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BEAVERTON ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with

ALPHA WILLIAMS

at her home in Beaverton, Oregon

INTERVIEWER: SHIRLEY TANZER

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SUMMARY OF TOPICS DISCUSSED

INTERVIEW WITH: ALPHA WILLIAMS

BEAVERTON ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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4. Learning to sew
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(Where unknown, phonetic spellings are used)

INTERVIEW WITH ALPHA WILLIAMS

for

BEAVERTON ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Place: At her home in Beaverton, Oregon

Interviewer: Shirley Tanzer

SHIRLEY TANZER: Alpha, where did your family come from?

ALPHA WILLIAMS: My mother was born in Niantic, Illinois, and my father was born in Colton, Kentucky. I was born in Decatur, Illinois. Before I was old enough to remember, they went to Wichita Falls, Texas, to live. They had a few dust storms and they stayed six weeks. Every time I read about some of the hurricanes and dust storms in Wichita Falls, I'm so grateful that my family didn't like it (laughter).

TANZER: Where did your grandparents come from?

ALPHA: My mother's mother came from Toronto, Canada, and her father came from Nottingham, England. I tell my fifth grade class that my grandfather was born in Nottingham, England, and they were really impressed. That makes me a relative of Robin Hood, oh, yes.

TANZER: What about your father's family?

ALPHA: They lived in Kentucky for a long time; before that some of them lived in Pennsylvania where a relative of Roger Williams lived so they thought they were part of the same family.

TANZER: Would that have been a Puritan family?

ALPHA: Yes, I would think so. Roger Williams, of course, was more liberal. They chased him out of Rhode Island. He went and lived with the Indians for a while.

TANZER: Do you think that he was a relative of yours?

ALPHA: The family seemed to think so, that we were part of the same family, but not a direct descendant.

TANZER: Do you consider your national origins to be English?

ALPHA: Yes. And then there was one family that came from France -- the Montagues. They are some of the ancestors. One of the families was named Montague.

TANZER: There's a Montague family in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, that I think are merchants; and they are quite prominent.

ALPHA: I don't know much about the Montagues in our family. As far as I'm concerned, it's just a name of one of the ancestors. I really don't know much about them.

TANZER: How did your family come to Oregon?

ALPHA: My father's sister was in Scamakowa and another sister and her husband lived here. Their names were Tom and Ann Allen. There were two Allen families that lived out there on Allen Avenue. The one I was related to owned the southeast corner of Lombard and Allen and the Clarence Allen family had the southwestern corner, so it was logical to name that Allen Avenue. I think it was named a long time before I was paying any attention to things like that.

My uncle had an old house there and they tore that down and built another one. It's about where the Bel-Air and that service station are. When they wanted that property for the business places, they moved that house across the street on Allen Avenue; maybe you've noticed a house that's painted bright green out there. Well, that's my uncle's house. They just moved it across the street down there.

TANZER: Who lives in the house now?

ALPHA: I have no idea. None of our family.

TANZER: Alpha, now tell me about your aunt and uncle in Scamakoway?

ALPHA: Well, they had this general store then. Richard's. Of course, they're both gone now. I used to go down there to visit them once in a while but not very often. They came up here more than we went down there.

TANZER: But that was the reason your family came to Oregon?

ALPHA: Yes, he had two sisters here in this area before he came here. After he left Wichita Falls, he went to some place in Arkansas. He liked to fish and he went out there and got malaria. Well, he didn't like that too well, so they were ready to move away from there. Then they came out here and my aunt in Skamakowa -- Aunt Mandy, we called her -- got hold of an herb called Man-in-the-Ground. --I wonder if it's an old Indian remedy. She sent my father some of that and said it was good for malaria and my mother made tea for him out of that; it made him violently ill. He was vomiting and had diarrhea -- it was really quite a severe treatment, but he didn't have any more chills and fever after that so it took care of the malaria.

TANZER: How interesting. Did you ever find out what its generic name was?

ALPHA: No, I don't know what it was. During the war I wrote a letter to the surgeon general or somebody and told them about this, but I don't think they paid any attention. Maybe they should have. They needed medicine there in the South Pacific. I've always wondered if it would have helped those people who needed it.

TANZER: What did your father do for a living?

ALPHA: He was an engineer. He used to work on the railroad and then he went to logging camps as fireman or engineer down on donkey engines. He did

quite a good many things. There was a starch factory down here and he worked in that for a while. And out there just the other side of Uncle Tom Allen's place, they used to have a brickyard and he worked there. The family that owned the brickyard had two girls about my age, and on Sunday we used to play in the brickyard. Run those cars up and down on the track and they'd go off the track (laughter) every so often.

TANZER: Where was the starch factory?

ALPHA: I think it was that building across Farmington and Cedar Hills Boulevard. There's kind of a big, barn-like building there. Well, that was where he used to work.

TANZER: What do you remember about the trip coming to Oregon?

ALPHA: Oh, nothing. I was just 13 months old, so you see I don't remember a thing about that.

TANZER: Did you have any other brothers or sisters?

ALPHA: No, just the two of us.

TANZER: How old was your brother?

ALPHA: Well, he hadn't been born. He's five and a half years younger than I am, so he was born here. I was born in Decatur, Illinois. But they moved to Wichita Falls, so of course I don't remember anything about Wichita Falls or Arkansas, either one. I was in Texas when I was in the service, just south of Wichita Falls, in Midland. I think the places would be quite similar, and I'm certainly glad my parents didn't like Texas (laughter)! They sent a lot of people from the Northwest down there and we thought it was awful. Some Texans who come here don't brag much about Texas -- the ones who live here now.

TANZER: You said they do complain a good deal about our rain.

