

My name is Katie Hortenstine and it is March 21, 2006 and I am here to interview Shirley Meeuwsen and my name was Shirley Wooldridge and I graduated in 1960 from Hillsboro High School

Q: Can you tell me anything about the old school and what it was like?

A: I grew up out at West Union and we went to West Union Grade School so it was really small and then I had to go into Hillsboro High School as a freshman and it was really big. There were four classes and our class, when we graduated there were almost 300 students in that class. So the classes back then were really large too. So it was kind of scary going from a country school into the big city of Hillsboro and of course Hillsboro like any other high school I supposed kind of had their city cliques. So that was a little bit different. I had my own friends from the country. I can remember how scary it was because when I was a freshman I wasn't in the right locker, I was in the locker with my friend and when we had the first locker cleanout I couldn't remember what my locker number was. I panicked and thought I was really going to get into trouble, but it worked out. Back then we had eight classes a day, pretty much like it has been here before and we didn't have like a counseling center we had more like a dean of girls and dean of boys and then the superintendent was right in the school and then the principal and we really didn't, kids didn't go to college back then like they do now and we really didn't utilize the Dean of Girls or the Dean of Boys as much as they do now.

Q: What was their position, the Deans?

A: I would image it would be like a counselor and that is what they were called and there was only one of each for that many kids.

Q: So were the classes geared more towards skills to use in life, like Home Economics and Shop?

A: Yes, they had that and I had American Problems which would be like a social studies class. I took Latin for a couple of years. Didn't have math class or English class. I took algebra couple of years. Then I basically took business classes because I wanted to be a secretary and they had all of those. Of course back then it was typing, shorthand, business machines. When I was a senior I got mono and I was out of school for two weeks because I had it really bad. I went in every day after school and made up those classes and got straight A's. I wasn't a great student, but I was kind of bad because I knew how much I had to do and still have a good time.

Q: Were you involved in any clubs or sports at Hilhi?

A: Actually, we didn't have any girl sports then and I probably wouldn't have anyway because I was always the last one picked in the PE class. I belonged to the dance club. We had a dance club and we had dances every once a while. And then when I was a senior Spart Net which as kind of a pep club for games and stuff. Hilhi back then was great because they had the party room upstairs in the big gym, the football field was

down at the end of school. You would go to the football game there and then walk up to the party room after the football game and go to the dance. It was really cool.

Q: This would be the current J.B.Thomas?

A: Yes.

Q: Were there any major rivalries between Hilhi and other schools?

A: I think back then probably Forest Grove was the biggest one because the Beaverton schools weren't. So it was basically Forest Grove and our league back then we even went to Astoria was in our league, so that was always a big trip. We would ride the rooter bus. We had rooter buses all of the time back then. That was the big trip to Astoria.

Q: So football was popular, basketball was popular.

A: We weren't very good in basketball back then, but football was always fun. Homecoming – the only thing I can remember that was different then that was really fund was during the school day we would do it like a serpentine down town and have a rally down there during the day and then go back to school. So that was really fun. We did that every year.

Q: Did you guys have skits or were there class competitions?

A: I don't remember anything like that. I don't remember that at all.

Q: Were there any other major events besides homecoming that went on that you could remember?

A: Just I performed in choir all four years and we always had our Christmas program. That was always a big thing for me because I was involved in that. I don't even remember that they had plays even though we had that great auditorium there. I am sure we had special assemblies and stuff, but I don't remember any specific ones.

Q: Sort of pop culture wise, were there any major popular singers or groups that everyone liked?

A: The only song that I can remember that was really was Red Sails in the Sunset. That is pretty far back. I can remember we had a dance where we were supposed to invite our dad and my dad went with me and my dad was really quiet and he was really good looking and boy everyone wanted to know who my older boyfriend was.

Q: What about clothing wise, were all the girls in dresses?

A: Yeah. It was kind of interesting back then because I can remember my sister was a couple years younger than me and they weren't allowed to wear patent leather shoes because your underwear might show in them. Basically you just wore, they didn't wear jeans or anything, I think culottes was kind of big then. White bucks and the Peter Pan collars and white blouses and sweaters were real popular then.

Q: What kinds of things were there to do in Hillsboro, like the city itself?

