

**Beulah Olson
Narrator**

**Beulah's Granddaughter?
Interviewer**

**1984?
Heritage Education Commission Oral History Project
Location?**

I: Okay. Grandma, where did you grow up as a younger child?

BO: I was born in Ortley, South Dakota. At that time, the doctors came out to the home instead of people...or mothers going into the hospital. And we were a couple miles from any neighbors. I went to school in a one room schoolhouse.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And the teacher there...well, you would be the janitor, and took care of the stove, and sweeping the floor, and all those things.

I: So she did almost everything.

BO: Yeah, banking the fire at night, so they'd have fire in the morning. And one time in February, a blizzard came up where you couldn't see, and we had to stay all night in the school. Next afternoon when it let up a little, a farmer came with a sled and took us to his home, until the next day when it let up enough for my parents to come and get us.

I: Hmmm.

BO: We all wore long underwear and high-topped shoes. And girls did not wear slacks or jeans. I think we'd have been sent home if we did.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: We could wear leggings. We usually wore black stockings and four-buckle overshoes.

I: Hmmm. How far away was your school?

BO: About three miles.

I: From your home. Okay. How did you get to school every day?

BO: We usually walked, except that a neighbor that lived another mile further on, he used to...my dad changed potatoes and gave him potatoes, and then we...hmmm...he drove...the boy drove. And then if...we always had a barn where you could put the horses in during the day, and there you took your own hay and stuff for the horses along.

I: Hmmm. Mmmm, what subjects did you study in school as a younger girl, when you first [unclear]?

BO: Ah, arithmetic and hmmm...reading and...we had a lot of memory work, which they don't have nowadays.

I: Mmmm-hmmm. Such as memorizing...?

BO: All kinds of poems and things like that.

I: Mmmm. Hmmm, I think you alluded to a time when you were older, and you used to teach once in a while at that school?

BO: Not at that one.

I: Oh.

BO: That was after we came here. And then the teacher got sick and...she had me fill in there with her grades.

I: Okay. And did you teach the younger grades then, or all of them?

BO: Not as a general rule. I had a lot of...tutoring, I suppose you would say, because a lot of the kids came to me to get help with their math and different things. But I didn't actually go out and teach small kids.

I: Oh, okay.

BO: These were the older ones.

I: Hmmm, speaking of winter, what did you do for snow control in those days?

BO: They didn't do anything for snow control. Then we'd...you just went over the banks and...and probably if your horses got...see, we went with horses and sleds. And if the horses got bogged down, you had to get out and scoop them out so that they could go, because...if it happened to be a drift so you couldn't get through, otherwise, they went around them.

I: Okay. So if it snowed really hard one night, and you had a lot of snow, you just had to hope that you would be able to make it to school the next day or [unclear]?

BO: Yeah, well, I think there was a lot of missing and...yeah. And the kids, they had a sled that they...with a horse on, that...that this kid used to take...pick me up. Otherwise we walked.

I: Hmmm. What did you do for entertainment back in those days, in your early years?

BO: Well, we played cards. There was hearts, and old maid, and authors, and all kinds of card games and [unclear – sounds like donna moes but maybe means dominos?] and...oh, I don't know. Different things like that we played. Yeah, otherwise we went out and played in the snow, and made forts, and threw snowballs.

I: [Laughs] Hmmm. Did you do a lot of...hmmm...more things at your own home rather than venturing out?

BO: Oh, yeah. We'd...yeah, lots of times you would have parties in the winter. And sometimes there was some dancing, or some card parties and things. We'd done much more at home than they do now.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: Among our neighbors.

I: Hmmm. Can you recall any games in particular that you played during that time?

BO: Oh...let's see. There was in and out the window and hmmm...oh...little red wagon and...

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: ...different things like that we used to play.

I: Hmmm. What kind of things did the older people do? Did they have dances and...?

BO: Oh, they'd visit, and played cards, and sometimes they had dances.

I: Uh huh.

BO: Or we went for dinner parties, lots of times, because then they'd have the day, and then they could get home early for chores and things.

I: Mmmm. Hmmm, where were your dances held? Were they held in the town, necessarily?

BO: Oh, no, there was very seldom any held in town. They were just in their parlors or whatever. They didn't have rugs on the floor, as a general rule, so they...all they had to do was pick up a few carpets and...go to it.

I: [Laughs]

BO: And the neighbors would do the playing, usually, pretty near lots of them played a violin.

I: Uh huh. Hmmm. What were the medical facilities like?

BO: Well, you...if you got sick, you went into the doctor's office, and he could pretty near always get you in. But of course if you were very sick, he came out to your place, because...[coughs] the hospitals were few and far between. And...unless it was very serious, something very serious, you didn't go to them. And then, of course, there was all these just communicable diseases then.

I: Hmmm.

BO: Like hmmm...smallpox, and chickenpox, and scarlet fever, and hmmm...diphtheria. I know a friend of mine had diphtheria, but she managed to come through it. And...and of course you'd...they were all quarantined at that time. And the only thing to do, some of the farmers would go in and help with the chores, and things, and stuff, so that...because they couldn't go near the milkings and stuff, otherwise they couldn't sell it.

