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Interviewee: Ona Lake
Interviewer: Suzanne Vernon
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Suzanne Vernon: I kind of want to start at the beginning and that's like how old are you?

Ona Lake: I never hesitate telling anyone how old I am. I'm eighty-six, I'll be eighty-seven my next birthday.

SV: So what year were you born?

OL: 1915. May 27, in fact.

SV: Where were you born?

OL: I was born in Belle Fourche, South Dakota, but that was because that was the closest hospital. Really Montana was my home.

SV: Which part of Montana?

OL: Eastern part of Montana. Broadus.

SV: How long did you live in Broadus?

OL: Oh, until I was ten.

SV: I've been there.

OL: It's the end of the earth. Powder River. We used to go swimming in Powder River and then we'd have to come home and have a bath. Muddy. Swim with the catfish.

SV: What's your maiden name?

OL: Edwards. My mom and dad are in a history in Encyclopedias. I used to work at the Carnegie Library in Miles City in high school. My boss showed me one day a write-up about them.

SV: So what is your dad's name?

OL: Ai, big "A" and a little "i". Edwards. Middle name Franklin.

SV: What did he do for a living?

OL: He was a rural mail carrier, for many, many years, and then he worked for the Milwaukee Railroad during the war.

SV: Which war? World War II?

OL: Yep, it had to be.

SV: If you were born in 1915, it wouldn't have been WWI.

OL: No.

SV: What was your mom's name, then?

OL: Carrie. Misely.

SV: Did she work outside of the home?

OL: No... women didn't in those days, not unless they were destitute.

SV: Did you live right in town in Broadus?

OL: We lived on a ranch until I was about five and then my dad lost the ranch as a result of the First World War. Then we lived in Broadus and I went to public school there. From five to ten.

SV: What's your favorite memory from those times when you were in Broadus?

OL: Oh, one of the outstanding memories in Broadus was.... I think there were about ten of us in my grade, in what would that have been? Must have been about fourth grade, because we moved after school was out the year, it must have been fourth grade. There were five girls in the class and one of them was the banker's daughter. So the banker's daughter's mother gave her a birthday party and invited us all to the party and the main event was swimming in their indoor bathtub.

SV: It was big enough for swimming?

OL: No, no, no, Just an ordinary tub, but that was something unheard of! We didn't have bath tubs in those days. We had a bath in the tub, the wash tub. And that was a big event, oh my. She must have had an awful mess to clean up when we were through.

SV: Was it a copper bathtub?

OL: No, no, it was porcelain, I would those days, I really couldn't tell you.

SV: Big long tall tub?

OL: Oh yeah, it must have been a six footer. She filled it half full of water and we all got in and we just had a ball. In our panties.

SV: It wasn't like a tea party then?

OL: No, we had a party afterward, but that was the main event.

SV: So you didn't have indoor plumbing or anything like that.

OL: Oh no, outdoor toilet. Right in the middle of town there was a fenced-in area where the jailhouse was and where the sheriff lived, and then they kept lots of county supplies within that fence. Big culverts and things like that, and that was a great play place for us. But right along side that fence was an artesian well. Most of the residents brought big cans, milk cans and such, and that's where we got our water. My dad made a cart with huge big wheels on each side, and it held three or four big milk cans. So my brothers, I had three older brothers, the brothers got to go get the water all the time. Now that water had to be packed for washing clothes too.

SV: Took up a lot of time.

OL: Oh yes. In those days I don't think moms ever stopped working. I think what an easy life I had. She had six children and she did all the canning of a huge garden. Mike's mother is my sister. And she made almost all of our clothes, dresses. Always had a beautiful new outfit at Easter time. And hunted Easter eggs in the sagebrush, you know, in the snow banks.

SV: Where the snow had drifted?

OL: Oh yeah, drifted. Oh yes. The wind never stopped blowing.

SV: There were big ranches there, weren't there?

OL: Today there are huge ranches, but in those days there were a few (?) but not like there are today. People today have bought these ranches up for special purposes.

SV: Where did you end up going then when you moved?

OL: My mother had always wanted to go to the coast. She's heard about it all of her life, so my dad sold our home and we had a big old Willis Mike car.

SV: What is that?

OL: Piled us all in with our dog. And I had a new baby brother, he had been born that year. And we went to the coast. And you know I have no memory of that trip to the coast. But my mother, they had to pack food and blankets for beds at night, it was after school was out so it was warm out.

SV: You said you had six brothers and sisters?

OL: My brother stayed at Broadus, so it would be five kids that went. And a big Airdale dog in that car. That car was a huge thing.

SV: You all fit?

OL: We fit some way. We packed in. But I don't really have memories of that trip.

SV: Must have been boring or something, huh?

OL: It must have been just a fun thing, kind of a lark.

SV: Where did you end up out on the coast then?

OL: We ended up at Cathcart Heights. It's just a few miles out of Snohomish, Washington. It was a new developing area and my dad bought a piece of property. I don't know, two acres or five acres; I don't know what it was. And started building a home for us. But he couldn't find work.

SV: It was getting up closer to the Depression.

OL: It was in the Depression. Oh yes, yes.

SV: What did you do for work?

OL: Well, he finally got a job driving a milk truck. Course those days dairies were the big thing and he drove a dairy truck. And then he lost that too 'cause he couldn't complete it without a job. And we lost that and moved into a rental in Snohomish. I went to junior high school in Snohomish.

SV: Okay, so that must have been a bigger school than in Broadus.

OL: Oh it was a pretty good size school. Beautiful campus. They had huge big rhododendron bushes all over. I've not been back and I wonder if they eventually cut all the rhododendron bushes out.

