HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #113 - Sides A/B

Subject: Agness Brown

Place: Brown Home - Burns, Oregon

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Interviewer: Charlene Gates

Release Form: Yes

AGNESS BROWN: ... crossed the plains, must have crossed the plains in '81, from Kansas. He had gone from Iowa, had left the rest of the family in Iowa, the brothers and all, and had gone down to Kansas and was down there for several years because my dad and two or three other kids were born in Kansas. And then they crossed the plains to Union County, and they were up there for a year or so. And then, for just a few months, they went to Spokane. Apparently, Grandpa didn't like it, because then they came back to Union and packed up and headed to California. And they got as far as Harney, Fort Harney, when winter set in. They had left so late because they wanted to get the harvest in.

Now this is what Uncle Alma Davis --- this is the story he told to the boys, and that's where it comes from. 'Course Uncle Dot was born here and he probably never really knew it. Uncle Alma was old enough at the time that they did all this, he probably remembered it. Anyway, when they got there, why there was buildings. They'd moved out of Fort Harney, but there was buildings there, so they just moved into them to spend the winter, going on into California in the spring.

But in the meantime, Grant County needed a Justice of the Peace down here. I suppose it was $25 a month or something, and that was money, that was cash money. So, he stayed, and that's how they happened to stay. And then he was the first Justice of the Peace when it was broke off into Harney County.

CHARLENE GATES: Oh, we were part of Grant County first?

AGNESS: Yes.

CHARLENE: Oh, I see. I didn't know that.

AGNESS: I have Bob and Amanda Irving's --- Robert and Amanda Irving's marriage license, where he married them and signed Justice of the Peace, Grant County, Oregon.

CHARLENE: Oh, I didn't realize that.

AGNESS: But they were married at Harney. Uncle Cecil Irving, who was married to my mother's sister, Floy, was the one that sent me this copy because he knew I'd be interested in having it. So that was the first I was sure, because the dates didn't fit, see. I was sure that he had been a Justice of the Peace while it was still Grant County.

CHARLENE: So how long did he remain a Justice of the Peace?

AGNESS: I don't know, and I've never looked in the records to see how long. Grandma died in '94. Now I don't know whether he was still Justice of the Peace at that time. He must have been, because I think that Dad acted as Deputy Justice of the Peace one time because he married somebody, and he signed the paper. And I do have that; I have a copy of that. And aside from that, I had no knowledge that Dad was ever Justice of the Peace. See, my dad was Charlie Davis. He was third from the youngest of the Davis family.

CHARLENE: Where did Alma fit in?

AGNESS: Aunt Laura, who married Watson Boyd, was the oldest. Let's see, there was Aunt Laura, then Uncle Frank, and Uncle Frank never got married. And Uncle Dave Davis, who was killed down in Clackamas County or someplace down there. Then Uncle Alma, then Uncle Pete, and Dad, Uncle Ira, and Uncle Dot.

CHARLENE: That's a lot of kids!

AGNESS: And there was two girls that --- I think one of them lived to be about four years old. And they're mentioned in that Harney County, Malheur County history book, but it doesn't say when they died, it just says deceased. I don't know whether they died before they left --- they must have died before they left back in Kansas. While we're looking up some of that, probably there wasn't even a stone placed there, you know, so it'd probably be --- we found that marriage records

and probate records are very complete. But don't look for death records or birth records; they just aren't there!

CHARLENE: I wonder why not?

AGNESS: Well, they had to get a license to get married, and they had to probate anything if they had owned land. So, when they died, that would be there, see, but it doesn't actually give --- there is not, per se, a death record. We were in the old courthouse in Southern Iowa. And I imagine they're the same way here. I haven't looked.

CHARLENE: Well, it was Alma who married my mother's sister Merle Dalton. I sometimes got confused about that. And that's how that connection went.

AGNESS: Let's see. Dot married Juliet King. She was always called "Punch". Ira married my mother's sister Lee. Then of course Mom married, they were the "Jade" girls, she was Iva, and she married Charlie. And I don't know what Aunt Lou's name was. She married Pete, and I just don't know who she was. Then Uncle Alma married Merle Dalton (interviewer's mother's sister). She was the oldest of the Dalton girls. Then Uncle Dave married Doctor --- can't tell you that doctor's name, but it was over at Baker. A girl from Baker. And of course, Uncle Frank didn't get married. And I don't know where Watson Boyd came in, now whether that was from over in the Baker area or what. And she lived with him, and they had one child. They moved down to Coos Bay, and I think that their daughter, Ethel was --- she grew up down there. Now they had one child that's buried in the cemetery at Harney. And Grandma Mary Miller Davis, and Grandpa Jasper Davis, and Jasper Franklin, which is Uncle Frank, are all buried out at Harney. And my dad is buried there.

See Dad was in a farm accident in 1922, and he died in May of 1923, the second day of May 1923. The lines got tangled on the Jim-wagon, and Dad stepped out on the tongue. He had just a teenage girl, it was Merle Hayes, driving the Jim-wagon, and had Ian a trippin' it for him. And of course, Ian was just a little kid. And when the horses started to run, Dad could have stayed on the horse and not got hurt, but he didn't realize the kids jumped. As soon as the horses started to go,

why the kids did just what they'd been told to do, jump, get out of there! And they jumped off the back end of the wagon and they weren't hurt. But just as he got back on the wagon, the wagon tipped and injured his back. And he lived from August until May. And he was in the hospital in Portland from, I think, January till May before he died. 'Course I was just in the sixth grade at the time.

CHARLENE: How long, about, did they stay out in Harney? When did people move into Burns?

AGNESS: Well now we lived three miles east of Harney. When the folks got married, Dad built a house three miles east of Harney. And that was at the mouth of Mortimer Canyon. And then over in the next canyon was where Uncle Alma and Aunt Merle lived. Then Uncle Pete lived this side of Harney, right next to where the Harney Cemetery is. In fact, he donated the acreage. I don't know how many acres that is, but he donated that land for the Harney Cemetery. The records are in the courthouse on that if anyone wants to look it up. They're all in the courthouse because Al [Alfred Brown] looked it up. When, oh we were trying to find the plat, so he went to the courthouse to see what was the history of it. And Uncle Pete deeded it to the Presbyterian Synod at Baker. And the Presbyterian Synod at Baker was absorbed into the Oregon Synod. And then, a good many years later, I don't know how many years later, an association, cemetery association, was formed out there at Harney. I was old enough to remember. It was after Dad was gone, so it was in the '20's sometime. They formed an association, and they got the deed to it, was deeded to this association. Well, I think that's right where it stands now, you know, as far as deed wise is concerned.

