

BARBARA RIMAR and ROSE ANNE JAKSHA INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

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INTRODUCTION

Barbara Rimar and Rose Anne Jaksha are sisters who were born into the Quackenbush family in Spokane, Washington. Rose Anne was born April 25, 1930, and Barbara was born March 29, 1933. The Quackenbush family moved to Trout Lake during the Depression so their father could work. Mr. Quackenbush was a Certified Public Accountant in Spokane and became a head millwright in Trout Lake. Their uncle worked in timber sales in Trout Lake and also owned some private timber.

Both sisters grew up around the Forest Service and, following in their older sister's footsteps, joined the Forest Service in the early 1950s. Rose Anne worked as a fire lookout on Flat Top and later became the youngest District Clerk in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Rose Anne worked under K.C. Langfield for six years in that position. While Rose Anne worked as a fire lookout on Flat Top she had her younger sisters living with her. Their mother was in a TB Sanatorium so Rose Anne watched over them until her mother returned. Mrs. Quackenbush also worked in the Forest Service as an Assistant to the Head Cook.

Barbara worked for the State Division of Forestry as a fire lookout. She worked in various locations and one of the most memorable places was on a lookout called Steamboat. At Steamboat, Barbara's lookout was at the top of a 90-foot tree. Barbara went to Walla Walla College and then to Airline School in Kansas City, Missouri. Later she was part of the first graduating class at Portland State University where she earned a Masters in teaching. Barbara taught third and fourth grades for 25 years.

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

Rebecca: Alright, Rose Anne, would you mind stating your full name, date of birth, and place of birth?

Rose Anne: Rose Anne Jaksha 4-25-30 and I was born in Spokane, Washington.

Jennifer: And Barbara, Could you state your name, date of birth, and place of birth?

Barbara: Barbara Carol Rimar, Spokane, 3-29-33.

Rebecca: What brought your family to Trout Lake from Spokane?

Rose Anne: It was during the Depression years. Our father was a certified public accountant and our grandfather was a lawyer in Spokane, so during the Depression years they had a lot of business but people couldn't pay their bills so they would bring in a sack of corn or a sack of potatoes and that was their payment. So my mother's sister, Olive Hollenbeck's, husband had a mill in Trout Lake, a lumber mill, and our father was also a mechanic, so he hired him to come out there to Trout Lake. I remember hours and hours to Bingen, and then our uncle, Harold Hollenbeck, came to pick us up and eventually [we went] out to Trout Lake and we lived there for a long time and that was how we came to Trout Lake.

Rebecca: So, what did your parents do when they got to Trout Lake?

Rose Anne: My mother didn't work in those early years and our father was a head millwright at the mill.

Rebecca: Was your family involved with the Forest Service or logging? You said your uncle — was he involved with the Forest Service or logging?

Rose Anne: Well, he had to deal with the Forest Service for timber sales and things like that. But he also had a lot of private timber.

Jennifer: So, how did you come to work for the Forest Service, Barbara?

Barbara: Well actually she [Rose Anne] was first. I went in the early '50s on Steamboat but it was, I'm sure through you [referring to Rose Anne], I got the job wasn't it?

Rose Anne: Well, I told you there was an opening and you applied for it.

Barbara: I did my work with the State Division of Forestry and that's how the ranger knew about me.

Rose Anne: And your experience.

Barbara: My experience.

Rebecca: Rose Anne, how did you get started with the Forest Service?

Rose Anne: Well, the Forest Service, besides the sawmill, was really the only place of employment other than farmers having their farms, and it was an ideal place to work. I mean when K. C. Langfield had, it, the compound, was perfect and everyone was dressed nice and none of this long hair that went on later. And so we just grew up around the Forest Service and we applied for the job and the first time we did, we didn't get it and we were working hard at it.

Rebecca: Did they say why you didn't get the job?

Rose Anne: They hired someone from Portland. Later, I got a job with the State on a lookout called Gray Back and then later that opened up. My older sister got the Flat Top job before we did, so I followed her then. And by working there, why then Mr. Langfield, course he knew us anyway, and he wanted to know if I wanted to work in the office. Well I thought, "That's great," you know. I did go and I worked half days for a while and then I went on full time. I was the youngest District Clerk in the Gifford Pinchot at that time, for five years. And it was unusual to have a person that young to hold that position, so I was kind of proud of that.

Jennifer: So what kind of training did you have to become a fire lookout?

Rose Anne: That was a kick.

Barbara: We went to fire school.

Rose Anne: Fire School at Hemlock. I mean all the jocks went there, all of the lookouts, they all converged there. They had a wonderful cookout. Wonderful meals.

Barbara: Cute boys! We were there three days, weren't we, Posie?

Rose Anne: Yeah it was a three-day school. So we went down to White Salmon and got [our] hair done well just beautiful, about that long. Well in those days you had to put your hair up in pin curls, in bobby pins.

Barbara: And no hairspray.

Rose Anne: No hairspray and [it] rained the whole time so we spent half the time putting our hair up, and then we just looked gorgeous when we went out the door. By the time we got to the cookhouse it wasn't so beautiful.

Barbara: [laughs]

Rose Anne: Three-day intensive training.

Rebecca: What kinds of things did you learn?

Rose Anne: Range finder.

Barbara: Well, in our day we called it a fire finder, but now they call it a range finder I think.

Rose Anne: It was a round circle and it had all the area you were going to see, the map and it had the azimuth. Remember, you had to look through the thing?

Barbara: Uh-huh.

Rose Anne: Through another one to line up where the fire was and then wherever you switched it then you give your reading around on this circle to tell you where the fire was. Then other lookouts would call in and see the same smoke. When they did that, why like if Barbara called in from Steamboat, hers would come in this

way and someone would come from this way and so it would come pretty close and wherever someone called in from there it would be the center of the fire. Then you would have your township and range and section to give to them. So later, when I went to the office, why then I was the one to [notify the firefighters]. They had a big table, a huge table of all the maps to plot the fire then [I'd] notify there was something going on, and ones trained with the actual fire training came in, because I was doing the office work.

Rebecca: So, what happened in the office once they found the fire? Once you located it?

