

Gathering Our Voice

Interview: Tricia Ortiz

Interviewer: Nancy Warner

Date: April 28, 2011

Transcribed by: Kristi Roberts, AmeriCorps Volunteer

This is Nancy Warner. And the date is April 28, 2011 and I'm here with Tricia Ortiz at her home in Dryden – Peshastin. So, this is a Gathering Our Voice interview and we're going to talk about "Foodways & Byways." This is also the first interview using the new lapel mic. So Tricia as I said before I started I'm just going to ask you some standard questions, questions we ask everybody as we try to tell the story of food in NCW, that's what this is about, big rich multi-cultural story. How long have you and your family lived in NCW?

TO: I was born here and have lived here my whole life.

NW: And just for the record what's your birthday?

TO: December 23, 1952

NW: Ok, a good year. I was born in June of that year. So you were born in 1952. And your parents - could you tell me a little about how your parents came to the region?

TO: They came in the early 1940s. My mother's family is from the Missouri and Kansas area and she came out with her parents and family looking for work in the early 40s and about that time my father who came from southern Mexico with the Bracero program and they actually met up on one of the Wells and Wade Ranches up the Columbia River.

NW: Do you know which one?

TO: Wells & Wade

NW: Is it close to Chelan?

TO: No it's past Orondo

NW: Before you get to Beebe Bridge?

TO: Yes, well before you get to Beebe Bridge. I can't remember which one.

NW: So that's where they met. What do you know about that? What was your father doing? Tell me about the Bracero program.

TO: He was one of many Mexican men who were brought up here by train to do manual labor because there weren't enough men around to do the labor, mostly agricultural I guess, because I

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think a lot of men were gone in the war, WWII.

NW: So he was from southern Mexico? What state?

TO: Yes, the state of Oaxaca.

NW: So the Bracero program was recruiting all over Mexico?

TO: You know, I really don't know much of anything about it. I assume so. I don't know how he heard about it or anything.

NW: So, and what was your mother doing on the Wells & Wade Ranch?

TO: Her mother was the cook who was the main cook for the work crew so mother was the cook's helper.

NW: Did they talk a lot about these things when you were growing up? The early days . . .

TO: Some, not a lot. They were busy working and having a family.

NW: Ok maybe there will be a few things you'll remember as we go along. One of the things I wanted to ask you about is traditions around food. Are there some traditions around food that might go back to the days when your parents first got together?

TO: Oh sure. You know we laughed about how we all come from long traditions of eating and enjoying food and it seems like that always has been and continues to be one of the focus of everyday life as well as celebrations. Get-togethers with friends and family always involve food.

NW: Are there certain ones? Are there Missouri traditions along with Mexican?

TO: Both of them came from very poor families who just lived subsistence and did not have anything fancy at all and so were very good about eating and surviving on whatever happened to be around. But that's it. I think they were both also used to having gardens and using lots of fresh fruits and vegetables that happened to be around. So we always had a garden as a kid. We were talking not too long ago about some of the things we eat for instance the lamb's quarters, the quelites. That we always ate. I think that exists in Mexico and was something that my father was certainly used to eating. And so we always ate that when I was a kid and we could just go out wherever and find it and freeze it and keep it and eat it in the winter too. We did a lot of preserving. I think maybe more from my mother's side was the preserving and canning and freezing, and drying things.

NW: What did you dry?

TO: Fruits, anything. It was the time when nothing went to waste. My grandmother raised a big family and so every little thing was used or eaten or saved or somehow made use of.

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NW: Was this your grandmother on your mother's side?

TO: My mother's side yes.

NW: So I need to back up so I have the whole picture. So your dad came up here as a young bachelor and your mother came out with her family and they met on the Wells & Wade Ranch. And you told me what they were doing. So they got married and her family was here to be grandparents to you.

TO: Right but they actually lived and got married in Mexico and lived in Mexico back where my father was from for about a year or so and there was no work still there. They had intended to just stay there. But then they came back up here looking for work temporarily and ended up staying.