And of course, the Luce's have endowed it now. Her family lived down the road from us when I was a kid, the Rodgers. They lived down the road from us, and so we had a definite connection with them. And then when this girl, granddaughter I guess, of Alex Rodgers, when she died, why she was married to Luce. And then they brought her body back from New York and she's buried out there. And I understand all the rest of them are gonna come back here and be buried here.

CHARLENE: Oh, for goodness sakes. I never knew about that until recently. That's real interesting.

AGNESS: A beautiful stone out there and everything. And it's nice this way, that I understand it's a trust fund that takes care of the cemetery. And they keep it cleaned up, there's no, you know, I mean the fence is up and ---

They had a very poor fasteners on those gates out there. There's a little walk-through gate for pedestrians, and then there's the one where you can drive in. So just before Al passed away, why we were going out one time. We took some chain with good snaps, the kind that people would use, and we took it out and we put it on both of them. And they've never had trouble with stock or anything getting in since then, because they will fasten those. But a lot of people can't find it, because you have to go through a farm, see, to get there. You have to go through a farm to get there.

CHARLENE: I don't think I've ever been out there.

AGNESS: Well, we were out and it's in good shape. Of course, my kids --- Roger came up, I was gone this Memorial Day, and Roger came up and he went out. We'd go out every year and check to see that everything's okay. The sad part is there's a number of them that aren't marked. Now I know, oh Peter Mortimer --- I know where the grave is, but I doubt that anybody else does. And I'd like to get it marked while I'm still alive to do it. The only reason I remember is there was a man by the name of Stroud and there was a gun battle, I guess, in the early days in Harney. And I guess they killed the man that shot John Stroud. Now I don't know whether Stroud was killed or what. I really don't know that history of it. But anyway, the man that killed him was buried down by the fence. And when Peter Mortimer died, they buried him right down beside this guy, and my mother was furious. Because old Peter Mortimer was a nice old guy, as I remember. He was the one that lived up Mortimer Canyon. And he's the one that they named the canyon after.

But he had a --- I can remember going there. My dad took me up. I sat on the seat or hung onto the saddle horn and sat on his lap and we just went everyplace. I liked to go. My brother

didn't, so I was the one that went with Dad.

And one time he took me up; he was going up to Peter Mortimer's and wanted to know if I wanted to go. I was little; I couldn't have been more than three and a half or four years old, something like that. And so, we went up there. And the picture I have of that house --- he dug back into the hill, I suppose probably ten feet back into the hill, maybe a little farther than that. And then he had gone in and lined it with, you know, like they used to build their old cellars a whole lot, but he'd lined it with wood, boards, and so that the dirt wouldn't fall down on things. And then the front of it was just like the front of a house with a door. And then it was boarded up, and one window. And I suppose across there it was, oh seven, eight feet, so it was narrow.

And on the inside, when you opened the door, the house opening faced east. And when you opened that door, it swung back on the north wall. And there was a space probably, oh a little wider than the door between that and the bed. And there was a bed there and it was just a built-in box, probably had a straw tick on it, I don't know, and a canvas over it. I remember the canvas. But that was his bed.

And then back in the far corner, back towards the hill, on the right-hand side as you went in, was the stove, and it was a little stove with a little oven in it. And I thought it was a cute little stove; 'cause Mama's was big and that was little, see. I thought that was awfully cute. And in the other corner was apple boxes laid sideways and piled one on top of the other. I suppose they were probably nailed together so they wouldn't fall. But that was his cupboard. And then he had a little tiny table, just a little bitty table, and one chair in there. And it was dirt floor. But that's where he lived.

And he asked me if I wanted a sandwich. Of course, kid-like, sure I wanted a sandwich. He went over and threw the covers back and he took out a dishtowel and unwrapped the bread and cut the bread off and made me a sandwich. And on the way home I asked Dad, I said, "Well, why does he keep it in the bed? Why does he keep his bread in the bed?" And he said, "That's to keep it away from the mice."

CHARLENE: Oh, I would never have thought of that.

AGNESS: Well, that's why he kept it in the bed. Well, when I got home I all but got spanked for eating that sandwich, and not saying no, I didn't want one. But I guess I lived; it wasn't that dirty.

But my dad was the administrator at the time when they probated his estate. And I have the records here where they sold his various things. He had a few cattle and a horse or two, you know, and things like that. But I do have the book that has where Dad kept track of it. And of course, I expect that over in the courthouse would be the record of it. But he was quite an old character. My mother didn't think too much of the food.

CHARLENE: Oh, it's a good story, though.

AGNESS: Yeah. Well, it's true. I mean that --- But another time Dad took me up, he was riding for cattle, and we found a couple buckaroos and they had their bonfire. And I suppose it was a lard bucket, it was about the size of a number ten can, you know. And they had that sitting there a boiling, something boiling in it, and they wanted to know if we wanted to eat. And Dad said --- they said, well, they had some porcupine. It was just about done, so we ate with them, and I ate some of that porcupine. And it's the only time I ever tasted porcupine. I don't know what it tasted like because I haven't tasted of it since, but to me it was sweet. The meat was sweet. Now, I don't know what it tastes like. It's supposed to be good food, so --- But I can remember eating that. And that was up above --- oh, I suppose up above the ranch someplace, I don't remember where.

Oh, I was adventuresome, so I got to do all the fun things that my brother got out of and didn't get to do.

CHARLENE: Oh, he was working on the ranch, I suppose?

AGNESS: My brother? Oh, we were little, tiny kids when all this happened. Oh yeah. See I was only 12 when Dad died. And we had moved from the ranch at Harney at the time we were going to start to school. No kid of Dad's was going to a country school! And we moved down --- he rented the Luig place, and we moved down there. At first Dad thought, he went and looked the school over, and we were going to have to ride two miles to school. And it was a one-room school. And

he came into town and rented a house and moved us in. And up until the time he died, we moved to the ranch every summer. And then we'd move back in the fall and go to school, because we went to the grade school here in town. We didn't start --- I was almost 7, and Ian was almost 8 before they started us to school. But Dad said he went to a country school and his kids weren't going to country schools. So that's how we happened to go to school in town.

