

Alice Hancock has worked a variety of jobs in her days. Before she retired, she was a school cook at the Union School. This interview was conducted in her living room.

Toan Ngo [00:00]: This is Toan interviewing Alice Hancock on July 22nd, 2007. It is 6:25 p.m.

TN: Alice, how are you today?

Alice: Doing fine, thank you!

TN: Okay, first question then. What is one of your favorite foods?

AH: One of my favorite foods. I like tacos, enchiladas, I like... I was raised in Arizona and I like... I like Mexican food. But... I like food. [both laugh]

TN: How often do you get to eat Mexican food?

AH: Oh... whenever I decide to cook it. There isn't any... I go and... there's one here that's really good and I go every now and then but not really often. I mostly stay home.

TN: Do you find that the Mexican food here in Oregon is equal to that of Arizona?

AH: I was only nine years old when I left Arizona. Nine, ten, eleven, somewhere around in there so... I... and where I lived, a little teeny tiny town just across the border into New Mexico. There weren't any restaurants, there was one gro... two grocery stores I guess and a school and a church. And that's all. So I wasn't really used to eating out (Oh okay.) so to speak. And I... I lived in a... just east of Eugene when we first moved here when I left the high school. And then over on the coast at Florence where I finished high school. And then I lived in Eugene and after I got married and in Medford I was a telephone operator for several years. And I lived in Medford, I was telephone operator there. And that's where I met my husband, who was actually my second husband but... I was married to him for forty-six years before I lost him so... He was really the only one I had. (Oh.) I met him and he was a cowboy from northern Arizona and I was working and he was logging and he didn't work in the winter time and he said we'd go over there where I could work all the time and you don't have to so. He brought me to Lake County. And that was in... oh gosh... early 60's. (Wow. Okay.) Early 60's... and we settled in Paisley.

TN: When did you get to Lakeview?

AH: Oh boy... when did we get to Lakeview... In the late 70's... We bought a ranch out on the Westside. He was logging and I was at that time working summers at the forest service and we bought a ranch out on the Westside and it... We were only there a couple of years when he was hurt really badly in a logging accident and we lost the ranch. And then we bought this place. So... he had to retire... he couldn't work anymore. And I stayed at the school and worked until I retired. And so we had... that's when we bought this place.

TN: Okay. When did you work for the ZX Ranch?

AH: Oh boy... Let's see... my daughter was... '63, 4, 5, somewhere around in there. I can't remember the exact dates but. I think my daughter was a sophomore in high school and my son a freshman when we were there (Okay.) so... that would have been around early 60's. (Okay.)

TN: And so after working there you went to work at the school?

AH: No... after working there I went to work at the Forest Service for a couple of summers. Just working summers. Cuz we had a little place there in Paisley and... and I... so I... we ran the bar in Paisley for awhile. I worked there and just... we were down just work different places around. And... then we moved to here. And I was working at the forest service summers and also my husband was logging so I was doing all the haying on the place, the irriga'in. And then... someone said that... a friend of ours that we knew here said a job was opening up at the [inaudible] school here and that way I could have summers off to do all those things. So I thought that's for me. I applied for the job and I got it.

TN: When did you stop working there?

AH: When did I stopped? Let's see... I retired in 19... 95. As soon as I got old enough. [both laugh] And my husband by that time had been retired on disability cuz he hurt himself pretty bad [inaudible] so I retired and just... took life easy.

TN: So are there... so you like Mexican food. (Uh hmm.) Is there anything you don't like?

AH: Cooked carrots.

TN: Cooked carrots...

AH: That's the only thing I can think of and I just cannot eat them. I cook a lot of them, I can eat them if I cook them with a roast and mix them up with anything else, or stew but to try to force one down all by itself... I... that's the only thing I can think of that I just really don't like. (That's funny.)

TN: What did you have for your dinner yesterday?

AH: [inaudible] here anymore and I'm by myself and it's just... probably a sandwich. (Uh huh.) I eat... I eat a pretty good breakfast, as a rule... and have a sandwich and maybe some soup or something. That's... that's lunch and when you're not doing anything you don't get very hungry. So... course I do a lot of snacking. I still make cookies and things like that... so... for my kids and grandkids.