NW: Oh that's neat. I didn't know about that. They went back to Mexico. So your mom had a chance to really understand.

TO: Yes, that was in the mid 40s. So traveling around was not very easy.

NW: No, she must have been pretty adventurous.

TO: Yes, very I would say.

NW: A risk taker. So, the quelantes?

TO: Quelites.

NW: That refers to lamb's quarters?

TO: Lamb's quarters. I don't know what other names it has other than lamb's quarters. But they grow as weeds in the garden. If you're cultivating they'll come up in the spring and so that's when they're the best. You can sauté them up with a little onion until they're barely wilted. You can eat them like that or you can put them in tacos with a little soft cheese. And that's very good.

NW: Ok, lamb's quarters. Well I have heard of people eating them and I myself have eaten them as salad

TO: Ewww, I don't like them raw because they have that underside of the leaf that is sandpapery. But they are very good just briefly cooked.

NW: And then there is purslane?

TO: Yes, vertolaga. And that you can do in a similar way. We had less of that because it was less available I think. (8.30)

NW: So both those plants were plants that were known and that occur in Mexico?

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TO: Yes. Oh, yes.

NW: So it was kind of a familiar thing up here?

TO: Yes.

NW: How about Missouri? Were they also familiar in Missouri?

TO: They may have been, but I don't know for sure. I do have an aunt living that might know some of these things.

NW: That's okay. This is great. That already is really helpful because I bought some purslane from a man at Farmers' Market several years ago I think.

TO: You bought it? [laughs]

NW: I bought it because he was telling me how to cook it. He was interesting. I had it in my own yard at home. But I bought it from him because he let them get a lot bigger than I ever did and taught me how to sauté it with pork chops. So that was verdolaga?

TO: Verdolaga.

NW: Okay good. Well, we're off to a good start because this is just the thing I was interested in learning about. So there's that tradition about harvesting these things. It seems like you've definitely kept that tradition in your family.

TO: Yes.

NW: That's a good one. So drying fruit.

[10:00] TO: Right. The fruits here are totally different than the fruits in Mexico. I can't really think of any overlap. Crabapples – that's about the only thing I can think of. But just the practice of using anything that happened to be around, I think they had in common.

NW: How did they dry them?

TO: We used to just lay them out on window screens in the sun.

NW: That's what we used to do in graduate school. So wild greens and drying fruit, what other traditions have you carried on?

TO: You know, just basic food that I, growing up, was used to – beans and rice and we continue to eat those as staples. And lots of the peppers and tomatoes and zucchini, things like that. We have a garden and we eat many of the same things that we always have. Corn and those things.

NW: How about any meat? Any special kinds of sausages?

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TO: We didn't really have any money when I was growing up, so we really couldn't afford to eat much, in the way of meat. They had chickens when I was little and they would slaughter the chickens periodically. So in that sense, not really. But I think that was probably true of both of my parents' families – they didn't have much money so they didn't eat things that cost more, like meat. I think they both grew up with farm animals because they both grew up on farms.

NW: But you always had plenty of eggs?

TO: Yes. Actually, my grandfather on my mother's side had lots of chickens so we got eggs from him all the time, but we didn't have our own. Never had cows or goats or things, thank goodness.

NW: Do you remember getting food from other people? Bartering for food when you didn't have much money?

TO: No. We pretty much grew it. We used to buy milk from this huge, big 2 gallon jars I think they were from the Duffy's when they were out there on Icicle Road, so we used to go buy milk from them. And I think when I was even younger some of my relatives had a cow or cows that we would get milk from.

NW: And you're speaking about something I haven't actually asked you about and that is when your parents left the Wells and Wade they came to this area to live?

TO: Well they left there then went to Mexico and then when they came back they came to the Wenatchee Valley.

NW: Ok. Here. I'm going to give you a little bit more room. That's why they give you a long cord. That will make it easier for you. So then where was their house? Where did you grow up?

