

MINERVA “MINNIE” (MRS. GEORGE F.) CHRISTENSEN

Interview: Jan. 24, 1976

Interviewer: Ivan Donaldson

Ivan: Today on this brilliant sunlit day, the 24th of January, 1976, we will have an interview with Mrs. George Christensen, who came here in the teens of this century. Mrs. Christensen, will you tell us when you did come here?

Minnie: Beg Pardon?

Ivan: Would you tell us when you did come to this . . .

Minnie: It was October 11, when I arrived, 1913.

Ivan: 1913. And did you come by boat, or . . .

Minnie: No, I came the first time I visited Stevenson, I did. That was the year the railroads went through.

Ivan: Oh, in 1907?

Minnie: 19, no, yes, about 1907. My mother-in-law and father-in-law were living here.

Ivan: Oh, and their names?

Minnie: Peter and Mary Christensen, and they came, and he was cashier in the bank (Bank of Stevenson) here.

Ivan: Oh.

Minnie: Until he retired as, ah, he was ill when he had to retire. That's when we came here, was when. he retired.

Ivan: That was before your marriage or after your marriage?

Minnie: After my marriage, shortly, about three years. We'd been married three years.

Ivan: Then your husband's parents had the bank before that?

Minnie: Well, he was cashier.

Ivan: Who owned the bank at that time?

Minnie: Well, I think Mr. A. C. Sly was a stockholder, and if I'd known this I. A man by the name of G. E. Lovell in Ritzville, who is my brother-in-law, and a man by the name of Claudius, a farmer. And let me see, I don't, there must have been somebody else here, but I can't if I'd known. I would have looked at the records.

Ivan: This is all right, this is fine. And then Mr. Christensen, your husband then, after you came here in 1913.

Minnie: He, they re-organized the bank at that time and had a different, Mr. Claudius sold, and Mr. Lovell, and a different board, you know. And let me see, I can't remember exactly, I know Mr. Ash was president, and there was a man by the name of F. E. Robbins in Ritzville who was the Vice President. And it was a very small bank.

Ivan: I see, what boats did you come upriver in this 1907-1908?

Minnie: I came up on the "Bailey Gatzert."

Ivan: I see. From Portland?

Minnie: From Portland. My mother and I were, we'd been down to the fair, Portland Fair. Something like that.

Ivan: Do you remember about how much it cost you for the fare, for the . . .

Minnie: No I don't, but it wasn't very much, I know.

Ivan: Three dollars?

Minnie: Probably, I wouldn't say exactly, cause I don't remember. About like everything else those days.

Ivan: How long did it take the "Bailey Gatzert" to come from Portland to Stevenson?

Minnie: Oh, I would say, hour and a half. I'm not, I don't exactly remember.

Ivan: We don't expect you to remember right.

Minnie: At the time, I didn't, you know, I was kind of young and giddy, I guess.

Ivan: You were a young lady then.

Minnie: Yes.

Ivan: In 1907, this was, you were married at the time?

Minnie: No, I was married in 1910.

Ivan: I see. But you came here to look over the family first?

Minnie: No, I came here just to visit them. My sister-in-law was here, and we were good friends, and that's how I happened to come to Stevenson. I knew Father and Mother Christensen, but not intimately.

Ivan: And when did Father Christensen retire from the bank? About what year?

Minnie: He retired the year we came down here. 1913.

Ivan: 1913. And what trips did you make by automobile to the washboard?

Minnie: By automobile?

Ivan: By automobile, or by wagon, or by mule?

Minnie: Well, we bought our first car, I think in '19, or 1917, or let me see, about '19, does this make any difference?

Ivan: Oh, just approximate.

Minnie: Between 1917, and around that time I think.

Ivan: And this was, did you travel to Vancouver and Portland with it?

Minnie: We went, yes, it was after the Old Columbia Highway, when the Old Columbia Highway, when we bought our first car, when the Old Columbia Highway went through on the other side. We crossed the river on the ferry, and back again.

Ivan: Did you go on the Washington side at all?

Minnie: No, not very often, the roads were, some of between Stevenson and Carson,

it was almost impassable. Some of those, the narrow road and curves, so we pioneered with the highway,

Ivan: Mr. Sly told me about the first, the Bond Issue road coming through here in 1915. I wonder if you traveled that Bond Issue road, between here, say, and Washougal by your automobile.

Minnie: Well, I don't know, I had a little family, and we didn't travel too much. But my husband might have. 1915, at the, oh, you, 1915.

Ivan: That's when Mr. Sly told me that the Bond Issue road went through and I'm, what I'm trying to learn is, about the road older than that one.

Minnie: Oh. Well, I don't know much about it, really cause we didn't have a car, and we didn't have a carriage of any kind here. So . . .

Ivan: Did you travel by horse and buggy at all?

Minnie: No. Oh, if we rented one. Around here for just short trips, you know, like up to Carson.