Rose Anne: It would depend on how large it was. They would put a call out for people to come to fight the fire and then they would have to come in and they would send a special team from Vancouver. I believe they would sign all the men up and get them lined up to fight the fire. It was exciting to fight the fire.

Barbara: It was a wonderful life, wasn't it Posie?

Rose Anne: It was, it was.

Rebecca: What were the first thoughts, the first fire you found?

Rose Anne: I don't want to say what I thought, [laughter] "Oh no here, this is for real!" This is for real, yeah. We knew the valley quite well and so we'd see a fire down there - I had a telephone book and I says, "There's a fire down at so-and-so's house," and we would go and cut it out. But in the woods, remember they gave us plain white butcher paper we put over the fire-finder?

Barbara: Yes.

Rose Anne: Because it would be dark usually when the lightning came, and we had to mark every strike. We would have to watch it for at least ten days, so we took our pencil and mark right down real quick with a line and put the time and where the fire was and then by the end of the thing it was just loaded. But then, if nothing came, they knew about where the fire was.

Barbara: We had to stand on insulated stools so that we wouldn't . . .

Rose Anne: The stool was about this size wasn't it? It was small.

Barbara: Yes, it was very small.

Rose Anne: Those insulators you see on telephone poles? That was what was screwed on this and we stood on that and it insulated you. I mean the lightning would really get to snapping.

Barbara: I mean it was right on you.

Rose Anne: Yeah. And when it got so close you had to go out and disconnect - You didn't have a phone.

Barbara: Yes I did.

Rose Anne: We had to run out and disconnect our phone from the telephone line, otherwise it would bum the phone up, so that was fun.

Rebecca: Did you ever hear of that happening to somebody?

Rose Anne: Yeah, there was someone and if you were on the phone and got shocked it was serious business.

Barbara: Yeah.

Rose Anne: And on Steamboat it struck that rock, which we have this one here [picture] and you can just see the lightning just rolling down.

Barbara: That's Sleeping Beauty, isn't it Posie?

Rose Anne: I meant Sleeping Beauty, yeah, excuse me, I said Steamboat. Yeah, the fire would just roll down it. One lookout was saying that when he threw his dishwasher out, the wind blew so strong it would blow right back, all over his windows. So he learned not to throw the water out when it was windy.

Rebecca: How did you get water up to your lookout?

Barbara: I guess it's my turn. They brought it up on mule train and I think

on Steamboat they brought it up once a month, didn't they, Posie?

Rose Anne: Uh-huh.

Barbara: And otherwise you hiked down to the spring and carried the water up on your back. Posie, what did I do with those pictures?

Rebecca: You can show us afterwards. Jennifer: Yeah.

Rose Anne: The mule string was - I don't know how he had them on there, there would be like seven or eight mules on there.

Rebecca: And how much water would they bring up at a time?

Barbara: Five hundred gallons.

Rose Anne: Five gallon cans, milk cans, mule milk cans.

Barbara: See this is the mule train here [picture].

Rose Anne: Spencer Frey was a great packer. Well we were wasting time with it - we'll show it later. But anyway, the real remote ones, they could drive to my lookout, Flat Top, they could drive right up there but the ones they had to hike to - it was a long ways down.

Barbara: Yes, it was.

Rose Anne: And she would see a bear, too, and it would scare her very bad.

Barbara: It was a mama and two babies and they didn't like me getting water. So I would just fill up my can, enough for drinking. The other water I used for my hair.

Rose Anne: It was a steep hike with that water sloshing on your back, a tough deal.

Rebecca: So, how often did you guys have to go the stream and get water?

Barbara: Well, Posie, didn't have to very often on Flat Top.

Rose Anne: They brought the water up to us, in cans.

Barbara: I went down about every other day.

Rose Anne: Toward the end of the time that water got kinda...

Rebecca: What all did you use the water for?

Rose Anne: To wash windows. And after you got through washing the windows, we would save it and scrub the floor with it, it was that bad. We would cook with it.

Barbara: Dishes.

Rose Anne: And our bath was a little pan with warm water and a washrag and that's how you washed. We made Kool-Aid out of the water to make it so you could swallow it and I looked at it one day, I said, "We won't be drinking this today. There are little fish swimming in it." Little tiny fish, like guppies.

Barbara: You will notice there are some little children in that picture. Those are our baby sisters and our mother had to go to the hospital, so Posie kept them up on Flat Top with her.

Rebecca: What are their names?

Barbara: Darla and Sharon. Another one, Merlynn Kay.

Rose Anne: This is silly. It was like I was putting them to bed but it was broad daylight. It was a big deal for these pictures. And when I hung my laundry out, it was nice and he [Ray Atchison] says to mix the colors up please to make it look more colorful. So I kind of gritted my teeth and had to re-hang it.

Barbara: I didn't know that story.

Rose Anne: Anyway this is the fire-finder. This is what it looked like, this round thing here and I think this is a picture of the insulated stool right there, underneath there.

Jennifer: Oh that's about — what do you think about the fire finder

[referring to size]?

Rebecca: Foot square?

Jennifer: Foot square, yeah?

Rose Anne: No, it was about this big.

Rebecca: So, maybe two-feet around.

Jennifer: Yeah two-feet around.

Rebecca: So, who took the pictures?

Barbara Ray Atchison.

Rose Anne: Ray Atchison, he is a famous photographer in Oregon. He's got slides and pictures and books.

Barbara: With him was Maureen and Richard Neuberger. Why they came with him, I don't know. Do you know who they are?

Rose Anne: They are too young. They were husband and wife senators in the state of Oregon. So they were very important.

Rebecca: Do you know why they wanted to interview you?

Rose Anne: In the summer time they enjoyed getting out and seeing how the forests were being managed and all.

Barbara: Well we were a novelty, too.

Rose Anne: I guess so, girls being on a lookout.

Barbara: You know like living, not living, but being in a tree.

Jennifer: What was that like, being up in a tree? I have read another woman's experience of the tree swaying in the wind up there?

Barbara: There was not much of that. I would go up at 6 am and then come down and eat my breakfast and then I'd go up until dusk. But the

only thing that swayed was when people would -- remember our friends?

