

BEAVERTON ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with

MRS. DORA STIPE

(widow of Elmer Stipe, Beaverton, OR)

INTERVIEWER: SHIRLEY TANZER

Date of Interview: October 27, 1982

SUMMARY OF TOPICS DISCUSSED

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(widow of Elmer Stipe, Beaverton, Oregon)

1. Iva and Dora, sisters from Nebraska, came to Oregon to teach.
2. Teaching at Beaverton Grade School
3. Double wedding with sister.
4. Stipe's Garage

(Where unknown, phonetic spellings are used)

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. DORA STIPE

for

BEAVERTON ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewer: Shirley Tanzer

SHIRLEY TANZER: Mrs. Stipe, how did you come to Beaverton?

DORA STIPE: I came to teach. I was a teacher. I came from Nebraska in 1910, my sister Iva and I.

TANZER: What were the reasons you came to Oregon?

DORA: We came on a trip to the 1909 Fair in Seattle. We went back home and we decided we'd like to come back, so we came back and taught.

TANZER: Did you know about jobs being available?

DORA: No. We just took a chance. We didn't have to have a job but if things turned out well, we would. We did and we taught for seven years here in Beaverton.

TANZER: How did you find the job in Beaverton?

DORA: We applied. We went to the Multnomah Co. superintendent and he said they needed two teachers in Beaverton so we applied, and they asked us to come out. We did, and they hired us. And that was it. We taught at the Beaverton School. We just had one. My sister taught 1st and 2nd and I taught 3rd and 4th.

TANZER: Where was the school at that time?

DORA: The old school was down across from the Safeway, where the Safeway is now.

TANZER: Where did you live?

DORA: We had an apartment with Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Barnes and we lived with them on the corner of Broadway and Allen.

TANZER: What was life like in Beaverton when you came here?

DORA: Very friendly and very nice.

TANZER: What were some of your activities?

DORA: We had, I guess there were movies, movie shows. I don't remember too much. We had parties. Quite a few parties.

TANZER: What was the Tennis Club like?

DORA: Well, that was organized a little later. Mr. Lawton had a tennis court made and we used to meet and play. And we had dances. We had really nice dances. There used to be an old hall. What was the name of that hall.

TANZER: Was that White's Hall?

DORA: I don't think that was the name when we came. But we used to enjoy dances. And we used to go to Portland for plays. We went to Portland on a little train that came to Beaverton. I think it made maybe two or three round trips a day. We used to go in on that and there was a late one we could come home on.

TANZER: Did you do your shopping in Beaverton as well?

DORA: Oh, no. You didn't do much shopping except your everyday needs like your household needs, but for clothes and things of that kind, we went to Portland. We shopped at Meier & Frank's, Roberts' Brothers.

TANZER: Tell me about teaching at the Beaverton Grade School. Who were some of the other teachers?

DORA: Merle Davies. We had only three teachers. She taught for two or three years. The principal was Fisher and then there was another before Fisher.

TANZER: What I would like to know was about your classes. Was there a set curriculum? Or did you teach as you wanted?

DORA: We taught everything. In the old days it was reading, writing and arithmetic, and then your geography and your spelling and your language and physiology.

TANZER: Do you remember some of your outstanding students?

DORA: Oh, many of them. They were all fine. There was never any ups and downs. They were all just fine.

TANZER: Now you taught from 1910 to 1917.

DORA: We were married in 1917, at a double wedding. I met Mr. Stipe at a tennis club dance. After I was married I worked a little in my husband's office.

TANZER: Well, tell me about your wedding.

DORA: We had a double wedding in the minister's home. The other couple was my sister Iva, who married Robert Summers.

TANZER: And did they continue to live in Beaverton, also?

DORA: They did. He was a contractor. But they have both passed away now.

TANZER: Tell me about Mr. Stipe. When did he come to Beaverton?

DORA: In 1911, a year after I did. He was a master plumber and then a Ford dealer. He set up his shop right here on the main street in Beaverton. We

bought the building later. Tore it down and built this building.

TANZER: And then did you live in this house?

DORA: I lived in this apartment for about 63 years now. We came here, we were married in 1917, we built this house in 1923, so that was ... I've never moved from here.

TANZER: Mrs. Stipe, did you want to continue teaching after you were married?

DORA: No. I enjoyed teaching very much. There wasn't one day but what I didn't enjoy it. I loved the children. I liked to be with them and Alfreda knows that we were very close, the children and I. I taught a grade first. We had a fifth grade. I had three, four and five, and the room was so crowded they had to put in another teacher and my fifth grade went upstairs, what we called upstairs. And when they marched out, I said, "Goodbye, Class." And I came in at Noon, they were all back in there, crying. They wanted to stay.

TANZER: Do you still see some of your students?

DORA: Not lately. Some have passed away, and some have moved away.

TANZER: What were some of the activities you did with your students? Did you do after-school activities?

DORA: Well, we'd have plays once in a while. We'd call them programs and we rented the hall a time or two and had a program. We had a nice turnout and I remember we charged for one and my sister and I added to the fund and bought a camera for the school.

TANZER: So was that the only play?

DORA: Oh, no. We had several, but that was the only one I remember we charged for. We'd invite the parents in. We'd have solos and programs; I remember we used to have some drills, flag drills and doll drills and things like that.

TANZER: I have heard that there were patriotic celebrations at school for various American holidays.

DORA: That must have been after our time. We used to observe the holidays. I remember we observed Arbor Day and we planted a tree a time or two. And we always had some lessons about like when Washington and Lincoln's birthdays were but we didn't really celebrate them. That's as I recall, anyway.

TANZER: Do you remember any special stories about any of your students; any particular thing that happened? I have heard stories that Mr. Fisher, the principal, was a very strict disciplinarian.

DORA: I don't recall that he was. But maybe he was.

TANZER: So after you were married, you stopped teaching?

DORA: No we didn't teach, either one of us. I worked in my husband's

office. I didn't take a salary. We just worked together.

TANZER: Tell me about your husband's business and how it grew as Beaverton grew.

DORA: Well, we just had one mechanic, and when we ended we had four or five. Our business grew really well. We had a good car for one thing and there was only one other garage in town when we opened the Ford. We had the first neon sign in Beaverton, in our garage.

TANZER: Were you involved in politics at all in the city?

DORA: Oh, yes, I suppose we were, but I don't recall.

TANZER: What about organizations, church organizations?

DORA: Well, I don't belong to a church and I should. I haven't attended church since I was a child but I belonged to the Eastern Star and Temple of the Nile. My husband was a Mason. We had a bridge club we belonged to after we were married. We didn't continue with the tennis club because different things took up our minds. It didn't last too long, only a few years. We had nice dances, but that was before we were married. Seemed like we had more time for those things then. I think people kind of enjoyed themselves and each other more. We were together. We knew everybody.