CHARLENE: Did he think it wasn't as good an education?

AGNESS: I presume he did. He just figured that --- well, in those days, usually the teachers --- I remember when Aunt Merle Davis taught at --- Mama telling when she taught at Cow Creek. Aunt Merle was just a year older than Mom was. She'd graduated the year before from high school, then she came out there and taught. And that's the way they did. So, you know that --- The teachers in town had to have a little more education. W. M. Sutton wouldn't have hired them, even in those days. He wouldn't have hired them if they didn't have some schooling.

CHARLENE: But they could teach right out of high school, for the country schools.

AGNESS: They did, yeah. I remember Mama telling about Aunt Merle teaching. She graduated from high school one year and taught out there at Cow Creek, at Cow Creek School.

CHARLENE: I didn't know that.

AGNESS: The Cow Creek School at that time was a little building

--- down the road is about a mile, the old road was about a mile north of where the highway is now, Highway 20, as you go out toward Buchanan. And it was down from Dory Poujade's place, probably a mile down the road. Well yeah, because kids came from Buchanan. They came from all around there to that little school. Then when there was --- oh, I was probably, I suppose --- it was even after my father was gone that the schoolteacher lived at Grandpa and Grandma Poujade's place. And Grandma fixed up one room. Of course, it was a great big house. Grandma fixed up the one room and they used it for the schoolhouse. And they had the school there at Grandma's house for several years. There was probably only three or four, or five kids, you know, that came there.

But Mrs. Wallace, and I can't think of what her name was, her first name was, was the teacher that lived at Grandma's and taught out there. Given time I could probably think of that name. But now my mom's side of the family, we're trying to trace how they came from France.

CHARLENE: Oh, they came from France?

AGNESS: Well, Grandpa was from --- on Grandpa's side they came from France. And we've got them to Oregon, but we don't know where, or how they came to Oregon. And we're looking into that now to find out. But he was born down at Canby or down near there, near French Prairie. Then his mother, he went with his mother when his father and mother separated, he went to Medford-Jacksonville area. And then after his stepfather died, then Grandma married again, why the boys left home. The Poujade boys and the Gribble boy came up to, came in here.

Grandpa said the first time he came; I think he drove cattle in for John Devine. And then apparently, he went back down to that part of the country, and he drove in cattle with Ed Hanley. Ed Hanley was Bill Hanley's brother, an older brother apparently. And I know Grandpa spoke very highly of Ed Hanley. He always thought Ed Hanley was a nice guy.

Then of course Grandma, I haven't figured out how they got from Iowa to Jacksonville yet, either, but somehow, they got down there and Grandpa had known Grandma, apparently, down in Jackson County. And then she came up, her sister was living in Baker, and she came up to Baker, and she and Grandpa were married in Baker, and she came over here. And Mom was born out to Harney.

I was born on the ranch, as far as that goes. And when I was about three weeks old, why having spent all of that time up to that time on the oven door, because that was the incubator. They weighed --- Mama tied me in a diaper and Dad weighed me on the steelyard and I weighed, the diaper and I weighed three and a half pounds.

CHARLENE: Oh, my gosh.

AGNESS: So, I spent the winter on the oven door.

CHARLENE: Oh, isn't that interesting! I never heard of that.

AGNESS: Well, Mama probably had had some experience, because Aunt Floy was tiny like that. And Grandma had kept her warm by keeping her in the kitchen. Only I think Grandma had a table next to the stove that she kept her on. But in those days, you know, houses weren't warm like they are now. And now, a 3 ½ lb. baby, and I probably didn't even weight three and a half pounds, because the diaper had to have weighed something, I imagine that they'd stick them right in the incubator. Well, instead of that, Mama put me in a dishpan and set the dishpan on the open oven door and kept the fire going day and night.

CHARLENE: That's fascinating. I've never heard of it.

AGNESS: I always asked Mama, well how did you keep me warm? So that's what she said. I guess she sat me on the table when she had to bake bread or something, because it's a cinch she had to use that oven some.

CHARLENE: Well, that's a good solution, though.

AGNESS: Yeah.

CHARLENE: Ingenuity to do that.

AGNESS: Well, they knew they had to keep them warm. I never did get very big; I was always pretty tiny, you know. I mean, when I was 10, and my sister was 6, I can remember Mama taking us to the circus, and she wasn't about to pay adult prices for two of us. If you were ten, you were supposed to pay adult price. And so, she put me in for under 10 because Della was bigger than I was. Della was 6 and I was 10. There's four years between my sister and I.

CHARLENE: But you went all through grade school here, and high school here?

AGNESS: Yeah, I started to school to Mrs. Huston. Frances Huston was in the first grade. And I went to Ruth Shaw the first year she taught here. I skipped the fifth grade. In those days they did that. I don't approve of it, but they did it in those days, they skipped. Of course, I was old enough that socially it didn't make any difference. I think I had Enid Gowan for the sixth grade, and Helene Biggs was the seventh. And of course, Mr. Sutton, W. M. Sutton, always taught the eighth grade. And in the second grade I think I had Lulu Hayes. Lulu Pierce, she married a man by the name of

Pierce, but it was Lulu Hayes when I went to school to her. I think it was probably her second year of teaching, something like that. In the third grade, the teacher they hired got sick. In fact, I think she died that year. And we had six or seven teachers in the third grade. Part of the time it was just eighth grade kids that he sent down to keep order, you know. I don't know what we did, but the third grade was practically a lost year.

CHARLENE: Did they have a hard time getting teachers to stay?

AGNESS: Well --- they just picked up somebody that would come up. I remember Lelah McGee, oh Lelah McGee by that time, she'd taught my mother. Lelah McGee by that time was old. And I remember she taught the last half of the year. But the first half that I remember --- I don't know, maybe it'd only been a couple of months, you know, that's a long time back. And I can't even remember, I think it was one of the Swift girls that started out that year. And I really can't tell you who all we had. There was a Mrs. Clark that was the county school superintendent; I think she was. She came in, she taught part of the time. I mean they just got whoever they could get to be there. And teachers weren't a dime a dozen, you know, I mean you just couldn't go out and pick them up anyplace, like they can now. They can usually find somebody.

