

A TAPED INTERVIEW WITH MARION VAN WINKLE BY AUDIE MANGOLD,
JANUARY 28, 1993.

Audie: I'm sitting in the living room of Marion Van Winkle.
Marion, my first question...When and where were you born?

Marion: I was born March 3rd, 1910, in Yakima Washington,
and I even know the street address. 311 South 6th Street. I
was born in my grandparent's home.

Audie: You were born at home, you didn't go to the hospital?

Marion: Yes, I was born at home. I wasn't expected to live, but I
fooled them.

Audie: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Marion: I have a brother who is two years younger, and he was born
in Yakima too, but he was born at St. Elizabeth hospital.

Audie: When did you move to Day Island, and what inspired
you to originally move here?

Marion: Well, we moved to Day Island in 1920. I was 10 years old,
and we came for the summer and stayed in a little house that
Bessie Stevens owned. The Stevens owned the general store
across the bridge on 19th street. Well it was just a rental
and when my folks first came from Yakima, we went to Seattle
and lived over at Alki Beach for a year or so. That was
after the war, because I remember we were living, of course
I am talking about World War I, and we were living over on
Alki. And I can remember the street car coming along
clanging, and the man was carrying a news paper that said the
"War is Over". That was really something. That must have
been 1918. My dad had come from Yakima to work in the
shipyards, because in those days they wouldn't take men into
the service when they had children. So then we came to
Tacoma and we lived on 6th Avenue for a while. Then we came
down to Titlow Beach, and moved into in the Titlow farm
house for a while. There was a big beautiful lodge there.
In fact when we got older, we knew Mark Titlow, who was the
son of A.R. Titlow, and he had this beautiful place over
there, called the Titlow lodge. As we kids got older, we
could go over there and play, and Mark used to take us in
and we'd slide down those big beautiful bannisters for three
stories. Then we moved here for the summer, my mom, my dad,
my little brother, and me, it was just a little one bedroom
house, but it had a big sleeping porch all across the back.
It is where the bridge is now.

Audie: Your folks were inspired to move here because of the
summer beach cabin?

Marion: Then they got to meeting all the people, and believe me they wouldn't live any place else. The first house we lived in was a little one, and then we moved across the street. I'm trying to remember the people who used to live there, Donna Colleran lives there now. That was at 2252 East Day Island. Then we moved to where the park is now, that was a bigger lot then. The house was moved for the road and they made a park out of the rest of the lot. The house wasn't demolished it was moved off the island. We lived there until I got married. When I got married we moved to Grandview Washington for a few years, that was during the depression. I never will forget it. My husband kept his job with the power company. This was my first husband, you see I've been married twice. So we were living there and in those days I think he was making about \$180.00 a month and that was pretty good money. Then when the Depression started his wage was cut in half. We had Dudley by that time, my boy.

Audie: Now, your maiden name was Dudley and you named your son after your maiden name. When was your son born?

Marion: 1930.

Audie: And he is an attorney in Seattle. Do you have any other sons or daughters?

Marion: I have a step daughter, but I have only the one son.

Audie: Your step daughter from your second marriage. And how old would she be?

Marion: Gloria is a little older than Dudley, she is 68. (At this she retrieves several photographs, the last of which is her great-grandson Billy).

Audie: So this is the famous Billy that you watch. Does he go to school here in University Place?

Marion: He goes to St. Charles. He is 10.

Audie: How has any of your initial feelings for Day Island changed?

Marion: I don't think its changed. I just love it. It's just home.

Audie: You've been here since you were 10, and you left for three years during the depression, and then you came back.

Marion: Well, no we were gone for about five or six years, but when I say we were gone, I mean that we were here every single summer. Bert Taylor owned the house there that had a bedroom and a bathroom down in the daylight basement and that was ours any time we wanted to come. They had no

children so any time we wanted to come all we had to do was call and tell them we were coming. Dave and Denice Burroughs live there now.

Audie: During the first years that you lived on Day Island, what interesting events happened on or nearby the island that you most remember?

