

Warm Valley Historical Project - Part II
Interview with LUCY BONATSIE, 80 years old¹
Anne Slater, Interviewer
January 8, 1991

Tape 1 Side 1

Anne Slater: January 8, 1991. A conversation with Mrs. Lucy Bonatsie about her experiences in school ...at the government school at Ft. Washakie.²
Ah, you've said to me that you were about... you were six years old when you went there.

Mrs. Lucy Bonatsie: Yeah, its when they fooled me and put me in.

AS And they told you that you were going to go down to play with your friends and they left you there?

LB Yeah, see, I had an older sister, so they left me with her.

Other woman in back ground: You can sit there if you want to.

AS Well, was your older sister already in school?

LB Yeah, she was already in school and my cousin... is Mary Anne Day, she was there. And they were in school already when I got there.

AS And ...when they took you to school, where was your family living?

LB Over at the Wind River. Behind the Wind River, that's where we lived.

AS Near that old jail?

LB Yeah, next block there.

AS Uh huh. AS Uh huh.

LB Next acre, I think. That's where we used to have a cabin there.

AS And was it...did you have a big family?

LB No. Just me, my sister and my step-father and mother.

AS And how much older was your sister?

LB What? About two years.

AS Oh? So, now, when she went to school, because it was a boarding school, had she come home ...did you get to see her some after she went to school and before you went?

LB Yeah, weekends and every month or something. Every month some girls go home. They stay over night and come back Sunday and then another bunch go out the next week... just like that... revolving, you know, girls get to go home one [at a] time.

AS Uh huh. Well, did you have any ideas about the school, maybe from your sister before you went there?

LB I knew it was a school and a place to sleep and eat [laughs].

AS And when you went ...you spoke Shoshone?

LB Yes, nothing but Shoshone.

AS And how did that go at school? What kinds of ...did the differences in languages make ...was that hard?

LB The Indian language, every body spoke their own language except the Arapahos, you know, they weren't there at that time. But towards my school days down there, they were. Several of them come there and I think they were put there because they didn't behave themselves down to the missions.

AS Uh huh, about ...you went there when you were six. About what year would that make it?

LB About 14...I don't remember.

AS It doesn't matter...

voice in background said something in Shoshone.

LB noco 1911...

AS So, about 1911?

LB That's when I was born.

AS So, that would make it about 1917 or '18... was that when ... Mrs. Bonatsie...when you went to school there ...was that road that is now Ethity[sp?], was that a kind of a... was it a dirt road?

LB The one going down the river?

- AS Well, the one going down to the school. Or how did you get down to the school from Wind River?
- LB Just going down that road.
- AS Uh huh.
- LB That's where the road is right there, where... from the agent's ...That used to be an agency once before. An' the whole thing burned down, I guess. Over there at Wind River. And that road going straight down to the big school, the day school, that was a road there all the time.
- AS That road's been there for a long time?
- LB Uh huh. They just changed the roads towards Lander [sp?] and that way around it.
- AS Uh huh.
- LB This road went clear down the river towards Ethity then it goes to the hot springs and all that.
- AS Uh huh. But now it's black top and its paved and all. But the road's where it always was?
- LB I suppose ...because I can't see to see that.
- AS Uh huh. But when you went to school did you go in a horse and buggy or horse back ...how did you get there?
- LB On a wagon and a team. Course, I didn't go there and back again. I stayed all nights and days... all the time. That was my home the rest of the years.
- AS Well, when you went and started in the school, did they give you school cloths?
- LB Yeah, they gave every day cloths and some [lady?] and then our uniforms which they called out good cloths for going to church in.
- AS Did they have you go to church?
- LB Yeah, the Rev. Roberts came there every weekend. If he couldn't, well his daughter'd be there, would come over. They'd come over in a team and buggy and... I think it's a one horse buggy.

- AS Well did they...When you started school ...and you got there do you remember when you were a little girl ...what kinds of things did you study ...what kinds of things did they have you do each day?
- LB Well, we learned to count. We had little sticks, something like matchsticks, only they were colored, and we cut out a lot of magazine cutting and we'd label them and all that.
- AS And they were teaching you English?
- LB Yeah.
- AS During all this?
- LB Yeah. Then we learned to count.
- AS Well, when you were in class they spoke ...Now you spoke Indian, but all the teachers spoke English... or do you remember that? You were pretty young...
- LB Yeah, they spoke English and when there was some that knowed how to speak English. Some of the older girls come in and translate the words.
- AS So, now you said that some of the older girls weren't friendly, they weren't too nice to the younger ones but... [laughs].
- LB Well, some of them but not all of them.
- AS Uh huh, But did ... they help you ... was it the older girls who really helped you learn English?
- LB No, not really. I pick 'em up my self.
- AS Yeah?
- LB I just knowed a few words when I started.
- AS Uh huh ...but you learned pretty fast.
- LB Yeah.
- AS And were there other children who had trouble learning to speak English? It was hard for [them]?
- LB You mean the other kids?
- AS Uh hum.

