

# HELEN GOULD BROOKS

**Interview: Sept. 20, 1974**

**Interviewer: Ruth Strong — Transcriber: Marilyn Misner**

*Transcriber's Comment: The first part of this tape is garbled, so I picked out and picked up the parts that seemed to make sense. I, personally, knew Helen Brooks, so I recognized her voice.*

Ruth: Tell me about your ceiling. It's just beautiful.

Helen: Well, my husband; his love of life was wood. All he said when I first saw him, he was setting whittling on a piece of wood, with a knife, and he never got over it. And . . . he made all my stands; he made that beautiful table in there, and chairs; the whole thing. He made my bedroom suite. And . . . he had always told me, he said, Sometime I'm going to build you a home, like I want, and I'm going to put a mosaic inlay ceiling in it, for you. And . . . see, he was a carpenter. During the depression, when there was no carpenter work, he, he, his second work was a portable engineer, and he ran machinery. But, when things got over with, he went back to his woodwork. And . . . he was a carpenter and cabinet maker. And so he contracted, then, for years, and built houses and mills and everything. So, he would bring home these little scraps of wood, and he would watch the grain and the coloring, and he said, Now, lay this away.

Now, we were living on the farm, at Carson, and I would put 'em in the attic and sale them, and when we moved, I had to move several pick-up loads of these scraps of wood that he had brought home, off the jobs, which were the waste scraps as far as the job was concerned. And . . . this is what he made of it. All made, all by hand and everything.

Ruth: Are these some of your children?

Helen: Yeah, those are the children's names. Frank and I is named there, with the years that he put the ceiling in, and then the children's names, and over on the other block there's some more of the names. See, I raised eight foster children. I had the misfortune of looking three of my own children, you know, still birth, and that's why I couldn't have any. So I took foster children and raised them. And, I took 'em as my own, you know. Children who had lost either one or both parents, and they all call me mother and come home. I have a big family of grandchildren.

Ruth: Isn't that wonderful. Now, how long did it take him, after he started to work on

it.

Helen: Two years, with his spare time. Part of the time he worked out, but in the long winter months, why; one of the years was — the river froze over. It was one of those horrible \_\_\_\_\_

Ruth: Where did he do his apprenticeship?

Helen: His father was a boat building and had a boat shop. He built tugs and barges and everything.

Ruth: Where was he grown?

Helen: Superior, Wisconsin. His father was on the high seas for forty-three years, as a ship's captain, and then he settled in Superior, and put in a big boat docks. Had his own hardwood timber, and everything and cut his own wood.

Ruth: Was he Scandinavian?

Helen: No; French, Creolian French.

Ruth: Both his mother and father?

Helen: Uh-huh.

Ruth: Brooks is a Dutch name.

Helen: Oh, I thought it was English. But anyway, when he . . . he came here. I can't even get the right pronunciation. He always laughed when I tried to pronounce it. He said I spoke it like a German. And . . . it was a very difficult name. It meant a small running stream, in French, and, so, when he became a citizen, he told the judge he wanted it changed. So the judge says, Well, that would be a Brooks, in English. So there's where he took the name of Brooks.

Ruth: Oh, Isn't that nice. Art's grandmother was Brooks, when she was born. Well, he must have gotten great satisfaction out of his work.

Helen: He did; he just loved it. And, I love it. I love the wood. I have some beautiful pieces yet that; I have a beautiful table in front of my divino, there, but I haven't brought it up. I thought, my boy will be here Sunday night, and I thought while he was here I'd have him help me.

Ruth: What about this beautiful piece of inlaid work?

Helen: Well, I, I, haven't put it up because I had some small grandchildren, still pounding around. And they'd mark things up. I was noticing this morning I was — got marks on my table. And . . . I'm going to put it up with little glasses.

Ruth: It is a beautiful piece.

Helen: That's . . . that's . . . clear through, it's perfect; there's no rotten spots in it. It's a big cedar burl. And that, and this is all the same thing, and the lights.

Ruth: Tell me again, when did you come here?

Helen: Ah, let's see . . . we came here in the spring of '33, to North Bonneville. He was working fer-fer (for) Kernan Kibby. He come up to kind of look over the land for him, and decide whether they could put the roads to the river, on the Washington side, to start building the Dam. See, Kernan Kibby, was one of the big six companies. There was six big companies went together to form what they called, The Big Six, and contracted to build Bonneville Dam. Cuz (because) our western companies were all too small, as in the breach books. And especially during the depression. They didn't have the money, so they went together. And Kernan Kibby was one of them. My husband had been working for them. And, so, he came up and then in the spring of '34, they shipped the first big cat in, on the railroad, and my husband took it off of the railroad car and built the first, cut the first road to the river, to start the Dam.

Ruth: In '34. Was that the first cat?

