

Tape #6 Elsie May Cimini  
Tualatin Historical Letters ~~Mag~~ (Part B)

L. These are the Thirties—were you living in Tualatin in the 20's or the 30's?

C. In the 20's, yes.

L Do you remember anything about a woman jumping into a well?

C (laughter) Oh, who was that? No, I guess I--

K. Dig it out, Elsie Mae.

L. Oh, come on dig it out. dig it out...

C If I could I'd tell you. I have a feeling that somebody did that, but I don't know....

L.It's hard for us ....we've heard rumors about it but it's hard for us to pin down as to any date and any real name....

K. That's the well where the <sup>ok</sup> old school house was?

L. Yeah, well there is a name that comes up Culthbert (sp). Did you know anyone named Culthbert?

C. I knew a Mrs. Culthbert, yes. Did she jump down a well? Maybe she did. Hmmmm, she was unhappy, so maybe she did. I wonder if she did.

K. Where did she live?

C. Well, she lived up beyond where the school house is. She lived on that road...on the way to Wilsonville.

K. Unhuh, yeah.

.C. Somewhere up in there.

K. She lived close to that well---with an unhappy person and I guess you could put the two together--pause--pause

L. She didn't divorce Mr. Culthbert and marry someone else did she? That you remember...

C. No---divorces weren't so common then and they were hard to get. You had to go out to Hillsboro.

K. No.

L. And kinda frowned upon.

C. And you put upon..you put up with...<sup>it was</sup> what you had,

K. Yeah.

C. What you had..

pause, pause

L. Have the roads changed very much since you were a little *girl.*

C. Only in recent times and now. Francis's husband, George, takes me riding a lot and every now and then I'll say, "Where are we George?"

Klaughter..Yes.

C. Because all the houses have built up around and all it's changed—but just recently..oh no.. They've stayed the same for years and years and years and years.

L. Were they mostly gravel when you were a kid?

C. Mostly dirt when I was a kid—oh, gravel that was a big thing.

K. Yeah.

C. Un heh.

K. Back to the stores, so, when you remember the Ed. Robinson store, that was Rocky *where a* Confectionery, wasn't it?

C. Yes, That *was* called the confectionery.

K. And the corner store was the Robinsons"?

C. The brick store that was the grocery store. That was the only grocery store.

K. I see. Robinsons' didn't have groceries...just candies and confectioniers.

C. Well, he may have had chocolate or something like that. But he didn't have groceries. Not coffee, beans, and things like that.

K. Yeah, yeah. But then was there *HAUX HURST S* ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Meat shop?

C. That came much later.

K. I see.

L. It seems hard to me, to realize that Ed Robinson could make a living on confections.

C. Well, he did.

L. Huh.

C. I don't know how to account for it.

L. Did he build that building? Do you know?

C. As far as I know, he did. But I don't know..

L. But he..

C. But I don't know what relation he was to *Newt.* ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~. I really don't. I don't know if they were brothers or not..

K. Didn't someone say...

L. Someone said they were brothers.

K. Yeah, and they lived overhead. Grace and . uh..

C. Un huh.

L. And they had no children.

K. And that was called Robinsons Confection and the other was called Robinsons Grocery Store.

C. The one was just called Grocery Store, I guess. I guess it was just called the old brick store.

K. Right. I see

C. It was just the red brick store.

K. Sure, and around the corner from it was the feed store.

C. Yes.

K. and beyond that there was something also or not..

C. No

K. Now do you remember anything in what we now call "old Town". Back up there where the first churches were?

C. I...not very much. I don't remember much about old town.

K. Yeah.

C. What was called "old town", we never went up there. Now you have to keep in mind that anytime we went to Tualatin we walked.

K. Yeah, right.

C. And so, we didn't walk around..

K. You didn't walk further.

C. Oh, though we never thought a thing about it, from our place down to the old brick store and bringing home the groceries..never thought about it.

K. Now, when you did get around, had to go into Portland, how did you go? By train?

C. Well, we went by horse and buggy for awhile.

K. Un-huh.

C. And after awhile by train. Trains came about the same time I did.

K. Un-huh. Now, do you remember going by horse and buggy?

C. Not any grteat distance. We had what they call a surrey.

K. Oh..

C. And it was just like in the song it had fringe on the top, and.

K. Now many did it seat?

C. It was square. This is the surrey, this is the seat, and this is the seat and it was open all around, you see, and the fringe hung down.

