

INTERVIEW SUMMARY-TAPE INDEX

NAME: Betty Smith
DATE OF INTERVIEW:
LOCATION:
INTERVIEWER:
REEL NO.

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This is an interview with Betty Smith on May 11, 1975 in Kooskia, Idaho. The interviewer is Eileen Bouchard.

EB: From Kooskia, Idaho and this is the Rural History Women's Project.

Betty, what is your maiden name?

BS: Betty Virginia Thies

EB: And when were you born?

BS: Feb. 25, 1938.

EB: Where were you born?

BS: Spokane, Washington.

EB: Where was your first home in Idaho?

BS: I grew up on a farm five miles west of Worley.

EB: And you were born in Idaho so you never did have to immigrate here.

BS: No my folks lived there; I lived in the same house from the time I was born until the time I was married.

EB: How old were you when you got married?

BS: I was 16.

EB: And how did your family get around when you were a little girl?

BS: They had an old car, I think it was about a 1930 Chevrolet and then later, I imagine when I was about five years old he had an old old pickup.

EB: Now I'm gonna ask you a few questions about your family background.

What was your mother's maiden name?

BS: Bernadine Haisington.

EB: What nationality is that?

BS: The last name is English but she's a mixture of about seven different nationalities.

EB: I was gonna ask if there was any particular nationality that it settled the area your parents lived in.

BS: Mostly English and German.

EB: And what was your mother's occupation?

BS: Well she just worked helping the farmer's wives up until she got married and she was a housewife.

EB: And when was your mother born?

BS: In 1906, July 8th.

EB: And what was her place of birth?

BS: Well she called it the Big Bend Country. It was over around Koulee Dam somewhere.

EB: Big Bend Country; I wonder why they called it that.

BS: Well it was just the big dusty desert. It's where all the dust storms form up.

EB: Like a dust bowl.

BS: Yeah

EB: And your mother's still living?

BS: Yes

EB: When was your mother married?

BS: In 1925

EB: What was your father's name?

BS: John Henry Thies

EB: And what was his occupation?

BS: He was a farmer and then later he worked as a carpenter, too.

EB: Did he have a wheat farm or what kind of a farm did he have?

BS: Mostly wheat; little oats and barley and grew some grass seed and raised his own hay.

EB: How large was his farm?

BS: Just 160 acres.

EB: Were farms generally smaller then, the wheat farms, than they are now?

BS: In that area but his was one of the smallest ones around.

EB: And he made it alright on that?

BS: Yeah that's all he did until after I was married and then he started carpentering for my cousin.

EB: And when was your father born?

BS: In 1905

EB: And where was he born?

BS: In Fairfield, Wash.

EB: And your father is also living?

BS: Yes.

EB: And did you have any sisters or brothers?

BS: I've got one sister, Arlene Glenda Kohler.

EB: Where does Arlene live now?

BS: In Coeur d'Alene.

EB: What is your husband's name?

BS: Robert Melvin Smith.

EB: And what is his occupation?

BS: He's a logger but the last six years he's worked as an outfitter and guide whenever there is a hunting season for anything.

EB: What is an outfitter?

BS: They take out of state hunters and he used to set up hunting camps and have horses but he's gotten rid of all of them and he only guides now.

EB: And what about his trapping, is that still an occupation?

BS: In the wintertime he traps.

EB: What does he trap?

BS: Oh Bobcats and coyotes mainly.

EB: And what does he do with the animals after he traps them?

BS: He traps them for a buyer.

EB: And what is his date of birth?

BS: 1933.

EB: And where was he born?

BS: Aberdene, Washington.

EB: And what was the date and the place you were married?

BS: We were married in Coeur d'Alene Idaho in 1954.

EB: And how old is your husband now?

BS: 42.

EB: And what are your children's names?

BS: I've got five children, Terry Lee, Theodore Joe, Kelly Lynn, Becky Sue and Shelly Terena.

EB: And are any of them working?

BS: The two oldest boys work in the woods.

EB: What do they do?

BS: They're loggers mainly hooking.

EB: Do they work for a logging company?

BS: They worked with their dad; they contracted a job last year but this year they hope to go to work for one of the other loggers.

EB: That sounds like a pretty good job.

BS: Teddy is working on a saw mill right now.

EB: How old is Teddy?