Then I went through high school. I started under McDade when he was principal, and then the last three years was under Merle Bennett, vice principal. And I was there when they built what's now the Lincoln School over here. I went in the old building, the old wooden building that every time the wind blew, we'd all run outside because it shook. But there's pictures of that old building, where the stairs came up from both the north and south sides of the building, big wide stairs, and there were steps up the front of it. Nice looking old building but wasn't very substantial. Wood stove in every room, you know.

CHARLENE: Was that Harney County High School, or was that Burns High School?

AGNESS: It was before it was Burns High School. It was Harney County High School when I first started to school. And I don't know how long it'd been; they'd had school in that building. I suppose maybe they had that at the time --- never have thought about it. It'd always been there,

when I was old enough. Walked past it going to grade school, you know, because they just tore it down and then built the Lincoln School.

CHARLENE: On the same place?

AGNESS: On the same place, and from the time school started in the fall till January we went to school in the Presbyterian Church, and that was when it was the little old white church. And we went to school over in what they called the Commercial Building, which was the old, what was later remodeled into the Episcopal Church before it burned down. And we went to school in the Baptist Church. We just had classes wherever they could pick up a building. Of course, I don't know how many of us there were. Probably not all that many kids going to school. But they didn't finish the building. They started tearing the building down the day after we got through with our junior year. I mean they were practically tearing it down while we walked out the door. And they tore it down and then built the other one and had it completed in, oh what was the name of the contractor that did that. Anyway, that's supposed to be one of the best built buildings in, best built school buildings in the --- And when they were trying to condemn it when they wanted to get the new high school, that was something else. Because that building, when the high school wanted to give it to the grade school, Mr. Slater said we don't take that building unless we know that it's safe. So, he got engineers to come in and check it. And they said, how did they ever get it condemned?

CHARLENE: Oh, so it shouldn't have been condemned.

AGNESS: It's still a well-built building. Not modern, you know, but it'll be there when these others are piles of junk, you know, it really will.

CHARLENE: It's still useful. They built things to last back in those days, I guess.

AGNESS: Silbaugh was the man that built it. He just built everything like that. I think he was the one that poured the concrete on that old building out to Hines, that big old --- that was going to be a hotel. That's still standing! With no protection or nothing! So, he had to have been a pretty good builder.

CHARLENE: Well, what kind of classes did they offer in high school?

AGNESS: Well, you had to take four years of English, and you had to take at least one year of science, and two years of math, and oh, they had typing. Ches Dalton was the Commercial Department for so many years that we didn't think that anybody else knew how to teach typing and shorthand and all these things except Ches Dalton. And of course, he was your mother's brother, and Aunt Mere's brother. I know I took four years of math 'cause I liked it, and I took two years of, took three years of science, because I took a general science course the freshman year, and biology the second year. Then girls weren't supposed to be smart enough to take physics, so I took it just to show them that I was just as smart as the boys were. And I got a "1", or an "A", or whatever it was they gave us in those days out of the course. Practically memorized the book, and thank goodness, because when I got to college, I had to have it. But anyway, why I had three years of science. And of course, I had the four years of English, that was a must. And if you were taking too many subjects, which I usually did, you could only take typing --- two periods. A double period was typing. So, I got a half a period. I'd take one period a day, and I got half credit for it. And in fact, I think I only did that for one year, so I only had --- I came out with a half credit in typing. No, I think they gave me a credit because I worked in the office the year, I was a senior. I worked in Merle Bennett's office. And that was all. They didn't have secretaries in there in those days; they just had one of the senior girls that --- you volunteered your time.

TAPE 2 - SIDE A

CHARLENE: Sounds like high school was in some ways was probably a little harder than it is now, or they made you do more.

AGNESS: Well, I think you had study periods, and things like that that they don't have now. I think they --- Of course, even starting in the first grade, we didn't spend our time coloring pictures. I have a notebook that I made in the first grade that I was writing, I mean script writing, you know. When --- by the time I'd been in school a week. You didn't start out printing and then gradually run

it into something else. And I look at this notebook --- I showed it to Hank Slater (former principal of Slater Grade School) one time and he said, "You must have been the only one in the room that did this." And I said, "You didn't know Mr. Sutton, everybody did it." And they did! Everybody had this notebook. You put in so many pages a week into this notebook, and when you got through you had a stack of papers within this notebook and you took that home and everybody kept them. I have my first two. After that, I think I --- well, as time went on, I threw them away. But I did keep the first two. Sometimes I think I ought to put it in the museum. It ought to be something that people would see what they presented to us. Because this idea that you don't teach kids until they get to be great big kids, you know, you let them color and you don't push them or anything, is ridiculous.

We learned the sounds, we had phonics, we learned all the sounds right from the day one. 'Course I probably paid more attention. I was scared to death. I had lived out in the country all my life. I'd never played with another kid except my brother and sister, you know. And Della was enough littler that I didn't play with her.

So, when I came to school that first --- I never will forget that first day of school! Just scared spitless, you know. I can remember she sat me up kind of toward the front, but at the end of the semester, I was ranked number one and I was back in that corner and I couldn't see, but I sat back there. It didn't make any difference whether you could see or not, if you were number one you sat in the --- had the seats numbered one, two, three, four, five across the back, and then six sat in front of number one and the kids that --- I guess his theory was that if you weren't getting enough out of school that you were ranked the lower in the class, you should be up in front where you could get it. I don't know whether that was his idea or not, but that's the way you sat. And I sat on that back row. And I didn't get glasses until I was in the seventh grade, and I couldn't see the blackboard.

CHARLENE: How did you ever get the notes off it?

AGNESS: I didn't get things off of the blackboard; I got most everything from just hearing what

everybody said. Consequently, I was a very poor reader. And how I got through school --- the doctors just shook their heads when they saw. I only had ten per cent vision in one eye, and almost less than that in the other one. But I got through school somehow. 'Course if you didn't get it, you stayed there till you did, in those days.

CHARLENE: That was a good idea.

AGNESS: We stayed in school longer, too, than they do. School for the first, let's see, you stayed in school till 2:30 for the first two grades. Third grade got out at 3 o'clock, and everybody else stayed there till 4 o'clock. And if you had lessons that you didn't get, a paper you hadn't turned in, you might stay there till 5 o'clock. And you might not get any recesses, or you might get to go down to eat your lunch in the lunchroom. You know, the sanitary department wouldn't have approved our lunchroom.