Ivan: Was there a livery stable here, where you could rent that?

Minnie: I think so, I'm not sure.

Ivan: My father ran a livery stable out at Maupin, Oregon many many years ago,

Minnie: Oh, did he? Yeah, we' had one where I lived before, but I, or this was either borrowed horse and buggy, or ah, there may not have been a livery stable here. It was probably borrowed.

Ivan: And what were your social activities, did you have dances, and . . .

Minnie: Yes, we had dances. We danced, we had, after we had been here several years, we always had a dancing club.

Ivan: Oh, a dancing club.

Minnie: And we went to the dances down at Eagles, Ash's Hall.

Ivan: The upstairs in Ash's Hall?

Minnie: That was a large hall at that time, and had not been partitioned off. And then when they made apartments up there, or partitioned it off, and that, we moved over to the Eagle's Hall and had our dances and suppers. And the first

dance we went to here was a holiday dance. I think there were, when I came here there were just two cars in town.

Ivan: Two cars.

Minnie: And but that, when we'd have one of these holiday dances, the hall would be full. And they had good music.

Ivan: Who played the music?

Minnie: Well, an orchestra, I don't know the name of it anymore, I don't even, may not have then. But and the Rebecca Ladies had supper, in the other hall, across the street.

Ivan: What hall was that?

Minnie: Well, the one, that building was torn down. I believe that was, this is, I believe that was the Oddfellows hall, I think, Oddfellows Hall.

Ivan: Oh, that's been torn down?

Minnie: That's where that beautiful building is now, where the hippies built the . . .

Ivan: Oh, oh, Mr., where Mr. Klinger had his store later. Was the store, was Mr. Klinger's store, was that the Oddfellows Hall?

Minnie: Mm Hm, downstairs, and then they lived upstairs, or they lived downstairs I guess. But they weren't living there at that time. I mean at the time of the, I was just telling about the supper.

Ivan: The supper?

Minnie: The suppers. Parties, they had big suppers, after, about midnight, you know.

Ivan: At the dance, they'd have a supper party? Did you know Turner Levins?

Minnie: No, I don't, my husband probably did.

Ivan: Probably did. I was trying to learn about this very famous and valuable violin that Turner Levins owned.

Minnie: Oh, no, I don't know anything about that.

Ivan: I do know that he played for dances. And how about basket socials?

Minnie: Well, I, I don't remember going to any. I wasn't very well acquainted when I first came here and . . .

Ivan: Well, I meant then or later. Up into the twenties.

Minnie: We usually went to dances, and the card club, card parties, and that's about it.

Ivan: Can you tell me the beginnings of the first library here?

Minnie: Yes, I think I can. It was not known as a library. The ladies rented a place downtown for the, there was a little club for them, for the ladies to come in from the country and rest and feed their children and shop, and . . .

Ivan: This was a little club, you say.

Minnie: Yes, a little club.

Ivan: Was it a building down near the railroad tracks, or below the railroad tracks?

Minnie: No, not that I know of.

Ivan: Where was this building?

Minnie: Well, we met around the home after we formed a library club, I mean that was our project.

Ivan: A library club.

Minnie: Yes, it grew and grew and we met at the homes first, and our project was to build a library, and we gave dances and card clubs, and bake sales, and everything. Always we, silver teas, we always had a silver tea, a very good program, and when we had money enough to start our building, you know where that is, where the City Hall is now. We moved into that before it was completely finished. Before that we moved, or moved, or met at the Church, and at the Samson (*cor. sp.*) Hotel, and when we moved into the building we had our silver teas and we had a committee. Our books were all loaned at first. By, I mean not loaned, but given to the, and it, Mrs. Goepel, (*cor. sp.*) Frank's mother . . .

Ivan: Who?

Minnie: Mrs. Goepel.

Ivan: Goepel?

Minnie: Frank's mother? Was our librarian, and she was open on Saturday afternoons

in the restroom in the garage. And that was, magazines and books that had been given. And then we just grew as we went along, and then when we formed a library. They came down and made it, I think, I don't just remember. I think we were open two afternoons a week at first. But we continued until we, at that time we wanted to be remembered as the library you know, committee. So we didn't want to take money unless we, from the commissioners or anything. My husband no, I know the lady that introduced the bill to the legislature that we could take money from the County Commissioners, and . . .

Ivan: And her name? And her name, this lady's name?

Minnie: Oh, I don't know if I can remember it right now or not, I'd have to have it now, wouldn't I?

Ivan: Oh, no, we can get it later.

Minnie: She was from outside of Spokane, that railroad town. No, I don't believe I can remember, I might find it in a book here. Then, where where did I leave off?

Ivan: About what time did you start this library beginnings, when did you form your club to start the library? About what year, '19, you came here in '13, but . . .

Minnie: Not quite that early. I didn't join right away because I was so busy raising my family. I was, I don't just remember when I did join, but would, be they must have the records down to the library, do they?

