

## *Gathering Our Voice*

Interview with Betty Deatherage

Interviewer: Nancy Warner

Date: December 5, 2012

Transcribed by Kara Gross, AmeriCorps Volunteer

NW: This is Nancy Warner and I am here in the basement cafeteria of the Entiat School with Betty Deatherage and it is December the 5th 2012. And the cafeteria staff are just in the kitchen having their own lunch having served the school and Betty and I are here to...she's going to tell me the story of this fabulous mural on the walls of the cafeteria here in Entiat. Unless you went to school here, people don't know about this so ummm thank you.

BD: Yes, you're welcome.

NW: ...getting together with me. Um it's a *Gathering Our Voice* interview and it will be archived so for every interview, umm, I always gather a little background information on everyone so just, um, just start with you. When did you come to Entiat?

BD: Um, March 7th, 1947

NW: And what brought you to Entiat?

BD: Well I had uh, just got married...and..in November. And we got married in Arkansas and we were...I was only 14 years old. (Giggle) And um, my mother lived in California, I was staying with my Aunt but my husband to be didn't want me to leave so, she gave us permission to get married. Which is another story. That....anyway. And there was no work down there and so he decided to come out here and I have two calves and a horse. I borrowed the money on them to get us train here and um, we got out here and he got a job right away with the Entiat Valley Orchards. And he worked for them for 28 years. And then we bought our own orchard and we both worked and raised 7 children.

NW: Wow

BD: And uhhh, I had uh, so far I've got 16 grandchildren and 37 great-grandchildren and 3 great-great-grandchildren but I did lose my husband two years ago.

NW: Yes, you mentioned to how you go to the Senior Center.

BD: And so I go to the seniors twice a week. I go to Leavenworth on Saturdays and I go to Wenatchee on Tuesdays. And it's very good therapy cause you meet people that are in the same positions and ahh I just love it.

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NW: Ya, good for you! So what part of Arkansas?

BD: It's up, uh, close to Mountain Home, Arkansas right on the border of Missouri. And it's a little town called Viola.

NW: Oh, is it close to Fayetteville?

BD: Uh, no Fayetteville's further south I believe.

NW: Oh, ok ok. Alright, well I'll look at the map. I've been to Arkansas a couple of times but not that far north. Oh, ok, and what was your husband's name?

BD: Deatherage, Harold

NW: Harold, ok, Harold. And then you had 7 children. Do any of them live in the area?

BD: They ALL live in the area.

NW: Ahhhh

BD: Uh, I did, we did lose two sons. Umm, my oldest son had surgery and a blood clot hit his heart and he died. And then my youngest son passed away with peritonitis. Let's see I have two daughters that live in East Wenatchee, I have a daughter that lives in Wenatchee and then I have a daughter that lives in Richland.

NW: Oh, neat.

BD: And all, believe it or not, all the grandchildren, they all live around the area, no further than Ellensburg.

NW: That's amazing.

BD: ...or Everett. They all live around.

NW: Isn't that amazing?

BD: Yes, they all live in the state.

NW: Oh my gosh, holidays in your family must be something else.

BD: Yes, on Thanksgiving I had 38 people there and people said how in the world. What'd you do invite the neighbors? I said, "No, they were all family." They said, "Well how can that happen?" I says, "You have seven children. They grow up. They get married. That's seven more. They all have at least two children. Those children grow up and they get married and they have..." Oh forget it." (laughter) Very much so but we love it, we love it.

NW: So you came in did you say '47 or '48?

BD: '47, March of '47

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NW: Ok. March of '47. And tell me a little bit about the journey. You said you came out on the train?

BD: Ya, we come out on the train.

NW: Ok

BD: Just a regular, we sat in the seats. We didn't have a berth or nothing like that. We just our regular seats and you know we left uh...we left from West Plains, Missouri and then we...in Minneapolis, I think we changed trains and then we come right into Wenatchee. And then of course we didn't have a car so we called the people from Entiat Valley Orchards and they come out and got us and put us in a cabin. We were happy. We'd been married what, four months or something like that. (Giggle) Finally had a place of our own.

NW: A roof over your heads.

BD: Yes

NW: So where was Entiat Valley Orchards?

BD: About six miles up the Entiat Valley.

NW: Oh, where you are now.