BS: He's 18.

EB: How old is Terry?

BS: He's 19.

EB: And Terry did something interesting just recently, didn't he?

BS: Yeah he was in that movie, "Breakhart Pass" He worked as a cavalry man and he also played an Indian for a couple of days.

EB: How did he get into that?

BS: He heard that they needed some local people for cavalry and he went down there and they told him to come back on a certain day and they signed him up.

EB: Did he enjoy it?

BS: He had a lot of fun. He really liked most of the stars that he got to work with.

EB: He got to know them?

BS: Most of them; they didn't see to much of the star, Charles Bronson but this Ben Johnson, he really got to know him and we think that someday he might come out and go bear hunting with us. He wants to guide him on a bear hunt.

EB: That would really be fun.

EB: Ok what about your education?

BS: I went just 2 years to high school and I went and got married.

EB: What skills have you learned throughout your life?

BS: Well just a little bit of everything; when I was home I helped my dad in the fields. He didn't have a boy to help him so I did it and I drove a tractor in the hay field and when I was old enough I learned to drive a grain truck and wheat. I milked cows and did gardening; then later when I got married I of course learned to cook and sew and I helped build our house, I put the roof on, put the floor in and what I could do and I like to do minor home repairs, wire light fixtures and plug ins and I like to overhaul lamps and things like that. I love to bake bread, I do all the painting here in the house and I like to sew, I made my drapes and I make a lot of my girls and my own clothes.

EB: Do you reupholster?

BS: Yeah I reupholstered a chair; I've learned to knit and crochet and most of the time I'm pretty busy cooking for the hunters.

EB: That's a pretty big job; about how many hunters do you cook for?

BS: Well of course I've got a large family so I always so I always include them but I cook for as many as 22 or 23 people.

EB: And you've even chopped some wood in your days?

BS: Until my boys got big enough, I chopped my own wood. I'm here alone so much that I had to learn to do it or I'd freeze.

EB: What are your hobbies or other interests outside of work around the home?

BS: Well that keeps me pretty busy but in the summer I like to go swimming.

BS: Of course I always had to go with the kids when they were small and we like to go out hiking and take movies.

EB: Do you swim right out here in the river at all or do you swim elsewhere?

BS: No just the river; the first time I got in the pool I just about couldn't swim.

EB: It's a little bit different. What to you are the advantages or disadvantages of living here in the rural area?

BS: Well the shopping isn't as good as if you're closer to a bigger town. If we want to buy like a lot of groceries, cases of things, we have to go to Lewiston. And of course, when you are looking for clothes you don't get near as big a choice. But as far as I know that's the only disadvantage there is to living away from the city.

EB: What about medical facilities and all that are they pretty adequate?

BS: Not really. If there is anything seriously wrong, we go go Lewiston. The doctors here are ok for a penicillin shot but if it's serious I like to go to a specialist.

EB: What about the advantages of living here?

BS: I think for kids it's so much better, they are away from all this city life and they learn to get out and work and we've got this mountain here above our place and the boys practically grew up on that mountain and they've learned to hunt. One boy spent the night out alone in the woods one fall; he got separated when they were Elk Hunting and he knew where he was until it got dark and he couldn't see to get back. He made it just fine. He knew enough to lay down in one place and he said he even slept part of the night and he didn't panic. I was real proud of him.

EB: Do you think your boys are pretty self sufficient. They could take care of themselves if they had to?

BS: I think they would if they are in this kind of country but if they went to a city they would be just lost.

EB: How would you compare your life as a rural woman with that of an urban woman?

BS: Well I wouldn't trade with them. I like being out where we can be fairly by ourselves and not a lot of people around. I don't think the crime is as bad. I'm not afraid to let the boys walk to the neighbors after dark. We never lock our doors at night until we go to bed; we don't have to worry, of course we have enough dogs to warn us if anyone comes around but even for entertainment I think it's so much cheaper. Anything you want to do in the city, you have to pay, it cost money and here if you want something to do you can drive for a mile and you are by the river. You can have a picnic or go swimming or hunt mushrooms or pick flowers and it doesn't cost you anything.

EB: Do you do a lot of that with your kids?

BS: Yes when the weather is nice we are always out by the river.

EB: In the summertime you do a lot of things outdoors together?