I: Hmmm. Since they were so contagious, those diseases, and the people were in quarantine at times, hmmm, were there any ways of helping those people that had those diseases that were so contagious?

BO: None except what the doctor had...done, and of course...and later, we got shots for quite a few of them, so then the children didn't get them anymore.

I: Mmmm. Okay. Hmmm...let's see. Getting back to, hmmm, the birthing procedures. Hmmm, you said that *you* were born at home, right?

BO: Yes.

I: Most people were?

BO: Yes.

I: At that time. And did your mother have a midwife come in?

BO: Well, I don't know if she was a...there was nobody that was that...exactly trained then; it was just somebody that had been present at births.

I: Uh huh.

BO: Like she usually came in and helped the doctor and...probably took care of the baby afterwards.

I: Mmmm.

BO: There were a few that would hire out for that and...or else just a neighbor woman came in, and maybe you had a girl that you hired to do the housework.

I: Oh, okay. Hmmm, and you mentioned a doctor. Was the doctor called in at that time then to help?

BO: Yes, uh huh. He was called in at the time when they figured the birth would take place.

I: Okay. Hmmm, I forgot to ask, what did your parents do for a living?

BO: Ah, they were farmers.

I: Okay. Hmmm...what kind of farming did they do? Did they have livestock, too?

BO: Yes, they had both livestock and grain farming.

I: So I imagine you did a lot of chores when you were younger.

BO: Oh, yes, we always had to help with the chores. I helped in the garden. We always had a big garden.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And like weeding, and...and, hmmm, taking in vegetables, like in the fall, like the onions and that. I would dig them after school.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And we would have to help with the...watching things, or watching the smaller kids.

I: Hmmm. Hmmm...let's see. I was going to ask, during the winter and when it was colder, what kinds of things did you do for heat? I know you didn't have electricity during those days, necessarily.

BO: Ah, no, we had a stove that you could burn coal or wood in.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And of course, out there, they didn't have too much wood, so...in Dakota where I was, so it was mostly coal.

I: Mmmm.

BO: And even after we came here, we burned up wood or coal.

I: Okay. And did you burn that in a furnace-type of...?

BO: Well, in a...what you'd call a round oak or something like that, so...it stood out in the middle of the floor, and...hmmm...you burned it with that. And the cook stove usually had the same thing.

I: Hmmm. And then for light, I imagine you didn't have the kind we have today. [Chuckles]

BO: No, we had kerosene lights and lanterns. We carried this lantern to the barn with us, with the kerosene in the bottom, and you had to...every day you had to check those chimneys, glass chimneys, to see that they were clean. And wash them, and check the wick, and so that it was trimmed and everything, so it was ready to give the best light it could give.

I: Hmmm. Where did you purchase this coal and kerosene and everything you needed for heating and lighting?

BO: Well, they had that at the elevator always.

I: At elevators?

BO: In town. Mmmm-hmmm.

I: Hmmm. Hmmm...and what else? Or how else did you purchase such things as, I guess, milk, and soap, and...?

BO: Well, we had our own milk.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: But...being we had cows. And that would give us butter, too, because you'd take the cream and...and had to churn it, of course, yourself. There was very little butter, otherwise, except what the farmers brought in. And so...and then they...for their groceries, and then the town people could buy that. And when...lots of things that we bought like crackers, and cookies, and things like that, they were either in boxes or...hmmm...barrels.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And you'd go in and tell them how many pounds you wanted, or how much money you wanted of this or that, and that's how much you got.

I: Hmmm. Hmmm, did you get the experience of making milk and butter yourself then?

BO: Oh, yes. You weren't very big when you had to start operating this handle churn, or you either...you either plugged a type of thing that you...patted up and down, or else some of them were run on kind of a wheel, so that they went a little faster.

I: Hmmm. Are you glad that you can purchase it in the way we do now, just run up town and...?

BO: Oh, yes.

I: [Chuckles] Over the counter.

BO: That helps a lot on the work, because it got to be a big job.

I: How long did this butter and milk making usually take? I suppose the milk was...

BO: Well, it depended upon the shape of the milk, how sour it was, and if...you didn't always want it too sour, otherwise the butter would taste too sour.

I: Hmmm.

BO: But you had, usually, light soured, and then it had to be a certain temperature, or else it took it longer to turn into butter.

I: Hmmm.

BO: And then, of course, we had the buttermilk to drink, or use for in baking and that.

I: So you had your own little dairy farm right there. [Chuckles]

BO: Oh, everybody did.

I: Uh huh.

BO: Yeah, otherwise you bought from your neighbor if you ran out.

I: Oh. Hmmm. So I was going to ask about clothes washing and drying. I imagine you didn't have the washing and drying facilities we do now in our homes?