TO: I grew up about a mile up the road on Ed Clark's orchard. And Ed Clark was the person my father worked for. Ed's still living and it's actually his father who owned and ran the orchard then. And so we lived in some of the orchard housing down below the railroad track. And they actually initially lived in a little cabin that was about the size of this room then they moved to a bigger place.

NW: So how many brothers and sisters?

TO: There were 4 of us all together.

NW: 4? And where are you in that?

TO: I'm 4.

NW: Oh, you're the oldest?

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TO: Youngest.

NW: Oh, okay. And do your brothers and sisters live around here?

TO: I have a sister living in Wenatchee.

NW: So you are living so close to where you grew up. Very neat. Very unusual. So I can picture where you would go to get milk. I know where that is, that old dairy. And then would you make your own cheese?

[15:00] TO: No. We didn't really do any of that. We had – what do they call those things – a freezer. It wasn't a freezer box. What were those things called? A locker – that they rented out at the Boswell's building down there. Wilding had a grocery store and there was a huge walk in freezer and you could rent a wooden slat cage that was in the freezer. So we had strawberries and raspberries and things like that, and peas. We would prepare at home and put in little bags or paper boxes and then bring them downtown Peshastin. You could go and put them in your freezer locker and each one had a little lock on it and when you needed something you could come down and periodically get out something.

NW: So do you remember doing that through high school when you lived at home?

TO: No, not through high school. I don't think. We probably had our own freezer by the time I was a teenager.

NW: Yeah, so maybe in the mid '60s?

TO: Yeah.

NW: That's kind of when everything started to change. Everybody talks about those lockers.

TO: It was wonderful because everyone had gardens and it was a way you could keep things. And canning. We did a lot of canning. Same things we can now – cherries, apricots, peaches, plums, apple sauce, pears. We made lots of jam.

NW: Are there any recipes that combine fruits with chilis in your family? Anything kind of unique that came through?

TO: Not on purpose! [laughs]

NW: Like a chutney or something.

TO: No. I don't think so. And the things was, when we were young, you could not get chilis here. There were no seeds. There were no stores. There were nothing in the store. It was a different time. There was nothing. Possibly, if one would go to Seattle, but even there you probably could not get them. I remember my parents had some friends in Southern California

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who talked about at one point where they could get some sort of products in the grocery store, but there was nothing.

NW: Ok. Now that is interesting, given what we see today.

TO: Oh, it's a total change. It still surprises me to see what is in the stores.

NW: And we're not that old. It's been a fairly fast change.

TO: It's been a fast change since I moved back here after training which was 1983. It's a remarkable change.

NW: So when your parents went back to Mexico, obviously they weren't even born yet, but did they bring back any seeds from Mexico that they gardened with?

TO: No.

NW: Okay, just thought that would be something that they would....

TO: No. Since then, I mean we have friends that brings us different things, seeds and basote which we use all the time and we didn't have then. And you can get it now.

NW: So, these are much more recent immigrations, but I interviewed, or visited with, Melissa Hernandez and some of her family down in Wenatchee and learned that on their way up from Mexico people would stop at Yakima on their way north. It would be sort of a last chance stop on their way to Wenatchee.

TO: I'm not surprised.

NW: So was there any place around here that you could stop and get things like masa.

TO: There was nothing. There was absolutely nothing. So there was a big gap for a lot of years.

NW: So that's interesting and good for people to know how recent that was.

TO: It's amazing what you can get in the store.

NW: In terms of traditions that you could, your parents could – in terms of limited resources – were there things that they did? Like I think I mentioned to you on the phone how I learned about not wasting any parts and how head cheese was a tradition that people brought with them and got from the people here that weren't using.

TO: Yeah, it's so funny because I think of the way that immigration – the migrant farm workers who came from Tennessee and Arkansas because many of those people came from similar backgrounds to the people that came later from Mexico had. And – you know again – we are very resourceful with the limited amount of options they had available to them then. So doing

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things like using whatever meats or parts you had you'd use it somehow. I think that is a fairly universal notion that people have.