Ivan: No, I believe not.

Minnie: Well, lets see. They started that project a long time ago, my husband gave the ladies twenty-five dollars. And for them, to help them along, and from that little plant in the restroom, restroom of the it grew into this library.

Ivan: In which garage did you have this little clubroom?

innie: Well it used to be where that little garage is on the main street, up by across, down from the bank, across the street.

Ivan: Across the street from the PUD there? In that area?

Minnie: Mm Hm.

Ivan: And you had a little clubroom there, with a few books, is that right?

Minnie: Well, that was when the, no our clubroom was in the little building down further, I meant for the ladies to meet when they first, but that's really where the library started, in that restroom.

Ivan: In the restroom.

Minnie: With the oh, books that were given to them.

Ivan: And you started out with 50 books, a hundred books?

Minnie: Oh, I don't know how, I don't know as they had anything very much to start out with, excepting what. I have a book here now that is the history of the Big Bend country. It is quite interesting to me because I'm from that part of the country and somebody gave it to that library group, and Daphne Hahn, do you know her? Daphne Ramsey? She told me about this book. She thinks and I think that my husband gave that book to the library, and it's now a very' I think it's in the state library in Vancouver. They don't have it, but they got it for me.

Ivan: Oh, and you have a copy here?

Minnie: Mm Hm.

Ivan: Well, its marvelous that you've preserved it.

Minnie: Oh, it really is. I just wish, if it was, had been his that I really had it. Because its, my Father's name's in that book, and my husband, and many many people I know. And the history of that part of the country . . .

Ivan: Of the Big Bend country of the Columbia? About when did you build your library building down here now, the City Hall, about what year approximately?

Minnie: Oh, approximately, now let me think. I'm so poor with dates, I always have been. Is it recording?

Ivan: Yes

Minnie: And well, is it pretty nearly over?

Ivan: No.

Minnie: Okay. Well, let me see now, I couldn't, let me see.

Ivan: In 1920, 1927?

Minnie: Oh, I would think so. Probably more near '27, but I, couldn't say.

Ivan: And who were some of the other ladies that worked with you on this project?

Minnie: Oh, Mrs. Wright, Berry Wright's wife, and Esson Smith's mother, and Mrs. Ash, and Mrs. Lear, and that was as we grew along then are these people. We all worked.

Ivan: What about Mrs. Rogers?

Minnie: Yes.

Ivan: Aleta (*c. sp.*) Rogers. And later, a little bit later, Mrs. Keene.

Minnie: Yes, mm hm, quite a bit later.

Ivan: Can you remember any of the other ladies?

Minnie: Well, I could if I'd known I was going to be interviewed. Oh, let me see, well I should. You can't snap that off for a second?

Ivan: You mentioned several people who were on that library, the early library committee, and now in our recess here you mentioned Mrs. Charlie Ziegler, Mrs. Winn Gillard, Mrs. Sam Samson,

Minnie: Sam Samson.

Ivan: And Mrs. Hufford.

Minnie: Yes.

Ivan: And what was her . . .

Minnie: Walter Hufford.

Ivan: Walter Hufford.

Minnie: Walter.

Ivan: Walter. Have you thought of any others that started the library?

Minnie: Well, not just at this moment.

Ivan: Well, we'll get them another time.

Minnie: Okay, I'll try to think of it, maybe I can get some records here.

Ivan: Okay, you mentioned that when you first came here, there were only two automobiles. At that time, who had those automobiles?

Minnie: Well, Ned Yeomans, who lived about four miles out of town. He was a lumberman. And . . .

Ivan: According to this clipping you have.

Minnie: Yeah, did you read it?

Ivan: Not yet.

Minnie: And the hotel.

Ivan: Sam Samson?

Minnie: Sam Samson had a hotel, and he met all of the trains.

Ivan: He met all the trains.

Minnie: Mm hm.

Ivan: Do you remember what kind of automobiles they were?

Minnie: I think his was a Hupmobile. I think he, I don't remember what Mr. Samson's was.

Ivan: News clipping July 1, 1915, Memory Lane, from the files of the Western News, Libbey, Montana. Mr and Mrs. E. L. Yeoman of Stevenson, Washington, traveling in a Hupmobile from Puget Sound to New York, were the occupants of the first touring car to make the trip over the newly opened road from Spokane to Glacier Park, traveling in a rainstorm. They made the 125 mile trip from Rothdrum, Idaho to Libby, Montana, in one day. And you knew Mr. And Mrs. Yeomans.

Minnie: Very well.

Ivan: Oh, what kind of a person was he?

Minnie: He was ah, he was a very nice young man. He's, I think he'd been a little problem to his dad, and that's why he was given this mill out here, but i would hate to say anything against him. He was just, you have a picture of

him, in the, one of those pictures of Mr. Knapp's, when he tied his horse up in the saloon. He did tricks like that, you know, but, goes out on a little binge, but otherwise he was a very likeable man.

