

MERCY LORING

Mercy Loring lives in Two Mile and is a dedicated member of the Homesober Service. She was born in 1932 to Katie and Robert Simpson. Mr. Simpson worked for R.S. Sargents.

Mercy has many interesting stories to tell. One is of Moose Foot Baskets.

"Well, you have to use the four moose feet, all four. My aunt makes them in Kitwancool. They ~~were~~ still wet when she sewed them together. They took the bones out, then sewed them together right away. Then they just leave the baskets sit there and they dry and get really hard. She used net line but they used sinew, I think it was. She makes great big ones. If it's a big moose she says, you get a big basket and if its a small moose, she says you get a smaller basket. She must have about three up there now. She has four more at the house. She asks around to everybody going hunting, 'make sure you guys save the feet now' and they save the feet.

"My aunt puts the lining inside the flour sack - that's what she used on the inside, the flour sack. It's already flowered. Once they used to buy flowered bags, She said I was to keep it 'when I die'. She said, 'You keep that for a keepsake', and I said, 'Maybe that's the only thing I will get for a keepsake' so I took it. That was in 1948."

Her wealth of stories are more interesting in her own words.

"My grandmother put a headband on her head, you know, when she's going to be Indian Doctor. I don't know why she does that. Then she takes the rattles - that's after she rubs you all over with the fish, she went outside and got fish in the shed and she said the ghost follow you guys. I don't know who made the headband. She already had it then and it looked pretty near like that already when I saw it. Must be 200 years old! It's just been passed on. I don't know who made it. I didn't ask her that. All I asked for was the rattles, but she gave me everything in a medicine bag. That's what all that stuff was in and all I asked for was the rattles. The rattles belonged to her mother from before. That's from my grandmother's mother. That's long time ago. They passed it on. Anything they had

they used to pass it on. They don't do that ^{any} no more. Like some people, young people, they don't care for things like that. Same's your wedding gown. Got to pass it on for the next persons getting married. They don't do that no more. They think it not right if you go and use the old wedding gown. And there was a wedding gown down at I think it's Mrs. Chancey past 50 years old. It's been from one person to another.

"Me and Dorcas, my cousin, we come out of school - that's Dorcas Jack, my Grandmother (I don't know what she'd be to her, she's my grandmother's daughter's daughter). We left the school and didn't even ^{go} ~~went~~ home to tell Mamma I was going up there. We played around and played ~~around~~ and finally decided to go to her house, so we went up to the graveyard and went through the shortcut, that used to be shortcut. I was about nine. We went up and I said to her, "Look at those nice little houses. Let's go and see what's in them." We looked first, you know and she said, "There's a trunk in there. I'll bet there's a lot of good things in there." I said, "Well, let's go look." She looked at me for awhile and she said, "Gee, I don't think I should, cuz Grandma says don't go near graveyards when it's gettin' dark," and it was getting dark then. She said, "Nope, we'll just go look." I said, "Alright, we'll both climb up and we'll both sit side-by-side." We both held the lid, you know, when we opened it so she wouldn't get blamed, I wouldn't get blamed, we'd both done it, so we opened the trunk and I said, "Oh! Look at the wedding gown!" She looked and said, "Look at the silk!" She said, "Well, let's get married!" I said, "I'll be the man and you be the woman." "Okay," she says, ^a she puts on the wedding gown, I help her, there was even ^{and} necklace in there, in that trunk, and I put it on her ^{and} she got dressed and then I got dressed and she said to me, "Let's pretend this is a big street with lots of people - we're gettin' married." So I held her arm and she held mine and we walked down - we walked a long ways, you know, and then we looked back and said, "Gee, we'd better take it back. Somebody's going to see us." We were still in the graveyard, so we walked back and I said to her, "Well, we'd better take them off and put them back the way they were." So we did. We put them back. And we were sittin' there laughin' and lookin'

through the trunk, you know, there was a lot of little things in the trunk, and she said, "We'd better not. It's gettin' dark." She's a bit older, about nine months older and she said to me, "We'd better go, the old lady's going to get mad. They're waitin' for me, cuz they're always wonderin if I don't get ome they'll send Gus lookin' for me." So I said, "Well, let's go." So we went home.

"Granny, did you know what we done?" When we were comin' close, you know, and she didn't hear, she's blind. The old lady's blind and she didn't hear and she said, "Where have you been?" She said, and Dorcas said, "Why?" "Cuz, I feel that the ghost was followin' you all the way here, I can feel it." She said, "I feel it all through my system. The ghost is followin' you, where were you?" So we told her about puttin the clothes on.

"Get inside!" she said. "I'm not feedin' you guys. I'm going to Doctor you up!" I thought 'well, maybe she's going to slap us around or somethin', but I never said nothin. I was scared of the old lady, you know, cuz I didn't want to be - if she gets mad at me she won't let me go there no more. She said, "The ghost followed you all the way to my door, right into the house!" I'm goin' to fix you guys up." So she went outside to the shed and she brought a piece of fish, just one strip, that's from the shed - dried and she said, "I'm going to Doctor you guys up. I'm going to burn your clothes," she said. And I said, "How am I going to get home?" She said, "Don't worry about how ^{you're} going to get home. It's just to cure you, that's what I'm worried about. Either that, or you're going to die!" she said. "They're going to take you away with them!" So, I thought I better do somethin' then - she took this fish and she rubbed it all over our body - this dry fish! I was just sitting there thinking, 'Oh, it stinks! I'm gonna be so stinky when you get through'! She rubbed it all over my feet and all over my hands and my hair. Oh, it was awful! And I didn't want to say nothin', you know, she said she was doctorin' up us. And she took our clothes off and she burnt it with the fish. Burned the fish, too. She was talkin' away in the fire when she opened the stove and put the fish in - sort of chanting, sort

singing to it. After she burnt all the fish, she done the same thing to Dorcas, she done me first and then she went to Dorcas and Dorcas went and got (we didn't use a nightgown then), she went and got me some clothes to put on. So, I wore hers and she said why don't I stay for the night and she done the same thing. She rubbed the fish all over her again. And she burnt her clothes, too, and after she made us sit down on the floor in front of her and she was singin' away with these rattles after she had got finished, you know. She was singing and chasing the spirit away. She said, "Now, you both sleep with me tonight." She said, "Because if you don't, you're just liable to die. You're not supposed to do that cuz the people at the graveyard, they're goin' to take you back down in the ground with them. You're just gonna drop dead!" And I did. I slept with her and Dorcas slept with her, too. We both slept with her and just about on the floor, the bed was so low. "By morning you be alright and you can go home," she said. And Gus went and got some clothes and I changed and went home the next morning. But she told us "Never walk near a grave at night."

I got one big tumpline and a wood box for keepsakes. That one that I got had pictures all over it. They belong to Mom's mom, my grandmother. When we were kids they give us one each. That's if they really love you, they don't just give it to you. But my grandmother said I was always helpin' her, you know, she couldn't get around very good and I was always helpin' her to get her shoes and different things, so she said, "You take this box. Take it home. When you get big, you use this box for pickin' berries." She said, "You use tin cans, you get poisoned." She showed me how to tie the tumpline around it. We used long ones not a short one. This is a short one I have, but it fits clean around like that and and goes right over like that and goes to your head and you hold the box and it don't tip or anything. But you don't feel it when you're packin' it on your forehead. It gives all the weight on your forehead and you don't feel how heavy it is. But you put it here and you sure feel it cuz it's hittin' you way down here. But you put it on your forehead and it lifts the box for you. And you don't feel how heavy it is when you're going, you can go long ways with them. You can feel it's heavy, but it don't get you down.

Last year when I went to Stewart, on the Stewart Road, I took the box and filled it up. I had seven cases of berries last year - all one time. Went up one day and come back with seven cans the next day. My, there was lots of berries - probably lots this year, too. I preserve them. I put them in jars and pr sure cook them. I was going to try to make that dry berry. I was just going to see what it looked like. I've been gonna try it and I have to use that Thimbleberry leaf. You put it all down on a table and then put the berries on top, as they dry you keep pilin', keep pilin', they get pretty thick, some of those berries. You don't need sugar or nothin' when you're dryin' them, when it's really nice out dryin' them. I soak them and eat them. Sometimes you just tear them off and chew on them. You take and squeeze them with your hands and they all squash up and when all the berries are squashed, you take and put it - Grádmother, up at Glen Voweall used to make a big pit in the ground and she said, "Watch, you guys will be eatin' fresh berries in the spring," and she said, "and you wouldn't believe how good it is."

And I tried it from her. She goes and she takes them out of the pit, opens it in the spring and it's just like berries off of the ground. Oh, they're so squashed - it's all juice but she puts it in this big thing, you know. It's a box. It's a homemade one and it keeps in there. It doesn't spoil. I really like them. That was the first time I tried it and it was really good. She only had the one out here - she was just showin' us you know. "I'm gonna die pretty soon," she said, "and you guys wouldn't know how to do it. You guys better learn now, before it be too late." We used to pick soap berries, too and put out on the - real shiny barks, you see. I see the kids make sometimes and it's really tight and thick and you put the berries right on them - made out of roots and that. Put the berries right on there and dry. I see her makin' them. I'm going to make the basket - Edith McDougal knows how and it never leaks. She said, "I'll show you in the spring. It won't leak." I'm going to learn in the wintertime.