BS: Yes, it's so much cooler, you can drive up the river and when you hit the 23-mile mark you can just feel the temperature dropping. On the weekends we like to go up and stay until evening and come back to town and you can just feel the heat when you drive back into town, it's so much hotter here.

EB: So you don't think you would trade for the life of a city woman?

BS: Never.

EB: You like it here in this life?

BS: Yes definitely.

EB: How does your family now compare to family life when you were a child?

BS: Well it's quite different. Out on the farm it seemed like my dad was always busy. Sunday was no different than any other day, if there was work to be done he did it and we hardly ever went anywhere and there was no one to play with but just my sister. Company was one of the biggest deals there could be. We were thrilled to death when we seen a car coming. Of

course here we have company nearly all the time. My kids have never been alone. Of course there is a lot of the hunters that stay with us. I enjoy people, I like to be around people and I would get lonesome if I lived on a farm where I didn't see anyone.

EB: Do you think a lot of people today have forgotten how to be alone?

BS: Yes I do; and I think they've forgotten how to get along without the modern things like television. When ours broke down I was glad. It was so peaceful and we played cards and of course we had the radio and the phonograph and we liked to play games together in the evening. Checkers or any kind of games and I really didn't miss the TV at all.

EB: That's good, I don't like TV much myself.

How was your life then, financially compared to now? Were you more self-sufficient or did you have much money?

BS: No my folks were really quite poor when I was born and they just have the small farm and up until he got the farm paid for things were really tough. Like when I was in the first grade I think I had two winter dresses and my mother made them and I can remember she even made my coats. We got two pair of shoes a year. We got a pair to start school and usually about February we would have to have another pair and those would have to last us until the next fall.

EB: Did you mother make a lot of the things that you would buy now like soap just around the house things, clothes and things that people buy today?

BS: Yes she made nearly all of our clothes. She even made our underwear. She made us flannel bloomers which I hated, but they were sure warm and I had to wear the old long brown socks because we had so far to walk to school and it was so cold.

EB: What about heating and all that, did you have a wood stove?

BS: They always had a wood stove and she always did her own canning and like you said, making soap.

EB: Did she do any spinning or weaving herself?

BS: Not that I can remember of, I don't think she did.

EB: What about free time, what did you use to do with your free time?

BS: Well I remember I used to get awful lonesome. In the summer especially when it was hot, we had an awful time trying to find a way to entertain ourselves because like I said, I only had one sister and she was nearly four years older than I was but it seemed there was always something to do if we really wanted to do it, you know kids get bored.

EB: You couldn't just get in the truck and drive out to the country for a picnic?

BS: No we hardly ever did that. It was really a big deal then.

EB: It was kind of an extravagance wasn't it?

BS: Well you had to go so far to find a lake or real woods or anything like that. It seemed like dad was always busy. He worked awful hard, long hours.

EB: What were some of the things you and your sister did when you were children?

BS: Well we both like dolls, we played dolls an awful lot together and we had this little game where we pretended to be teenagers. We even made up a favorite name for each other.

EB: What were your names?

BS: I think that mine was Peggy but I can't remember for sure, but we even had a pretend boyfriend. His name was Duane and my sister's was Glen til we outgrew that.

EB: Were you expected to go on to school to high school or anything?

BS: Well my sister graduated from High School. She was Valedictorian of her class. I was never real good in school; I got passing grades but when I got up around the seventh grade I didn't really enjoy school. I met Bob and we knew each other for nearly two years and I think my folks knew in the back of their minds that I was going to get married before I finished.

EB: How old were you when you got married?

BS: I lacked three months of being 17. We came from a real small school, there was only 35 in the whole high school and it wasn't the ideal school. You didn't have much choice of what subjects you took. I never really thought too much about what I wanted to be. I guess I just knew I was going to get married.

EB: How did you meet Bob?

BS: That's a long story. My sister met his little brother in the bus depot in Spokane and I was with her but I never said nothing to him and he took her name and address and he was my age and about a year later Bob decided he wanted to write to a girl, he was too bashful to go meet one. So he wrote to my sister and they wrote for maybe six months when one day he came to see her and she already had a boyfriend so she told me not to let her boyfriend know that Bob had come to see her so I just acted like I knew him and he got kind of serious right away and I told him I was too young to get serious and it hurt his feelings and he thought I didn't like him so he brought his younger brother out and thought I might like him. It was quite a mix up before we finally decided that I knew he was the one I wanted.