NW: Right. I think that's true. Use what you can.

[20:00] TO: People did not waste much. And it doesn't matter, whether making rag rugs or using whatever you have.

NW: Right. I've gathered that from other interviews. One wheat farmer I talked to several years ago talked about how his family came from Luxemburg and they traditionally made head cheese. So it's just now associated with Mexico in some people's mind because they don't do that anymore. They've abandoned that. So I think I'll move on to some other questions but we might come back to this one, which is interesting. Thank you for that perspective. One thing that we are also exploring is what kind of food people gather from the wild. And you've already talked about the wild greens. But was there hunting in your family?

TO: No. No guns. No hunting.

NW: Gathering berries?

TO: We'd always go up to Steven's Pass and pick huckleberries in the fall.

NW: Would you make jam?

TO: Yes. Jam and pie. I think that was about it.

NW: You would never dry them?

TO: No.

NW: Was that a real family tradition?

TO: We did it every year for a long time. We would get together with another family and some friends.

NW: You don't have any photos from those days do you?

TO: I might.

NW: Oh gosh. Those would be great.

TO: Gosh, I'd have to look – if I get a chance to look at any of those things.

NW: Oh, it's okay. But if you do, that would be interesting to have – a combined social food gathering tradition. And you've probably kept that up, I imagine.

TO: Some. Not as much. Not as much as we used to. We went pretty much every year, but not

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anymore.

NW: So how would you find out when it was time to go? Do you remember?

TO: No. Probably somebody talked about it. You know, you just kind of knew the time. I don't know. It was probably related to some of the crops around here I would think.

NW: Yeah I guess. It would be interesting to know how people followed those cues because it's not the same every year for huckleberries. You know, sometimes they peak in September. We're also asking people in relation to hunting their own gardening, how much they grew and gathered as opposed to what they got at the store.

TO: We didn't go hunting but my father would go fishing. And I remember getting fish from the river. We would get steelhead and whitefish and something else because it was just down in front of the house.

NW: So out of the Wenatchee then?

TO: Yeah, just up from this place.

NW: Yeah, nice. So would you just eat them fresh or would you...

TO: Oh, I don't remember. They were so big! I do have a picture of my father with this big fish.

NW: Oh, that'd be great. Do you remember drying them?

TO: I don't think so, because it's in the middle of the winter. We cooked on a wood stove and heated on a wood stove, but I don't think we would want a fish drying room in the middle of the living room. I suspect we just ate it. I don't know. I don't remember that very well.

NW: Maybe canning it?

TO: No. We didn't have a pressure canner so... My grandmother did, but we didn't.

NW: So where did your grandparents live in relation to you when you were growing up?

TO: In Cashmere, down there on [?] Canyon Road, those orchards down there.

NW: So down there beside Maggie?

TO: Well, just a little bit down from them.

NW: Oh that's neat. So did your grandparents have an orchard?

TO: My uncles did. The three of my uncles.

NW: So learning is a really big part of passing on traditions, passing on good practices and so

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how did you learn to grow or gather your food? Was it your mother, your father?

TO: Both. They both worked in the garden.

[25:00] NW: So you garden, obviously. What do you think is most important about what you've learned? What are you passing on to your own kids?

TO: I think the most important thing is family. And the importance of gathering to mark events, whether it's seasonal events, holidays, celebrations, that sort of thing. And food is a very integral part of that. I think, you know, our kids know that gardening and eating and food is very important to us. They just don't aren't in places where they would be necessarily interested in doing it at the moment. We'll see if that changes.

NW: Right, yeah. Mississippi and Seattle. Yeah. Well, here's another question for you. Is there one thing that you are most proud of, in terms of your family and community has had a relationship with food in this area – from gathering to growing to sharing or are there any particular things that are passed down traditions or values to your kids that you emphasize. I mean, you already mentioned not wasting.