BO: No, you had a board, and you took...got your water in a boiler. And then probably the night before or so...and so you...it'd be warm when you started. And then you would start rubbing on the board, and a lot of the white clothes were boiled, and...

I: Hmmm.

BO: And hmmm...you made...lots of times made your own soap with lye and fats that you would now throw away.

I: You used to make your own soap, didn't you?

BO: Yes, I did. I made quite a bit of soap.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: It was nice and good soap, too.

I: Do you think it was as strong as the Tide and so on that you buy at the grocery store?
[Chuckles]

BO: Well, if you made good soap, it got just as good.

I: Uh huh.

BO: No, it wasn't as handy...and of course, probably maybe not as good for the clothes, I don't know.

I: But it was strong enough. [Chuckles]

BO: Yeah.

I: To get them clean. Hmmm. Hmmm...let's see. And when you bought things at stores, you usually bought them in bulk, didn't you?

BO: Yes, it got to be quite a...more or less in bulk. They didn't have too many vegetables in cans or whatever.

I: Hmmm. So I suppose that's where your garden helped out.

BO: Yeah. Uh huh, we'd...like carrots and beets, so a lot of those things you could put down, and keep them for in there until spring.

I: So did you do canning in order to do that?

BO: Yes, we done some canning, but it didn't get to be an awful lot, because the cans weren't as good then. The lids and stuff that...weren't as good. But we did do quite a bit of canning. We made sauerkraut and different things like that.

I: Hmmm. Okay. Hmmm...I was also going to ask, in those days, did they have such things as old wives tales, do you know? Hmmm, things that we have found not to be medically true?

BO: Oh, yes. There were some of those.

I: Can you recall any right now? [Chuckles]

BO: Well, I've kind of lost track of them. I know one of them was when you were pregnant you shouldn't raise your arms above your head, or that it...or it'd just strangle the baby and...

I: [Laughs] Hmmm. Were there any things that women shouldn't do during like their monthly cycles, or...?

BO: Yeah, they had some of those things. You shouldn't wash your hair and...and different things like that, or have a permanent. And of course in that time we...we didn't have permanents. We mostly used the curling iron, and those we heated in these lamps.

I: So you didn't have type that we plug in today, you...

BO: Oh, definitely not.

I: You just heated up the rods somehow?

BO: Yes, we just...heated...

I: Mmmm. Hmmm...what did you do for infections, and open wounds, and so on?

BO: Well, there were a lot things that...ah...different ones had. Some of them put salt pork on them.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And of course. And some of them used bread and milk. And you put that on real hot and...

I: And what was that supposed to do?

BO: Draw out the infection.

I: Oh, okay.

BO: There was a product that they had that you could buy, too, called Denver Mud that I don't see anymore.

I: [Laughs]

BO: [Chuckles]

I: Hmmm. Hmmm, did you have any movies in those days to see?

BO: Definitely not.

I: No movies. Not even black and white?

BO: No, that didn't come in until I was...oh, twelve...I don't know, twelve or thirteen years old before I remember ever seeing one.

I: Mmmm.

BO: And then they...the talking was separate. They must have had a phonograph or something and run it. It was separate from the movie.

I: Okay. And hmmm, when did records come out and so on? Was...?

BO: Well, we had some of those. We had these round cylinder ones on the...I think it was the Edison one. [Coughs] And they played a lot of things.

I: Hmmm. How did you operate those?

BO: They were run with a...you wound them up, and put your record on, and used a needle and ran over them, and around, and around. There was also a brass one that...hmmm...you had to have special records and stuff for, and that ran the same way. You wound it up with a handle, and then it would play...that was shaped more like a record, but it had holes in it and stuff, so it made the music.

I: Oh, okay. I think I've seen those. Someone has to constantly wind it in order to...

BO: Just about. [Laughs]

I: ...to get the noise. [Chuckles] Hmmm. And hmmm, did you have those...? Let's see, I forget what you call them...but those organs that you needed to crank in those days?

BO: In the churches, but not much in the homes. They didn't have anything but a lot of violins, mostly.

I: So fiddlers, I suppose, were more prominent?

BO: Yeah. Mmmm-hmmm. They could pick them up and go and to the neighbors and have a little dance or jig and stuff, and a lot of the men played them.

I: Hmmm.

BO: And accordions come in later, too.

I: Mmmm-hmmm. Hmmm, do you think the church services were pretty much the same then as they are today? Or can you think of any great differences at all?

BO: Well...I suppose...

I: Besides the pump organ? [Chuckles]

BO: I suppose a lot of the times they...they didn't have a regular pastor lots of times, unless it was in a bigger town. And then they came around on certain Sundays, maybe the second and fourth Sunday or something, a pastor would come, and then people would go to these places, to these churches. And they had...lots of times had services in the schoolhouse. That was what I was familiar with when I was smaller. We had Sunday School and...hmmm...even our teacher, lots of times, gave us verses from the Bible that we had to learn.

I: So you had more memorization then, too, I suppose?

BO: Oh, yes. Quite a bit more. Mmmm-hmmm.