SV: So did you go to school there all the way through high school then?

OL: Oh no, we were not through traveling. No, mail contracts when they're bid on are good for four years. So, work was so scarce out there that my dad bid on another mail route and got it. So, we moved back then to Miles City. He had the contract for mail from Miles City to Broadus.

SV: What a stretch of country to drive every day. How often did he have to do it?

OL: Every day. One of my older brothers drove too. My dad had two trucks. One truck would go from Broadus to Miles City and the other would come from Miles City to Broadus, so that they passed at Volborg.

SV: How old were you then when you moved back to Miles City?

OL: I was going into my sophomore year. I graduated from Custer County High.

SV: Did you live right in town?

OL: Oh, yes. Then during my junior and senior years I worked at the Carnegie Public Library, in the evenings and on Saturdays. And completed my apprenticeship and became an assistant librarian. Loved it.

SV: What was the best part of the apprenticeship then?

OL: I just loved everything about it. The books.

SV: Do you still read? I see books everywhere.

OL: Oh, yes. Most everything is recipe books. I still like to read. Reading is a favorite pastime of mine. Especially in the winter.

SV: Miles City was kind of a rough town in those times?

OL: Miles City in its day was a real rough town. I never saw any of that, but it was a rough and rowdy cowboy town.

SV: Cowboys being pretty independent.

OL: Oh yes.

SV: Did you guys go to church in Miles City?

OL: Oh yes, I went to the Christian Church in Miles City. Even taught Sunday school class.

SV: What's the Christian Church? Is that a certain denomination?

OL: Yes. Like a Methodist. Just called the Christian church.

SV: Did your folks go to church?

OL: No.

SV: I'm trying to think how big Miles City was in those days. Do you remember?

OL: Oh, I couldn't begin to tell you.

SV: Yeah, I know where the high school is now.....

OL: The high school is in the same place, that hasn't changed. In fact the other day I was looking through two old class books, one from...I graduated in 1933 and then I had one from 1934, I think. I don't remember how many were in the class. It was pretty good size to me. It was much larger size then than it is now. It has shrunk. Billings is the one that has grown. But Miles City...It has no industry or anything to draw people there.

SV: Still pretty much just agriculture, I would think.

OL: Yes.

SV: So did your mom continue to be a homemaker?

OL: Yes.

SV: Was she active in any clubs or organizations?

OL: No, she was a homemaker really.

SV: You had a garden and stuff in Miles City?

OL: No, not in Miles City. No place for a garden.

SV: What was the best part about going to high school there? Do you remember any good times in high school?

OL: Well, you know a lot of the things kids participated in...I was working, ya know. I remember getting off to go to the basketball tournaments. We went to dances. But I don't remember anything that's outstanding memories.

SV: You didn't fall in love in high school or anything? (Chuckling)

OL: No, I didn't fall in love in high school. I went to the proms, but I just wasn't struck with boys until I got older. I had older brothers, that probably...

SV: Now the brothers stayed in Broadus when you went to the coast?

OL: The oldest brother stayed in Broadus, the others went to the coast with us. See the five of us went to the coast, the oldest brother. And then when we came back to Miles City to live, the next oldest brother stayed in Snohomish, so our family got smaller.

SV: What did you end up doing after graduation then?

OL: My life changed. I worked a year at the library and then the following year my dad lost the mail route again so they wanted to go back to the coast. So, we found a little apartment for my sister and I, I think it was two rooms, for something like twenty, twenty-five dollars, can you believe it? And my mother got it all furnished so cute for us, and on our little table was a set of glassware for creamer and sugar and a toothpick holder. And I had this job so my sister was going to stay with me and graduate the following year from high school. Well, I must have been having a little bit of qualms about them going off and leaving us. I don't remember that, but it had to have happened 'cause my mom, my sis and I went down to the apartment one evening to take some things, they were to leave the following week, my mother and dad. And we found a bedbug in the toothpick holder on my table. My mother said, "You're not staying here!" I quit my job and went. (Chuckling)

SV: The little sister too?

OL: Oh yes. (Chuckle)

SV: Had you ever had bedbugs before?

OL: Oh, no. I didn't even know what a bed bug was! But my mother sure knew! (Laughing) It was just such a silly thing. The bedbug changed the whole course of my life! For that to have happened I must have been a little anxious about staying, I think.

SV: She must have sensed that you were a little reluctant.

OL: Oh, she could have. Certainly could have. I wasn't aware of it. But I feel myself anymore I must have been. All I needed was one little word, bedbug.

SV: How about the little sister?

OL: Oh, she was...whatever.

SV: So did you miss that library at Miles City when you left?

OL: We just went home and took everything out of the little apartment and packed everything and the next week we were all gone to the coast again. This time we went to Tacoma. And my sister graduated from, at that time it was Tacoma High School. And the brother older than me stayed in Miles City. See each trip we lost one son.

SV: What did he do there for a living?

OL: My brothers? I don't know. They were just brothers; I wasn't too interested in them. (Chuckle) They all worked.

SV: Did you like Tacoma?

OL: Yes, I liked Tacoma. We lived out on South Tacoma Way and there was a Wapiti Park, oh, some distance from where we lived. My sister and I and my little brother, he was ten years younger than me, we used to take our lunch and hike out there, it was a regular thing. It was some distance from the house, but we enjoyed it so much, being out. And it was still trouble getting work, you know. I got a job helping a woman housekeep. For a dollar a day and paid car fare out of it. 20 cents car fare out of it. So I got eight cents a day, ya know. Now, ya know, some of them get ten dollars an hour doing the same work. But back then a gallon of milk was only ten cents, a dozen eggs ten or fifteen cents, a loaf of bread ten cents. Not sure about the eggs.

