

Gathering Our Voice

Interview with Lucy Keane

Interviewer: Nancy Warner

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Transcribed by: Jennifer Riccitelli, AmeriCorps Volunteer

Nancy Warner: This is Nancy Warner. I'm here at Lucy Keane's home in Rock Island on May the 18th, 2012. And we're going to start this interview with Lucy reading a poem that she wrote about Rock Island as background. Thank you, Lucy, for sharing it. I'm ready when you are.

Lucy Keane: I wrote this about... I call it the "Rock Island Era" because it starts at the time the glaciers deposited the alluvial fan that we had here. And then onto through the accomplishments that we have done in Rock Island.

When the glacier moved, it was so strong
it carried huge boulders as it inched along
Depositing river sentinels here and there
and islands of rock, stark and bare
This erosion of land caused canyons deep
and bluffs inaccessible- columned and steep
Then the ice melted and water ran
leaving sand, rocks, gravel, an alluvial fan
Then the water channeled with a raging roar
it created a river of rapids galore
With boulder dotted islands away from shore
tall river sentinels on watch evermore

Eons passed and vegetation grew
Sagebrush flourished and grasses too
Animals inhabited this pastoral scene,
feeding on vegetation, lush and green
Oregon Territory then its name
and "Mighty Columbia" the river became
Wild salmon braved the rapids upstream to spawn
Indians fished these rapids every day from dawn

In 1885 leading a pack train
a mining engineer from California came.
James E. Keane, a man of vision

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predicted what this area could provision.
He saw the potential of this site
by harvesting Columbia's powerful might.
Irrigation for farms, orchards, alfalfa and beef
also mineral extractions beyond belief.
He felt there would become a historical hour
when man could harness Columbia's power.
For electricity, irrigation and water transportation
not thinking then of its value for recreation.

A post office was opened; Hammond its name
then James Hill and the railroad came.
Homesteaders were busy raising cattle and grain
Keane established Hammond Mills to ship that grain.
Great Northern Railroad a depot ordered
Keane bought and platted this city as recorded.
The town of "Rock Island" derived its name,
from the huge rock islands in Columbia's streams.

However, the Rock Island depot was not to be
Great Northern powers changed it to Wenatchee,
But Rock Island City didn't lay down and die,
Picked itself up for another try.
One of the best schools in the state was slated
and as Keane predicted a dam was created.
The first on the Columbia, it made jobs galore
Brought business to Rock Island by the score.

Restaurants, groceries and gas stations were there
A new post office; Hammond was yesteryear.
Newspaper editions spread the news
and city solidarity it kept infused.
With vigor and strength for a new day
inspiring community effort in that way,
a church called people to "holiness"
A fire department had volunteers always in readiness
the town worked together for the common good,
neighbors helping neighbors as they should.

When Rock Island dam was finally finished
some local business' then just vanished.
But Hanna mining did arrive
and once more Rock Island came alive,
A city golf course wasn't just a dream,
city dumps were covered and cleaned.
Ball fields were made to enhance our youth
Rock Island's athletes furnished the proof.

Then Rock Island damn had to be raised
and our lakes evolved, God be praised.
They will furnish fishing and boating
a recreational outlet for quite a few,
Our city is now setting a new pace
with a 20 years "Comp Plan" almost in place.

A sewer project, water enhancement and civic pride,
With lots of concerned citizens standing by its side
So Rock Island is healthy and well on its way
as a small rural city with a bright new day.

True to the prediction of a "visionary man"
riches are now dredged from our alluvial fan
this dredging of rock and gravel once cursed
will help pay the way for Rock Island's rebirth.
And what James Keane envisioned in 1885
Rock Island is keeping that vision alive.

NW: At two and a half pages. That's so great Lucy. I mean, others in towns all over North Central Washington, it'd be interesting for them to try and do the same thing. Wouldn't it?

LK: Well I wrote the dedication for the court house after the annex and that went over pretty good.

NW: Oh yeah that, I think I read that. Yeah that was excellent what you wrote. That was quite a few years ago now, wasn't it?