LB Yeah. Just like me some of them started out with out a word of English, and we'd ask each others what it meant and sit there and count with our fingers or what ever we have out there. We'd pick up pebbles, put them in a row and count that.

AS Well, did they let you use Indian language when you weren't in the class or were you supposed to use 9nglish?

LB No, we weren't supposed to talk in Indian while we're down there. All White Man.

AS What happened if you did?

LB Well, we got punished for talking Indian ...go sit in the corner or send us somewhere else.

AS I heard one story about people getting sent down to a dark room in the basement.

LB I don't know...

AS But that was a boy-maybe they didn't do that to the girls.

LB To the big girls, yeah.

AS Oh, they did?

LB I think so. I'm not sure about that [laughs].

AS Oh well, during the day they taught you how to count and how to color and you were learning how to write out words ...what others ...what other subjects did you study?

LB Read. We learned our ABCs. Learned how to count, then we learned all the names of the animals like chicken, pig, and all that...

AS Uh hum.

LB Some times they'd have us drawin' what pig looks like ...what we thought it looked like [laughs].

voice in back ground: I'd like to have seen some of those!

AS Yeah!

LB They tell how to ...maybe have us draw in a girl or a boy or something like that. I still remember my cousin Millie, she'd drawin...what she drew was a girl she carrying, just a girl ...just come down to about the end of her skirts hanging down

full length. Well, she'd put the feet hanging there on the end [laughs]. I still remember her drawing that.

AS Well, that wasn't the ...the person she drew wearing the skirt wasn't wearing an Indian skirt?

LB No.

AS She put them in a white skirt?

LB Yeah.

AS What did your uniforms look like?

LB They're blue surge, wool surge ...They're middy type. You know what middy type is³?

AS Yes.

LB They have that collar with the stripes ...with the red stripes with, maybe, little stars on the corners. And they come, you know, like this. And then we had a little tie that went with it, a red tie that we could have hanging down or maybe tie it into a bow. And that was a middy up here with a button on the sides and that skirt has pleats over here in the front and back, too, I think.

AS Did it-was it pretty long, the skirt?

LB I don't know ...No, I think, below the knee anyway.

AS Yeah, And did they... you had to wear shoes that had those hard soles, that was different from the way it was at home, wasn't it?

LB Yeah.

AS What did you think of those shoes?

LB Well, I didn't think nothing of it as long as we got shoes on... and running around with shoes on [laughs].

AS Protected your feet?

LB Uh huh. Sometimes those shoes blister your feet, too.

AS Yeah. Did you always get a pair that fit well?

- LB We try to. They tried to get us with a pair that fit. Of Course, they're a little stiff when we'd first get 'em.
- AS Well, that outfit you just described, did you wear that every day?
- LB No. Not that uniform. That was just Sunday and good wear.
- AS Uh hum.
- LB The others are just something like the one I wear around here with the round collar and the short sleeves. They're straight dresses. Something that could go through the mangle without ruining the seams or the folds. You just fold it in half and you ran it through the mangle and you got your dress ironed.
- AS Did they have ...They had mangles there?
- LB Yeah. They had those big washers too.
- AS As part of your being a student, did you have to learn how to use a mangle and how to do the laundry?
- LB Yeah. We didn't handle the washer though. We sorted cloths and folded clothes. Those little girls that's assigned to that... Each month a different girls working in that, down to the laundry. They iron and they press and they fold clothes and sort clothes and put them away. Put them in baskets so they could be transferred to the building.
- AS That sounds like a big job!
- LB It is. It's a bunch of them working, the ones in the morning, some in the morning and some in the afternoon.
- AS Oh, sometimes some students would go to school in the morning and work in the afternoon and some would work in the afternoon [sic] or ... Not everyone had the same schedule?
- LB No. Whether it was the laundry, in the kitchen, in the sewing room, in the house. That's the house girls that keep the building clean. It's a bunch of them, too, there were. They work some in the morning and some in the afternoon, that's for the house part.
- AS When you were little, when you were there for the first time, did you have to do those jobs or was that something that happened when you got older?
- LB Little older.
- AS Were there any of the jobs that you liked?