SV: How much was butter?

OL: Oh, we didn't have butter. In those days what they called "Ollie" came out, and I can remember my mother getting Ollie and I always got to squeeze the color in with my hands. You would get these packages of Ollie like butter. And with them each pound, came a pack of coloring. And you colored it to make it look like butter. I just loved that stuff. (Laugh) Mom always let me do the Ollie coloring. Today there're called margarine, and of course they're colored. Those were the "do it yourself" days. (Chuckle) I think of funny things.

You know there was an incident when we lived in Snohomish. Christmas came and my dad was not working, so there was no money to buy gifts. I never saw my dad cry in my life, but I saw my dad cry. It was Christmas Eve and there were no gifts, and you know I don't remember any of us having any bad feelings about missing anything. We must have been very happy kids. Had to have been. But the reason I remember was that my mother allowed my brother just older than I to have sugar to make fudge, and to let it cool he put it on a stump in the yard, and our old dog got all the candy. (Chuckle) When you think back on those funny things.... But the Christmas part we didn't, there was no sadness, except seeing my dad cry. But I've thought many times what a hardship that was for them. You know we don't think about those things till we get older. We don't appreciate the sacrifices they made. It's a different world we live in today.

SV: Were there some other Christmas traditions that you remember?

OL: Oh we always had a beautiful Christmas tree. Always had a lovely Christmas...that was a big event. That's why I have no memory of sadness at this not having a tree this year. So it couldn't have affected any of us that much I don't think, just my parents. Oh yes, when we went out there too...now this is in Snohomish again, all five of us kids got yellow jaundice, it was called then. Today it's....I don't know, it's not called yellow jaundice today. We got so tickled with one another, we were completely, our eyeballs were yellow. The doctor believed it to be caused by the extreme change of diet. You can see how very knowledgeable doctors were in those days. Of course today, we know it was water. I don't remember being ill from it, but I'd remember a bread man coming by, and there was a certain brown bread that my mother used to buy from him, and yet today when I get an upset stomach, I can get that taste of that brown bread. It's a mental condition! (Laugh)

SV: So she didn't bake her own bread?

OL: Not after we moved out there. They had bread man. He'd come around with all these various kinds of bread. You don't see that today either.

[End of Tape 1, Side A]

[Tape 1, Side B]

SV: So how long did you work in the hospital?

OL: I worked for a year in the hospital and then there was a bakery in town and he would deliver his baked goods to the hospital and he talked me into come work for him. So I went to work for him. And I worked for him about a year a guess. (Pause to get a coughdrop) While I was working in the bakery I met my husband-to- be.

SV: Was this the only bakery in town?

OL: Yes. Harp's bakery. His name was Harple.

SV: Your husband-to-be, he didn't work at the bakery did he?

OL: No, no.

SV: How did you meet then?

OL: Oh, yes I distinctly remember, I'm just debating whether to.....(laughter) It wasn't a bad occasion, but I mean to put into something like this.....I just.....Now, where was he working at the time....oh he was working in a mine around Deer Lodge at the time when I first met him.

SV: Was it one of the mines that...

OL: I'm trying to think of the name of the little area, it was up east of Deer Lodge in the mountains.

SV: Sure, up by Blackfoot City?

OL: No, not that far away.

SV: Fell in love?

OL: Well, yes. We went that fall on a Saturday after we started going together. He brought me up here to show me where he was going to retire.

SV: That long ago he showed you that?

OL: He brought me up here to show me this country.

SV: How did he know this country?

OL: There were several men in Deer Lodge who had....I don't know if they bought the ground, but they had a cabin built so they must have (?) a little piece of ground. The cabin still sits down behind the store, the community hall; it sits right on the edge of the river. Today there are what a couple of homes down there? Nice homes. At that time just that cabin was there.

SV: Was it on this side of the river or across?

OL: No, on the highway side, on the east side of the river. As you go down around that hill you drive right in before you cross the bridge. You know you drive in...you know where I am?

SV: Yeah, okay.

OL: They came in only for hunting. This was a hunting lodge. And there were half a dozen of them, I guess, in on it. And my husband was friends and he came in with them. And he met Geta's dad at that time, he knew Geta's dad. And Forester's, have you ever heard people talk about the Forester's? Jess Forester. He built that cabin for these men.

SV: Yeah. Wow.

OL: Of course he also supervised the building of the community hall.

SV: I didn't know Jess Forester was in on that community hall.

OL: He supervised the building of it. Now, I was told that years ago. Look into it, because he should be given credit for it.

SV: That's right. I've seen little newspaper clippings with the date of when it was built but they don't give anyone credit for building it.

OL: Yeah, I don't know whether he completely supervised it or not, but I know he was one of the supervisors. I think maybe it was WPA funds or something that it was done with. Check that out to be sure. I used to have, I still have it somewhere, a picture of my husband and I helping them hay with a team from that area on the east side of the highway from the rodeo ground. There were no trees there. That was grass; they cut it with the mower.

SV: I would love to see that picture sometime.

OL: If I ever run into it, I'll give it to you.

SV: Great, we could put it in the archives.

OL: Because it is, it's a nice little picture. I had a lovely picture of Uno and Emma Strom and their daughter when she was probably eight or nine. Sitting on the steps of Lydia's little log cabin, the store.

SV: Lydia Strom?

OL: Yeah, and I gave it to them for their fiftieth anniversary book. They made a book.

SV: So the daughter might still have it?

OL: I would think she would. Yes. It would be in that book. Maybe she would give that to you too. Because that's history up here too.