ALPHA: Yes. I suppose so. Well, you know, I got hay fever out there in that desert and they sent me down to San Antonio to the hospital for treatment. So I got a pass and went downtown one day. Some of the civilian clerks in the store weren't very nice to me because I was in uniform. Some of them could be pretty nasty. It made me so mad, you know what I did? And I tell Texans this, too! I was so mad at that woman that I walked right past the Alamo, my nose in the air, and I wouldn't go in. (laughter) Well, I've seen missions before, so I don't think I missed a great deal. But I wouldn't do them the honor of going in.

TANZER: Tell me about your mother. First of all, what was her maiden name?

ALPHA: Herrod. She was quite independent, but at the same time she was very quiet and a perfect little lady. Some people said they don't know how two parents like my mother and father could raise two like my brother and me (laughter). She never worked outside the home. Well, before she was married, she had a millinery store in Niantic, Illinois. She knew how to sew. Maybe you noticed the old machine in there. Well, a neighbor girl came over when I

was five and a half (the summer before I started school) and she was going to make a doll dress for me, so she just went over and opened up the machine and started a-sewing. She was a few years older than I was and Mother seemed to think it was all right for her to sew on the machine. After she went home, she left the machine open. And I thought, "If Mother will let her sew on the machine, she ought to let me do it, too." I'd watched her and I knew how (I thought I knew how), so I didn't ask because I was afraid of what I might find out. And I went to the rag bag and got a piece of cloth and sat down there and tried to sew, and when she came around I was watching to see if I was going to be told to get away from that machine and she'd say, "Well, now, this is the way it goes," and go off and wasn't paying any attention, you know. And just let me alone. But she was there to help me if I needed it. And so I've been sewing on it ever since.

TANZER: Sounds like a very wise lady.

ALPHA: Well, it was just exactly the right thing to do. Other mothers would say, "Oh, if you learn to sew on the machine at first, you won't learn to sew by hand." There were girls several years older than I who weren't allowed to use their mothers' machines. My mother said you couldn't hurt it, and the only thing you could do is break a needle and that's no great disaster. She thought I'd have sense enough to keep my finger out from under the needle. Most of the time I have. I've nipped my fingers a little bit, but not often. And that made a little smarty out of me because I could sew on the machine and these other girls who were older, couldn't.

TANZER: When you came to Oregon, you just came with your immediate family. Your grandparents didn't?

ALPHA: No. I only knew one of my grandparents, my father's father. I remember him visiting us, but I think my father's mother died before I came along. And my mother's mother died shortly after I was born and her father had died before I was born, so I never knew them. But I had three aunts and uncles out here and then another one came and visited and I was the only child in the family until my brother came, so I was their queen (laughter).

TANZER: What year did your family come to Oregon?

ALPHA: January, 1905, I think.

TANZER: When did you move into this house?

ALPHA: I don't remember exactly when we moved in. Somebody had started this house and my father bought it before it was finished. They lived someplace down the other side of the railroad track for a little while. I don't remember anything about that except just being told, and then they finished this up and we moved in here.

TANZER: So you were just over a year when you moved into the house then? And you've lived here ever since?

ALPHA: Well, except when I was away teaching someplace. I lived in Portland for a while when I was teaching there. When I got out of the WAC -- my father was sick, so I moved out here and went back and forth on the bus. I've

never learned to drive so I had to go by bus.

TANZER: Tell me where you received your own education here.

ALPHA: Well, I went through grade and high school here, the Beaverton school. The first year the Beaverton school system consisted of one little, three-room schoolhouse down there near where the Safeway is -- down in that area. You know, I look at some of these kids with their mothers bringing them to school on the first day and they're bawling their heads off. That isn't the way we did it. (laughter) I had been to the schoolhouse and I knew where it was. So my mother gave me my lunch and a bouquet for my teacher and sent me on my way. It was all right. They had two railroads, the same as they have now. And Mother told me to be careful crossing the railroad tracks. She thought I would know enough to do that. That's the way we did it.

TANZER: What was the neighborhood like?

ALPHA: There was this house and the one on the opposite corner over there. That was the Summer's house. And Edgar Summers and his son Bob built the houses over here on this half of the block. They were very good workmen. They did very good work.

TANZER: Would that be nine?

ALPHA: Yes. And these other houses weren't built. My family owned five lots and that was our garden. Oh, I remember one time a neighbor was so amused. My father was working up there in the garden. It was time for him to come to lunch, so I went out there and gave him a piggy call and he came. (laughter)

TANZER: How old were you at that time?

ALPHA: Oh, good-sized. (laughter) Practically grown up.

TANZER: Was it fun growing up in Beaverton?

ALPHA: Yes, we had lots of fun.

TANZER: Who were your friends, Alpha?

ALPHA: Edna Hawkin and she's gone. Della Allen, and she's gone, too. And Violet Springer. Her father had a grocery store down there. Who else? There was Lucille Jones and Rita Zimberg. They were school friends. I knew them all the way through school.

TANZER: What grades were there at the Beaverton Grade School?

ALPHA: Well after the first year at that little school down there, they built one up here just this side of where the high school building is. That was four rooms and then it became eight rooms and then it just kept on growing and they built the high school then, so I went right straight through four years of high school here.

TANZER: So the grade school was one through eight.

ALPHA: Yes. And then four years of high school. Then I went down to Monmouth. You could teach then without having a degree. At that time, it was called Oregon Normal School. It's been changed twice since then. I went one year and down there at Pistol River they had school from April until November instead of the winter because the roads were so bad.

TANZER: Tell me how you got the job at Pistol River.

ALPHA: Oh. Well, I'd saved up enough money for one quarter and then I ran short of money. My folks didn't have much, so I went and lived in a professor's home and did some housework for my room and board. He was in charge of placement and they got word that the teacher at Pistol River wanted somebody to finish the term in June so she could come back to school. So guess who got the job.