In the wintertime Grandma gets a great big dish, this great

big deep bowl, puts whole bunch of snow in, takes some ooligan grease and sugar and mixed 'em like this, you know - it's really cold on the hand. I tried it, already, just to see what it's like. You mix it with your hand and it just looks like ice cream. You mix the ooligan grease and the sugar together. That's the way my grandmother used to make it. And when you're mixin' it, it's not thick. It's not thick when you start, you know, how fresh the snow is and you just mix and mix and mix it until it gets to a - it just looks something like icing sugar. It's not runny. It's almost like soft ice cream. Then, after it's ready then you put a hole like that in the center. You put the huckleberries or blueberries, that's all they use, and you eat it like that. Oh, I'm tellin' you, I used to like it. I don't know what it's like now. It's been so many years since I tried it. We'll have to try it - I got a little bit of grease here. I must try it. I got some from my sister.

"We did the smoking and drying of fish and meat - like jerky. We'd go out with Richie and get some fish. You know, we put out the net - Oh, I see 89 to a catch sometime, 120 to a catch. William goes with us, Lillian's husband, and it's my uncle's fishing ground. That's past Cedarvale. We bring the fish back here and hang it up. But you have to get those - it's not the thimble berry leaves, it's just those long leaves you see purple flowers on - Fireweed! You pick a whole bunch of them and thimbleberry leaves, too, and we'll just put it all in the tub - they told us we're not supposed to wash the fish. You're not supposed to wash them. They said it's not right to wash the fish. I said "Why?" to Lillian. Lillian said, "Well, you're not supposed to because it don't get soft and you put it in the water too long and the fish is hard when they, when you're smokin' it and it's dryin' it, really dry, and it gets really hard, not soft. If you don't wash it too much it stays soft when you're dryin' it. You know, after it's dry you can eat it, it's soft. For goodness sake, but before we used to wash them, even scrub them, the scrubbin brush, buy a scrubbin' brush for it. Lillian says "that's not right." Lillian takes that up in Kitwancool. And she shows us when she

comes here.

And I've smoked fish over here. I've smoked fish, I've smoked porkipine. One time, you know, the car run over the porkipine. I picked it up on the road and brought it home. Edith McDougal said, "Oh, boy. That's GOOD eatin'." I said, "No, it isn't." But, gee, I just couldn't see - I wanted the quills, for a necklace. That's the reason. Otherwise, I wouldn't have picked it up. They make pretty necklace. Just take all the quills off. So I said to her I want the quills. Yvonne and I were pickin' all the quills. Yvonne makes the necklace, I don't. And me and Edith, we smoked the porkipine. It was good! There was nothin' wrong with it. It was just waste to see it sittin' there. So I picked it up after this, if I see it. It's really good eatin', porkipine, beaver, you smoke it - I don't like beaver fresh. I've tried it fresh and I'm not too fussy with it. Same as bear meat. I'm not too fussy with that. I like it smoked. I smoked bear meat, and moose meat - deer meat, porkipine.

They put the fish in fireweed. When you take the fish out you wipe the fish, you wash the fish when you bring it out of the water. You can't wash it again before you hang them up. You wash them when you take them out of the water, enough. When you clean the fish. But you can't put them in the water after that. It's hard when you dry, you have to put it amongst the leaves. It can stay there for oh, three-four days in the leaves. It never spoils. You think it's out of the refrigerator. It can stay right - that's the fireweed leaves. It never gets spoiled, even if it's hot weather - a real hot day - leave it there amongst the leaves. Sometimes you hang the fish in the summertime when it's too hot outside and it gets hot in a smokehouse and the meat just falls off with the sun shinin' on the smokehouse and the meat will fall off when it's hangin'. I've seen it fallin' right off th skin and just the skin hangin' there. That's how hot. If it's too hot you can leave it amongst the leaves and it'll keep. I've done that last summer. I kept it in leaves and it was real hot. William said, "Don't put the fish up. Wait till tomorrow. Keep it, it won't hurt." I said, "And by that time it be stink!" "Oh, no it won't,"

he said. "I seen Mother do that." and so I thought, well tomorrow I'll hang it up. You hang by the tail, you put a hole through the fin so hang it up by the tail. Just leave it the way it is, cuz it's already sliced in half. You just take a day's catch and smoke the whole works and you smoke them for about six weeks - for good drying. I had to move mine out to Kitwancool, make William's mom finish dryin', I couldn't do it. It takes too long. Too much holding you back. You want ^{to} go pick berries and got to be sittin there watchin' the fish. That's ^{what} my grandmother said, "First soon as the fish come in the spring," she said everybody get to work and get at ~~the~~ fish. Get all your drying done, smokin' and everything. When the berries come, you forgot about the fish. You finished with the fish, eh, then all your work on is your berries." I see she's right. And you don't put salt on nothing. I never put no salt on fish. Some of them do, but I don't see any difference. It does taste better with salt in, though. I like it better with salt. We salt fish, we dry fish, we can fish, we can smoke fish. So, we do lots of things with fish. I never put salt on moose or deer. Some of them do and it's pretty good when they do it. You know, you soak it with salt brine, for a little while and hang them up. If you haven't got salt, you can get by without it. In the olden days, I guess Indians didn't have salt. I don't think they knew or used it. They just left salt right out of their food.

There was a lot of trading done with the coast Indians. You know, well, they come up with some seaweed and fish eggs and ooligans and we trade them with - well whatever berries they want, if they want soapberries, mostly soapberries. They take soapberries and huckleberries - not very much huckleberries, but mostly soapberries. They're so crazy over soapberries. They're really wantin' lots for their seaweed, now. Like seaweed is really - they want \$20 for one gallon of seaweed. Boy! So, I give them two jars of soapberries. I figure it's worth it. It's quite a bit of a job pickin' them, too, you know. Just even trade them. Soapberries are green right now. They'll be red. You see lots of little red berries hanging, and be just lots of them. I'm goin' to be pickin' some next

week. You can pick them when they're green. You can pick them when they're red. When they're green it's more - Oh, I like it when they're green! It's not as bitter as when they're red! Oh, it's really good! It's supposed to be good blood tonic. I know when I used to pick lots and Art and I, we used to take the juice out.

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You take dried meat and hammer it out and just into powder and you can eat it just dry in your hand. Take it in your hand and just eat it dry like that. It's really good! Or you can make a paste out of it with mayonnaise or you can use a little ooligan grease, whatever way you like. I like when I make sandwiches with mayonnaise and it is really good. You don't have to put salt on it. It's really good like that.

Used to go to the old hospital. Not this one they got now. Used to be Dr. Wrinch. I was sick a lot when I was little. I used to go there when he was there. He was really good. He said any time I got sick I was just to go right away because I had kidney trouble. He said he was gonna have to remove one kidney when I was 12 years old, but they never did. I passed it on to Yvonne. She's got kidney problems. They said if I had kids they would get it. They go to school - oh, sometimes they go to school one or two weeks and go in hospital one or two weeks or three weeks and they'd go home and do the same thing all over again. Just not too long at all. When I was going to school they used to give us Cod liver oil. They said we wouldn't get sick. They'd line us up outside the school and as we came in, so they don't miss nobody, and they gave you cod liver oil. Sure didn't like the taste of it. This is really a terrible taste, this cod liver oil! One teaspoon they give you! Looks like big spoon to me! When you come in the door and they give you one spoon of cod liver oil and we used to go to our cups and get

a drink of water. Be all hittin' for the water. They had our cups all on the wall with our names on. Tin cups. That's where the Anglican Church is. That's where I used to go to school. You don't use nobody else's cup but your own. Your name's on it. It's a silver tin cup. I like ooligan oil better than that. That's what my grandmother used to give me. Ooligan grease when I got sick. I know when I was really, really sick one time and she said to me, Well, this Mrs. Oakes, she's some relation to my Dad - I don't know what she is to him. She comes down one time when I had double pneumonia and the flu. She come down and she put onions at my feet. She rubbed me all over with coal oil and ooligan grease, all over my chest and my back she put onions at the bottom of my feet and she said, "if these onions are not soft by morning, she's gonna die!" She just put the onions at the bottom of my feet and tied it on with a cloth. She'd rub me with - she'd use that - I don't know what it is - electric oil? I don't remember what kind of oil, but I know she used ooligan grease, and coal oil to - to rub with. This is Mrs. Oakes. I don't know what relation she is to my Dad. I got better. She was at it all the time. She come down every day. She rubbed me with this ooligan grease mixed with coal oil and she rubbed me and she tied onions to the bottom of my feet. She says that if the onions are soft she says I'm gonna die. They were soft, you know, but not as real soft as she figures. And I got better! She said, "Oh, before too long she'll be better. You watch and see!" She gave me ooligan grease to drink and she mixed ooligan grease with coal oil and sometimes I drank it. I was always scared, you know, because it was such an awful taste. Really bitter with coal oil. I always got better.

I just got to grade three. John was born when I was 14. I was only in grade three. They never let you take no books out of school, or it's just what you learn in school is what you got. If you miss the school, you just miss out. I seen when Yvonne was in the hospital that time in Vancouver, they brought books. But when I was sick that time, nobody came with a book or anything. You just have to catch up when you go back to school or else - you don't pass. That's all!