TN: Are your grandkids in Paisley?

AH: No... no... My daughter and her husband are there and their kids are in La Pine and Prineville. So that's two of them there. My son lives just a couple of miles from here. One granddaughter is staying with me now. She's going to school at... Monmouth. (Monmouth...) Yeah. And so she comes and works here in the summer time. And she's stayed with me the last two years.

TN: What year is she at Monmouth?

AH: [to granddaughter] Tiffany (PSEUD.) are you in there? (Oh is she here?) She's a... I think this is her second year. She wants to be an English teacher. She went two years at Linn Benton Community College. And this is her second year at Monmouth and I think she's got two more. I could be wrong about that... my memory isn't what it used to be. [both chuckle]

TN: Well... thinking about the food system that we... looked at. What are three things that you like about the food system here... in Lakeview?

AH: You know I really don't know much about it now but when... when I was cooking it was... like the school board said, you know... there were rules and regulations... then too... You had to give them certain things... that kids need (Uh hmm.) to eat. But there wasn't near the structure as there is now. So... if they liked it... I fixed it for 'em. There wasn't... there were still reports to put... to turn in to the Department of

Education every month that I had to fill out and... but basically... what they liked I gave 'em all a list and their favorite things and I try to cook those.

I [07:40]: Now of the food system that's in Lakeview. Is there anything you don't like? Didn't like?

AH: I don't know much about the food system in Lakeview. I know the kids didn't like it when got out of our school and came to Lakeview school... but of course, like I said... the school board out there that's... they... they got consolidated so that's part of the Lakeview district now. (Okay.) And I think the cooks here... I know a couple of them... and I do... I don't have any idea what they serve. But I think it's probably good food. As far as I know. I know a lot of them would come back out after they got done with high school and have hamburgers on Friday.

TN: When did the Union School... the Union School was where you worked (Yes.) right? When did it get consolidated?

AH: Oh boy... you know I really don't know. It was after I left. (Okay.) Quite awhile after I left.

TN: So... rather recent then?

AH: Yeah... it hasn't been very long. (Okay.) And I think a lot of the food now is prepared in Lakeview and taken out there. (I see.) Yeah, they still have a cook out there, in fact, she's the one who took over after I left. And she's still out there but... I think the majority of the food is prepared in Lakeview.

TN: Could you tell me your history and your family's involvement with food in the past?

AH: Well... let's see... I was raised in a little farming community and just across the Arizona border into New Mexico so... There weren't any... I think there were two little tiny stores there. If you did any shopping you had to go... this is a long time ago too... so we raised our food... raised a garden and everyone canned. I still do. [laughs] Old habits are hard to break. So I do a lot of canning and... and for myself and for my kids and...

TN: What... what kind of canning do you do?

AH: Oh... let's see... green beans, corn, peaches, pears, apples for pies, tuna fish. My brother goes and gets tuna fish every year and we all have a biggest party here Labor Day and just can tuna fish and have a good time. All my kids and the grandkids, my brother and his wife and... have a good time... canning fish. I've canned beef. (Uh huh.) I guess there's... if it could be canned I've probably canned it [both laugh] one time or another in my life.

TN: How about cooked carrots? [jokingly]

AH: I do those too! (laughs) Not for me! [both laugh] But I do do them.

TN: Now the... the things that you do can now, are they from here? In your garden?

AH: I don't have a garden now? Not here... no. But my daughter, in Paisley. If you ever go up Stephen Rd. (PSEUD.), she's right across from the church (PSEUD.). (Uh huh.) And she's got the biggest garden... the neatest garden you've ever seen. You oughta go out and see it. And that's where I get a lot of my stuff. (Okay.) So I go up and... and... or she brings it. Cuz they grow a whale of a garden. He puts pumpkins out there so all the kids in Paisley can have them... have a jack-o-latern. (Wow.) It's the talk of the town in Paisley actually. (chuckles)

TN: Are there any... special stories related to food in your family that you'd like to tell?