LK: Yes it was while Dane was still commissioner.

NW: Yeah. Oh well that's delightful. Thank you so much for sharing that and... so what I'd like to do now is just ask you a few questions.

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LK: Alright.

NW: And we do on Monday's Gathering Our Voice interviews we ask everybody some of the same basic questions like if you could tell me first of all where you were born and when?

LK: I was born in Wenatchee on August 6th, 1927. My parents resided on Wenatchee Heights and were early settlers and farmers. They were raising cattle in the orchard and hay and grain and buying land in the Stemilt Basin around Black Lake and developing a big area up there.

NW: What was your maiden name?

LK: Shiflett. Father: Sargent. Mother: Mae McClure Shiflett.

NW: Oh, okay. McClure is part of your heritage.

LK: Yes. They were early pioneers. She and my father both came here the same year, 1906. And my mother's family were... He was an engineer, her father. He worked on the Great Northern Railroad and they were stationed in Leavenworth for many years.

NW: Okay.

LK: Before coming up adults, my mother received her education up there in a year of normal school teaching.

NW: Mhmm. Okay, that's great background. So then, when, so you were born up there... well you were born in Wenatchee but...

LK: Yes. We resided in the Stemilt Basin and agricultures were, we were... my father was very, very instrumental and developing water systems in that area, the Wenatchee Heights Reclamation district. He was made a figure in that. And we just survived by working.

NW: How many siblings do you have?

LK: I have two brothers and one sister. And I only have one sibling living; my brother is a year older than I am. And his name is Tom.

NW: Does he live here?

LK: Yes, he lives in Wenatchee Heights. He raises cherries.

NW: Oh great!

LK: My sister was Mrs. Stanton Chase and they had, they were both big figures in the development of fruit and it worked. And my other brother Ned, he was... he lived in Wenatchee Heights raising cherries. And he was also water master for that area for years and years.

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NW: Oh. Okay so yeah, you know that area pretty well then. Very well. So when you were growing up, did you ride horses all over that area?

LK: Every day to every field and work place. We had no cars.

NW: So did, go ahead I'm sorry.

LK: Then I got my education in Wenatchee and got to have a privilege of being in the agriculture class. The first women who were allowed in agriculture and Mister, uh anyway... had me try to join FFA. And of course no women were allowed at that time. And so I was the first honorary member of the FFA in Wenatchee. Got around it that way... and then I had scholarships to WSU but I couldn't use them in my... I had wanted to become a veterinarian. And no girls were allowed in veterinarian school at that time. So it was... I did graduate as valedictorian and used that in my knowledge in all my life. I married my husband March 16th. 1947. And to us, two children were born: Jeff Russell Keane and Dane Sargent Keane. And they were seven years different in ages so we had two families (laughs).

NW: Oh, so Jeff's the oldest?

LK: Mhmm.

NW: Oh okay, and I know Dane but I don't know the third one.

LK: That's all I had was two.

NW: Oh, two. Oh okay, and they're seven years apart.

LK: Yes.

NW: Okay, okay. And your husband's name?

LK: Delbert Russell Keane.

NW: How'd you meet?

LK: We met at a grange dance in Stemilt Hill.

NW: Oh the Beehive Grange?

LK: Mhmm. No, Stemilt Hill Grange.

NW: Oh, okay.

LK: Yeah and I had been secretary of that organization for sixty five years.

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NW: Oh my gosh (laughs)! You have a lot of continuity with everything you touch.

LK: Yeah. We pioneered Badger Mountain and of course my husband's father was Russell and his grandfather was James E Keane. And they were here when the Indians were still camping on Rock Island Creek. And Grandpa Keane being an engineer he developed many things in Rock Island like the Hammond Mill where they shipped wheat and grain. Also, there was no access down off the bluffs for the wheat to come down. They had to take it by wagon road clear to Waterville up the creek areas. So he built a pipeline over the bluffs and down to the landings in Rock Island. Not in Rock Island, but down along the Columbia there. And then they hauled it by truck up to the Hammond Mill and the depot out there. The siding out there. And all of the homesteaders that were up and beyond him hauled their wheat down there and so that was a big, big step forward for them to get their produce off the mountain.