SV: I think she's in Stevensville now.

OL: Yes. Just her and Emma.

SV: Emma's still alive?

OL: Oh, no. Emma's been dead for years.

SV: Emma's a sister then?

OL: No, Emma is Lydia's daughter-in-law. She was married to Uno Strom. There was Tano and Uno. Lydia's sons. They were half brothers, I think.

SV: It would be fun to see the old building though. The way it looked.

OL: I'm not sure that one of those cabins back up there isn't still the original store. There's a couple log cabins up at the store that I think they rent. And somebody could tell you probably.

SV: I should ask.

OL: Yes. I believe one of them was the original store.

SV: What did you think about the Swan Valley that first trip you came up here?

OL: Beautiful. It was beautiful. But it was so isolated. Old Pete Rude lived over here, and I'm not sure if anybody lived at the boy's school at that time. What was the name of the people that lived there later?

SV: Kattleson's should have been here until the '30s.

OL: I didn't know them. They were here I think, but at that time we only came occasionally.

SV: Dunlap's?

OL: Oh, yes! Chip and Bess Dunlap, yes.

SV: And you probably met them...

OL: I knew them well. We went back for (?)

SV: Do you remember the details of the first trip when you came up here?

OL: No.

SV: You probably just went to that cabin?

OL: I don't even know. I don't have any memory of seeing that cabin at that time, but we probably did. Oh, but the road at that time. It went around trees and pot holes were 6, 8 or 10 inches deep. Dust. Oh, my goodness, the dust. It was pure powder. All the shrubs and trees, you couldn't see green around the road, it was dust. Everything was covered in dust.

SV: This is the late 1930s right?

OL: Yes, the first time I was up was '36 and we were married in '37.

SV: So he liked to come up here to hunt.

OL: Oh, he loved this country. This was his dream. He would have loved to have lived way back in the top of some mountain.

SV: Why do you suppose he was so taken with it? What was it about the country that he liked so much?

OL: The isolation I think maybe. Completely away from people. Lots of men kind of like that idea, you know. I'm so thankful he wasn't able to get a place way back.

SV: Did he spend a lot of time hunting up here then?

OL: Oh, yes. Every year. After we were married we had horses and we'd trailer our horses up here and go hunting. Way over on Elk Creek.

SV: Elk hunting or deer hunting?

OL: Whatever.

SV: Do you remember him getting excited for hunting for trophies or just for meat?

OL: Oh, no. His was meat, trophies didn't...He loved to see a big one, but trophies, I never heard him use the term even. No, he was not a trophy hunter, he was a meat hunter. And we used it all. Now I don't even care if I ever have any, but in those days it made a big difference. And then we'd take them down to Conklin's. He had lockers at that time and he would cut your meat up and put it in the lockers for you.

SV: He must have had propane refrigeration?

OL: I have no idea.

SV: Was there electricity up here yet?

OL: Not then. Had to be propane. I never gave it any thought.

SV: Lockers, huh? Did you camp out when you came up here?

OL: Oh, no. We used the cabin. The men only came up for a hunting trip when they came and that was like once a year. And they wouldn't come and stay for like two weeks, all of them worked and had jobs they had to get back to. So the cabin was usually available to us. We used it for years.

SV: Must've been a cook stove in there?

OL: Cook stove, only a cook stove. I can remember we were up here over New Year's once.

SV: At that time up here, people hadn't discovered this as a trophy hunting place yet.

OL: Oh, no. I think just the two places were.... I don't know who owned the place up on top of the hill back here, but no one lived there when we were here.

SV: I don't remember either. Evelyn Jetty told me about those people. Might have been Peterson?

OL: I don't know. She would know. I think they lived on up the road here a little ways. And look how many there are living here now on this side of the river.

SV: This was a popular neighborhood then, though. Pete Rude evidently knew quite a few people...

OL: In those days there were so few people living up here everyone knew everyone else.

SV: Did your husband know Shorty Kessler?

OL: Just who he was I think. He had no occasion to meet him or anything. He may have met him sometime when they were out hunting and met up with him.

SV: If he hunted up Elk Creek then he must have fished up there too huh?

OL: He didn't do that much fishing. When he fished he fished in the Swan. He caught big nice trout in the Swan in those days. And white fish. He'd catch nice ones, I'd bake them.

SV: You must have driven up here?

OL: Yes, we had an old secondhand clunk.

SV: What was Seeley Lake like then?

OL: You ever hear of Fresh Hours in Seeley Lake? Well that was always a stopping off place for us when we'd come up on Friday night or whenever we came we stopped at Fresh Hours. Beautiful big old log building. I was just sick when that was burnt down. To me that was Seeley Lake. Weren't that many people there either, ya know.

SV: I don't even remember what time of year it was when it burned down.

OL: No, it burned down when we were home; we could come only on weekends because he worked for Montana Power. One time we came up on a Friday night. It was the winter time; we left Fresh Hours to come up to the cabin and in those days we had to bring all of our own bedding, all of my cooking utensils and everything, because there was nothing in that cabin--it was bare. Our cooking utensils and everything. There was no store, you brought your own things. I don't think Lydia had that little cabin.

SV: She would have just been building it I think.