Ivan: About how old was he when you first knew him?

Minnie: Well, I would think he was in his thirties, I really couldn't say. You see, we came here, I was quite a bit younger than I am now.

Ivan: Mmm, there too. And was he here when you came, or did he come later?

Minnie: Yeah, he was here. And they had, he and his partner, that was the Yeoman-Simpson Mill. And they lived, they built two lovely homes, out by the river, I think they both burned down, and Ned finally moved away, and . . .

Ivan: About when did he move away?

Minnie: Well, I just couldn't give dates, because I really don't . . .

Ivan: About three or four years after you came here?

Minnie: Oh, longer than that I think. They used to come in for our country dances.

Ivan: Oh?

Minnie: And we'd, once in a while we'd walk out there on the railroad track for a visit. We didn't have any cars ourselves.

Ivan: About how far were there homes out of town?

Minnie: I think four miles.

Ivan: Four miles.

Minnie: And the highway was very, very rugged.

Ivan: And what, will you describe Mrs. Yeomans, please?

Minnie: She was a very nice lady, and she had been an ex-schoolteacher, and she was from Ohio. And they met in Seattle, that's all I know about it.

Ivan: And she entered the social activities of the town?

Minnie: Oh, yes, both of the ladies did.

Ivan: Mrs. Simpson also?

Minnie: Mm Hm.

Ivan: What kind of a person was Mr. Simpson?

Minnie: Very fine, very fine, very stable.

Ivan: Very stable. Was he older than Ned?

Minnie: Oh, yes, much older.

Ivan: He was in his forties or fifties?

Minnie: Well, I would imagine fifties when we came here, I really don't know. I'm not very good about judging people's ages.

Ivan: Then he went on to form, to establish the Simpson Lumber Co?

Minnie: His father, I think. His father was an ex-lumberman Ned's father, and um, in Winona, Minnesota. And he thought this Mr. Simpson was sort of a stablizer, I guess for Ned.

Ivan: He was more of a controller.

Minnie: Mm hm, I would say so.

Ivan: Did he handle the money?

Minnie: Beg pardon?

Ivan: Did he handle the money?

Minnie: I don't know, I really don't know.

Ivan: I heard that they had a flume out here from their mill down to the river, is that right?

Minnie: I think so, I really don't know for sure. I don't think I paid enough attention to those things. No, the, is it still running?

Ivan: Yes, its running.

Minnie: Any other questions?

Ivan: Yes, I have lots of questions if you're willing.

Minnie: Oh, yes, I'm, I have all day.

Ivan: I wonder, can you tell me who had the greenhouse here?

Minnie: People by the name of Jackson.

Ivan: Jackson, initial please?

Minnie: No, I don't remember their initial.

Ivan: Did they have a garden along with their greenhouse?

Minnie: I don't remember, but she used to bring me flowers when I first came here, and I thought she was bringing me a present. Then I realized after a while that she was, she had a little business of her own, you know, so and then when I lived, I lived four years where Gertrude, Mrs. Ash, lives.

Ivan: Oh, in that home there where Mrs. Ash lives now? Who built that house?

Minnie: Let me see, a man by the name of, you want to stop that a minute?

Ivan: Then there is this fine home down here, right where I, that beautiful Beech tree is now planted, right exactly across the street west of the jail, the old jail. Do you remember who built that house?

Minnie: The old jail.

Ivan: The present jail, down here now.

Minnie: Who has that house, Jack, not Jack Wright?

Ivan: No, no. One of the Council members, but I can't remember his name. I'll think of it in a little bit.

Minnie: Did you want me to . . .

Ivan: And were you here when Queen of Romania went through?

Minnie: Yes, that was the day the Bridge opened across the river, and we drove across the bridge to see the Queen and her . . .

Ivan: And she came down the river . . .

Minnie: On the Oregon side.

Ivan: She came down on the Oregon side?

Minnie: Mm hm, and we all thought that they'd cross over our new bridge, but they didn't, they passed us up.

Ivan: She did not cross the . . .

Minnie: No, they didn't come over to this side.

Ivan: They must have crossed up above then.

Minnie: Yes, they crossed on the, up above. I imagine the ferry, I don't know though. Because I know they didn't have a bridge at The Dalles.

Ivan: Oh, no, and how many cars did she have in her group?

Minnie: Oh, I'd think a half a dozen or so, maybe more. Maybe eight, ten, not too many.

Ivan: There were not as many as fifty.

Minnie: No, no. They were on their way to the horse show in Portland.

Ivan: I see, this was late in the afternoon, of that particular day in 19 . . .

Minnie: Well, no, I think it was around the middle of the afternoon.

Ivan: I see. They had come all the way from Maryhill, down river then.

Minnie: Mm hm.

Ivan: Do you remember what kind of automobiles they used? Were they Lincolns or Cadillacs, or . . .