TO: Yeah, I think that's probably the most, or one of the most important values. And also sharing. I think that's one thing that's important and I don't know how well we have passed that on, but certainly I remember going out with people and picking huckleberries or if you were picking the pie cherries and you had an extra bucket full sharing them or trading them with somebody who has prunes or, you know, that sort of thing. And sharing the wealth around with whatever's available.

NW: And things from your garden, too?

TO: Mmm-hmm.

NW: In your network when you were growing up, in your family network which sounds like it might of went from Leavenworth down to Cashmere, were there some people that were better at growing potatoes? Or had better ground for growing some crops?

TO: You know, I don't remember anything like that. What I remember is that everybody had a garden and everybody grew, you know, whatever they wanted or needed for the most part. So most people had their patch that had similar things, the basics. And people did not drive around. I mean, you did not jump in the car and go some place. People pretty much stayed at home, so you could be at home working in the garden and you didn't really go out and see people unless you went to church, really. So that was very different. We rarely went to Wenatchee.

NW: And that's interesting, because... Boy.

TO: It's very different. It's a very different way of thinking about place, because you pretty

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much stay in one place.

NW: And you know how it works when you stay there. So I suspect you know a lot about the seasonal changes and when to plant and when to harvest things. Yeah.

TO: Yeah. Mm-hmm. I would think. I'm supposed to.

NW: Yeah. You've lived here almost your whole life except for when you were away for school.

TO: Right, except for going away for training.

NW: So tell me if you could what are some spring cues you use to trigger planting of things. When do you plant corn?

TO: Corn? Hmm. Of course now, you have someone else to figure that out. So I do it when everybody says it's time or when we have time. I remember when we were – when I was a kid – we used to plant or start planning, and I don't remember if it was the corn but, on Apple Blossom weekend. And that's the first weekend in May.

NW: That's when you'd start your garden?

TO: Right. But I suspect the corn didn't go in until later. The soil has to be warmer.

[30:00] NW: So one thing that's bugging me, did you grow up... Did your dad go years without eating fresh tortillas?

TO: Yes. Can you imagine? I mean, can you imagine? The whole thing must have been hard for him in many, many ways. But unbelievable.

NW: Yeah, that's sad.

TO: Yeah.

NW: Now how long ago did he pass away? Quite a while ago?

TO: 1981. So 30 years.

NW: He didn't get to see the beginning of what is now a very rich culture around.

TO: No, he was very isolated.

NW: In your network, were there other people that came close to his part of Mexico?

TO: No. There was nobody.

NW: Wow. Okay.

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TO: He talked about when he came on the train, the bracero train, it went up the coast of California, Oregon and up through Washington. And I remember him talking about it, how it would stop on various parts of the way and how people were looking for labor would get on the train and say, "You, you and you." And those people would get off. And he kind of laughed about it. He would look out the window and think, oh, he didn't like the looks of that place so he'd go to the back of the train and so when [laughs] he got up here it was the end of the road and he had to get off [laughs]. And so I don't think there were very many people left, because there were none. Even when I went to college and I went to college in California, and people were amazed that I came from Washington State. And people would go, "Oh, I didn't think there were any Latinos up there." And there weren't, relatively speaking, there were none. And that was 1970. Now things have totally changed.

NW: Wow. He probably thought he ought to've gotten off in California, huh?

TO: Had of he'd know that there wasn't anything to eat up here! [laughter] But they made do.

NW: Yeah, oh gosh. So there's a question on here that I think you've already been addressing. Were there difficult times where you had to survive with little to no money?

TO: All the time, basically.

NW: Four kids and your mom and dad... And so your dad worked in the orchards?

TO: Yes. And then my mother had a stroke when I was 6 years old and she was 29 and nearly died. And she was over in Seattle in the hospital for about a month and they didn't think she'd ever walk again and various things, but she did. She was great. She came on home. And so she couldn't do a lot for a while. So I was 6 when I started to do a lot of the house cleaning and cooking and things like that. You know, and then gardening things too. So I did a lot of that.

NW: So did she get stronger? As you got older?