OL: Yeah. I don't remember just when she built that. But I brought everything from home. We left Seeley Lake, I don't know, probably 10:30, 11:00 at night to come up here and somebody had plowed, but in those days when you plowed it just went one way and only one car, not the double track. And up on Coyote Hill when they plowed, whoever, there had been a big snowball that rolled back down on the road and froze there. And we came up on top of it with our car and tipped our car over right in the middle of the road. Now the road was only wide enough for the car, but it tipped the car over when it got up on the snowball. And I had everything with us, he had a rope that extended to the nearest tree, but I wasn't heavy enough, he needed more weight besides his and mine. So I made the bed out on the glass, the windows of the car and we

went to bed. There wasn't a soul came by until Jonny Hollopeter came by the next morning about eight o'clock on his way to Seeley. So he got on the rope with Dutch and they set the car back up, and there wasn't no window broken or nothing wrong, but the water had run out of the radiator. That was all that was wrong, so we came...(laughter)

SV: Do you remember what kind of car it was?

OL: You know, I don't remember. Secondhand, I know that, but I don't even know what kind of a car it was. I just don't remember.

SV: When you were living in Deer Lodge, did you come up by way of Helmville and Ovando, or did you go to Missoula and come up that way?

OL: By Helmville. By Drummond most of the time, because that road wasn't all it was supposed to be by Avon. Drummond Canyon and through Helmville and through Ovando. And when you left Helmville it was the old road to Ovando, it wasn't this new one.

SV: Kind of wound through the prairie?

OL: Around up on the bench, around Woodworth.

SV: So then you came out kind of on the old road kind of at the head of Salmon Lake there?

OL: Yes, past Big Sky Lake.

SV: That was Fish Lake then.

OL: Yes.

SV: I've heard it called Taupe Road.

OL: I don't know. Fish Lake. We drove in to see Fish Lake.

SV: There wasn't much at Seeley Lake then.

OL: No, no. There wasn't much. My goodness, over the years Seeley Lake has built up so. The whole country has.

SV: Do you remember past Coyote Hill, was Rovero's there?

OL: Yes, Rovero's. He was going to walk down to Rovero's to see if he could get a hold of Pete to come down and help him set the car back up. He stepped out on the road and it was so icy

he fell, the road was just like a skating rink, and that was enough of that. He got back in the car and we went to bed.

SV: Didn't freeze to death, you're still here today. (Chuckle)

OL: Oh, no. Those old quilts were warm and cozy. We enjoyed Kenny and Betty Freshour.

SV: I've seen pictures and heard stories about them.

OL: Oh, there're lots of stories.

SV: Fred Meshour must have been here?

OL: I didn't know him. We were close friends to Lydia and I heard her speak all of those names, but I didn't know any of them.

SV: What did Lydia Strom look like?

OL: She looked like a (?) person, and she had broken English. I just loved her. She was one, if she liked you she liked you, and if she disliked you she didn't hesitate to let you know it. Very down to earth person. In fact, when her and George got married they came over to visit us in Deer Lodge.

SV: George who?

OL: Gorman.

SV: Okay.

OL: I just couldn't believe what I was hearing when she came to tell me she'd married George.

SV: Was he from here?

OL: No. I'm not sure where he's from, I think Michigan years ago.

SV: Okay.

OL: But she just thought the world and all about him. He was good to her.

SV: She needed someone to be good to her.

OL: Yes, she did. She had worked hard all of her life. Poor old George, he'd go out on a toot, and he wouldn't come near her till he was sober. He'd stay away. He wouldn't even come home. He wouldn't come near her while he was still drunk.

SV: It protected her.

OL: Yes, it did protect her. I appreciated the fact that he was like that. I would imagine one time or another she had told him.

SV: I would think so, yeah. Was Liquid Louie's built yet?

OL: (laughter) Yes, we used to stop at Liquid Louie's. Now the old original Liquid Louie's was a cabin sitting in there on the river bank somewhere close to where Bill Loge's place is. A little log cabin and there was no electricity in the valley and my husband had beer and he would stop there for a beer and Louie would haul a beer out of a tub of ice. That was the way he kept he drinks cold, was ice. Now that's Mary Lou Wilhelm's dad.

SV: Did they have food there too, or was it just the bar?

OL: No, it was just the bar.

SV: I need to talk to Doris Haush about it too.

OL: Yeah. Later on....see, he built a home for them across the street, on the east side of the road where the bar is now. And later the turned that into a bar, I think that was after he died. Maim (?) Turned that into a bar. But he was just a likable guy.

SV: Well he had to be to be in the bar business. (Chuckle)

OL: Yes, he did.

SV: Just like Kenny and Betty Freshhour.

OL: Oh, they loved everybody. They just liked people. I agree with you, you have to like people to be able to take it.

SV: So you came up here in the winter?

OL: We were up here at least once every month. And it was an all-day trip up Saturday and an all-day trip home on Sunday almost, in those days.

I started to tell you once about when we were using that cabin. We were up over New Year's holiday and it was 40 below and there were bunks in one half of the cabin, and they were

partitioned off. We brought mattresses to the other room and put it on the table; that heater was only stove there was in the place, and it was just a cabin setup. Dutch got up every hour; we set the alarm clock and started the car every hour to make sure that we could go home the next day, New Year's Day. So he could go to work the next day. And the trees popped open from the cold, they froze, it sounded like a gun going off.

SV: The car still started?

OL: Starting it every hour kept the engine warm. If he hadn't done that we wouldn't have ever been able to get home. And a job was pretty important in those days.

SV Montana Power you said he worked for?

OL: Yes.

SV: Where did you end up going then? Did you stay at the bakery?

OL: Oh, no, no. He came into the bakery one day.... He got a job in Anaconda for the BAMP. He come into the bakery one day and said, "I want you to quit your job; we're going to get married." So that was the proposal. He did say, "Will you marry me?" (Laughter) So we got married and we moved to Anaconda. Worked there for a year and then back to Deer Lodge. And then it wasn't too long after that he went to work steady for the Montana Power.