Rose Anne: They would come up at night and scare you.

Barbara: They would climb up the ladder and you would feel them coming up the ladder. What was his name? Calvin Carr?

Rose Anne: Calvin Carr. But when you would go up there with this house on top of this tree and then Barbara, it was 90 feet up, so Barbara would climb up and lay on the roof. You could tell she likes to lay in the sun. I says, "You could fall and you would be a grease spot." She got to be like a monkey, scared me to death. But you never did fall.

Barbara: Nope, didn't. Well, no, I'm here, living proof. When I came down that first summer, I climbed Mount Adams and my legs were stronger than anybody's around, [laughs] Zip up the mountain.

Rebecca: Calvin Carr, did he work for the Forest Service?

Rose Anne: No he was just a kid that lived in Glenwood.

Barbara: That turned out to be one of Posie's and my friends.

Rebecca: So, Rose Anne, would you describe a day in your lookout for me?

Rose Anne: Well, we had to be on the phone by 6 o'clock and that was very interesting because everyone had to be on. You could hear a "ding, ding, ding" that was calling the ranger to check in. And so we would all get on the phone and we could listen to checking in and finally one day I could hear some laughing and it was Daryl Couch and he was a jewel of a guy. He worked even for the CCC. And I said, "What are you laughing at Daryl?" And he said, "I can envision everyone standing there on the phone and I know not one of you are dressed." [laughs] Then one day the reception wasn't very good on the phone and someone said a bird must be on the line, you know, to knock out the — we always had to put the flag up and take it down and very respectful.

Barbara: Fold it a certain way.

Rose Anne: Yep and then we prepared our meal and got ready first and you always looked. Where else is there to look, I mean, you looked. Even now I can pick a smoke out of any place. You are just trained. We had the reputation that if the Quackenbush girls phoned in a fire, that's where it was. I mean, we prided ourselves in that.

Jennifer: Was your day similar Barbara, to hers?

Barbara: Yes except on Steamboat, I was all contained in one building, but my house was [different]. I had to go up some steps to get to my tower. It was pretty much like Posie's yeah, except I did weather, you didn't have to do weather.

Rose Anne: Not on Flat Top.

Jennifer: How did you report the weather?

Barbara: I would call it in at the end of the day and tell whoever was in the office. Posie was in the office but you left at five, didn't you?

Rose Anne: Uh-huh.

Barbara: Then a neighbor lady, a lady we knew most of our life, worked in the office after she did and I would tell her, give her the information and then she must have recorded it somewhere.

Rose Anne: Yeah they had a big book they wrote down. Mainly the weather was at the Ranger Station and they would, if it was a call in, then they knew by the radio what the weather was going to be.

Rebecca: How did you record the weather?

Rose Anne: They had a big book and you wrote the date and just wrote down what it was. But when I was in the office I had to take the weather down three times a day and I am trying to think of the name of the instrument I had to go out and read, and it would tell the pressure of the air.

Rebecca: A barometer?

Rose Anne: A barometer, that's what it was. Also then I had to walk quite a ways out into the woods where no one could touch these sticks, fuel sticks they called them, and you had to reach in and weigh them and that way they could tell what the moisture was in the woods to know how critical the woods were for fire.

Rebecca: So, then you recorded that and who took the information after that?

Rose Anne: Oh, the ranger knew what was going on then, and then they would direct the program from the weather.

Rebecca: So, after you took the weather what did you do later in the day in your lookout? Rose Anne: Well mainly watched.

Barbara: We looked.

Rose Anne: Yeah we looked.

Barbara: I remember I called Rose Anne one day and said, "Guess what Posie, I am in a cloud. I don't have to look today!" [laughter] We looked and we read and we listened to the radio. I learned to embroider something stupid.

Rose Anne: For fun we bought a pair of pillowcases. She took one and I took the other and I don't know what you are going to embroider on yours and I decided to embroider all in one color. I don't know what you did with yours.

Barbara: I always used the red and the pink.

Rose Anne: Oh that killed some time.

Rebecca: What did you embroider on them?

Barbara: Roses.

Rose Anne: Well, it was already a print.

Rebecca: Okay.

Rose Anne: They were all pre-printed and we just embroidered them in. Oh and another thing that was wonderful — we had this radio that was run by battery and we had to really, well they were expensive, this was my radio. Arthur Godfrey was popular in those days and he was on for three hours, and so I saved my radio to Arthur Godfrey and that made the time go by. And all those wonderful stars that came on after that - we tuned that to our radio.

Rebecca: So, what kinds of food did you eat while you were up there?

Rose Anne: Not very good.

Barbara: Well, I boiled beans one day and I boiled them and I boiled them because the altitude was so high that the water boiled but the beans didn't cook. So I did not have beans for supper. I always had a pancake. What did you have for breakfast?

Rose Anne: I think we — no, because we had to build a fire, it would be too warm.

Barbara: Hmm.

Rose Anne: I don't know what we had, cereal I guess. But one thing that we did because I had to cook for my sisters, you know. One thing we did was open up a couple of cans of vegetable soup and get it hot and then I'd mix up Bisquick and drop it in and made dumplings and it was good. And also we did it with — we had huckleberry bushes around and we would make huckleberries and drop that in it and that was our dessert. And then there would be a snow bank there for a while. Anyway we would make Jell-O while we could and we go out sit in that snow bank, by gosh, in about a half an hour it would be done. We ate Jell-O 'til . . .

Barbara: You guys ate good!

Rose Anne: We could hardly stand to see a box of Jell-O, my stomach would jump, because we would eat it while we had snow.

Barbara: Did you have them all summer?

Rose Anne: Yeah, two-and-a-half months, I think. We had to wash for them,

that's another story.

Rebecca: How old were they at that time? Your little sisters?

Rose Anne: Little, little kids. One was three and one was four.

Rebecca: And you were in your early twenties?

Rose Anne: Uh-huh.

Jennifer: How old were you Barbara when you were a fire lookout?

Barbara: When I was on Meadow Butte for the State I was seventeen, because the State took you a year earlier than the Forest Service. So on Steamboat, Posie, we were trying to figure that out earlier today and I don't know. I was in my early twenties but I don't know.