AH: Not that I know of...

TN: Nothing especially hilarious or funny... that you'll only think of...

AH: No... not really...

TN: I'll tell you a story that I heard from a friend... when I asked the same question and she said that her dad was a really bad cook. And his wife... was sick... and so he had to cook one day and then so he made steak and he comes in the bedroom and she asked "Well... how's the steak coming along" you know? And he said "Well... it's really odd. One side is completely burnt but the other side is really raw." (laughs) He never... (He never turned it over!)

AH: No... I... I... I just... I don't remember ever not cooking.

TN: Are there any special family recipes that you guys enjoy?

AH: Well... Not really... Bread. Homemade bread and rolls. I always... I made a lot of those for the kids out on the Westside too... And... they'd come and get 'em. Cinnamon rolls. I do a lot of baking... or I used to... I don't really do much cooking at all anymore cuz it's a waste of time cuz it's for one person.

TN: Now... What you know now... is it just self-taught mostly?

AH: Pretty much. Pretty much... I never... I don't think I ever took any cooking classes (Chuckles) that I can remember.

TN: But then you taught all your daughters and [inaudible] (My daughter, yeah... and my son.)

TN: I guess they're doing well. [both laugh]

TN: Well... do any... do you belong to any groups that often eat together? Say, a church group or anything like that?

AH: No... no... I'm not much of a... of a group person. (Uh hmm.) But I have one granddaughter that graduated from culinary arts and... at Linn Benton. Yeah! Linn Benton. (Oh it is?) Yeah. So... she's... she's cooked. And like I said, my daughter cooks so... And then the rest of my granddaughters I don't think will ever be cooks. So it... it... And my son's a fairly good cook.

TN: How many siblings did you have?

AH: I had... let's see... There were three of us. Just like... thirteen and twelve months apart. And then... I was nine when my little was four. And... that's when we lost our mother. And my father remarried when I was in high school and I have two half sisters. And just one boy amongst the whole bunch.

TN: So... you... Did you cook, help raised your brother?

AH: Oh yeah. He was... Yeah! I used to take him to the... to my grandmother's on my bicycle. (Oh.) And he was just a tiny baby. And we lived in New Mexico. And go get him after school and bring him home. I'd sit him on the seat, put an arm around him and one hand on the pedal... or the steering wheel and I'd sit on the back fender. (laughs) He was pretty much my baby. My very first one. I was pretty young when I had him. [both laugh]

TN: And what does he do now?

AH: He... has a machine shop in... just outside of Portland... Clackamas. He's a machinist.

TN: Does he come back to visit you often?

AH: Oh yeah... Yeah. We're real close. I don't see him real often, cuz it's a long way to Portland and he's working all the time. But... we see each other fairly often. I used to go up there but now... it's all... the traffic just... I don't do well in traffic any more. But he comes down at least once a year, so usually twice. And we keep in touch... telephone.

TN: Do you do a lot of family holidays? (No.) Get-togethers?

AH: Not really. Not really...

TN: Do you anything about how the farmers and ranchers in this community are doing?

AH: You know... I don't. I really don't. Just accept whatever I read in the papers, and everybody knows that.

TN: I actually haven't been reading the newspaper... What... what has it been saying?

AH: I don't know anything about them really... [laughs] I know they've been... oh they're having a time in a... Well I don't remember as good as I used to either. So... read the paper and then... five minutes later I've forgotten what it says. But I really don't know much about the farming community here anymore. The majority of them I think just raise hay.

TN: Okay. Okay. I think part of my project too... is to interview ranchers as well as cooks so... I'll get to that.

AH: You can get that from them.

TN: Sooner or later, yeah. (Yeah.)

AH: Then there's only [inaudible], I've got five acres here and I've got my own horse. I have it put in the place... it's leased by a guy who puts cows on it. And he's got one really cold out there and I got a horse out there that's... It was my husband's last horse and... I think he's almost thirty... he might be a little past thirty. He's pretty old... so... He's just living out his... [inaudible]

TN: Well... Do you... How often do you shop in town... for food?