I worked in Port Edward for the herring season. I was cleaning

them. You squeeze them and all that stuff come out. You have to fill these big boxes, you know. It's not very small. It's bigger than that box there, and you have to fill them with the herring before you even get a punch on your ticket. When each one's full, then you get a punch, and if it's not full then you just get that one punch all day. So you got to work to be able to get a punch. Two boxes per morning, and work all afternoon and get the same. Sometimes you get overtime and you work at night and you might get another box at night - if you work overtime. And it was big pay for us then. When I was working then, I don't remember what they paid me, but it was more than what I got when I was working in the hospital. When I was working in the hospital I was only getting one dollar a day, and then they take off, well, I would be there by the month. I stayed at the hospital and they'd take off \$15 for my room and board and I cleared \$15. It was \$30 a month. It was a dollar a day. For 31 days you get \$31. I was cleaning and I was sometimes working in the laundry. Sometimes I worked on the floors, cleaning floors. I figure, well, that's lots of money for me. I used to give Dad half of what I got. I figure, well, I got lots when I keep so much, cause Dad buys my clothes anyway. I didn't have to buy any.

My Dad was Robert Simpson. He worked at R.S. Sargent's for 28 years. He priced everything down there. He said to me when he was going to school that when you go to grade three - "well, look at me. I only went to grade three myself and I'm working in a store. Sure, it's what you do with yourself, cuz you just gotta push yourself along and learn at home. You can't just sit there and say well, I only went to grade three and it's not gettin' me nowhere. " He said, "But I picked it up myself." and there was just stacks of books all the time and even lawyer books. He died 21 years ago, on April 17. Cuz Archie was born after he died. Archie will be 21 tomorrow.

I worked as a cook in New Town, but I don't like gettin' tied up in the kitchen! It's too much! It's too hot in the summertime when I was doin' that. I sure didn't care for it. It's early in the morning. I don't mind gettin' up early in

the morning - it's just you get so tired out! I tried everything where I could. Long time ago they didn't ask you for education. You could try anything you wanted. Today they do. They ask 'What grade are you?' But long time ago, they don't say that. They just say, "Well, you come and work and if you can do it, you just go ahead and take the job." But today....today you can't do that. But long time ago I used to go anywhere and get a job. But you can't do that today. I've been lookin' around and I can't get a job.

It's better money at the coast. I sent money home to dad all the time and he built himself a house. I came home in the fall and helped him tear down the old one. And we used the lumber from the old house for the new house. But I bought all the strippings. The money I sent him, he bought stripping for the house and the ceiling tiles - the inside for the house - but we used the old lumber for the outside. Was no insulation. That's why they tore it down not too long ago. I don't know how it was kept warm. We lived in it about 15 years, I guess. We had two stoves. We had a stove goin' in the kitchen and a stove goin' in the livin' room to keep warm. Well, we never noticed the difference, cuz there's no insulation. Dad didn't say we had to have insulation. We did put sawdust and shingles inbetween the walls, but not all that much. Just here and there, where we could get it. But we didn't have insulation and we lived in it. It was long ago and they said it's too cold for my Mom. She got a new house now. Brand new one. Three bedrooms and livin' room and kitchen, bathroom and a basement. Helen Green and her kids are living with her now. Costs too much stayin in that house. Have to pay for the furnace all the time, oil. She'd never do it on just her pension. I was the only one in my family, and my Mom.

When I was born, my Mom was sick and I stayed in Wrinch Memorial Hospital. I was born in April and in August, well, my Mom went out just about three or four days towards the end of July. When she came back again, on the 5th of August, she was sick. She had double pneumonia. I was in the hospital all this time. I stayed in the hospital, well, April, May, June, July, August - four months I stayed in the hospital. Then my Mom came in again and she had double pneumonia before. Well, she had the

double pneumonia before, but they thought she was all better when they let her go. They said to come back right away, so they kept me there. And she asked before if someone would want to take me - like her relations and that.

My Mom's name was Katie Brown. I haven't been registered yet. I'm going to get registered at the government agent's office. They're gonna swear me in and register me. I just got these papers from the hospital here. They took it back and I got the right year, too. I told them what year to look for and they got it - it's all written on the paper. All I got to do is take it down and get registered. I've never been registered. I was born in 1932, April 10th. I have never been registered. I said my Mom put down on the paper that Kale Brown was next of kin to her. I guess she didn't have nobody to take me and I guess they had me up for adoption at the hospital. My Mom died then. She died in August. She was in there, you see I was only four months when my Mom died. So they turned around and adopted me out. Dr. Wrinch put out a notice that I was up for adoption. Someone mentioned at the store to my Dad, so he went home at lunch hour and told his wife - this is my Dad's first wife - Agnes Simpson. And he said, "Well, they have an adoption up at the hospital for a girl." And she said, "Well, after you get off work we're goin' to look. Go and see her." And that's what they did. When he got off work at supper time, they hurried up and they ate supper and they went to the hospital to see me. He didn't realize it was me. They just adopted me then. Mrs. Robert Simpson was - never had no *family* of my own! So they adopted me. Agnus Simpson adopted me. And she had me for three years and she died of cancer. She died with cancer so Dad hired this Mom I got now. And then he married her after. She was just workin' for him and I guess he said it cost too much for a housekeeper so he turned around and married her. Cuz he had me and my brother there was just the two of us. They adopted him too, from a different family. And my sister's adopted, too, from a different family, too.

My brother, Robert Simpson, died in Wenatchee, Washington in 1967. Only brother I had. We were raised together. My

second Mom adopted my sister, Mary Simpson. I was happy with my Dad. I had no complaints about him. He did a lot of things for me. When I was workin' he used to ship groceries down. It took his whole paycheck to keep me and his own home goin'. When I was workin' in the cannery. First time when I went down to work, he used to send me groceries in a box. Cuz he didn't want me to starve, he said. I could get them down there, but he decided he should send them, I guess. He was workin' at the store and he figures it's better for me. He knows what I'm supposed to eat, and he figured if I just go and eat cake and pop and stuff like, that it's not right. And he'd send me soup and sardines - something fast, you know, to eat when I came home from work. I was 14. And he used to ship me groceries and I was really happy and pleased with it. The first check I got, I sent him the whole thing. It was \$200.00! Well! The second check I got, I sent him the whole thing and he sent me back \$20.00. He sent it back in a money order. I just signed my check and sent it to him.

I was staying with Sarah Gunanoot at the cannery, another old lady. She used to tell me stories at night. Oh! The boss would knock on the door, "Are you up!?" Right away you jump, right now! If you go back and lay down a few more minutes after he knocks, you've had it. Stay sleepin'. I done it once. I thought "no more!" I get up right now when that door knocks. He was really good. "Come on, it's time to get up! Time to go to work in half an hour!" He always gives us half an hour. Yeah, he used to be Harry - gee - I forgot his last name. I know his name was Harry. I seen him down in the cannery the summer before, when I was down. He don't look any older and that's years and years ago and he still looks the same. I told him, too. He said, "I'm retired long time ago and I'm still at the cannery."

I lived with Sarah, the wife of Simon Gunnanoot. She used to tell me about it. What life she had to go through. She had to stay in the bush and make a living. She'd tell me "You haven't got it hard yet. You should be there when I used to have a tough life. And then you'd say you have really tough goin'",

to me she'd say that. "This is easy life with you guys. You don't know what it's like." She went to hide with him, her husband. She was really nice. I really liked her. She wasn't cranky to me or anything. As long as I got up in the morning and I run home ahead of her and get my meal. She was really old then, you know, but she didn't look that old, cuz you know at her age, she, you know, she's old. Yeah, always run ahead of her, hurry up and put something on - water first, have to have tea.

I met Art when I was gonna go to the dance in Hazelton. He was goin' to the dance, too. "Oh, I'll come back," he said. "I'm going back to Houston to work," he said, "but I'll come back." And he came back. He was there quite a long time. He must have stayed in Houston for about three years. And then we moved up here.

I've helped a of of kids. Well, I had six - myself. Not sayin' I was goin' hungry or anything like that, but you feel if you get a bawling out from your Mom and you feel that you just got no place to go - it's pretty hard for you to decide what you're gonna do. My Dad, I was pretty pleased. We were never without. Me and my brother, we always had like oranges and apples. Those were our main food in the house. We couldn't get candy - not for a long, long time. He'd always give us oranges and apples. Sometimes Dad would throw it all outside, you know, and we see who's gonna pick the most - if there's a whole bunch of kids come in. All our friends came. Then he'd dump the bag outside and we'd be running. The same with peanuts. He'd throw them outside and we'd go to pick up what we can pick up and that's what you can get. They're really good for you. All that stuff is really good for you.

I had a lot of kids to help. There was Carl Foster and Norman Lawson, Lottie and Rosemary. Then I had Frenchie's kids, too. He's got two little boys. They used to go to school here before. Oh, I had lots of kids. They used to say "Mercy's got the right name" because I always had mercy on the children - always got room for them. Always have so many kids all the time. I feel sorry for the kids you know.

Mercy Luning

Mercy Luning lives in Two Mile, is a dedicated member of the Homemaker Service. She was born in 1932 to Katie & Rolt Simpson. Mr Simpson worked for R.S. Sargeant.