Marion: Well, they fixed up the Club House, and we kids could use that whenever we wanted to. That was where we had Sunday School. There were no churches around here, you had to go clear into town for church. You see the bridge was over here. (on 19th)

Audie: Let me ask you one quick question. Do you remember the first Day Island Bridge, the Draw Bridge that the Day Island Company first built?

Marion: No, I don't remember that one. We used to come across and drop down behind where the mill was, and then drive across the railroad tracks. Then we'd have to turn and go up 6th avenue, because 19th wasn't cut through then. We could go up to 19th and Grandview and that was it. That was the way we walked to school because we didn't have any school buses then. In fact we didn't even have school buses when Dudley was going to University Place.

Audie: How did you get Dudley to school?

Marion: He walked himself, of course things were a little different then, there wasn't the traffic. I used to walk up there all by myself and never thought anything of it.

Audie: Do you miss those days when there were fewer cars and people seemed friendlier?

Marion: Do you know, let's see Dudley's dad died in 1943, and then I had to go to work. Dudley was 13 when his dad died, it was awful. We were up at the mountain hiking and he dropped with a heart attack. He never made it back here alive, he died on the mountain.

Audie: What was your first husband's name?

Marion: My first husband was Kenneth Bradford Panchot, he was French. That is Dudley's dad.

Audie: And Edgar was your second husband.

Marion: Yes.

Audie: What other interesting events that happened on Day Island do you remember? How about the last Day Island bridge.

Marion: I remember, I was working and in fact I was remarried then. We were married in 1948, because Dudley was going to the University by that time. The people around here were so good to him, they knew that he had to come home alone. Tuttle used to live next door, and we had a time with Gracie, because she wanted to feed him all the time and he always had a problem with weight. I remember we had the darnedest time, he finally got to the point where he would bring the food over here after school and eat it. They had this great big hunk of a kid, Jack that could eat 6 times a day and not be full. Of course in those days the houses were all open, I didn't even know where the locks to the door were. We had to put new locks on because I forgot where I put the keys. It wasn't too many years ago that we changed the locks. We never locked the doors, we'd be gone two weeks and the house would be wide open. You just didn't even think of it.

Audie: Other than the Day Island Club, what other kinds of social activities did you and your family participate in?

Marion: In those days, you didn't have two cars. Then all you had was one, and when the man went to work then you (Stayed home). Because there wasn't a church around here, we had Sunday School in the Club house and Mr. Gillispie and his family would go to church in the morning and when they came back then we would have our Sunday School at noon on Sundays.

Audie: So the Club House was also a church? And then a Post Office?

Marion: No, it was never a post office. We have always had mail delivery. We used to have a butcher wagon that came around with the scales, and he used to give the wieners to the kids. And there used to be a man on Fox Island that raised chickens, and he'd row over and deliver eggs and chickens. That is over a mile (from Day Island to Fox Island). That was where we used to go to picnic when we were kids. We had to row over there because none of us had a motor boat. We would row over and take our lunch and picnic and play over there and then come on back. Sometimes we would go clear down to McNeil Island, we would row over there and sometimes stay overnight.

Audie: Was this before the penitentiary was there?

Marion: Oh no, the pen was there. It was a Federal Pen and there were spots there where you could go, they seemed to always know when we were there. One time, all of a sudden the sirens went off and pretty soon down they came and they said we're sorry but you'll have to leave now. So we started to get into our row boats and then they decided that they would

tow us home with their motor boats. Because someone had escaped, but they didn't tell us who. We found out later that it was Roy Gardner. He was a famous train robber. They always knew we were there, lots of times we would go over there and they would be having baseball games or something and we would sit outside the fence and watch the games.

Audie: What year was this?

Marion: Oh, that would be about 1923.

Audie: When you first moved here on Day Island in 1920, what were your aspirations?

Marion: Well you know, at 10 years old, you didn't even think of that. All I was thinking about was going to school, and that was about it. I don't remember ever having any.

Audie: Did you have any desires?