BD: Yep. Where I am. Pretty much.

NW: Oh, ok, so did you end up you and your husband Harold did you end up buy part of the Entiat Valley Orchard?

BD: No, no, no, no. We bought from a private party.

NW: Oh ok. Ok, just kinda next door?

BD: Oh yes. Well their name was uh, Warners and um they had this pear orchard and he wasn't very well and she couldn't take care of it. They tried selling it two or three times and so they offered it us at a fair price and uh, Harold says, "Well ok, we'll try it." And so we decided we'd take out a ten year loan which we paid off in four years because we both worked. And uh, we still have it. Our son runs it now. So, we bought that in 1966.

NW: Oh ok.

BD: So, we've had it that long.

NW: Ok, great

BD: But uh, we love it. I like to work in it every day if I can and if they'll let me.

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NW: Great, great. If you could put your hands.....(couldn't understand) ...Thank you. So you were fifteen when you came to Entiat?

BD: Uh, let's see I turned fifteen in February so...

NW: Ok, your birthday's February, what year were you born?

BD: '32, 1932

NW: 1932, ok, alright...so 1947 and could you just describe what the town of Entiat looked like then. What was your impression coming from Arkansas to Entiat?

BD: Well of course, I was. My mother and father were divorced and I was raised everywhere. I went to school in Chicago. I went to school in California. I went to school in Arkansas. I went....just all over. It was a nice little town. A little homey town where you could go in the grocery store and you needed groceries, you could charge your groceries and pay for them at the end of the week when you got your check and uh, it was, it was nice. Everybody was very nice. They even had a feed store in town I believe. Yes, I know they did. Um, yep.

NW: But you were living six miles up the valley?

BD: Yes, uh huh. With no car.

NW: Oh, no car.

BD: We had to depend on other people to bring us in. In fact I even have somebody bring me into town when I had my baby.

NW: Oh really? Oh so did you actually deliver, did you go to the hospital in Wenatchee to have your children?

BD: Uh, the first one we went, uh that winter of '47. We went back to Arkansas to visit my aunt and while I was there, she decided to come about two months early. So she was born in my Aunt's house in Arkansas. And she was born in that November. And uh, she only weighed 3lbs and something but I don't know, she did it just fine. Anyway and then we came back out here. And yes the rest, the last two children were born in Chelan.

NW: Oh ok ok. So, let's see, this mural we are here to talk about which it reflects your history and the history of the town. Um you actually um, how did it happen that you painted this mural and when was it?

BD: It was in...I'm pretty sure it was in 1959 cause my son was about, he wasn't quite two years old. He was born in April. Um in the summer, I'm sure it was in the summer of '59. Uh, they were building the dam and they were gonna have to remove the town of Entiat completely. And

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uh, (9:12.9 can't understand) living here in Entiat it wasn't it was a Sapphire Club. She asked me if I would mind doing it and I said "Well I don't have anything better to do, sure. What do you want to do? And I looked at it, I thought ....(1st recording ended)

NW: So someone from the Sapphire Club contacted you about the mural?

BD: Yes and asked me if I'd do it. They said, "Well they'd pay me for it and get my paint." I said, "Well I've got a lot of, uh, you know, paint that I've painted inside the house and I mix my own paints and it's possible they wouldn't even have to get me anything." And uhh so I just started out. Started out with the town over here and uh, as you can see it wasn't much of a town but it was a nice town.

NW: I have spent a good share of my life in California and I look at this and it makes it look like a beach town.

DB: Oh really?

NW: California beach town, especially with those old Chevys (undecipherable).

DB: They had uh, well there wasn't much traffic as you could see. And that building up on the corner there, that's the church. That was a French Church.

NW: Ohhh K.

DB: And they, but uh, most of the town moved up on the hill. In fact where the French Church was the highway goes right through it now. But uh, I said sure I would do it, so and I started in on it and then. First they wanted just the town. Then she said, "Well, think you do something with the rest of it?" I said, "Well, I can put the river in." That and where the road goes through and the old highway and where the ferry was and of course Orondo was on the other side. And I just kept, I just kept going. (laughter)

NW: Ya, you had a big canvas to work with.