AH: If I'm in town and need something. I've got... I'm usually in town at least once or twice a week. Just because... go in and see somebody besides me! [both chuckle] I shop... probably... I don't... I, I... I do a lot of canning. I do like canning and do a lot of canning so... And I don't eat a lot. Especially [inaudible].

TN: Do you know where... stores like Safeway and Stewarts get their food from?

AH: No. Now that you mention it... I don't! [both chuckle] I guess it never occurred to me. They just have it so I go buy it.

TN: You know... not a lot of people do. (Yeah.)

AH: No... I have no idea where they get it from.

TN: I'm not sure either actually. [laughs]

TN: So the stuff that you eat... I guess, since you can it yourself, is mostly local then?

AH: Yeah... pretty much... Well... the... the tuna fish we can... My brother goes over to the coast at Newport I think and bring it down. He gets to go there... and brings it down. But... yeah, nearly all of it.

TN: What's the shelf life for canned tuna?

AH: It never lasts long enough to worry about it. It'll last a year... It'll last two years... it'd still be good. (Oh wow.) Yeah.

TN: The same with beef too, I assume?

AH: I would suppose. Yeah.

TN: Well...

AH: [inaudible] the beef in the freezer. I have canned... beef... to use like in stew and stuff like that... pressure cooker and... I guess... I guess I never paid attention to the shelf life... I just use it when I need it! (chuckles)

TN: Are there any thing about the food community here, in this community, that you would like us to know more about?

AH: You know... as far as the food community, I am really... I've been retired long... I really don't know a great deal about it... what they do in town. So... I guess not.

TN: Ummm...

AH: I'm not being much help.

TN: No! That's alright. Any... anything you say is a lot of help.

TN: What do you think Lakeview will be like in another twenty years?

AH: Oh boy... I don't know, sometimes I think it's just gonna dry and blow away... And sometimes I think it's been going on forever and it'll just keep being the same small town, different people. Because a lot of the kids that grow up here go away for awhile and come home. So...

TN: Do you see that happening a lot? A lot of people move back?

AH: Well... I really don't know, you know... For as long as I've lived here I don't know a great many people. I'm not what you call a social butterfly. I know a few of them, I have some very good friends here but... the general community I really don't know a very... a great deal about it.

TN: So... That was just the questions for Lakeview in general. (Yeah.) Now I'll ask more specific things about just the school. If I can find it...

TN: Okay... So when you were working at the Union School, how did you guys get a budget for the food?

AH: The school board... How did we get the budget? We just figured out what we needed and... I'm not really sure!

TN: Did you ever... discuss about money with the principal or anything like that?

AH: You know they had school board meetings and they talked about the money and whatever they decided that I needed they pretty much let me have. So...

TN: But... did you a say in how much money you needed?

AH: I think so! Yeah... Actually, I think... They just took it... How much... You know... I'm not really sure about that now. I have a lot of trouble with my memory here lately. So... I've forgotten a lot of things. (That's alright...) Yeah.

TN: Did you have an assistant cook?

AH: No.

TN: Just by yourself?

AH: I was by myself. I did the cookin' and the cleanin' and the orderin' and... everything.

TN: Where did you order your food from?

AH: Usually the stores here in town is where we got... we got commodities from the state, of course. And... milk was delivered. They had a dairy here and the milk was delivered. But we just came to Safeway or Stewarts and bought it. Canned goods I could

order by the case. And I got into the little Westside Store. As a rule she ordered them and delivered them to me.

TN: Have you been to the Westside Store since?

AH: What?

TN: Have you been to the Westside Store since you've retired?

AH: Oh yeah! Yeah... The people that ran it for a long time were real good friends. (So...) But I haven't been out there for... oh gosh... quite awhile. I haven't been out that way. (Okay.) I don't even know who has it now.

TN: Oh... I don't know... I was just wondering if it's changed since you've been there.

AH: Yes. (Okay.) Yeah, quite a bit. (Okay.)

TN: Let's see. When you were working there... you were the only one that made the menu?

AH: Yes.

TN: And how did you determine that?