That was from June until November in '22. My father was away at a logging camp, working, when I came. I just came home for the weekend -- got my things together and I was on my way to southern Oregon. I was 18.

TANZER: How much were you paid for the job?

ALPHA: \$110 a month, which was good money. I'd been working at Meier & Frank's while I was in high school, getting \$55 there, so \$110 looked like a lot of money.

TANZER: What did you do at Meier & Frank's?

ALPHA: I worked in the art/needle department selling. During my high school senior year, I worked there on Saturdays. If I remember, I worked in the candy department a little while. (laughter).

TANZER: So in 1922 you were at Pistol River. How close is that to Gold Beach?

ALPHA: About 15-16 miles. I was down the coast from Gold Beach and we could see the ocean from one place in the schoolyard.

TANZER: Is the school building still standing?

ALPHA: I don't know. I haven't been there for years.

TANZER: It would be interesting to drive down to see.

ALPHA: Wouldn't that be fun?

TANZER: Alpha, tell me what the school at Pistol River was like.

ALPHA: Well, I had about 10-12 children, all different ages. The oldest one was 16 and he was in the 6th grade. I was 18. Think of the difference in how it was done. They were nice little youngsters to work with. I enjoyed them very much.

TANZER: How did you plan your teaching?? Did you teach them a variety of subjects?

ALPHA: Oh, yes. I tried to follow the same kind of course that you would in regular grade school.

TANZER: Was there a state curriculum at that time that you followed?

ALPHA: Yes. They were more detailed in their outlines than later. In Portland they began by just covering a general area; some people thought they should have a detailed outline, but that wasn't the trend in those days. They said, "Well, if you can't figure these things out for yourself, you've no business to be here." (laughter)

TANZER: Who hired you in Pistol River?

ALPHA: Well, they asked at the school to have somebody sent down so I just arrived and was hired. I guess they just left it up to the director, Dr. Baty there in Monmouth, to send somebody down. They sent me, so that was it.

TANZER: Where did you live?

ALPHA: I lived at a farmhouse with a family. It was really very nice. I don't know how I was ever able to eat so much, but you know these breakfasts that they fix for farmhands? Well, that's how I ate and I was just as thin as a rail -- never gained a pound, and established my eating habits and never changed.

TANZER: What were the reasons that you left Pistol River?

ALPHA: Well, I went back and taught another year after that first one and then I wanted to go back to Normal School so I started in the winter term. And when I was on the vacation on the two terms at Pistol River, I went back there for one quarter, so you see I had my second year.

People from all over would ask to have somebody come and interview them, they wanted somebody for Fairview Home. A friend of mine was going over there. I didn't know if I wanted to do that kind of work or not, but decided it would be a good thing so I went, too.

They showed me all of these different places and I saw some things I'd never seen before. They took us to the low-grade cottages, and you'd see vegetating people and see these microcephalic, little tiny heads, and hydrocephalic -- I saw this head that was that big. And I'd never heard of such things. Then they asked me if I wanted to come and I said I would do it. I went back to school and I was weak in the knees for several days after agreeing to go to a place like that but I guess you get just the way doctors do -- you get so that you adjust to things like that and it didn't upset us.

TANZER: How long were you at the Fairview School and was it in the same place that it is now?

ALPHA: I stayed there for three years. It's in the same place but I think they had more buildings than now.

TANZER: What was your job there?

ALPHA: I taught music and gym. Those children could learn a great deal

by rote and I put on two big programs each year. I rehearsed them thoroughly and I had to supply all the gestures. I couldn't depend on them to express it themselves. I had to just work it out in detail for them, but they were so reliable after you got them trained that I never had a serious slip up in all of those programs. People thought it was so remarkable that they could do that. Well, it wasn't at all. It was that they can do rote things.

TANZER: What musical instrument do you play, Alpha?

ALPHA: I used to play the piano some. I just don't practice. I had several years of piano but I've done more chorale singing. I sang in Portland Symphonic Choir for a long, long time which was very nice, and I've done some church choir singing, things like that.

TANZER: So when you did your musical programs, they were not instrumental music, but they were choir music?

ALPHA: Yes. Chorus and dancing and things like that. You know the kind of spring programs or Christmas programs that they put on in schools? --That kind of thing.

TANZER: Today, as you look back on that experience, what do you think about in terms of Fairview?

ALPHA: Well, I think that it was very worthwhile to bring that type of thing to those children because it was something they could thoroughly enjoy. They could feel they had accomplished something, where they wouldn't have so much accomplishment in the academic work. The girls did very nice sewing, hand work. We had booths at the State Fair and we dismissed school during fair time. We'd go down there and sell these things. And the boys had manual training work, so those were very good things for them.

TANZER: What do you think the benefits were to you?

ALPHA: Well, it was a very good experience to teach those things that I taught and then sent me downtown to a ballet teacher to get some things for the first program or two that I did. Then I took some ballet lessons on my own and I learned how to work out the choreography myself.

TANZER: After you left Fairview, you came back to Portland?

ALPHA: Yes. I got a job teaching music, and then I'd have a grade, too, sometimes. We'd trade off, and I'd have most of the music and somebody else would do the other part. I started at Creston -- the old building before it burned down. Then I was in Glencoe for a year. Then I went to Joseph Lane. I went up to Ainsworth -- I better not tell this, but I didn't like it up there. I stayed 12 weeks and joined the WAC. (laughter)

TANZER: Why was that?

ALPHA: Well, you know, they were such very important people and their youngsters were, at that time, just unbearable. I wasn't alone in my opinion. I taught reading and library up there and they had four teachers in that job. They had four people in the music teacher's job in one year, so you know it was bad. But I think it's better now, so I shouldn't be telling that.