Jennifer: Were you going to school during then or in the off times?

Barbara: I went to Walla Walla College and I saved up my money to go to Airline School in Kansas City, Missouri. So I did that and then I came back and I tried to find my job record and I just can't remember. That was fifty years ago.

Rose Anne: Well you worked for the Fish and Wildlife.

Barbara: Yes

Rose Anne: And you worked for SDS Lumber Company, then she went back to school and she has her masters and she has been a teacher for, how many years?

Barbara: Fifty-five years.

Rose Anne: Twenty-five years.

Rebecca: And what do you teach?

Barbara: I taught third and fourth grade.

Rose Anne: She's retired from that.

Rebecca: What was your favorite subject? To teach?

Barbara: Math is easier to teach, for me it was anyway, because the kids loved it. They love arithmetic, seeing the patterns. Reading is difficult because you had to group the kids, you know, and that kind of makes it - if you are in this group that means you don't read as well as you in that group. So that was always a tough thing for me. Does Carla find that?

Rose Anne: Yes it is, and I think the kids sometimes do learn from listening to the smarter kids. And the way they are cutting back and you know, for many children in the classroom and all that. Oh one thing, when we had bread we would order a couple loaves and try to eat it before it got stale and so we would talk at night on the radio, "I got this loaf of bread and I have to waste it [give it to] the squirrels," [Barbara laughs] and one lookout says, "I learned a way to make it fresh again." I said, "How's that?" And he said, "You stand it on the end and you push real slow down on it. Way down slow and then let it back up and that makes it soft again." And it did and we were able to eat it.

Barbara: No kidding?

Rose Anne: Yeah.

Barbara: How come you didn't teach me that?

Rose Anne: [laughter] And it seemed like every time that they would deliver milk, fresh milk, no way to keep it cold except we had a little food cooler dug in the dirt and it was a nice little building. We would have a lightning storm and it soured the milk, it just made a clabbering mess out of it. So that's so much for the milk.

Barbara: I've forgotten that.

Rose Anne: Yeah.

Rebecca: What kinds of things did you guys have for dinner?

Rose Anne: Probably soup or a lot of sandwiches. And I tried to shop to feed the kids. We ate fruit and a lot of apples and oranges and things like that. I wasn't a very good cook and I'm still not a very good cook.

Barbara: I always ate a can of tuna with chopped onions in it. God, I can't look at tuna today. And if there was some left over, I had it for breakfast.

Jennifer: Did you ever see any wildlife while you were up there?

Barbara: Well, I had bear on Steamboat and on Meadow Butte. Remember the range cattle that would come up and they would fight each other?

Rose Anne: Yeah. There were a lot of range bulls and they would just knock them in the head and knock them down and it was scary.

Barbara: I had a lot of deer. You did, too.

Rose Anne: There were two lookouts on Flat Top, West and East. One night I was on the west side and I just felt creepy, like someone was looking in and I didn't hear any car driving up or anything. I had the radio on and I remember he had a real deep voice and anyway he was singing, "Some enchanted evening I don't see a stranger." What was it? Anyway . . .

Barbara: Oh, I know! Yeah, go ahead.

Rose Anne: And I looked out and there was this deer looking in at me with these big eyes and I jumped back and he did too. [laughs] You were telling about an animal that was looking at you. In the middle of the night you would be asleep and you would hear a car come up and your heart would - and you weren't allowed to have guns or anything like that. You know someone would be drunk, "Let's go out and see the girl."

1 Merlynn Kay worked for the state of Washington as a lookout in the Ellensburg area.

Barbara: "I hear there's a cute little girl on lookout."

Rose Anne: So, Mr. Langfield says if that ever happened call right away because its seventeen miles. No one ever really molested us but I tell you our hearts pounded several times.

Barbara: Uh-huh.

Rose Anne: It was scary.

Barbara: Well my mother came, they put her in the sanitarium that's why Posie . . .

Rose Anne: TB Sanitarium.

Barbara: After she got out, she came up and stayed with me for a few days. And I told her, "Mama I'm so scared at night." The Glenwood Rodeo was going to come on." And I said, "I am just terrified of that." And sure enough we heard a car coming and mother said, "Don't even -" and her hair had gotten real long in the sanitarium, she had just gotten out so she hadn't gotten herself prettied up, because she was a gorgeous woman. So the car pulled up and you could hear them yelling and talking and they started pounding on the door and Mother went to the door and [laughter] with her hair hanging she looked like a hag. They said, "Are you the lookout?" And she said, "I am the lookout's mother and you will be leaving."

Rose Anne: And they did.

Barbara: I was so glad she was there. I don't know what would have happened that night, bunch of them like that, drunk.

Rebecca: Now, your mother worked as a cook for the Forest Service?

Barbara: Uh-huh.

Rebecca: Where was that at?

Barbara: Trout Lake.

Rebecca: In Trout Lake. What kinds of things did she do?

Rose Anne: There was a head cook and then she assisted. They cooked wonderful meals, it was wonderful. Nice pies, cinnamon rolls and cookies and big salads and anything you would want. They fed the crew very well. Then they would dish up great big dishes of food and Mother would put them on the tables and after they would leave, the tables would be cleaned up and they washed them up and that would be the day. Its breakfast and dinner. Then they would have to make the lunches while they were eating, I mean they were busy! Big crews in those days. Now it's nothing, they don't have anything going on up there anymore. It's a shame. Everything is overgrown, when you go out down that road, you can't see anything because of the brush. It's a complete fire hazard.

Barbara: But there's a lot more employees.

Rose Anne: Yeah, but what we did in that office -1 mean they stumble over everybody in there. I mean they don't have any timber sales, they don't have anything like that. They don't have any trail maintenance. They don't have any lookouts, they don't have any guard stations that they would patrol, and do. Nothing like that. I don't know what they do. I really don't know what they do.

Barbara: Stand around.

Rose Anne: They must, look important, I don't know. I had nothing to do about cruising timber or anything like that, I mean of course I didn't. So that's why I suggested Bob Chamberlain, if you wanted to talk to someone like that.