EB: It was pretty complicated with all the sisters and brothers.

BS: Very

EB: How old was Bob when you got married?

BS: He was almost 21, he just lacked a month.

EB: And you had know him and his brother for about two years before you got married?

BS: Yes.

EB: What do you remember about the things you did together during your courtship before you were married?

BS: We didn't get to do very much because he was too poor. He had to drive

about 180 miles to see me. When he would come up he would always stay a few days and we never did have the money to go anywhere. We just stayed there at home and I guess we watched Tv in the evenings and we used to go for walks after it cooled off. Later on he brought my sister and I down here to meet his folks and we were about four days here. One day his mother, two brothers and his sister took my sister and I all for a ride up in the mountains and we got stuck in the mud and ended up staying overnight in this old pickup and I remember that.

EB: Now Betty what about your early married life. What were some of your expectations before marriage and have those been met?

BS: Well I think the only thing I really thought about too much was just making a good home and both of us being happy and we've had some rough times. I think we have succeeded.

EB: That noise in the background, that's a two-way radio isn't it?

BS: Yes my husband and sons got them and they come in handy when they are bear hunting.

EB: They get messages back home and everything.

BS: Right.

EB: That would make me feel a lot more comfortable if I knew they were alright out there.

BS: Except when they are down in the canyons I can't reach them.

EB: Is that very often?

BS: Yeah quite a bit of the time. He has to be up on top of the ridge.

EB: When you were having your children, what kind of medical services were available to you?

BS: Just the ordinary all around type doctor. All of them but the last one was born in a hospital and I had the last one at home.

EB: Who helped you to do that?

BS: There's an old doctor that will deliver once in awhile. He says he's getting

to old to do it all the time but I talked him into it. And it was great.

EB: You really liked it?

BS: Yes if I had it to do over again, I'd have all five of them at home.

EB: That's fascinating. What kind of things affected the number of children you have? Did you decide how many you wanted to have?

BS: We had the first two boys right away. I really wanted a baby and then I decided I didn't want to have him grow up alone so far apart like I was, so we had the second one. Then later on I got to thinking that it would be nice to have another one so we had another one and they were all boys and I was awful disappointed when I had the third boy and I decided that's all I wanted. Then years later for medical reasons and because I still wanted a little girl we decided to have another one and the last one was unplanned.

EB: She was kind of a surprise?

BS: Yeah I guess

EB: She's a doll though.

EB: What do you see as a future for your children?

BS: I expect the boys to grow up pretty much following their dad in the logging and hunting and guiding business. And the girls are too young to tell.

EB: Do you have any ideas of what you would like them to do or is it up to them?

BS: It's mainly up to them, the two oldest boys don't really have the education to do any business type work. They weren't very good in school. They didn't like school. So I imagine they'll pretty much be loggers.

EB: What about the girls, are they too young for you to tell just yet?

BS: Yes really, we'll just have to wait til they are older and see.

EB: When you think back, what have you done to help support the family?

BS: Well I do what I can to save money. I can all of the fruit and vegetables that I can get and I bake my own bread most of the time. I make most of

there is.

EB: I think that too. Do you think a lot of young women today don't understand those kind of things? (end of tape side 1) (Tape 7)

BS: I think a lot of them have been babied too much and are spoiled and I have seen some of them that have sort of a selfish attitude. They knew what they wanted and they were going to get it and you have to sacrifice a lot.

EB: Do you ever feel that you're not satisfied with your life, that you're overworked or taken advantage of?

BS: At times yes. When I really get tired I have a tendency to think that I'm being used once in a while but it just last until the next day and I get over it.

EB: So you really enjoy what you do here?

BS: Yes I do. As long as; it's usually when the hunters are here and lots of times I don't get to bed until 1 o'clock in the morning. I have to get up early to get them off hunting the next day and if they're nice and they act like they appreciate it then I'm alright. But some of them are so hard to please that you just feel like you don't care.

EB: You just look at that as a part of your work because this is your husband's work?

BS: Right. It's the only way I can help him and I do it mostly to save money. We could take them to a cafe to eat or board them in a motel but we wouldn't make much by the time we paid the expenses.