CHARLENE: Oh, really? What was it like?

AGNESS: Dirt floor. Big long tables in the basement of that big old school, and I'm sure there was mice running around in there. But it was dirt floors. 'Course it was out of the rain, out of the snow, but I never thought about that till right now. We usually sat on the tables. I can remember putting our feet on the benches. The benches were fastened to the tables some way; however, they were built. Just wood ply, you know, just plain. And I guess the janitor would come in and --- I know Mama, when she was janitor up there, she did, she'd go in every night and wash the tables off, or maybe once a week. I don't know how often she did it, but I remember we sat more on the tables and just had our sack lunch.

CHARLENE: Well, you all survived, so ---

AGNESS: Well, it didn't hurt us any. But I'm sure that the health departments nowadays would have a fit. And you know, really, I don't think we were sick so much as kids are nowadays. Maybe we just built up immunity to stuff, I don't know.

CHARLENE: You must have been tougher. They had all wood stoves in those days?

AGNESS: No, now the grade school didn't. The grade school had a big old boiler, and it was a

steam-heated, with radiators, that if the wind blew and you was on the right side of the building, you might get kind of cold. Or if you was on the other side of the building, you'd get too hot. And they had old Pop Sayer with --- well, I guess the boiler man. He kept the heat going. He didn't do any janitor work that I can remember. You know, I never thought about it, but the gymnasium didn't have anything but dirt floor. The only place that was concrete was in where the toilets were. The whole basement floor wasn't paved. I just have never thought about that till now.

CHARLENE: And they kept it like that for quite a while? Dirt floors?

AGNESS: I don't know when they did change it. I have no idea when they changed it. That might be fun to sort of look that up in the school records. Someplace there ought to be some history of when they put the floors in that --- maybe they didn't do anything till they tore it down, I don't know. See, it was built in 19 and 12, and I went to school there, I started in 19 and 17. Then in the fall of '18, was when they had the flu epidemic and closed the school for that whole year. And we went out to the ranch, Dad took us out to the ranch, and we stayed out to the ranch for the whole winter.

He had a crew and was building the road from where the old castle used to be, south of Wright's Point. To what was Wright's Point, I mean to the foot of the old Savage Grade, anyways, where he was building. And he had a crew there. Mama cooked for the crew. And he had a rule; you didn't leave the place. If you left, you didn't come back, even to get your paycheck. He might leave it out to the gate, and you could come get it, but he wouldn't let anybody come back because he figured that if they went out and mingled with other people that we'd all get the flu. See, and the year before, people had died, I mean whole families would die within a week. So, it was terrible.

Anyway, to get groceries, they had --- it's out about I suppose where the millpond is now, where the millpond used to be. They've got it all filled in now. But out there was a house, a vacant house, and anybody that wanted to --- they called that the "Pest House". They'd take things there and leave them. Dad would leave a list of groceries and some money. And Uncle Ira lived in town, and he'd come out and get the list and come to town and buy the groceries, put the change back in

an envelope in the --- with the groceries, and they'd sit there for twenty-four hours. And then Dad would go pick the groceries up. And that sat out there. Can you imagine people leaving money like that nowadays and it being still there when you got there? But all the people out there did that. And they had family or friends in town that would get the groceries for them. And then they'd take them out and probably, I suppose Dad did that, and take the mail out about once a week or once every ten days. And we stayed out there all winter and we didn't take the flu. In fact, we didn't take the flu till the next year. Didn't any of us have it. So, isolation worked in that case.

CHARLENE: They figured that out that it was somehow contagious.

AGNESS: If you go down to the Saddle Butte Cemetery, you'll see where there's whole families down there. And the death dates are one or two days apart. Whole families that died.

CHARLENE: Oh, that's so sad. I wonder why it was so --- was it a different kind of flu than we have around now?

AGNESS: Well, I think it was a more virulent kind, but I don't think we had ever been exposed. It was like when they came in with smallpox in the days of the Indians, you know, in the real early days; a whole tribe would die from smallpox if they got it. And that's the way this flu was. It was terrible.

CHARLENE: It came through then in 1918 was it, or '17?

AGNESS: It must have been 1918, fall of '18, and the winter of '19, I think. 'Cause that was the year that we went to the ranch. And that's the year they closed the schools. Just as soon as they started being any cases, why they closed the schools and so Dad just took us back to the ranch.

And then the next year we all had it, and I can remember we were just awful sick. I remember having jaundice afterwards, and it lasted for --- no Oriental was any yellower than I was. I was just --- I can remember that. They didn't close the schools that year. 'Course it wasn't as bad, people didn't die. And then the funny part was, there were people that lived through both those years that never even took it, so it was a peculiar type of --- Al (Alfred Brown) always said he never had it. He didn't have it the first year, and he didn't have it the second year. Everybody in the house

was sick, even the hired girl, he said, that they had was sick, and he didn't ever take it.

CHARLENE: That's funny. I wonder why they didn't?

AGNESS: You don't know.

CHARLENE: That must have been pretty terrible. That lasted a whole year?

AGNESS: Lasted all winter, that first year, I remember. And I don't know how long the epidemic lasted the second year. But the ones that had it that second year, or the ones that had had it and got well the first year, didn't seem to take it the second year. You know, so there were people that had had it the first year and lived through it that were able to help nurse and take care of people. There'd be whole families be sick at once.

CHARLENE: That must have been just awful. Everything must have practically come to a stop in Burns.

AGNESS: Oh, well yes. 'Course it was at a different pace than anything is nowadays, you know. I mean there wasn't electric power and there wasn't, you know, there wasn't all these things that you depend on, and just a far different sort of life.

There was more snow and colder. It was cold back --- in fact, I can remember when I was a kid at the ranch at Harney that every winter the snow would be clear over the fence. We had a wire fence in front of the house. And we kids could just run over the top of it out into the road. And it would crust over and of course we didn't weigh much, and we'd just run all over. And the snow was deep enough that once in a while we kids would hit a spot where an animal had broken the crust and fall through. And I can remember falling through and Mother having to wade out to get me. And I'd be dangling where I couldn't even --- my feet would --- the snow underneath would be soft. And I couldn't get --- well, kept my arms out so I wouldn't go clear down through, and her having to come and get me. The snow would be that deep. Now I was probably three years old, so you know it had to be pretty deep snow. 'Course it might have been drifted, you know, I'm sure it was drifted over the fences. I'm sure that that's what made it that deep, but ---

CHARLENE: Then it didn't get so cold for a while, did it? I remember ...