Helen: Uh-huh; on this side. There was cats on the Oregon side. They started cat work over there in '33, but that was the first cat unloaded on the Washington shore, and he built the road. At that time, you know, where the old depot stands, there you know, that was way out. There was just a swift channel through there, and the islands, you know. And the whole point of that land was cut off and Humpy Adams had a farm, a rabbit farm out there. And, of course, he just . . . the rabbits, half the time, was getting out and they were all over everything. There was rabbits running everywhere when he run the dozer out through there. And it was all a point of land covered with timber. He had to push all this timber all over, you know, and . . . bulldoze off the land.

Ruth: Do you have any pictures?

Helen: I have one. I believe I left it downstairs. I was going to give it to the historical society, but not of that early, because I couldn't afford to take pictures with my little camera. Because it was in the depression; we just didn't have that kind of money. And, but he did buy a big picture. I'll run down stairs and get it for you.

Ruth: Later; you can do that later.

Helen: And . . . it's a panoramic picture that is put together and forms a big sweeping view, like if you stand in the window, and shows the old, what did they call it, the manikin, the big walking shovel that they had down there. That's in there and all of this, but it's after they were putting in the coffer dams, not before it was--. But Adams' probably would have old home pictures of that. Now I know the Adams'; I could get . . . Now, who was it, the girl that ran for sheriff; now she was an Adams.

Ruth: June Sobaski?

Helen: Sobaski, now she . . . she was an Adams girl. So she probably . . . that family and her mother sold to them so they would probably have some pictures.

Ruth: Was Buz Adams of that same family?

Helen: A, yes, I think Buz is June's brother.

Ruth: Brother: I kind of felt that ----- I don't know him, I just know of him. What do you remember about those early construction days? Did you live in the boom town?

Helen: Yes, we lived in North Bonnevile. And . . . I enjoyed it because I was an out girl and I had been raised in the out woods. I enjoy being out, I don't like city life. I have no desire to go to town to live.

Ruth: You were raised in the . . .

Helen: Yes, I was born in Sacramento; out from Sacramento, at Sterling City. My father was a chief engineer of the Diamond Match Mills. My father was a steam engineer.

Ruth: Of the Diamond Match?

Helen: Yeah, uh-huh, of the Diamond Match Mills, out there, and . . . he took Malaria Fever, and the doctor told him to come north. And, a, into a colder climate, so, . . . they . . . Diamond Match Mills had purchased a bunch of timber, lumber, up around Klamath Falls. But there was no way of getting it out, and they were trying to build that big irrigation system in there and put a railroad spur in. So, he went up on that to lay that out because, in those days, they had to . . . run all of their; see they had tunnels in the mountain. They had tremendous tunnels in the mountain; they had to bring the water through. And . . . they used all steam drills, and everything in those days. So he set up their steam plants and everything, and helped them engineer the project to finish that up.

Well, we were there about, oh, a year and a half, I would say, on that job, and he still was sick. He would get down with this Malaria, so he thought he'd try coming north. So he came north and he went up on to Satsop, Washington, on a big logging job. And, then . . . in 1911, see, I was born in 1905. And in 1911 they took and spread a chunk of the Rainier National Park, and took a area up here and formed the Columbia National Forest, which is now the Gifford Pinchot. They named it after our Secretary of Agriculture, who was initially a forester. And he was a first . . . he was a Deputy Ranger; not a real ranger; he was a Deputy Ranger. They appointed him, and he went in there as a first Deputy Ranger on the Columbia National Forest, at Mt. St. Helens; thinking that out in the woods, why he would get better. And, we were in there about six years, and . . . he took the first survey; government survey crew and set all the bench marks from Mt. St. Helens to Racetrack, at Red Mountain, through forest land.

Ruth: Now tell me: Jim Gould?

Helen: Yeah, uh-huh, James Edward Gould. And his name is in all the records. The old forestry people, up here, remember him because, when they set it up, Mt. St. Helens was the headquarters. And, George Williams was the overseer, and he would come in to oversee things, and that's who my father reported to. And then later on, you know, they have, it was nothing to have 14-16 foot of snow there in the winter time. We had . . . kind of . . . swiss chalet lodge, that my father built for us to live in. And . . . we had to go out the upstairs, over the balcony, in the winter time, to get out.

Ruth: How near the lake were you?

Helen: Ah, well, we were about seven-eight miles below the lake because, at the time, they had opened up timber claims, up along the river; the Toutle River. And my father took up a timber claim, so, in the summer time, of course, when he was working, he was either in the forest or at the office at the lake, but the family lived down on the timber claim, and developed it.

Ruth: It must have been beautiful.

Helen: It was beautiful, and wild, and animals everywhere. Ah, you can understand, after living in that country, why I wouldn't want to go to the city to live. So, . .

Ruth: Where did you go to school? At Toutle?

Helen: No, we had a little school up there, on the Toutle River.