Barbara: Did you call him?

Rebecca: I passed his number on to Donna.

Rose Anne: Oh, okay.

Rebecca: So, how long would you be stationed in a lookout?

Barbara: Well . . .

Rose Anne: We were usually up . . .

Barbara: June.

Rose Anne: The last part of June and July we had to go to fire school and then it would depend on the season. But sometimes it be until late September and then there might be one or two [lookouts open] until October, it would depend on how dry it was. But a lot of people had to go to school. They were college kids. I don't know how they went on \$94.25 every two weeks. Of course college didn't cost that much at that time. Another thing we had to do on look out, we had to call in when the airplanes flew over. And tell which direction -

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A, BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B]

Rose Anne: [laughing]

Rebecca: Okay, so you were saying, you had to report when the planes flew over.

Rose Anne: When these big planes would fly over, and I often wondered, by the time you'd call down to the office and they got the number and then they'd talk to me, the plane could have been in Europe, you know. But we did. Also we had a record there and different times swarms of insects would come, remember that?

Barbara: Yes

Rose Anne: And they'd cover the lookout and you'd have to write down what kind of insect it was and how long they stayed and so they could tell how the wind brought them in . . .

Barbara: And we had to put them in a jar too.

Rose Anne: Yeah, they sampled.

Barbara: They sampled, so . . .

Jennifer: Oh, wow.

Rose Anne: So that was a diversion. We had gas lanterns — Coleman gas lanterns. You'd have to fill it up with this gas and pump them up and that was your light.

Barbara: I was so proud when I learned to do that.

Rose Anne: Yeah, [laughter]

Jennifer: What other kinds of tools did you have? Besides the fire-finder and your lantern?

Barbara: I had a baseball bat. [laughter] It was painted red, white and blue, [all laugh]

Rose Anne: We had an axe; you'd have to cut your own wood.

Barbara: Yeah.

Rose Anne: And they had nice, you know, chunks. And we cut our own kindling and stoking. We had a hammer and screwdriver and if we ever had to fix anything. Oh, and also then you always had to paint your lookout. Did you have to paint yours?

Barbara: Oh yeah. I didn't paint Steamboat, but I did Meadow Butte.

Rose Anne: And we always had the same color green, very pretty green. It was very restful.

Rebecca: How often did they need to be repainted?

Rose Anne: Probably about every five years, something like that. And we had to keep our windows very clean. That was very important. To look through.

Barbara: I washed mine every day. Probably for something to do.

Rose Anne: Something to do.

Barbara: I don't do that today, [laughter]

Rose Anne: And on Flat Top we got a lot of tourists. And that was fun because we had to answer questions and some would bring the Sunday paper or they might bring a sack of fruit or something - really, that was great, something new there, to eat. And there's a lot of nice people out there, you know. You'd tell them where there'd be an interesting place, where to go. See, I'm trying to go down my list here.

Barbara: You were smart to make notes, I didn't.

Rebecca: What were some of the reactions of the public towards women lookouts?

Rose Anne: They thought it was great. It was about time that the barrier broke through. You know, because just for the men always, I mean, that's still a lot today. If you go out in the job market you're gonna find that out. Even yet. When you sit side by side and see the man and he probably earns two, three hundred dollars a month more than you, same education and everything.

Barbara: Well, that's the good thing about being a school teacher, they're-

Rose Anne: They're pretty much the same.

Barbara: They're the same. It depends on your education.

Rebecca: Did the administration react any differently than the public to women working for the Forest Service?

Rose Anne: No, they were always very nice. Nice to us and I felt perfectly at ease and one of the guards would come up, we knew we wouldn't be bothered. They were very professional; delivered water and visited and did what we needed, any questions and they were on their way.

Barbara: They were very respectful to we Quackenbush girls. There was a lot of us. Our sister Shirley, and then Posie, then me, and Claudia was hired but she didn't take -

Rose Anne: Didn't take the job.

Barbara: And then our own mama went on Nestor Peak with -

Rose Anne: There was five of us that, you know.

Barbara: And then Merlynn Kay.

Rose Anne: And Merlynn Kay was on [lookout] for the state¹ for several years.

Barbara: So, we were pretty well known.

Jennifer: Were people fascinated by this lookout in this 80, 90-foot tall tree? Did people come up and want to go up?

Barbara: Oh, I had a lot of tourists. A lot of women would climb up the ladder, but very few men [laughter]. I remember my first time. Gene Warner said, "Now, when you get to the top you're gonna have to step from the top step, you're going to have to let go to get inside."

Rose Anne: "Let go, and get in there."

Barbara: "And if you can't do it, Barbara, you can't have the job." So I knew, I wanted this job so bad. And so I did it. But oh man, it took me -

Rose Anne: And then later you could whip out the window and up on the roof.

Barbara: Oh, yeah.

Rose Anne: She wanted a typewriter up there, remember that?

Barbara: How I got the job was, I wrote a letter to Dewey Schmitt. And I said, "I'm twelve and my girlfriend is thirteen. And so between the two of us, we're 25. So we want to go on Meadow Butte." And he thought it was so funny. And he filed it. And when I turned 17, he came looking for me.

Rose Anne: And you got the job.

Rebecca: So, you mentioned earlier, Gene Warner, who was he and -

Barbara: He was my boss.

Rebecca: What was his title?

Barbara: What would you call him?

Rose Anne: Fire Warden.

Barbara: In the state they're wardens.

Rose Anne: This is where the state department — He was handsome. He looked like Rhett Butler, or, what's his name? Rhett Butler, what's his actor's name?

Jennifer: Clark Gable?

Rose Anne: Clark Gable, thank you. Yeah, he was handsome.

Rebecca: And then you mentioned Dewey?

Barbara: Dewey Schmitt.

Rebecca: Dewey Schmitt. What was his-?

Barbara: He was the biggest big shot, but I don't know what his title was.

Rose Anne: I don't know either, but he was -

Barbara: He was in Olympia. He lived in Trout Lake, but his office was in Olympia. I forget what they called . . .

Rose Anne: I don't know what . . .

Barbara: He was the head man.