I: In Sunday School. Hmmm. Hmmm...you know, I've seen these old black and white photographs that the younger boys had, hmmm, these long skirts or dresses on or whatever. I was wondering how long they had to wear those?

BO: The little boys?

I: Uh huh.

BO: They wore them until they were probably pretty ready to go...ready to go to school, lots of times. They wore dresses.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: I suppose it was handier to change them and stuff.

I: Oh. Mmmm-hmmm. And then did they ever wear those dungarees or...breeches?

BO: Yeah, knee highs.

I: Knee highs.

BO: Then they started out with knee highs, and they wore them until they were about sixteen, seventeen years old. Lots of times they quit when they were confirmed.

I: Uh huh.

BO: But otherwise it was up in that age, fifteen, anyway.

I: Hmmm. And then they wore the long pants after that?

BO: After that, then...then they were men when they got to have long pants.

I: Oh, okay. That's how they came of age then. [Chuckles] How about the women? Did they always wear dresses then, you said? No pants for the women, huh?

BO: Yeah, we'd...we weren't allowed to wear anything like that.

I: Hmmm.

BO: Even when I was going to high school, I didn't...we didn't wear slacks, where it would have helped a lot in walking and stuff on your legs.

I: Hmmm.

BO: I remember freezing my legs more than once because...they...of the snow and stuff you'd tramp through, because then you'd...

I: And you only had socks on or...?

BO: Oh, yeah. We had long socks on.

I: Mmmm-hmmm. Hmmm, when did you finally get to wear pants? I know you get to, now!
[Laughs]

BO: Oh, I was...hmmm...married, I think, before I ever wore any slacks then.

I: Uh huh.

BO: Well, I guess I did wear overalls a couple of...a little bit the last year or so, I wore some old overalls or something when I was out helping with chores or something. But otherwise we didn't...we always wore dresses.

I: So they didn't get...hmmm...come into style, I suppose, until like twenty years ago?

BO: Oh, I suppose it was longer...

I: Thirty?

BO: ...than that since I had my first slacks.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: I got a snowsuit. And...that was maybe thirty, forty years ago since I had that.

I: Hmmm. I guess we just had the holiday season. I was wondering...was Christmas celebrated any different way back then?

BO: Yeah, we started sooner and we kept on longer.

I: Hmmm.

BO: It was always at least two weeks of Christmas, and then you were visiting here and there, and we had a lot of suppers and dinners and stuff...and dances and whatever during that period, because that was...

I: Hmmm. It was just longer. But was it as much of a family event? Or was it more...?

BO: Oh, yeah. A lot of family, and a lot of neighbors, and stuff, because you...you wouldn't be driving...going visiting much between people that lived too much further away.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: If you lived much more than...if you lived over ten miles, I don't think you would hardly go. You'd go to church maybe for programs.

I: Mmmm.

BO: But...otherwise you had to take your family up to the church, and then you'd have to go downtown, for the barns to put the horses in.

I: Mmmm. So you had more gatherings for a longer period of time then.

BO: Yeah. Mmmm-hmmm.

I: Hmmm, were there any kinds of games you played to commemorate Christmas? Like I think there was a fooling one, I can't remember exactly what that one was?

BO: Oh, Christmas fooling, yeah, when I got a little older then, and we used to go around to the neighbors. And lots of times they walked. Well, that wasn't when I was really older either, that was before that time that they did...did this. And then you'd all dress up in masks, and probably the girls would go as boys, and the boys as girls, or whatever.

I: Hmmm.

BO: And we'd go to these places and knock on the door. And then they'd invite us in and try to guess who we were, and that sometimes took quite a long time.

I: [Laughs]

BO: And then they would give us either candy, or apples, or whatever, something. And even some drinks sometimes for treats.

I: Hmmm.

BO: For...this...and then when we got done with that, we'd go on to the next one! [Coughs]

I: You know, that sounds like trick or treat today.

BO: Yes, it's a lot on that order.

I: So it sounds like we've kind of exchanged holidays there, but...

BO: Yeah.

I: That sounds like fun. We should have two of those! [Chuckles]

BO: [Chuckles]

I: Hmmm. Let's see. I know on [*Little*] *House on the Prairie* we see how Caroline goes to town and she exchanges eggs and stuff for groceries. Did you do any exchanging then instead of...?

BO: Yes.

I: ...always using money?

BO: They took eggs in. We took the eggs that we could spare...in and traded them for groceries. And lots of times there was a man that took care of the cream, too, we...a lot of the cream just went into this place, and then they shipped it down, so we would take in the cream in in cans and ah...sell then it for groceries, too, usually...or whatever.

I: Hmmm. Hmmm, and did you buy cloth, and sew your own clothes, or...?

BO: Well, there wasn't too much...hmmm...of clothes that you could buy ready-made.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And if you did, they weren't...didn't always fit or whatever. So usually you...most of the people either went and made up their own, if they were...had a sewing machine and could sew. Or else they had other ladies that...once in a while there was somebody that went around and done some fancy sewing, too, like for weddings and that, she would come and maybe stay a couple weeks and do a lot of sewing for you. And even our underwear, a lot of it was homemade. You always hear about the story about the flour sacks and the prints on the flour sacks.