Ruth: (Garbled response)

Helen: We had to go right past the Toutle School, in order to; now there is no Toutle School. It's over at the \_\_\_\_\_ and they call it Toutle Lake. They build a huge, big complex; grade and high school, out there in the Kid Valley district. And . . . but at that time it took us two days to go from Castle Rock in, because we had to go clear over Green Mountain. And . . . it took two horses to pull our loaded wagon up Green Mountain. So, you'd travel with two wagons and then you had to stop and pull your load up one side. Going down the other, they would cut little fir trees and drag them behind the \_\_\_\_\_

Ruth: To hold you back.

Helen: To hold it and to break the.

Ruth: Do you know what they called those breaks?

Helen: No, but I do know, on each side of the mountain, that the canyon was full of little dead trees, where they'd take 'em off and throw them over into the canyon.

Ruth: How were the roads build? Did the Forest Service build the roads?

Helen: Ah, they must have. I never gave it a thought who built the roads, whether it was County, but I know that each settler, in the area, had to put ten dollars (\$10.00) worth of labor on the road, each year, for pole tax to keep the roads up. And, all across the marshy places, why it was . . . half split; what they call Puncheon Roads, half split logs, and you traveled for miles, bump-bump-bump. I used to always get out and walk because I couldn't stand the constant bumping.

Ruth: How long did it take you from home to get to town?

Helen: Ah, two days.

Ruth: Two days.

Helen: Yeah, we'd leave early in the morning. We'd camp at . . . above Toutle there someplace, then we'd go into Castle Rock the next day, and the same going back. And now you do it in around two hours, easily.

Ruth: Would you go in often, for supplies?

Helen: Once a year. They'd take the two big wagons, big freight wagons, and go in, and bring our supplies out.

Ruth: How did you meet your husband?

Helen: I met him in Portland. I was working in Portland, after I grew up. Later on, we left there; why we moved to . . . out in the, what we'd call the Greenwood district, and, on the Toutle River, on a farm. We had one hundred and twenty (120) acres out there; a pretty nice farm, and there's where we were raised, then. And I went to Castle Rock School. Graduated from high school there, and I went to Portland to go to Business School. Because I was small and I couldn't compete with the others on the farm, or anything, you know. Only weighed a hundred and eight (108) pounds, and I wanted to go to a high . . . to, I wanted to teach, and that's what I took in high school. Well, the year that I graduated I was signed up, I was supposed to teach at Toledo, and that spring the legislation passed this bill, that you had to go to school two years, or I just didn't have the money. I was going to go to school and then go in the summer time, and, you know, get my education this way. So, I went to Portland and went to Business School, thinking that I would earn enough money to get my college education. Well, I, when I graduated I made almost twice what the teachers were making. As a write-up, I went to the head of the office and was a manager for a long time, and it didn't pay me to quit. So, I never, never went back to fill that dream of teaching.

Ruth: Was Frank working in Portland then?

Helen: Yes, he was working for Kernan Kibby, and I met him through mutual friends. One of the boys that worked with him brought him home from the job, and I know he and his parents, and often called out there. They had me out to dinner one night and I met him.

Ruth: And then when you were married you came up here to . . .

Helen: Well, we were on a couple of jobs. We went . . . let's see, well, he took me; at that time he was at Mt. Hood, and he spent eight months at the Battle Axe Inn, at Mt. Hood. He was on a job there for Kernan Kibby, putting in the Waponisha Cutoff. And, we stayed there, and that was a wonderful summer. That was just like a honeymoon; hiked and fished and climbed the mountain.

So, then we came back to Portland, that winter, and he worked on the Barber Boulevard, where they — I don't think they even called it that, then — but they were cutting through the pass, there. He worked on that a little while, and then when spring came they sent him to Beaverton. It used to be from Beaverton to Hillsboro, you went around square corners all the way around the farmer's fields. Well, they cut a big highway through there; that straight highway, and they put him out there on that job.

Let's see, they pulled him off of that job and he was in Bend for . . . twenty-five (25) days. I went right with him. We had all our belongings in an old touring

car, you know. And, ah, we, ah, tarred the streets of Bend. And there's a special mix they used up there, so that it doesn't break up in the winter time because it gets down to below five below, you know, and gets so hot in the summer. And they was having trouble with the mix, you see, so he had to go up and get that straightened out for them.

And a, so a, let me see; completed that job and then that's when they sent him to North Bonneville. And we got up here and he fell in love with the country.

*Transcriber's Note: EXTREME NOISE, LIKE THEY DROPPED THE RECORDER OR SOMETHING, SO THERE IS QUITE A SPACE. THEY ARE TALKING BUT IT IS NOT UNDERSTANDABLE.*

Helen: No, let's see, I believe this is my thirty-sixth year. *(I believe she was talking about her Grange participation, but can not be sure.)*

Ruth: How many groups have you belonged to?

Helen: Oh, it's just ah, it's all been in the Carson Wind Mountain Grange. I, I, when I moved away . . . you see I'm just halfway in between *(meaning half way between Carson and Stevenson)* or so, and I always go back.

Ruth: She's been master of that Grange several times.

Helen: Yeah, clear back in '40; when was it, the fall of '42, I believe they elected me Master of the Grange, and I was '42, '43, '44.