Minnie: No, I'm afraid I don't, I'm not a very good, no I don't remember, they looked, they were nice cars, I know. But . . .

Ivan: Was the Queen friendly, did she wave to the people?

Minnie: Oh, after a fashion.

Ivan: After a fashion.

Minnie: I think she was a little afraid that her daughter or her son might have a American girl on the string over here.

Ivan: That wouldn't be so bad.

Minnie: But they, Marie (???) did come to this country you know, and live after, during the war over there.

Ivan: The daughter?

Minnie: Mm hm.

Ivan: Did she marry an American?

Minnie: I don't think so. I don't know, but I read an article in the Ladies Home Journal by her once.

Ivan: Then I judge that you consider the Queen's greeting somewhat reserved.

Minnie: Oh, yes. I imagine. We all did I think. I think I can voice that opinion, that's the way I felt, anyway.

Ivan: This is what I want, an honest appraisal. About how many people did she have, four or five people in each car?

Minnie: I would think so, mm hm.

Ivan: Including her daughter?

Minnie: Her daughter and her son, Nicolas, and, of course, Sam Hill.

Ivan: Oh, yes, Sam Hill. I would think that you probably knew Sam Hill here in his travelings up and down the river. Did you know him?

Minnie: I had never met him. I've seen him, been on his train when he was on.

Ivan: Oh, Mr. Sly knew him and told me considerable about him.

Minnie: Well, I imagine so.

Ivan: In interviews, I guess in the Samson Hotel here, Mr. Hill told Mr. Sly about his dreams of a highway up and down the river. He went on, then, to get Samuel Lancaster, the engineer, and build with his promotion, with his aid, they built, Multnomah County built the Old Columbia River Highway. So Mr. Sly knew him quite well.

Minnie: That's good.

Ivan: And I have two hand-written interviews with Mr. Sly. I wasn't able to afford one of these things at that time. Where did you see Mr. Sam Hill?

Minnie: Sam Hill, on the train.

Ivan: On the train. On his special train?

Minnie: Well, he was on the train one time when I was coming down from Spokane.

Ivan: Oh, and did he build a house over across the river, near Bonneville later?

Minnie: I think so, but I couldn't swear to that, but I think so. I'm not sure.

Ivan: Did you travel the train back and forth to Portland after the trains . . .

Minnie: Well, when we went to Portland we went on this, yes. On this side.

Ivan: You didn't travel the trains in preference to the boats?

Minnie: Oh, yes. They were faster.

Ivan: Faster than the boats.

Minnie: Mm hm,

Ivan: Is this one reason why the boats died out?

Minnie: I guess so. Lack of passenger service, trains, passengers.

Ivan: Passengers on the boats.

Minnie: Mm, hm.

Ivan: Describe the "Bailey Gatzert" to me. Was she a luxury ship?

Minnie: No, I think that was about as nice as any. There were other ships before that. The "Bailey" was the one that was running when we came here.

Ivan: And the salon, was it quite well fixed up, was it luxury?

Minnie: Well, it wasn't exactly luxurious as they say now, but it was nice.

Ivan: By those days it was very pleasant.

Minnie: Mm, hm. They shot the rapids one time, since I've been here, the boat.

Ivan: Oh, did you see the boat go over the rapids?

Minnie: No, I didn't but there was a lady on the boat that said, Oh. I'm so thrilled to go through the locks, and he says, you're gonna get a bigger thrill than that. You're gonna shoot the rapids.

Ivan: Oh, that would be a real thrill.

Minnie: That water was that high.

Ivan: And when was about the last time you remember a steam boater running passenger runs up and down the river?

Minnie: Mmm, regular runs?

Ivan: Yes.

Minnie: I wouldn't say much after I came here. After the trains were running.

Ivan: In 1913. As late maybe as 1916?

Minnie: Oh, could be, but I'm not. I just don't remember that. I don't think about it anyway.

Ivan: And, of course, you've gone through Cascade Locks on the "Bailey?"

Minnie: Oh, yes, many times. Not many times, but as many times as we could afford.

Ivan: Did you travel on any other sternwheelers other than the "Bailey?"

Minnie: No. No. I didn't.

Ivan: When did you first get electric power here?

Minnie: It was here when we came.

Ivan: Oh?

Minnie: And Mr. Samson had, ah, out of Rock Creek down here a . . .

Ivan: Power plant?

Minnie: Power plant. And one night we were having a storm and that went out. And we, he then made, ah, had a plant over across the river, and we had that until the Bonneville power.

Ivan: Oh, did you have, for instance, the Northwest, the old North-western Power Company up here, built Northwestern Dam, or Conduit Dam, and they ran their line down through here, did you get any power from them?

Minnie: I don't think so, I don't know though, as far as I know. We might have during that period of, I know we weren't without lights very long. We used to have storms here where we'd be without power for two or three days at a time in the wintertime.

Ivan: Electric power.