Mercy has many interesting stories to tell. One is of Moose Fort Baskets. Copy 1, page 1 to bottom of page 1. ~~Another of head bands and gaggly bear claws is worth listening to. Copy~~ Her wealth of stories are more interesting in her own words. Copy 2 page 2 to end of page 18, excluding lines marked out

This is a tape of Mercy Loring Two Mile June 25, 1976:

Well, Mercy, we would like to hear again the stories that you told about the Moose Foot Basket and your headband and rattle. Maybe you could tell us again how the basket was made. You mentioned that they were moose feet --

Copy!
Well you have to use the four moose feet, all four. My aunt makes them in Kitwancool. And you mentioned how they dried and about how they were made, that they were skinned and then dried ---

No they were still wet when she sewed them together - But they took the bones out
Yeah they took the bones out then they sewed them together right away - Isn't that interesting and then they dried it --- and then they just leave the
baskets sit there and they dries and get REALLY hard. And then what did they sew it with? A net line you said - She used net line but they used that -- sinew
Sinew? Yeah, I think it was sinew -- yeah -- So they would use that to the knee
Yeah they do it away up here - cuz - they see the ones Lillian do And she makes
yeah, she makes great big ones. If its a big moose she says, you get a big
basket and if its a small moose, she says you get a smaller basket. How many has
she made? She must have about three up there now. She has four more at the house. She asks around to everybody going hunting 'make sure you guys save the feet now' and they save the feet -- My thats beautiful, and of course they have their little things to rest they dont even fall over or anything.

No -- My aunt puts the linning inside - the flour sack - thats what she used on the inside - the flour sack - inside - thats what she used on the inside ---
She dyed it? No, Its already flowered - remember? - Once they used to buy flowered
bags - ohh - oh for goodness sake thats what she used inside - ask her. So then
she promised that to you? Yes she said I was to keep it 'when I die' she said, 'you keep that for a keepsake' and I said, ' maybe thats the only thing I will get too for a keepsake' so I took it right then - I'll bet. So that would be about

1948 then?

then in 1948. '1

Yeah, about that cuz the kids came to school here after. Rosemarie and they came to school here one year and then they went to Old Town.

What was their name? Derrick Umm, I just can't remember. Tell us the story about

the headband, the grizzly bear claws --- I really dont know too much about it

myself -- Who told you? ^{copy 2} My grandmother, she puts ^{a headband} it on her head, you know, when

shes going to be Indian Doctor. She puts that on her head? I dont know why she

does that - then she takes the rattles - thats after she rubs ~~she rubs~~ you all

over with the fish - she went outside and got fish in the shed, she said the ghost

follow you guys ---- Yes, yes, youre going to tell us that story anyway, but the

grizzly bear - you dont know who made the headband? ^{know who made the headband} No, I dont - she already had it

then - it looked pretty mear like that already when I seen it - and its all worn

out practically Yeah - So it must be a hundred years old? Oh, ^M must be TWO HUNDRED

years old. It's just been passed on - I dont know who made it - I didnt ask ~~for~~ ^{her}

that - all I asked for was the rattles - but she gave me everything in a medcine

bag and you have that too? Yeah, thats what all that stuff was in ~~oh yeah~~

all I asked for was the rattles Ohh, thats nice and what were the rattles made

from? I dont even know. You said somthing the rattles belonged to your great

aunt or did they?? The rattles belonged to her mother from before. Thats your

gramma? ~~Yes~~ thats from my grandmother's mother thats long time ago - they pass it

on - anything they had they used to pass it on - before ~~they~~ ^T they dont do that no

more - Is that right? Like some people, young people, they dont care for things

like that - No, they dont understand its different Before - gee- cant do that -

got to pass it on - Sames your wedding gown-got to pass it on for the next

persons getting married they dont do that no more, ~~so~~ ^T they think it not right

if you go and use the old wedding gown. And there was a wedding gown down at

I think its Mrs. Chancey past 50 years old and it was used? ~~Yes~~ Its been from

one person to another.

Tell us the story about that graveyard - thats just a beautiful story.

Dreas Jack

Me and Dorkis my cousin, we come out of school -- ~~Dorkis~~ thats ~~Dorkis~~ Jack - my Granmother - I dont know what she'd be to her - shes my grandmother's daughter's daughter - ~~Oh~~ We left the school and didnt even went home to tell Mamma I was going up there. We played around and played around and finally decided to go to her house so we went up to the graveyard and went thru the shortcut, that used to be shortcut. And you were 8 or 9 years old? ~~No~~, I was about 9. We went up and I said to her, "look at those nice little houses lets go and see whats in them". We looked first, you know and she said "There's a trunk in there, I'll bet theres a lotta good things in there", she said, I said "Well lets go look" she looked at me for awhile and she said "Gee, I dont think I should, cuz Grandma says dont go near graveyards when its gettin dark and it was gettting dark then. She said "Nope, we'll just go look" she said. I said, "al-right, we'll both climb up and we'll both sit side-by-side " we both hold the lid, you know, when we opened it so she wouldnt get blamed, I wouldnt get blamed, we both done it, so we opened the trunk and I said "oh! look! at the wedding gown!" she looked, she said "look at the silk"! She said, "well let's get married." (~~chuckles, laughs~~) I said, "I'll be the man and you be the woman". "o-k", she says, she puts on the wedding gown, I help her, there was even necklace in there, in that trunk, and I put it on her she got dressed, and then I got dressed, and she said to me" lets pretend this is a big street with lots of people - were gettin married. (~~chuckles and laughs as she tells this~~) So I held her arm and she held mine and we walked down --- we walked a long ways, you know, and then we looked back and said "Gee, we'd better take it back, somebodys going ---- " This was still in the graveyard, like? Yeah, ~~We~~ we were still in the graveyard, so we walked back and I said to her "well, we better take them off and put them back the way they were". So we did, we put them back. And we were sittin there laughin and lookin through the trunk, you know, there was lot a little things in the trunk, and she said" we better not, its gettin dark" she said ---- Was she older than you? She's bit older, about 9 month older, ~~oh, yeah~~ and she said to me, she said, "We better go, the old lady s going to get mad. "Theyre waitin for me" she says, "cuz theyre always

wonderin if I dont get home they'll send Gus lookin for me " she said, so I said, "well, lets go." So we went home. "Granny, did you know what we done?" when we were comin close, you know, and she didnt hear, shes blind. The old ladys blind, and she didnt hear, she said, "Where have you been??" she said, and Dork~~is~~ said "Why?" "Cuz I feel that the ghost was followin you all the way here, I can feel it", she said, "I feel it all through my systm " , she said, "The ghost is followin you, where were you?" So we told her about puttⁱⁿ the clothes on ----

"Get inside!". she said. "I'm not feedin you guys, I'm going to Doctor you up!" I thought 'well maybe shes going to slap us around or somthin -- but I never said nothin I was scart^{ed} the old lady you know, cuz I didnt want to be ----- if she gets mad at me she wont let me go there no more. She said, "the ghost follow you all the way to my door" she said, "right into the house" "I'm goin to fix you guys up" So she went outside to the shed and she brought a piece of fish, just one strip, ~~thats from the smokehouse?~~ Yeah, ~~NO, its not from the smokehouse~~ - thats from the shed - dried - ~~dry fish?~~ yeah, and she said, "I'm going to Doctor you guys up, I'm going to burn your clothes" she said. . And I said, "How am I going to get home?" She said, "Don't worry about how you going to get home," she said, "its just to cure you, thats what I'm worried about either that or youre going to die!" she said. "Theyre going to take you away with them !" So I thought I better do sumthin then -- and she did she took this fish and she rub it all over our body! This dry fish! I was just sitting there thinking Oh it stinks! Im gonna be so stink when you get through! (laughs) she rub it all over my feet and all over my hands and my hair. Oh it was aful! An I didnt want to say nothin, you know, she said she was Doctorin us up. And she took our clothes off and she burnt it with the fish. ~~She burnt the fish as well?~~ Burn the fish too, she was talkin away in the fire when she opened the stove and put the fish in Sort of chanting, sort of singing to it? ~~Yep, Yep, and~~ after she burnt all the fish she done the same thing

to Dork~~is~~, she done me first and then she went to Dork~~is~~, and Dork~~is~~ went and got (we didnt use a nightgown then) she went and got me some clothes to put on - so I wore hers and she said why dont I stay for the night - and she done the same thing she rub the fish all over her again? ~~Yes~~ and she burnt her clothes too and after she made us set down on the floor in front of her and she was singin away with these rattles after she had got finished you know. She was singing and chasing the spirit away. She said "now, you both sleep with me tonight" she said "because if you don't youre just liable to die" she says, "youre not suposed to do that cuz the people at the graveyard, theyre goin to take you back down in the ground with them. Youre just gonna drop dead!" --- And I did, I slept with her and Dorcas slept with her too, we both slept with her, and just about on the floor the bed was so low. And she said that by

morning you'd be alright? "By morning you be alright and you can go home."

she said. And Gus went and got some clothes and I changed and went home the next morning. But she told us "never to walk near a grave at night".

No. Thats interesting -- reeally interesting.