Ruth: Isn't that unusual?

Helen: Yes, I think I was the first woman Master in Skamania County.

Ruth: It isn't so unusual now.

Helen: No, now it's common. There are many women masters, but it was then, and, ah, and my husband was called back into the service; he was an ex-Navy man; he was in World War I. And, ah, he was in the engineering department and the signal corps, and he was badly hurt, over in France. They sent a bunch of the Navy men ashore, on some special telephone installation, and shells hit their installation and he was badly hurt and in the hospital quite a while. But of course, this was all before we got married. Well, then, he was getting alright; limped a little yet. But when World War II come along, they called him back and he went in and he got two percent off for his eyes; otherwise perfect, he had come out of it beautifully. And then he was twenty-nine months in World War II, so during World War II, I went back to work and I was the head of the War Board for Skamania County at the courthouse, here. And I was there four



and a half years. After twenty-nine months he was sent home and he had lost his hearing completely and wasn't very well, so I worked until he was able to get back on his feet, and take over his carpentry work.

Ruth: You worked on some other; one of the agricultural products.

Helen: Yes, I helped Gillard, there, the first few months.

Ruth: Oh, I thought it was A.A.A., or something.

Helen: Oh yes, Agricultural Conservation Association, for the government. And, I was the first woman in the United States, to be elected by the farmers of the County, as chairman of an agricultural committee.

Ruth: That's remarkable.

Helen: Yes, at the time, my picture was brought into the state papers and national papers, and they thought it was quite an outstanding thing. And, then, a couple; three years later, why. . . they was a couple more. Over in Colorado there was one, and someplace else that they; there was one. And, ah, it seems like whatever I went in to, in any office, they soon put me at the top. I, I must have been a natural born leader.

Ruth: Well, you had ability and confidence.

Helen: I've always enjoyed life. I think it's wonderful. It's ah, and I'm never afraid of work. I've always been . . .

Ruth: Your health has been up and down, hasn't it.

Helen: Lately, yes, I've been having this high blood pressure and heart trouble, but they found medicine. Now, that I'm coming out of it, as long as I don't overdo.

Ruth: What do you remember about North Bonneville? Was that the most interesting part of your Skamania history? When you first came to the . . .

Helen: Well, we came, it was just a little roadside place and there wasn't much of anything. Residents: Mrs. Brown, Don Brown's mother, owned a place there where he lives, and then the, ah, let's see, Voorhees had come there. Hillyards, and Hillyards were there, and Hillyards worked for the Wauna Lake Club.

Ruth: Oh, did they?

Helen: Yes, uh-huh, and let's see, I think that's what brought them there.

Ruth: Do you remember the organization of the Wauna Lake group?

Helen: Well, the Wauna Lake Club, itself. You see, Wauna Lake is a group of, ah, they were doctors, lawyers like that, from Vancouver, that had formed a club and purchased, you know, several hundred acres of land around Wauna Lake, and they had their summer homes up there. That's absolutely private, and it was called the Wauna Lake Club. And, he was, ah, they worked up there as manager and office . . .

Ruth: And then they stayed down in North Bonneville.

Helen: Yeah.

Ruth: Who were the leaders of the sportsmen?

Helen: I forgot their names. I used to know most of them, but I have forgot most of them. I understand they're all selling out now, or quite a few of them aren't living now.

Ruth: Dr. Griswald is one of them from Vancouver, but I have known some of them. I remember them because their son was in my grade in school.

Helen: Yes, and ah, and ah, they later built the Bridge of the gods, and then they sold it. That's the company that built the Bridge of the gods, too.

Ruth: Oh, the Wauna Lake people?

Helen: Yeah, they went together and, and, and formed a corporation and built the Bridge of the Gods.

Ruth: You don't say!

Helen: Yeah, yeah, and then they sold it to ah, ah, Hood River County, you know. It belongs to Cascade Locks. I tried to get Skamania County to buy it when they sold it. It was sold at a bargain, and oh, they didn't think that they could manage it; it would go broke. And, boy, it's been a money maker.

Ruth: The old timers: too conservative, afraid to risk.

Helen: Yes, uh-huh, afraid to risk. And, let's see, we formed a club. I remember Mrs. Voorhees and Mrs. Raycroft, who had a little restaurant there. Let's see, the names, I would have to stop and think of all the names that was in there, but we, we formed a club, just a community club, you know, for helping and developing the town and helping the people because — what was it — there was something like thirty-four hundred (3,400) people came in there, and no

houses, nothing. We came in, in a little trailer house. And, ah, we rented from Don Brown and, ah, there was nothing. There was no sanitation. There was one over on his property, there, on all that big area, there was one little faucet out in the yard. We stood in line to get a bucket of water out of it. And, ah, no toilets. They had one spotted here and there, just out in the back yard, so, I know my husband built us one and I put a lock on it, so we would have, at least, that privacy behind our trailer. And, ah, it was still in the days when, if you wanted a bath, you drug the ole bathtub in and set it in the middle of the floor and took your bath, and we took most of ours. The Cumblands came in and put in the steam bath and we took most of our heavy bathing down there. We'd go down and have those steam baths. We could wash our hair; it was wonderful.