Minnie: All the wires, not all of them, but a good many of the wires would be down, and you know, and we'd be out of power.

Ivan: Mm, hm, and who maintained these lines for Sam Samson, who were his linemen?

Minnie: I really don't know, I really don't know. See they, they didn't build that hotel, they bought that, it had been built for a Hot Springs hotel.

Ivan: Or a hospital? By Dr. Avary?

Minnie: Dr. Avary was downtown.

Ivan: Didn't he build that?

Minnie: He might have, I don't know. But I know some doctor built it. And then I think he probably went broke or something, but I don't know, but anyway Mr. Samson bought that hotel. And then that. I don't believe it was Dr. Avary, but it could have been, I don't hardly think so.

Ivan: Oh, did you know Dr. Avary?

Minnie: Yes, very well.

Ivan: He was here when you came?

Minnie: Yes.

Ivan: How long did he stay after you came?

Minnie: He was, here until, let me see, I would say, I know he brought George into the world. And I don't remember how, I imagine about, oh, I'd say, he was born in 1921, I would say several years after that, but I don't, he . . .

Ivan: Did he move to Portland?

Minnie: Portland. He was assistant health officer down there, and that's when Dr. Barber came in as a partner.

Ivan: Dr. Barber came in . . .

Minnie: He went in business with Dr. Avary and I think he, I don't know, something happened.

Ivan: You mean Dr., oh, they split up, that's what you mean.

Minnie: Mm hm.

Ivan: And Dr. Barber stayed.

Minnie: Yes.

Ivan: How long did he stay?

Minnie: Oh, he stayed, oh, I'd say, approximately ten years, maybe longer, I really don't remember.

Ivan: Who followed him?

Minnie: Dr. Avary, Dr. Barber. I think it was Dr. Harris, but I'm not sure, Dr. Harris, maybe Dr. Barber was, I don't remember where he went to, but anyway, he, he, there, he's been dead a number of years, I understand.

Ivan: Dr. Harris or Dr. Barber?

Minnie: Dr. Barber, both of them. I'm afraid I'm not able to give you the information that you want.

Ivan: Oh, I just keep searching, that's what one has to do.

Minnie: That is it you want now?

Ivan: Well, were building up a file of these interviews from these people who were here early in the town. And we'll keep them in the Historical Society, and we

share this knowledge with the Washington State Historical society and with the Oregon Historical Society. We give them a file of the interviews we have. Was this mill down here, was there a mill down here, on the Rock Creek when you came, a planing mill?

Minnie: Man by the name of Lindus had a sawmill out this way someplace, and that was in my time, and they became very wealthy. And by investing in oil on Signal Hill in California, went down to spend the winter and he bought, he borrowed some money from the bank, and that made him very wealthy. But they were a very nice couple. She was a very lovely lady. I think she was a member of the Women's club, too.

Ivan: Women's club and the library group? Now did Mr. Lindus, then, after he struck oil, did he leave his mill here, then?

Minnie: I don't think for a few years, but he did, eventually, shortly.

Ivan: I understand he had a flume delivering lumber down from the mill.

Minnie: Then there was, ah, this is later, at the Ryan-Allan mill on Rock Creek, you know, and that burned down one day, hot summer day, and just like that. Then Mr. Birkenfield had a mill down just right down here. We came in to eat our dinner, it was in the summer time and the mill was there, my husband was out on the porch, and when we got up from the table it was gone.

Ivan: This is the mill down here across the tracks now? Just east of the plywood plant?

Minnie: Well, that burned down, they never rebuilt there. He didn't rebuild.

Ivan: But this was the mill you're talking about? That burned after we came here.

Minnie: Did it, I didn't know you'd been here that long.

Ivan: We came here in 1950. Who were some of the other old-timers here when you came?

Minnie: Mr. and Mrs. Wright, Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Sly, and Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Sly. Esson's father had the ferry. And as he became pretty well off too on the ferry.

Ivan: Charlie Smith.

Minnie: On weekends, cars would be parked way up, far as the bank from the river.

Ivan: Trying to get across.

Minnie: Waiting to get across.

Ivan: And was he operating when the bridge was built?

Minnie: Yes, he was.

Ivan: Did you know Mr., any of his operators, any of his ferry boat operators?

Minnie: I knew one from across the river. Mr., oh, well. Is the . . .

Ivan: Rosenbach?

Minnie: Yes, Rosenbach. That's who it was.

Ivan: He was one of the operators for Charlie Smith. I knew him.

Minnie: Did you?

Ivan: Yes, and I knew his son, too. Did you know, did you ever go down to the fishwheels down here at the . . .

Minnie: Oh, yes. Mr. Ash had one, you know. Did you know that?

Ivan: Yes, on the other side of the river, was it?

Minnie: No, on this side.

Ivan: He had one on this side?

Minnie: Mm hm.