Marion: When I graduated from high school, I decided that I wanted to go on to college, and my dad asked me what I wanted to take, and I didn't know but I just wanted to go. He says no way. So I went to business college, so I got a job, and then I got married. And of course when you got married, you lost your job.

Audie: What year did you first get married?

Marion: 1929.

Audie: That was a very short career.

Marion: But then I worked after Kenneth died. I went to work for Social Security. And I worked there until I retired at 60, 23 years ago.

Audie: Where did Edgar work?

Marion: He worked for Nordstrom. He was in charge of the shoe department, for several years.

Audie: Were you satisfied with your work?

Marion: Yes, the reason I decided to retire, I had the time in and they were coming in with all these new disabilities and Medicare problems and then I decided that I wanted some time at home.

Audie: How do you feel about that now, the entitlement package that the government has?

Marion: Well of course, I can't kick about it, because I've got a nice retirement. And I have ample coverage with medicare. I also took on a government insurance deal that I paid for, it sure has saved me something, particularly in these last few years, because it seems I am in the hospital more than I am at home. It only takes one or two things like that and you're broke.

Audie: What do you remember about the depression?

Marion: We got along beautifully, as I said Ken kept his job, but his wages went clear down. We lived in Grandview, which is in Yakima Valley, and nobody had anymore than we did. Ken would go after work and help the farmers with their wiring problems and he would come home with 10 lbs of sausage or maybe a couple of chickens or turkeys. We had more food, in fact there was a little cold storage place there, and we rented a little locker to save the meat, and when ever my family from Tacoma would come over there or when we would come over here to see them, why we would take food to them. We had plenty. I remember one time some folks from Day Island, The Taylors, the Grimes and the Kepners came over and spent the weekend with us, they all went home with food.

Audie: Did Kenneth work for the REP? (Rural Electrification Project)

Marion: No, he worked for Pacific Power Co. and Puget Sound Power. Then when he was transferred to Tacoma, of course the only place that we could live was Day Island. There was a house down here for rent and we rented that until O.V.Synder (Pacific Match Company) who owned this lot which was vacant at the time, and he took quite a liking to Dudley's dad, Ken, and he said "I think you should buy that lot." Ken told him that we couldn't buy the lot because we couldn't pay to put anything on it. He made arrangements so that we had money to build this home. Of course we paid him back but, it was nothing compared to what it would be like today.

Audie: How has the increase in property values here on Day Island affected the way you live?

Marion: It hasn't made any difference to me, because I haven't done much, all I do is try and keep the house up. I've had a new roof put on a couple of times and things like that, but that is about all that I've done. I don't think that out here there has ever really been what you would say are blue collar, it seems to me that its always been white collar workers. In fact for years you couldn't find a Democrat around here to run for anything.

Audie: That's funny, it seems that some of them have changed their tune lately.

Marion: Well, yes they have, and I sure don't like that.

Audie: Have you noticed a change in the cultural values here on the island?

Marion: The thing that has bothered me is, we were too lax for too many years. Like this marina down here, no body wanted to upset the apple cart but we should have done something about that. Cummings had a little boat place down here, when he passed away we should have fixed it right then, but nobody wanted to upset anybody else. So, Ernie Adams got it and from then took over most of the lagoon. With all those boats in there we would have had quite a sewage problem. I remember what happened before we had sewers, sometimes in the summer it got pretty raunchy at low tide. Then we were going to start a petition and put a hole through the end of the island where those houses are on the south spit. There used to be no houses there at all, that was just a pile of gravel and logs. There was nothing from our house down, except two other houses and the canoe factory and that was it.

Audie: On a high tide would the water actually go over that?

Marion: Yes.

Audie: So then at that time Day Island would have been an island.

Marion: Yes. Supposedly that is where it got its name Day Island, one day of the year it was an island.

Audie: So then there would have been a natural flushing of the lagoon.

Marion: We wanted to get a little flushing but the railroad opposed that because they were afraid that it would erode the banks of their tracks.

Audie: What do you remember about the railroad? We had one little issue about the construction of the 1958 bridge, where the railroad held out.