Ruth: Did you have electricity?

Helen: Yes, and, ah, let's see, the northwestern line that run through Northwestern Dam, when it went through here, but we had a limited amount. Now, in our trailer house, I had the . . . one light in the ceiling of our trailer, and I was allowed to use my electric iron. I paid a dollar eighty-five (\$1.85) a month for it, in those days when you got; I think my husband was getting a complete sum of something like sixty-eight (\$0.68) and hour. The common laborer was getting thirty-two; thirty-five (\$0.32-\$0.35) cents, wages. Of course, this was the depression.

***Transcriber's Note: The beginning of this side of the tape is garbled, so I have to pick up the conversation wherever it is possible.***

Helen: I think he started a lumber mill. I'm not sure; I believe Hans had worked for--- as a carpenter, and I believe he worked for him. So you wanted to know what my husband was still----(something about the Big Six) and for awhile he ran the big hoist that pulled the buckets back and forth across the---. They built an elevator and in order to get the men from the north to south shore, they ran an, a, a, elevator over the big high-lines, and carried the men back and forth, and my husband ran that for awhile. He ran donkey, a cat; wherever they needed him to, to fill in or straighten out a job, that's where he would goes; responsible jobs. He built the first road down to the river, and it was a road they used clear through the Dam; he engineered and----- . And, later they, he called 'em up and told 'em he was all finished and wanted to know what to do next, and they said, Well that hasn't been approved by the Army Engineers; they'll have to come out and survey it. They sent him out to survey it and they never changed it. He had it right to grade. They left it that way.

And, let's see, we had a very bad winter that year. It was long and cold and wet; ice storm's. And people had even dug holes where the school house stands,

there was a big sand hill there, of quite soft sand, and they; people dug caves into this sand hill and hung blankets across the doors and used it to live in, because there was no places to live. And then after the long winter rains, it got so soaked up, the water was dripping through the roofs of 'em, and we had to find places for these families, and go back there and pack those children out, and some of them was poor. And we put in a very hard winter, just looking after the poor. And we-----and then begged groceries and everything we could from the merchants. We'd go to the Red Cross and everything where we could find a place to get anything for these families, to take care of them.

Ruth: Were those families that didn't have work on the Dam?

Helen: They were the men that come to work on the Dam, but they had, there was no housing, and they had no place to leave their children, so they just; they lived in cars, a, boxes, they would, they used, a; plywood was coming out then; the first of the plywood, and they were using those forms on the Dam, and when they'd tear it off, the men would pack it home and put a couple of pieces together and; four pieces together with a roof over the top and make 'em a shack out of it, to move the family in. It was terrible; the conditions were terrible.

Ruth: They didn't earn enough to . . .

Helen: No, didn't earn enough to build and there was ah, no, to buy any land to put it on.

Ruth: And the construction companies felt no responsibility for housing here?

Helen: No, no, no responsibility whatever.

Ruth: That's changed now.

Helen: Yes, and ah, so they, they, they had an existence, that's all. And so, there was no schooling; they were taken to Stevenson. The Stevenson school was in such a condition, they used a play shed, up on the hill, which was in a low area, and they had to put blocks of wood on the floor, under the desks, for the children to put the feet on during school hours, to keep them up out of the water, when it flowed in on the floor.

So we went to the company, and the government, the State School Board, and we got them to build the North Bonneville school to take care of the grades down there. And then we put on dances up on . . . there was a high hill with a dance floor building on it.

Ruth: Right across from Frank's store, there, wasn't it?

Helen: No, it was up back of the old theater, in there, in that area. And, you walked up steps, and then right up on the hill there, they built this huge, huge dance floor, and they have, well, it was a nice thing because everybody would go there and enjoy themselves. And they had good orchestras in, and a lot of fun was had there, dancing. And, they kept it good and clean. And, we, we would get them to donate it, and we'd give dances and then we'd turn it over to buy things for the school. We bought the piano that went into that school, by giving dances.

Ruth: How many women were there in your club?

Helen: Ah, I can't remember, but there was quite a few. There must have been thirty, I would say, altogether. And, all of the, the women that was any workers, and all the businessmen's wives. First they was going to call it The Businessmen's Wives Club, and they said, Well, now, that wouldn't be fair because, like myself, we were not in business, so they called it the Community Club, and, ah, I can't remember---. Florence \_\_\_\_ was in it; Florence \_\_\_\_ was one of them, and, ah, let's see, now there was a Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_. There was a Price that was ah, the walking boss on the Dam. He was over my husband and the others.

Ruth: They had a lumber store there.

Helen Brooks: Did they?

Ruth: She lives in the Mt. Pleasant area now.

Helen: Over the hill there; I didn't know that? And, well, she was a member. And, I would have to think hard to remember who all I contacted in those days, but I know we met quite often.