Ivan: Oh, where was it located,

Minnie: Well, do you know where Ash's Lake is now, down here? Well, you see he had a little ranch down there. I don't know whether it was right at that spot or not, Gertrude would know, his, Preston's wife. She was also a member of the woman's club, oh boy, put her name in there, will you?

Ivan: You have it.

Minnie: Do I?

Ivan: It's in there.

Minnie: Oh, is it? Let me see now, you asked me about the fishwheel.

Ivan: Was it a floating fishwheel, on a barge or was it a stationary?

Minnie: Stationary one. My husband walked down there with him one evening, I think it was, and brought home a fish from the fish wheel and we thought that was about the best fish we'd ever eaten.

Ivan: Probably a spring chinook?

Minnie: Hm?

Ivan: Probably a spring chinook?

Minnie: Probably.

Ivan: And, how many fishwheels were down there? How many of them do you remember?

Minnie: That's the only one I remember going to see. I don't . . . there must have been more along the river on both sides.

Ivan: I mean right there at the rapids.

Minnie: I don't know. I bought some of your books.

Ivan: Yes, I recall, I came down and made an inscription.

Minnie: Oh yes, you autographed some. I sent one to Bob, my son-in-law, you know.

Ivan: Fine. I still seek information about them because it will, the record will go to the Oregon Historical Society.

Minnie: Oh, it will?

Ivan: Oh yes. Did you know any of the fishwheel operators?

Minnie: No, I didn't, I was pretty busy.

Ivan: Did the portage railroad operate at all after you came here?

Minnie: No. My mother rode that.

Ivan: About what year?

Minnie: About 1874, I think, around the portage railroad, and she was on her way, she . . . the boat came up as far as the rapids and my father and mother were pioneers in Eastern Washington. I know more, remember more about the early days there than I do here, because . . .

Ivan: Wheat country?

Minnie: Well, we had a stock, my father had a stock ranch and hay, raised hay.

Ivan: I see.

Minnie: And sheep, and there were just three families on Crab Creek. That was just after the Indian war had been settled. But they'd get on the uprising every once in a while, and Fort Walla Walla was their nearest fort, and that was where they did their shopping and Post Office, and everything, so I'm quite interested in pioneer days.

Ivan: Yes, you're quite close to it. But did you remember ever seeing the portage railroad locomotive at all?

Minnie: No, I haven't. I hear it's in the Dalles Museum.

Ivan: No. It's over here, the old pony on the Oregon side, that's over at Cascade Locks right not, but I'm talking about the one that ceased operation here, some time before you came, and it remained on the siding down at North Bonneville for a long long time, and Mr. Knapp photographed it.

Minnie: Oh.

Ivan: I just wonder if you saw it at all.

Minnie: I might have, we used to after we had our car, we used to stop at that look-out place and look right down on the tracks, but I guess they're not there anymore.

Ivan: Only the incline, there is an incline and grade, as the grade was altered in 1907, moved by the SP&S.

Minnie: Oh.

Ivan: See, the SP&S moved the portage line.

Minnie: Oh, I see.

Ivan: And you can find traces of that old 1907 road yet.

Minnie: Well, yes, I guess so.

Ivan: And then when the highway went through here again in 1923, it took out the 1927, or 1907 road, the 1907 railroad. Down there just west of the Bridge of the Gods.

Minnie: Oh, yes. Well, I suppose you know all about the Courthouse being down . . .

Ivan: No, tell me a bout that.

Minnie: The old Courthouse at Cascade Locks. I wish we'd called Rae over and have her and she would know that, my neighbor.

Ivan: Well, I'll get an interview with her someday, how about that?

Minnie: That'd be fine. Let her tell you about that, will you?

Ivan: Well, I'd like to have your vision, your memory.

Minnie: I don't remember anything, excepting here-say.

Ivan: That's what I want.

Minnie: Mm Hm.

Ivan: Please tell me that. The Courthouse, the first one down there.

Minnie: Let's see, we didn't have any means of transportation, excepting, until I think we bought our car in '19, '19, my children were all born, 1919 I think. So . . .

Ivan: Oh, and what was your first automobile?

Minnie: I think it was a Buick, I'm not sure. But I'm pretty sure it was.

Ivan: Big car?

Minnie: Well, five passenger.

Ivan: Do you remember any very severe winters here?

Minnie: Oh, yes very. I've seen the river frozen over. Mr. Ash walked across one time, Preston. And with ropes, and, oh, I've seen the snow four and five feet deep. And I think I told you about the electric lights.

Ivan: Yes, you mentioned how they went out some times. And . . .

Minnie: We haven't had, ah, everybody said this summer were going to have a hard winter this year, it might come yet, but I don't think so. I don't know, it could be.

Ivan: I remember the storm on the 13th of January, 1950, that was a bad one.

Minnie: 1960?

Ivan: '50.

Minnie: Oh, '50, yeah.

Ivan: There was another one in 1937. Did you travel the old Columbia River Highway quite frequently?