Rose Anne: Like here it'd be, Forest Supervisor would be the head of the forest. So, I don't know what the state called them.

The Indians camped in an empty lot across the highway going through Trout Lake, South of the then Post Office. The present day Post Office is located on the site of the Indian Camp.

Rebecca: Okay, so, Rose Anne, could you describe a typical day working as the District Clerk? What kinds of things did you do?

Rose Anne: The office opened up at eight. And the first thing, the flag had to go up. Then you checked in with the lookouts, make sure everyone checked in, was okay. I ran out and took the weather to tell what kind of a class the day was going to be. If the floor needed to be swept, I pushed the broom around, dusted. Then I had a lot of paperwork to do. The switchboard was old-fashioned, “ding, ding, ding,” little black bells on this old switchboard. And you got to know the dings of who was calling in. They would report the problems or if they needed water, food, if they were hurt or anything like that. I had a lot of typing to do.

Gotta get ready, we prepared all winter for summer. Each lookout had a canvas bag and in that was everything they were gonna need. There were instructions on how to - if they were hurt or how to refresh on how to use the rangefinder. They had first aid. Each had a book.

I mean I, you know, I was typing like crazy. It was a lovely typewriter with big [broil?] in it, and you know it was with me. You'd shift that thing and it would just go — and I'd type like a fool. Got all the bags all ready. And then the different ones would apply for work and Mr. Langfield would write the letter and I would type it and send it out.

The mail would come in and I'd sort it, put it, because the mail would come and there was a lot of people that lived there, different homes and they had their little slots for the mail and I sorted that -

Barbara: How did you get the mail?

Rose Anne: There was a box down there by the service station

Barbara: I remember that.

Rose Anne: And I'd walk down and there was a big sack that all the mail came in and locked, oh, it had to be secure. [Barbara laughs] I Sorted the mail and then go out and like I said, check the weather. A lot

of people came, and lots of tourists. They would ask questions, where to go and different camp grounds. Different officers that worked there, they had a lot of typing they needed done and I would do that.

And I got a compliment one time. This fellow came in, he was transferred from Randle Ranger District, Bob Tokarczyk. And he said, "Sometime when you have time the next two, three weeks, I'd like to have this typed."

And I said, "Two or three weeks?"

And he said, "Well, yes. That's how we had to wait over at Randle." And I had it on his desk that evening and he couldn't believe it. I don't know what the lady did, I really don't, [laughter] Two or three weeks? The summer could be over! [laughter]

Rebecca: So, what kinds of paperwork did you do?

Rose Anne: Well, we had time sheets, they'd fill in their time. I had to type their heading on the time sheets, and two or three carbons to that and then that was mailed in to Vancouver. And they paid from Vancouver. And hiring employment sheets, I remember it was form 676, isn't that funny? So then they'd hire them and they had like so many weeks to work and you had to count to make sure the days were right. It took a lot of time, so sometimes I'd have down time. I mean, nothing would be moving. So, I thought, "There should be a faster way of figuring this," and so I took my time and did it and so I showed it to Mr. Langfield and I said, "This is what I've come up with. It's gonna save a lot of time." And he was very pleased and he sent it in and I got a hundred dollar reward.

Barbara: I'm learning a lot of this stuff. Did you call him Mr. Langfield, or did you call him K.C.?

Rose Anne: No, Sir. No, Ma'am, [laughter] Mr. Langfield.

Rebecca: Describe K.C. Langfield for us.

Barbara: Ooh, he was wonderful.

Rose Anne: A very nice man and a lot of people you know, [would say], "Here comes K.C." you know, or something like that. But he, I mean,

they were all dressed in uniform all of them and they'd have their little badge. He was always very neat and clean, very precise and he was no dummy. And that place was run efficiently. They sent a lot of men there to be trained under Mr. Langfield, and if they were trained under Mr. Langfield, they ended up with a good job somewhere, because they knew they were trained and there were a lot of nice guys that came through with their families. I don't know. He wasn't handsome that's for sure.

Barbara: No. He was small, wasn't he?

Rose Anne: He was a small little man.

Rebecca: Like how tall?

Rose Anne: Probably about 5'6", something like that. Small. His personality and his intelligence, you know. He smoked a pipe. I told him that if I died of lung cancer, "You know why." Because he sat over there and I sat here and here'd come the smoke. Right under my nose. You could see it blew right there.

Barbara: Did you tell him that?

Rose Anne: No, I didn't. [Barbara laughs] And so, one day he left. He was out there on a tour of the district, and he came back, real early. And he walked right in and he'd taken his pipe, and there was an adding machine up there and he'd done some filing or something and he took his pipe and stuck it in there, the stem of it, and he forgot his pipe.

Barbara: Oh.

Rose Anne: He come back in and he was wasting government money and he must've been a mile out of town [all laugh]. He got his pipe and walked right on. I had to kinda smile at that, that he snuck back after his [pipe]. And then, one time, someone came in early and hung the flag upside down. I got to work and the flag was upside down, and they tied it so I couldn't untie it.

Barbara: Who did it?

Rose Anne: A bunch of guys that came from over at Hemlock. They did it because they knew I was gonna, they did it for a laugh.

Rebecca: Well, what happened?

Rose Anne: Well, Mr. Langfield came in and he said, “Rose Anne, did you have a problem hanging the flag this morning?”
And I said, “No, I didn’t, Mr. Langfield, it was that way when I came to work, and I can’t untie it.”
He said, “This is serious.” [laughter]
And I said, “I know, but I can’t get it down.”
And so he had a meeting and he said,
“There are several things that need to be straightened out.” He said, “Playing with the flag is not one of them.” And the guys all sat pretty quiet. No one admitted that they’d done it. And he said, “That flag goes up with respect and it comes down with respect.” And he said, “There are no ifs, ands or buts about it.” And so no one bothered the flag anymore, that was one incident.
And snow in those years, it’d snow feet deep and I would have to walk up to it at that time, from home, which would be two miles. Wouldn’t it be about two miles?

Barbara: Yes

Rose Anne: I couldn’t get out to drive. I’d run up in that snow like crazy and K.C. was out there and he’d say, “To think people play in this stuff.”

