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Denise Denelias [00:00:31] You've got these questions so well prepared. I should have a pen and a paper and write these down because you're so well organized. We're here today doing a living history interview with Marge-

Margaret Post [00:00:44] Do you want me to tell all these crazy things that I have down here about when I was babysitting and on Easter Sunday and all that sort of thing?

Denise Denelias [00:01:03] Whatever you feel comfortable talking about, that's fine.

Margaret Post [00:01:07] Well, I don't want to get too much in here. And... Well, I don't know.

Denise Denelias [00:01:30] Let's go ahead and we'll work it through and it will turn out fine. You'll see. Okay? We'll just go with what you've got.

Margaret Post [00:01:37] Can I mention my husband?

Denise Denelias [00:01:43] Yea.

Margaret Post [00:01:43] And I said here, my husband, and I don't need to add this, did you sell your weaving? No, most of my weaving I gave to family, relatives, and friends for Christmas and birthday gifts. Sometimes I put a piece in the weaving guild sale in the fall just to help out. And then I went on, but I can stop there. I put here that my husband was on the faculty at MSU for many years. He was head of the Plant and Soil Science Department for 27 years. Is that all right? We have two sons.

Off-Screen Speaker [00:02:21] That's great!

Margaret Post [00:02:22] OK. We have two sons. Arthur is a dental specialist and is employed by the oil company in Saudi Arabia. Richard is a horticulturist on the faculty at Nevada University at Reno. We have lived in this home. I have lived this home since my husband passed away, and I have lived alone in this home, since my husband passed away in 1982, we bought this home in 1929. As of December 1st, I will have lived here 60 years. Is that alright?

Off-Screen Speaker [00:03:01] Wonderful. Wonderful.

Denise Denelias [00:03:06] Okay let's-

Margaret Post [00:03:06] There's a lot of personal stuff in here.

Denise Denelias [00:03:07] That's wonderful. Everybody's been giving personal information and that's really interesting to hear about. So don't worry about that. That is not a problem.

Margaret Post [00:03:14] Or, this is my life!

Denise Denelias [00:03:17] It is, that's what we're doing. This is your life, Margaret Post. Okay, okay, let's go. All right?

Margaret Post [00:03:25] All right.

Denise Denelias [00:03:27] We're here today doing a living history interview with Margaret Post, and so my name is Denise Danelias and we'll start with it. Margaret, I'd like to know a little bit about your background. Could you tell us a little bit about that?

Margaret Post [00:03:39] Well, I was born on a ranch in Wyoming, and I went through the first eight grades in Buffalo, Wyoming, and then my family bought a ranch in Bighorn County, and so I went my freshman year in high school in Hardin. And the next year, I went to Wesleyan at Helena and also went back then, my third year, to Wesleyan, and that was the year of the flu. And all of the schools in Montana closed. Then after Christmas, the Hardin High opened, and I didn't know when Wesleyan was going to open, and so I went back to Hardin High. They, in going over my credits, they found that I had enough credits to graduate that year. Then the next year, I taught a country school close to home for one year. Then in the fall of 1920, I came to Montana State to take home economics.

Denise Denelias [00:05:02] Why did you choose home economics and why were you interested in home ec?

Margaret Post [00:05:06] I don't know. I just thought that was a thing to take, I guess. In those years, we didn't have as many choices as they have today. There was the School of Agriculture, the School of Engineering, and the School of Professional Schools. In the professional group was art, business, and home economics. And that was all we had at Montana State then. Of course we had the supporting classes, chemistry, the sciences and all, but there were just those three that you could get a degree in.

Denise Denelias [00:05:57] Can, when you think back about two of the classes that you took while you were majoring in home ec., can you tell us a little bit about those classes?

Margaret Post [00:06:06] Well, of course, we took the regular things. I was here for just my freshman and sophomore years. And the Home Economics Department was on the third floor of the Ag building at that time. And then after I had had two years here, I received a scholarship from Pace Institute of Accountancy in New York City. It is now called Pace College, and so I went back to New York. I went to day school and worked at the school my first year. My second year, I worked at Saks Fifth Avenue in the accounting department and went to night school. And then after two years, I was ready to come back to Montana State.