Ruth: Were Mrs. Peterson and Mrs. Voorhees part of it?

Helen: Yes, and, ah, let's see; we had a Chinese Restaurant there.

Ruth: I know, Alice and Frank used to eat there.

Helen: Yes, oh, she was a lovely little person; she and her son.

Ruth: See, I lived that near to all of this and didn't know anything about it.

Helen: Well, I lived right in the middle of it. I lived right in behind the Chinese Restaurant, down by Don Brown's.

Ruth: (garbled)

Helen: And ah, it was wild and rough. A woman didn't dare go down town at night. It was open 'till late. There was wide open gambling. There was seven good-sized restaurants, and I know, one night my husband — it was Saturday night — there wasn't much to do and he said, Well, let's walk down the street and see if there's anything doing. We started up towards the theater, and came all around on the street; well, it's across from Miller's Restaurant, is where we started, and that was a big gambling house over there, and we walked down the street and there was four street fights going on.

Ruth: The streets were all mud, weren't they?

Helen: All mud!!! In the winter time you wore knee-high boots in order to get anywhere; just waded through the mud.

Ruth: No wood sidewalks.

Helen: No. Later on we put in some wood sidewalks down past where Jerry's Restaurant is now, but later on they were taken out.

Ruth: I remember one famous fight between a couple of women, out in the middle of the mud road. I don't even remember who the women were.

Helen: I know who the women were; one of them was a restaurant woman; oh!, she was a tough old thing, and this woman; yeah, that was down at the lower; well it would be down where Gordon's grocery store was. Down in there, there was a restaurant down in there, and this woman went in and started a disturbance in the restaurant \_\_\_\_\_ got into it and they, they broke the front window and then they got out into the street. They finished it up out in the street.

Ruth: I knew at the time, who it was, but I forgot now.

Helen: And, all the --- was tough men and tough women.

**Unidentified Third Person:** You would have enjoyed that song that the young man sang last night; tell her about it. What was his name?

Ruth: Sam Little. do you know Sam Little?

Helen: Oh, yes, I knew the Littles.

Ruth: He brought out his loud speaker for Emery to use and then he played a couple of his little pieces at the end. It was about living in a construction town.

Helen: You mean something ah, he was . . . he made it up.

Ruth: He was a construction worker and he'd go home and tell his wife it's time to move, and then he'd go on, and it was a lovely little song.

Helen: See, he was raised up here, on the hill. I knew him then as a small child. His mother used to bring him to my \_\_\_\_\_

**TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE: Gossip at this point does not warrant transcribing.**

Helen: Now Patty Little. Do you remember a, years ago, when we first came here Patty Little was just a teenager, but she was going to Portland and singing over the old, ah, what did they call it: the Hoot-Owls and the Corn-Cob programs, in Portland, radio. And she would go, take her guitar — natural singer — she'd take her guitar and go in and sing, and she, she, she's been married. Well she's still living here. (Gossip)

Ruth: And Patty is this young man's sister?

Helen: Yes, uh-huh.

Ruth: So he comes from a family . . .

Helen: Yes, it's a big family, and he's one of the younger ones and she's the oldest in the family. So, his talent is in the family.

**Third Person:** He really has talent.

Helen Brooks: And, but they had no advantages when they were younger.

**TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE: Gossip, at this point, does not warrant transcribing.**

Helen: Patty is one of the first women I met when I came here. Her, ah, she was going with Lucas then, and Lucas was working with my husband. He was one of the boys under him. (*Garbled*) So he, ah, he says, We're having a dance, at Stevenson, Saturday night. Why don't you come up to the dance. Bring your wife and come up to the dance. It was at the Cloverdale school. So he drew out a map where we could find it, so we came up. There was just nothing to do in the country, you know, so we went up to the dance and my husband and I, we, we went to all the dances we could because we loved to dance and, ah, he introduced us to Patty. So they are some of the first people I knew, and then when we moved to Carson and built a home up there, they had their first child. She had married Lucas then and they had their first child. And, ah, right out

back of where we built our log cabin, there was a huge big log with about a foot of moss all over it. She'd bring the baby up and she'd lay him on this big mossy log, for his cradle.

Ruth: What was the first church in North Bonneville? The Christian Science one?

Helen: No, because that Community Church there, was there before the Christian Science, 'cuz Voorhees started the Christian Science then, and Carpenters. See, Carpenters were there long before the Dam.

Ruth: Oh yeah, Carpenters, they go way back.

Helen: Yeah, and I got acquainted with them and I was their friends through the years. And, ah, there was another family there by the name of Batellis. He worked with Mr. Carpenter. He worked with Mr. Carpenter. See, they worked on the steam engines and things, when they had that railroad through there. And, ah, ah, I still keep in touch with those. They live in Portland.

Ruth: And after you left North Bonneville?