EB: Is it hard to plan on how to cook for all those men? Do you have trouble with it or are you pretty used to it now?

BS: Really I'm used to it because I have to fix pretty good sized meals for just my family but the hard part of it is, is not knowing what time they are going to be in to eat. I like to fix something like spaghetti or stew or something that I can warm over when they are late. The last ones

we had there was three different groups and they didn't even all get here at the same time. So I feed part of them and maybe a couple more would get here.

EB: Was there a lot of cooking on the farm when you were a young girl?

BS: Just during haying season, my uncle and cousins used to come over and help put in the hay because my dad didn't own a hay baler and when they were there then there was extras to cook for. My mother always cooked big meals like most farms do.

EB: What kinds of foods would she cook?

BS: When she had extra she usually fixed a big roast and of course, mashed potatoes and gravy. She always baked pie or cake for company which we didn't have to much for just us. She wasn't one to fix a lot of sweets and desserts. So it was usually quite exciting for little kids around haying time.

EB: Did you ever have to help out in the kitchen during those times?

BS: Yes, we always had to help, we peeled vegetables, we always had to help with dishes and things like that afterwards.

EB: Did you girls have a lot of chores or did you feel you had a lot of time to play?

BS: Well I had quite a few chores because my sister was older and she didn't like to work outside so usually I was the one that did the outside work and I always had to feed the chickens and gather the eggs and I had to carry the wood for the wood cook stove which we had until after I was married and I had to milk the cows and separate the milk and help in the fields.

EB: Did you have a cream separator then or did you have to do it some other way?

BS: When I was smaller we had one that we turned and then later on he got an electric one and you just plugged it in and I always had to wash it after--

wards and I hated that chore.

EB: You really hated it.

BS: Yeah I didn't like to wash the cream separator.

EB: What about feeding the chickens did you enjoy that?

BS: Well just like most kids it kind of griped me because I was the one that always had to do it. Just getting at it was the worst part, it wasn't a hard job.

EB: What about carrying the wood, did you enjoy that or did you kind of begrudge it?

BS: Oh I didn't mind that too much, it was in the basement and I didn't have to go outside in the cold to get it.

EB: Did the wood stoves keep your house nice and warm?

BS: They had a real warm house, my dad was a real good carpenter and what he did, he had an old schoolhouse that he remodeled and you'd never know it had been a schoolhouse, now.

EB: How old was it do you think when it was built?

BS: He got it before I was born so I think it was quite old then. He put it on log skits and pulled it about five miles across the fields.

EB: He moved it first.

BS: Yeah he had to move it.

EB: Wow, that's pretty interesting. A lot of hard work it sounds like.

BS: Yes it took a good many years.

EB: And now down here in Kooskia, do you belong to any community or church activities?

BS: I am a member of Jehovah's Witnesses. I don't belong to any community clubs of any kind.

EB: Is there a reason why you're not?

BS: I'm just busy at home. I figure if I can take care of my family that I have got enough work without belonging to any clubs.

EB: You don't care too much for the social side of it?

BS: No not really.

EB: What about the children or Bob, are they pretty much the same?

BS: Bob is worse than I am, he doesn't even like to go to a movie unless it's a drive-in, he just doesn't like to be around a lot of people.

EB: But you are a really close family unit.

BS: I think so, yes.

EB: It seems like to me when I watch everybody interact.

BS: The boys have no desire to run around town in the evenings or anything like that. They are content to stay home.

EB: You haven't had any of your kids been into some of the things a lot of the kids today are.

BS: No; but I know that I have never had any trouble with them at all.

EB: The drug culture and all that, it just doesn't interest them at all?

BS: No I'm sure they have never tried it and as far as I know one beer is the most either one of them have drunk at one time.

EB: Do you think your boys are so much; I mean you don't have to worry about them the way a lot of parents would.

BS: Well their dad or I, neither one drink and we have no desire to go to dances or bars or anything like that. They don't see us doing it and I've tried to raise my kids by bible principles. They see us by trying to live by what we teach them and I when I tell them something is wrong, I show them in the Bible where it says it's wrong. That's just my idea.

EB: You try to be an example to them and you try to back it up with the Bible teaching.

BS: You can't tell a child not to do something and then they turn around and see you doing it and expect them to have any faith in what you say.