I: And what story is that, the prints on the...?

BO: Well...

I: Is that a picture or...?

BO: Well, it said Occident or...probably of...of the different ones, Pillsbury or whatever.

I: Oh.

BO: The flour brands were on there, because they used these flour sacks for underwear. And they were...in fact, they were all bloomers.

I: Oh.

BO: There wasn't any...I mean, we didn't have short ones or anything. They were all bloomers that went just above the knee.

I: So you had flour sack designer underwear then? [Laughs]

BO: Yes!

I: Oh, that's interesting. Hmm. Let's see. For communication in those days, I know you didn't have television right away. Hmm, probably not until later on when you...

BO: No, that was quite a bit later.

I: [Unclear].

BO: Yeah. And...radios didn't come in until I was...hmmm...I don't know, ten, twelve years old, and maybe even more, somewheres in there. Then my dad bought one.

I: Mmmm.

BO: Although my brother had been experimenting before in making...they had made one that worked. But then he bought one. And all the neighbors used to come, anything interesting on, they'd come certain nights.

I: [Chuckles]

BO: They had WLAS[sp?] and they had a lot of dance music and stuff. Then we got a lot of company always because they would be coming to listen to these programs.

I: So instead of going out to a theater or something like that, you just had a gathering over at your house?

BO: Yes, they didn't have too many theaters at that time. Maybe in the bigger cities.

I: Oh. Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: But not in the smaller towns.

I: Hmmm. Mmmm, you said your brother made a television, was it...that worked?

BO: No, a radio.

I: Or a radio.

BO: They had made...ah, him and a couple other guys had made a radio that worked.

I: Well, that's interesting. He must have had, hmmm, a way with electrical equipment then.

BO: Ah, he was kind of talented a little that way.

I: Huh. Hmmm...let's see. And did you have telephones when you were younger, too?

BO: Yes, we had telephones. They were only...hmmm...you might say lines...and I don't know if...if they ever reached into town or what they did. I think they were probably just one of these things on the wall, and then you cranked them for them, and you would...a short one for short, and a long one for long.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And everybody had a call. Say, they'd have three longs, well then it'd be three long rings.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And maybe if it was three shorts, it'd be three short rings. Or maybe it was a long and a short, then it'd be a long ring and a short.

I: That sounds like a telegraph. [Chuckles]

BO: [Chuckles]

I: Must have been sort of on that order. So there were no numbers involved then?

BO: Well, no, because they just had these longs and shorts.

I: Oh. Number of long and short then.

BO: Mmmm-hmmm.

I: And hmmm, let's see, I know at your farmhouse you had a phone like we do now, but was that something that developed later, too?

BO: Oh, yes, that was quite a bit later. Mmmm-hmmm.

I: Okay. Hmmm. Did you have any different things that were used for house cleaning that we don't use right now?

BO: Well, you took the rugs out and beat them on the line.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: Instead of washing them like they do now.

I: No carpet cleaner. [Chuckles]

BO: No, there was no carpet cleaner. And...

I: Hmmm.

BO: If we had to iron, we had to set the iron on the cook stove and have the heat up. And then you set these irons on there, and then you had handles for them that you fastened onto them, and then done your ironing. Although you'd have to brush your iron off good so you didn't get no spots on your ironing. In fact, they...everything had to be ironed in those days. There was no chance of just hanging them on the line and wearing them. They had to be ironed, they'd be so full of wrinkles that...

I: Hmmm.

BO: So you'd wet...dampen them down, and then you'd wait...you ironed on them with these hot irons.

I: I suppose some of that cloth was more starchy in those days, too.

BO: Yeah, you'd done most...quite a bit of starching. Oh, because it was practically all cotton or wool.

I: Hmmm. How about for dusting your furniture and so on? I know that, hmmm, you didn't have any of this Pledge dust spray or anything.

BO: No, we didn't. But they used feather dusters and...lots of times the wing from a goose or something. Or else they used a rag. And then of course they didn't...if they used anything, I suppose, maybe it was...I don't know, a little oil or something on that. I don't know what they could have used.

I: Hmm.

BO: Because there was nothing of that type. A damp rag, probably?

I: Okay. Hmm, I guess I'm kind of interested in knowing how you viewed marriage in your day. I think you got married when you were about twenty-one, wasn't it?

BO: Yeah.

I: Boy, about my age. And hmm, you married...grandpa was a farmer, right?

BO: Yes.

I: Uh huh.

BO: Yeah, well...we met at the neighbors and I had...so then...they'd...boys would see you at one of these dances or something, and probably start out by taking you home.

I: Uh huh.

BO: And then maybe someday he'd come and take you to a dance at a barn dance or a house dance. Or it...there was getting to be movies then, we'd go into a movie...or go visit a neighbor or something of that type.