NW: Hammond Mill, Hammond Mill. So do you have a picture of the Hammond Mill?

LK: No, I don't.

NW: Okay, all right.

LK: The house burned and they lost a lot of things in it.

NW: Okay, okay. So you, your husband's name was Russell?

LK: Pardon me?

NW: Your husband's name was...

LK: Delbert Russell.

NW: Delbert Russell. His father was Russell.

LK: Russell, James Russell.

NW: James Russell.

LK: And grandpa's name was James Eugene.

NW: Okay, so you were able to get to know your father-in-law quite a bit and hear his stories?

LK: Yes. He told me many things about the Indian encampments here and they were a branch of Moses Lakes Chief Moses Tribe and they spoke the Chinook language which my father-in-law could speak. And so he told me many things that... how they lived in Rock Island and had their sweat houses there. And when it was a pastoral scene there before the '48 floods.

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NW: What kind of things did he tell you about? About how they handled their horses for one thing?

LK: Well, they camped there in the winter time and in the spring they were gone back up Rock Island Creek and into the Waterville country as a nomadic tribe. They just winter quartered down here. And they had their sweat houses and they'd get in them and then run and jump in the river or creek. And they got smallpox and of course that's a white man's disease carried to them. And they died by lots and a lot of them were buried down by the weigh station. The old weigh station. And the bluffs in the mouth of Rock Island and they had Indian graves up Batterman Road. Oh probably an eighth of a mile up Batterman Road. We had to rebuild a road differently to pass so they could go across the burial ground.

NW: Right I remember that. Yeah.

LK: The Colville Nation.

NW: Did you hear about how the Indians would feed their horses through the winter?

LK: Well, in those days they just turned them loose and let them forage for themselves. Grandpa Keane brought the first Aberdeen Angus cattle here and a bunch of horses from Missouri. And the winter of, let me get my facts straight if I can, 1889-1900 they had a terrible, terrible winter and snow piled up deep. There were no roads at that time, of course. And in order to try to save one of his horses he would walk in snowshoes to Waterville and bring back a sack of flour to feed his horse. And he saved one horse out of all those and lost his whole herd of cattle. Because they didn't establish alfalfa fields at that time.

NW: They weren't putting up hay?

LK: No, they didn't. And you see the cattle could range clear all over this. He had a township here at one time. Then he developed water for his alfalfa fields out of Rock Island Creek in flumes. So Rock Island itself was a pastoral scene for sheep and cattle and homesteaders across the canyon.

NW: So in your own experience then when you got married, you moved here or to the ranch?

LK: No, we lived on the ranch and we stayed there all the time. It had no roads. We had to use pack horses over the bluffs. For winter time that's all we had to get in or out. No phone. No water supply other than... well I had to get by on 100 gallons a week.

NW: In a cistern?

LK: No they just had it in barrels. Then of course in summer we could haul it from downtown here. My aunt and uncle would let us get water there.

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NW: So you're talking way up high where Dane and Jeff live?

LK: No, on up farther, on top where Jeff lives. And about a quarter of a mile back.

NW: Oh, okay.

LK: When the road was accessible, then we could use it. It was seventeen miles out and down over a bluff to Wenatchee. It's where we did our business. We hauled our sacked wheat there.

NW: You'd take your sacked wheat to the grain elevator?

LK: Mhmm.

NW: You didn't sell it directly? You'd take it to the grain elevator and then they would broker it?

LK: Yes, yes. We'd store it there.

NW: So how many acres were you guys farming when you were...?

LK: Oh we weren't farming that many because in those days all we had was horses to farm with and you just had no wide equipment so you were lucky if you farmed 400 acres so that was a big amount.

NW: Right. Yeah. So you really had the spirit for all of this...

LK: Yeah I mean, we pioneered, even in my 1947 time.

NW: Right, yeah. So you grew up learning some of those skills and then you said you went to the... you were the honorary member of the FFA and so you had a real interest in agriculture and animals.