DB: And I just kept going and I tried to put in a lot of little things that the children would pick out. Uh, I think I've got a guy over there changing sprinklers, over there. And I've got the trucks and uh, I just every once in a while I'd put in stuff, as you can see right along there. And it was a lot of fun. There's the Orondo Ferry.

NW: So, let me ask you Betty, um, how did you, did you have pictures that you worked from?

BD: Only for the town.

NW: Ok

BD: Only for the town, this is just kind of from memory.

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NW: Ok, wow. So um, were they Polaroid pictures or prints that you had of the town?

BD: Ya, Polaroid pictures.

NW: So then you just, you had your paints and you had those pictures and you, did you draw it out?

BD: Oh yes, oh yes, I did.

NW: So you penciled it out?

BD: Uh huh. Well, not really penciled. I used paint. I'd paint it out and then, but uhh, I don't know, I guess it come out alright.

NW: Oh, it's wonderful. So on that panel there of the town, um, the building on the far right that has Entiat on the roof, is that a packing shed?

BD: No, the packing sheds was on the, on the south side of the town.

NW: Ok, what is that?

BD: There was restaurants and umm ah, grange hall and uhhh, just a lot of different things. In fact one of the buildings I think they even had clothing in there. And then the post office was at the corner down there.

NW: OK, I can kind of see. It's a great perspective. I mean that street, you know, just kind of, that's headed north, then that street?

BD: Ya, uhmhem.

NW: OK, huh, so how, you showed me this newspaper article and talked about the Sapphire Club inviting you to do it and had the school asked the Sapphire Club for help?

BD: I'm not sure, I just, uh, who was it...I was trying to think of her name that asked me to do this...and...but anyway I said, "Sure, I'd do it."

NW: So you were pretty well known as an artist by then? You'd been here like a decade or something.

BD: I...yes, no well I don't know, maybe they did. I don't know. I'm not too sure. I know uh, later on in the years they uhhh, they helped me get a scholarship down at Wenatchee Valley College through a Vern Duncan. And I was under her for a while and had a lot of pictures in the fairs and stuff like that. And sold some of my paintings too but not very many just cause, I just liked to do it for the fun of it.

NW: So did you start painting and drawing when you were little?

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BD: Yes, I use to like to draw cars or horses or animals or stuff like that first and then uh, this was really, wasn't really a challenge for it was just kinda fun.

NW: Oh ya, I think it's really fun and so you supplied the paint. You just had left over house paint?

BD: Ya and I painted inside the house at one time or another and of course like I said, I do mix my paints you know if I need a different color well I can.

NW: Well you did a great job, I mean they're great colors here. You definitely did a good job so it was 1959 and so what kind of paint was it? Do you remember? I mean it wasn't like latex then, what was it?

BD: It was something like latex, ya, it was just whatever you, like I say it's been a long time.

NW: We can actually research that, that would be interesting, wouldn't it?

BD: Ya, ya. Let's see I, where'd I, I don't even know where I got it. I got it out of Wenatchee. Of course Wenatchee wasn't as big as it is now...

NW: Did you have to clean your brushes with turpentine?

BD: No, water.

NW: Oh, just water?

BD: Ehm Hem

NW: Oh, ok, alright, ok, so was there a lot of publicity when the mural was done?

BD: I don't remember any, no.

NW: Oh,

(Giggles)

BD: I don't remember anything...

NW: And you told me on the phone why the school wanted to have it done. Maybe you could tell me that again.

BD: Well the walls, as you could see, they were cracking and they still are, and uh, they thought maybe if they covered it up with something like that, why it would keep them until they could have something else done with it, you know. Evidently it has. But I had heard that there were going to paint it out and they asked me about it. I said, "Well, I don't care, whatever you want to do you know. It's up to you because it's your painting."

NW: Somebody said they were gonna paint it over? I'm glad they didn't do that.

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BD: Well it was probably people who had come in later, not the original people. Cause you know there's been a lot of turn-over. The dam wasn't finished when I painted it.

NW: Could you, I mean I know it's been a long time but it's such an interesting piece now because the city is in the process of doing a river front development that would kind of restore some of the river front.

BD: Course the town there is under water now, the old town.

NW: Right

BD: I think maybe they might mean the park down in there. Where it's at now. But uh, and where it says Entiat over there, that was a packing shed.

NW: Oh that was...that's what I was talking about.

BD: Oh I was, I think that was the Entiat Packing Shed.