A: Basically there was the movies and then there was the soda shop downtown that was popular and the Times was a little restaurant that we went to after school waiting to go to the same or whatever and that is about it. I guess there was a skating rink out at Shute Park and don't think we had a swimming pool. There wasn't that much to do. It was pretty small back then. Portland wasn't some place where Hillsboro kids would go probably.

Q: Did they have the label of being country kids, farmers?

A: Yeah. Basically. Actually, I probably shouldn't tell this but we went to David Douglas and I went with my friend and coming back up Sunset Highway we passed this car full of guys and got talking out the window and ended up that a couple of them were going in the service the next day or something. They were fairly young, like 20 years old, and I invited them out to my house at West Union. They followed us home and I think we got Chinese food or something and I don't know why my mother allowed that but they turned out to be really neat guys, but I wouldn't recommend it to anybody especially now and we did that. We had a really nice evening and these guys were going to go off to war the next day.

Q: Speaking of war, Korean war or was it Vietnam?

A: It would have been Vietnam. Because that was about the time I was getting out of school and I got married a year after school.

Q: What was the mentality of people about the war, was there one or did they see it as something happening in Asia?

A: At my age, I don't remember that impacted us a whole lot. I think when I was in grade school the idea because back then they used to have watches where they had people on their barns or whatever watching for planes to come. That was when I was in grade school, it scared me to death. I had nightmares about it for a long time because my dad was president of the West Union Community Club and I remember somehow they had a meeting and it bothered me so much that I would have nightmares at night and couldn't sleep and all of a sudden I decided well I wasn't going to let them do that to me. Then it was okay, but it was kind of scary. But that was earlier so by the time I was in high school it didn't affect me that much, but right after I graduated one of my best friend's husband was over in Vietnam. That way it kind of affected us, but then he came home.

Q: Going back to the classroom type stuff were the class sizes like and the learning environment?

A: Okay. There were probably about 25 kids. I don't think they were much bigger than that and I think the environment was like but I haven't been in a class room lately, but teachers weren't real strict, but I mean you had to get your work done as it should be.

Q: Did teens have a lot of jobs back then? Did they work or were they just kind of on the farm type stuff?

A: Yeah, being a farm community. Then you picked berries in the summer and I suppose some of the city kids might have had jobs you know like in town, but basically the kids I knew from the outskirts were just being kids.

Q: Compare Hillsboro now to what it was back then.

A: It is no comparison. It was completely different. It was golly there were only probably I don't know if there were 20,000 people in Hillsboro and traffic wasn't a problem. It was just a nice, quiet little town with a Main Street and you didn't have any malls anywhere. You just bought at J.C. Penneys in downtown Hillsboro. That was about it, that was our life was just around here. There was only the one high school and I don't even think there were junior highs right then. There was Peter Boscow, JW Barnes, it was really small.

Q: Do you have anything else to add about HilHi anything that is completely different to what it is now?

A: Well, I have been involved with HilHi from 1956 – 1960 and then I came back in 1980.

Q: And you have been working here?

A: Even since then. I was at Brown for five years before I came here. Two of my kinds ended up going to Hilhi and were very successful here. Actually, I think we were very lucky for them to be able to go to school in the Hillsboro District. My daughter went to Glencoe, but we won't hold that completely against her. It has very rich traditions. You wanted to know about one of the studs or whatever at Hillsboro when I was there – Larry Binkard. He was a track star. I think he played basketball too. He was a year younger than me.

Q: Are there any traditions that we have now that you had back when you attended Hilhi?

A: Of course we were the Spartans and we had the same fight song.

Q: The homecoming parade was going on for a while?

A: Yeah. I know what it was. Ron Clark our choir teacher he was the one who started May Fete, it was probably after this school opened. I had him for a choir teacher for four years. And then also out in our choir building there was this little class room and I had it for study hall probably just before lunch or something and Eldon Keller who was our former track coach, he was just the advisor in there and this man remembers peoples names do well that years later he remembered my name and I didn't even have him for a teacher or anything. He just remembered it from being out in that classroom the same time I was for study hall. I couldn't believe it. That is how teachers back then connected with kids. He was one of those extra special teachers but I think he had more personal contact with kids and you didn't have to worry about a lot of things that you do now. Racism, of course you didn't have much of that then either. I don't remember having other nationalities.

Thank you very much and I really appreciate it.