Marion: The bridge over here on 19th street finally got bad and we needed an overpass. As far as I know the railroad has just gone as they please. It is too bad that all of this water front in Pierce County is (controlled by the) railroad. Tacoma is surrounded by a ribbon of steel with the exception of Point Defiance and Day Island. This is one of the things that gives Day Island its uniqueness.

Audie: Mary Babare spoke of Day Island as being a paradise, what did she mean?

Marion: Oh she just loved this place.

Audie: As much as you?

Marion: Oh yes, she was just a darling. You know that her sons have torn the old house down, but they are building again. It's her grandchildren that will be in there. I'll tell you something that used to go on around here, they used to have a quartet that caroled every year from 1920 on, as far as I remembered. It was my father who was the bass, my mother who carried the air, Agnes Foss was the contralto and Gus Nyman was the tenor. They sang Christmas carols every year.

Audie: When did they finally stop?

Marion: In 1976. I can't remember who died first, I think it was my dad. I had forgotten that, but it went on for years.

Audie: Since its beginning as a camp ground, Day Island has been the home to some important people of Tacoma. Do you remember if any of these important people played any interesting roles in the development of Day Island?

Marion: Have you ever heard of Tige Reynolds? He was the cartoonist for the Tacoma Ledger. He always had a little tiger as his trademark, everybody got a kick out of that and he lived out here for along time. George and Fred Marvin were always involved with their little boats that would deliver stuff to all the islands. It was like the Mosquito Fleet. They had a delivery service to the islands, not just to Day Island, but to all the other islands, Ketron, Anderson, McNeil and Fox Islands.

Audie: Do you remember the Martin family?

Marion: Jim Martin was a school teacher at first, and there is quite a little story about that as well, where his first wife took their little (children) out in front here and drowned them both, intentionally. I think she was very upset, mentally.

Audie: Do you remember Al Davies?

Marion: Yes, he was a caution, and he was a lot of fun. I can remember so many nice things that he did, he was always doing anything that anybody wanted him to do around here. He had some interests in the tug boats and other things in California. But he loved his home here, he and Ellen fixed up that house real nice. After he was gone Ellen continued to live there and then her sister Myrtle Nordstrom, came to live there. Myrtle worked for the telephone company for

years, then after Ellen passed away Myrtle continued to live there until she was gone. Morrie Pitts was another caution that we had around here. He was married to Jeanne Pitts and he drowned a long time ago. As I remember he was down in Oregon someplace, and his plane went down he died.

Audie: Do you remember Mat Opgenorth? What kind of a guy was he?

Marion: He was very nice, but he was very stern. He was very difficult to be friendly with. After Irene passed away he just seemed too unhappy. Those two boys were hellers. Especially Charlie, he was a little go-getter. I remember when they were building the big house, and they were living across the street where Garrisons are living now, as I came walking down the street I can't remember what it was that came floating out from their house, it was whole hands full of stuff. They were playing up there on the porch and they decided that they were going to dump it all on me. It wasn't serious, it was more of a joke, but those two were always doing something like that. Irene was so good with them.

Audie: I understand that Irene was quite a bit shorter than Mat, was she a small woman?

Marion: No, I wouldn't say that she was small, she wasn't big, I'd say she was about my height. But she had the softest voice, and was such a lady. That's the best way that I can describe her. I knew her mother also, Mrs. Swanson. She lived at Burton over on Vashon Island. I had an aunt from Yakima who had some property at Burton and I used to go over there during the summer, and Mrs Swanson had a cottage near the dance hall so I got acquainted with her. That was many years ago. She was so sweet she made quite an impression on me, she was just like her daughter. Then after Irene passed away, she lived here for awhile. Then one of Mat's sisters moved here, Margret, and then Olive Opgenorth.

Audie: Olive passed away four years ago when she was 93, she had Parkinsons disease. Up until she was 84, she would row out into the Narrows in an old heavy wooden dowry, snag a log and row it back to the beach where she would tie it up and later she would come back and cut it up by hand and then split it up for fire wood. She was too frugal to buy fire wood.

