

This is an interview with Olive Randall on June 20, 1975 in St. Maries, Idaho and the interviewer is Erma Wood.

EW: What do you want to start with, the things you enjoy about living in St. Maries, would that be alright?

OR: I think it's a small place where you know everyone and I think that's an advantage, don't you?

EW: Do you know everybody in town, is everybody your friend?

OR: I think it's more enjoyable than a large place because you don't hardly know anyone, even you next door neighbor in these large cities.

EW: I think that's an advantage, definitely. How does your family life compare with the life with you as a child either financially or free time.

OR: Well I was raised in a small place, too; everybody knew everybody in those days too.

EW: Did you live on a farm?

OR: On a homestead; we had a garden and we lived just out of Sandpoint a ways and I went to a rural school until I went to high school in Sandpoint.

EW: How long did you know the man you married?

OR: I knew him three years before we were married.

EW: Were there unusual circumstances when you met him, where did you meet him?

OR: He came to a dance and out of all the girls he chose me to dance with first; so I don't know, I guess he just liked me.

EW: What were your expectations of marriage?

OR: Just to be married and the main thing was to love each other and get along and I always figured it was a 50-50 thing.

EW: What medical services were available to you when you were having your children?

OR: Well there was a doctor.

EW: Did the doctor come to your house or did you go to the hospital?

OR: We went to the hospital.

EW: In Sandpoint?

OR: Yes, they had one in St. Maries, too when my children were born.

EW: What factors most affected the number of children you had?

Where did you get your knowledge about childbirth and childrearing?

OR: I don't know, I just; I suppose from older women.

EW: Possibly your mother?

OR: Oh yes, I suppose my mother and neighbor ladies.

EW: How has the role of your children changed since you had children?

OR: Well they've grown up and are on their own, have families of their own.

And grandchildren and great grandchildren that I enjoy.

EW: What do you personally do for recreation?

OR: I belong to some many lodges and two or three clubs and the Senior Citizens and we dance every Saturday.

EW: Oh you do, that's a nice thing to do. Do you go to the Elks to dance?

OR: Well I haven't in quite a few years because my sons aren't here, I used to when they were here. We go over to the Eagles to dance but mostly down here at the center.

EW: Thinking back what are some of the things you've done to help support your family? And I suppose that would be to raise a garden.

OR: I just made a home for them and raised a nice garden. and

EW: Did you have cows?

OR: Oh yes, we had cows and chickens.

EW: How do you; has there ever been a time when you had the major responsibility of your family?

OR: Yes part of the time when the children were growing up and going to school here in town. My husband worked out in the timber. He was gone a week at a time.

EW: Then you had full responsibility of the children. But you have never had to help support them?

OR: Oh no I've never had to.

EW: What community activities have you been involved in?

OR: I belong to the Home Demonstration Club.

EW: I heard you mention Senior Citizens.

OR: I was taking an active club in the Senior Citizens in hopes of getting it going. I had belonged quite a number of years to the Grandmother's Club. Yes I've been the grandmother of the year, too.

EW: What do you do at the grandmother's club?

OR: We have a business meeting once a month and at the second meeting of the month, we play cards and we've always had quite an active club.

EW: Would you tell something about the Senior Citizens club?

OR: We have a potluck dinner once a month and every Saturday afternoon we dance. We have two meetings a month, business meetings and once a month we gather and I'll take time in putting out a little paper. We put out a little paper called "The Sparkler" Of course there's two of the ladies that kind of go ahead and plan the articles to be put in the paper and we all gather there on a certain date and address those and send them out in the mail.

EW: Who do they go to?

OR: To all our members and we have about 300 members.

EW: That's quite a bit of doing.

OR: And then we take turn and two of us will kind of take care of the club for a week at a time and do the janitor work, sell the rummage and answer the telephone. and

EW: Somebody told me the club wasn't funded by anything.

OR: We had government help to start with and we gave food sales and rummage sales and all different things to bring in money and we finally; when the business men of the town donated money to help us get started and we soon was able to get away from the government help. So we paid for our building, which was 16,000 dollars and we paid for that in just a

little over a year.

EW: And you earn all your own money?

OR: Yes. Our rummage that we sell helps pay our expenses and also we have every Tuesday night, Bingo which brings in money. For a long time we saved the aluminum beer cans and sold those and got quite a bit of money. At a sell we go through our rummage and pick out the things that don't sell well and make good rags and send them to the plywood mill. And that brings in quite a little bit for us.

OR: He went to work for the mill Lumber Company and he worked up by Fernwood and then they changed; he started to go up Alder Creek to log, so my husband found a homestead cabin for us to live in so we moved up there. Just took some bedding, dishes and clothing. We sort of camped out all winter and we didn't have only one near neighbor and I just thought I had moved to the end of the world when I got there, six miles from the railroad. We spent a good winter and there was a post office about a mile from us and a little grocery store called Sebestus Post Office.

EW: Was that there in Fernwood?

OR: No, in Alder Creek what they call the Benewah Country. We used to buy fresh meat and eggs from this little store.

EW: Can you tell about the shoveling?

OR: Well I was going to; the part that my neighbor wanted me to tell was how I came from Spokane on the train and changed trains here in St. Maries and went up the branch line and got up off the mouth of Alder Creek and rode the log train about four miles up the canyon and ate lunch at a logging camp then rode the log train up another two or three miles and that's where we went to find this cabin and moved into it.

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EW: You said you were lonesome in Spokane.

OR: I lived alone in Spokane a month and was feeling lonesome and I told my

husband that I would gladly live in any kind of a little cabin if I could be close to where he could be home so he found a cabin for us to live in, it was a homestead cabin and so I came to St. Maries on the train and I came up to the branch line on the train and the log train met me at the mouth of Alder Creek and I rode the log train for about four miles and got off and ate lunch at a logging camp and got on the log train and rode about three miles farther and got off and walked in about an inch of snow in high heel shoes and finally came to the cabin but the funny part of it was the way I was dressed. I had on real nice dress, a black satin skirt and a Georgetta crepe waist with it and a black plush coat with a big fur collar and here I was riding in a greasy engine and I don't know why I didn't have rubbers on. Leaving Spokane and knowing I was going to the woods.

EW: You said the hoop skirt was a problem?

OR: Well yes, I had to climb up in the engine which was a long step and I had on a hobble skirt and I had to pull myself up to sit in that greasy engine. We finally came to the log cabin and lived there all winter and I thought I had come to the end of civilization, I was six miles from the railroad, never had been that far away in the woods and had one neighbor, an elderly lady who hadn't been to St. Maries, only once in eight years so she couldn't tell me very many interesting things. Luckily we were only about a mile and a half from a little grocery store and a little post office and we used to buy fresh meat and eggs there so we managed to lived there all winter and I did lots of fancy work and read lots of stories and I thought If I ever live through this winter, I'd be glad to go back to town but I lived there nine years.

EW: Did you have a woodstove?

OR: Oh yes we had a woodstove, hubby carried a water, we had a nice spring close to the; we finally bought land and lived for nine years out there.

The youngsters were old enough to go to school and we moved into town and

I've lived in St. Maries ever since.

(end of interview, tape 12 side 2)

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