

This interview was conducted in the community center in Paisley. It was after the Pancake breakfast and raffle, people were cleaning up. We had walked by Vicki Howard's garden several times, and just admired it. My teachers had talked to her in Lakeview, already, so we were eager to give the interview. I took notes because it was relatively noisy.

Colleen A. Johnson: How long have you been living in Paisley?
Vicki Huck: For two years, but after 30 years I came back. I grew up here.
CAJ: How long have you been a master gardener?
VH: I'm not the master gardener, my husband is.
CAJ: You you aren't affiliated with the Master Gardeners in Lakeview?
VH: No
CAJ: Sorry, I must have assumed some wrong information. Why do you garden?
VH: We have family that loves it, and my husband was raised by his mother in the Sandy they were adamant gardeners. We love to can, grow our own food.
CAJ: What's your most challenging aspect of gardening here?
VH: Weather, the temperature. Sometimes we get snow in June.
CAJ: I've heard about that. Do you cover any of your plants?
VH: No, we don't cover. We just let nature do its thing.
CAJ: So do you have bad years and good years?
VH: Well we've only been here for 2 years. But our last house's garden in Culver was huge, it makes this one look small.
CAJ: What do you grow?
VH: Vegetables, cabbage for sauerkraut, squash, pumpkin for the kids, tomatoes, peppers, lattice, onions, potatoes, carrot, pears, green beans, squash, and New Zealand spinach, lots more. It has become a tourist attraction of sorts.
CAJ: What do you do with the vegetables?
VH: I make a lot of zucchini bread, we freeze spinach, we just started the short corn called Bodacious corn. We just pick it stick it in bags. Freeze it. And in the winter we can bring it out and it is like we just picked it. We canned about 150 green beans last year.
CAJ: Do you have any trouble with animals?
VH: The main problems here are with dears, but we have a large fence. They sit there and look in. We get the occasional rabbit though.
CAJ: Where did you learn how to can?
VH: My husband's grandmother. My mother was a ranch cook so we never needed to can. I didn't grow up with it.
CAJ: Do you like to can?
VH: Love it! Know what we put in it. Eating what we have raised.
CAJ: Do you share your knowledge with anybody?
VH: My grandson seems interested in gardening now. He has his own cabbage patch.
CAJ: Do you share your vegetables with anybody?
VH: A lot of people in town like fresh vegetables? We sell our vegetables at the farmers market here on Fridays. If you aren't here by 8:30 in the morning you are out of luck.

CAJ: Do you have any family recipes?

VH: Yes, for zucchini bread. My mother. Her mother was gone, so it probably came from herself.

CAJ: Do you spray your garden with anything?

VH: We don't use any artificial fertilizers, pesticides, etc. Though we do dust our cabbage so the white butterflies don't lay their eggs there.

CAJ: Is it hard to garden?

VH: In most parts. Paisley is the banana belt of Lake County most of the time the temperature is moderate.

CAJ: What else to can?

VH: Tuna. We have a family thing everything Labor Day weekend. Thomas Orchards we get peaches, plums, and cherries from there.

CAJ: Do you dry any of your food?

VH: We fries for a couple of years. Fruit leather from apples. We also made our own jerky. We make dill pickles, relish, dill. We also have tomatoes and carrots every year because they are volunteers. Our land used to be a horse corral.

CAJ: You make your own sauerkraut, is that an ethnic tradition?

VH: My husband's family is German. Once you try our homemade sauerkraut, you will never buy the stuff at the store. There is no comparison.

CAJ: How do you make it?

VH: We put it in a big container and it's just salt and cabbage, we looked it up on the internet how to do it. And we've been making our own ever since.

CAJ: Do you have any other food traditions?

VH: We make lots of cookies, recipes from my husband's grandmother and my mother. We have peanut butter and sugar are the best. I also make a lot of break. Any kind really. Though I haven't mastered whole wheat yet, but we use a lot of oats.