I: Well, it seems in that way, courtship hasn't changed a whole lot. Hmm. Possibly a lot of women married younger in those days, as a general rule?

BO: Yes, it's getting so that they're marrying later than they did then, a lot of them, yes.

I: Mmmm-hmmm. And I imagine a lot of them weren't so career-oriented. They had plenty to do around their farms or houses.

BO: Well, career...it was hard to get an education, because you had to go away, and you had to have the money. And, hmm...a lot of these people just didn't have it. And a lot of them...it seemed that the...most of the men thought that the women should stay home and take care of the house. They didn't think that...of course, there was a lot of women who helped outside, too, with the chores and even in the fields.

I: Hmm. I know that you did really well in school, hmm, in...I don't know, just about everything. But you liked chemistry a lot and...

BO: Oh, yes.

I: And math and so on.

BO: I...yes. I liked...those things. I got good marks in those, and I got...I'd done a lot of reading.

I: Uh huh.

BO: And...I don't know.

I: Hmmm. Did you ever want to go to college?

BO: I did at one time. Yes, I had plans on it.

I: Uh huh.

BO: But then I got engaged and got married, so I didn't go. [Chuckles]

I: Yeah, I've heard that from a lot of women around your age and so on. But, hmmm, I think a lot of you would have done really well. And I guess the times really have changed [unclear]. [Laughs]

BO: Yes, they have in that respect.

I: Uh huh. Hmmm. How about the women that did go to school, that did continue their education? Did more of them go still for, hmmm, the more traditional goals of teaching?

BO: Yeah, most of them got to be teachers, or nurses, or something like that.

I: [Unclear]. Uh huh.

BO: In a nursing career, you could practically work your way more or less through, so a lot of those got to...at times, got to be nurses.

I: Mmmm. A lot of on the job, possibly, experience or...?

BO: Mmmm-hmmm. A lot of that.

I: Oh, okay.

BO: They did a lot learning it at...go to the hospital and...and to...get it.

I: Hmmm. What would be thought of a woman who was good at chemistry and the mathematics and that would like to go to school to be some type of engineer or something like that? I suppose that just wasn't an...wasn't heard of?

BO: There wasn't much of that done in them days, no.

I: Hmmm.

BO: They thought they were kind of *odd* if they did. [Chuckles]

I: Uh huh. Something was wrong with them. [Laughs]

BO: [Laughs]

I: Hmmm. And that's one of the higher goals today, I guess.

BO: Yes.

I: Hmmm. Hmmm, I was wondering...

Child voice: I want to tell you something! [Unclear whispering].

I: Did your chores change much when you...after you, hmmm, got married and lived on the farm?

[Clunky noises, like marching feet]

BO: Oh, yes. Ah...before that I...lots of times just made the meals in the evening. My mother went out or...I helped with different things and...helped haying, stacking hay and stuff, but...

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: Of course, as long as I was going to school and that...

[Clacky noises]

I: Shh!

BO: I didn't do a lot of the stuff and...after we got [unclear] on the farm, I...lots of times I would walk behind the drag, or ride the disc, and things like that.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And I would ride the binder, too. After we got a tractor, I rode the binder and made...that made the bundles and stuff, and I shocked a lot of grain.

I: I think that's interesting that women couldn't get into...or more or less didn't get into the men's professions in those days, hmmm, academically, but they could work right along with their fathers and do the farm work just about as well. [Laughs]

BO: Yes, that was true. The men kind of thought that they...They were trying to keep the women out of a lot of these jobs.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And at first they had a lot of trouble trying to get into them. Like if they wanted to be a doctor or something, they...

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: Men would try to keep them out of there, if there was any way that they could do it.

I: Oh. Hmmm. Were most of those ways legal? Or did they just give them such a bad time that the women would...?

BO: Well, yes, they gave them a bad time.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: They weren't exactly legal, but...

I: Hmmm.

BO: You'd find the board and everybody was that way, because they were men and they liked to keep the women out if they could anyhow help it.

I: Hmmm. So there was a great male orientation in all of the fields?

BO: Yes. All this. Mmmm-hmmm.

I: Hmmm. And then I was wondering, after you married grandpa and so on, did you...let's see, I know that some of your goals were like working on the dairy farm with him or...?

BO: Yes.

I: You had livestock then again, too?

BO: Yeah. We had...we sold milk and...toward the last, we sold milk, because before it was cream...and then you had to get that in. Sometimes in the winter when the roads were bad, then it was hard to get the...even the cream in. You would have to take it in in the sled with horses.

I: Hmmm. And mom was an only child. So did you do a lot of sewing and so on for her?

BO: I sewed practically everything she wore except stockings and shoes until she was...oh, I don't know, in the fifth or sixth grade. I sewed coats, and bonnets, and all those things.

I: Hmm. So you got to be quite a seamstress! [Chuckles]

BO: [Chuckles]

I: Boy, I know you still do a lot of sewing around here and so on, so that hasn't completely diminished. Hmm...I was wondering, what were the law practices like back then? Just getting into the legal aspects that...?