AGNESS: No. It began to be warmer, and the one-year that I taught out at Hines, the little girls ran in anklets and sweaters all winter long. I don't believe we hardly had a storm all winter. And it was warm. I mean, a sweater's all you needed. And then the next winter, boy, boy! That was the year Al and I were married and we came home the first part of December on dry roads, and we got home about 11 o'clock in the evening, at night. And the next morning when we got up there was 20 inches of snow, and it was still snowing at 7 o'clock the next morning. And our car sat right down there; we lived just a block off Main Street, and our car sat right there until March.

CHARLENE: Couldn't get it out at all?

AGNESS: No. Well, they didn't clear the streets, and it was covered. So, we just left it and we had --- 'course we had high-top boots. And I went up and bought a pair of what they call snow pants, ski pants, I think they called them, and I bought that and a long coat, long heavy coat. And we walked all winter long. We were living about a mile from Al's folks, and we thought nothing of walking up there at night and back, you know. Now they say it's good for you. Then we thought we had to. ... That was more like the storms we've had in the last three years, you know, I mean it really --- 'Course now they clean the streets and you don't --- and I don't think that was drifting. It just got that deep.

CHARLENE: I remember when I was a little girl it was pretty, it was heavy and cold, but I don't know, this last winter was real bad.

AGNESS: Well, the last five years we've had, five years ago, this last winter was bad. That was the year that Al passed away, and we had the ice storms. You weren't here then, were you?

CHARLENE: No, I wasn't. No, I was in school.

AGNESS: Well, we had an ice storm. In fact, they had a bad ice storm in Portland. Roger left that night; he said he felt safer riding at night when there wasn't anybody on the road. And he came up as far as Bend and then came on in the next morning. But I know Gearald Frost came up with his equipment and the ice right out here in front of the street was probably six or eight inches thick. They took it out, to clean it out so that people could get in and out.

CHARLENE: Oh, I didn't realize it had been anything like that.

AGNESS: That's why, when they say three years for this filling of the lake, it's more than three years. See it goes back, 'cause that was heavy snow that winter. Knowing that winter, and we've had good heavy snows ever since. It's hard to believe that there's that much water down there when, oh it must have been in the '30's, early '30's, that Uncle Henry was farming almost the center of the lake.

CHARLENE: Isn't that something.

AGNESS: Grain grew. 'Course that's all that saved those people. It was during the depression time, and they could grow that grain. He'd ride on horseback out into the grain field, and you couldn't see him. It grew that high.

CHARLENE: Gosh, that's incredible.

AGNESS: Well, it was kind of on a peat bed, you know, rich and

--- And when they were plowing down there, they dug up lots of these buffalo skulls. Now they're not petrified, but they were in that --- Apparently, they must have gone out on the ice or something and broke through and drowned. And then of course they were preserved because they were in the water.

CHARLENE: Yeah, I see. I didn't know we had buffalo here.

AGNESS: Well, I've got a buffalo skull in the basement that Wilbur Poujade --- when he was working for Uncle Henry, he's Wilbur Poujade's mother's youngest brother. And when he was plowing down there, he dug up a number of them. And of course, we liked them, so Uncle Wilbur gave us one. Or Uncle Henry, I don't remember which one gave it to us.

CHARLENE: I didn't realize there were buffalo skulls around here. Now that's one name --- I was wondering if you could spell that for me, Poujade.

AGNESS: P O U J A D E.

CHARLENE: Oh, I see. I hadn't heard that name before.

AGNESS: Well, it's a French name.

CHARLENE: Is it from around here?

AGNESS: Well, I have a cousin over at Bend that started in to do genealogy for fun, and she took the name Poujade. Her husband's great-grandfather was my great-grandfather too. Grandpa Pierre, Dr. Pierre, Jean-Pierre Poujade, came from France. He was a doctor in Napoleon's army. So, at least that's according to some of the history books, medical history books that they'd got compiled here in Oregon. And he came over with his children. And one of his children was my great-grandfather, Andrew. And it's through them that all the Poujade's in this part of the world are all related.

CHARLENE: Oh, I see. And they had been in Harney County?

AGNESS: Well Grandpa moved here; you see. Grandpa Poujade was the one that came in here with Ed Hanley, driving cattle in with Ed Hanley. Then when they --- after they got their --- well, he and Uncle Charlie Jones, Charlie Jones was Grandma Poujade's brother, half-brother, and he and Grandpa built up the ranch out at Cow Creek. And they kept, Grandma kept what they call "kept the travel". That was the expression they used. They had a big house, and on the east side was one room that was just like a lobby. It was a sitting room with a stove, and the people --- traveling public went into that room. Then they had a dining room, a little dining room where Grandma served the traveling public. And then there was the kitchen, and then there was the family dining room. And Grandma and Grandpa had a bedroom ... and then all the rest of the bedrooms were upstairs. And there was a partition; I mean a door that closed, between the ones that they rented to the public and the others.

CHARLENE: I see.

AGNESS: And they had two rooms upstairs that they rented to the public. But Grandma and Grandpa kept the travel for years, I guess. And then there was another house, and that's where Aunt Jane and Uncle Charlie Jones lived. And I had never realized until I've been going through some of the things Mother had, Uncle Charlie Jones died when he was only like 35. And Grandpa took care of everything for Aunt Jane and Alan until Alan was of age. See he was the younger and they

couldn't settle the estate till he was of age in those days. Maybe you can't now, either, if there isn't a will or anything, you know. Anyhow, why then Alan took his share, they took their share and came down and bought that place across the river. But Grandpa had that big house --- well Temples tore the old house down out on Cow Creek.

...

AGNESS: I can't think of anything else that I think you'd be interested in.

CHARLENE: Oh, I have a lot more, so ---

AGNESS: You ask questions, and maybe I can ---

CHARLENE: I don't want to take up too much of your time, but if you're not ---

AGNESS: I don't really have a lot I have to get done.

CHARLENE: Well, I'm probably almost out of tape. I've got a few other things --- I didn't bring enough tape, I can see that. So, I wonder if I can get together with you maybe next week also, and get some more of this. Oh yeah, there is so much --- Well let's see, I wanted to know --- The Brown family has been here quite a long time, haven't they?