And then you had the tump-line and the wood box they were keepsakes for a long time too?? ^{*tumpline and a wood box*} ~~Yes~~, I got one big one and ~~one small one~~, that one that I got had pictures all over it. Did they belong to the family too? ~~Yeah~~, they belong to Mom's mom, ~~oh yes~~ like my Grandmother -- How do you use them? When we were kids they give us one each, thats if they really love ya, they dont just give it to ya. But my grandmother said I was always helpin her, you know, she couldnt get around very good and I was always helpin her to get her shoes and different things so she said "you take this box" "Take it home", she said. "When you get big you use this box for pickin berries!" "You can fill it up" she said, "its the only thing you can use", she said, "you use tin cans" she said, "you get poisoned!" Thats one of those boxes you brought here? ~~yeah, that wooden box,~~ and she showed me how to tie the tump line around it. We used long ones not a short one, this is short one I have, but it fits clean around like that and

and goes right over like that and goes to your head and you hold the box and it dont tip or anything when you walk --- ~~I guess one of those boxes full of berries must surely weigh 25 or~~ --- But you dont feel it when youre packin it on your forehead. It gives all the weight on your forehead and you dont feel how heavy it is. But you put it here you sure feel it cuz its hittin you way down here. But you put it on your forehead and it lifts the box for ya. And you dont feel how heavy it is when your goin you can go long ways with them, you can feel its heavy but it dont get you down. ~~Me~~

~~I guess you picked berries in it many, many, many times. Yep, last year --~~
~~Youre still looking for berries, too~~ Yep, last year when I went to Stewart, on the Stewart Road, I took the box and filled it up I had seven cases of berries last year ~~(through)~~ all one time, went up one day and come back with seven cans the next day. ~~Oh --~~ Ohh my there was lotsa berries - probably lots this year too -
~~And how do you fix your berries?~~ I preserve them. ~~You put them in jars and pressure cook them?~~ ⁹ ~~Yep, yeah --~~ I was going to try to make that --- Dry berry? ~~yeah?~~ I was just going to see what it looked like. I been gonna try it and I have to use that ~~thimble~~ --- ~~Thimble berry leaf?~~ ~~Yeah,~~ Thimbleberry leaf, You put it all down on a table and then put the berries on top as they dry you keep pilin, keep pilin, they get pretty thick, some of those berries.

~~Oh yes, Jessie Olson~~ told a story about how they used to go there and camp and stay there until they were finished my they must have been good --

~~Yes~~ ---- Why you dont need no sugar or nothin when youre dryin them when its really nice out dryin them ---- ~~and youve eaten a lot of them?~~ Yep, I soak them and eat ~~sometimes you just tear them off & chew on them~~
~~them -- and sometimes you just tear them off and chew on them?~~ yep -- ~~And then Hazel mentioned that sometimes you just put them in the box and preserve them there and they also -- I think they squash them? --~~ You do ~~you~~ take and you squeeze them with your hands and they all squashe up ~~Yes~~ and when all the berry squashed you take it and you put it --- Grandmother up at Glenvowell used to make big pit in the ground and she said " watch, you guys will be eatin fresh berries in the spring" she said, and you wouldnt beleive," she said how good it is -----

And I tried it from her she goes ans she takes em outta the pit, opens it in the spring and its just like berries offa the ground. ~~Theyre not squashed or anything?~~ oh theyre so-o squashed --- its all juice but she puts it in this big thing, you know, ~~What does she put at the bottom?~~ Its a box, its a homemade one - ~~oh yeah~~ - and it keeps in there it doesnt spoil ~~No, and Hazel said theyr just like (smack) --- just like when you --- and no sugar, nothing?~~ No, I really like them, that was first time I tried it- ~~It~~ It was really good-- She only had the one out there - she was just showin us yu know, "I'm gonna die pretty soon" she said, "and you guys wouldnt know how to do it" ----- ~~Thats your Grandma?~~ ~~Yes,~~ "you guys better learn now", she says, "it be too late." ~~Thats how to do the berries?~~ Yeah. ~~This was when she was --- We used to pick soap berries too and put out on the --- Racks? no --- it takes ----- the barks from the --- real shiny barks you see, I see the kids make sometime (keeds?)~~ Yeah, and tis really tight and thick put the berries right on them- made out of roots and that - put the berries right on there and dry -- I see her makin them - I'm going to make the basket --Edith McDougal knows how and it never leaks she said she said I'll -- ~~in the spring~~ show you in the spring --- It wont leak she said I'm going to learn ~~sure~~ *In the wintertime* ~~And you mentioned in the wintertime you beat the berries - you used to make these special - the berries and have ooligans -~~ Yeah, Grandma gets a great big dish this great big deep bowel, puts whole buncha snow in - take some ooligan grease and sugar mix em like this you know - its really cold on the hand, I tried it, already - Just to see what its like - ~~Oh, you mix it~~ *You mix it* with your hand and it just looks like ice cream - ~~So you mix the berries and the ooligans?~~ No, you mix the ooligan grease and the sugar together -- ~~Oh, and sugar?~~ Yeah, ~~oh~~ Thats the way my grandmother used to make it. ~~And then you put the berries with it?~~ And when youre mixin it its not thick its - its not thick when you start, you know, how fresh the snow is and you just mix and mix and mix it until it gets to a -- it just looks somthing like -- icing sugar -- ~~what is it? not too thick? well somthing -- runny?~~ No, its not runny its Almost like soft ice cream ~~yeah~~, and then after its ready then you put a hole ~~in~~ like that in the centre - you put the huckleberries or blueberries, thats all they

use ~~it~~ and you eat it like that. Oh, I'm tellin you I used to like it, I dont know what its like now, its been so many years since I tried it, -- ~~Is that right?~~
~~I guess you'll just have to try it again.~~ Yeah, we'll have to try it -- I got a little bit grease here- I must try it - I got some from my sister -----

we did
~~And then you mentioned about the smoking and drying of fish and meat---~~ ~~like~~

~~making up row~~

like jerky

~~It was really thick meat wasnt it?~~

Yeah, we used ~~we go to the~~ --- ~~we~~ go out with Richie and get some fish --

You know we put out the net OH, I see 89 to a catch sometime 120 to a catch. William goes with us, Lillian's husband. ~~Oh, yeah~~ and its my uncles fishing ground.

~~Thats in~~

*T*hats past Cedarvale. ~~Oh, oh, oh, oh, I see!~~ We bring

the fish back here and hang it up. But you have to get those -- its not the thimble berry leaves, its just those long leaves you see purple floweres on -- Fireweed!

~~Yeah, yeah~~, you pick a whole bunch of them and thimbleberry leaves too, and we'll

just put it all in the tub - they told us we're not suposed to wash the fish. ~~You're~~

~~NOT suposed to wash~~ --- ~~2 (No)~~ *ye* you not suposed to wash them - they said its not right

to wash the fish - I said WHY? to Lillian. Lillian said, "well youre not suposed to"

~~because it dont~~ -- because it dont get soft and you put it in the water too long

and the fish is hard when they -- when yur smokin it and its dryin it, really dry,

and it gets really hard, not soft, So ~~if you dont wash it?~~ If you don't wash it

too much it stays soft when your dryin it ~~from~~ *it* you know, after ~~its~~ dry you can

eat it, its soft, For goodness sake But - - er -- before we used to wash them,

even scrub them, with the scrubbin brush, buy a scrubbin brush for it. Lillian

says "thats not right".

Lillian takes that up in Kitwancool. ~~Sure, sure, she would.~~ And she shows us when she comes here.

And I've smoked fish over here - I'vw smoked fish, Ive smoked porkipine. One time you know, the car run over the porkipine. ⁹ picked it up on the road, and brought it home. Edith McDougal said "Oh, boy, that GOOD eatin".

I said, "No, it isn't," I said, but gee, I just couldn't see -- I want the --
~~What you call them? Quills.~~ Quills, yeah, I wanted for necklace, that's the
 reason otherwise I wouldn't have picked it up, they make pretty necklace.

~~Oh, I guess.~~ ~~Yeah,~~ just take all the quills off- so I said to her I want the quills,
 Yvonne she -- Yvonne and I were pickin' all the quills. Yvonne makes the necklace,
 I don't. ~~Oh, yeah.~~ and me and Edith we smoked the porkipine. It was good! ~~Oh!~~
~~but it was?~~

There was nothin' wrong with it - it was just waste to see it sittin'
 there. ~~Oh, sure!~~ So I pick it up after this if I see it. It's really good eatin',
 porkipine, beaver, you smoke it - I don't like beaver fresh. ~~I've eaten it cooked~~
~~a little bit.~~ I've tried it fresh and I'm not too fussy with it. Same as bear
 meat, I'm not too fussy with that. I like it smoked. ~~Yeah.~~ I smoked bear meat, an
 moose meat -- deer meat, porkipine --- ~~I suppose ground hog if you could find him?~~
~~laughs - If I could find him, yeah, I don't care.~~

~~Now, what do they do with the fireweed? That's used for wiping the fish? Yeah, No -~~
 They put the fish in it. ~~Yeah,~~ ^{fireweed} when you take the fish out you wipe the fish - you
 wash the fish when you bring it out of the water. ~~Yeah.~~ You can't wash it again
 before you hang 'em up. ~~Like when you clean them, you don't wash them?~~ You wash them
 when you takin' 'em out of the water, enough. ~~Oh! When you clean the fish? Oh,~~ when
 you clean the fish. ~~Oh, you wash it then? Yeah, yeah.~~ But you can't put 'em in the
 water after that. ~~Oh, I see!~~ It's hard when you dry you have to put it amongst the
 leaves. It can stay there for oh 3 - 4 days in the leaves, it never spoils. You
 think it's out of the refrigerator. ~~Isn't that nice?~~ It can stay right --- That's
 the fireweed leaves, ~~then? Yeah.~~ ~~It wouldn't~~ -- it never gets spoiled, even if
 it's hot weather - a real hot day - leave it there amongst the leaves.

