

MARIE SHOOPMAN

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On Friday March 25, 1983 and again on Sunday April 24, 1983, I interviewed Marie Shoopman.

Marie was born in Rock Springs in her home with a midwife, on April 19, 1926. She was also brought up in Rock Springs, and has lived here for 57 years.

At this time Rock Springs was a small coal mining town of between 5 or 6,000 people. She grew up in a part of town that was called number 4. This was over by where the Sand's Cafe is now. This section of town was for immigrants from Yugoslavia and Italy. Another part of town called number 7, was behind the Sands Cafe. This was where the Japanese lived. Just east of where East Junior High School is now, was called number 1. Some Italians and people from Finland lived there. Where A, B, and C streets are now was called the upper 400. This was for the rich people. The Chinese lived along a small stream which is now K Street and Pilot Butte. That is why those streets are so crooked. There were about 3 or 4 black families living in Rock Springs at that time and they all got along with everyone else. Each group had their own part of town.

The government of Rock Springs was said to be just, and the school system was very good and had high standards. At this time there were many doctors in Rock Springs and they made house calls.

Around this time it is estimated that there were between 15 and 17 bars in Rock Springs. Prostitution was here, but there was no soliciting. The men came to them. Even with all this there was not much violence.

Where the Rock Springs National Bank Drive In is now was the Realto Theater. There was a stage with a band stand below it and shows were brought in for the public, It also doubled for a movie theater. The Community Hall, a union hall, was between Lowell School and Number 4. It was owned by the Union Pacific Coal Company and was used as a social hall, for union meetings, Girl Scouts and dinners.

In Rock Springs there has always been a mixture of religions. The two main ones were Catholic and Mormon.

The home Marie grew up in was a duplex owned by the Union Pacific Coal Company. There were 3 rooms down stairs and 2 rooms upstairs. There was no indoor plumbing, they used an out house, no hot water, and no furnaces. They burned coal for heat and when taking a bath they used a big wash tub. Marie said until 1946, when she was married she didn't have any indoor plumbing.

When Marie was growing up, her mother had no machines to help her with her daily work. She said she could remember in winter bringing frozen clothes in off the clothes line and putting them in front of the fire to dry.

Everyday shopping in Rock Springs at this time for Marie's family was done at a small market called Home Meat Market. The major shopping was done at the Miner Mercantile on Pilot Butte. At this time the old Union Merc Building was a store. Marie said when she was in Junior High her mother would give her a nickel and on the way home from school she would stop at a small bakery and buy a block of yeast. She said this 5¢ was probably harder to scrape up for her family than \$100 would<sup>be</sup> for someone today.

A child's life in those times was hard. In Maries case since her family was poor there were no luxuries, but Maries family was close because they had no relatives living here. All the children

had chores to do and since she was the oldest of her eight brothers and sisters, she had to help by chopping wood and getting coal. Marie also had to keep a garden up which helped her family financially.

There was really no organized recreation for children at this time. There were some school ball games and they also at certain times got to go to rodeos in Blair Town. Every year a carnival would come to town and a few times the Ringling Brothers Circus came here. There were movies and they only cost a nickel but Marie's family didn't have that mickel. Marie only saw one movie in her childhood. For entertainment they played "Kick the Can," "Hide and Go Seek," and "Jump Rope," in the backyard or in the alleys. They would roller skate on the sidewalk. Only some lucky people had roller skates and they shared with ones who didn't.

Sometimes in the evenings the children would build a fire and fry potatoes. This was a real treat. Someone would bring a large black pot and each child would be allowed to bring a teaspoon of lard and a couple of potatoes a piece. They would peel the potatoes, cut them up and fry them. Marie's family never went camping or hunting and Marie and her brothers and sisters never had toys because they didn't have the money.

Marie's father was a coal miner. The miners of this time were family men and they all got along real well. The coal miners were allowed to work 1 day a week for food.

Marie's father was very active in the United Mine Workers of America union. He had an active part in getting it started in Rock Springs. Everyone swore by the union and it helped them to make a decent living.

The coal miners had a monthly publi newspaper through the

union. The union sponsored recreational activities such as a First Aide Contest, dances, and a Christman Talent Show.

The union organizers were workers. At one time Marie's father was running for a union office. These elections lasted all night and at about 3 a.m. it was determined that Marie's father would win. His opponent was very upset and planted a bomb under their house which blew up their kitchen. Luckily even though her mother, her sister, and she were in bed no one was hurt.

Marie's father was put on strike many times in the 30's and the 40's. These strikes usually didn't last very long and the men usually won because they stuck to their guns. When the men were on strike, no one worked in the mines and moral was kept up through many meetings. Normally conditions were much better after a strike.