LB I liked most of them. 'Cept the laundry of course [laughs].

AS Was it hot in there?

LB Yeah. Pretty hot when it's going, yeah, but the toughest part was working with the mangle. You had to watch what you're doing and fold them sheets so they could be pressed the way it is.

AS I haven't talked with any body for a long time who knows what a mangle is and I remember that from my childhood and having to get them all squared up straight so you didn't iron wrinkles and stuff into them.

LB Uh huh.

AS But they ironed all of the bedding?

LB And sheets and pillow cases. 'Cept blankets. They hang them out or put them through the dryer. Cool dryer.

AS Oh, they had dryers?

LB Uh huh. And they had that spinner, spin that, twists all the juice out of that, they had that too.⁴

AS You said that you liked most of the work that you had to do... Is that where you learned how to sew?

LB I knew how to sew before I went to school.

AS Was it a different kind of sewing at school?

LB No ...Yeah. The fancy work ...what they called the fancy work. Them different kind of stitches. The sewing room, that's where we learned how to do that. Its just the same part of what's going on... some girls going in the morning, some girls going in the afternoon. And those switched around so that we learned how to do this and that.

AS What kind of things did they have you sewing?

LB In the sewing [room]? Why we made those simple-made dresses like I said we wear for our every day dresses made out of hickory and gingham and percale... And we make pillow cases... She cuts them out or she shows one girl how to cut them out and then she ... two or three of them cut it until all put down so the teachers can come along [and see what] we got. We had six or seven of them sewing machines. Some White Rotary [?] or Singer.

- AS So, when you were sewing, you didn't make something, say a pillow case or one of those simple dresses... you didn't make it from beginning to end... it was kind of like an assembly line that you did some part of it and somebody did something else? Is that right?
- LB No. We finished the whole garment.
- AS You did the whole thing?
- LB Uh huh. And the pillow cases too. We put French seams in that.
- AS When you finished a dress, or ...one of those everyday dresses... would that be something that you might wear or were you making clothes for the whole school?
- LB For the whole school.
- AS So the school ...Really, you were in that sewing room... you were making that school go. You were supporting it, weren't you?
- LB Supporting it, yeah [laughs] Yeah, Those simple dresses we'd ...like Millie and I, we'd get together and have it lying here and we'd decorate it with different stitches or different ways of using bias on it. That's what we did on it to decorate it, so it wouldn't look so simple and like, the same as the others.
- AS Oh, so, when you were making those dresses, you could do a little bit so they didn't all look like each other?
- LB Uh huh.
- AS And did the teacher, or the person who was in charge of that...did they want you to do that? ...Did they like that?
- LB Yeah, they liked it.
- AS So, if you were handy with your hands and clever... that wasn't a bad place... That wasn't a bad place to be?
- LB No. I liked to work up in there.
- AS Did they ever ask you... when they assigned those jobs and stuff ... did they ever ask you what you wanted to do or did they just tell you what to do?
- LB No, they showed us most everything, I guess, but there was some girls who worked in the bakery. There was two boys, too, they worked int he bakery. They made the school's bread, that old bread.

- AS Did you ever work in the bakery?
- LB Yeah. We used to make pies, roll out pies. We used to pour in that flour into that mixer, then I'd turn it on and then it'd mix that dough then when it'd get through, there was a big old tray-looking thing that was a wood. It was all greased up and then we'd just turn that thing up-side-down into that one and pour it in into that thing, that wooded tray. Then from there its cut up into smaller pieces where the girls can handle them. There's two or three of them standing around there too, waiting for to knead the bread. Then they'd knead it and then they'd throw it back into that wooden thing and then they'd leave it there to raise. And when it raised, then they'd start kneading it again and shape it into loaves.
- AS I know we're talking a little bit about the bakery, and I know it was a long time ago ...and if I'm asking too many questions, please tell me to slow down, but ... do you recall whether the food at school was different from the food at home?
- LB Oh, yes, some times, yes. My mother was an old lady. She was an old Indian, but she knew how to bake bread and pies and cakes, so it wasn't too different.
- AS But what about the meat and the, you know, the other things... Were there differences between the school and home, how they cooked things and what they cooked?
- LB Not ...not from where I used to be... Just about alike. My mother was an old Indian but she knew how to cook [garbled] pies and stuff like that. Bake ...cook meat.... She dried meat and all that. Knew how to store the meat too.
- AS Well, that was different from school, from the way they did it at school?
- LB Yeah.
- AS And how did your mom do it?
- LB Do what?
- AS Store meat.
- LB Dried it, then ...what do you call it... She dried 'em and hang 'em up in the sun and let it dry, ...let the wind dry it up. Put salt on 'em and keep 'em turned now and then. Sometimes she'd put a thin material on it so they flies didn't get to it.
- AS But they didn't do that, you didn't have dried meat, or jerked meat at school did you?
- LB No.

