

## **Interview with Dorothy Sherman**

**By Roger Sherman, Cathy and Kristy**

**Cathy Meyers and Kristy Mulvihill (maiden name) videotaped**

**November 22, 1998**

Q-Kristy---Asked about early life at Cook house when mom moved up on the hill by grandma and grandpa Sherman. Can you give us a little early married life here on the island?

A-Dorothy---Well, I had a hard time around the time Roger was born because I lost my teeth. I don't know what from. Apparently they hadn't been taken care of as good as they should have been. They pulled my upper teeth and I went three months without my teeth. That was very hard on me. And, ah I finally got my first denture, but when I got them I thought I looked better without out my teeth than I did with the ones they supplied.

Q-Kristy---You and Uncle Clark had been married one year when Alvin was born?

A-Dorothy---Uh huh.

Q-Kristy---And that was what year?

A-Dorothy---We won't interview him on that.

Q-Kristy---No, no we won't---giggle---I was just getting a little spacing. That's OK. More giggles.

Q-Cathy---We talked earlier about-----You got married----you got cows and the baby came and you got adjusted to the large family of Shermans. What year was it that you talked about the barn burning, 1940?

A-Dorothy---1935

Q-Cathy---That was the depression era when you were having your children. Can you talk about the hardships of the depression.

A-Dorothy---I don't remember. We didn't have anything. I have a book at home that has our finances in it. You did everything by cents instead of like we do now, but I had a thought but it left me. Everyone was in the same boat so we didn't notice it like we might have.

**Page 2, Dorothy Sherman Interview, Cont.**

Q-Cathy---And you had the two boys during \_\_\_\_\_? Could you tell us a little bit more about when they were born?

A-Dorothy---Well, Roger's was the most dramatic one because we had a snow storm. This was January 22. We had a snow storm and we couldn't get anyplace. The roads were just simply closed. And the doctor. Well, the first place, Pratt's house was on fire, and the.

Q-Cathy---And you were trying to have Roger and Pratt's house was on fire?

A-Dorothy---It was all the same weekend. Anyway the drifts were so high on the cemetery road the fire trucks couldn't get up there. They finally discovered that the snow had blown off the field below it and ah the truck could go out in the field and go up to the house. It finally got there. And then it was all day before---I talked to the doctor two or three times on the telephone but it was all day before the highway was open to Oak Harbor.

Q-Cathy---That's where you were going to go? You had your children in Oak Harbor?

A-Dorothy---Yes, I had both Al and Roger at a maternity homes in Oak Harbor. There was no hospital. A friend of mine had a baby at the same time and she elected to go to a hospital in Anacortes. And they went to the ferry landing---They had called the ferry people who were on the other side, on the Skagit side and they---she was going to tell her husband but she forgot and went to sleep so there was no ferry at the landing when they got there. But they called, it seems impossible, but they called loud enough that it woke the ferry man up and he brought the ferry over. But I went to Oak Harbor and there was a nurse there and she took care of a few patients.

Q-Cathy---And then you had Jim. What year was that?

A-Dorothy---Well that was in 1940. He was one of the first ones at Harpole's in Coupeville.

Q-Cathy---There was some stories, that I heard, that you had a \_\_\_\_\_? about feeding the thrashers?

A-Dorothy---Yes. The first year we were married, there were 22 on the crew and I didn't know much about cooking. Aunt Mable helped me and she didn't either. We cooked something. I was used to thashers at home. We had fried chicken, Clark must have dressed the chicken and a Mr. Holbrook, who was one of the Pioneers in town, ran the outfit and when he passed the sugar at the table, the handle broke of the sugar bowl. It was a wedding present and he was just chagrined to think that he had done this awful thing and apologized all over the place and brought me something in its place and I don't know what all. It was one of the events, but we got through it anyway.

**Page 3, Dorothy Sherman, Interview, Cont.**

Q-Cathy---The thrashers then were people that came then to harvest.

A-Dorothy---It used to be the custom to eat three meals a day when you followed the thrashing machine. And the women got the breakfast and the other two meals. But the time I started, why it was just the noon meal. Which was plenty.

Q-Cathy---And the other stories you have to tell us about digging the well?

A-Dorothy---Yes, we were several years on the farm with turkeys before we had water. We just had cistern water, well that's what Shermans had to, cistern. Anyway, Clark hired two men from Edmonds, a man who was a communist and his son and they stayed at our place and ate three meals a day and I had two babies and it was a little much for me. And the older man said that I should have help. He said his wife had always had help and I should have it too. I heard that every day. And ah we had a little trouble about the bathroom. It wasn't the best time of my life and then Wilbur decided to dig a well and Grace was in the hospital so I got to feed them longer while he drilled Wilbur's well. He never seemed to remember that very well.

Q-Cathy---We really haven't touched a great deal on your husband Clark. What you can tell us about him, his personality, what he liked to do, things like that?