TANZER: It's good to know that something is improved in education. What were some of the reasons you decided to go to the service?

ALPHA: Well, one of them was that I wanted out of there. I also thought I'd like the experience, and then we got G.I. benefits. At first they were only going to give them to people of college age, but somebody talked them into giving it to all of us. In the meantime, while I was teaching in Portland, I went to night school and summer school and got my Bachelor's Degree. It's from Oregon, because this was the Extension then, and when I got out of the service, I had all these G.I. benefits and decided Uncle Sam could afford to send me to Reed so that's where I went for my Master's.

TANZER: So your years of service were what years?

ALPHA: From 1943 to 1945. I had time left over after I got my Master's and you had to be working for a degree. There weren't very many places around here that gave a doctorate and I ended up out at Portland University.

I didn't complete my doctorate but I took courses in the psychology department until I ran out of benefits and then I had some state benefits coming so I took some courses at Portland State, so I've really been around.

TANZER: You're an alumnus of all those institutions.

ALPHA: Oh, and I'll tell you some place else I went; just for summer but I recommend it highly. For once it paid me to read the State School Superintendent's office bulletin. It said the government would pay for two scholarships for each state for people beyond college age to spend six months at the East/West Center of the University of Hawaii. We people on the West Coast got quite a few of those because other states didn't use them all, so I got one of those scholarships and spent six weeks at the University of Hawaii. That's where I did my in-service training for that period.

TANZER: I see. After you finished with service, did you teach before you went to Reed?

ALPHA: Oh, yes. I taught for quite a good long time. I came to Portland in 1927 and did my junior and senior year of college work while I was teaching there.

TANZER: After you came out of the service, did you go back into teaching?

ALPHA: Oh, yes. Just before school was to start, I went over and told them I was back. They asked if I could take a full-time job at _____ and I said, "Yes." And she said, "This is the first time I've been able to smile all day. I just didn't have anybody to send out there." And I liked it very much and was there until I retired in 1969.

TANZER: So when you went back to Reed, you just went part time?

ALPHA: I went during the summer, and then I took some night classes. I think of the way things are around here now. Then I took night classes at Reed and at Portland University, took the bus home and got here around midnight, and I had to walk from downtown here to my place, and nothing ever happened to me. And now if I'm over at my brother's next door, somebody brings me home.

TANZER: To what do you attribute the change?

ALPHA: General conditions; permissiveness, and I think there's probably more in the way of narcotics, although when I was in high school, some boys got mixed up in narcotics, and that was way back in the Twenties, here in Beaverton.

TANZER: What was that about? What happened?

ALPHA: Well, I couldn't prove it, but I was told that five boys went and got some narcotics. There was a Chinese man who used to work as a gardener out there and somebody told me that he was the one that was selling it to them.

TANZER: What happened to them?

ALPHA: Well, most of them are dead now.

TANZER: At the time, were they apprehended and punished?

ALPHA: It was all kept pretty quiet. But after it was all over, somebody said that that's where they got their narcotics. So when I hear about all this business that's going on now, it's not too new. But I think we come more in contact now. Up there on the bike path the other side of these houses, a woman told me just today that they'd pick up dope out there once in a while, turn it over to the police -- somebody drops it and somebody else is supposed to pick it up.

TANZER: Right here?

ALPHA: Yes. And today she called, this neighbor called and she said for me to take a look out here -- a girl dropped something at a telephone pole out here and somebody came along in a car, and there was somebody coming over there, talking to them, I don't know what it was about, but I bet I could guess. The people that live up here on this corner are very nice now, but there was a group of young people in there and just too many cars going in and out of there at strange hours and all that, and there were things going on. So, yes, it's all around you, just every place you go.

TANZER: So this has been a considerable change for you, having grown up in this neighborhood?

ALPHA: Well, yes. Now another aunt, my father's sister, lived out there on the corner of Lombard and Denney Road. Her name was Eggman, John and Barbara Eggman. I'd walk from their house here after dark, never thought anything of it, going from the place out on Allen Avenue. And now my brother brings me home from right next door.

TANZER: And you keep the doors locked?

ALPHA: Yes indeed, uh huh. And you know, salesmen can understand very well when that screen door is hooked (laughter). Well, you know what I tell these telephone advertisers? I think it discourages them. I don't get many of these calls. A woman down here who does my hair says she gets all kinds of calls, so she's going to start telling them what I tell them and then keep track and see if she gets fewer of them -- my standard answer is, "I don't buy from telephone advertisers and you can take my name off the sucker list." (Laughter)

Somebody called me the second time and I started the same speech and she hung up on me before I got to the part about the sucker list (laughter). She'd heard it before!

TANZER: Alpha, I want to ask you about your parents' activities in Beaverton and what they were.

ALPHA: They were quite interested in the church. First we went to the Methodist Church because they didn't have their church here. Then when they started the Christian Church (the Disciples of Christ), we went there.

My mother belonged to the W.C.T.U. for quite a while. In those days, it wasn't ladylike for women to take part in politics. But she was always a perfect lady and went ahead doing what she wanted to do along that line. I've always said she didn't defy public opinion; she simply ignored it. I remember a story she told about Illinois before she came out here; she and a minister's wife found there was no law which said women couldn't vote in the school election, so the two of them went and voted. And she said the minister said he hoped the time would come when he could always take his wife with him to the polls. And it did.

I've forgotten what year they got the Women's Suffrage here in Oregon. It was before the national law was passed. You see, when the men would come here to vote, they came in horse and buggy and it would take them a long time. I expect it would be most of the day's ride to come in to vote.