- AS Was it mostly beef that you had?
- LB Yeah. The school raised it too. The school raised everything, chickens, pigs, sheep, horses, cows. So, they'd butcher now and then... I think Fridays they butchered. And they'd have these great big lockers where they'd hang the beef and stuff. Its where the ice... Its all in the center of a nice place where there's ice put in the sawdust. Then in the middle of that is the place where they hang the meat and keep the meat.
- AS Did they serve you a lot of meat?
- LB No, not too much meat. Just enough.
- AS Well... was it as much as you'd gotten at home?
- LB Well, maybe a little more, because, let's see, the school raised it and at home, of course, we'd have to scrub off of that and look ...hunt for it. At that time, the Indians used to go out and get a deer when they felt like getting one and if they could find one. But nowadays, you can't survive, you can't survive on all that... They put you in jail and let you starve worse than what you're doing.
- AS The buffalo went away and then the deer went away?
- LB They didn't exactly go away. They was just taken away from us.
- AS Yeah, yeah, that's true.
- LB And the fowl... chickens, ducks, wild birds... only thing... I don't know... I think they still took the prairie dogs, eh?
- Woman in background: Yes, that's controlled too, now.
- AS [shifting] I'm moving around because the tape is about to stop and I didn't want to stop and us go on talking... Well, did you have a lot of bread at the school... more bread than you had at home?
- LB Yeah. We had plenty of bread because they bake it there and they... They raised their grain, then they take it to the mill and then they have their flour.
- AS Where was the mill?
- LB To Lander with it.
- AS Oh, they went to Lander with it? 'Cus at one time there was a mill out there at Ft. Washakie.

LB Oh yes, they was, there still was, Still there.

AS Well, they don't use it any more. But I was out there poking around and I think I found out where it was... It was close to the river, going away from the Public Health... uh... I'm going to stop this a minute and turn this tape over. Just a second.

END TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

Lucy Bonatsie, Continued TAPE 1, SIDE 2

AS Well, I'm sort of curious... You would go home, then sometimes on weekends?

LB Uh huh.

AS And what was it like, after you'd been at school for a while ... going back home when you were spending most of your time at school and then you'd just get to go home for a little bit to be with your family. Was that strange?

LB We were glad to get home.

AS What was good about getting home?

LB I think it was fun [laughs] because we'd get to eat whatever Indian food that they'd make. That's what I always enjoyed. Dried meat and stuff like that.

AS Well, the dried meat was something to look forward to. Can you remember any of the other things that you used to look forward to about going home?

LB [long pause] What do you mean?

AS Oh, were there games that you could play or things that you could do at home that you couldn't do at school?

LB Oh yes, if we have a neighbor... That we could play together... But just with my mother... We'd go berry picking in the summer.

AS Where did you go berry picking?

LB Along that creek there. Trout Creek.

AS Yeah? And what kind of berries?

LB Gooseberries and currants.

AS And then you'd make gravy out of it?... How did... did you dry them?

LB Yeah. We dried them. Of course, my mother, she knew how to can, too. 'Cus she used to be working with [sounds like "ID, over here at Crow Hart Wood." Is ID her sister's name?]among those white Indians or whatever they called themselves She used to wash for them and I used to go with her and that's where she learned how to do that. She knew how to bake bread and all that before that.

AS Yeah. Now, when you'd go with her when she was working up here... was that after you had graduated from school?

LB No, that's during the summer.

AS Oh, so you came up here in the summer?

LB Uh huh.

AS And what was your mother's name?

LB Queen.

AS That was her first name?

LB Yeah.

AS When she... Before she was married... What was her other name?

LB Her maiden name?

AS Uh huh.

LB Ah... Let's see... [talks with other woman in Shoshone] Daylight, OK.

Other woman: That was her maiden name.

AS Daylight? That was her white name?

LB That's my grandpa's name.

AS Did that eventually get shortened to Day?

Other woman: No.

AS No, oh. And your dad's name was...?

LB Beaver Hill.