SV: Well, all of those towns had electricity?

OL: Yes, we had electricity in town.

[End of Tape 1, Side B]

[Tape 2, Side A]

SV: You must have camped at the cabin for a long time before you actually bought land here?

OL: You, know, we bought the land from Dutch's brother, Morris. Did you ever hear of Morris Lake?

SV: Yes.

OL: He and his wife moved up here from Deer Lodge, some years before we came.

SV: Did he work at the Wine Glass?

OL: Oh, yes.

SV: Morris did?

OL: Morris did, and he worked for ACM too, at the old camp--I always say the Four Corners.

SV: Woodworth?

OL: Woodworth! Why can't I remember that name? It's not that difficult. Yeah, the old logging camp, he worked up there. A lot of the older men knew Morris, worked with him one place on another. He wanted to sell some of it, so we bought half of his property. And you know, I don't remember when that was, but that has to be in the '40s or early '50s.

SV: So Dutch was convinced and maybe you were too that you wanted to have your own place here.

OL: Oh, wherever he'd gone I'd gone. I though Broadus was the end of the earth, but if he had wanted to go back to Broadus I would have gone with him probably. I told him if he ever wanted a divorce just to tell me that he was gonna move me back to Broadus and I'd divorce him, 'cause I didn't ever want to go back there. But it never came to that.

SV: I don't think that I have any pictures of Dutch, if you run across any early pictures of him I would like to copy them for the history project.

OL: Oh, I have pictures of him I'll find one someday and that other one too. I have a million pictures.

SV: You probably have some from trips up here and visits up here?

OL: You know, it's been so long, I'll have to look.

SV: Well, if you run across one...

OL: That was taken down in Yuma. (referring to a picture she had of Dutch)

SV: Beautiful sunny day, huh?

OL: Yeah it was a lovely day. Isn't that bougainvillea beautiful.

SV: Handsome!

OL: He was a good guy! Yeah, we had 56 years together.

SV: Did you guys have kids?

OL: Just Mike, and he's my sister's boy. No, we didn't have children of our own.

SV: What happened to your sister?

OL: My sister got infection from teeth and tonsils and it got in her bloodstream and killed her. When she was two and a half. She was ill for a long time, and the doctor told me that had he been able to use penicillin he could have saved her life, but at that time they were using it only for servicemen. It wasn't for public use, but he said he could have saved her life with it, killed the infection. She was just two and a half when she died and my mother was taking care of her when she died and she had asked my mother to ask Dutch and I to please raise her boy. And her husband went along with it. He told me after the services, he said now, if I haven't...well, he drove one of those big cross country busses.

SV: Oh sure, like a Greyhound or something.

OL: Yeah, he worked for a Greyhound at that time, and he wasn't home a lot and he told us if he had not taken him back within six months, he would never take him from us, and he kept his word.

SV: Oh, what a hard thing.....

OL: Yeah it was hard, but he made our life for us. Gave us stability.

SV: He got to come up here on your hunting trips.

OL: Oh yes, you bet he did!

SV: 'Cause he seems to remember pretty well....

OL: Oh, well he came up here often, oh yes he came up here. See, Morris, the brother, had two boys and he used to come up and stay maybe a week or a few days with them at a time. And they fished and hiked.

It's my fire alarm you hear beeping, I think it needs new batteries.

SV: That's usually what it is. Yep. So you bought the property over here...

OL: And then we had an opportunity to get one of those cabins so we had it hauled down in the winter, skidded down on a couple of trees.

SV: And this is Rauther who had the Wine Glass Mill?

OL: Yes, the mill.

SV: And the mill had closed up and they moved those cabins out of there.

OL: You know, there are a lot of homes in this battle that are made from these and ours is one of them over there.

SV: Skidded in the winter, huh?

OL: You skidded it out in the winter and then it sat along the road there where the yard is now for, oh gee, I think it was the second year, we had Chip Dunlap come down and in the meantime Dutch had put a block foundation up for it and Chip moved it with his equipment onto the foundation.

SV: I should go around and take pictures of these houses just for fun.

OL: This was one of the cabins from Rauther Mill. Did you know Lois Camel?

SV: No.

FO: Didn't know her. She had a little picture about three or four inches square hanging in her room. She had a stroke and couldn't talk or anything, and I used to visit her in...what's the town beyond Missoula?

SV: Stevensville?

OL: No, Hamilton, in the little rest home there. In her room she had this little picture hanging, and it was a...someone had drawn that picture of our little cabin. They had passed one time, I wanted that picture so badly after she died, but her niece I guess has it. I would just give

anything to have that little picture. They had sketched it. I looked at it and said, "That's our cabin, Lois!"

SV: Did the main highway go right close to your house here?

OL: At the time...that's something you should follow! No, the main road went up on top of the hill, just a matter of yards from the top of the hill on Glacier Creek. There's that old road that you can see there. You know where Dolores Birch lives?

SV: Yeah.

OL: She lives on that old road. That road that goes by her place is the old road, and it goes down across through, you know where....Jan Moore's ex-husband...

SV: Oh, Dwayne Forder?

OL: Yeah, Dwayne Forder, the road went right between those two homes there. That was the old road. You'd enjoy following that old road sometime.

SV: I need to do that. I'm familiar with it in a couple other parts of the valley, but right in here I don't know. So to get to this road where your house, where did you come off of the old road?

OL: Right where we do now. See, this guest ranch was over there, Pete Rude's home was here. There were two or three old homesteads back through here. That road was there.

SV: So what happened to Morris's property? He sold half of it to you guys...