K. Now, did the seats face each other?

C. No. They faced the front.

K. They both faced the front.

L. And did one or two horses pull?

C. Two. Un-huh, I remember riding in that.

L. Did your father farm with horses?

C. Oh, yes. There wasn't anything else to farm with.

L. What kind of farming did your father do?

C. Well, he raised onions and grain and then we had a dairy farm.

K. Oh. that's right, the calendar mentions your guemsey...

C. Dairy farm.

L. Did you ever milk cows?

C. Did I ever milk cows? No.

L. Now somewhere in the back of my memory it seems like I remember hearing ther was an air strip back there behind....

C. Un...no.

K. Oh? Uh

C. Now Ed had an air strip by the .... *Wager's, you know.* (couldn't understand)

K. Now that must have been the one.

C. There never was one—

K. I've heard stories in the thirties, there was, there was either a radical or a pink element that would meet in the old city park. Did you ever hear anything about that? Either Communist or Woodsmen of the World or some kind of radical group.

C. Well, they weren;t Communists because nobody was communist then. Ah, I don't remember hearing about hearing about Woodsmen of the World..

K. I don't know where I heard that. Associated with Mark..Oh, ah, Do you remember 4th of July Celebrations?

C. Oh, my yes.

K. Mother used to talk about that in Kansas, that was the big holiday of the year.

C. Oh, Yes.

K. Are you going to the 4th of July? That the 4th was the ...

*It's like "to the 4<sup>th</sup>" was just*

C. Big basket of lunch, the band played, a man gave a patriotic speech. Oh my, and..

K. Now where was this held?

C. Over near the river ..

K. OKay.

C. Probably about where the park is now.

K. Yeah, yeah..

C. and there would be stands where you could buy candy, soda pop

K. I see, kinda like our crawfish festival now.

C. Great...

L. Oh, that sounds fine

C. Oh, yes.

L. And firecrackers?

C. Oh, my yes...

laughter, and more laughter

C. And everybody was scared to death because you just set off in the dry grass..

*them*

K. Oh, yeah.

C. Get up on the roof of houses and it was dangerous. Oh, my.

K. We have a picture. I don't know where it came from but it was in Tualatin City Park on the 4th of July, like in 1928 or something and there's it looks like a hundred cars all lined up and parked. I guess people came from a long ways around.

C. Un-huh.

K. Was there any activity in the river? Were there any river parks--did people swim in the river in those days?

C. Not very much, nobody swam..it wasn't a common occurrence.

K. I see.

C. And it was the big event when the lake was filled--Oswego lake you know.

K. Oh--

C. That was something.

K. Do you remember that?

C. Well, I can remember how exciting it was when it was filled.

K. Do you have any idea what year that was?

C. I have no idea, would have been,,,,well, I was in high school--pauseBut that's an artificial lake.

K. Yes, there was a small body of water to start with, I guess and then they just expanded that.

*they dug the canals, and --  
+ Taylors Ferry BRIDGE*

C. Uh,huh.

L. Do you remember up by Taylors Ferry, is-bridge-up by Jurgens Park?

C. Yes.

L. Do you remember a gambling house called the Spinning Wheel?

C. UH,no.

L. That would have been before your time.

K. Yeah, right, Do you remember a covered bridge being on the

C. No.

K. Do you have our covered bridges calendar?

C. Un huh

K. You do..

L. Now, Jessie, I went to see her, maybe ten years ago, and talked to her. She couldn't remember very much. She had a picture of a covered bridge and she had a picture of Rev. Blake and I wanted to make copies but Annette took them into town and just made zerox copies. I saw that today. I ran across the picture of the covered bridge and Rev. Blake. But she didn't know which covered bridge it was.

K. Could you identify it from...

L. No. It might be..

K. It wasn't a humpback?

L. No, but there was a picture of Rev. Blake and Clayton always said that Rev. Blake had a long beard--but in this picture he didn't have a beard.

C. Oh, I don't recall that he had a beard, Clayton

pause, pause

L. What were the hair styles like when you were a child?

C. Well. I wore my hair in curls..pause

K. Short curls?

C. No, shorter than

K. How did you get the curls?

C. Well, my hair was naturally curly.

K. Oh, I see, you didn't have any--

C. And I --most of the girls wore braids and they just hung down the back as I recall. I really don't remember much about it.

K. Oh.

C. It was considered a big event when you could put your hair up the first time.

K. You had to be grown up.

pause,,pause

K. Now, how, what was school like? Being a teacher, having gone from being a child in school in Tualatin to then teaching when they got to be, ah, when you were a teacher, but what were your memories of the early grades?