Sometimes you hang the fish in the summertime when it's too hot outside and it gets
 hot in a smokehouse and the meat just falls ^{off with} ~~of or uh---~~ you mean it gets kind of --
~~Yeah, it's just too cooked, like.~~ Oh, yeah, yeah, from the heat on
 the sun shinin' on the smokehouse and the meat will fall off when it's hangin'.

~~For smoke!~~ I've seen it fallin right off the skin and just the skin hangin there. Thats how hot. If its too hot you can leave it amongst the leaves and it'll keep. Cuz I've done that last summer. I kept it in leaves and it was real hot. William said, "~~Don't put it~~ -- dont put the fish up", he said, "wait till tommorow, keep it, it wouldnt hurt." I said "and by that time it be stink!" "Oh, no it wont," he said, "I seen Mother do that". and so I thought, well tommorrow I'll hang it up ~~You hang it up by the tail?~~ Yeah, You hang by the tail, you put a hole thru the fin so hang it up by the tail. ~~And then you open then up so that they can really~~ the ~~smoke can~~ No, just leave it the way it is, cuz its already sliced in half. ~~I see, its already sliced in half. Yeah - it really - So when you do that, You just~~ take a day's catch and smoke the whole works, thats it? That's it, yeah. And you ~~say~~ you smoke them for six weeks? ~~About six weeks~~ for good drying. ~~Copy!~~ I had to move mine out to Kitwancool, make Williams mom finish dry I couldnt do it. ~~It~~ takes too long - too much holding you back - ~~oh yeah~~ - you wanna go pick berries and you got to be sittin there watchin the fish - ~~Yeah and you dont~~ -- Thats my grand. mother said, "first soon as the fish come in the spring" she said everybody get to work and get at the fish. Get all your drying done, smokin and everything. When the berries come you forgot about the fish. You finished with the fish eh, then all you work on is your berries," And I see shes right. ~~But~~ and you dont put salt on nothing, ~~You dont put anything on your fish?~~ No, I never put no salt on ~~fish~~. Some of em do but I dont see any difference. It does taste better with salt in though. I like it better with salt, we salt fish, we dry fish, we can fish, we can smoked fish, So we do lottsa things with fish. ~~And do you smoke your heaver or moose or big deer?~~ Or ~~do you~~ - I mean ~~do you put salt on them or do you~~ - dont bother?? ~~moose n deer~~ No, I never put salt on ~~them~~. ~~And you like it better that~~ -- yeah, some of them do and its pretty good when they do it. You know, you soak it with salt brine, for a little while, ~~and~~ hang em up. ~~But its not absolutely necessary?~~ ~~NO~~, If you havent got salt you can get by without it. ~~Sure, so in other words like~~ in the olden days, I guess Indians didnt have salt? I dont think they knew or used it. They just left salt right out of their food? ~~Yeah. Thats very, very, interesting.~~

~~And then you mentioned trading,~~ that theres a lot of trading done with the Coast Indians. ~~Yeah,~~ You know, well, they come up with some seaweed, and fish eggs and ooligans and we trade em with ~~- with -~~ well whatever berries they want, if they want soapberries, mostly soapberries, they take soapberries and huckleberries, not very much huckleberries; but mostly soapberries. Theyre SO crazy over soapberries. ~~Thats interesting.~~ Theyre really wantin lots for their seaweed, now. Like seaweed is really - they want twenty dollars for one gallon of seaweed. Boy! So I give 'em two jars of soapberries, I figure its worth it; its quite a bit of a job pickin em too, you know, ~~sure if its~~ Just even trade em. ~~Soapberries - are they white??~~ ^{Soapberries are} No, theyre green right now, theyll be red. You see lots of little red berries hanging, and be just lots of them. I'm goin to be pickin some next week. ~~I honestly dont know what they look like - you pick them when theyre green?~~ Yeah, You can pick them when theyre green. You can pick them when theyre red. When theyre green its more -- oh I like it when theyre green! Its not as bitter as when theyre red! ~~Well, when you get some bring some and come in, drop in, I'd sure like -- I really don't know what they look like --~~

Oh its really good! Its suposed to be good blood tonic. I know when I used to pick lots and Art and I we used to take the juice out ---

END

Side one Mercy Loring

~~Side Two Tape of Mercy Loring Two Mile June 25, 1968:~~

And then you mentioned the dried meat that you hammer it. Would you like to tell us about that again? That you hammer it to a powder like - you know -

you take dried meat.
~~Yeah, use it for - take it~~ and hammer it out and just into powder and ~~use it for -~~

can eat it just dry in your hand, *take it* in your hand and just eat it dry like that. Its really good! Or you can make a paste out of it with mayonnaise ~~and it~~ or you can use a little ooligan grease, whatever way you like - I like when I make sandwiches with mayonnaise and it is really good. ~~And that doesn't have salt?~~

you
~~No, dont have to put salt on it - its really good like that. And then you went on to say when you were little you were sick a lot. You had kidney trouble and that you often went to the - often took you to the old hospital, I guess? Yeah, used~~

to go to the old hospital. Not this one they got now. Used to be Dr. Wrinch.

I was sick a lot when I was little I
~~Oh, you remember Dr. Wrinch? Yeah, I used to go there when he was there. Oh, for goodness sake. Yeah, He was really good, you know, He said anytime I got sick I~~

was just to go right away because I had kidney trouble. He said he gonna have to remove on e kidney when I was 12 years old, but they never did. ~~Oh, and you~~

~~never did have it out? No. And you got better? Yeah. I pass it on to Yvonne, shes got kidney problems. Is that right?~~ They said if I had kids they would get

it. ~~Oh, I see?~~ They go to school - oh somtimes they go to school 1 or 2 weeks

and go in hospital 1 or 2 weeks or 3 weeks and they'd go home and do the same thing all over agan -- just not too long at all. When I was going to school they used

to give us Cod liver Oil. They said we wouldnt get sick. They line us up outside the school and as we come in, so they dont miss nobody, and they give you Cod Liver Oil. Sure didnt like the taste of it - ~~And yet you did like Ooligan Oil? Yeah.~~

~~But this is really terrible taste, this Cod Liver Oil! Well, you know, isnt this funny?~~ One tsp. they give you! Looks like big spoon to me! When you

come in the door and they give you one spoon of Cod live oil and we used to go to our cups and get a drink of water. Be all hittin for the water - They had our

cups all on the wall with our names on. T in cups. ~~Just like the Indian Day School~~

here? Yeah, thats where the Anglican Church is. Thats where I used to go to school. You dont use nobody else's cup but your own, your names's on it. Its a silver tin cup. ~~Oh yeah Strange they wouldnt have ooligan oil for you. You'd like that~~ ^{ooligan oil} Oh, I'd like ~~it~~ better than that. Thats what my grandmother used to gve me. Ooligan grease when I got sick. I know when I was really, really sick one time and she said to me, Well, this Mrs. Oakes, shes some relation to my Dad I dont know what she is to him. She comes down one time when I had double pnunomia and the flu, she come down, and she put onions at my feet, she rubbed me all over with coal oil and ooligan grease, all over my chest and my back she put onions at the bottom of my feet, and she said, " if these onions are not soft by morning, shes gonna die!" ~~She'd rub them or just put them by the~~ Just put the onions at the bottom of my feet and tie it on with a cloth. She'd rub me with - shed use that - I dont know what it is --- Electric Oil? I dont remember what kind of oil, but I know she used Ooligan grease, and coal oil to -- to rub with. ~~Shes an awful skrewd person, to make you get better. Your grandmother did that~~ No, this is Mrs. Oakes, I dont know what, she some relation to my Dad. ~~Oh yeah. And you got better?~~ I got better, ~~yeah~~ She was at it all the time. She come down every day. She rub me with this ooligan grease mixed with coal oil and she rubbed me an she tied onions to the bottom of my feet, she says that if the onions are soft she says shes goona die, ~~So they'd have to stay hard?~~ They are soft, you know, but not as real soft as she figures ----- ~~Oh, for goodness sake!~~ And I got better! She say, "oh, before too long she be better you watch and see!" she say - ~~for goodness sake!~~ She give me ooligan grease to drink and she mixes ooligan grease with coal-oil and sometimes I drink it - I was always scared you know because it was such an awful taste, ~~I'll bet!~~ - really bitter with coal oil - I always get better. ~~Good for you, and you said that between all this the hospital and everything that you managed just to get to grade three by 14?~~

9 ^{got} Just to grade three - John was born when I was fourteen I was only in grade three -

~~Yeah, but you say you -- you say they never had -- let you take your books to school.~~ ~~No.~~ They never let you take no books out of school or its just what you

learn in school is what you get. ~~If you dont~~ - if you miss the school youk just miss out - ~~Because now they even have teachers go to school and doing the hospitals.~~

I seen when Yvonne was in the hospital that time in Vancouver, ^{they brought book} but when I was sick that time nobody come with a book or anything - ~~Nothing?~~ You just have to catch up when you go back to school or else - you dont pass thats all!