Marie's mother was a very hard working woman. She worked from morning to night. The men did no chores and if they ever thought about it they would have been laughed at. The woman's place was in the home, to raise children, keep the house and do for the man. The man was the head of the house and he was free to come and go as he pleased. The women did not socialize. They were strictly housekeepers. Marie's mother made all their clothes from flour sacks and she also made everything else around the house.

In Marie's family her mother did what little discipline was necessary. Children of this time were brought up to respect their elders and property. Therefore there weren't very many discipline problems.

There were large families, no family planning and women had children one right after another. In fact Marie's mother had nine

in 14 years.

At this time it was not uncommon to see Indians and gypsies passing through town on horses and in buggies and wearing their native costumes.

Marie went to school grades 1-4 at Lowell, grades 5-6 at Washington, grades 7-8 at the old D. E. Building for Junior High, and 9-12 at Rock Springs High School which is East Junior High School. She graduated in 1944.

When she was 6 years old, in 1932, Bitter Creek flooded. The water got to the floor of the grocery store, Home Meat Market. This was owned by a man named Mr. Kruljack and he told the children in the neighborhood that if the water got any higher they could have all the fruit and the candy. All the children prayed that the water would get higher.

The funerals of that day were very big, but were mostly like the ones we have today. The only difference was the childrens funerals. They didn't put the child's coffin in a hearse. Instead they put it on the parents lap. It rode there from the church to the graveyard. One time when she was in Junior High one of her friends died. Marie and 5 of the girls other friends were selected to walk behind the car, the child was in from the church to the graveyard. They were dressed in white dresses.

Marie Marie was very sick only one time in her childhood. She had her tonsils out and afterwards she hemorrhaged. At one time during the day the hospital called her father and told him that she was dead. He rushed to the hospital only to find that she was alive. The hospital at that time was where the County Building is now.

Marie's first job was in 1938. She was in 7th grade and she got a job in the hospital kitchen. At this time the state owned

the hospital and it was called Wyoming General Hospital. She got \$1 a day. She had no days off. If there were 30 days in the month that is how many days she worked. She would get up at 4 a.m. and walk to the hospital. She would work all day and then walk home at night. When she had this job she supported her family for a whole summer when her dad was in an accident and couldn't work.

She then worked in Hudacks Department Store as a clerk. She only worked there a short time because she got a job for the Union Pacific in a place called Sunlight Bakery. This was a bakery and a drug store. This was right across from her house. She worked from 3:30 in the afternoon to 9:30 in the evening. This job was from 1942-1943. During this time she had to fill in at the Union Pacific General Store. This consisted of just about every kind of store. Most people who worked for the company shopped here because they could charge and it would be taken out of their paycheck. Marie carried groceries and worked in the butcher shop. In 1943, the butcher took her in and taught her to cut up meat. She worked here through 1944, keeping the job while going to school. She couldn't go to school on Wednesday afternoons and Thursday mornings because the girls who worked these shifts had that time off. The wages were good and they bought a lot. All work was watched very closely and a person had to work hard every minute or they would lose their job. During WWII working conditions were good and she made a lot of money. But until her office job after her marriage she had no holidays or paid vacations.

In 1942 when Marie was a sophomore in high school her family got their first radio. They listened to music, big band, and the Rock Springs High School games. Dating as a teenager for Marie

was very different from today. They had to walk everywhere. The boy would walk to the girl's house, pick her up, and they would walk to the movies. After the movies they would go to a cafe and have a Coke or coffee. Every Saturday night there was a dance at the Pla Mor which was where Ace Hardware is now.

In 1944, just after Marie had graduated from high school, an epidemic hit Rock Springs. One day her 13 year old brother came home from school with a swollen throat. The doctor was called and the brother was treated for a cold. A few days later her 9 year old sister came home with the same symptoms. The doctor was once again called and upon the examination of the two sick children it was determined that they were both suffering from Diphtheria. They were quickly rushed to the hospital. In just a few more days a 7 year old sister and a 5 year old brother came down with it too. They were also rushed to the hospital. All were treated with antibiotics, but the 13 year old brother and the 9 year old sister died of the after effects of the disease.

Holidays in Rock Springs were greatly celebrated. The town as a whole celebrated Memorial Day, the 4th of July and Labor Day. On these days there were parades, dances, and on Labor Day there was a rodeo. Also in June there was a 2 day holiday called Old Timers Day. This was for the coal miners. The first day was called First Aid Day. The Girl Scouts had a first aid team consisting of a captain, 4 members, and a patient. Teams came in from all the coal mining towns such as Hanna, Superior, and Reliance. The competition was held where the Civic Center is now and the building was owned by the Union Pacific. Each team would be given a project telling them what kind of accident their patient had been and what kind of problems they had resulting from the accident. They had 10 minutes to treat the victim.