C. Oh, I don't

K. You went to the Tualatin Grade School?

C. Un,huh

K. Uh, when it was, I've seen pictures of it, it was originally just a two room school and then they added the upstairs and then...

C. The upstairs was there when I went to school. That was where the high school was.

K. Yeah, right.

C. The grade school was two rooms, first, second, third and fourth and fifth,sixth, seventh and eighth...

K. I see.

L. Is that the way it was when you went--

K. No, when I went, by this time they had built the gym building and then attached it to the primary rooms. So grade one and two were there and then 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and then when they moved th high school out then it was 1, 2, 3, 4, well it was somewhere. Two grades to a room.

But I can just remember the wooden floors—and they soaked them with oil, to cut down on the dust, I guess.

C. Oh, yes.

K. And I've often thought what a fire trap that must have been...

laughter, laughter

K. But <sup>but</sup> they never caught on fire.

C. I can remember my first year at school, I was always afraid I couldn't find my seat. I sat at the very end of the row, way at the back so I could be sure.

laughter...

L. You walked to school?

C. And my mother didn't want me to walk by myself when I was six years old. So I didn't start until I was seven. So then I skipped to the second grade, I think it was. I was in the first grade and I could already read. I don't know anyway, I skipped a grade somewhere in there.

K. Now you walked to school, of course we all did. Now did you walk the long way around--all the way to Boones Ferry and then up or did ?

C. No, no

K. cut across the field?

C. No, I just came down the Tualatin Road, Sherwood Road, past Itels, down to the Railroad crossing.

K. Unhuh

C. The road that goes by the OUR farm. Well on that road to the Railroad crossing..

K. And then up the hill.

C. Up the hill.

K. Yeah. There probably would have been a short cut but you would have had to cut through a field.

C. Oh, well, that was unheard of...

K. That's right.

C. We didn't do that.

L. You never went on someone else's property? I remember.

C. Oh no, you stayed out of people's fields...pause

K. Did you ah, in my day I can remember we used to shop in Oregon City instead of going into Portland. Can you remember?

C. No, we didn't. We went to Roberts Brothers.

K. Down on fourth St.

C. Un,huh.

L. Did she go to Portland very often?

C. Well, it was no big event when we went. As I begin to remember we went fairly often. But we didn't go unless we had something to go for.

K. Sure.

C. We didn't go the the movies ~~at~~ just..

L. I wanted to ask you about movies.

C. Oh well, it was a big event when the Sherwood ~~Stars~~ <sup>STORES</sup> went together and we had Saturday night movies out doors.

K. Yes.

L. I've heard about that.

C. And everybody went to Sherwood. You bought your groceries then you went to the movies.

C. And everybody went to Sherwood. You bought your groceries, then you went to the movies.

K. Yes, yes. You sat on a bench outside.

C. Un huh.

K. Outside.

L. That was in the day time or at night?

C. At night. Saturday night. We bought groceries...

L. Oh, you remember that too?

K. Un huh..it was Thursday night when I was a kid. And it was just a big social event.

L. Did they charge you so much?

C. No.

K. I think it was free. It was...

C. The merchants..

K. Yeah, the merchants. A way to get the people to their stores to shop.

L. What a good idea and I understand there was a skating rink in Sherwood.

C. Yes, there was. I never went to it but there was one.

L. What was there to do in Tualatin?

C. Nothing, but go to Sunday School. But you had a wonderful time.

K. You had...

C. You had a far better time than people do now.

laughter...laughter

L. People, kids complain nowadays if they're not just stimulated to the.

C. Oh yeah, un huh. We never had any trouble being happy and contented.

K. Now, you went to Sunday School both in the first Methodist Church and the one that's there now.

C. Well, I never went very often in the one that's there now. But I did go there, Yes!

K. I see.

C. But the other one, I went every Sunday.

K. That was a good long walk from your place. Probably about a mile?

C. I don't know a thing about...

pause

K. Can you remember, I don't know. I wouldn't be able to....remember you took your lunch to school. Do you remember what kind of lunch your mother would have packed for you?

C. Yes, sandwiches and left over fried chicken, pieces of cake, cookies and an apple. I never had a banana.

K. No. no. Did you have an orchard on your place?

C. Yes. Unhuh. Yes.

K. Did you know the Hedges?

C. Yes.

K. Yeah, you would have known..

C. ~~All through Tualatin....~~

*Ralph & Clyde.*

K. Were you ever in their house?

C. Oh my, goodness yes. The Hedges House.

K. Oh that's right. Helen and Lloyd lived there too.

C. Un huh.

K. You know we dismantled that very carefully in hopes of building it up again.

L. When you were a kid, who lived in the house where Helen and Lloyd live now?

C. I don't think it was there when I was small..

L. Oh, oh.

C. It was built by Kochs' later on...much later on. No one lived there. Illies (spelling?) lived back in a house on that property.