Barbara: Really? He said that?

Rose Anne: And that was so high that you couldn’t throw it up any higher. But when it snowed, everyone knew they had to get a shovel and clean up, right away, to the office door and to the fire hydrants. Very important. In case of a fire that was all opened up. And in the winter time the men that worked out on trails and the guards, they had a nice big warehouse and they would do all the mending of all the bridles, you know for the mules, and the pack sets were there, and they would make new toilet seats — and then when they would go, they were all ready to go. And they sharpened all the tools, the axes, shovels and - what was it? Pulaskis? What was it?

Barbara: Yes, Pulaskis.

Rose Anne: They were shaped different - they still use them today. They could dig through dirt and get to the fire.

Barbara: We learned how to use that at fire school.

Rose Anne: [laughs] Never had to use them, thank heavens. We had two different cook houses in the summertime. And so the cooks out there would phone in their orders and then it went from there and I'd have to combine the orders and they would go in to a grocery store that won the bid in White Salmon, everything went out to bid. Then the Forest Service would go down and take up the food and these great big gorgeous, you know, big beefs and stuff and the cooks would have to cut that up. When I went out to Mosquito Lake, there was no refrigeration, and so to get that meat and they'd have to fry it down. And the bacon and pork roasts and things. They'd cover it with this grease from the rendering of the pork and that's what kept it . . .

Barbara: Was Erma the cook there?

Rose Anne: Yeah, she cooked out there first and then she came in. It was hard work, but they did nice meals.

Rebecca: What was Erma's last name?

Rose Anne: Fry

Barbara: She was the wife of my mule train man.

Rose Anne: Spencer. Spencer Frey.

Rebecca: What kind of things did you do at Mosquito Lake?

Rose Anne: That's where all the men that's part of the crew lived, out there, so they didn't have to come in to Trout Lake, and that's why they cooked the meals here. I had little to do with that, except type up the food list or ask her any questions or anything like that, you know. Different guards would call in, they would have to . . .

There were a lot of people that came out there; hundreds of people who'd come out for the huckleberry fields. They were famous, you know, to pick huckleberries. And sometimes they'd have problems in the campground and at night they'd get around the fires and sing and get to drinking, when they weren't supposed to. And sometimes you'd have problems and K.C. didn't like that one bit. You know, it's hard to deal with the public but it was held under control and after we're through I'll tell you a quick story.

Rebecca: It's not a story you want to tell on tape?

Rose Anne: Not on tape.

Rebecca: Okay.

Rose Anne: During that time I worked when they changed, before that it used to be called Columbia National Forest. Then they changed it to Gifford Pinchot. Well they had reams of paper, beautiful stationery, that said Columbia National Forest. So Mr. Langfield said, "If you have time to fill in, if you would mark, x that out and type Gifford Pinchot." I said, "Okay."

Barbara: That saved a lot of money.

Rose Anne: It did, but I mean GIFFORD PINCHOT, GIFFORD. . .

Barbara: What took the time was putting the paper in.

Rose Anne: Yeah, right. I got that all done. I mean, FILES of it.

Rebecca: So, other than retyping letterhead, did you have anything else to do with the renaming of the forest?

Rose Anne: No, nothing at all.

Rebecca: Do you remember it?

Rose Anne: I remember when it happened we didn't like it. We thought Columbia National Forest was appropriate, you know it was the Columbia River and it'd been that forever.

Barbara: And then they named it after a Frenchman or something.

Rose Anne: But anyway, he was a great man, and they chose what he stood for, a nice forest, and managed well and all, and so it was an honor really to have the forest changed. But to the locals, it took some getting used to. A lot of the people that worked there later on went on as district rangers themselves, and I ended up meeting a lot of nice people. Like I say, it was the old way, the old way it used to be. It isn't that way anymore.

Barbara: They don't even know where Flat Top is.

Rose Anne: [laugh] And then another interesting thing. You could go out to the huckleberry fields, a place called Peterson Prairie, and they had a big building built there, it was round and people would drive by and we'd say, "Where are you going?"

And they'd say, "We'd like to know a good place to pick huckleberries." "Well, they're picking berries over toward Smokey Creek today." And so when they'd come back, they asked them to stop and say "How many berries did you get?" And then if anyone had any problems, it was a central place for trouble. Some real nice people would man that for years during the summertime. It was nicely kept, with the flag up. You know, it really kinda -

Barbara: It made you proud.

Rose Anne: It made you proud, it did.

Barbara: But it was a good thing because then people knew to respect the forest. They had to identify themselves. And didn't we sign in too, when we . . .

Rose Anne: Yes. They asked them to sign in and they took down your license number. It was great too, because if someone got lost, well, "Yes, they checked in at this time and we told them which direction to go." Not a lot of people got lost, but it was keeping a record of if a fire started, you know maybe perhaps.

Barbara: Now when you picked huckleberries you had to be careful to stay

on a particular side of the trail because part of it . . .

Rose Anne: That's right.

Barbara: Was the Indians?

Rose Anne: Yeah, the left side was for the whites and the righthand side was for the Indians.

Barbara: And guess where the best berries were.

Rose Anne: That side. The Indians would put up their tepees and it was something to drive by and see those tepees.

Barbara: Oh, it was neat.

Rose Anne: Yeah.

Rebecca: How many people would be in a berry camp at a time?

Barbara: Hundreds.

Rose Anne: Yeah, it'd depend on the size of the camp, but it'd be full. And people would leave their food out on the table and throw a dishtowel or something over it to keep the flies off of it and it would be there when they'd come back. You know, you can't do things like that anymore. It's a different world. The Indians would have their babies and have them on those papoose boards.

Barbara: Yeah.

Rose Anne: And they'd hang them in the trees. They'd play and they'd swing and that was their way of life.

Barbara: And the cutest little babies.

Rose Anne: What a way to keep your kid from running around. Here, go on this board, kid [laughter].

Rebecca: Did you guys have any personal experiences with any Native

Americans?

Rose Anne: No, they were always — in fact, where we lived, in Trout Lake, we called it the heart of the city because it was pitiful, a post office, a grange hall and a store.