~~And then you mentioned that as a young girl you worked at Port Edward Cannery.~~

~~Yeah, I worked in Port Edward for the~~ ^{herring} ~~sockeye season, not sockeye, but herring.~~

~~And that was cleaning them like?~~ ^{I was} ~~Yeah,~~ cleaning them - you squeeze them and all that

stuff come out. You have to fill these big boxes, you know, its not very small, its biggaer than that box there - and you have to fill them with the herring before you even get a punch on your ticket. ~~Yeah~~ When each ones full then you get a punch, and if its not full then you just get that one punch all day so you got to work to be able to get a punch. ~~So if youre lucky you get two boxes per morning?~~

Two boxes per morning ~~yeah~~, and work all afternoon and get the same. Sometimes you get overtime and you work at night and you might get another box at night -- if you work overtime -- and its big pay for us then. ~~What do they pay you?~~ Well,

~~When I was working then I dont remember -- what they paid me - but it was more than what I got when I was working in the hospital.~~ ~~Yeah?~~ When I was working in the hospital I was only getting one dollar a day ~~Yeah?~~ and then they take off, well, I would be there by the month I stayed at the hospital and they take off fifteen dollars for my room and board and I cleared fifteen dollars. It was thirty dollars a month. It was a dollar a day. For thirty one days you get thirty one dollars.

~~It was for cleaning like, cleaning and all that?~~ ^{I was cleaning} ~~Cleaning yeah,~~ I was sometimes

working in the laundry. ~~Oh, yeah!~~ Sometimes I work on the floors, cleaning floors.

I figgure well thats lots of money for me. I used to give Dad half of what I got.

I figure well, I got lots when I keep so much, cause Dad buys my clothes anyway.

¹⁵
my Dad was

I didnt have to buy any. ~~What was your Dad's name?~~ Robert Simpson. ~~Oh, I see!~~
He worked at R. S. Sargent's for 28 years. ~~Oh, for goodness sake! Well, that's~~
~~like a clerk? Yeah,~~ he priced everything down there and he was really - he really
knew - and ~~he~~ he said to me when he was going to school - he said that when you go to
grade three he said, ~~I'd - you'd be in grade ten here -- at the grade three that~~
~~used to be when I was going to school you see, but he said today its nothing~~
~~for you guys that go to school. He used totell me that he cant see why I couldnt~~
~~get nowhere and only get to grade three and dont understand nothin. But he said~~
"look at me, I only went to grade three myself and I'm working in a store." "Sure
its what you do with youself." he said. "Cuz you just gotta push yourself along
and learn at home!", he said, "you cant just sit there and say 'well I only went
to grade three and its not gettin me nowhere' "But I picked it up myself." he
said, --- And there was just stacks of books all the time amd even lawyer books.
~~Boy, you name it - hes got it! Its he dead now? Yeah! How long ago, since he died?~~
He died twenty-one years ago, ~~tomorrow. Oh my, thats June 22? Oh, -- Ono, -----~~
~~twenty-one -- Oh no, he died in -- twenty-one years ago on April 17. For goodness~~
~~sake! Cuz Archie was born after he died. Oh. Archie be 21 tomorrow. 21? Well,~~
~~and then you said you worked as a cook in New Town? But you didnt like it very~~
~~well? No! (Laughs) I dont like gettin tied up in the kitchen! No, I dont blame~~
~~you.~~ Its too much! Its too hot in the summertime when I was doin that. I sure
didnt care for it. Its early in the morning -- I don't mind gettin up early in the
morning - its just you get so tired out! ~~By the time the day is over -- tired --~~
~~everything I could try to work at. You what? I tried everything where I could.~~
~~I tried everything where I could. Sure -- so anyway --~~ Long time ago they didnt
ask you for education. You could try anything you want. ~~Well, I mean as long as~~
~~you were able to do it.~~ Today they do -- they ask What grade are you? But long
time ago they dont say that - They just say "well you come and work and if you can
do it you just go ahead and take the job. ~~Sure, sure.~~ But today today you cant
do that. ~~No.~~ But long time ago I used to go anywhere and get a job . But you
cant do that today. I bin lookin around and I cant get no job. And ~~anyway you~~

mentioned that - then of course you went to the coast again because you like ~~that better anyway~~ ^{at the coast} Yeah, its better money. ~~Better money?~~ Yeah - well then --

I sent money home to dad all the time and he built himself a house. I come home in the fall and help him tear down the old one. and we use the lumber from the old house for the new house. But I bought all the strippings ^{The} money I sent him he bought stripping for the house and the ceiling tiles - the inside for the house - but we use the old lumber for the outside. Was no insulation. Thats why they tore it down not too long ago. ~~Oh, I see. Was no insulation in it -~~ I dont know how it was kept warm. ~~Oh, thats too bad!~~ ^{we lived in it} ~~How many years did you live in it?~~ Oh, about 15 years, I guess. ~~Well!~~ We had two stoves - we had a stove goin in the kitchen and a stove goin in the livin room to keep warm. Well, we never notice the difference, cuz theres no insulation - Dad didnt say we had to have insulation. ~~Just didnt realize. No didnt know. -- if it was log it be different~~ If that was a log house that would be different? We did put sawdust and shingles ~~not that - shavings~~ - in between the walls but not all that much. Just here and there where we could get it, but we didnt have insulation, and we lived in it. ~~To too~~ ^{it} long ago and they said its too cold for my Mom. ~~Oh, your Mom?~~ Yeah, she got a new house now. ~~Oh, I see.~~ Brand new one. ~~Oh, thats nice!~~ three bedrooms and livin room and kitchen and a bathroom and a basement. ~~Oh, Yeah, thats nice, whos living with her there?~~ ^{Green + her kids are living with her now} Helen ~~is, Helen Green?~~ and her kids. ~~Thats nice!~~ Costs too much stayin in that house. ~~Why, sure.~~ Have to pay for the furnace all the time, oil, shed never do it on her pension. ~~No, How many are there in the family, Mercy?~~ ~~In one family?~~ I was the only one in my family, and my Mom. ~~Oh, were you?~~

Yeah, when I was born my Mom was sick and I stayed in Wrinch Memorial Hospital. As a baby? ~~Yeah,~~ I was born in April and in August well my Mom went out just about three or four days towards the end of July. When she came back again on the 5th of August --- ~~Because she was sick?~~ She was sick. ~~And you were in the hospital all of this time?~~ Yeah, she had double pnewnonia. I was in the hospital all this time. ~~Oh my goodness!~~ I stayed in the hospital, well, April, May, June, July, August, four months I stayed in the hospital --- ~~As a newborn baby?~~

Yeah, ~~and~~ then my Mom came in again and she had double pneumonia before - well she had the double pneumonia before ~~but she~~ -- but they thought she was all better when they let her go. They said to come back right away so they kept me there. And she asked before if someone would want to take me - like her relations and that --- ~~and I see on the paper that the only one I was close to was~~

My Mom's name was Kattie Brown. ~~Oh yeah!~~ ---I havent been registered yet -- I'm goin ta get registered at the ----- ~~is that right?~~ at the government agent's office, theyre gonna swear me in and register me. I just got these papers from the hospital here, they took it back -- ~~Where you were born?~~ ~~Yeah,~~ and I got the right year too --- and I told em what year to look for and they got it ----- its all written on the paper all I got to do is take it down and get registered. I've never been registered. ~~What year were you born?~~ ~~Merry?~~ I was born in 1932, April 10th. ~~April 10th?~~ Yeah, I have never been registered. ~~Well thats nice,~~ ~~a big celebration~~ I said my Mom put down on the paper that Kale Brown was next of kin to her ~~that'd be your Uncle like?~~ --- and I guess she didnt have nobody to take me and I guess they had me up for adoption at the hospital. ~~Oh! Oh!~~ ~~goodness sake!!~~ ~~Because your Mom was so sick?~~ My Mom died then. ~~Oh! your Mom~~ ~~died!~~ ~~Yeah,~~ she died in August. ~~Oh-My~~ She was in there, you see I was only four months when my Mom died. ~~Oh-My~~ So they turned around and adopted me out --- Dr. Wrinch put out a notice that I was up for adoption. Someone mentioned at the store to my Dad, so he went home at lunch hour and told his wife -- this is my Dad's first wife -- Agnes Simpson. ~~That was he that?~~ and he said, "well they have an adoption up at the hospital for a girl" and she said, "Well, after you get off work were goin to look. Go and see her." And thats what they did, when he got off work at supper-time they hurry up and they ate supper and they went to the hospital to see me. ~~And he didnt realize it was you?~~ No -- they-- they just adopted me then. ~~Oh!~~ Mrs. Robert Simpson was --- ~~oh theyre the ones~~ ~~that adopted you?~~ ~~Yeah.~~ ~~Oh -- I see!~~ Never had no family of my own! ~~I see.~~ So they adopted me. Agnus Simpson adopted me. ~~Well!~~ And she had me for three years and she died of cancer. ~~Oh! You just had the greatest luck with mother!~~

