What color? Every time before,
they just handed me a pair, they don't ask me what color." I said "Tell them you don't want that, you want another color." She said "I only have a dollar." I said "I'll pay the difference on the tax." I was doing this for so many, that pretty soon, even when I was up in the office taking care of the books, they wanted the lady with the white hair, if they didn't have enough money, was paying the extra. So I didn't do that anymore.

Everybody is afraid of everybody else. Nobody trusts anybody. Of course, it was Haight-Ashbury days, and this long-haired young fellow came in and he was looking around at the back, and I thought that he was suspicious looking. Finally I went back and said "May I help you?" Finally he said "My wife needs a package of Tampax and I don't have any money." I knew then that he was going to lift them. They were 35 cents then. I said "Wait a minute. I'll give you the money for them. Someday when you get some money, bring it back." He said "I have a job, but it's two days away from payday." When payday comes, I said, bring me back 35 cents. Everybody was horrified. "You'll never see that money again!" I said "So what? 35 cents - you girls smoke and drink up more than that.

Two days later, somebody hollers from the bottom of the stairs, "Carm that hippie guy is here that you bought that stuff for the other day." I ran down, and here he was. There was a very young girl with a pack on her back with a brand new baby. Here she had come home from the hospital that first day and needed Tampax. I said to her, "You're not using Tampax? You are not allowed to. In the hospital they even sterilize the Kotex." I'm standing there giving her all of this. They were so delighted over what I had done for them. It shows. It will come back to you.

JH Comes back one time out of ten.

CS That's right, and I don't care. What's 35 cents? I've eaten more candy than that in half an hour.

JH Let's get into the marriage and personal life. Is there anything else you want to say first?

CS I got married when I was 25. Somebody said "Wasn't that old in those days?"

JH I said that.

CS You said that! I said yes. If I knew what I know now, I would have waited 25 more years. The first year my baby was born and lived only five hours. It was a bad delivery. In World War Two, I was working in a grocery story. I decided that I was going to join the service. I was going to join the WAVES. I had to go to Seattle to join there, you had to have a physical from a doctor first. I went to Dr. Long, the family doctor, and he didn't charge me anything for it. I said "Dr. Long, I don't feel
good. I'm not hungry and I feel like I'm ready to throw up all the time." He said "Carm, you eat too much, you eat all the time." He gave the the physical, and I kept waiting until the deadline for me to send those papers. I went back, I was pregnant with my son George. He was born the following May. And about four years after that....

**JH** Let's get the years down.

**CS** OK. 1939, my first baby was born and died. In 1943 my son George was born. He died in 1981 from a heart attack. My son Michael was born in 1947, he lives in Missoula. My daughter Theresa lives in Connecticut, her name is Record. She's married to Steven Record, she's 35. And I'm here at 71.

**JH** Not 71 yet.

**CS** Almost. I came home one day when I was working in the garage, and it was near the first of the month. I worked late, and I was getting ready to do the bills the next morning. I came home and looked; the garbage hadn't been dumped, the beds weren't made, nothing was done. Here sat my three angels. I've got a six year old, an eight year old and a twelve year old sitting there watching TV. I ran over and shut it off. I went out on this tirade about the garbage not being emptied, about all the dumb lazy kids and I'm just really pouring it on. So my second son Michael said "Happy Birthday mom." I kind of stopped. My little girl said "And we made you a chocolate cake too." I stood there feeling like the world's biggest jackass. I said "Oh! It's my birthday!" And my oldest sitting there said "And Hitler's too." So that was the birthday I remember.

**JH** That's how I usually remember Hitler's birthday.

**CS** My marriage lasted until 1955. That was 17 years. I went to work in Softy's grocery store, I worked in a bowling alley first, then I worked in Softy's market. The people from Central Motors came after me; I worked there at the market 6 1/2 years. They came after me [from Central Motors] and Mrs. Gore said that she would teach me the books. I worked in a garage for eight years. I went to California when I was 56.

**JH** Why did you go to California?

**CS** Because my friends said that maybe I'd have better luck with opportunities there.

**JH** You couldn't work up?

**CS** No, I was just stuck there. My children were in college. We had the marking. They were my children, what did I expect?
They were out there shooting off their faces on how the world should be run, and I don't know why I expected anything different. I always told them, if you don't think it's right, if you are the only one, stand up and say so. That's what they were doing. I came back inside of a year and worked at Thrifty Drug [in Anaconda] for eight years and then I retired.

JH Did you know that there was a protest march here on Friday? For the US out of El Salvador. First one I've seen in years.

CS I can't understand it. It's just like sending troops into Ireland. I said to my mother once when I was working and in high school - Dick Matchet was our night watchman. I came home and said to my mother (my mother, who felt that if you weren't Catholic and Irish you might as well be dead) - I said "Oh mom, he's an Irishman." She said "He is not! He's a black Orangeman from the north of Ireland." I didn't realize [what she meant] until I got to reading this books by Leon Uris, "Trinity." It took a Jew to write this beautiful book about Ireland. I can see the degradation and poverty. They will never forgive England for anything. That's like sending the American troops into Ireland to straighten things out. Why are they doing this in El Salvador? Why don't we stay out and mind our own damm business? Of course, there's going to be war as long as there are two people, even if it's only a man and a wife. And men like to fight, I guess.

JH Some women do also.