Barbara: And a store.

Rose Anne: And there was an open lot there and the Indians, for years, would come and camp there over night.² They'd come in on horses or trucks or old cars and they'd camp there for two or three days and rest, remember that?

Barbara: Uh-huh.

Rose Anne: And then they would go on. And they never bothered any of us, and we didn't go stand and stare at them either. You know, they would pick berries and they would come in the store there and you couldn't understand them because they would talk in their language. That was interesting to see and you know, the old squaws with their big long dresses and their moccasins . . .

Barbara: And braids.

Rose Anne: And braids.

Barbara: After they'd leave we'd go over and look to see if they left any babies because we wanted a baby, [laughter]

Rose Anne: Because they were so cute. They always took their babies!
[laughter]

Rose Anne: To keep the hazard down, the Forest allowed the farmers that owned herds of sheep, they would herd them right through town up into the forest and they would have certain sections they could be there like a week, to eat, and then you'd have to move on and that was another thing. I had to type this little tiny [notice] on paper for these shepherders. You are to move such and such a day.

Barbara: Oh, really?

Rose Anne: And K.C. would go out and check and he rode horses. And he got on his horse and herd out there and he was very well respected and he respected them also. At the end of the year they'd have a great big cattle dinner and he was always invited to go with his wife. That kept the grass down from fires, so it was a well-managed forest.

Rebecca: Rick McClure, who works for the Mt. Adams Ranger Station, he's one of the archaeologists. He asked us to ask you about Ray Filloon.

Rose Anne: Personal friend

Rebecca: How did you know him?

Rose Anne: Well, he was a guard at Cultus Creek for years. My sister, Shirley, worked at night, they had a switchboard in one of the clerk's homes. So the calls would come in at night and so they hired Shirley to come over and man the switchboard. And, oh, she was so thrilled to be able to do that. I think it paid 50 cents an hour, I'm not sure.

Barbara: That's big money!

Rose Anne: So through that, Ray Filloon knew of her and then she was on lookout later. He asked her to — when he went out in the forest to take pictures — if she would go with him and he had a terrible bad heart. And he needed someone, very respectful, he never even made any advances on . . .

Barbara: Well, we've all been alone with him and . . .

Rose Anne: Yeah. You know, just a nice guy. And we've got some great pictures at home that he took. In fact, he was very clever, I have Ray Filloon's potato masher. He didn't have one, so he took a telephone wire and he devised it this way and it was just darling and [Barbara laughs] so one time I went and he was up on Flat Top and he told me he'd made that. So toward the end of the season, I knew that was the last season, I stole it. I've got it right to this day. I don't care -

Barbara: Do you really?

Rose Anne: I don't care if I go to prison over it.

Barbara: Now that's on tape.

Rose Anne: I don't care. Ray Filloon made it, and I've got it. [laughter]

Rose Anne: It's just darling how he made it. He was very perfect in everything that he did. Later, he built a cabin in Trout Lake. My sister Shirley and I helped him build that cabin. We were putting the roofing on it, you know, the strips of roofing, and he said, "Now girls, I have to go into town to buy some groceries and so you've got enough up here to last you and I'll be back in a little while." Well, we were getting tired. We'd been with him about a week and we were tired of that life. And so we got to talking, "I'm tired, I wish we could go home." "Pound pound pound," and he came and he heard everything.

Barbara: Oh no!

Rose Anne: We just felt terrible. Well, anyway, we made a sag in the [roof]. It wasn't straight because we were trying and it was hot and we had this little marker and we got kind of a sag in it, but it was on the back side of the cabin. And he said, "Well girls, that's alright. One thing, it sure won't leak there." [laughter]

Barbara: Well he had a sense of humor then.

Rose Anne: Yeah, he did. He took some wonderful pictures. But he was just a personal friend for years. It was very sad when he died. He died of a heart attack of course.

Rebecca: How long ago was that?

Rose Anne: Oh, it's been a long time ago, I mean like 50 years, I guess. His wife had a business in Portland, a gift shop kind of a deal. Hallmark Cards. In those days they had a little piece of paper with the price of the card and the funny little paper clip was round, remember that? And so when he was in the cabin he would price those cards for her by the hour. Which is ridiculous any more,

because they have the price right on the card of course. It was a nice little cabin, very cleverly built. I haven't been there for a long time, I don't know if someone took it out or not.

Rebecca: Where about is it located?

Rose Anne: As you leave Trout Lake, you go towards Mt. Adams and it's out there a couple of miles.

Barbara: Is it on a creek?

Rose Anne: Yeah, it's right on the creek. He was very clever, he made a cooler out of the water and how it drained and it was ice-cold. It kept his food cold. Because there was no electricity out there. I think now they do, but in those days, you know.

Barbara: Well, I don't have anything to contribute [laughs]. Are you done?

Rose Anne: Yeah, I'm just looking down here to see if I hit everything. The time that I was on West Flat Top the lady that was on East Flat Top, I can't remember her name, but, she married the supervisor of the Forest Service, K.P. Cecil, at that time, and the wedding was held right up there at Flat Top. They were older. A minister came up and K.P. Cecil told K.C., "Mr. Langfield," he says, "I'd like to have Rose Anne leave her lookout and come over for the wedding." And he says, "Well, I guess you're the supervisor, I guess she can go." [laughter] So I went over and . . .

Barbara: Didn't we go over to his house in Portland once?

Rose Anne: No, not him.

Barbara: Who was it?

Rose Anne: It was a name like, Mr. Brown and he was one of the big . . .

Barbara: Oh.

Rose Anne: Mr. Brown. I don't know what he did but, you keep your lookout spotless and waxed, the floors waxed all the time.

Barbara: Oh my goodness.

Rose Anne: And here comes Mr. Cecil over and he's, "Oh look at the floors! Wheeeee!" and he slid right across them. Left these great big streaks right across that floor. And I thought, "You might be the supervisor but I don't like you doing that to my floors." [laughter]

Rose Anne: He was a nice man but he came up a lot there because of his girlfriend being there on the other lookout.

Rebecca: And how did . . .

[END OF INTERVIEW]