Marie met her husband in Rock Springs in 1945. She had known of him when she was in junior high and he was a star football player in high school. After he graduated, he went into the service. When he got out in 1945 she officially met him. They were married in the catholic church on June 5, 1946. Before their marriage, Marie was very active in the church and her husband became a Catholic so they could be married in the church. As a special honor for Marie because she was so active she was given a special 3 priest high mass which lasted 1 hour and 25 minutes. After their marriage Marie helped her husband's parents in their truck stop. As a result of this she had to join the Culternary Workers Union. They had reasonable dues which were only a few dollars a month. Shortly after this, Marie got a job as a secretary for a trucking company which is not in business anymore in Rock Springs. The Police force of Rock Springs was very good and Marie's husband was the very first lieutenant on the force.

Marie had a daughter on January 20, 1951. As a housewife Marie only had a wringer type washing machine and a iron to help her in her household duties. Both she and her husband handled the money.

After she was married Marie strongly supported the Democractic Party. She voted for first time when she was 21, for Franklın D. Roosevelt. The working class supported the Democrats and therefore were the strongest party in Sweetwater County. Politics was a clean profession, and Marie was very active in door to door campaigns. She helped Teno Roncalio, J. Warden Opea, Pete Vase, and John F. Kennedy. Marie's father was a friend to Joe Kennedy, the Presidents father. At one time Ted Kennedy visited Rock Springs and Marie helped plan a dinder for him.

Ma At the first of the Jim Bridger boom, Marie's husband developed

a terminal case of cancer. Her husband was ill for a year and a half. During this time he was in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Marie was with him. He died on July 14, 1973.

Being in Salt Lake, Marie missed the first part of the Jim Bridger Power Plant Boom. When she finally returned to Rock Springs it had changed greatly. Never before had she had to lock her doors or be afraid to go anywhere alone. Crime had increased greatly and so had prostitution. Never before had there been soliciting on the streets.

When the oil boom came, the money in Rock Springs got bigger and more people came in from all over the country. The biggest problem at that time was that the building industry couldn't keep up. People were having to live in R.V.'s and in tents in the desert.

Marie's best and happiest memories were of her childhood days. Her saddest memory was that the town got so big. Her funniest memory was of her husband. He came home for lunch every day and if he couldn't make it he had someone call. It was Saturday and he hadn't come home and he was very late. Marie called the police station but no one knew where he was. By the end of the afternoon the whole town was looking for him. Come to find out he was at the radio shop getting his radio fixed, the whole time he was missing. As a child Marie loved housework, and hated chopping wood and coal.

Marie was very bitter about the 60 minutes story, ~~sh~~ She doesn't feel the truth came out, and it was not a true picture of Rock Springs.

Marie feels that the biggest change in the county had been the growth. She feels that its future looks good. She says that Rock Springs has never been hit hard at any time and that it will never get very bad. She also thinks that the country will soon be back on its feet. She would like to tell her family to

always remember their heritage.

NAME: Marie Shoopman

PRESENT ADDRESS: 505 Ashley Rock Spring Wyo. 82901

1. - Present profession or occupation: Secretary
2. Occupations followed in the past (give dates): Same since 1944
3. Date of birth: 4-19-26 Place of birth: Rock Spg. Wyo.
4. Date of moving to Wyoming: -
5. - Full name of parents (give mother's maiden name)  
Matt J and Anna (Kralj) Yovich
6. Names of brothers and sisters (and to whom married):  
Joe Yovich - (Sharon Waters)  
Anna Yovich - (W T Robertson)  
Olga Yovich - (R. D. "Chick" Magagna)
7. Schools attended (give dates): Lamell (1-4) 1932-36  
Washington (5-6) 1936-38 R. S. Jr. High (7-8) 1938-40  
R. S. High School (9-12) 1940 - 1944
8. Places of residence in Wyoming (give dates):  
Rock Spring 1926 to present
9. Military service (dates, awards, area served, rank, etc.):
10. Political offices held (give dates):
11. Political affiliation: Democrat
12. Religious affiliation: Catholic
13. Marriage (spouse's name, date and place of marriage):  
Millard Shoopman 6-15-46 Rock Spring Wyo.  
Widowed 7-14-73
14. Children (names, dates of birth, grandchildren, etc.):  
Judith Shoopman Lake 1-20-51  
Thomas Millard Lake 11-20-73  
Melanie Marie Lake 11-22-75
15. - List of clubs and societies of which you are a member:  
Secretaries Airfield Services