Helen: We bought acreage from the old Iman homestead in Carson, and we built us a log house on it, and my husband followed construction for a long time after that. Well, up until World War II, he followed construction and was sent all over the country, wherever they needed him, and I stayed there and I raised my children and we had us a few cows and chickens. I took up my community life there. I was chairman of the school board; I was on the school board, for, was it six years. And, ah, I was the chairman of the school board and during that time I was, also, for a couple years, chairman of the county school directors for Skamania county. And our group was instrumental, at that time, of getting this Forest money for the schools. We used to didn't get any of them, and so, we decided the schools needed to build new schools. I still have a letter from, an answer from President Roosevelt. I wrote back to him on it and asked him what he could do for us, in Congress, and he assured me he would do something, and not long after that, why, they passed a bill we we to get a share of that for our schools; a portion of it; and it has held since.

Ruth: That was a big step.

Helen: Yes, that was; we really need it. And, ah, oh I joined the Grange and followed it through the years. And, ah, I worked for anything that was a good of the community. I helped get the water system through in Carson, so we could have water.

Ruth: Where did the water come from, in Carson?



Helen: Ah, Bear Creek, and we got ah, we floated a bond and I was instrumental in floating the bonds to build the new schools there, before I left and moved down here. And, after I got down here, I became interested in; or, ah, first thing I did, I got us a rural route out through here so we could have mail delivery out of Stevenson. Before that, they had no mail delivery out this way. With that in, I got the telephone line built out here so we could have a telephone. Then I went to work on a Fire Protection District, and I worked for twelve years for the rural fire department here, and we formed the, an organization District No. 2, and I was their secretary for twelve years.

Ruth: We need Mrs. Brooks down at our end of the County. We still don't have fire protection.

Helen: Oh yes, you need that. And ah, lands!, I save fifty percent (50%) a year, just on my policies.

Ruth: Yours is a volunteer?

Helen: All volunteer; well, that is it's volunteer up to the point; you have to pay the men something, ah, in order for them to get under the insurance; premium insurance, in case they get hurt. So we gave 'em a dollar an hour, and, so, now they are giving them two dollars an hour. Big pay.

Ruth: Well, you know, the Bonneville fire district is one of the most wonderful things that ever happened in the country, but, at Skamania, there is no nucleus of a town to call on. You see, if we'd have an alarm there, the people would be way off in the hills or else . . .

Helen: There isn't enough demand.

Ruth: No, I'm not saying there isn't, but it appears to be that that's the problem.

Helen: Well, now in Carson, they have their district right there in town, you know, and they, they spread out now. They take in Home Valley all around. Now we, see Stevenson, the town of Stevenson had a fire department, but they couldn't leave the town, so we just circled the town. We go clear to Fort Rains. We take in Fort Rains and go clear up this side of the junction this way, and back on the hills, and, well, ah, Stevenson needed more help too because they only had one engine, and it was a small one. Well, we went out and bought that big Oshkosh, a great big engine. We got a good buy on it because they had it up at Hanford, and the government had bought it for the Hanford plant, and it was too heavy for that sandy country. They couldn't get it off the highways, so they bought a light one and put the big balloon tires on it so they could get on that sandy roads and things, and, so, they advertised this for sale through the fire departments and we applied for it and we got a wonderful bargain on it. And

so we brought that in; well Stevenson said if we would go out on their fires with our big truck, when they needed it, they would help us man ours, so we just ran into luck. And, so we house them together, in the same building, and then we went, Stevenson and the district went together and also the hospital district went in with us. We built a new building, and built it big enough for all three of us. There's two ambulance housed in there, there's the help building, our two fire trucks. Stevenson, I understand, we just bought a brand new fire truck here lately, and, ah, ah, Stevenson had two trucks in there. We had our big truck and then we had a little pick-up, you know, for fast work and for the cheap, and now I understand; and then Stevenson had their big truck, or medium size, their's was a pumper for off of their lines. See, where ours was a big tanker. And, ah, this way they work well together and ours is big enough that they can; it's also a pumper as well as a tanker, and they can throw that big four inch hose in the river. When the mill caught fire, Rudy Hegewald's mill, here a few years back, ah, they had enough power by dropping their big hose right into the pond there, but they were knocking that metal roofing right off the top of that building. So, ah, and they were under the Stevenson fire department, so they said those high buildings they have there, they have nothing to reach up there, where our pumper would really help them out, so, the boys, they're all the same; you can't tell which belongs to which, and it makes it very nice.

Ruth: They have regular training then?

Helen: Yes, they have regular training and they all carry their ratings with them and they're all under insurance. When they have put in so many years or reach a certain age, they get so much retirement. It used to be, it started out forty and then it went to sixty, and now it's up to; they get a hundred (\$100) dollars a month when they retire.

Ruth: What's the financial support thing, if it's a rural volunteer?

Helen: Ah, it's ah, we're allowed to tax the . . . it's a junior taxing district and we'd get from two to four mills; whatever . . .

Ruth: Just like your library district.

Helen: Same thing, uh-huh, port and library and all is all junior taxing districts.

Ruth: Whatever happened to that petition down our way, that we all signed?

