

Interview with Dorothy CHRISTENSEN Parks Nash

Conducted by Dean Bones & Students

(This was the 2nd or 3rd interview that we had ever attempted during the Heritage Project at Nestucca Valley Middle School in 2002. There were 3 wonderful students participating in the interview along with me, Dorothy Nash and a caregiver of Dorothy's. Yet . . . as I look back at this transcription I realize that it was a very poor attempt at an interview!

Our questions seem to be very random! And there are many comments made by us during the interview. Dorothy was having a very difficult time hearing us, and at this time in her life she was having a difficult time remembering specific events.

At this stage in the Heritage Project our interviews mostly focused on gaining information about school life of some of the long-time residents of South County, and I think we missed out and learning other important information about general life in South County.

Once again, thank you so very much to Darleen Cole who put in so much time and careful effort in transcribing this interview from a very poorly taped interview recorded on a sad little recorder! Dean Bones)

Student: *And my name is Heidi Denton...*

Dorothy: *Heidi what?*

Student: *Heidi Denton. My grandparents were Evans...*

Dean: *I don't know if she'll know.... right at, uh... at Swede Hill is where her grandpa lives...*

Dorothy: *Oh, uh huh.. (yes)...*

Dean: *And Michael Shepherd. And Michael's....*

Student: *Well, we just moved to this area.*

Dean: *Michael's dad is, uh... I'm saying manager...*

Student: *He's the manager at Camp Winema.*

Dorothy: *Oh... uh, huh (yes)...*

Dean: *Near your stomping grounds.*

Dorothy: *Yes... Winema... I always went by it as I go back and forth to school.*

Dean: *Did you remember Did you drive at the beach at all, or was that the way to go when you were going through there at all...*

Dorothy: *No, I didn't....*

Dean: *No... ok...*

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Dorothy: get out on the beach with the car... no.

Dean: Ok.

Student: Is there anything that really stands out in your mind about school?

Dorothy: Well, I had a lot of good classmates (chuckling).... I enjoyed high school.

Student: Do you remember what you studied?

Dorothy: Well, I took home ec. for one thing... Mrs. Elizabeth Baertlein was our teacher...

Students: Oh, I know her.... was that your favorite class?

Dorothy: Yeah, I believe it was... uh, huh (yes)

Dean: She's coming to school....

Student: Is she really?

Other voice: She was one of my foster kids' like, great-grandmother, grandmother or something...

Student: Do you have a favorite story about Tillamook County?

Dorothy: Well, just off hand, I can't think of anything... maybe I'll come up with something....

Student: What's your favorite thing about living here?

Dean: In Tillamook County...

Dorothy: Well, I enjoy my family. Yeah.

Dean: Her daughter-in-law teaches at Tillamook, doesn't she? Or no... where is she?

Dorothy: Yeah, at Tillamook.

Dean: Is she at Tillamook?

Dorothy: Yeah.. uh, Donna Nash. Yeah, she's a teacher.

Student: Does she teach at the elementary, or the high school?

Dorothy: I think it's high school, yeah... and there's a son that goes there, and her daughter is going to.... let's see.... at Albany... yeah, college at Albany...

Dean: So when you went to high school, Dorothy, was it at Nestucca or was it Cloverdale High School?

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Dorothy: Well, it was Nestucca... yeah, it's been Nestucca for... I think...

Dean: 1930...

Dorothy: After they got the new building...

Dean: Yeah...

Dorothy: I'm sure it was Nestucca for all the rest of the county, cause the old building was in Cloverdale... it was down close to town... it was not a good building at all... just an old....

Dean: Do you remember stories that your parents used to tell you, or your grandpa... any stories about homesteading in the area... any encounters with Indians, native Americans, anything that stands out in your mind?

Dorothy: Well, they never had any trouble with the Indians... they bought a house from the Indians when they moved about... down to Siletz...

Dean: Really....

Dorothy: Or was it the valley... I guess it was at the...

Dean: I think you're right, it was Siletz....

Dorothy: Was it Siletz?

Dean: Yeah, I think they wanted to go to the valley, but they sent them to Siletz.

Other Voice: Tell 'em how much they paid for it.

Dorothy: \$30.00 they paid for that house.

Students: (chuckling)... oh, gee...