TO: Oh yeah. Yes.

NW: Did she live longer than your dad?

TO: Yes, actually. But that's kind of another story. But yes she did.

NW: So that burden of having her in the hospital for a month in those days must have been something.

TO: Yes. So that was another financial drain that took a long, long time to deal with.

NW: So the hospital would bill in those days. Wow. What hospital was it?

TO: Swedish.

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NW: Okay. Interesting. It's interesting that a few years later you go into medicine.

TO: Yes.

NW: You've had the satisfaction of helping. That must be really good.

TO: Yeah.

NW: Okay, again, here's a question that I think we've already addressed unless you have something to add. How have you passed this information on to others in your family or community? Traditions, how to survive on little money?

TO: More by example. It's not anything I particularly talk about.

NW: And the story, though, of your mom and dad.

TO: Yeah, and I think we've talked about that with the kids.

NW: So you still have family, the uncles and so on, in the area and your sister, did you say, in Wenatchee. So within your family you get together for these celebrations and gatherings we've been talking about? And so if your family is anything like my family, you find yourself talking about these stories from the past and those kinds of settings.

[35:00] TO: Yeah. Not so much. Well, some with my brother I guess. And then my one aunt, who actually did live up in Baker Flats and lives in Portland now. But yeah, she's probably a good historian.

NW: Where's she live now?

TO: She lives in Portland. And I still see her periodically.

NW: So is there anybody in your family – you know, almost every family has somebody that's the historian, keeper of recipes, the person that you go to when you are looking for some little sliver of the past that could be useful?

TO: Not really. I'd say my brother and I sort of divide that up. We divided up the recipes and things after mother died.

NW: So was she a cook that would use her hands to measure or measuring cups?

TO: Both.

NW: So we're asking folks about land stewardship, too. And the story that we tell about foodways and byways will be grounded, you know, in place – in North Central Washington. So what did you learn about how to deal with water as you were growing up and how did you carry that forward?

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TO: How to deal with water?

NW: The importance of water and how to manage it?

TO: Hmm... I'm not sure about managing it. We used a spring and I'm sure it still exists next to that house we grew up in. It was just a natural spring, so something happened. And I'm not even sure what the source of the water that came into the house was, because it was separate. But it was nice always having that spring in case you didn't have the other water. You could use the spring. You know, I certainly don't remember as a child there being discussions about water, water rights, water use – partly because it was much less populated and I could imagine that it wasn't such an issue.

NW: And then you lived right on the Wenatchee River.

TO: Yeah and we didn't own any land. We didn't own anything, so in a way that's kind of the problem of the person who owns the land.

NW: Well, so then beyond your family – people were obviously irrigating. Irrigating systems were well in place.

TO: In place in 1900, I think, when Icicle Irrigation started.

NW: Did you pick up any ethic from the community of water conservation wise use.

TO: No. Nothing. And I left to go away to college when I was 17 I guess and then came back after training when I was 30. Then I would come back summers and vacations and things like that.

NW: Yeah that was a long time to be gone. Where'd you do your residency?

TO: In Spokane and Yakima so it was pretty close.

NW: Oh, interesting. And where did you go to med school?

TO: The University of Washington in Seattle.

NW: Oh, I thought you said you went to California?

TO: I went to college in California.

NW: Oh, for your undergraduate degree. Where was that?

TO: At Stanford.

NW: Oh, yeah. That's right. You got a scholarship didn't you?

TO: Yes.

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NW: Oh my gosh! That's another interview sometime. That's just about your path, not that it's not related to this. That is so cool. You were away that 17 years there were great big changes in water and notions of community.

TO: You know, and I sort of feel like that's not something that was talked about or dealt with even when we moved back here in 1983. I think of that as something that was quite recently, like maybe the past 10 years or so, or maybe more than that, but you know, you didn't hear people talking about conservation issues at all really. There was the occasional little discussion, but I mean still it seems to me the great majority of people around here in the valley still don't have much awareness in that sort of thing.