OL: Yes, he kept the other half and ended up selling part of it to Charlie Goff, and Boyd Kessler.

SV: So that's the way it laid in here, kind of a rectangle on the river. How long before you started staying in the new house then?

OL: Oh, we stayed in it with the wallpaper hanging down, and it used to be you had to stand up to look out the windows. They were little, the way they built them houses, the men must have built them. The women didn't have any say, because none of them could look out the windows. If you were sitting down all you could see was sky up there. Oh my, we had it like that for several...we didn't have money to go ahead with it and fix it up, so we just enjoyed it. I've got pictures of having parties with the wall paper coming, it didn't stop us a bit from really enjoying it. As soon as we got it on the blocks.

SV: But you didn't have electricity then, did you?

OL: Oh, no. I don't remember the year electricity came in here.

SV: Yeah. Late 50's, I think.

OL: Was it? I just couldn't remember. We got it as soon as it was in.

SV: So you must have had an outhouse?

OL: Oh yes. It's still out there.

SV: You didn't have indoor plumbing then.

OL: Oh no, there was no plumbing. Dutch rigged up a long rope, that rope that anchored to the other side...the river has changed in there. At one time the river was right under that hill. Oh, it's changed its course so much in there. It's come this way. We used to have a potato patch over where the river is now. On that little island over there, we had a patch of potatoes over there. He rigged up a long rope with a pail on it and anchored it with a pulley, anchored it on the far side, so we would just let it down and the pail would get full of water and we would pull it up. We did that for several years.

SV: Did you get a fish in it once and a while?

OL: No, never did that.

SV: Were there any springs up and down the river.

OL: Yes, there's a spring. I don't know if I can...I haven't been over there in years. There was a spring on this side of the river. Kind of you know where you go around the road and you kind of come up the bank. Yeah, down in there, there used to be a nice spring. I don't know if it's still there or not.

SV: Yeah. Mike might know.

OL: He might.

SV: It just sounds like almost the ideal "getaway spot."

OL: It was. It was. We both just have loved it and enjoyed it so. Oh, we've had so many of our Deer Lodge friends come over and visit with us, and we just really enjoyed that home. From the time the wallpaper was hanging.

SV: I'm surprised there was even wall paper in it at that camp.

OL: Yep, it had three or four layers. Some woman had made a home out of it. There were three or four layers of wall paper on it, so when it hung it hung heavy.

SV: Is the little cabin at Nan Nelson's...

OL: Those were some. And Evelyn Jetty's. Down at Evelyn's, some of those. And I've heard of several of them around here that remolded them, but I can't think who it was.

SV: You'll find out. Make a list of them. They were all kind of built the same way, right?

OL: Yeah. Ours was three rooms....no four rooms. 'Cause it was a kitchen, a real small one, and a partition, and we took the partition out, and a living room and two bedrooms. They were all small rooms, but, you know, four rooms.

SV: Pretty cozy really.

OL: Oh yes, yes. And there were some with one bedroom, whether there were more like that I don't know, there could have been.

SV: I wonder how Morris ever got interested in buying property here?

OL: He had a friend up here who used to be a barber in Deer Lodge. Now, how he got up here I don't know, but he came up here and bought a piece of property and he loved it up here. Morris and his wife used to come up here and visit. And it was through him that Morris bought the property. But before he ever bought that property Dutch brought me up before we were ever married, so I knew where it was.

SV: I wonder why the isolation was attractive to those guys?

OL: Some instinct in them. Probably some sort of romantic instinct of being self... what am I trying to say? Being totally independent. I don't know. Probably like a cat ends up after birds, instinct within them. Caveman, something. (Chuckle) I don't really know. He just loved the country. He thought the big trees were so beautiful, and of course so many of those trees are gone now, long gone. But the freedom that was up here you know...he loved the privacy that went with...I don't know what makes a man feel that, I've known other men who felt that way though. Just love to get off by themselves completely.

SV: Did the country look any different then, than it does now?

OL: Oh, sure. The trees were all there. You didn't see a house every so often on the road, those houses were few and far in between. Oh, yes. It was a long way you'd have to walk if you ever got in trouble, to get help.

SV: What about telephones?

OL: Oh, telephone came in lots later. I can't tell you what year it came in either, but it was... I don't know how much longer after electricity the telephone, probably not too long. See in those days we were coming up on weekends and on vacations and at that time I was working.

SV: Where were you working?

OL: Oh, I worked for the Milwaukee Railroad. When Mickey went to high school, started high school, I went to work for the Milwaukee Railroad.

SV: And you stayed there then until you retired.

OL: Yeah, I worked there 17 years.

SV: Oh my word. Did you enjoy it?

OL: Oh, I loved it. I still keep in contact with the girls in the office who are still living. I had one girl who called me last week from Denver. She had moved from Helena and one of the other girls told me she had moved and she hadn't let me know. She called me from Denver to tell me where she was. One from California, and we talked every couple weeks or so, and she's gone now. Another one lives in California, she and her husband were here to visit me this summer. And there's two in Deer Lodge that I go and visit. They were both up to see me, no one wasn't here this summer, but the other one was up and spent several days with me.

SV: You kind of like people too, don't you.

OL: Oh, I love people. I like people. You know, we have people who don't want to be around other people, but I'm not one of them.

SV: Was Dutch a people person or was he kind of...

OL: Oh, certain people. He liked his privacy.

SV: It sounds like it.

OL: Yeah, hunting an isolated spot like this. No, he...certain people he just loved dearly, and he had a wonderful sense of humor. Never hesitated to tell a tale on himself, you know, he had a great sense of humor.

SV: Do you remember any funny stories that he told about hunting or.....