EB: They seem pretty respectful in the things you teach them and you ask them to do and it's your idea.

BS: Yes I think so.

EB: That must make you feel good.

BS: It does, I'm very proud of my boys, I get a lot of compliments on them.

EB: Are there any magazines or newspapers that your family subscribes to?

BS: We take a few magazines, yes. Bob gets the Hunting and Fishing magazines, and I get a couple of women's magazines.

EB: Which ones would those be?

BS: I think it's Redbook and McCall's, I just started getting them. We have the Bible study that we bring home.

EB: Do you enjoy your magazines pretty much?

BS: Yes I do.

EB: What is it in them that you really enjoy?

BS: Well I like the recipes, the patterns and I like to read the short stories in them and I just enjoy looking at the modeled homes and things like that. I like to sit and think of what I would like to do with my house if we could afford it.

EB: But you have done most of your house yourself haven't you?

BS: Yes, our house burned down when we had been married five years and we had no insurance and we already had three children so we just started from scratch and built our own. Of course Bob was working a lot of the time and didn't have time to work on it and I just started doing what I could do.

EB: Of course Bob's work he doesn't get any kind of security or insurance.

BS: Well he usually logs enough to where he can draw a little unemployment in the wintertime. And of course he pays in his social security. If anything did happen to him I might be able to draw social security for the children til they were 18.

EB: You don't have any kind of medical insurance?

BS: No we have no medical insurance at all.

EB: Would it be pretty hard to make those bills if anything were to happen?

BS: Well we have had quite a few doctor bills just since winter. So far we have managed to get by. We are thinking of getting hospital insurance.

EB: Hospital costs right now are high.

BS: Yes they are terrible.

EB: Do you watch Television?

BS: Some. I would rather crochet in the evenings or write letters. There are certain programs that I watch.

EB: What kind of programs do you enjoy?

BS: Well I like the animal shows, Animal World is real good. I like the music shows. Mac Davis and the Irish Rovers; I always watch them.

EB: What's that all about?

BS: They're just music

EB: And then there's one we like to watch it's called "Moving On" It's about a couple of truck drivers and I like it.

EB: I bet Bob can kind of enjoy that.

BS: Yes, he likes it as well as I do.

EB: What about the news, do you watch the news much?

BS: Oh a little, I don't enjoy the news because it's such a wicked world that we are living in. It can really make a person depressed and I listen enough to know what's going on but that's about all.

EB: Thinking back on your day to day to life, what are the most common things that Bob would talk to you about each day, say like when he'd come back from the woods or something?

BS: He usually walks in and says "well how did it go today?" and it's just mainly routine.

EB: Does he take a pretty big interest in the children?

BS: Oh yes, he's taken them with them. He started taking them steelhead fishing when they were about 3 or 4 years old and he's taught them to shoot

a gun when they were quite young. He's never allowed them to have a bee-bee gun. He says they're gonna shoot the real thing and they're gonna know what it can do and he's nearly always got one of them with him when he's out hunting or checking traps or anything. He enjoys taking the boys and teaching him what he can.

EB: What about the girls do they get in on any of that?

BS: Becky gets to go once in a while if he isn't going to do a lot of walking. Of course she can't go and keep up with him.

EB: It's ok for her to learn some of those outdoor things too.

BS: Oh yes he's taken her up and he's showed her a bear and he's showed her the deer and the elk and everything that he can.

EB: The city kids would have to go to a zoo to see any of that.

BS: And like I said, the kids know what mushrooms to pick and we go berry picking all summer when there's berries to get and they love it. They have all learned to fish. Shelly has even caught a fish.

EB: And Shelly is pretty young, isn't she?

BS: Yes, she's three.

EB: What about you your own life, does he ask you many things about how your day went or what's on your mind or things like that?

BS: If he isn't too tired sometimes he'll come in at night and sit down and he'll fall asleep before I even have dinner ready. But we talk a lot, I think really more than most people. We talk about things that's happened. He leaves most of the business up to me to take care of. I even book most of the hunters for him and I, he usually gives me his check and he'll say, "I want so and so amount for some certain thing," and I take the rest and pay bills and buy what has to be bought. He don't even go shopping at all. He don't even like to go to the grocery store if he can get out of it.

EB: It sounds like you work pretty close together in all the things, you just know what needs to be done.