AH: Just whatever sounded good... [both laugh] I guess. I had a list of them and then I would... and after I had been there awhile, I knew what the kids... their better likes or dislikes. I had them all fill out a thing... and "what would you like?" and "what's your favorite food?" and "what's your not favorite?" and just kinda went from there. So... I had a list of them and just...

TN: So besides the hamburgers that you mentioned (Yeah.) what else did the kids like?

AH: Oh... what else did we have? We had... sheesh... meatloaf, they liked that. We got a lot of... commodities that... canned beef and stuff like that they've been. Pizzas... I made pizzas for 'em. Just... I guess just about like you'd feed a family. (Yeah.) Roast... roast [inaudible] once in awhile... roast beef, roast pork.

TN: Is there anything they didn't like?

AH: Not collectively. (laughs) Quite a few of them didn't like spinach. And they didn't have to eat it then. They didn't like it there was enough of other stuff that they could eat. So that they all got vegetables and their meat and the bread everyday. So... if they didn't like one particular thing, there was enough food that they could have something else. Cuz I... I don't believe in forcing the kid to eat something they don't like. (laughs)

TN: We should have more cooks like you around. (chuckles)

AH: I could remember being forced to eat carrots. [laughs]

TN: When you were working there. Did you have to follow a nutritional guide?

AH: Pretty much. Yeah. You... you follow... the basic... basic common sense will tell you what they need. They need vegetables and meat and cereal type bread. So... your menus had to include the food groups. (Uh huh.) Milk. And some kids don't like milk so... But then if they didn't like it then they didn't have to eat it. There's no point in forcing a kid to eat something they don't like.

TN: But what you were serving... nutritional wise... was it government enforced? Like... they had to say... oh... you have to serve how many servings of this per day.

AH: No, no... there wasn't a... I don't remember them saying you have to serve this many portions a day. They'd have to have this many portions of... of meat... meat or the equivalent. Peanut butter's just as good as meat. (Okay.) Protein! You'd have to have

that and your vegetables and the starches but, so yeah there was a guideline. I don't remember near as good as I used to... I'm losing my mind. I know I am. So... but... yeah there... there were guidelines to follow.

TN: Now, when you were there. Were... was there still... a lot of... what do you say... reduced lunches and free lunches available for kids?

AH: I think we had 'em. We had 'em, yes. They were available. There weren't too many who... I think we only had in all the... in all the time I was there... there was only three or four that were on... (Kids?) Yeah... that were on free lunches. Because most of them, most of them out there were ranching families that have been there forever. (Okay.) Yeah.

TN: Because it seems like nowadays there's a lot more.

AH: Oh, way more. Yeah. A lot more of the free lunch and reduced students. Yeah. But no there wasn't... there wasn't very many at all out there then.

TN: Why do think that is? What was there such change?

AH: I'm not really sure. Jobs aren't as plentiful now... what with the spotted owls just nearly shutting down the timber... and Lake County is timber and ranching. There isn't... there isn't too much industry around here. So... I think that's a lot of it. I'm not real sure.

TN: When... when did the lumber mills shut down?

TN: [brief pause] Were they still there when you were working?

AH: Yes. Yes. There were three mills here and one in Paisley. (Okay.) And now I... They just... They shut down the woods so they can't log so...

TN: When you were there... did they have vending machines at all in the school?

AH: Not out there. (chuckles) No... there weren't any vending machines at all.

TN: Not even for the teachers?

AH: No. I don't even know if there are any over there now or not.

TN: Yeah, I don't think so.

AH: I don't think so... yeah.

TN: That's a good thing though. (Yeah.) It's healthier.

AH: But no, there weren't any. They could go to the store on Fridays I think. Everybody got to go the store and get something. That was store day... so... The last period of the day. (Uh huh.)

TN: When... when you worked, did you serve... How many meals did you serve a day?

AH: Just one. Well... well no... the latter part I had to serve breakfast too. (Okay.) They started that... oh boy, I don't remember when... several years before I retired we started serving breakfast too. But then... when I first started it was just lunch. (Okay.)

TN: Did you serve any snacks along with the meals?