Dorothy: And my grandmother had to cook on the fireplace, and every time if she'd build it too high, why, she'd catch the chimney on fire...

Students: (laughing)

Dorothy: Cause it was made of wood... can you believe that?

Student: The fireplace was made of wood?

Dorothy: Yeah... and it would catch on fire if you built too big a fire. (chuckling)

Other voice: Now, this is her grandfather who came here from Denmark, and according to one of these articles I read, he and his cousin opened a clamming... was it clamming, or oysters?

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Dorothy: Oysters.

Other voice: Oyster business.

Dorothy: Uh, huh (yes)...

Other voice: And so the two cousins opened an oyster business over there.

Dean: Where would they get oysters?

Dorothy: It was up north somewhere.

Dorothy: My dad didn't have anything to do with that....

Other voice: No, it was your grandfather... yeah... it's the Tillamook Pioneer Museum home page, and it's got pictures and history all over the area...

Dean: Well, we were in the... I was in the museum with some kids a while back, and there were a lot of records as to Christensen, and I didn't even realize that you were a Christensen until somebody in South County mentioned that the other day....

Dorothy: Yeah, well, I, uh....

Other voice: Yeah, well, I guess that when her grandfather and grandmother moved in, that was the first white woman most of them had seen, and then her father was the first white child that was born in south county.

Dean: Dorothy, why would they have come here? Why would your grandpa have come to this area?

Dorothy: I don't know... just wanted to try something new, I guess. (laughing)

Dean: He really did!

Dorothy: Yeah... I don't really know what their reason was.

Student: Dorothy, could you tell us about some of the things that students would play at recess... some of the games?

Dorothy: Oh, we played baseball, and... gosh, that's been such a long time ago (laughing)... it's hard to remember.

Student: Do you remember what your favorite one was?

Dorothy: Huh?

Student: Do you remember which one was your favorite?

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Dorothy: Oh, I don't think I... I just jumped rope, I think... (laughing).... we did that quite a bit.

Student: Yeah....

Student: Did they have tether ball?

Dorothy: Huh?

Student: Did they have tether ball back then?

Dorothy: Feather ball?

Student: Tether....

Dean: I don't think so...

Dorothy: Never heard of it...

Other voice: That was my age....

Student: Did you ever play the game Run, Fox, Run?

Dorothy: Not that I remember.

Dean: That's a game that they heard from another person this morning.... Ruth Crockett mentioned that... she used to play that...

Dorothy: Oh... well, could be I did, too... (laughing)

Student: Annie Over?

Dorothy: Huh?

Student: Annie Over... where you threw a ball over the school....

Dorothy: Annie Over... yeah, we used to do that. Funny how you forget all those things... that's been a long time ago.

Dean: And actually, in her later years, Dorothy used to go to lots of games up at the high school, didn't you?

Dorothy: Yes, I...

Dean: Great spectator... good supporter of all the high school sports....

Dorothy: Yeah... I always enjoyed that....

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Student: Blazers rule!

Dean: Yes!!

Dorothy: I know they would.

Student: Michelle watches 'em all...

Other voice: She could tell you every Blazer and everything about 'em.. and every time they mess up and what they did wrong...

Dean: Yeah... good for you.

Student: Did you used to play basketball?

Dorothy: Well, I tried, yeah... I wasn't too good a player, but I tried...

Student: Yeah. What were any jobs that you've had?

Dorothy: Oh, I used to work at the restaurant at Neskowin....

Dean: What was it called at that point?

Dorothy: Oh, it was Neskowin...

Dean: Neskowin Restaurant? Is that what..

Dorothy: I don't know... I can't remember if it had a special name or not... I think it was just...

Dean: At the hotel that was there?

Dorothy: No, it was separate... it was, uh, towards the ocean there right back of the store, on that road....

Dean: Ok...

Dorothy: On that road that went across the bridge... yeah... yeah, I used to go down there and wait tables during the summer.

Student: Did you have animals? Did you have cows or anything like that?

Dorothy: Had cows... and we had a dog...

Student: Did you used to help milk?

Dorothy: Oh, I would give the cows their grain... that's about all, I didn't do any... we had machines to do the milking.

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Dean: As a child you did, you mean, or as an adult did you have a farm also?

Dorothy: My folks had the farm.

Other voice: Didn't you tell me one time that they were some of the first people to have a... to get milking machines, though, in the area?