AGNESS: They came about the same time, Al's dad, well Grandpa Nathan Brown, and Uncle Ben and Al's dad, Leon, came in here. I think Grandpa Brown --- now I'm speaking of Al's grandfather, that's Nathan Brown, I think that he came in up around Walla Walla. And eventually drifted into here, I don't really know too much about it. I don't even know where you could find out. There's --- I do have clippings that at the time --- see they built a little building, it's about where the building now stands. And they built that little building, had a little wooden building there, and then in 1896 they built the building, the stone building.

Grandpa was quite an old character. If he owned a piece of land and you were going to put up a building, he always had a party wall. You built the wall half on my land and half on your land and then we hooked onto it. And the people, when they bought the old Liberty Theater and tore it down --- the oil company bought --- next to us was the old Liberty Theater. And when they built that, why there was a party wall between our building and the Liberty Theater. And those people

came in and they surveyed, and I can still hear this fellow. I happened to be down at the office at the time he came in and he said, "Well Mr. Brown, what are you going to do?" He said, "You're over on my land a whole foot." And Al says, "Well," he says, "I think you'd better look into the deeds before you get to upset." And he says, "What do you mean?" He said, "Property lines are property lines." And Al said, "Well, let's go to the courthouse." So, they went up to the courthouse and they dug out the deed where Grandpa had deeded this land to --- I don't remember who. Anyway, they found the deed, and when they constructed the building, it was to be built, and they built the two buildings at the same time. And this was a property wall agreement, and its built half on our side and half on your side. It's two feet wide. And the fellow said, "Well, what am I going to do?" Al says, "Well, I don't think there's any way you can possibly move that over onto mine." And he says, "You can't take it down," and he said and on top of that, he said, "that was an internal wall and you've exposed it." So, in the end they had to gunite that wall, the oil company did. They had to gunite that wall to keep the moisture from coming through, you see.

And then there was another one that was back of the bank that one time they called up and they said, "Al, what are we going to do? You own half of this wall!" Finally, Al says, "Well," --- it was all cut stone --- Al says, "Well, I'll tell you. I'll agree; I'll give you an agreement that you can take the wall down if you take the stone up." Said, "My boys want to build some stone walls up at my house." He says, "If you'll haul the stone up here," he said, then I'll agree to let you take it." It was nothing but a stonewall left! ... I mean, that's what it was going to amount to because it was a warehouse on one side of it, and on the other side was, I guess they'd already had the building down, I don't know. Anyway, why Al owned half of that crazy wall. But I guess that was a common practice in those days, I don't know. 'Course stonewalls, I suppose, were expensive to build even in those days.

CHARLENE: It was more convenient, I suppose, and less expensive ...

AGNESS: Well, you didn't have, like some of the places downtown. If you go behind and look, there will be alleys down; I mean a few inches between walls. Well, that's just asking for trouble

down the pike, you know. And in those days, why they probably were a little smarter, they just built ---

CHARLENE: Yeah, as far as buildings in the city, I know, ...

AGNESS: I've been cleaning up things out of the building ---

I've got to go down now; I don't know what I'll run into. That's why I don't care for ... I've run into a whole bunch of old, old, old deeds. That's turn of the century deeds, in one envelope, I just stuck it right back in the envelope when I saw what it was. It says deed to the French Hotel.

CHARLENE: Huh, where was that?

AGNESS: Well, the French Hotel was where the old Arrowhead used to be. It was across from our building. It was in that block where the Arrowhead was, and then along there where the, well Pete Clemens' building, and then where they put that new health spa and all that stuff. I think it was that full block.

That fire burned in 19 and 14. Della was born on the 15th of August 1914, and Aunt Lee and Uncle Ira were in the next block back. They had a house back there. And Mama stayed with Aunt Lee and Uncle Ira until Della was maybe two weeks old, or something like that. And Dad came in and he took her home, and that night, I think it was, so it was about the first of September was the night that the French Hotel burned. And I guess it was quite a blaze. I didn't get Aunt Lee's and Uncle Ira's house, but it got several other things that were right there close. Now I think that --- well, you remember where Mr. Hirsch had his flower shop and greenhouse?

CHARLENE: Uh huh, yeah.

AGNESS: I think that's about where his house stood was where Aunt Lee's and Uncle Ira's house used to stand. But it was in there; it was in that block, anyway. And Al, I wish that somebody could have taped when Al could have told. Because he could have remembered these things. He remembered better than I did. Because, well of course I lived out in the country at that time. I remember when the Summit Hotel burned.

CHARLENE: I don't know about that one.

AGNESS: Well, the Summit Hotel burned in about 1938, or the spring of '39, because I know we were getting up feeding Ron. Ron was born July 4, 1938. And Al grabbed his camera and ran down and took movies of the Summit Hotel when it burned. Now the Summit Hotel is where, well, it's the one that was made into offices. What do they call it? It's up there on the hill, you know. What do they call that hotel now?

CHARLENE: Silver Spur?

AGNESS: No, across the street from that.

CHARLENE: Oh, is that Whittier's?

AGNESS: Yeah, Whittier. And they made the Whittier where the Summit used to be. And the Summit was a big old wooden building. And it burned like maybe 5 o'clock in the morning or something. We were up heating the bottle for the baby. And I think it was still the old fire bell, that long ago, rang. Al just jumped in the car and took the camera. We had an 8-millimeter camera. And I've got pictures of that. Some of those pictures I guess I should have; I should get them --- Because I think you can get 8-millimeter pictures blown up now.

CHARLENE: Probably so.

AGNESS: It was in color; it was in color. I haven't looked at them for years.

CHARLENE: That's fascinating; I never realized there was something ---

AGNESS: And then I remember when the Welcome Hotel burned. I had scarlet fever and I was in quarantine, and I couldn't leave the house, and of course everybody went to the fire. It was of course in the summertime; it was in July. And big pieces, oh, 18, 20, 24 inches square of mattresses would go up, you know, sucked up from the fire, and they were landing --- We were living over here back of the Catholic Church. And there was, well there's houses in there now, but there didn't used to be. And there was weeds, weeds up, and dry! And here I was, with scarlet fever. I was out there running with water; putting these things out, keeping my back yard from burning up, keeping our houses. And couldn't get anybody. I could call --- I called the police, I called everybody. 'Course everybody was at the fire. 'Cause that was a terrific fire when that big

old Welcome Hotel burned.