NW: OK. So, so um, do you remember much about the feelings people had about losing the little town at the time you were doing the mural?

BD: Well, not really, I think they were kinda looking forward to a new road and the new, just a new way of life. You know the buildings was, they were alright but they were looking for something bigger and they didn't get a lot bigger but more modern.

NW: Ya, ya. So did you know any of the business owners?

BD: Well, of course Will Rescue(sp) was the store owner and uh, then a, let's see, who else was it. There was so many people moved in and out...(undecipherable)..but I know when I worked at the Entiat Packing Shed and I, I had lunch down in those places years and years ago before they were torn down.

NW: Oh so even though you had your husband had a job at the...

BD: orchard

NW: ...at the orchard, then there were some times when you went to the packing sheds and worked.

BD: I worked every fall and winter in the packing sheds.

NW: Even when you had seven kids?

BD: Well, ya, um I had, my girls was all winter babies sometime fall come around, I could safely leave them with a sitter and uh, my boys was spring babies so it worked out pretty good.

NW: Ok, so you worked a lot of years in that packing shed?

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BD: Ya, well I worked several years in that packing shed and then uh, I worked later on I worked at the JK McArthur up the valley, you probably heard of him?

NW: Ya

BD: and I worked, uh, I think I packed fruit for him for nine years and then I run his machines for twelve years.

NW: Machines? Packing machines?

BD: Yes, well they lift the bins up and put them into the water. I worked for that.

NW: Oh

BD: So I worked for him for quite a while.

NW: Wow, ya, you kinda know the orchard business then.

BD: Ya, well I tell ya I got, we got six tractors and there's not a one of them I haven't driven.

NW: You know how to fix em?

BD: Oh yes, now that's another story too. When something breaks down they come and get mommy. (Giggles)

NW: Just by looking at this mural and knowing that you just kinda did all this out of your mind, this mural for the benefit of the tape, this mural is basically the landscape around Entiat.

BD: Ya, well, from the Entiat up the old road, the ol' Highway that goes to the dam. Cause you know it's quite a ways from the dam.

NW: Ya, it is quite a ways to the dam. So that's what this is the old highway?

BD: Yep, uhhemm.

NW: Ohhhh, Ok. Good. Then and um, so the Orondo, talk about this ferry landing a little bit cause this gets confusing in this day and age. So the ferry went, where did you catch the ferry in Entiat? South of town it looks like?

BD: Ya, well we had a, Entiat itself had a ferry but the Orondo Ferry was more known than the Entiat Ferry because, every once in a while they'd lose it, it's take off down the river but the Orondo Ferry was a gas driven ferry and it was close down there by Spencer's Canyon whenever it went off. You may not know where that is but anyway, they had a bad wreck there about last Tuesday, a woman got killed.

NW: Oh so it's like three miles south of town. Oh ok. Alright, I'll look when I drive south. So that's where the Orondo Ferry took off?

BD: Ya, but, in that area.

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NW: Ok

BD: And then it went across and uh, it, it didn't run on a regular schedule you just get on this side and blink your lights and stuff and it'd come across and pick you up.

NW: Really? Ohhh. That's interesting so you had to like have a little time on your hands.

BD: Oh yes, oh yes.

NW: So how long did it take to get across the river?

BD: Oh it didn't take very long. About fifteen, twenty minutes. Something like that.

NW: Ok, ok, well that's an interesting system.

BD: Ya, well it was at the time. But you know it was river, it wasn't lake.

NW: Right and so talk about that a little bit because I haven't had the benefit of seeing it when it was a wild river and many people haven't so what was it like?

BD: Ooohhhh ya, it was a wild river and and uh, up where the Entiat Ferry went a cross they had cars go off in the water and people drowned and stuff like that. It was pretty wild. That's why they had it on a wire to go across. But every once in a while that wire break and they'd end up down here and this one would catch it.

NW: Oh really? Wow.

BD: It was funny.

NW: And this one was gas driven, the Orondo?

BD: I'm pretty sure, ya it was gas driven or diesel or something. Probably gas in them days.

NW: To follow the mural around the room then, um we're following the old highway down....