NW: It's still an abundance issue. I mean, there's so much water.

TO: Yeah, except there's so little water. I mean I notice a change.

NW: Little water in...?

TO: I mean in the river.

[40:00] NW: And in the springs? You notice changes in the springs around here?

TO: I mean the weather patterns in general, the winters more than anything.

NW: Being so mild?

TO: It used to be cold, we used to have long winters. I got pictures of that, cold and snow and sunny. There weren't the green versions and we didn't have rain. It virtually never rained. It was either snowing or it was nice. That's funny.

NW: Sounds like Colorado. Well I'm going to move into some questions about distributing food. We've already talked a little about sharing food. So that's the train going by?

TO: Yes.

NW: That's kind of neat, adds to the ambience of the place. It's a great setting. So we already talked about sharing food or harvesting food with other families. And then we're asking people about any cooperatives and that collective process about sharing food.

TO: I'm not aware of any, but you know then I was a kid.

NW: So as you were getting closer to 17 and were getting ready to fly the coup, were you aware of gleaning projects where people would glean food and put it up for the poor?

TO: No. And I don't recall there ever being anything equivalent to today's food bank or that sort of thing.

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NW: So when your family was in crisis, I can imagine when your mom had to go to the hospital after having a stroke, four kids at home, it was your neighbors and your extended family that stepped in?

TO: Yeah, and church people which is neighbors.

NW: So it was just personal?

TO: Right.

NW: And I imagine your family did that for others.

TO: Yeah and I remember where there times and things came up and that's similar that things exists, peoples' needs in the community and people get together and...

NW: He's got the fall crazies. It's too cold for him. We're talking about a fly, for the benefit of the recording [laughter] not a person. Okay, so food distribution. We've been talking about that, because now you go to the grocery store and there's a whole section on foods from different continents. And before that you made the point that you just didn't travel to the store that much.

TO: No, when we went there was one grocery store and we went to either Leavenworth or to Cashmere. And there's actually a really nice grocery store with a meat counter and a butcher in downtown Peshastin. The Fullers had that and you could go in there and have whatever piece of meat you want and wrap it up in butcher paper at the counter. And so I think people got you know, supplies and things there. I remember that counter.

NW: Is that family still around?

TO: Fullers. They are not here. I believe Georgette Fuller is still living and she was married to Al. Al's parents, or his dad Norm, was the one that had the grocery store in downtown Peshastin.

NW: Hmm. That'd be neat to have some photos of that.

TO: You know who would be an excellent source, I think, would be Kathy Springer in downtown. She has a lot in her office. She has some wonderful photographs anyway, but she may know.

NW: Ok, I will talk to her.

TO: Or my next door neighbor Ione. She has lived here her whole life. She's probably getting close to 90. I don't know, she's getting pretty old. That's Robert's mother.

NW: Ione?

TO: Ione Springer.

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NW: Oh, okay. That's good to know. I'll have to follow up with these folks. So the grocery stores were here. And of course the train just came by a minute ago. Do you remember the train bringing in any kind of produce or on any kind of trucks?

TO: I have no idea. No recollections. It could have well been the train. The train had a depot. Every town had a depot. There was a depot here. There's one in Dryden. There's one in Cashmere. There's one in Monitor. But I have no recollection of any of that. We didn't live by any stores. We didn't see stores. We didn't really go to stores.

[45:00] NW: So you didn't eat much meat in your family, but when you did you'd just get it from a meat counter?

TO: Right. Exactly. And I remember there was also the meat cutter at the Cashmere Safeway and that family is still here or around because I hear about them. What was that guy's name? Scamhorns. That was the meat cutter at the Cashmere Safeway.

NW: Good. That's an interesting name. So question about the changes in the way food is being distributed and how that's affecting your community. So what do you have to say about that?