CS I guess so. It's just like the people who are anti-abortion. I had a woman sit down one day at a table. I had never seen her before. She said "What do you think about this abortion?" I said "Don't get me started." "Why?" I said, "It's none of the government's business, it's none of the doctor's business, it's none of any man's business, it's none of a husband's business. It's up to that woman. If her conscience is clear, and she feels that she's not guilty, and she can cope with it - I couldn't cope with that. But if she can, that's her business. Tell all these banner-carrying characters to get off it. Every child born out of wedlock, deformed, or otherwise born to these women who want an abortion, but couldn't have one: get all these do-gooders and goodie-two-shoes and bring them all these babies and say "Here they are. Feed them, raise them, educate them, be sure and send them to college." The first thing you know, all these do-gooders will be real quiet about this whole damm thing. Murder is in the eye of the beholder.

JH That's a rather odd opinion for a 71 year old Catholic.

CS That's right. Another thing that I notice as people get
older: I was raised a couple of years with the nuns. I went to
the convent in Sprague Washington when our folks moved. to me,
going to mass every morning was good. It has gone with me all my
life. It's discipline. I'm a disciplinarian. that's why I
don't think I was a good mother. I'm a disciplinarian. I think
people should mind. Of course I see some of the kids out there
now - I'd crack them right across the face. My kids knew that
the second time I talked to them, they hit the ground. Oh, now
you mean it! So this is what's the matter, I'm a disciplinarian.
Now I go back to Anaconda and I see all these old guys and old
ladies that never went to church all their young lives and were
probably Catholics practicing birth control. So we don't go to
church, we don't go to confession - which is a bunch of malarky.
Now, they are all scared of death, so they are all in church.
I'm not afraid anymore. I could quit going to church. I was
never afraid. They didn't ask me. I'm sure that the Pope would
send me off to Elsalvador if he knew I was out spouting this! [laughter]

JH Other people might too!

CS The probably would too. Serves that country right to get
me.

JH Can you think of anything else? I'm running out of
things to ask now.

CS Let's see. Talking about people being the head of the
house. My oldest boy was about seven. He wanted to be boss of
everything and nobody else was boss when I was there. He said
one day "Carm, when am I going to be boss?" I said "When you pay
the lights, and the heat and the water and the garbage and when
you buy all the groceries." He said "I guess never, huh?" I
said you just said it. Nobody ever asked me again if they wanted
to be boss.

I warned him about stealing crab apples. He must have been
about ten or so. I said the people don't care about the crab
apples. You break their trees. Don't do that again. Go to
Mrs. Crandle, I used to work at Fitzgeralds. Tell her who you
are, and she'll give you the crab apples. I know it isn't as
much fun. Two days later he came home with sacks of them for me
to make jelly with, fine. About three or four days later, he
came running. I was taking baby clothes off the line. He's all
out of breath. Couldn't get anything out of him, he was so out of
breath. What's the matter? "Cops, the cops are chasing me." I
said what for? Were you stealing crab apples again? "I wasn't,
but the Dricolls next door were." How did you get involved? "I
was walking down the street, and they had all these apples in
their pockets, and she had called the police and they saw the
cops coming. They ran, and so did I." I said, Oh good! I'm glad
you're afraid of the cops. He said "No, I'm afraid of you!
Good, let's keep it this way.
We had this outfit next door, his uncle was a policeman. He was teaching this obnoxious kid how to box. My George was kind of shy, except when you got him mad. Terrible temper. They were out there talking this day and this kid says to him "I bet your dad can't lick my dad." My George stopped for a minute, and he said "No, but I bet my mother can." I'm almost ashamed to tell this to anybody. That's the way it was in our house.

JH I also wanted to get women's liberation things, even though you don't think of yourself as a women's liberationist. Although you really are. You threw your husband out and raised your kids by yourself.

CS That's right. I was raised in a house of eternal fighting. If you didn't have a couple of fights every day, it was a waste. That's why I was out in the street fighting. They left me alone. I thought that was the way of life. My mother would never allow pouting. She would say "We have boxing gloves in there. Go out and have a fight out in the street. There will be no pouting in here." You never carried a grudge. If you did, you didn't let her know. You had a fistfight and then you came in and talked. That's the way it was.

With women's lib, I've always had it. They let me chop wood and coal, they let me wash windows and shovel the walk and do heavy lifting. I've always had women's lib. Ever notice - I notice all these women, these feminists, these are the ones who can't get along without a man. They are not married to them, or else they are living with them. You don't know what women's lib is. If you are for women's lib, what do you need with some guy hanging around? I will never understand it, my children have done it too. Live with somebody. When you are married to them, you have to live with them. I don't like this living together and putting up with one guy when you don't have to. I would say I'll come over to your place Tuesday, you come over to mine on Thursday. You're free of that guy.

Women's lib? They are talking about not wanting to do dishes? I don't like to do them either, but I like doing them for myself. I did it for my children; they came before anybody else, because they weren't sent for, I brought them here. But women's lib? I think some of this is a joke. Somebody out there saying we want this and we want that. How about going right to the head man and saying "Look!" Then if he cans you, then get to him. This is the way to do it. About twenty of them out there marching in the street and some of them have been sitting on their butt for God knows how long. Maybe some guy keeping them. They are marching. They haven't done the work I've done. If you were hungry, you'd work. Other people were standing in lines for jobs. I was the only one during the Depression who had a job sometimes. Root Beer was a nickel for a great big glass. When I would get paid, I'd buy Root Beer for all of my girlfriends. To this day they remember that Carm had the money and we got Root Beer. That's
what I remember; nothing but good things out of the Depression. Except that I got married. I don't know if that was good or not.

[end of tape]