LK: Oh yes I... my husband and I ... we ran, we had to get started in conservation and we had to clear our land of horses we weren't using so we went and rounded up and brought 80 here down over the bluffs and through East Wenatchee. There wasn't a house, there wasn't a fence, and we took them over to the Evergreen Cemetery and there was a cattle corral there so we corralled them there. Next morning, we got up early and crossed the Wenatchee River Bridge and took them down to the railroad.

NW: Oh my gosh how many horses did you herd across that bridge?

LK: Well we had 80 head going across the bridge. My father-in-law, in the lead, they follow after... my father-in-law, brother and my husband and I... And we got on the bridge, it also carried the main water supply over to East Wenatchee, and one of the fasteners broke and it shot

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water up 100 feet in the air. Those horses stopped and you could feel the bridge moving. It was kind of exciting.

NW: Sounds exciting.

LK: I think we're probably getting too far into that history rather than Rock Island.

NW: We are a little bit. I was trying to get some background and trying to understand your situation which I'd like to visit with you more about but that's a great story about the wild horses. So let's talk more about Rock Island specifically and city hall. Wiley just told me about the birthday club.

LK: Oh we had... we didn't move here until 1955 as a permanent residence. We had... after the children were born, we had to... couldn't get them to school, couldn't get them off the mountain in the wintertime if they were sick. So in 1955, we bought this place and from that time on we were as dedicated to improving Rock Island as we could be and still be farmers and carry on our own business. We, um, I don't know how to say it but we were involved in community activities. People were in and out of each other's homes and so we worked on youth, building baseball fields. We started cleaning up Rock Island at dumps that were accumulated over the years from the first citizens here and then we got a chance to build a golf course. This was before the dam was raised. The second before the lakes came in. So then when they raised the dam, they raised the water up and the lakes started coming in. And we had to move the golf course from its original area and so then it was just nine holes and as it is today on that city part of the gold course. And then Mr. (??) added another nine holes across on PUD property that he bought. And that's how the gold course evolved. We were on the park board and that meant getting down there and cleaning up some tracks and doing a lot of work in the clubhouse. And that was a big improvement for Rock Island.

NW: To have a golf course?

LK: Yeah. The golf course helped pay some of the bills. We had more money coming in from the rocks at first at that time and so with what real estate taxes we had and community projects. And then of course the Rock Island school was a good thing for Rock Island development. And as it evolved, it became one of the best schools. We had eight grades. My husband went to the original wooden school house. We've been affiliated with Rock Island since Grandpa Keane came in 1885. Course he brought his family here in 1887. Then Rock Island was platted and they changed it from Hammond to Rock Island.

NW: Now where did the name Hammond come from?

LK: I don't know the original name but it was something that Grandpa Keane used. I don't know where he got that name. But we never knew it by Hammond other than through his history and

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the history of Rock Island because it was Rock Island by the time... it became Rock Island when James Hill wanted to put the depot here. Course they thought there wasn't enough room and Wenatchee was a growing area so they moved it to Wenatchee.

NW: Oh because the valley was wider?

LK: Oh yes and you know, more room for advancement... orchard and... And so, But Grandpa Keane was a mining engineer and his money came from the sale of a goldmine in California.

NW: What part of California? Do you know?

LK: I just don't know California very well, sorry!

NW: Oh by Sacramento?

LK: Mhmm. So the family's possessions were brought up here in a covered wagon in 1887. And then it became a state in 1889.

NW: Okay, so that's about the same time the roads were getting established up on the Waterville Plateau isn't it?

LK: Yes but Waterville was coming alive by then with homesteaders and they had a way to get the grain to railroads better than we did. They finally put that down Douglas Creek. They had a spur line that came down and lowered it down on the highway. When the dam went in, of course it was all horse power. And my father-in-law had teams helping in that. Then when the Great Northern came in, that tunnel was developed through the rocks and that was the way the road was. And since the Columbia got harnessed, they had to move the road up to where it is now. And the railroad much farther east than it was when I was married even, in 1947.

NW: Mhmm, because the river was high. Oh, yeah you've seen some huge changes. So was that chute still there when you came into the family?