Denise Denelias [00:07:05] And then once you came back to Montana State, what did you do?

Margaret Post [00:07:10] That was the year that we moved from the Ag building into Herrick Hall, and as it developed, we would have maybe one of our classes in the Ag building and then another class in Herrick Hall. And we were told to never go empty-handed over to Herrick Hall because there were so many things to take over. Herrick Hall was on the second, or Home Economics was on the second floor of Herrick Hall and the Art Department was on third floor. I took a lot of electives and all of my electives I took in art. In fact, one day I was up in the Art Department, and Mrs. Hannon came over to me and she said, Margaret Campbell, why in the world are you taking home economics? I think I always had sort of a flair for art, particularly crafts.

Denise Denelias [00:08:23] So then what did you do? You continued until what time?

Margaret Post [00:08:27] Yes, then I went on and some of the things that we did in home economics, I remember in sewing, we made dress forms. And first we made some kind of a little garment out of muslin that covered us up. Then we would put those on, and then another girl would take paper mache, a sticky paper, and go around and around and round so that we had a dress form, our own individual. Of course, we had to be cut out of it then. And then, last spring, we made silk dresses, good dresses, and we used our dress forms to make our dresses. Let's see, what else was I going to say here?

Denise Denelias [00:09:30] What other classes do you recall?

Margaret Post [00:09:35] We also had the home management house. We all had to take classes in the home management house. In those years, we didn't have a home management house, so the Home Economics Department used to rent a house for spring quarter. And the house that I lived in was down on Tracy and Story at that corner. Miss Branegan and her mother moved in, along with four senior girls. And the duties that we had was: one was cook for a week, one was assistant cook and waitress, another was housekeeper, and another one was baby tender. We had the first baby that we have had in the home management house that year. She was a little girl, nine months old. We got her over at a home in Helena and we were there the four weeks and each week we changed and took another, changed jobs, so that. We had to have one formal dinner, one luncheon, and one open house or tea, while we were there. We made out menus for the week. We kept costs of our food. We studied baby food and oh gosh, they'd better stop. And so that was what we did there. And I remember one day in particular. It was an Easter Sunday, and it was a beautiful day. After breakfast, Miss Branegan and her mother went to church, and so did the other three girls, and I stayed home with the baby. They came home for dinner and we had dinner and then Miss Branegan and her mother went to a musical that afternoon and the girls met their boyfriends and they went out for this lovely day and I stayed home with the baby. When Miss Branegan came home that afternoon, she said, "Margaret, has Arthur asked you for a date?" And I said, well, he called, but I told him I couldn't go out. She said, you call him up right now and tell him to take you to the show tonight. And Gladys stayed home with the baby.

Denise Denelias [00:12:39] And Arthur is who?

Margaret Post [00:12:42] Arthur is the man that I married. After we were engaged, I took a job in the treasurer's office at Montana State, and worked there for about nine months. And then when we were married, I had to quit my job because in those days, two in the same family could not work for Montana State. And so I quit my job, and we were married. And then I did work for a while after we were married, that is, I kept books for Marshall Furniture Company for a couple of years and I worked during the Christmas rush at Pease's Jewelry Store. And then after that, I had my family. So I didn't work outside of the home.

Denise Denelias [00:13:49] What year did you graduate?

Margaret Post [00:13:52] I had a few credits left when I dropped out, and so I finished later. My degree is in 1929.

Denise Denelias [00:14:06] So you had a break?

Margaret Post [00:14:07] Yes, I had a break, but I just had a few credits left. I think I had practiced teaching and something else, so it didn't make much difference.

Denise Denelias [00:14:21] What did you do after you got your degree from Montana State then?

Margaret Post [00:14:25] Well, I didn't work outside of the home, and there weren't many women who were working- many married women who were working. I did do a lot, though. I entertained a lot. After my husband became head of the department, I always planned parties for the department. We used to have a party every quarter and a picnic every summer. We used to hold them here in our home until the group got too big, and then we had to find someplace else. So I kept really very busy all the time. Another thing that I did as a department head's wife, I always had a big dinner, the last of May just before graduation for the graduating seniors and also those getting an advanced degree.