- AS Oh So, Alright. And... uh.. when you... how did you feel about going back to school when you'd come home for the weekend?
- LB We thought it was fun. We'd all be glad to see one another when we got back.
- AS So, you'd make good friends at the school?
- LB Uh huh.
- AS And when you went home... now you had to wear those... you know... those everyday uniforms or the dress up uniforms... did you wear those home? How did that work?
- LB Yeah. We wore those home. Then when we'd come back, we'd throw them in the wash.
- AS Oh?
- LB Let the school wash it [laughs]. Of course, when we go home, we change into our little clothes to play around in.
- AS Were you glad to get back into them?
- LB Uh huh [laughs] then when we were going to come back, then we'd put the school clothes on.
- AS Uh huh. Did you... when you went to school... was the way the people ate... were the dishes and cups and the knives and the forks was that something that was different from what it was at home?
- LB Not really. 'Cus we had plates and cups and forks and things like that. We may be Indians, but we had those. And then before that, them spoons and stuff, they had things to eat with. Like they'd carve out wooden spoons and things like that. Then they'd have these two pronged willows to stir the food with.
- AS Oh, you could cut where the willow forked?
- LB Uh huh.
- AS and did you have to dry it out or could you use it immediately?
- LB Any way. It depends on what you're making.
- AS [long pause] Well, why might you dry one of them out? What different things might you make with them?

LB With the willow?

AS Yes, with the willow.

LB Well, we'd make forks and spoons and we'd make straight sticks to stir with. then we'd use them, you know. Most of the time when I was growing up we had a Dutch oven... you know... So we'd have a willow and flatten it on the end, you know to go through the lid... the handle of the lid and then lift it with that and then put it on something.

AS Well, now, at this point were you cooking in doors?

LB Out.

AS Out?

LB Unless your [Dutch] oven could fit into your stove,-the kitchen stove.

AS But could you cook outside that way pretty much all year round?

LB Yeah.

AS Warmed up the outside. [laughter] Where there differences between home and school in the kinds of things you slept in or on?

LB Well, before these houses came around, well, then, we had just tents. We'd have that all warmed up, you know. Cloth all around, with maybe canvas for, what to you call it... for the base around the tent to keep the wind out.

AS Were those pretty warm?

LB Yeah, it was pretty warm once you got used to it. Only you had to keep turning around every now and then, to keep one side warm and then the other side warm.

AS Did you sleep... There was a fire... a fire inside?

LB Yeah.

AS A Warming fire?

LB Yeah. One of those old-time stoves. And sometimes we didn't have that so we'd have a... The Indians used tub stoves. They'd cut a hole in it for the fire box and then cut a hole on top for the pipe and then they run it through the tent and then they'd have some tin around the neck of that pipe so it won't catch fire on it... on the cloth. See how smart we are? [laughs]

- AS I always wanted to spend a winter in a tepee because I have an idea that its probably pretty warm in there.
- LB Uh huh.
- AS But did each person have their own place in that tent... or in that tepee where thy slept... or did you sleep where you wanted to?
- LB No, we had places to sleep. We had straw mattresses. We had, you know, straw... bring in bale of straw and then spread it out. And then they'd cover that with burlap, or denim, you know... Old overalls that we'd cut up and then sew together. Maybe make a big bag out of it, you know, like a mattress, you know, then it's cleaner. And then we'd take it out and dust it every now and then. Sweep the top off and things like that. Then we'd roll it up next to the wall, then at night, when we were ready to go to bed, we'd pull it down and fix it up and put the mat down good and then we'd put another covering on there.
- AS So, you kept pretty warm?
- LB Uh huh. Then they had the floor... its covered with burlap and they'd nail it down and it still has straw underneath it to keep the floor warm. So you could sit down anywhere. Get you a little mat or something to sit on, a cushion, then you'd... that's nailed down and its all... maybe we'd moisten it every day and then they'd sweep it so the dust don't fly. Then the ground part is all around the stove, you know, so the ashes don't fall out and burn anything. That's what they had. they'd have ground sticking out and they'd keep that clean, dust it every now and then. Moisten it with warm water to keep that dust down.
- AS Was the dust worse in the summer or in the winter?
- LB No.
- AS Did you do it every day?
- LB We did it every day.
- AS When you would go back... You said that you enjoyed going back to school after you'd be home for a day or for vacation. When you were at school, but you weren't doing the jobs you were assigned to and you weren't in classes, how did you amuse your selves? What did you do for fun?
- LB We walked around. They had those swings and stuff out there in the yard. Then we'd sit. They had a special hole in the playground there that had this clay-mud. Its really sticks hard. It gets hard too when you shape it. We used to have that. Go over there and play with that. Make what ever it was we wanted to make. Make horses or people or whatever we're going to make out of it.