*4: ILEY*

K. That's the house..

C. I think Helen sometimes mentions the Illie house. In fact when the wind blew the other night, she thought the Illie house was going to blow down or something she said.

K. How do you spell that?

C. I L E Y.

K. That's the one we went through--behind

L. It's been standing there vacant for years.

K. Yeah.

pause, pause

C. I have to go in 10 minutes.

K. Okay.

C. I must alert her, in case there.

L. Yeah, important things we're going to forget.

K. Sure.

C. You can call me on the telephone.

K. Of course, Can you remember the clothing you would have worn from the underwear on out..

C. Well. always wore a long undershirt, slip, long, high top and...

K. Now, how long would that be?

C. It came down, as I recall, I don't think I ever wore what we'd call long skirts, down to my ankles. I don't think I ever did.

K. And did your mother make your clothes?

C. Oh, yes.

K. And what would the dresses be like and what would they be made of?

C. Gingham...pause..and what would the winter ones be made of...is there a material called challis?

L. Unhuh. it's a real light wool.

C. I think we had dresses make out of challis and serge.

K. Oh, yes.

C. It was common.

K. Did you always wear hats, Not to school but, but

C. Yes.

K. Did you make your own hats or was that a special purchase?

C. Well, like we might purchase one and then make a couple. I don't know about that.

K. Have you saved much of anything from your growing up years? Old clothes,?

C. No

K. ~~mother~~ <sup>mother</sup> has saved a lot of things. Not a cedar chest, a camphor chest, that was just full of old memories of the past...

pause,,pause..

L. Did your parents or grandparents belong to the Grange or Odd Fellows or any other organization?

C. My family didn't, but Aunt Jose, Uncle Erv and Uncle Will all did. They all were very active in the Grange and Odd Fellows.

L. I wanted to ask you about ~~Wy Millot~~(sp)? Now he's your uncle?

C. ~~Wy Millot~~? He's my cousin.

L. Oh, your cousin. I see.

C. Aunt Jose's boy.

L. I see, I see.

K. He's still living on the property?

C. Un huh.

L. Did he help build the Methodist Church?

C. Did he what?

L. Help build the Methodist Church?

C. ~~Wy Millot~~? Heavens no.

L. Well, did his father...

C. Well, I don't know, maybe he did. He was a carpenter.

L. Oh, I see!

C. So he may have...

L. Somewhere I heard that it was ~~Wy~~..

C. It was probably a co-worker. Millot, he was a carpenter

L.L. I bet it was. Do you remember when the church burned down?

C. No, I can remember seeing a fire from our place, but I don't remember when..

L. That must be devastating..

K. Must be...

L. A church is like your home. You love the church just like your home.

K. Yeah. Do you remember any houses burning down? Cause that must have been candles and and kersone laterns....

C. No, I can't remember houses...

L. Did you ever hear why the church burned down?

*How the fire started?*

C. Oh, I suppose I heard but I don't remember. My guess would be that little boys were playing matches.

K. Yeah. *We heard that.*

C. But that's just a guess.

pause

K. Do you remember any really awfully cold winters. I was just reading an account of Scholls Ferry...

CC. Oh, my yes. Things used to be awfully cold.

K. Well.

C. Uh huh.

K. I've heard back in the maybe more in the 1800's when ever the Willamette River and Portland froze over...drive across..

C. I've heard mother tell about that.

K. Really.

C. Un huh

K. and the Tualatin River just reading..

C. Used to flood...

K. Used to flood. I should think so. And one year, I think 1880, maybe then, the Tualatin River froze.

C. Not in my time.

K. It's interesting, were the winters colder then? Then they are now?

C. Well, it seems so

K. Unhuh

C, More bad weather.

L. Very much snow when you were a child?

C. It wasn't common.

K. I see.

C. Well, even when I was teaching at Wilson High School, I had just bought a brand new car. It was my pride and joy. It was beautiful. And snow came up and I had to leave it ~~on~~ abandoned

on a side hill over there and I didn't get it for two days. I was thinking about that just the other day.

laughter and "oh no"

pause...

L. Well, we should go.

*End of Side 1 - Side 2 Blank*

~~30~~ 6-15