Denise Denelias [00:15:37] So, because there are so many more students today, that seems like it wouldn't be possible at this time.

Margaret Post [00:15:42] That's right. I used to have about 30 to 35, though, for dinner, even in those days, from the department.

Denise Denelias [00:15:52] So, you got your degree in home economics. Did you put the degree to work, or what types of things did you become involved in?

Margaret Post [00:16:00] Well, I really went, after Arthur and I were married, in a few years he took a sabbatical leave and went back to Wisconsin to work on his Ph.D. And while he was busy, I took weaving and art metal. And then one summer, they had a special course here in jewelry. They had a teacher come up from California for a summer session, and I took jewelry that year also. And so those crafts, I have taught in my home many different times, many different groups. I taught the art metal down in the basement, and we were able to solder from the gas furnace, an outlet from that, and so I did a lot of teaching in my own home of these crafts. And then when Hillcrest opened, Adult Education called me and said that they had a request for weaving and that Hillcrest had a hobby room and that they would like to have a class in weaving up there. So we gathered up all the looms I could find in Bozeman, which really wasn't very many in those days. The blind school was teaching weaving in their summer sessions here at Montana State. So I asked them about their weaving, their looms, and they had them stored here in Bozeman. So they let us have them and they were glad to let us have them because they didn't have to pay storage then. And in the spring of the year, the man who was teaching weaving would send me his patterns that he was going to use that summer. And my class would thread up all the blind school looms for them, and they really appreciated it because the man who taught weaving was almost totally blind himself. And in threading up the looms, they would get them pretty messed up sometimes.

Denise Denelias [00:18:37] So you taught weaving in adult education?

Margaret Post [00:18:39] I taught weaving, yes, and then I taught for ten years, and it was practically the same group of girls that was taking all the time. And so I started the Bozeman Weavers Guild so that we girls could stay together and weave together, and we have, but of course our weaving guild has grown, we now have over 50 members.

Denise Denelias [00:19:05] What year was that that you started the Weavers Guild?

Margaret Post [00:19:08] Mmm, about 1973.

Denise Denelias [00:19:12] And you have about 50 members now, so you're still active in that.

Margaret Post [00:19:15] Yes, we're still active, and most of the weavers are still weaving, those that are still in Bozemen.

Denise Denelias [00:19:25] Well, I see you have many beautiful woven articles around you. Would you like to show some of those and tell a little bit about what you have here?

Margaret Post [00:19:34] This is a coverlet. In the bicentennial year, '76, I suggested to the girls that we weave coverlets for the year. And there were 16 who signed up and made a coverlet that year. And before the year was out, there were seven of us who had made two coverlets, woven two coverlets.

Denise Denelias [00:20:02] Wow. How much time did it take, or would it take to weave something as large as that?

Margaret Post [00:20:06] Well, it takes quite a while. This one is for a single bed and is made in three pieces. And then it has to be put together, don't you see? So it takes really quite a little bit. We thought we were pretty good to make two in a year.

Denise Denelias [00:20:23] I would think so and then you also have some?

Margaret Post [00:20:27] Well, we have some different pillows. This is an old coverlet pattern. It's reversible, just as this one is. This is called Summer and Winter, this particular weave. And in the early days, there was often a bed in the living room, and so they would use their summer and winter coverlets. In the wintertime, they would use the dark color, and in the summertime, they would use the light color on their beds in the living room.

Denise Denelias [00:21:04] Uh-huh. And then you have another pillow there.

Margaret Post [00:21:07] This is a pillow here, and this is just a little bit of everything here. This is bound weave across here and this is a chain and this is pick up on the under shed. This is loops and this is crossed weft and this laid in. They're all different kinds of weaving.

Denise Denelias [00:21:34] It's beautiful. It's lovely.

Margaret Post [00:21:37] It's just a sample.

Denise Denelias [00:21:39] And here you have a rug.

Margaret Post [00:21:42] Yes, in our class we made a lot of saddle blankets, and then from that a number of us went to Navajo rugs, and so I have woven two Navajo Rugs.

Denise Denelias [00:22:01] This is beautiful and this is similar to what, a saddle blanket?

Margaret Post [00:22:06] Well, a saddle blanket, yes. Our saddle blankets were the same weave, but just the size of a saddle blanket. And they used different designs.