BD: Uh-huh and it come out over there and, course see like I say the dam wasn't completely finished then and that's the road that would go back up the hill and around, course you know the road's different now. They, it's a completely different road so it's hard to really, but you can see the fish ladder and everything there and then on the other side is the Orondo side...on the other side of the, so I got a little bit that in there too. That's where the guy's over there changing sprinklers.

NW: Oh, ok. So since the dam wasn't done when you did this painting, then you were sort of projecting what it was gonna look like?

BD: Well to a certain extent, that much was done.

NW: Oh, ok, ok. Alright. They just hadn't closed the gates yet to the flood uh....

BD: You know what I think had because I got the lake up behind it.

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NW: Ya, you do but I guess it took a while for the water to come up so high...

BD: Ohhh yes. You know they raised that 600 and some feet...behind there. 639 feet I think it was.

NW: Wow, ya, ya.

BD: That was interesting to watch.

NW: I'm sure it was and and you were down here enough to see it because you were, you were working in the packing house and by then you probably had a car.

BD: Oh ya, (laughter) but at 16 I started driving.

NW: Oh right, right. Ohhhhh that's amazing. So so, you had uh, children, the first one was shortly after you were married and then were they...

BD: Well she was a little over a year when she come along.

NW: But did you have them all fairly close together or did you stretch them out a period of years?

BD: No, they were pretty much at two years apart and the last two I think was four and five years apart.

NW: Ok

BD: My oldest daughter, like I say, is 65 then my youngest would have been, he was born in '5...no '67, 1967. And she was born in 1947, so there's 20 years between...

NW: My goodness.

BD: So, they were pretty well spaced.

NW: So I was trying to get a feel for your family life at the time you were doing this.

BD: Oh ya.

NW: It must have been extremely busy, you had little..

BD: I was busy, yes, when I did this, my son that's teaching school right now, he uh, he wasn't quite two years old I don't think, cause he was born in April of the year and he was born in '57 so it must have been '59. And the other little, my daughter she, at the time, she was two years older than him so she was about 5, 4 or 5.

NW: Do you remember how long it took you to do all this work?

BD: Oh, I imagine it took 5 or 6 weeks but I would, cause you know I just could do it on certain days when I could get down here. And then when I got this one finished, then they wanted that wall painted over there and they asked me if I'd do that. And I says, "Well what do you want me

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to put over there?” And she says, “Put anything you want over there.” And I thought well, heck, this is camping and fishing and hunting country and so I put something over there that would interest the kids.

NW: So could you describe it?

BD: Ok, there's there's two horseback riders and they're riding up the deal there and way up in the upper corner, there's a guy fishing in a pond, and I believe I got, I forgot how much stuff I got in there but there's I think there's a deer and cougar and stuff like that in there. I tried to get stuff in there that would interest the children.

NW: And the adults it looks like it.

BD: Well I guess so (giggles).

NW: So those mountains in the background?

BD: That would be up towards Tyee area.

NW: Ok ok and did you model those horseback riders after anyone you knew?

BD: No

NW: Ok just made up..

BD: Just made up as I went along. The whole thing is kinda more or less made up as I went along.

NW: That's great. It's a really wonderful composition and color. I love the color. So it's house paint?

BD: Yes, just wall paint that you'd paint your walls with.

NW: Oh my goodness. Ya, so so um...has the PUD ever seen this do you think?

BD: I wouldn't know.

NW: Ya, well they're going to because it's gonna get a scanned and up above ground. Well are there any other features about the mural that you'd want to talk about while we're still sitting here and can look at it?

BD: Well....

NW: We have really talked too much about the railroad maybe, Betty; talk a little bit about the railroad.

BD: The railroad, you know, I, I just can't remember that at all because the the, I think there is a train there.

NW: Ya

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BD: And it was down, course, it was down lower, you know way down towards the river and you really couldn't see it too much.

NW: Oh, ok. So then they had to move that after they...

BD: Oh, oh yes

NW: ...after the water rose 600 feet. Ya, ya, so

BD: but I, like I say, it's been so long since I've even been down here so I, I didn't even know that it was still going to be here.

NW: Well what's it feel like to see it again after all these years?

BD: Oh, you know, it brings back a lot of memories, a lot of memories.

NW: It must have been terribly satisfying to stand back and look at it all when it was done.

BD: Well, it was. It was, it felt like I'd really done something. (chuckle)

NW: Quite a contribution to the school.