LK: Yes, we didn't... it wasn't useable but it was there. My husband and I, we used to... if we could get down we'd walk up over the bluffs and home if we wanted to go somewhere. It was different.

NW: (laughs) Rural living.

LK: Fire swept through there and burned the tress ling and so the pipe (inaudible).

NW: Oh, okay. That's when you lost a lot of the family photos was in that fire?

LK: Oh the house burned. It wasn't that fire.

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NW: Oh.

LK: Grandpa Keane built what we call the White House. A big home there. A very impressive home for that day and age. I got to be in that after my husband and I were married. But the Keanes at that time lost that area through well improper litigation through the county. Well I'll just say that. We had to move out of there the first year I was married.

NW: That's too bad.

LK: So I have some of the things that came up on the covered wagon.

NW: Wow.

LK: And a dresser that they got out that wasn't burned in the fire, marbled top. A woman's dresser.

NW: Well one of the things that we want to do with the listening posts and interviews with people like you is sort of emphasize what's special about the different communities in north central Washington. And when James would write back to people in the family in California what would he tell them about Rock Island? Do you know?

LK: Well he was all enthused about the mineral development mainly and the Columbia River. And he just felt which proved true, the gold that has come out of this area. And he had a clay mine up on above the bluffs up on our place and he had that fired but it wasn't really good enough for fine china and stuff. So he didn't develop it further but now they probably could develop it if we knew where it was but...

NW: Oh really?

LK: Yeah, he just got up there and dug around...

NW: Yeah. That'd be neat to know where that was these days.

LK: Well, there's so many things up there. They end in artifacts and they end in area. And what they left the rock formations for hiding themselves when the game came down the trail. We call them Indian fighting holes cause that's what they... in fact there's part of that in one of the Washington State histories; some of the pictures and some of that.

NW: Mhmm those hides... hunting hides. Well did you know any of the Indians yourself?

LK: No, no. But Delbert my husband knew some of them. And of course his dad, he was down there a lot because he even had food with them and you know, they were there a lot. And when

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they first came here, Grandma Keane... she was quite frightened because they'd circle the house. And she was afraid they were going to be hostile, but at that time they weren't.

NW: Did she have interactions with them, get to know them, do you know?

LK: Pardon me?

NW: Did she get to know any of the Indians?

LK: I don't think so. But Harry Tracy stopped at their house. The western gun man from this area.

NW: Oh!

LK: But one of the things that was a development for Rock Island was when they do eliminate going, crossing the river in boats and taking a wagon they had assembled on the other side and going to Ellensburg, over the Ellensburg trail for their supplies. And then they'd come back and they'd have to swim the horses back, take the canoe and come over with the supplies and leave the wagon over there.

NW: Yeah, so that changed when bridges started to go in?

LK: No, there wasn't any bridges in. So they had to use canoes and swim the horses. And one of the Indian canoes that floated in, it must've got away from the Indians that camped up around Cashmere and Leavenworth because it floated in there and it is on display at the dam and also some other things. Rocky Reach that is.

NW: And so that was Delbert or James that pulled that canoe out of the river? Must have been James.

LK: Well James and the family. There were thirteen of them.

NW: Wow, they had a lot of kids.

LK: And three of the boys passed away at 18-21 years and they had to be... they had their own burial ground down there. Then they had their bodies moved when they raised the water in the dam. We had to move them to Wenatchee.

NW: Oh okay. That's a big family.

LK: The first post office, probably doesn't mean anything to anybody not knowing but weigh station, the weigh scales were the... the transportation weighing area down there... that's where the post office was at Hammond.

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NW: Do you know why they put it there? Why at that site?

LK: Rock Island wasn't developed and they had a rail service but how they got here I don't know. But that was the post office for the...and when he platted Rock Island he came this way because of land and where they wanted to put the rail road depot. And then it wasn't Hammond after Rock Island railroad got involved...James Hill.

NW: Oh, okay.

LK: When Grandpa Keane platted Rock Island he lost a lot of money doing that and James Hill personally paid back some of that.

NW: Oh, that's good.