They came in from out in the country. It wouldn't take all day but it would take a lot longer than now. Do you know where the old Grange Hall was; down there on Farmington and Stott or Main -- Pegg's Mortuary used to be in the front part of the building and the Grange Hall was in the back part. I think it's Stott, but I'm not quite sure. So these women concocted pot luck dinner and invited all these men who had come to vote, and suggested that they vote for Women's Suffrage (laughter). One of the men my mother mentioned -- a German, "No, I vote for the Vimen." So they got their vote, all right.

TANZER: Tell me about her W.C.T.U. activities.

ALPHA: Ladies attended their meetings and she carried petitions to get rid of the saloons. She didn't believe in dancing, so she carried a petition to get the dance hall closed. Whenever she thought something should be done, she'd go out and start to work on it.

TANZER: You mentioned that there was a particular tavern in Beaverton that she was opposed to.

ALPHA: Well, the women talked about going to a Council meeting and they decided not to, but the men didn't know that and the Mayor said, "There'll be no Council meeting tonight; the damn women are going to take charge." Later on that night they held an informal meeting in the back room of the saloon and the women couldn't go to the saloon (laughter).

TANZER: Now why were the women coming to the Council meeting?

ALPHA: I guess they wanted to talk about some of the things that were going on. I'm not sure what their reasons were.

TANZER: I did want to ask you about the saloon. You said your mother had an on-going battle with one of the saloons. How many saloons were there?

ALPHA: Well, with all of them; she wanted them all closed. At one time there were 3 and she thought that was a lot of saloons for a town this size. She wanted to tell somebody about this man who said, "the damned women will take charge," and she wouldn't think of swearing, and she certainly wouldn't say that in front of me because I was about five, so she spelled it when she was telling some woman about this, but she forgot that she was teaching me phonics and I sounded it and told her what she had said. (Laughter) I'd learned more than she thought I had.

TANZER: Tell me about her battle with one of the saloons.

ALPHA: Well, she just carried petitions around and tried to get it on the ballot to vote them out. That was the only way it could have been done. I don't think she succeeded in closing the saloon, but it sort of went out of business.

TANZER: Where were they located?

ALPHA: There was one on Broadway on the north side of the street and then farther east, I think on the same street there was one. I can't remember just where all of them were.

TANZER: And there was a card room, also, you said.

ALPHA: That was a confectionary store with a cardroom in the back.

TANZER: Who owned the saloon?

ALPHA: Gus Rossi did. Alma Rossi, I think, still lives there. Of course, the mother and father are gone so is one of the brothers, but I'm not sure about the other one. The card room was owned by George Thyng. Oh, those were dens of iniquity, according to my mother!

TANZER: Was your father politically active?

ALPHA: No, not particularly. Oh, I was going to tell you about him. He was a good southern Democrat and always voted a straight Democratic ticket. Once in a while he might vote for a Republican, but very seldom. He said one time some Ku Klux Klan people came here and got some of the business people and others interested in joining the Klan -- 100% Americanism, and it was a patriotic and civic thing to do. My father, coming from the South, didn't think it was so bad so he joined with them and he went downtown. After the election in which they said to vote Republican, the man asked my father how he had voted. Well, he voted for the Democrats. The man said, "I don't see how you can do it and be a good Klansman." Well, my father asked him what kind of Americanism that was "100% Americanism, and you want to disenfranchise me?"

TANZER: Did he ever mention what the answer was?

ALPHA: I don't think there was an answer. He took care of it. He was all through with the Klan. They told him to vote Republican and that took care of the Klan!

TANZER: What did he do for a living in Beaverton?

ALPHA: He worked at the starch factory for a while, he worked in the brick yard and he used to go to the logging camps and work there on the engine. Later on, he bought some property out here southwest of town, cleared that land and sold the wood. He grew some potatoes and things like that. He just did whatever kind of work there was to be done.

TANZER: Were you comfortable?

ALPHA: Oh, yes. Oh, we weren't wallowing in wealth, but we never went hungry either. We always had what we needed.

TANZER: Did your brother go to college, also?

ALPHA: No, he never finished school. He liked to work on trucks and things like that so he didn't go to school very long; he did that kind of work. Then he got a job from the Fire Department and he stayed there until time to retire.

TANZER: What was his job in the Fire Department?

ALPHA: First it was a volunteer fire department and he was fire chief but he got a job in Portland and couldn't very well be fire chief out here and work in Portland, so he was assistant for a while and then when they got the paid fire department, why he was assistant chief at that. I don't remember what year it was, oh, a few years back.

TANZER: And he's continued to live here. This land that you and he live on, was that all land that your father owned?

ALPHA: Yes. He owned the land the next house is built on, and that makes three houses, on five lots that he had. There's two lots that they sold. Then he sold this place where my brother lives, to a lady called Mrs. Harris. When she reached the age where she couldn't take care of herself any more, she went to a retirement home and the place was for sale so I told Harvey that he should buy that, so he bought it from her, and has lived there ever since.

TANZER: What about the other property that your dad owned?

ALPHA: Well, he just sold it and never developed it any.

TANZER: Did he hold onto it during the Depression?

ALPHA: I don't remember just when he sold it. He probably needed the money so he sold it.

TANZER: Did he continue to pursue engineering the train?

ALPHA: No, he got away from that. At the brickyard and the starch factory, he worked with machinery, of course.

TANZER: When did your father die, Alpha?

ALPHA: Shortly after I got out of the WAC, in 1946.

TANZER: And did you live here with your mother?

ALPHA: Yes. She died in '54. I remember that because that was when I was going to Portland University that summer.

TANZER: Did you always have good relationships with your parents?

ALPHA: Well, I guess average (laughter). I'm just independent, and then they taught me to be that way. If I wanted to do anything, I knew that it wasn't diplomatic to tell my father everybody else is doing it because that was just like waving a red flag in front of a bull. He wouldn't be impressed by that at all. I had to have better reasons. One time I was giving him all my good reasons why I should do something. He listened and then he laughed and said, "Well, I was going to let you do it all the time. I just wanted to hear you beg."