BS: We do. And I usually leave most of the big decisions up to him. Half of the time he'll say, you do whatever you think. But if it's real important we talk it over.

EB: Do you ever get to do anything like travel or take any trips together?

BS: Bob and I have taken one trip together and that was 17 years ago to go any distance. We go to Coeur d'Alene to visit my folks but usually I stay home with part of the kids. The only trips he takes has to do with hunting. He's had to go to Boise and pick up the hunters because the plane was grounded or something like that and he flies back up in the mountains two or three times during the winter.

EB: Do you ever get to go on a plane trip with him?

BS: No there's usually no room or I can't get away for that long but with the kids in school I have to pretty much stay here.

EB: Before you did get to go Elk hunting; when was that?

BS: Well about 10 years ago I used to go Elk hunting quite a bit, just for the day, we'd come home at night. I really enjoyed it, I went for several years. Since I've had the girls I kind of gave that up.

EB: Did you shoot an elk yourself?

BS: One

EB: Did you have to pack it out yourself?

BS: No I got it across the river and there was about five men that was following us in their car and there was only gun left that had any shells in it and I spotted the elk and I really did think I could hit it anyway so they let me shoot at it and when I killed it we had to all go across the river in the boat and we walked up to it and one of the guys pulled the teeth out and handed them to me and then he handed me the hunting knife. I just turned around and said "I'll see you at the river," so they dressed it out and then they packed it out later.

EB: That must of been a pretty big deal for you.

BS: It was, I was real proud of myself.

EB: Does Bob usually hunt for all the meat you use here at home?

BS: This is the first year that we've ever had any beef and he traded a bear hide for a beef. Other than that we have always bought pork a couple of times but mainly we live on the deer and elk.

EB: Do you ever eat any bear meat?

BS: No Bob won't eat bear, the boys like it. They'll wack off some steaks off the bear; and cougar they've eaten cougar.

EB: I've never heard of eating cougar.

BS: It isn't too bad, if you didn't know what it was, you'd think it was pork. But just the thoughts of it, Bob won't eat it.

EB: Do you have your own freezer?

BS: Yes and I cut the meat myself.

EB: You do; you cut all the different steaks and roasts?

BS: When I cut meat, there's steaks, roasts, hamburger and a little stew meat.

EB: How did you learn to cut the meat?

BS: By trial and error.

EB: Nobody sat you down and showed you that this is the way?

BS: No; if the grain all goes the same way, I cut steaks and if it's to mixed up, we either put it in the hamburger or make a roast out of it.

EB: How do you make hamburger?

BS: I cut it up in little pieces and I clean it up good and then we take it down and have the market grind it.

EB: So you have it ground for you?

BS: Yes.

EB: Do you use the liver and the other parts of the animal?

BS: Bob won't eat heart or liver either but we always give them to his folks and they like it.

EB: And then you clean the hides?

BS: We used to just throw them away but this year we saved them for the fur buyer.

EB: He buys them and he has them tanned and other people can use the furs?

BS: Yes

EB: That's pretty interesting. Does Bob set the carcass off for you so you can cut the meat or do you do that yourself?

BS: He cuts it into quarters which is really to big for me to handle but I always manage it. He brings them in in the morning before he leaves. It takes me just 12 hours of steady cutting to cut a big elk to cut it and wrap it.

EB: So that's a whole days project.

BS: It is, all day and it's a mess.

EB: Do they girls watch you, have you ever tried to teach them?

BS: No I don't want them using the knives. I bone it all out, I don't leave any bones in it at all. Of course you can use them for dog food.

EB: You have quite a few hunting dogs?

BS: We have anywhere from 8-12-14 dogs. We got it narrowed down now to about eight.

EB: Do you sharpen your own knives and everything?

BS: I'm not very good at it. The last fall we cut meat in the evenings so I got Bob to help me but before that I'd just gather up all the knives I could find and he'd sharpen them before he left and just get by the best way I could.

EB: Do you ever have a night where you just say the heck with it and open a TV dinner or two?

BS: No I don't think that I have ever eaten a Tv dinner.

EB: You never order things out say like a pizza?

BS: There's no place around here to do that.

EB: So even after a day of butchering the meat you would fix a big meal?