LK: That's all in the history books of Washington.

NW: So what is Keane? Is it Scottish? Is it English? What's the nationality of the...

LK: Keane? When they came from Ireland it was McKeane. And the great grandfather changed it to Keane, shortened it. And they were back in New York City and he married an Indian woman, part Indian woman. And that's where the history that some of the Keanes were dark haired... and so they had a history of Indians that came from Canada. So then Delbert's grandfather, James E, he left that area and went to California where he established his gold mine and then they moved up here.

NW: Yeah so he probably went to California in the 1870s.

LK: Oh yeah and they had most of their children there before they came. They had 3 girls I think passed away in California and one here. She's buried down there somewhere by the weigh station but we don't know.

NW: Wow so they lost, to count them up, seven children before they were adults.

LK: Yeah. Then they lost the three boys and there was three girls and there was 5 boys left. That was eight. And three of the boys died shortly. One had appendicitis, peritonitis, one had a gun accident and on had an abscess from falling backwards onto a sharp rock. It was open too soon and he expired very rapidly from that. And then two of the girls died out of that and there was just Delbert's two aunts left. And they had just one brother. There was three of them.

NW: Wow. So it's interesting to think of Rock Island and the road to Ellensburg and what you were talking about earlier.

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LK: Well where the Keane's were was below Rock Island and probably two or three miles... and that's where they crossed the river. And the rapids were below that yet. So they crossed there. And of course the river froze deep and they cut ice and had their ice house. And my husband would skate to Wenatchee on the river.

NW: How fun!

LK: Yeah and he... they had to carry long poles in case they got a soft spot where an eddy would come up and so they had to carry long poles in case they went through. And that would hold through. Yeah they loved to ice skate and swim the river.

NW: So where they would cross the canoes and the horses was a pretty smooth stretch of the river?

LK: Well, there was a current there of course. But you know, in those days, it was expected.

NW: So then they would leave a wagon over there so they could load it up with stuff?

LK: Yeah, they took parts of wagon over there in boats and assembled it. Then they'd swim their team. And of course when they got back they wouldn't disassemble their wagon. They just left it there. I don't know if other people used it. I don't know that.

NW: Yeah, I was wondering about that. So most of the traffic going over Clockhum was coming down from Wenatchee and that side of the river I guess.

LK: Yes later on. That was developed. But in those days that wasn't a developed area.

NW: Right okay. Well I think I am getting a better picture of Rock Island. It was pretty much an outpost wasn't it? When it didn't become a rail station it was so isolated and you know, living up there on the ranch and everything... seventeen miles to get to town.

LK: Yeah to get to Wenatchee. Then we had a road we put in ourselves down over the bluffs and into Rock Island where the Indians camped. My husband and I paid for that road down there. And it was... you couldn't use it if it rained ten drops. It was slick. It'd go over the bluff. And so the county had to maintain it cause it was a school bus route. And they wouldn't do it in the winter time. So we were two houses all the time. And then we were able to acquire right of way down over above Rock Island golf course, that area, then they vacated the other road so that they could maintain this one. And we just deeded it all to the county.

NW: Well I wanted to ask you a couple of questions about more current times and your involvement in Rock Island. You started to talk about when you did move down here so the kids could go to school and everything.

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LK: Well we only lived down here in the winter time and then we'd move back to the ranch. And until my husband came ill, where were up back and forth. And after he became ill we stayed here and the ranch house is just used to farm out of. Jeff and Dane both have home up there.

NW: Oh okay. So nobody lives in the farm house you used to live in?

LK: Well, we use it daily but... yeah. Mostly for the livestock, to keep the feed in there. And hot water. We just don't use the bedrooms.

NW: One thing I wanted to talk to you about, Lucy is sheep drives and cattle drives and actually getting the cattle to market. And the sheep coming up from Quincy basin... did they...?

LK: You want to know about when my husband was young? They drove them down off the bluffs right up where the road is now, through what was in development in East Wenatchee, and across the bridge and down the slaughter house. And in those days they didn't harvest the steers til they were four years old. They were huge animals and very difficult thing to do because they could hurt people and stampede. But my husband, we developed an outlet that we could bring them down into Rock Island Creek then. And we built a road partly up the creek. And we could take trucks up there to load them.