A-Dorothy---He liked to work.

Q-Cathy---It seemed to be Sherman trait.

A-Dorothy---Yes, uh huh. He quite often, it seemed to be one of the traditions in the family, Sunday evening, all of the Shermans seemed to be there, except Clark. If I went, he would stay home and work and I didn't like that but he did it anyway. Oh, we did things like picnics. He probably liked to go to shows more than I did, he would do that, sometimes take some of your family. I remember him doing that.

Q-Cathy---I remember a lot of people commenting on his crystal radio set.

A-Dorothy---He never did any of that after we were married. He had a lot of projects. He had drawing classes and all sorts of things that he worked on, but I don't think of any, when he got the farm, that just about did it.

Q-Cathy---Did he go to Alaska also?

A-Dorothy---Yes, he went on the Admiral Rogers, a passenger boat, to Alaska as a radio operator. And he was also on a light ship out from Tatosh Island.

Q-Cathy---What is a lightship?

**Page 4, Dorothy Sherman Interview, Page 4, Cont.**

A-Roger---It has a light and a fog horn on it and takes the place of a lighthouse.

A-Dorothy---I think it was a month or so shift and then he would come in for a month and he hatted every minute of it. It was boring you know, nothing, except maybe two or three reports a day and then he was sea sick most of the time.

Q-Cathy---When he was courting you would you say he was a romantic man?

A-Dorothy---Well, I think he was to a degree.

Q-Cathy---Did he write you poetry or things like that?

A-Dorothy---No, I don't remember that but I have some nice gifts he gave me.

Q-Roger---You have that one set of book ends that you gave me. Was that before, the ship book ends that you had at the house so long, was that before you were married that he gave you those?

A-Dorothy---Yes, that was before we were married. He'd meet me at the dock from Tacoma and a curiosity shop was along that street and we were in there and he bought these book ends so I gave them to Roger for his nautical room.

Q-Cathy---He bought you lots of things before you were married. Did he do that after you were married?

A-Dorothy---Yes, well he was good about remembering on important days.

Q-Cathy---I understand he liked to whistle?

A-Dorothy---Yes, he whistled.

Q-Cathy---He had some interest in keeping diaries?

A-Dorothy---Oh, we had books of diaries. We have one from the time we were married. He did it at longer intervals then.

Q-Cathy---Anything also about him that you would like to share?

A-Dorothy---Well, of course, his pool interest. He played a lot of pool and particularly with John Shelton. They would play pool until 10:00 and then I would serve them coffee.

Q-Cathy---I would like to touch on some of the family members. Do you have any stories or memories about, ahm, you mentioned Wilbur earlier, was there something from his younger days?

**Page 5, Dorothy Sherman Interview, Cont.**

A-Dorothy---He was always the unruly one. I don't remember any particular thing. He was certainly one of a kind. He came to our place one time. He had been using our saw, some new saw that Clark bought and Wilbur had been borrowing it and Clark decided that he didn't want to loan it anymore and Wilbur was really upset and expressed himself accordingly.

Q-Cathy---Aunt Iva: Anything that she brings to mind?

A-Dorothy---No ah we went to the Skagit River one time on one of the Seattle Light trips. We weren't doing anything for entertainment during the depression and we went up on this Skagit River trip and it was quite an event. We left the youngsters with grandma and went up there, a big dinner and a trip up the river.

Q-Cathy---How about Mary?

A-Dorothy---Well, I don't remember any particular thing about Aunt Mary. She was always good to everybody. I would just as soon not describe Aunt Mary.

Q-Cathy---That's alright, I'm an impartial interviewer here. How about Uncle Raleigh. Was he young when you got married?

A-Dorothy---Well he was my age, we're the same age. I was ahead of him in class, I started early. Oh Raleigh had kind of a hard time at first, but there's nobody like Raleigh. He's a wonderful man. I don't know what I would say about him.

Q-Cathy---We have a few kids left: Nina?

A-Dorothy---She's the entertainer. She used to tell about the telephone company and her years at Fort Casey when she used to pull the shades down in the kitchen so she didn't have to see her neighbor washing dishes across the way.

Q-Cathy---And Aunt Arline?

A-Dorothy---Aunt Arline has always been the perfect one.

Q-Cathy---And Cora?

A-Dorothy---Cora was---She was a little girl when we were married. I think she was about six. She's always been just Cora.

Q-Roger---Tell her about Cora's singing? She used to sing over at their house and we could hear her at our place. I can remember dad talking about it. Cora liked to sing.

A-Dorothy---I don't remember that, but she did have a nice voice.

**Page 6, Dorothy Sherman Interview, Cont.**

Q-Cathy---I left out Uncle Edwin. Don't know how I did that. He was a big part of your life, I think.