TANZER: Would you call them strict parents or lenient parents?

ALPHA: They were strict in some ways and in other ways, they weren't. Now, one time we were going to have a political debate. There was a Presidential election and we could take whichever side we wanted. We did it in the Grange Hall down there in the evening for our parents. I don't think it ever occurred to my parents and it certainly didn't occur to me to ask permission to be in that. But my girlfriend's father wouldn't permit her to be in it.

If I wanted to be in a play or something like that, I never asked permission. I just came home and announced that this is what I was going to do. But they didn't believe in dancing. Of course, I learned to dance. And they weren't too terribly shocked when I was teaching dancing down there, so you see, I guess I wasn't a docile, awfully obedient child. I obeyed as much as I had to, and that's about it. (laughter)

TANZER: Alpha, do you remember the red train?

ALPHA: Oh, yes. We used to go on that all the time. We'd go from here to Portland. When I was older, I worked at Meier & Frank's during the summer so I rode the train back and forth. I think it cost 20-25¢. I used to get books of tickets.

TANZER: Where was the stop and where did it take you to downtown?

ALPHA: There was a depot west of Hall Street, then it went in on 4th Street in Portland. You know, the train track went due east and west here. And it doesn't in Portland -- so I still have to stop and think about directions after all these years.

TANZER: Do you remember the accident?

ALPHA: Yes, I remember it very well. It was on a Sunday morning. People were going to church in Portland. Fortunately I wasn't involved in it but I knew people who were. I don't remember whether anyone was killed or not but some of them were injured quite severely.

TANZER: Did you know anyone who was on the train?

ALPHA: Yes, one of my classmates was on the train. She wasn't injured seriously but she was really quite shaken by it.

TANZER: Alpha, have you been historically involved with political or social things in Beaverton?

ALPHA: Not too much in political things here, but I get involved in state and national issues, sometimes. You know, I did something one time. Anybody could have done it. But I was the one who started it and I hate to think what might have happened if somebody hadn't started it.

When Wayne Morse changed from Republican to Democratic Party, someone introduced a bill in the Legislature which would prohibit anybody from running for re-election as an Independent or for a party other than the one which had elected him in the first place. They made no bones about it. It was to keep Wayne Morse from running for re-election. Well, I saw a little tiny article near the back of the paper down at the bottom of the page where you wouldn't notice it particularly, and I wrote a letter to the man who introduced the bill, the chairman of the committee, my representatives, and I wrote to the papers -- both papers printed my letters. I went to the Democratic Central Committee. I didn't miss a trick. In this article, they said they had considerable support for it, and it was in committee, when it came time to vote that out of committee, there wasn't a person that would stand up and be counted.

TANZER: Good for you!

ALPHA: Someone showed the letter to Wayne Morse in Washington, and he wrote me a very nice letter thanking me for what I had done.

TANZER: Have you been a Democrat most of your life?

ALPHA: Yes, I've always been a Democrat. My father was always a Democrat. He was a good old southern Democrat.

TANZER: You told me that story about the Klan. Do you remember anything else about the Klan and its organizing in Beaverton?

ALPHA: I don't think it ever amounted to very much. It was presented as a city organization that they would all be interested in and I think they all found out what it was and nobody stayed with it.

TANZER: When you were younger, did you notice racial or religious bigotry in this area?

ALPHA: The churches were all quite separate. Catholic and Protestant churches didn't cooperate to the extent that they do now, but they all managed to get along with each other peaceably. We didn't have many people from the minority groups. We had some Japanese and Chinese people who were gardeners here and they were good, thrifty, hard-working people. They went to church where I went and everybody got along all right. But, as I remember, there was only one black man in this community as I grew up. He worked for a man named Livermore and my father knew him. I don't remember his name.

TANZER: Do you recall any anti-Japanese feelings during World War II?

ALPHA: Not particularly. I remember someone was rather shocked because Reed College allowed the Japanese to present his point of view in a speech out there. What people don't always realize is that allowing somebody to speak doesn't mean they endorse what he says. You hear what the speaker says but you don't hear all of the searching questions that those students ask, and there are no holds barred when it comes to questions.

TANZER: What was his "point of view," the Japanese speaker at Reed?

ALPHA: I didn't hear him, but it was after Pearl Harbor. I think he might have been talking about them interning Japanese here. There was considerable criticism of that. We went up to Vancouver, B.C., and the Japanese people were going around there just the same as everybody else. But here they'd all been interned. Of course, when you think what a shocking thing Pearl Harbor was, it was understandable that people would over-react.

TANZER: Well, I was interested because Beaverton seemed to be more insular, and I was curious whether people, Catholics and Protestants, and Italians and Germans, got along together.

ALPHA: In school we got along all right. Nobody paid any attention to that kind of thing.

TANZER: What about social interchange, your parents -- who were their friends?

ALPHA: They were quite interested in the church and a good many of their friends were people they met there. We also had some relatives, so we had plenty of social life. Mother had her temperance friends, too. But Dad would stay home a lot. Of course, those people in the temperance organization are a good many of the same ones that went to church.

TANZER: What was your church, Alpha?

ALPHA: When we first came here, we went to the Methodist Church and then when the Church of Christ was organized (the one my family had belonged to), we went there. The Methodist church then was more like the free Methodists and I found I didn't particularly like that highly emotional kind of thing. I didn't like the minister very much. One morning he tried to tell me which girls I should associate with to help me to be a good Christian.

TANZER: How did he happen to tell you that?