Denise Denelias [00:22:17] And then you have a bit more of a delicate weave back here with this, and this is...

Margaret Post [00:22:25] This is linen, and I've done a lot of linen weaving. That is placemats, napkins, and runners. And so this is just one of the placemats that I've made.

Denise Denelias [00:22:45] Very lovely. I don't know how to weave, but it looks like it takes quite a bit of talent and quite a bit of time.

Margaret Post [00:22:54] It's fun. I've enjoyed my hobbies very much.

Denise Denelias [00:22:57] You have some pieces that you worked on, you said you took a jewelry class and an art class.

Margaret Post [00:23:03] These, uh-huh, these I did in Madison, Wisconsin. I started out with a sheet of pewter, and from that sheet of pewter I made a lot of things. These are just some of the things I have left. And with this, I started out with just a collar and then soldered it together up the back here. Then I pounded it around here and it's It's much harder to make it thick, than it is to pound it out and make it thin. And then I soldered the bottom part on. I cut a little V-shaped here and put my spout here. And then the handle is cast. I made a form and poured the liquid pewter into the form to make the handle.

Denise Denelias [00:24:12] So that's a sugar and creamer.

Margaret Post [00:24:14] That's the sugar and creamer and most of my things I've given away, so I really don't have much left. Well, this piece here, of course, is pewter. And this was a big round piece, and I had to pound it down into this shape. We had molds to pound them into. The beading along here is soldered on, And then I put the footing on it. I pounded that out and soldered it on.

Denise Denelias [00:24:51] Very nice, and then you made some jewelry?

Margaret Post [00:24:55] Yes, I have very little jewelry made. I made a ring for each one of my sons, and I think that was when things were really very modernistic. And this pin I still have left, and also the earrings that go with it, so.

Denise Denelias [00:25:19] Those are beautiful. I love that set. It's gorgeous.

Margaret Post [00:25:21] And I did a lot of etching, and so this is a bracelet that was etched. And we used to be able, and I suppose they still can, I don't know. We used to get sterling silver bracelet bands, and they were rounded at the end. All we had to do was paint them and etch them. And so this is one of the bracelets that I etched.

Denise Denelias [00:25:52] Beautiful, so you're still active in weaving now. Do you sell the weaving that you're doing?

Margaret Post [00:25:59] No, not very often. I have given my weaving to family and friends, and for gifts such as Christmas or birthday. So, most of my weaving I have given away. Once in a while, I put a piece into the sale that the Bozeman Weavers Guild has in the fall, and but aside from that, I give all my weaving away.

Denise Denelias [00:26:40] Now, you married Arthur Post, and can you tell us a little bit about what happened with your life then since you didn't teach?

Margaret Post [00:26:49] Well, as I said, I did do a lot of entertaining, particularly department people. Well, Arthur was head of the department for 37 years, the Plant and Soil Science Department. The Arthur H. Post Field Research Lab, which is about four miles west of the campus, is named for him. Then we have the two sons. Our oldest boy is a dental specialist and is employed by the oil company in Saudi Arabia. Our other son, Richard, is a horticulturist and is on the faculty at Nevada University. And I've lived alone in this house since my husband passed away in '82. And we bought this house in 1929. And as of December this year, I will have lived here 60 years.

Denise Denelias [00:28:17] 60 years, that's a long time. When you think back now on home ec, choosing a career and taking home economics in school, all the things that you've done with it, do you have any feelings about what you've? I mean, you haven't necessarily chose it to be a profession and be a professional woman, but the information that you learned in your home economic courses.

Margaret Post [00:28:43] I feel it's helped me very much. I really do. It's a really wonderful foundation for anyone's life.

Margaret Post [00:28:55] That's wonderful. Thank you so much for this interview. It was very nice to talk to you.

Margaret Post [00:29:09] Oh, it's timed, is it?

Denise Denelias [00:29:12] She's taping just a little bit more.

Margaret Post [00:29:14] Oh, I see.

Denise Denelias [00:29:16] How did you feel? Do you feel like it went well?

Margaret Post [00:29:19] I don't know.

Margaret Post [00:29:20] It did.