AH: No. [pause] Dessert. I always made them cookies or cake or... There was always cookies around there and the kids knew that they got hungry they could come down and get something. It was a lot less structured when I was there.

TN: I started going to school, I guess to high school in... 2000 or something... pretty late. (Yeah.)

TN: The food that you were buying for the school... Were they seasonal?

AH: Some things. Yeah.

TN: Like what?

AH: Vegetables. Fresh vegetables and... I can't think of anything else but... Mostly I... I bought local. They... they were... oh what... some company that used to come bus us. Can't remember the name of it that would bring cases of it, but mostly it was local. Most of the cases of canned goods I could get through the Westside store there. They would order 'em for me and... so most of it was local. (Uh huh.) And a couple of times I took fresh things from my garden. Which probably was not... not really the thing to do! (Yeah.) [both chuckle] But the kids loved it.

TN: You know, that's nice... I don't think they allow that anymore... (Oh no.)

AH: No, indeed they wouldn't. No. (chuckles) No... when I... by the time I retired you couldn't do it... you just couldn't do it. So... And it's understandable. (Right.) Yeah I guess. But there were a lot... there's been a lot of changes since I started there. Some of them good, not all of them. But the whole world changes so...

TN: What do you think was the best change that happened to the school? ... Or worst?

AH: I'm not really sure... I don't really know. I don't know much about the school system now. I've been retired quite awhile... and... I really don't know. I know the... my grandchildren don't really like the cafeteria down here and I have no idea why. (Hmm!)

TN: Do you still keep in touch with the people that work at the schools?

AH: No... I very rarely run into them, well there's a couple of 'em... a couple of the teachers that was out there. If I run into them then... but as far as being close, no. I'm quite a lot older than most of them. In fact, I run into one of them that taught out there when I was talking to your two friends in the beauty shop the other day. She came in after her mother.

TN: Oh who's that?

AH: She was Connie Cullman (PSEUD.). She came in, she taught 7th and 8th grade when I was out there cooking. (Oh!) Then she retired and I think now she's selling real estate or some darn thing. (Oh interesting!) She's... she's changed her career a couple of times since she's retired. [both chuckle]

TN: Well it seems like you worked a lot of jobs too. (I have!) Different jobs!

TN: What was your favorite job, you'd say?

AH: Telephone operator, I liked that. (Okay.) And of course, they don't have them any more! So... Well they still have them but not... cuz all the long distance have to go through a telephone operator.

TN: What exactly did you have to do there?

AH: Well... when the light lit up you plug one plug in there and they'd tell you where they wanted to call and you wrote it down and you'd plug in and dial it up and that was it. And all of it as handwritten. (chuckles) Boy, I'm dating myself aren't I? [both laugh]

TN: Way before my time. [jokingly]

AH: But it was... it was a fun job. I liked it. There were outlying towns that you, that still crank the bells to ring (Uh huh.) and you had to answer them and if they any long distance it had to go through the central office there so... In Eugene you could dial direct... locally. (Uh huh.) But there wasn't any dial direct long distance. It all went through the telephone operators.

TN: Do you know when they stopped doing that, using operators?

AH: I don't. Cuz I had already quit and moved over here. (Hmm.) But I do remember when I quit my job I'd been there... sheesh... a long time. My chief operator... "[gasp] Who's gonna quit a good job like that and move over here with that man?" [both laugh] She was an... an old maid that her... the telephone operator was her whole life. (Oh.) That was her life and... And it was a good job. I liked it.

TN: What was your not so favorite job, that you had?

AH: Picking cotton. (Oh.) Without a shadow of a doubt... picking cotton. It don't weigh nothing.

TN: Where... where did you pick cotton?

AH: New Mexico. I wasn't very old. That was way before they had laws that made... that you couldn't work until you got to a certain age. Which I was... eight, nine, ten. (Oh wow.) Somewhere around in there. On the local farms.

TN: Who did you work for?

AH: The family. Yeah... it was just the family thing. Family ranch. I don't like picking cotton.

TN: Did they... did they give you an allowance for that?