NW: Okay, so that's how that changed over time. So then you trucked them to the slaughter house for a while?

LK: Well to whoever bought them. Sometimes they'd go north; sometimes you know other people that... where they had use for them.

NW: Okay. So in terms of sheep, coming up from the Quincy Basin, Drumhellers and all, would they come up through Rock Island or would they come up over the Waterville Plateau? Did you interact with the sheep herders?

LK: I only know about Coffin sheep and they came up over the Clockhum and into Ellensburg and into those mountains up above. And we'd see their dust trails as they came. And we'd ride up there on their horses and they'd give us bumper lambs and we'd take them home and raise them. I don't know about the sheep but I do know that they had sheep running in what is Rock Island now because my father in law told me that.

NW: Yeah I would think that they would be coming up from Quincy and so on. Coming right on up the river. Makes sense. Well I guess the last thing I would like to talk to you about today, Lucy, is part of this interview will probably be used on the big David Thompson Interpretive site. Where the focus will be on the story of Rock Island as first sort of described by David Thompson 200 years ago when he landed there. So given what you've seen, the changes in your life, how do

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you think that site where David Thompson landed earlier has changed? How is it different from what David Thompson would have seen two hundred years ago?

LK: It was different because the river is smoother and it's much wider now and he wouldn't recognize it now I'm sure. And I don't know where he came ashore exactly because you know we had that first, where we all went over past Hannah Mining, over there and down to river. They stopped there he said and (inaudible) and went on down to where they're going to have the dedication or whatever you want to call it. And that's all I know about that but I'm sure that if my father in law was invited he'd tell me but I don't know. I don't really know about... the change would be where they want to put the dedication. If you had to put it where he landed that many years ago, you'd be going across the river west quite a bit. You'd probably have maybe almost a quarter of a mile there or maybe not quite a quarter of a mile. They raised that river so much even from the time I was here. They just, the dam wasn't raised the first time. See, there's been two raisings in the dam.

NW: Yeah. So the first... the dam went in, it was the first one on the Columbia I know.

LK: Yes.

NW: And it went in in the 1920s? Early wasn't it?

LK: Yeah. It did I think in... oh I'm sorry. That isn't what I'm looking for.

NW: But in your life, you remember the second rising. And they raised it to generate more electricity to take advantage of the fall? Is that why they raised the level of the dam?

LK: Pardon me dear?

NW: Why did they raise it again, the dam?

LK: Well, mainly for salmon recovery and control of the river. See, as they built more dams up the Columbia, then it became imperative that this dam coincided with what they needed to do to control the water. And to generate enough electricity for the growing need. Now that's my understanding. I know that my husband's uncle was a foreman down there when they were raising it.

NW: Yes, and Charlie Mason came in to work down there in the what, 1960s? Charlie Mason, Charlie and Ruth?

LK: Charlie Mason what?

NW: He worked at Rock Island dam I know.

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LK: No. I don't know the year. Because I know it was... Dane must've been older than five. Dane was probably...I don't know. But he was in California operating a dam and then they moved up here. And what's interesting is that my grandson and his new wife are buying Charlie and Ruth's home on Keane grave there. They've had to move into condominium.

NW: Oh right. That's right. Because of Ruth.

LK: She's doing pretty good, though.

NW: Is she?

LK: Yes, yes, she's a doll.

NW: Oh good.

LK: And Charlie looks good but it just became, he needed to be where he could get some help with her. If he had to go somewhere or do something.

NW: It would be good to talk to Charlie about Rock Island though, wouldn't it?

LK: Well all he would absolutely tell you about the geological formation cause I... when I was driving the school bus, I took his college classes on many a tour, so I learned something about it through Charlie. And all you got to do is ask him. And I've been to his lectures and things and they are absolutely marvelous.

NW: Yeah he is. I have too, yeah he's great. So you wrangled cattle and drove a school bus and raised (inaudible), were a city council woman. How long have you been on the city council?