Dorothy: I don't remember that....

Other voice: I think that she mentioned that one time that they used to do it by hand...

Dorothy: Yeah, we used milkers...

Student: Do you remember when you got the electricity down here?

Dorothy: No, I don't, but it's been... it was a long time ago... yeah... we were some of the first, I think...

Dean: Now, even when I was in school, which wasn't as far back as Dorothy, there were still people up Blaine Road that didn't have electricity, so it just depends on how far away you were from the main... calm down... stop trying to figure my age... ok...

Other voice: I'm from San Diego.. we had electricity...

Dean: Oh... no, even forty years ago or so there were some people who were still getting it on the outer roads...

Student: So, what kind of things did you do when you were young, just in general?

Dorothy: Well.... played games with neighbors....

Dean: When you were in high school, though, Dorothy, what would you do to go have a good time? Were there dances, or what was there that the kids would do?

Dorothy: Well, no, I don't... we didn't do much dancing... uh... (chuckling)... oh, gosh, what did we do?

Other voice: Well, you were telling me earlier that you went on a lot of picnics...

Dorothy: Well, the family did, yes. My dad, especially, loved to go on Sunday... just anywhere to get out and eat a lunch somewhere...

Student: Was your family a big part of your life?

Dorothy: Oh, yes, very much so. Uh, huh (yes)... I had three sisters... lost one of 'em when she was just young from eating sprayed apples...

Dean & Student: Really? Oh, no....

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Dorothy: Uh, huh (yes)... they didn't at that time... didn't know anything about it, but the other two lived their full life.

Dean: No brothers?

Dorothy: No brothers. I was the cowboy.

Students: (laughing)

Dorothy: Yeah, I used to ride the horse, pull the hay up into the barn when we harvested it...

Dean: So your property that your parents had, did that include the Scherzinger property... what it is now?

Dorothy: No, uh huh (no)...

Dean: It didn't include that.

Dorothy: No... uh...

Dean: I saw the picture in here, where it was.

Dorothy: Across the road... uh, Scherzingers were up on the hill across from us.

Dean: Yeah...

Dorothy: Uh, huh (yes)... yeah.

Student: Did you used to enjoy school?

Dorothy: Oh, yes... I always enjoyed....

Student: Did you do a lot of reading?

Dorothy: I did, uh huh (yes)... I don't do too much now, but I did a lot as a young girl.

Student: Do you have any stories about when you were young, just about anything at all?

Dorothy: (chuckling) Oh, boy...

Student: Did you ever get in trouble?

Dorothy: (laughing) No, not that I remember...

Other voice: Didn't you tell me a story... could have been my mom.. I don't know who it was... didn't you tell me a story one time about your dad raising pumpkins and letting the people steal pumpkins out of his pumpkin patch, or something like that?

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Dorothy: No... I don't...

Dean: Dorothy, when you were in school, if kids got in trouble, what would happen to them? How were they punished? Do you remember? Grade school, or high school?

Dorothy: It affected their grades, and they got taken to their parents...

Dean: That wouldn't have been good, would it?

Dorothy: No, I don't think so (chuckling).

Student: Did they ever have to sit in...

Dorothy: Did ??? No, I don't think they ever did. (laughing) It wasn't maybe 'cause they didn't need to... (laughing)... oh, gosh.

Student: Do you remember any times when you were in class and some kids were getting in trouble? Do you remember any funny stories?

Dorothy: No... I stayed pretty good.

Dean: What about other students, though? You all weren't perfect, now you just stop that right here... you tell me (laughing)...

Dorothy: (laughing) No... there was others that had trouble... I know they did... that goes back a long ways...

Dean: Was Ruth Crockett... was she behind you in school... younger in school in, or...

Dorothy: Oh, she was older.

Dean: Was she? Really?

Dorothy: Yeah... she was older.

Student: She graduated with Tony.

Dorothy: Her brother was there... she had two brothers for a while... uh, huh (yes)...

Student: When did you graduate from high school? Do you remember what year?

Dorothy: Oh, let's see... I think I figured that out... I wrote it down here...

Other voice: Well, has anybody from her era in school said anything about corporal punishment at all?

Student: Yeah...

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Other voice: They had that when I was in school.

Student: Getting whupped. Getting whupped when they were bad. Did anyone get whooped when they were being bad?