BO: Well, there was a lawyer here and there, yes. He kind of told you what was legal and what wasn't. And once in a while, I suppose, they had some cases.

I: Hmm. So they weren't used as prominently as they are today?

BO: No.

I: Possibly...

BO: I served on a jury one time, I know.

I: Hmm.

BO: And...I was the only woman.

I: [Chuckles] Did they call you in to represent your family then or...?

BO: No, no, no. I...I was called in, they represent the...hmm...well, we decided the case. They were...each side came up and told what was going...they had done, and so forth.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And then...and they had...each one had their own lawyer, and he asked questions, and then the...ah, there was a judge. And then we went out into a different room, the juror's room. I was on a jury.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And...decided the case. Well, then the men, they decided that we had just about...about decided what...how we were going to...the...it. And then the men decided they were going to stay for supper. So of course I was the lone woman, so we stayed for supper.

I: Oh.

BO: And I had a long ways home that night in the dark. [Laughs]

I: [Chuckles] And had you come by horse and carriage?

BO: Car.

I: Oh, you had a car then.

BO: I had a car then.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And lots of times before that, when they were on a jury, they had to go and stay in that town, because they couldn't drive back and forth with horses. It would take too long.

I: Mmmm. Okay. Hmmm, I guess we're getting kind of close to the end on this side. I wonder if there's enough time for another question? Hmmm...let's see. Did a lot of women serve on the jury in those days?

BO: Not too many, no. It was mostly men.

I: Mmmm-hmmm. Oh, okay. That one sounded kind of fun.

BO: Very seldom. I...I was surprised when I was chosen.

I: Hmmm. And you were on the debate team in school, too, weren't you?

BO: Yes, I was.

I: And what was debate like in those days?

BO: Well, we had figured out what our...there was...the question was...was the...hmmm...about these...ah....

[Recording interruption]

BO: The roads happened to be open then, so we could go.

I: Hmmm. And say you did pretty well as a team, did you just keep advancing then?

BO: Well, yes, but then that was the end of it. It was kind of a thing between the schools. I don't know...

I: Oh, so you didn't go from...?

BO: No.

I: ...local to regional, I mean, and so on?

BO: No, no. We didn't have any of that then.

I: Oh, okay.

BO: Even the...

I: And what else...I know you went to high school. What else did you do in high school for activities?

BO: Well, I played some basketball. That was kind of coming in for girls then.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: We only played on...or each...the guards were on one side of the floor.

I: Uh huh.

BO: And the...forwards were on the other side of the floor.

I: Hmmm.

BO: So if you were a guard, you never got a chance to make a basket, because you...you were on the other side.

I: [Chuckles]

BO: Although I could throw the ball from one end of the gymnasium to the other, so...[Chuckles]

I: [Laughs] Did you ever try for a basket? Or I suppose that...

BO: You weren't allowed to unless you got fouled.

I: Oh...Hmmm. Well, I'm glad the rules have changed. [Chuckles]

BO: Yes, because I was a guard.

I: Hmmm. Hmmm, I was wondering. I know that you and grandpa and mom lived out on the farm for, oh, I'd say until she became about eighteen. I know she got married then. Hmmm, what kind of things did you do for entertainment during that time?

BO: Well, the same as we always did. We visited the neighbors. And then it got so there was a few dances, lots of times, in town in the hall.

I: Mmmm.

BO: And...lots of times we had, hmmm, what they called a whist party. So we went from one neighbor to the other and...then we advanced in our group...by ourselves, of course, and when you got to the next partner, you would change. So that...you...in the end of the evening, they counted up your points that you have made.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And of course then you won. And of course the guy that was...that had the least, he got the booby prize.

I: [Laughs] And...oh. The booby prize was...the least amount of points won then?

BO: No.

I: No?

BO: The one that had the *most* points won.

I: Oh!

BO: And the one that had the least points, he lost, so he got the booby prize. Probably a bar of soap, or some toy (kids' toy) or something.

I: Oh.

BO: Where the one up above was [probably] a notebook, or a glass dish, or something.

I: Well, that sounds interesting. That must have been pretty economical, too, then, just to go from house to house and keep playing cards.

BO: Yes. Mmmm-hmmm. Each one furnished...we each furnished our own meal, of course.

I: Oh.

BO: It was just a lunch after, about twelve o'clock.

I: Okay. I know that you were somewhat active in your community, too. Hmmm, in your church, you were in Ladies Aid or something?

BO: Oh, yes. I was in Ladies Aid. I served in quite a few different offices there.

I: Uh huh.

BO: I was president lots of times, and I...and secretary an awful lot, and I'd been voted in for treasurer, too, for that matter.

I: Hmmm.

BO: And then we put on much more than they do nowadays. We had suppers and...hmmm...and we always served the Ladies Aid to anyone that came that afternoon. They came to our luncheon and...and then a lot of the people in town and around came, because we were serving or whatever, and a lot of them came up for lunch or for supper.

I: Now were they all members of the church?