- AS And when it dried it made something good to play with?
- LB Yeah. When it turns hard.
- AS Did you use it to make balls to play games with or anything like that?
- LB Not big balls, marbles. We'd make a chicken and then make a bunch of eggs out of that mud [laughs] mud pies, cakes...
- AS Well, did you make dolls?
- LB Uh hum, We made dolls out of ... We'd go to the sewing room and get some scraps. Ask for scraps and then some old material maybe that we could tear up.
- AS So, they'd let you have a little bit of scraps to make ...so you could have fun with...?
- LB Uh huh.
- AS Were the teachers... Most of them were white, weren't they?
- LB Yeah, most of them were white. Except this sewing room teacher, seamstress. She was a big woman. She was a ... not a Chippewa. Was she Chippewa? ...Sompasse ... something like that, from the East. Her name was Skoggin. Miss Skoggin, Josephine Skoggin. She was a big woman. You know, most of the Indians that way are tall and big. That's the way she was.
- AS But she was an Indian. but she was from the East?
- LB Uh huh.
- AS And... well did you... these teachers that you had... did they have anything to do with you when you weren't in school? Were they friendly? Or did they kind of stick to themselves?
- LB You mean?
- AS The teachers.
- LB Oh, they got their rooms, so they go to their rooms and do what ever they want.
- AS Uh huh.
- LB During nap time, until it's their school time or their time to go to work.

- AS So, you wouldn't see much of them when you weren't in class.
- LB nuh huh, no.
- AS But did they... in those dormitories, or at meals... did they... Who was in charge? Was it the teachers or the matrons or...
- LB Let's see they have a ... somebody there... the disciplinarian watch on the boy's side. Then on this, girl's side is a ... any teacher who can come down and watch and take over... they just stand there and watch and be sure you're behaving yourself, not throwing food around.
- AS When you were in the dining room, when you were having meals... did you have to sit... did they assign you places? Did they tell you where to sit or could you sit with your friends or how was that?
- LB Yeah. We sit with friends. We used to have a place assigned to us. One table, certain amount each. Older girl sat at the end of each table, then the younger ones on the sides.
- AS Did they help the little ones?
- LB Yeah, They served that food for [them]. Same way for the boys.
- AS Did the boys and girls eat in the same dining room?
- LB Same dining room... on the one end.
- AS Ok, but you didn't eat together?
- LB No, later on, after they become more civilized, I guess [laughs]. Then they had the three girls and three boys on each table.
- Woman in background: I like that, More civilized [laughter].
- AS That was when you were older?
- LB Yeah, that's later. Older or not, we all did the same.
- AS Oh, the rules changed, or they changed the way they did things. Well, what was it like in the dormitories? Where you in there during the day or were you in there just to sleep?
- LB No, we had a washroom and ... what do you call it ... a place to sit around in. Sit down and talk or what ever. Play games or whatever until meal time. When they'd ring a bell and we'd be getting ready to go to the dining room.

AS Did you... Could you just go to the dining room or did you have to line up and march?

LB Yeah, we all line up. Go in a row so we don't have to knock each others down [laughs].

AS Did they kind of run it like it was an army... I mean that everything ...you did everything according to rules?

LB Yes, Some places, yeah.

AS Well, you had to walk...

LB Well, we had to march here and there. Let's see... we had to march from our girls' side and go on around this side walk, watch them there. Then the boys come from the other end. Then we had boy- girl, boy-girl all the way into the dining room. Then they turn off on to the boys' side.

AS And you'd go to the girls' side?

LB Uh huh.

AS Was there,... did you have... you were marching into meals and out of meals... did they have times when you just had to march, When you had to drill, when you had to practice?

LB Yeah, Sundays.

AS Oh?

LB Sunday mornings, we had to get cleaned up and dressed, ready to go to church, I guess the place where we'd go. The doctor, Rev. Roberts, he used to drive down there.

AS He'd drive down there, but... but ...he'd actually have a service at the school?

LB Uh huh, at the school building.

AS Did everybody go to that?

LB Yeah. All the students... all the school. Not teachers. Teachers don't have to go if they don't want to.

AS Oh, they didn't?