TO: Yeah, it sort of probably affecting everyone. Like you say, there's so much available. And there's an abundance or an over abundance in choice. I think there's a lot more non-food food available that I don't recall people having. I remember the schools had the cooks in the kitchen and the kitchen had helpers and they cooked real food in the kitchen and we all tripped in there and there was half the dining area was for people that brought their lunch and I always brought my lunch, but half were people that had hot lunch and they ate there. And we got our milk, our milk came in those little bottles from the dairy up on Blewett's Pass, the Smiths. And I forget what grade it was. It might have been the 3rd grade or something. For our field trip we would go up to the dairy and watch the cows getting milk and the milk going into the little bottles, which we were familiar with because they had the little paper tops. So we had those for our lunch every day at school.

NW: That'd be fun to see some of those little bottles. They must be around.

TO: Well you know, the Smiths they're all related. The Smiths and Betts. They're the ones that had the dairy up there. Marsha and Ted Smith and some of their family.

NW: You're giving me all kinds of good leads here, so that's good. So that's Randy Smith's family?

TO: Randy Betts's mother was a Smith.

NW: So the Randy Smith I know is a different one.

TO: It's Randy Betts who makes log houses with chainsaws up there. And then Ted Smith and

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his wife Marsha have orchards and Marsha works up at the school. And then Warren Smith I think still lives up there too. And John and Devon. It was their grandparents I think that started the dairy.

NW: Okay. That'd be nice to talk to them. I have talked to Pat Stoudt about dairying. And she's in Leavenworth and she's very knowledgeable, but it'd be neat to talk to somebody up in Blewett.

TO: Yes.

NW: Yeah, so you had local milk and you had hot lunch cooked by women that lived in the community. And they wore those hairnets I bet.

TO: Right. I don't remember hairnets. They probably didn't [laughter]!

NW: I remember the hairnets. They were fascinating. Yeah, but we had that. I grew up in Colorado but we had that. Actually in Colorado we had tamales. We must have had a bigger population of Latinos. Of course, we were further south. Anyway, it's terrible to think of you not having masa up here for all those years.

TO: Decades.

NW: Yeah. When you think of the food that we do harvest and eat locally what's your hope for the future of this region?

[50:00] TO: That it becomes very widely available for everybody and anybody to be able to eat fresh and local and healthy food and to realize that that's important and that's a connection that people need to make. And I think getting away from the packaged, processed, non-food food. And for people thinking, to become more aware of their relationship to food as it related to the earth and to the community and to the world these days. You can't ignore other parts of the world because our community really is the whole world now.

NW: So, just a little bit more on that, the connections between food and community, between people and the earth, when you don't have those connections what are you missing?

TO: You know, I don't know. I'm very fortunate because I've always had those. But I can imagine that people would feel very isolated and lonely and extends to other parts of their lives in a lot of ways.

NW: You probably have some patients, you probably see some people that would benefit from more healthier connections.

TO: A lot.

NW: Yeah, and that's changed a lot, too hasn't it, in just the last 10-15 years. It's just amazing.

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TO: Yes.

NW: Maybe it'll change back the other way.

TO: Yeah, I'm very hopeful.

NW: You are hopeful that people will change their eating habits?

TO: Yes, that'll be a greater awareness of food and elemental food as opposed to processed food.

NW: So access, you said, your hope is that there would be improved access, greater access. So do you have in mind any specific ways to improve access to local food?

TO: I don't but I think as with many other areas of life that education through the schools would be key, because for instance when they put the little garden out behind the school there're probably many children in schools who don't have their backyard gardens like we had. We all had gardens, so that was a very common experience. So just being able to introduce them to the fact that food comes out of the earth and what you do with. So I think educating kids is a very important first step.

NW: Good. Is there anything else that you thought of before we close this down? We covered a lot of ground.

TO: Yes. Wide ranging.

NW: Yes and we could tighten this up a little more, but since you're the first person to be interviewed I don't want to short you on the opportunity to share something that occurred to you.

TO: No I don't think I have anything extra to add at this point. I'll probably think of something later.

NW: Well that's fine. Everybody does. I'll go ahead and turn this off.

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