LK: Probably close to eight years I guess, or more. I wasn't into the city government like (inaudible) and I just came cause they had a need for somebody and got involved in it and wanted to see the sewer project and some of these things... the enhancement of our lakes. So that was main issue at that time. And we didn't have any ordinances and policies. We didn't have a comprehensive plan which was what we were supposed to have for a twenty year... and we worked hard in that. And that gave us a direction. Cause times have changed so much. You see, Rock Island had three gas stations, two grocery stores, three cafes and this is when I was married. Then we had the big housing development for the war housing. You know the war housing project.

NW: Oh, was that where Whitey lived when he moved here?

LK: Yes, yes.

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NW: Oh yes I was asking him... he would love to have a picture of that. And he thought you might have one.

LK: No, I don't. The only thing I've got is a movie of the old wooden water tank being demolished. I wasn't into that nearly year round because of farming. We had to move out. We became very active in winter projects and...

NW: Well, I need to wrap this up. I know you need to get onto other things.

LK: Yes.

NW: But I'll just ask you this, Lucy, in closing. When you think about the time that you have been involved in Rock Island, you and your family have made a lot of contributions to this town... what are you most proud of? Is there one thing that you just feel really good about that you would want to share with me?

LK: Well, the development that we did for community spirit, but now we've lost a lot of that. Mainly because our Hispanic people follow their own cultures. And they're not like we were where we get together out in the streets and mingle with each other. It's just different. We don't have that many people interested in the improvement of Rock Island at this time that we would like to have. And for us, I don't know what the biggest improvement I guess would be the raising of the Rock Island Dam and making our lakes come to an area because we are going to have recreation monies coming in from fishing. And so of course the biggest project we have done I feel is water enhancement. We have a new well that is the purest water that you could ask for of any well. And we have the sewer project coming in which is going to protect our water systems. And I guess that is the main issue at this time. And we've worked hard at getting our mayor and the council, so we're almost finished with it. When we get through this summer we'll have all the hookups done. Which we are all dreading (laughs).

NW: I guess then some people start complaining about the bill.

LK: Well yes, we have quite a bit of adversity. Then it seems like every entity in the county is asking you for money more and more and more which is a hard thing for me to sanction because our low income housing and our low income area. These people, a lot of us are widows and single people. And it's hard to meet this new sewer bill. But it's something we had to have because we had to drill a new well because our water was getting down below acceptable. What happened was that it always was, but the government lowered the standards that was acceptable. And so that puts you in a different category. But this sort of thing, you talk to Whitey or them about would be more knowledgeable than me.

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NW: Yeah, that's okay. And I didn't really, when I asked you what you're most proud of, it doesn't have to be current you know? It could be back in the 60s or 70s. I mean, I know your family was instrumental in development of the golf course.

LK: We worked hard at getting youth development here. We'd haul kids from all over the country for baseball and participated in all that sort of things. Basketball, whatever kept the kids going. It was... I feel proud that we did that.

NW: Yeah, Whitey was telling me how competitive your baseball players are.

LK: Oh varsity.

NW: That's pretty cool.

LK: And then we had community spirited things like we'd all go into (inaudible) like we were a bunch of drunks or something. But we could meet at the Rock Island Tavern and we could raise money for the kids' baseball teams and basketball and then we had a birthday calendar which brought in income. We sold... everyone went around and got the birthdates of their families and put them on a calendar. And they had to buy that calendar for three or four dollars. And then we used that mainly for our youth. But we all would meet down there and we'd have games and singing and a BBQ. We'd barbequed half a beef one time. But it was community spirited. And I do feel we've lost a lot of that because both mom and dad have to work. And there's a language barrier now. Not a barrier, but there's two cultures here now. And so you just don't neighbor like you did. And that's a big loss.

NW: Yeah it's transition time.

LK: Lot of musicians in Rock Island... we get in each other's house and play music. But we worked hard to clean up the messes around here. Because they deteriorated after so many of the businesses went out.

NW: Okay. Well thank you Lucy. Thank you very much.

LK: Okay.