AH: Well if they did, I don't remember it. [both laugh]

TN: Trying to get some free labor. [jokingly]

AH: Yeah. Free labor. [laughs] Then when I moved to Oregon we picked leaves. That was, that was a little bit of [inaudible] money, well not a lot... enough for school clothes and... spending money, so... [inaudible]

TN: Aside from moving to where you live, did you just travel a lot?

AH: No. In later years my husband was a very good cowboy poet and we did a lot of travelling on that.

TN: I'm sorry... cowboy what?

AH: Poet. (Oh.) Yeah. He was one of the first ones invited to the... the big poetry in Elco. (Uh huh). And went every year, I think we missed it once because we were snowed in, couldn't get out of the house. (Oh.) [laughs] But... so and we did quite a little travelling after that but no... When I was a kid we didn't travel. (Hmmm.)

TN: So you mentioned snowed in... I've been hearing that it hasn't happened a lot lately.

AH: No, it's been quite awhile since we've had a good snow.

TN: Do you think the snow will be back?

AH: I hope so, cuz boy it's dry around here! Yeah... I hope so... but... it's... it's warmed up a lot.

TN: Do people around here talk a lot about global warming at all?

AH: I think probably... it's... I think it's a concern everywhere.

TN: I think it's... a fellow student of mine is studying environmentalism... and how people are understanding it in general everywhere. I think she's trying to write a thesis on that. So she's been asking people, you know?

AH: What do they say?

TN: I think... that they're saying that it's a natural cycle. (Yeah.) It just happens every few hundred years or so.

AH: Well the cowboys and ranchers around here aren't really happy with them environmentalists. In fact I think my husband wrote a... poem about that that was quite popular [both laughs] and a little derogatory.

TN: Well... it's not really my area of study so... (Yeah.) I don't really know much about it.

AH: Well that was... I think that was about them spotted owls when they shut down all the timbers. (Oh.) It was spotted owls, it was a lot of... you know... they just shut it down.

TN: I don't know the story behind that.

AH: It's... well they found the spotted owls and it was an endangered species... and so they just shut down the woods! They couldn't log. Well if logging is your whole life, you know... it's the only thing you ever done... and that's what happened to the mills in town. (I see.) Shut... shut down the mills, shut down the logging. Put a lot of people out of work! And they weren't happy about that. (Wow.)

TN: What... how many years did that happen in?

AH: Oh gosh... seems like a period of four or five. And it's, of course it's [inaudible]. I think they decided now that wasn't so terribly endangered but (Uh hmm) it ruined a lot of lives.

TN: I can imagine...

AH: It's a hard business... [inaudible]

TN: Were you guys directly affected?

AH: Uh hmm! Yeah... my husband was a logger. (Oh okay.) Not a... not a great deal because... by that time he was... I think he was pretty much retired.

TN: Well it's a good thing you didn't have to move away.

AH: Yeah. He... he got hurt pretty bad and was retired [inaudible]

TN: So... you stay here with your granddaughter now?

AH: I... I live here alone. My granddaughter's just here for the summer. She's out of school.

TN: Does she come back summer?

AH: Well she did last summer and this summer. (Okay.) Cuz she's working here with her... her brother works for the forest service and she's working... for a good [inaudible] too so... Whether it'll go on, I don't know. She just... she's in there... Just turned twenty-one I think... [both laugh] Having a hard time remembering how old my kids are. I think they're older than I am by now.

TN: Did you see the fire that was out here recently?

AH: I got a lot... I always get a lot of smoke here... I didn't go out and see it. You could see the red at night, you could see it... but as far as driving to see I figured they had enough to do without people driving out there. But... it was pretty smoky around here cuz it was coming right over the house. Most of the time... wind's blowing that way so... And I had to keep... if I open the windows I could smell the smoke. (Oh wow.) So... Yeah... it was pretty... pretty intense out there.

TN: How many fires have you seen since you've lived here?

AH: Oh boy, I have no idea. I really don't know... Half a dozen... more... (Wow.) I was on... one, two, three... four... (Uh hmm.) I was there for the forest service...