Audie: How do you feel about the increased attention that is being given to women's issues and women's rights?

Marion? I think they are overdoing it. To me, I don't like all of that. I think women have a right to work and earn what they can. But I just can't see all this sticking their faces in

there like they do and acting like that. I guess I was born 50 years too soon.

Audie: Do you think that if a woman had been involved initially in the Day Island Club that things would have been any different?

Marion: No. No I really don't.

Audie: What makes Day Island so unique?

Marion: For one thing, we are kind of away, we are on our own little spot, and there isn't the rivalry. Its just kind of a little community.

Audie: Do you think that everybody is content with what they have here?

Marion: Yes, I think so, I think most of us are.

Audie: What would you say, of the island residents who are living here now, what percentage are white collar workers as opposed to blue collar workers?

Marion: I'd say 90% at least.

Audie: Of the residents of Day Island how many would you say are retired?

Marion: I would think about half of them now.

Audie: There seems to be a lack of minority races represented on Day Island, how do you feel about that?

Marion: I've noticed that and I like it. I'll be honest. Now I have no objection if people will keep their property up, and not fill it up with garbage.

Audie: Do you equate that races, for example blacks, Hispanics or Asians, do you find them to be basically dirty or what?

Marion: I don't think that I would say that, but the ones that I have seen have been sloppy. And I wouldn't want them to live around me.

Audie: If there had been a minority race represented here on the island, what do you think would have been the overall attitude of the residents toward that individual?

Marion: I think they would have tried to get rid of them. I really do think that. Although, I can't say that if one person bought a home and kept it up nicely, why any of us could

object. You see, I worked for so many years off of K Street, and I can tell you that I got fed up with it.

Audie: What do you remember about that?

Marion: Well it was a mess, and it was getting worse. Our office was down on L Street just down the hill from K Street, and it wasn't very long before they were all putting up barricades. In fact for a while we didn't go home at night after 5:00 unless we had a guard get us into our cars and lock the doors and get us out of the parking lot. That was in 1970.

Audie: But as far as the island goes, you would rather it remained a white majority neighborhood.

Marion: Yes I really would. I think that is selfish but that is what I think.

Audie: Were you actively involved in any of the labor rights or civil rights movements?

Marion: Don't start in on that! No! (She is holding her fist up in the air) When anybody mentions labor unions to me, I just want to swat them. Because I think they've ruined all of these businesses. I think that the union officials have simply ruined our chances around here. They don't want to work, they just want to be handed the money and I say that most of the union officials couldn't earn an honest living. Oh don't get started on that! I'm rabid on that. I think that they are the bane of our existence.

Audie: What kind of involvement did you have in WWII?

Marion: We had a little first aid place here in the club house with all kinds of bandages and cots. And of course our water system is just down below the club house so we fixed it up so that we had an extra well head in case the power was off if we were attacked. They felt that we were in a spot here, where the Japanese were supposed to attack. I think that we were lucky that we got out as easy as we did. We made preparations for it, we had blackouts all around and I had food and water bottles in the basement. We were very concerned about it.

Audie: Do you remember in 1939, the submarines that bobbed right up in front here?

Marion: That was the day the submarines came along, and all of a sudden there were some ships with machinery from Bremerton that came along following them and brought them back. Nobody knew what they were doing.

Audie: Did Dudley go into the war?

Marion: No, he was too young.

Audie: Do you know how he felt about the war?

Marion: No I don't. I think in a way he would have liked to have gone. But, he was 16 and in high school.

Audie: If you could make any changes to Day Island, what would they be?

Marion: I would get them to slow down driving. That's about it.

Audie: How do you feel about the club?

Marion: I like it. I get a kick out of it. Of course I've been around it and in it for so many years. I was secretary for a couple of years, before Ferm Almquist.

Audie: What do you want to be remembered for?

Marion: (She laughs) I don't care. I'm not going to worry about what I'm remembered for. If I have to be remembered, I want to be remembered as somebody that enjoyed people.