BO: No, they were not.

I: Oh. So it was more of a community action when one church had Ladies Aid put things on.

BO: Mmmm-hmmm. It was, more so than now. I don't think there's hardly any served outside their own business unless they have a chicken supper or something and so on.

I: Hmmm. What were your main goals in those days? Did you still read a lot, and then do your sewing, and so on?

BO: Oh, yes. I read a lot, of course, when I had time. But...when you do a lot of sewing, and help with chores, and you've got a house to keep up, you don't have too much extra time.

I: Mmmm-hmmm. It's a full day every day then. [Chuckles]

BO: Yes.

I: Yeah, it sounds like a lot of what the women did was the traditional things around their own home, and they had about all they could do to keep things running that way.

BO: Mmmm-hmmm. We'd go to town probably once a week and get...pick out the groceries and things like that, maybe a piece of material you wanted to sew and...

I: Hmmm. Well, I guess things changed quite a bit after, hmmm, you came to live with our family. Now we have an extended family with you here. And hmmm...let's see. I think you came about when I was seven. So that would be about...let's see, fourteen years ago or so?

BO: Is it fourteen? Yeah...it's about fourteen.

I: About that many. [Chuckles]

BO: Yeah.

I: So...hmmm...how has your life changed since you moved off the farm and came to live with us?

BO: Well, I don't do...I have a garden, of course, a small garden that...

I: Uh huh.

BO: And I do some canning and that. But I do not go out in the fields, of course.

I: [Chuckles]

BO: And of course, this is in town all the time. Sometimes I walk uptown, but most of the time I ride.

I: Uh huh. And hmmm, I guess you've kind of a set schedule, taking care of my seven-year-old brother and so on.

BO: Yeah, we...

I: Became the babysitter. [Chuckles]

BO: We have an automatic washing machine, so it's nothing to throw the clothes in and wait for them to get done.

I: Uh huh. Hmmm. And I guess you get a little more time now to contemplate and read?

BO: Oh, I read a little every day, usually in the evening.

I: Uh huh. Well, I think it's really helped a lot since my little brother was born. I know that you've been his prime babysitter and all that while mom's been out working. And that's worked out really well...hopefully on both sides! [Chuckles]

BO: [Chuckles] Yeah.

I: And hmmm, I know it helps when we need groceries and so on. Since mom is working, you're able to continue buying what we need around the house and so on.

BO: Yeah. Or I tell your dad to get it when he's home in the winter. Otherwise in the summer, it is all...I have to take of most of it.

I: Uh huh. So really, you still fulfill a very traditional role around our house, while my untraditional or more career-oriented mom now goes out and works full time. And I see where that is very helpful. I think a lot of other kids right now are probably...well...my little brother's

age, who would be going to daycare centers or somewhere after school. And hmmm, he would probably be babysat, I suppose, until mom got home.

BO: Yeah, Raquel and Randy don't...wouldn't seem to have time, because Raquel is kind of busy athletically.

I: Yeah. The two high school kids are always busy and so on. Hmmm. What do you see as some goals right now? I mean, what...what do you really enjoy about living in town, I guess, and being our grandma and...and part of the family? [Chuckles]

BO: Oh, yeah, it's...very little...and then I go and...out and visit a few neighbors once in while or they come and visit me.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: And I go downtown. Once in a while I take in a show.

I: Uh huh.

BO: And sometimes there's something going on downtown I want to take in. Then I...I go down. But there isn't too much here.

I: Yeah, it's quite a small town, so...Hmmm. I was going to ask another question here. Hmmm. What do you foresee as being the prime interest of your future? Do you just...do you get a lot out of watching us grow up? [Chuckles]

BO: Oh, yes. I like to...I have watched you grow up, and gave you a few hints now and then what I think you should do and...[Chuckles]

I: Uh huh. That's always helpful. [Chuckles] Hmmm.

BO: Patched a few clothes. Darn you something.

I: Yeah, I know. Every time I need some altering on clothes I'm always coming and saying, "Grandma..." [Chuckles] And needing some help. Hmmm. Well, I think this has been really interesting, just getting a background of your life in the 1920s, I suppose, through today.

BO: Well, yeah, I...part of it was before the 1920s.

I: [Laughing] Okay!

BO: [Laughs]

I: Mmmm-hmmm. And I see where a lot of things have changed both...hmmm, well, from the traditional to career-oriented expectations of women, and the role changes, I guess, on both sides.

There's a lot more men helping out with child raising and domestic activity these days. And hmmm, I think that's been really interesting. I'm sure it's been quite a change for you to acknowledge, too.

BO: Oh, yes. It's been quite a bit different.

I: Mmmm-hmmm.

BO: A lot of it. [Coughs]

I: So...well, this has been really interesting. And thank you for participating in this tape. And hmmm...I guess that...hmmm...I think we've covered just about everything. [Chuckles]

BO: Covered quite a bit, anyway.

I: Uh huh. It's [unclear]. So okay, this is the end.

[End of interview]