ALPHA: He wanted me to come to prayer meeting and I didn't do it. I didn't care for prayer meeting. My friends were the ones who were leaders in their class over there at high school, and I have never heard a word of scandal about any one of them to this day, and I overheard my father say to my mother, "He had no business to say that to her." So when my friends at the Congregational Church invited me to come over there with them, I did and the family came, too. They left the Methodist and went to the Congregational, too.

Then when they established the Christian Church, we went there. But now, I'm back at the Congregational again because it's convenient and I sing in the choir. In Portland, I used to sing in the Presbyterian choir.

TANZER: But you have been consistently Protestant?

ALPHA: Yes. Yes. You know, I participated in a nice ceremony that wasn't Protestant in India in the Golden Temple of Amritsar. We went into this lovely temple in the evening and they have a very nice ceremony. You hold your hands out and they give you some little meringue wafers similar to what they use in Communion and then you share them with a child.

They had this big copy of the Koran and the man was sitting on a big cushion reading out of it. It seems they read for an hour and then someone else comes on and it's continuous. You could go in there any hour of the day or night and hear some part of the Koran being read.

TANZER: When were you in India, and did you go with a teachers' group?

ALPHA: In 1957. Some were teachers and some weren't. It was after Dr. Frank Monk was our tour leader and Prime Minister Nehru's nephew had been at Reed to do some lectures. He told Dr. Monk if he ever came to India to let him know, so our little group of about 15 or 16 had about 3/4 of an hour interview with the Prime Minister. That was really very interesting.

TANZER: Have you done some traveling other than that trip?

ALPHA: Two years before I went to Europe. Dr. Monk was our tour leader there, too. It was under the auspices of World Study Tours. I retired in 1969.

TANZER: And then you moved back here?

ALPHA: Soon after World War II, I came back here. My father died and that left my mother alone, so I lived here and commuted to Portland while I was teaching.

TANZER: How has Beaverton changed?

ALPHA: Well, when I started to school, the Beaverton School System was one little three-room school down there near where the Safeway is. The next year they built the school this side of where the high school is and they had four rooms. Then they increased that to eight rooms, and now see what it is.

TANZER: You went to Beaverton High School? Who was the principal?

ALPHA: Oh, yes, I graduated from Beaverton High School. The principal was Mr. Nash. It was a small high school and I had an advantage which I never would have had in a larger school. I went out for debating and I was on the school team for three years. I always said I learned more English there than any place in all my English classes.

TANZER: Aside from the school system, how do you feel Beaverton has changed?

ALPHA: Well, social activities are more fragmented now. More go to Portland or someplace else for activities. Of course, I did a lot of that because I was teaching in Portland, but you don't have as many whole community activities as you would in a smaller place.

TANZER: Was it unusual when you were living here and working in Portland for a young person to be doing that?

ALPHA: Oh, no, as soon as we were old enough and could get a work permit, we would go into Portland and work during the summer.

TANZER: Did you have a circle of friends with whom you went to Portland and did activities? And what type of social activities did you have in Beaverton as you got older?

ALPHA: Oh, yes. I didn't participate in very many social activities when I was in high school, but then you see I went to college and then down to Pistol River in southern Oregon, and then I went back to school after I had one year (you could do that in those days). Then I got a job at Fairview Home, stayed there for three years, then came to Portland and everything I did was in Portland.

TANZER: Was your life very different from those of your friends who remained here in Beaverton?

ALPHA: I went to different things that were available in Portland. I'd go to concerts and lectures. I sang in choir in Portland for years. And we had social activities, so you see I was kept busy there.

TANZER: But your brother seemed to remain much closer to Beaverton. How was his life different from yours?

ALPHA: Yes, he stayed here in Beaverton. He went through more social activities out here and, of course, part of the time he worked in Portland, but he always lived out here except for a real short time, so you see his social life was here.

TANZER: I'm interested in the change in Beaverton being a rural community and then becoming an urban community. Do you have any reflections on that?

ALPHA: It used to be that you knew everybody. Now there are people living right in this block that I don't know. Well, I really think I know most of them, but in the next block there are people that I don't know. There was an accident about a block down the street the other day -- a man was working on the roof and he fell off, and I heard the emergency vehicles go by so I went up there and I had never met this woman, but I introduced myself. There weren't very many around and in a smaller town I think there would have been quite a group of people.

TANZER: Perhaps because a lot of people work and are away. Are you involved with organizations now in Beaverton?

ALPHA: Well, not other than the church. Well, I've been over to the Stuhr Center but I don't get over there very often. I belong to the World Affairs Council in Portland and a few things like that.

TANZER: And you belong to the Senior Craftsmen, I know. When did you start making quilts?

ALPHA: Well, I made one a number of years ago and when they first started

talking about a possible fuel shortage and I thought maybe we were going to be cold, I made quilts for everybody in the family for Christmas, and I wrapped them in these green plastic garbage bags and tied them with red rug yarn. One of my nephews looked so funny when he saw these garbage sacks coming out here (laughter). He couldn't imagine what they were getting for Christmas. Well, I didn't hear any complaints. As soon as he got home, he called me and they were just delighted with them. They still like them.

TANZER: Oh, that is just wonderful. Do you still find the opportunity to attend cultural things?

ALPHA: I'm getting so I don't go out at night. I don't think we're safe. I used to go all over Portland and all over Beaverton any hour of the day or night and think nothing of it. Now imagine going to night school at Reed College and also way out at Portland University and at Portland State; think what distances, and I'd come home on the bus, and I used to walk from downtown, down here to 8th Street. And I did that any hour of the day or night. Now if I'm at my brother's house next door, somebody brings me home and they wait to see that I come in and everything's all right.

TANZER: Have you ever had any attempted breakin or anything like that?

ALPHA: Yes, somebody broke in one time. It was youngsters looking for money. And they didn't find any. If there was any, I'd like to know where (laughter) But that's the only time. But there have been things that have happened not too far away from here.