A-Dorothy---Yes he was a big part of our---when I went to see him when he was about gone, I couldn't think of a word to say. I really can't now. He was---There's just no describing what he did for us. He was a good man.

Q-Cathy---We did talk some about the thrashing but we didn't talk about the war, you know rationing and that sort of thing.

A-Dorothy---I don't remember that we were much affected by rationing. I don't know why particularly, but I just don't remember it. And about the war. The war to me largely centered around the Bantz family, my cousins because one of them was flying planes from a carrier and one of them was at---what was the island in the Pacific?

Q-Cathy---I'm going to go back a little further again. I know when there was a time when there was a storm and water up here and I think it was cargo that washed up on Ebey's Landing and people going down to get butter out of the cargo. Do you remember that event?

A-Dorothy---Well Sherman's were always, well so poor for so many years and, and they found this butter and, I don't know, it might have been rancid. I can't imagine it wouldn't be but anyway it was just like a gold mine for them. They found this butter so they could all have butter so they could all have butter instead of margarine on their food and there was some thought I had, of course everyone knows the story about the logs that washed in, ah lumber. That's part of the church history. I can't tell it well because, Roger probably knows it better than I do. This lumber washed up on the beach and ah one of the men came up to Wilbur and said there was this lumber and they could---It was anybody's lumber and so they went down and got trucks and hauled up a good bit of lumber for the new church. One of Wilbur's best stories.

Q-Cathy---Roger said you might be able to tell us something about the history of the cemetery, who was buried at the cemetery and the ship wreck survivors.

A-Dorothy---I know so little about it that, Dad (Clark) used to talk about these graves that weren't marked. He said they were men who were lost in the wreck of the Whidby, I guess (*Roger's note: It wasn't the "Whidby"*). I'm sure not the one to tell it because I don't know about it. It's funny Jimmy Jean doesn't have more in her history about it.

Q-Cathy---There was one question that I wanted to ask earlier and I forgot. Ahm, I have also heard about the birthday song and wondered if you know what I'm talking about when I mention the birthday club.

**Page 7, Dorothy Sherman Interview, Cont.**

A-Dorothy---You mean about the three birthdays that grandpa Sherman. Oh well, grandpa Sherman and Chuck Ruthford and Freeda Solid had birthdays on the same day, eleven years apart. They made quite a thing of this. They were all nice people and they had this dinner and I think they met for several years. It was just family.

Q-Roger---One of the things in the program that you saw the other night with the historian, Theresa Trebon, she talked a lot about the early woman's clubs on the Island.

A-Dorothy---She did a film on it.

Q-Roger---Yeah, you were involved a lot with those also. Now-a-days with all of the working mom's and everything those things have kind of gone by the wayside. Can you remember any that you belonged to?

A-Dorothy---Well, I remember the Ladies of the Round Table. I think Sherman's kind of frowned on me belonging to that. They thought it was some kind of a snob club or something. They are members of the national woman's clubs. They had programs on different cultural things like artists and author's. I can't just think of what we did all the time, but among other things, they restored the block house(cemetery, Davis blockhouse). That was in 1930 which was really quite a project and they fought to keep the timber down at the, I don't know, down past the Admirals Cove, the virgin trees. And I've always belonged to church groups. I was a member of WCTU (Women's Christian Temperance Union). Grandma always used to pay my dues. This is the other grandma, grandma LeSourd.

Q-Cathy---We didn't really dwell to much or talk to much about your grandmother, what her life was?

A-Dorothy---Well, I had different grandmothers, grandmother LeSourd, she was the Sunday school superintendent and the Ladies Aid president and she kept her house just so with starched towels and pillowcases and everything and she had this big house and she lived alone for twenty years. I spent a lot of time there, sleeping there at night, so she wouldn't be alone and always eating off her table. My grandma James was a homebody particularly, she never went to church. I never remember her in church. She was just a wonderful homemaker and I was very fond of her. I was just spoiled by them. They had a horse and buggy. Mr. Terry, the original Mr. Terry would get up Saturday morning and I can always see him because he had one leg outside the buggy. He was too long to fit in it. And he would stop and talk to grandpa James and then he would go down, I suppose to get a shave on Saturday morning and grandpa would soon follow him with his horse and buggy and grandpa would come home---He had been a meat cutter in Nebraska before they came out here and he would bring home a roast for Sunday dinner. It was a big deal and I could sometimes go with him.

**Page 8, Dorothy Sherman Interview, Cont.**

Q-Cathy---I think you're getting tired. Before we stop, is there anything at all that you can think of that you would really like to tell us?

A-Dorothy---Well, I always think of the impression that young women now are so much better organized or something for their life than the women who were supposedly staying home and I'm not putting it well, but I think that some wonderful women lived around this community who didn't have a job or weren't jobs outside their homes but they had a lot of influence on the community and did a wonderful job. Like I could name a few-----  
*End of tape----Did not record any more-----Mom was pretty tired.*