CHARLENE: Where was ---

AGNESS: It was down where that market was, oh where Smyth's used to have, Smyth's Grocery, down on that corner.

CHARLENE: I didn't know there'd been so many different hotels here.

AGNESS: That was a beautiful hotel, great big stone building, just a gorgeous place, and three stories high.

CHARLENE: Was that owned by the Welcome family that was here?

AGNESS: No. I don't know how they happened to call it the Welcome Hotel.

CHARLENE: Oh, well I just wondered if that was the name of it, or if it was connected with ---

AGNESS: I don't think so. I don't think it had anything to do with them. Then of course on the other corner, across where Copeland's is now, that was --- Grandma Poujade's sister owned that place. That was the Savage [Sevedge] place. And I've got pictures, I guess I ought to put some of those in the museum, I've got pictures of that place. That was Aunt Mary Savage's [Selvedge] and Uncle John's place. And Aunt Lee and Uncle Ira, at that time, lived --- well it's where the theater is. Their house was right there where the theater is, and then we lived, when we first moved to town, we lived in what they call the Briscoe (sp.?) House. And on the corner where --- well Aunt Lee and Uncle Ira lived there, facing, and then if you went to their back of their lot, and that is where the, oh that used car lot is. Now our house faced north there. It was called the Briscoe House. I don't know why it was called the Briscoe House, but it was. And it stood there, though, for a good many years after we didn't live there. Then the next year we moved. Dad bought Uncle Dot's place and we moved there.

But the, across on that corner where the Elk's parking lot is now, was Hagey's Grocery Store. Next to that was Trogett's Real Estate Office. And then there was the Burns Garage. Oh wait; there was a hat shop or something in between there. Wally (Welcome) could probably tell you what was in between there. But there was --- Hagey's Store was on the corner, and then

Trogett's Real Estate Office. And then there was something else, a little something or other, and then the Burns Garage.

Now when the Burns Garage burned, that was still while we had the old fire bell. The old fire bell was, well where the city hall used to be, that Cramer has that, that was a stone building. And up the east wall of that was the stairway that went up to the library. And the upper part of that building was the library. And up over that stairway was the bell tower where the old fire bell was. And the ropes hung down. And whoever saw the fire first; he ran and rang that bell. And there's nothing, nothing can give you the feeling of fear. Now in those days, when something caught fire, it burned! I mean, they didn't get, somebody, a fire department didn't get there fast enough to do much good. They got there, and they had their old pampers, you know, and things that they got there with. But it really struck terror, because you didn't know whether your house, and the next one, and the next one was going too, you know, in those days. And there's no siren can give you the feeling of that.

They had a bell system when I was in LaGrande, when I went to school up there. And I can remember, they had an arsonist; he was a young fellow, oh in his 20's. But all the buildings he set were vacant buildings. He never set anything where people were in there. And when those bells would start, it was a system that you could tell what part of LaGrande, by the way the bells rang. But I could still --- that terror! And if it had been bad before, after I lived through a year with that guy setting even one house next door to me, cross the street from me, I'll tell you, after that every time a bell rang for years, my heart would just stop. That type of ting! ting! ting! ting! ting! There's nothing like it.

But the back part of the garage didn't burn. And Mama had put our old Ford, we had an old Model-T Ford, and we couldn't afford for it to be in the heated part, so Mama had stored it back here 'cause you could store it for a dollar a month, or something like that, back in the back part. And she always said, "Well, it paid to be poor!" Because our car didn't burn and all those that were up in the other part burned. Then in behind that --- now I don't know, maybe you remember the old

tin shed behind the Burns Garage, that block that had the high metal up about 8, 9 feet?

CHARLENE: I might, I don't know.

AGNESS: That was a campground, and that was the first campground where people traveling could come in and stay.

CHARLENE: Oh, I see.

AGNESS: And in each corner, I think in each corner of it was little rooms. They'd be like cabins that you could rent. But otherwise, why it was a shed roof, and you could pull up your car there and set up your tent and camp overnight at that campground. And then at fair time they'd go out in the middle of that and build a dance floor, and that's where they had square dances, out-side. I was a teenager at that time, so I can remember going to the square dances there.

CHARLENE: Oh gee, that would be fun.

AGNESS: But I don't know when they took that down. I mean, I'm sure you kids remember that. It was black.

CHARLENE: It was near Burns Garage?

AGNESS: Back behind it, that whole block behind Burns Garage.

CHARLENE: Gee, I don't know. I think I remember it --- I remember the iron fence, the corrugated type of fence.

AGNESS: Yeah.

CHARLENE: I think by that time, when I was a kid, it might have been ---

AGNESS: They used it for storage.

CHARLENE: And some guy had a junk, or a car business or something. He used to ---

AGNESS: Well, I think the Burns Garage used to store cars back there.

CHARLENE: Yeah, that's what I do remember; I do remember the fence.

AGNESS: But originally, they built it as a campground.

CHARLENE: Now that's real interesting.

AGNESS: I expect that was one of the first --- 'course Archie McGowan was always a little bit

progressive, you know, and he was trying to promote tourism clear back in those days, you see. Well, they had a place to camp when they came here. And I suppose they had a pump out there; I can't remember that part, but there must have been a pump where they could get water. I'm sure there wasn't at the time they first put it in. I know that there had to have been a pump, because they didn't put the water in till after my father died. That was in '23, and I think they must have put the water --- I must have been in high school when they put that water and sewer in, I don't remember when they did that.

I can remember when they did it; I mean they had the streets torn up. They had a big old machine that was a ditch digger, and it dug those trenches down. Of course, down --- I guess they had troubles up here on the hill, because you see they couldn't use that ditch digger, they had to, I guess, dig them by hand, and blast and everything. But down there, of course the dirt was down as deep as they wanted to go. Why they'd no more permit them to leave open ditches with just a plank across for you to walk on --- I mean a footboard across. You'd walk over a mound of dirt and walk across this board and up over another mound of dirt. And seems to me like those were there forever. But it was a long time that they were putting all that modern sewer in.

I've got a picture that I'm gonna have enlarged, a picture that I took of that machine. I don't know ---

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