TN: I think I'm gonna go out... drive out there to see the effects of it today (Ahh.) to see what happened. I've never seen a forest fire before.

AH: They are devastating. They are... they're scary as hell! [chuckles]

TN: The newspaper said it took out over eight thousand acres! (Yeah.) That's incredible. (Yeah.)

AH: [inaudible] out there. I haven't been down there for... I don't know how many years cuz we used to go down that back side across the lake. And we'd go south of it any time and we lived out there it was closer [inaudible]. I haven't been out there for... a long time. A long time...

TN: When you worked out there... at the Union School. Fran was working out there too, right?

AH: Yes.

TN: How long has she been there, you know?

AH: No. I think she was working out there when I was... (Okay.) Yeah... cuz she taught kindergarten I think... So she just worked half days but then I think when the first or second grade teacher retired, well then she taught maybe fifth or sixth grade, I think... after that. But I can't... like I said... my memory isn't as good as it used to be. So I'm... I'm not really sure when.

TN: Did you like working at the school better than at the ZX Ranch? Or which one did you like better?

AH: I think at the time... both of them... equally. I liked working at the school, it was a good job. And I liked the kids... nice bunch of kids. But I liked it at the ZX Ranch too. And I've always cooked... I like to cook.

TN: How many people did you have to cook for at each places?

AH: Oh... usually out at the school... there was sixty to sixty-five or six... students and then four, five adults. And at the ZX Ranch... I think when I first started I was cooking up at their summer range at the [inaudible] and I was cooking for a haying crew that was probably sixteen (Uh hmm.) maybe twenty people.

TN: That's a big ranch.

AH: Yeah it was... it's not near that big now and they don't have... And then... the cows was mostly... they had trailer houses the cowboys lived with their families and they'd go home for lunch. (Oh okay.) And there was a few... a couple of 'em that lived in the bunkhouse that they... over there too... but mostly it was what they called Rawson-jaws (sp?)... people, ranch owners that give the haying and... feeding... people like that. And they changed... about as fast as they got enough for a bottle of... a lot of 'em. (Oh wow). A lot of them were... were just drifters. They'd come in and work long enough to get a paycheck and then they'd be gone and they'd bring another load in.

TN: The... the food that you cooked there. Did you ever use the cows that they raised?

AH: Oh yeah they furnished the beef. Yeah... The rest of it I just... I had... I'd make out a list and... and the guy that was the secretary of the ranch would come to town every week and pick up whatever I needed.

TN: You know how many heads of cows they had? Sounds like a lot...

AH: They had a lot, yeah. Oh boy... You know I don't... (Uh huh.) Thousands... (Wow.) Yeah... a lot of cows. And they trailed them... up to the... up... the high country in the summer time.

TN: Do you know how kept track of all those cattle?

AH: Cowboys. Well they branded them... (Okay.) And they had maybe... you know... and... did they ear tag them them? You know I'm not sure if they did... But I know they were all branded.

TN: Did you know if they already used computers back then?

AH: No I don't... I don't think so. But they might have... in the office.

TN: Well I guess... you worked there in the sixties then...

AH: Yeah... I'm trying to think just when... We were there when my daughter graduated from high school in nineteen seventy... one... We were... I was cooking there then. And I think that my son did... two years later we moved away... we were gone. Yeah, because my husband was a cow boss and he got into an argument with a guy that was running the ranch, the rancher. They had a cow that got down and couldn't get up and he was hauling it water and hay and... and... but the cow boss objected to that and he finally told Sonny... "That damn cow's worth more to me dead than it is alive!" And Sonny says "I can't work for an S.O.B. like that" so he quit right then and there... And we moved back to Paisley. But it was! It was a corporation... (Right.) and the cow wasn't gonna get up probably so... if it were... if it died then they'd take the loss off the books so... and he was right... it was. When you spend your whole life taking care of cows... you can't change your [inaudible] the way you feel about it.

TN: It's more personal...

AH: Uh hmm. More personal, yeah... And that was the last time he worked for them...

TN: Thank you very much, Alice.

AH: You're quite welcome.

TN: That was helpful...