BS: Well usually when I do something like that, I'll either cook a big pot of chili; or maybe I'll go buy some weiners and have hot dogs or something. or maybe soup.

EB: It sounds like a big job.

EB: What were some of the most of the important things to you when you decided to live down here in Kooskia?

BS: It was expected, I had no choice, this was Bob's home and ever since the first time I had been down here, I loved this country and I don't think I would ever want to go back to a farm, I like the mountains.

EB: Are there any immediate relatives living down here near you?

BS: My mother and dad live real close to us but they are the only relatives.

EB: What kind of people are your neighbors?

BS: There's only one neighbor that we really know and that's an old Indian man and his daughter and her family who have come back and moved in with him and she's got little children that play with my two little girls. They are one of the nicest families I think you could ever live by.

EB: Have you learned much from him or vice versa, do you do much together?

BS: Some, he will show you when to plant your garden and when to pick it. He's very good at gardening.

EB: And do the Indian people and the white people here in Kooskia, do they get along pretty well?

BS: Some of them, there's a lot of white people that are real fanatics about the Indians. But from what we have found there isn't a lot of them that I wouldn't want to live by, they do have a habit of drinking. The family by us, he doesn't drink at all and I just can't think of a nicer person.

EB: That's really interesting. Do the kids enjoy talking with Charlie?

BS: Oh yes, my girls have really liked him all their lives and when he came over and my youngest daughter was just real little he picked her up and she just grinned real big at him and he told me that, he says, "this is

the first white baby that I've held that isn't scared of me." And he just took to her and he just loves her and she thinks the world of him.

EB: But it took quite awhile for Charlie to trust you, didn't it?

BS: It was a long time, we've lived by him now for over 14 years and it's just been the last five years that I have really felt that he really liked us. They are hard to get acquainted with.

EB: You have a picture here of yourself and your mother dressed in some Indian clothes holding up an Indian rug, can you tell me a little bit about that?

BS: Those are Charlie's clothes, he has two suitcases full of Indian clothes and he offered to let my mother try on that dress because I was too tall. The dress weights 40 lbs. the top part is solid beads and the long white beads are made out of the backbone of steelheads and they are worth 50 cents apiece and they are only about a half an inch long and those clothes are real valuable, he wouldn't sell them for any price.

EB: Did he save these from when he was a young boy?

BS: His grandfather was an Indian chief and he got the chief's bonnet that he wore. But now some of his clothes aren't Nez Perce clothes. He said that some of them were from Montana.

EB: So Charlie was a Nez Perce Indian?

BS: Yes

EB: What about this rug, do you know anything about that?

BS: I'm not sure just exactly what it is but it isn't really a rug. I think that it was something that the men tied around their waist and wore as kind of a skirt in front. This is a handbag that my mother is holding.

EB: Is that emblem a hawk or an eagle?

BS: It's an eagle. The Indians used the eagle feathers for all of their head dress and I think they've got some tradition about eagles.

EB: And this is the American Flag behind the Eagle?

BS: It looks like it.

EB: And all of this silverwork was handcrafted, I suppose?

BS: It was all made by the Indians.

EB: Wow that's pretty interesting. Is there anything else that you can think of that you'd like to tell about your experiences as a rural woman?

BS: Well it takes a lot of hard work and there's always something to be done, you never get it all done.

EB: It's kind of unique, there aren't too many women that are married to a professional trapper and hunter, it's kind of a dangerous business. Is there any incidences you can recall that where you were scared or things that you had to contend with?

BS: Well I used to worry an awful lot but anymore I guess you kind of get used to it, although I know if I really stopped to think about it that I could get upset. There were so many times, he takes a lot of bow hunters and they will get wounded there and sometimes he has to take the dogs and sometimes they won't go up a tree to fight the dogs. We've had dogs hurt awfully bad by a bear and he's had a cougar jump out of a tree at him and he would shoot it on the way down and things like that. You never know how an animal is going to act.

EB: So you just kind of accept what your husband does?

BS: I couldn't change his way of living if I tried and I know that he would never be happy anywhere else. I just do everything I can to help him.

EB: Has he tried to changed your life at all?

BS: I changed my life quite a bit when I married him because when I was in school I liked to go to the school dances and dress up and I liked to go to the.....

(Interview stops here and it is almost at the end of the tape 7) Side 2)