TANZER: So what about your daytime activities? You're not restricted in the daytime?

ALPHA: No, I go places in the daytime, like Portland. Until a year ago or two I sang in Portland Symphonic Choir. I was in that for years. Then the World Affairs Council and things like that. It seems to be so easy just to sit at home.

TANZER: You mentioned something quite interesting -- that Linus Pauling had been your commencement speaker at Reed College. I thought maybe you could tell us about that. What year was that?

ALPHA: Well, you know actually I don't remember much about it. Isn't that awful? The year was 1954. That's right. It's been a long time ago. I got my Master's there. I don't remember any impact of his speech or very much about it at all.

TANZER: Have there been people who have become models for you?

ALPHA: Not particularly. The thing is that I wanted to be myself and make my own mind up about things, the way I did about changing churches. I didn't care what anybody thought. That was what I thought and that was the way it was going to be.

TANZER: Well, you certainly have exhibited an independent spirit all these years.

ALPHA: Yes. I even did it. I was two years in the WAC. And I even did it there.

TANZER: That must have been unusual for a woman to enlist in the WACs.

ALPHA: I went in during the war. I went in as a private and came out a PFC two years later. I was the college graduate. I graduated from the University of Oregon and they had trained more officers than they needed. Women didn't enlist in as large numbers as they expected so they had more officers than they needed. No matter what we did, there wasn't much chance of becoming an officer so I used to say I might as well have put my brains in storage along with my fur coat. Some of it was pretty bad. Sometimes we had good officers and sometimes we didn't. I didn't say this out loud until after I was out of the service but I decided that if a psychologist could condition a rat, I could condition a second lieutenant and, you know, it works.

TANZER: Did you make many friends in the service?

ALPHA: I don't keep in touch with any of them. I had some friends. Some people liked me and some didn't.

TANZER: Well, likely your independent spirit had something to do with that.

ALPHA: A person either likes that or they don't. I found that with principals, too. I had one principal who used to say I was tougher than boiled elk.

TANZER: You taught for most of your years on the east side of Portland.

ALPHA: Yes, I taught for 12 weeks up at Ainsworth. The principal they had there then was sick, and later on he was really very ill. He just wasn't able to cope. I couldn't stand it up there. I stayed 12 weeks and joined the WAC. That's how I happened to go into the service -- one of the reasons.

TANZER: What was the school where you remained the longest time?

ALPHA: At Hosford(?). That was a good, substantial middle-class neighborhood. I'd been teaching in a white poverty area before I went to Ainsworth, during the Depression and us white people out there were really poor and I went from there to Ainsworth and I started giving the same kind of assignments that I'd given, and the children didn't have enough work to do. So I thought when they bus these children for integration, what they could be doing unless they hand-pick them. In this poverty area, I could have picked children that could have gone up there and done the work, but there are others who would have been simply lost. In fact, a little boy that I had in this poverty area grew up and when I got my Master's at Reed, he got his Bachelor's on the same day. I was so proud of him.

TANZER: Do you still keep in touch with some of your students?

ALPHA: No, not really. Oh, if I go to some school functions I see them and meet them in quite a good many places.

TANZER: And you never married, Alpha. Was that your own choice?

ALPHA: Yes. I don't think I'm very domestic. I would hate the idea of having to keep house and feed a family. ...I'm too lazy (laughter).

TANZER: Or perhaps too independent?

ALPHA: Maybe. No, I don't think that would be for me.

TANZER: Tell me about your family now, your nephews and nieces. You are close with your brother's family?

ALPHA: Oh, yes. There's one family up at Madras and that nephew's in insurance. One of them is in the high school here, and the other one works for Tektronix. The daughter of the one who is in high school, and her husband, live across the street and they have a little four-year-old girl, Sarah. She's going to pick my violets for me. I have red violets out. Did you see them? Oh, they're all out. They've been out for several days and it was raining so she couldn't do it, but she wouldn't have so much trouble bending over as I would.

TANZER: Do you like to work in the garden?

ALPHA: Not particularly. I'd rather visit.

TANZER: But you do like to sew?

ALPHA: Yes. As far as cooking is concerned, when you see what kind of cooking I do ... It's very easy. I didn't spend hours in the kitchen doing that. That's the way I do my meals.

TANZER: Do you read a good deal, Alpha?

ALPHA: Not a great deal. I don't read all the time the way some people do. I read the paper and I read the Christian Science Monitor. I get some of it read, but that's a little bit much to read every day, if you read it thoroughly. A person could do it and profit by it, but I don't always. I skip over things pretty fast.

TANZER: As you look forward, what do you think you're going to be doing in the next few years?

ALPHA: Maybe I'll get the house cleaned one of these days. I don't know which day. I start to work on it and then I have to quit because I get so tired so fast. There are some things I do pretty sketchy, but I might get that done some day.

TANZER: Are you still interested in taking classes and that type of thing?

ALPHA: I haven't for some time. You see, I did so much of my college work at night school and summer school. It was ten years from the time I graduated from high school until I got my Bachelor's Degree and I taught $8\frac{1}{2}$ years during that. I've been doing so much sewing that I've neglected a lot of other things. In addition to making those quilts for the Senior Craftsmen, I make little hand puppets for little tiny youngsters to play with.

TANZER: Do you do those for the Senior Craftsmen, also?

ALPHA: Yes.

TANZER: Are those the felt ones...

ALPHA: Yes

TANZER: Oh! I know those very well. I have bought those for years and years. Alpha, do you have friends here who do these activities with you? Do you have friends in the area?

ALPHA: I have some friends in the choir and then I have some friends that have retired and one that is still teaching and we go to Sorority meetings together, Alpha Delta Kappa. I still have a good many acquaintances and friends in this area.