She died with cancer so Dad hired this Mom I got now. ~~Oh!~~ -- and then he married her after, She was just workin for him and I guess he said it cost too much for a housekeeper so he turned around and married her. Cuz he had me and my brother there was just the two of us. They adopted him too from a different family. ~~Well!~~ And my sister's adopted too, from a different family too. ~~Well, which was your brother?~~ My brother's mother was ~~But what was?~~ Is he here in ~~Hazelton?~~ ^{my brother} Robert Simpson? ~~No, he~~ died in Wenatchee Washington in 1967. ~~Oh!~~ Only brother I had, we were raised together. ~~Well!~~ -- and then you had another ~~sister?~~ ^{my sister} My second Mom adopted her. Mary Simpson. Mary Simpson? Yeah that's ----- My goodness! I know how I used to say at one time that there were all these adoptions and didn't understand them. Now I really do. I understand! Yeah, yeah. Goodness sakes! I think it's so interesting how Indian Culture especially, you know, they, the families come right in and someone takes the children -- or relatives take them. Yeah, I was happy with my Dad, I had no complaints about him. He done a lot of things for me. When I was workin he used to ship groceries down. It take his whole paycheck to keep me and his own home goin. ~~You mean you were here, now~~ When I was down the coast. ~~Oh, when you were down the coast what were you? When was that?~~ When I was workin in the cannery. First time when I went down to work, he used to send me groceries in a box. ~~Why?~~ Cuz he didn't want me to starve, he said. ~~Well, couldn't you get them down there?~~ I could get them down there but he decided he should send them I guess. ~~He was working at the store then?~~ Yeah, he was workin at the store and he figures it's better for me -- He knows what I'm supposed to eat, and ~~Well!~~ He figures if I just go and eat cake and pop and stuff like that it's not right. And he'd send me soup and sardines -- something fast, you know, to eat when I come home from work. ~~How old were you when you went down there?~~ ~~14!~~ Oh! Right at 14 ^{I was 14} you went? Yeah. Oh for goodness sake! And he used to ship me groceries and I was really happy and pleased with it, I was --- ~~I send him some~~ -- the first check I got I send him the whole thing -- It was \$200.00! ~~Well!~~ the second check I got I send him the whole thing and he send me back \$20.00 He send it back in a money order. I just signed my check and sent it to him. ~~Was there a place to live while~~

at the cannery
~~you were at the cannery?~~ Yeah, I was staying with Sarah Gunganoot, another old lady, She used to tell me stories at night. ~~Oh! Was --- the boss come and knock on the door~~ didnt have to just --- comes about half hour before you go to work, ~~so~~ there was no problem of gettin up. ~~Oh, I see.~~ *the boss would* Knock on a door "Are you up?" Right away you jump right now! If you go back and lay down a few more minutes after he knocks, you've had it. ~~Oh~~ Sure. Stay sleepin. I done it once, I thought 'no more!' I get up right now wh en that door knocks. He was really good. "Come on , its time to get up! Time to go to work in half an hour!" He always gives us half an hour. ~~The Boss~~ ~~from the Cannery?~~ Yeah, he used to be Harry --- gee -- I forgot his last name----- I know his name was Harry, I seen him down in the cannery the summer before, when I was down -- He dont look any older and thats years and years ago and he still looks the same. I told him too. He said, "I'm retired long time ago and I'm still at the cannery".

~~And you lived with Sarah Gunganoot? Wasnt that the wife of that man who was in all that trouble over ---~~ *I lived with Sarah, wife of.*
~~Yeah, Simon Gunganoot --- Simon Gunganoot? Yeah~~ She used to tell me about it. ~~Oh~~ What life she had to go through. ~~I guess a terrible~~ *she* life. Yeah, had to stay in the bush and make a living. She'd tell me "You havent got it hard yet" she said, "You should be there when us ---- I used to have a tough life. she says. And then you'd say you have really tough goin, to me shed say that ---- This is easy life with you guys . You dont know what its like ---- But she didnt really -- she couldn t very well --- she didnt live with her husband where he was hiding or DID she go and hide with him too??? She went to hide with him. ~~She did!~~ ? Yeah. ~~Oh Day!~~ She was realy nice. I really liked her. ~~She was~~ She wasnt cranky to me or anything. As long as I got up in the morning and I run home ahead of her and get my meal. She was really old then, you know, but she didnt look that old, cuz you know at her age she, you know, shes old. Yeah. Always run ahead of her, hurry up and put somthing on, water first, have to have tea,----- Yeah, and my goodness you have of course then you got married and everything. I guess you met Art here in Hazelton I suppose? Yeah, I met ~~him~~ *Art* when I was gonna go to the Dance. ~~Is that right?~~ *in Hazelton* He was goin to the dance too. "oh, I'll come back." he said

"I'm going back to Houston to work" he said, "But I'll come back." and he came back.

~~He doesn't work here. He works at Houston all the time. He was there workin for~~

~~Howard~~ He was there quite a long time. He must have stayed in Houston for

about three years. ~~Oh!~~ And then we moved up here.

And then you had your share of adoptin' kids and helping them? My goodness I'll bet
~~you couldn't count how many kids you've helped!~~ *I've helped a lot of kids*
I've had lots. I always say to myself

'well, I had six ----- myself. Not sayin I was goin hungry or anything like that.

--- but you feel if you --you know -- get a bawling out from your Mom and you feel
 that you just got no place to go - its pretty hard for you to decide what your gonna

do. ~~I think gettin older you know -----~~ My Dad, I was pretty pleased, we were
 never without. Me and my brother we were always *had* like oranges and apples ---

Those were out main food. in the house, we couldn't get candy, not for a long, long time

~~That's no good for you anyway.~~ He'd always give us oranges and apples. Sometimes Dad
 would throw it all outside, you know, and we see whos gonna pick the most, if theres

a whole bunch of kids come in. ~~Oh yeah.~~ All our friends come. Then he'd dump the
 bag outside and we'd be running ~~I'll bet!~~ The same with peanuts. He throws it

outside and we got to pick up what we can pick up is what you can get.

They're really good for you. All that stuff is really good for you. ~~Yeah - Well~~

anyway how were those -- what was that one boy that was a terror? He got in so

~~much trouble?~~ Carl. Well, theres Carl, *I had a lot of kids to help.* yeah he was at your place. Yeah, there

was Carl Foster and Norman Lawson. ~~Norman Lawson where is he? Darlene Lawson --~~

~~Lottie & Rosemary.~~ *Where is Norman?* Fishing in Terrace. ~~I see, My goodness April? What relation is~~

April to you? My aunt's kid. Oh yeah. I had Lottie --- Rosemary --- They were

just here for a very short time? Well, they were with me for two years. But

they didn't go to school? Nope, they went to Old Town. They were bigger kids?

Yeah, I see and yet there were funny little kids that remember caused a lot of

~~trouble -- that woman that was sent~~ --- Oh, I had Then I had Frnchie's

kids too. ~~French?~~ You know, that Frenchman staying over here -- at Kiermat - *21st*

got two little boys. They used to go to school here before. Yeah, yeah, and

he moved them up to the Seventh Day Adventist School, well I had them too.

Oh, I had lots of kids. ~~They~~ ^I used to say "Mercys got the right name" because ~~you~~ always had mercy on the children - always got room for them. Always have so many kids all the ^{time}. I feel sorry for the kids you know.

Woody, I had him too. ~~Oh yeah!~~ I had quite a few kids. ~~Thats after their mother died? Yeah. Their mother died very suddenly? Yeah. She shure did. So what are your thoughts to the future? What advice would you give to the children?~~ I always tell ~~them~~ kids today are very, very lucky. I says, "when I was a kid," I says, I used to have it really hard - I wouldnt say its that tough but its pretty hard for me. I know I didnt have this, I didnt have that and Dad always tells me, he didnt haide from me that I was adopted and I didnt have no parents and that. He always told me and "I tried to do the best I could," he said. "well, Dad, when I have kids, I said, "I'm sure lookin forward to make them happy, do everything I can to make them happy" I'm happy at home. But times I get pretty disappointed too. ~~I suppose its the same - I suppose the biggest problem with young people is still - at least what would you say the biggest problem young people have these days? What would you say was their biggest problem?~~ ^{Today is} they get too much and they dont appreciate it. The more you give the kids today the less they appreciate you. And if you give them less they appreciate it more. ~~Yeah I know it. And actually the things that are really you know that mean the most are the things we cannot buy because they -- you know -- love and to be considerate ---~~ When you lookin after kids you got to show you love em - If you dont show your love to them they they dont think nothin of you. ~~What's that? Well she dont love us or anything s he dont know -- She doesnt care about us? She dont care about us and we dont care what we do and I know I got some kids been like that. Yeah. And they come back to me and say "I got more love when I was with you than I ever did since I left here ----~~ ~~Yeah~~ Manys the times that they come back and tell me that. ~~Sure, because they care did. thats what I say Your name is right!~~ Kids, they need love and if they aint got love, they just ---- if you dont show your love for kids they just aint nothin - they just dont care for nothin -- They just ignore you and --- but they do they try to help you out the best way they can if if they figure you really showed it for them - that you loved them - ~~that you love them --~~