Other voice: There was a nice big paddle in the dean's room, and those boys....

Dorothy: Oh, I think there probably was.

Other voice: bent over and grabbed their ankles more than once....

Dean: But you know what? In all the years that I used to do grandparent's days at Beaver Grade School, which would be... oh, I don't know what... seven, eight years... of the grandparents, they would say... most of them said we would never dare do any... we would never talk back to a teacher... that's what I heard over and over... not that everybody was perfect, but they just wouldn't do it... and they knew... every one of them said that they knew that if that ever happened, that they would not only get punished at school, but it was worse at home.

Dorothy: (laughing) Yeah....

Dean: And nowadays, as a teacher, it's like that with some families, but for a lot of them it's more if... once the home hears about it, it's to get mad at school kind of a situation, instead of being so supportive of the authority. There weren't very many that actually talked about.... I mean, I can picture in my mind, lots of them sitting here thinking, "You know, I can't really think of anybody that ever did anything to the teacher or anything", but I think kids who got in trouble can't really remember those very much.

Other voice: No, 'cause I can remember.... you wore a skirt too short to school, and....

Dean: Oh, my gosh!

Other voice: ...you were expelled.

Student: Yeah, you got sent home.

Student: Dorothy, did you have to wear a certain thing to school?

Dorothy: No... no...

Student: Could you wear pants or did it matter?

Dean: I don't think women wore pants at that point.

Dorothy: I don't think I ever did... I just wore dresses.

Other voice: That didn't change until the seventies...

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Other voice: Yeah, 'cause we couldn't wear pants in school...

Other voice: Yeah, we weren't allowed to wear pants in high school.

Other voice: But I think my sister... and she graduated later....

Dorothy: No, I walked home at night...

Student: You walked home from school at night?

Dorothy: Uh, huh... (yes)

Other voice: It was a pretty good walk.

Dorothy: It was about two miles.

Dean: Would lots of kids walk home with you?

Dorothy: No...

Dean: No?

Dorothy: No, I was about the only one.. (chuckling)

Dean: Really?

Dorothy: But they didn't have the cars on the road then that they have now.

Dean: Yeah, right.

Student: Were you ever afraid?

Dorothy: Well, kind of, yeah... had to walk up there above the lake there at Winema...

Student: Yeah...

Dean: So, Michael, ask her what the name of the lake was.

Student: What was the name of the lake when you were there?

Dorothy: Winema.

Dean: Oh...

Student: We've heard Fletchers, and....

Dorothy: Fletchers, yeah... it was called that, too...

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Dean: What was the other name?

Student: Fletchers and Bailey...

Dean: Bailey Lake... did you ever hear it called that, also?

Dorothy: Yeah, it was both of them... it's names were used... but later, it was Winema... yeah, used to have... take our tents and go down there and camp, after we got the hay in... we'd go down and stay for a week.

Dean: Now, Michael was telling me that there was a coast guard camp down there at Winema for a while... do you remember that?

Dorothy: No.

Dean: So when you camped, you could just basically go anywhere down there to camp?

Dorothy: Uh, huh (yes)... there was no restrictions....

Other voice: Now, where was this lake?

Dean: As you go... do you know where Oretown is?

Other voice: Uh, huh (yes)...

Dean: Just south of Oretown... on the right...

Other voice: Over the hill....

Other voice: Oh, ok... I've seen that little lake down there.

Dorothy: Yeah...

Student: Do you ever remember having a deputy sheriff or a constable?

Dorothy: Do I what?

Student: Do you ever remember having a deputy sheriff or a constable?

Other voice: Who was the law? Who were the police back then?

Dorothy: I don't know.

Other voice: See, she was a good kid.

Dorothy: (laughing) Yeah, well, I never had a trouble with 'em, but...

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Other voice: They probably had a sheriff that took care of things, maybe?

Dorothy: I just don't remember...

Dean: I don't think there was a county sheriff that took... I think it was more of a local... in fact, what we learned this morning, I think probably the reason for her question, was there was a person who was a constable, 'cause that's what they called them... surprised me... at Cloverdale to take care of the problems in that area.

Student: But that was in Cloverdale, not in Oretown.

Dorothy: Oh, uh huh (yes)... well, I don't know.. I never had any trouble with anybody, so... yeah...

Student: Did you ever teach school?