Minnie: Every time we went to Portland, and we used to go up North.

Ivan: On the Oregon side?

Minnie: On the Oregon side, and crossed over usually at, at Umatilla.

Ivan: On a ferry there?

Minnie: Ferry, they were all ferries.

Ivan: And what was your next car after the Buick?

Minnie: Well I think we had the Buick for quite a number of years, and then my husband bought a Lincoln, I guess, or not a Lincoln but what is the car that is under that, its made by the same company, but not as expensive.

Ivan: A Mercury, by Ford?

Minnie: No, it wasn't a Ford, he used a Ford for traveling when he was contracting.

Ivan: Oh, your husband was a contractor before he entered the Bank?

Minnie: No, that was during the Depression when, yes, he, oh, the Hazzards are old timers here, I suppose you've had their name.

Ivan: Well, I've known about the Hazzards all right, but I haven't interviewed except . . .

Minnie: There aren't any of them left are there? Is this off?

Ivan: No, its still going, I don't know. I knew Stella Hazzard, she's I think living down here yet, under another name.

Minnie: Yeah, well, anyway, I understand Pete Hazzard has had a stroke, so he would be the only one I think of the near family that you could interview, but they're an old family here. There might be a daughter in 'White Salmon.

Ivan: Did you know any of the Imans?

Minnie: Oh yes, Mae was my husband's best friend.

Ivan: Oh, Mae Iman, who was she now?

Minnie: She, that was Lou's wife, he had the Red Saloon.

Ivan: That was Bill Iman's mother then?

Minnie: Mm Hm, Connie Lundy's grandmother.

Ivan: Oh yes, and when did the Saloons go out of business here? Was it 1915?

Minnie: The year of the prohibition.

Ivan: I thought it was earlier in Washington than in Oregon.

Minnie: Earlier, I think that was national, wasn't it?

Ivan: National, well Oregon . . .

Minnie: On the 4th of July. I don't remember the day, it was when we first came here, anyway, there were six saloons down on the lower street and they all burned down excepting Mr. Iman's.

Ivan: Oh, he should have had good business then.

Minnie: Well, the fire started and you could just hear the, we could hear the bottles pop up here. And I . . .

Ivan: Where did the fire start?

Minnie: One of the saloons. I don't remember which one.

Ivan: What year was this?

Minnie: It was shortly after we, not too long after we came here. Because it must have been about, we we came here in 1913, must have been around, oh, '17 or '18, maybe '19.

Ivan: 4th of July, huh?

Minnie: Mn, hm, the 4th of July. And that was the night my husband walked down to the fishwheel and brought home the fish. Oh, these mills when they burn they go pretty fast I guess.

Ivan: There's so much inflammable sawdust about them, oil, I guess you know that we're moving a large steam engine down here to the Rock Creek park right now.

Minnie: Oh, are you, no,

Ivan: Yes, a very large steam engine, it used to be up here at Mr. Birkenfield's mill, up Wind River.

Minnie: Oh, it seems to me I read that.

Ivan: You probably saw it in the Pioneer. So we're very active in trying to set that up as a monument to our history.

Minnie: Well, that's wonderful. They're going to make, ah, enlarge the park are they?

Ivan: Yes, you see the Corp of Engineers gave and hauled up here, 270,000 cubic yards of earth to raise that land down there, up to elevation 85 feet above sea level.

Minnie: Oh, that's wonderful.

Ivan: And so its made an extensive park area there, but it will take many seasons to develop it, because as you know the voters turned down the bond issue to try to develop it.

Minnie: Well, I understand. I'm going over when I'm able to go through the Museum, and I hope to see Mr. Knapp's donation of his pictures to the . . .

Ivan: We would like to show you, them to you, there are a lot of them, and it will take a lot of time.

Minnie: Are they hanging?

Ivan: We're preparing to hang them, and I'm making some brackets now, some supports for the pictures right now. Otherwise there are so many of them in these albums as he left them, and Mrs. Nelson gave them to us.

Minnie: I know, it was a wonderful gift.

Ivan: Oh, yes, a very very fine gift. We are busting out all over down there. Thank you, Mrs. Christensen, for this interview, you gave us significant data here, and . . .

Minnie: Well, I've always been awfully poor remembering dates. I can remember my children's birthdays, and the date of our marriage, and one thing and another like that, but I'm not very good at history dates.

Ivan: Well, this is helpful, you, as you perceived, I question closely trying to . . .

Minnie: No, someday when, if I had realized, I didn't realize that I was supposed to this morning. This lady I have with me was, answered the phone first, so she was going to talk to you, and then I decided I'd like to, you know, and . . .

Ivan: I'm glad you did.

Minnie: Thank you. I, my hearing isn't what it used to be, or my eyesight, so I have a bit of difficulty, quite a bit of difficulty. Would you like to look at that book a minute?

Ivan: Yes.