OL: No.

SV: Have to think about that. Did you go hunting with him then?

OL: I did up 'til the time I started working. We used to bring several with us up to the cabin in hunting season, and I was cook. Chief cook and bottle washer. Now my husband was a great cook, he could put a mean dinner out, but of course it's easier if you're out hunting all day to have somebody else do that cooking.

SV: What kind of things did you have fun cooking up here?

OL: Oh, in the cabin down there like that in the old wood stove, roast, stew, in the old Dutch ovens. Hot cakes for breakfast and deer steak to go with the hot cakes. Oh, yes.

SV: Did you pick huckleberries in the summer?

OL: No, my husband didn't care much for huckleberries. And I suppose I didn't just because he.....I like 'em, I love to eat 'em right off the bush. But there's a lot of things I don't do anymore because I'm alone.

SV: What about hiking and that kind of thing—did you go for hikes up here?

OL: Oh, Gyda and...did you know Peggy Cratser? Gyda and Peggy and I have had the most wonderful hikes. I've been up to upper Rumble. Sure I have. In my 60s, after I retired. Turquoise Lake, the top of Lindy peak. Have you been to any of those places?

SV: No, maybe when I retire. (laughter)

OL: Well, it's never too late. Gyda and Peggy and I had such wonderful, wonderful hikes.

SV: What was the prettiest place?

OL: I think they are all gorgeous. I think Lindy Peak is my favorite because one time when I was up there we with Peggy, I believe, I won't swear to it, but I believe that she counted and named 13 lakes around us. See, the peak itself you're on top so you can look around on all sides, and she looked down and named these lakes.

SV: Gyda must have known the way up there.

OL: We didn't follow any path; we went right up the ridge. Well, Peg did too. She and Burl packed for somebody who used to live on Lindbergh Lake and I don't know who it was, for two or three years. So she was very familiar with that area down around by Lindbergh.

SV: Might have been Did Hickey?

OL: Could have been. I didn't know him, but it easily could have been.

SV: Is Peggy still alive?

OL: Oh yes, they were here to see me this summer.

SV: Burl's still alive?

OL: Oh, yes. Burl's still alive. Yeah, they were here to visit this summer.

SV: Okay, I should visit with them because he worked for the Forest Service.

OL: Oh well, they live....It's doubtful that you'll ever see them unless you go to Arkansas. She said that they had been wanting to come back so badly, and that his ex-wife and the kids live up in Eureka. He comes every year and visits the kids. And she decided that if she was gonna get Burl back here, she had better bring him this year because who knows next year.

SV: Maybe I could write them a letter.

OL: She would be tickled to death to have you write and ask questions!

SV: I'll do that.

OL: Do that! Oh, she would answer you.

SV: When you were coming up here in the summers or on your vacations there were no churches up here, were there?

OL: No, oh no. My goodness. Now, after Main moved the bar over into the house. You remember Fran and Dorothy Major?

SV: Yeah.

OL: Dorothy started a café in the old bar, was it in the old bar? I think it was. And I think it was in that same building. Now I don't know when that happened either.

SV: I bet Doris Haush had it written somewhere.

OL : She could have.

SV: They built the café up here, so then you had a café.

OL: We had a café.

SV: So there was the Gordon Ranch when you come over top, there was the Gordon Ranch as far as landmarks. What about the Rumble Creek mail drop, was that here?

OL: That little building there? Oh yes, that was there for years, when I first came up here.

SV: They probably wouldn't have still been using it though.

OL: No, as far as I knew they weren't using it at that time.

SV: There were bridges across the river...

OL: But they were not the bridges that were there today. It's a concrete bridge today. This bridge was put in, oh my, ten, fifteen, maybe fifteen years ago. I can remember them men finishing it off in November and it turned cold, something like 30 below and those men were down there working and I thought, oh, terribly cold. But ten, fifteen years ago that was put in. Suppose they'll ever get the bridge in behind the community hall? What did you start to ask me?

SV: Do you remember any floods?

OL: Oh yes, I've got a picture! I'll have to get those pictures out and go through them for you because I'll pick them out when I find something. I really will, I have no use for them. Mary Lou Wilhelm came down to our house one day during the week and it's been years ago and that water was from one side of the valley to the other. It was a huge runoff, and I have no idea what year it was. She's gone, she would maybe be able to tell you awfully close.

SV: I'd better interview her.

OL: Yeah, well she's in California now, but she'll be back. Oh, Mary Lou could tell you lots of things.

SV: What about forest fires? Do you remember any forest fires, or were you here?

OL: No, I don't remember forest fire except coming along the Blackfoot River over by Sperry Grade. Now we came through there on two different occasions when that hill side was all a fire. There was fire on both side of the road. But that's the only...there was a small one down along the road, I think it was not too far this side of lake Inez, on the east side of the highway. There was a small fire there that really took the trees out. But they caught it real quickly. Today it's just a little tamaracks probably just twelve or fifteen feet high, just into each other you know, so thick. I'm very thankful I don't have any remembering of forest fires.

SV: Did you guys ever go up to Holland Lake Lodge, just to visit or to go to a party or something at the lodge?

OL: We used to go up there for dinner years ago, but I don't think I was ever up there for a party.

SV: Right. So when did you retire? When you retired you moved here?

OL: Oh yes. Well, my husband retired a year before I did. I wanted to get 20 years in, and I was gonna work those years. I had four more when he quit, but after one year of him living up here and me there, I thought, this is for the birds and all for a few dollars, not worth it, so I quit. And then in a short time, three or four years the Milwaukee was closed anyway. It was going downhill badly, had been for a number of years.

[End of Interview]