

Interview done by Ami Allain with Mary Steward on July 26th, 2007. The interview took place at about 11 o'clock am and it took place at the coffee shop The Gathering Place.

This interview was obtained as I was in there working on other homework and Joan and Nancy asked those who were working there if they would mind being interviewed for this class project that we were doing. The air around the interview was light and there was a lot of joking. She was also soft spoken and very pleasant to talk to.

Ami Allain: So, what is one of your favorite foods?

Mary Steward: Chocolate

AA: How often do you eat it?

MS: Everyday. [We both laugh]

AA: What is one of your least favorite foods?

MS: Mincemeat.

AA: And how often do you eat that?

MS: Never.

AA: What did you eat for your evening meal yesterday?

MS: I ate a Spanish Chicken Casserole. And a green salad.

AA: Alright, so thinking of the food system more broadly, what are three things that you appreciate about the food system in your community?

MS: Hmmm, explain that.

AA: Food system is, I've got some of the definitions on here. [I point to the letter for community members.] So its, stories relating to food, cooking food, hunting and fishing, the processing, growing gardens.

MS: Ok, so what was the question again?

AA: What are three things that you appreciate about the food system, what types of these things do you like in your community?

MS: Well, that I can go to the store and buy almost anything that I want. Um, we have good cooking facilities and my home is easy to cook in. I like eating and sharing food with friends.

AA: Alright.

MS: Is that good?

AA: yeah, and what are three things that you don't like so much about the food system in your community?

MS: I can't really think of any. You know, I spent time in Africa, so I appreciate everything that we have.

AA: Alright, well, that makes sense. So, how does your household get their food?

MS: By buying it at the grocery store. I do raise, just tomatoes.

AA: Tomatoes? Does anybody hunt or fish in your family?

MS: My husband hunts but we don't like wild game very much.

AA: Oh, okies.

MS: So we give it away.

AA: Hey, that works too. I'm sure people appreciate that.

Do you or any of your family face any challenges in getting the food that you want to eat?

MS: I can't get Starbucks Java Chip ice cream or cofficino bars. That's my biggest challenge. Pretty minor isn't it?

AA: Yeah, a little. Isn't there a way to get them... I guess not from Klamath.

AA: What is your family's history with food in the past?

MS: We didn't really have any involvement in the food industry. We loved to cook, but we really weren't involved in the food industry.

AA: I guess kinda, technically you work in the food industry.

MS: Right, now. Haha.

AA: And are there any stories connected with food in your family? In the past or present?

MS: Seems like there are lots of little stories. You know. I can't think of any particularly. My mother just liked to cook. She loved to bake. And I had six brothers that loved to eat so. She was a busy lady.

AA: What was your favorite uh, family recipe that she would make?

MS: Probably one of the things that I liked the best was a Danish pastry. I like sweets.

AA: And, Are any of your family members involved now in growing, raising, processing, selling, delivering, serving, or making food for the community.

MS: Nope

AA: Do any of the groups that you belong to eat together? Offer meals?

MS: Mmhmm.

AA: Which groups?

MS: Our church.

AA: Alright.

AA: How do you think that farmers and ranchers are faring in the community?

MS: I think well.

AA: Do you have any stories or experiences about them?

MS: Well, I hear them complain some, and I know it's a turkey to count on the weather for your existence, so that's always a hard thing. But I see them doing very well. I do see some difficulties sometimes in the family things, but those are about who is going to inherit the ranch, whose not.

AA: What do you know about how low income/disabled/and the elderly people get their food in your community?

MS: Well, they do have the senior center where they get some meals. You know, of course we have food share too. I don't know. I hope if there is people that need it they are being reached.

AA: It's a sensitive topic.

MS: It is. I would be happier if I knew that their needs were being met.

AA: They always need help at the churches.

AA: Do you know where the food comes from that is eaten in your community?

MS: The store.

AA: Do you know how far it comes from?

MS: No, I don't.

MS: I don't really pay that much attention.

AA: That's alright.

AA: Do you eat any local foods?

MS: Sometimes I buy a few things at the Saturday market or we buy food from the baker who bakes here.

AA: So how often is the Saturday market open?

MS: Just in the summer months. Just a couple of months.

AA: Ok, so, how would you get more local food grown or processed here?

MS: Change the weather.

AA: Can't really do that.

MS: That's right. We had pumpkins freeze here one year on the fourth of July. My husband says that he was never going to do it again.

AA: And how do you think the community could make more local food?

MS: I don't know. I guess that's something that I never had a real desire to look at. If it was in somebody's heart to do. We have green houses.

AA: Are those used anymore?

MS: They used to raise tomatoes there.

AA: I heard something about tomatoes not ripening because of something in the water and soil?

MS: it could have been. I'm not sure what the story is there but I know that they used to raise them a lot.

AA: are there ways in which you'd like to see the food system changed here in this community?

MS: No, it's fine.

AA: Have you heard or read anything about how people are changing their food systems in other places?

MS: No.

AA: Ok. Are there things about the food system in your community that are important for us to know?

MS: You know, I don't think so. I think that we have a heart to try and keep locals to purchase foods sold here. You know, it's important for the businesses.

AA: Yeah, it's a hard thing to try and keep people to stay here and not buy in Klamath.

MS: It's harder for them to be competitive here because we don't have as much of a market. You've got to be willing to pay a little more.

AA: What is your view of what your community will be like in twenty years?

MS: Um, not much different. It hasn't changed much in the years that I've been here. Which has been a long time. So, I just see little things come and go. I hope to see more businesses open. I don't know. It's hard to say. I hope it doesn't change its flavor. It's got very wonderful people, it's got a nice atmosphere. I hope that we can retain that. I hope that we can retain the jobs to keep people here.

AA: I've enjoyed my visit here.

MS: Good. Lots of good people here.

AA: Thank you.