***(garbled and low toned - cannot transcribe)***

Helen: Those have to be registered in with the State Fire Martial, along with a drawing

of the district; a legal description; a drawing of the district. I went right up to the Engineer's department and got maps and then marked out where they were, and then you are issued a charter for \_\_\_\_\_, and somebody has to be at the head . . .

Ruth: It has to be voted on, doesn't it?

Helen: Yes, then it has to come up to a vote and you have to have a certain percent of the votes. I think it's sixty percent of the registered voters have to vote and then there has to be a passing vote on that. I know we'd get out and on the night of the vote. We were running cars; hauling people in an' everything, but we went over; we had two descending votes in the whole district. But we canvassed it.

Ruth: I see you have some stereopticons over there. Are they old?

Helen: Yes, yes, yes very old.

Ruth: Of this part of the country?

Helen: Ah, not many, ah, I had some of the Columbia River Gorge and they all disappeared. The only thing I can find that's even local any more, in there, is one of the cannery at the mouth of the Columbia River; the old cannery down there, and the rest of them have all disappeared over the years. You know, I've loaned it and set it around and they just help themselves. And there's slides from all over the world there. They're really . . .and I now this; I have two of 'em. There's another one around here someplace. And, ah, there's all these slides. You can borrow it any time you want to look at 'em; from all over the world; and there's a lot of little comedy things that you can entertain the children with.

Ruth: Yes, what I was, of course, interested in were the local ones that are all gone.

Helen: Well, no, they're all gone, 'cuz I looked the other night after I went down and saw your husband's pictures. I came home and looked to see if I had any left, and the one from the cannery was the only one. And I had 'em of the Ellsworth cannery, down here, and all the different ones and they're all gone.

Ruth: You don't know which cannery that was, down at the mouth of the river; the Ilwaco one or . . .?

Helen: No, it's Astoria.

Ruth: Well, let's see, that would be ----(*garbled*)

Helen: (*She is reading from something.*) Yeah, Interior of the salmon cannery

establishment of Astoria, Oregon, U.S.A. It doesn't give the name of it but it was taken in; or copyrighted in 1904. My slide is gone off of here, but, a, I've got to straighten these out; they're cut.

***(garbled)***

Helen: My little box. Oh my children enjoyed this. They just used it and used it. They took it to school; they took it all over and this is where they get lost, you know.

Ruth: That's the only picture I've ever seen with the cans. I lived a few blocks from several canneries, when I lived there as a child, but . . .

***(Idle conversation; not pertinent to the interview.)***

Helen: I have lots of old things, passed down from my mother and ah, and ah, things that my husband has given me. I'm a regular ole packrat.

Ruth: Do you keep old letters and . . .

Helen: Yes, and old magazine clippings and paper clippings from those histories. Now I might be able to find, in fact, way back when they was building the Dam. The paper in Cascade Locks, I think it was, put out a magazine section on the development into the Gorge, about the time they raised the water, and I have that yet.

Ruth: Oh, those would be wonderful to keep.

Helen: Oh, well, I can hunt those up for you.

***(Somebody came in and the conversation changed. I am picking up what I can after things settle down.)***

Helen: Original, ah, ah, land claim, and it belonged to the Alhola family, and there's a lot them related around here, back of Stevenson, yet, because they were part Hawaiian, and he came in on a ship and jumped ship.

Ruth: That was Kanaka Creek then?

Helen: Yeah, like Kanaka's; they were also; the ship went aground or something and they left the ship and never went back, and they settled in here, and then intermarried.

Ruth: There was a whole colony of them in here; where is Kanaka Creek?

Helen: Well, it's a creek that comes down just as you leave Stevenson, this way. That

little creek that comes down through there. It runs up, ah, well ah, let me see, I know where it runs. It goes almost up to, ah, Cloverdale school, up in there. It runs on an angle up through, back of Stevenson.

Ruth: What's the name of the creek that's on your place?

Helen: I don't think it has a name because it comes from a spring and just runs into the river, and it runs the year around. I have filed for water rights on it, so in case I sell the place, why I'll have the water rights on it.

Ruth: Now, tell me this title about the beach, again. They have flood rights; or property rights.

Helen: I own the land clear out into the river to the original river bank, and that goes with the place, and the State has flood right; the government, the Army Engineers has flood right.

Ruth: But they don't have right to tie up logs?

Helen: No, no, just to flood water over it and that's all.

Ruth: And that's because it's *(garbled)*

Helen: No, no, that's the way they purchased it. It's that way all along this shoreline, here, because that's the way they purchased it when they built the Dam.

Ruth: See, that's true of ours except that where we are, ah, it's to high water line, and when the water is up. You see, we don't have anything to say about the boats that come in there.

***(Conversation not pertaining to the interview.)***

Helen: But they flood this, you see, they flooded this from down below. You see, this last time, they bought another ten feet, in fact I haven't settled with them yet. I still have the coming yet. I should get it before long. They've taken almost another five acres of my beach land, for flood right.