Dorothy: Teach? No.

Student: What did you do... like, what did your parents do when you were growing up? What was their occupations?

Dorothy: Who?

Student: Your parents.

Dorothy: My parents?

Student: Yeah.

Dorothy: They just run the farm... Jersey cows, not the black ones like everybody up here has... (chuckling)

Student: So there were more meat cows, instead of dairy...

Student: No, they were dairy...

Dorothy: No, they are dairy cows....

Student: Oh, were they really?

Dorothy: Uh, huh (yes)... they have a higher yield than the Holsteins... the Holsteins beat 'em by having more milk, but it isn't as high a grade.

Dean: Dorothy, was the cannery running in Oretown... do you remember that?

Dorothy: Hmm.... I don't... when I was growing up?

Dean: Yeah.

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Dorothy: I don't hardly think so... I remember it being there, but...

Dean: Uh, huh (yes)...

Dorothy: ... I don't remember it ever running at that time. It could have been, I wouldn't say it wasn't...

Dean: Right.

Dorothy: Yeah...

Dean: Do you kids have any other questions?

Students: (in unison) Uhhhhhh...

Dean: (laughing)... Uhhhh.... So Dorothy, the other Christensens in the county... there are quite a few of them... are they related to you, then?

Dorothy: Well, there's not too many left any more.

Dean: Really.

Dorothy: Uncle Fred was the cheese inspector for years, and he lived here in Tillamook... then Uncle Claude had a meat company...

Dean: Right.

Dorothy: ... on down the road a ways up at Tillamook...

Dean: That's the one out by Kilchis, isn't it?

Dorothy: Yeah... and... well, let's see... that's about the only ones here... there was one that lived in... down south...

Dean: What about Shirley Christensen... is she related...

Dorothy: Huh?

Dean: Shirley Christensen?

Dorothy: No.

Dean: Oh, they aren't, huh? Ooooh... that's interesting...

Student: Did the... there's a road in Oretown... it's Christensen Road... was that named after your family?

Dorothy: I don't know, honey.

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Dean: I'll bet it is. We could do some research and find out.

Dorothy: Oh, could be... I don't know... this place over here is owned by a Christensen, but it's spelt different...

Dean: Really?

Dorothy: It's ... I A N E N, and ours was E N S E N....

Dean: Yeah...

Other voice: What is this... what is this interview for?

Dean: Oooh... good question!

Student: We have a Heritage Project going on at our school... and we're just trying to find out more about South County's past, and so we're... partly by interviewing people that lived here and we're looking up stuff, and just trying to figure out what exactly...

Student: Homesteads and dairies, and...

Other voice: Is it something that you guys are interested in, as just you guys being interested, or did the teacher say we're gonna' do this, and you just...

Student: It was both.

Other voice: Oh, it was a project...

Student: It's a whole school project.... our school is split up in committees....

Other voice: That's an awesome thing.... just listening to you guys.. and I think that... I was just thinking a few minutes ago... 'cause Dorothy has told me stories all the time, but I... as a kid, you know... I don't remember anything about my history, and it didn't really make any difference, but to see you kids here, living here, wanting to know more about where you're living, it makes living here so more alive... so much meaningful than just growing up, going to Tillamook High or whatever, getting married and, you know... yada yada.... it's so... that's a great, great task you guys are taking on... I really admire that.

Student: There's some... most people think that it was forever... like a long, long, long, long time ago...

Student: And we're finding out that it really wasn't that long ago at all.

Other voice: Exactly! Exactly. And isn't that a neat concept?

Student: Next week we're having a lot of older people come in and do interviews, and I video tape 'em and everything... and I don't know if we're gonna' end up making a movie of 'em...

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Other voice: You should. You know, because... you should, and you could even sell it...

Dorothy: And what are your names?

Student: My name is Heidi...

Student: My name is Serena...

Dorothy: Last names...

Student: Denton

Student: Pietruszka

Dorothy: I see... you're not familiar to me...

Student: Nope... my name's Serena Pietruszka...

Student: My name's Michael Shepherd...

Dorothy: No... I don't recognize any of 'em... you're newcomers...

Students: (laughing) Yeah...

Other voice: Are you going to have a presentation at the end of it, or...

Student: I don't know, yet...

(end of interview)

Transcribed by Darleen Cole
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