BD: Well I had kids going to school. They graduated from this school. I had grandkids graduate from this school.

NW: And so you're

[17.43]

BD: I (garbled)...is teaching...

NW: And what's his name, the one that's teaching?

BD: Jack, he's the one that was running around and was two years old when I did it.

NW: OK

BD: And his wife, he uh, she teaches the fifth grade here and uh, she was born in Manson...Chelan.

NW: Ohhh, that's great.

BD: But uh, anyway, that's about all I know about it.

NW: Well, that is great. Thank you for spending a little time with me. I think I've....

BD: Oh, you are welcome. I...I uh...

NW: I'm going to try to help see something happen with it, you know so it's preserved.

BD: Oh yes, I wish it would be, you know because, like I say, I've got grandkids and stuff in it, and they got children now going to school.

NW: Well and a lot of people that don't have kids in this school wouldn't even know about it.

It's such a great piece. There's a lot of history in this piece.

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BD: Ya, there's a lot of history in it.

NW: Ya, um it is a tad bit on the noisy side in here so I think I would like to ask you if there is anything else you would like to say about it while we are still sitting here in front of the mural. Anything you'd like to point out?

BD: Um, no not necessarily. I, like I say, I really enjoyed doing it and I'm proud that somebody going to take advantage of using it for something. Uh,

NW: Is there any part that was harder to do than others? Like the sky or anything?

BD: Well the hardest part was when they remodeled and brought the ceiling down, you can see how far they brought the ceiling down and they put these pieces in, was trying to match the colors.

NW: Oh, I see, I see. Ya. I see what you are talking about now. They lowered the ceiling.

BD: Yes they lowered the ceiling. Well you can see how far they lowered it.

NW: A good foot, 18 inches.

BD: So you can see where the top of the other pictures was.

NW: I see, so we lost a little something.

BD: Ah huh, well not much.

NW: Hills it looks like.

BD: Ya, sky.

NW: Hills and sky, ok well that worked out pretty well then.

BD: But ya that, no it makes me feel good to know that somebody wants, like to see it. It's a legacy for my children.

NW: Oh it definitely is.

BD: And my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren....

NW: (laughter) ....all your relatives

BD: Well, they said replenish the earth, we tried.

NW: Ya, you did your part. (more laughter) So did you know any of these people that lived in these places along here? These houses, were they....

BD: No, not really, uh, like I say, we just raised our family and minded our own business and...

NW: Oh, ok and this house on this part of it aren't necessarily actual homes they were just.

BD: Well they were at the time.

NW: Oh, oh they were. Ok, oh ok.

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BD: They were at the time.

NW: OK so, it wasn't all right out of your mind then it was sort of...

BD: No, just, I'd remember this and I'd remember that and put that in there and then and a...course the trucks and stuff like that I'd put them in cause you know, gotta have something in there for the kids to look at. And the road across the Orondo side, you can see I got it in there too.

NW: Ya, with a bus and a car.

BD: Yap, emhemmm.

NW: And you got your power lines, got the power lines and fences and the horse, so and then these trucks. There were probably a lot of trucks like that hauling apples around and stuff, huh?

BD: Ya, and stuff for the stores and stuff.

NW: Right right. You must have a soft spot for '57.....

BD: This house I here I think was one from Spencer canyon. It burned down.

NW: Oh, ok. Ok, great.

BD: That little white house.

NW: Cause here's the...well that's neat, I didn't know that was Spencer Canyon that was the old Orondo Ferry.

BD: Ya, it was right in that area.

NW: Ya, right in that area.

BD: There's a house there now but it, uh, it's an A-frame.

NW: Ok, I'll look for that on the way too, I think I know what you're talking about.

BD: Em hem, just before you get to where that wreck was.

NW: Yes, ya, ok.

BD: Ya it was, well what happened on that, there was some people renting it and the guy was cooking and the power went off so it was off and off and off so he decided to go to town. While he was gone, the power come back on...

NW: Oh dear, oh, that's too bad. So it looks to me, it's like a brick house, but it was wood?

BD: No it was wood.

NW: It was wood, ok, alright. Ok, well, thank you very much. I'd love to take some pictures of you by the mural if that's ok.

BD: Oh, that's fine, if I'm dressed correctly.

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NW: Oh ya, you are.

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