- LB Nuh huh.
- AS But the whole school... the children had to go?
- LB uh huh, yeah.
- AS Did... was there problems with kids running away and not wanting to be there?
- LB Oh, sometimes. I think maybe they get into trouble or something. Or some kids, Some children pick on them and that's why they take off.
- AS And what happened when they'd run away?
- LB Oh, they'd get punished worse.
- AS Like how?
- LB I don't know, spanked maybe.
- AS Oh really? Would they send somebody after them to bring them back?
- LB Yeah. The Indian cop goes after them.
- AS Was that Mr. Trujerro?
- LB Huh?
- AS A man named Trujerro?
- LB I don't know... no that was late.. lately.
- AS Who was the one...?
- LB Charles Mayer, Charles Mayer. The old Charles Mayer who was the cop. And then they bring 'em back on a wagon or on a horse. on horse back. If they're boys, they just let them ride on the back of the horse. Bring them back.
- AS But some of the girls would run away too?
- LB Uh huh.
- AS and they'd bring them back in a wagon?
- LB Yeah.

- AS What kinds of things did they do to them when they'd brought them back?
- LB Oh, I don't know. They'd get punished, but I don't know how. They'd deprive them of certain things, I guess. If its not too bad, why you'd get switched on the hand with a shoe string.
- AS Oooh! That must have stung.
- LB Yeah, it sure did. I got hit with that once. Once or twice [laughs].
- AS Was it a leather shoestring?
- LB Uh huh. No... regular shoe strings with the little metal ends.
- AS Humn! And they'd hit you with the metal?
- LB Yeah.
- AS Huh! Would the teachers do that or the disciplinarians?
- LB No the matrons or the disciplinarians, I guess. I don't know what the man disciplinarian does to them but...
- AS I've heard a variety of things... People having to kneel on broom sticks if they'd done something bad. That was after that, I think, but yeah, it did happen. Uh... So the kids...Some of the kids would run away because people had been mean to them?
- LB Yeah.
- AS Did any of them run away just because they didn't want to be there?
- LB I suppose. I couldn't answer that.
- AS But were there more boys than girls that ran away
- LB Uh huh, but boys got to work out in the garden... They got to do some harrowing and stuff like that. .arming. They learned how to farm out there. Some took care of the pigs and some kept the milking stalls clean and all that. They were assigned to each thing.
- AS Was it more fun to be out doors than to be inside?
- LB Yeah. Warm weather...
- AS You'd rather be outside?

- LB Uh huh.
- AS But the girls didn't have a lot of activities outside.
- LB Swings.
- AS But they didn't have any jobs or assignments that were outside?
- LB No. The boys did all the lawn cutting.
- AS Ah.
- LB They used to have the boys, sometimes, they used to have them dig out dandelions.
- AS Well, I lived over at Ft. Washakie School last year and there are still kids over there digging out dandelions! [laughter] But well, you know, Talking [about] the whole experience... 'cus you were there for six or so years... what did you... How do you remember it. Did you, more or less, like it or do you just as soon not to have been there, you know when you think back, was it good or was it not so good?
- LB Well, it was good, I think. I think it did the Indian kids good. Otherwise, I wouldn't know how to talk English or nothing. I'd be a regular Injun [sic] [laughs] Yeah.
- AS Well... This tape is going to stop and I don't want to wear you out...

END TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

TAPE TWO SIDE ONE

[Mrs.Bonatsie and other woman are talking in Shoshone as the tape comes on]

- AS Ok...Well, you said... what you learned at the school. Did you use any of the things you learned there in later life? Were they useful to you in getting along?
- LB Yeah. I think it did me good.
- AS What were some of the things that you used later?
- LB Well, baking and ironing and washing and all that ...Making clothes. I make my own clothes.

- AS Well, that's what Raphaleta [sp?] mentioned when we came in. That you'd done a lot of sewing. And so, at least, you learned how to sew at home but you learned more, you added to it when you got to school.
- LB Uh huh, the fancy work part.
- AS Uh huh. You mentioned French seams. I sew too, and not everybody knows what a French seam is. I mean, that's kind of special. What were some of the other kinds of fancy work they taught you to do?
- LB Well, crocheting and embroidering, all that.
- AS Uh hum. Did you enjoy that?
- LB Yeah, I enjoyed making those. But sometime you don't have time for them, raising your family.
- AS Well, now. When did you move up here?
- LB Well, Let's see... 19...36, I believe, 'cus I had that house built 1941.
- AS And you've lived up here since then?
- LB Uh huh. This was all full of sage brush here. We broke that and worked on it. Night and day, scorching brushes.
- AS And you made it into a ranch?
- LB Uh huh. It's sort of went down though. we were trying to build it back up in shape again. The money part is what gets us. That White Man's money doesn't stick with [laughs]. Seems like it goes in your pocket and it goes out the other end.
- AS Yeah, and the way it goes not, it goes in the one pocket and out the other end faster than ever before. The hole in the pocket is a lot bigger [laughs]. Well, are there things about the... What was it like at school that I haven't, you know, had the sense enough to ask you about? Are there things that you're thinking about that you'd like to add to what we've said here?
- LB Well... I talked about most all of it, except the place where they abused us.
- AS Well, what did they do to you?
- LB [laughs]
- AS I remember from my own school days... And I've got some horror stories, that are Anne Slater horror stories. What are some of the things that Mrs Bonatsie remembers?

- LB [laughs] [long pause] Its just that we have to stay out of the big girls' way and those, just a few of them women that's left now that was mean to us, especially, us Seal [family name?] girls [laughs].
- AS They were hard on... It really was from a particular family that they were hard on?
- LB Uh huh, Yeah. Now when you see them, thay gots big grins for you, or they come and hug you. They probably forgot the meanness they had towards me [laughs].
- AS Well, I don't know if that's good or bad.
- LB I think it's just done talking it ...cover...
- AS Yeah.
- LB Cover up, that's what I think of it.
- AS Well, did they push you around?
- LB Yeah, they knock us around, pull on our hair, pinch us or even pull our panties down and look in there... see if our panties' clean.
- AS That's not very nice ...and did they get into trouble for that?
- LB No. We were too afraid to report it.
- AS And they never did it when anybody was around?
- LB No.
- AS Well, did that stop when you got older?
- LB Yeah, 'Course, those women who did that were all out and married, having their own children.
- AS How old were you when you graduated?
- LB I graduated, I think, in 1927.
- AS So, you graduated just a little bit before this big depression that the United States had and that was... The 1930s, I understand, were really hard up here on the reservation. Was it hart being a young woman in the '30s?

LB Yeah, I guess. 'Course I wasn't married at that time. I was still loose, staying with my sisters, here and there, after my mother died... She was taken by tick fever.

AS Oh, really?

LB Uh huh. I think in '27. '26 or '27. that's when she passed on and then I started living with my sisters. I'd start going with Ide [check spelling of sister's name. Might be Heidi. Speaker seems to drop initial "h" sound in her other sister's name, then corrects herself.] You know Ide, don't you? Ide Wissaw?

AS I don't... I've met her, yeah.

LB That's who I used to stay with, her... after I quit school. Then after that I stayed with my other sister, my older sister, Ellen. Helen Wissaw. You know Delmar, don't you? Well, his parents... I stayed with them [laughs].

AS That was a house-full!

LB Uh huh. I know what they're all like. You can't tell me they're any better [laughs]. Yeah, that's the way... Then from there I went to Idaho with my mother's sister. She came around, so I went with her. We stayed back there... I think '30, 1930...Anyway, we had to go through American Falls to vote. They came and picked us up. Clear from Bannock Creek, to American Falls to vote and gave us a big dinner.

AS Was that the first time that you voted?

LB Yes, I believe so.

AS And then, when you came back, you moved up to where we are now?

LB Yeah.

AS How did you meet Mr. Bonatsie?

LB Oh, he was my friend before I went from here.

AS Uh huh.... Oh, you had been up here in the summers?

LB Uh huh.

AS Yeah? Oh, but he had always lived up here?

LB No. He was used to living just like I was ...going here and there from relative to relative... but his dad lived up here most of the time. He broke up this ranch here.

some of this ranch and he only had one horse and one team to work with. That's during that war time, I guess.

AS Uh huh.

LB conversing with woman in background in Shoshone. [long pauses] I think we moved to this part of the country in 1930.

AS You and your mom.

Other woman Me, my mom and dad.

AS So that's before the Second World War, but right in the middle of when it was really bad in the depression?

Other woman As I remember, we had to register for food stamps. Shoe stamps and shoer[?] stamps.

AS Was it dry up here during that period? It was dust bowl in the large part of the United States. It might have been hard years, but not particularly...

Other woman Not up here.

AS At least that part of it you were spared.

END OF TAPE

¹

²...] is for long pauses or for stammering. I'm not omitting anything from the transcript.

³These are sailor type dresses: midshipman's outfit.

⁴Was this an extractor that works by centrifugal force or a rolling wringer?