

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #150 - Sides A/B

Subject: Pete Clemens

Place: Clemens Home - Burns, Oregon

Date: April 2, 1988

Interviewer: Pauline Braymen

PAULINE BRAYMEN: This is Pauline Braymen; I'm interviewing Pete Clemens at his ranch home near Burns, on April 2, 1988. He's been chosen Grand Marshall of the Harney County Fair Parade for 1988. And this tape will also be used in the Oral History Project at the Harney County Library.

Well, Pete, usually I like to start with hearing about how you happened to come to Harney County. I think you were born here, weren't you?

PETE CLEMENS: Yes, I was born here.

PAULINE: Where were you born?

PETE: Well, I was born in the house that right now is the Ye Olde Castle. And I was born there on August 3rd, 1911. At that time there was no hospitals in Burns, and most everyone was born at home, or something like that.

PAULINE: So ---

PETE: Pardon?

PAULINE: Who were the people who lived in the house?

PETE: Well my folks, when they first came we didn't have the house down here at the ranch. So my folks bought the house and that's where I was born. And we stayed there about a year and then when they got the house completed down here, they moved in here, and my folks sold that house. And I've lived here ever since, outside of about five

years. We moved to Pendleton at the end of the First World War, and stayed there for five years to look after some properties that my mother had inherited. And, but after that, in 1924 we returned to Burns, and I've been here ever since.

PAULINE: Did you go to school at the Burns Grade School?

PETE: Yes, I started here and went two years, and then schools were closed because of the flu. But during the First World War--- and we moved to Pendleton, and so I came back to Burns and I finished here at Burns in the eighth grade. And then I went to high school here three years, and one year in Portland. And I went to college one year in Portland. And the other years I spent down at Saint Mary's in California at, close to San Francisco.

PAULINE: Your parents were the children of pioneer families in Harney County. Can you tell me who they were, and ---

PETE: Well my father was the son of Peter Clemens and Jenny Clemens. My mother was raised in Pendleton, and she was the daughter of J., John S. McCloud, and Annie McCloud. And my father met my mother over there when he was going to Business College. He stayed at this place kitty-corner to their home, and some people by the name of Sinkey (sp.), who was the great-grandfather of Vera Hotchkiss. And so that's where my father met my mother.

PAULINE: His parents came to Harney County in the very early days. They were among the first settlers of the county. Can you remember what date they came?

PETE: Well, my grandfather came here along about 1880, and my grandmother, I think, came in here a little earlier. My grandmother came from Jacksonville, and she and her first husband, named Thomas, they came in at the same time that Nellie and Rye Smyth, they all came together. And they got down there as far as the second Warm Springs, and so they --- below Hines. And the ladies stayed there while the gentlemen; the men went

looking for a location. And finally they found Happy Valley, at Barton Lake, and that's where they all moved over, and that was just previous to the Indian War they had here. And they had a homestead there, and my grandmother told me that at night, I mean in the daytime she would be around, but at night she slept in the haystack with a double-barreled shotgun because of the Indians trouble, and other things. So when the Indians went on the warpath, my grandmother and all the ladies they went to, well, even the men, they went to Fort Harney. But Mr. Smyth and his oldest son decided they wanted to go back or the Indians would find their money that was in their orchard. And they tried to get them not to go back, but he decided he would go back. And so they were surprised the next morning and were surrounded by the Indians, and they set fire to the house and it killed both the --- Mr. Smyth and his oldest son. And they are now buried on that same ranch where they have the cemetery. And also my grandmother's first husband Thomas, he was killed by a horse, and he's also buried there.

And then I think it was in 1882, or in 1982 (1882) --- my grandfather met my grandmother, and they were married at that time. And they had three boys and a girl. The first child was a girl who lived to about one years old, and then she died. And then there was my --- the oldest boy was Clay Clemens, then my father was in the middle, Calvin Clemens, and my youngest uncle was Glen Clemens. And that was the size of their family. And they lived out on Poison Creek. Delmer Clemens is now residing at that ranch. And before Delmer had it, his father Clayton Clemens, who passed away here about six months ago, owned it. And so that's all the Clemens.

And then on the other side, of course my mother was born in Pendleton. But her mother came across the plains in the early days, and she had a lot of real tales to tell about that. And now my grandfather, he came originally, from McCloud. He came originally from Edinburgh, Scotland. And he and another Scottish boy, they had a station

in New Zealand, which people know here as a ranch here in our country, in the United States. But it is a "station" in New Zealand or Australia. And they were doing real fine until; they were running livestock, until the foot and mouth disease. The British Army came in and killed all their stock. And so they salvaged a little bit out of it.

The other gentleman went back to Edinburgh, and my grandfather he took sail to San Francisco. And when he arrived there, he had his dog, and his saddle, and \$14. Then he worked his way up through the country, and being an educated man, he was able to advance faster than a lot of them. And so he finally arrived in the Pendleton area, and he worked for a sheep man. And finally he took sheep instead of money, and in about five or six years he bought this man out. And by the time he retired, which was before he ever got married, he was one of the most, the largest sheep man from around Pendleton. He had the operator, or sheep from LaGrande to Echo, that's below Pendleton. So before he got married, he sold out and then in his latest life he was a broker. He loaned money and come into a lot of property, and so that was --- He died about the time that I was just a little boy. He died in 1918 --- But my other grandfather Clemens, he died in 1920. And that's about as far as on the history of my grandparents.

PAULINE: And you were named for your grandfather, Peter?

PETE: Yeah. Yeah, I was named Peter Wesley. (Laughter) How I got the name of Wesley, Mother and Father were arguing over two names. One wanted to call me --- my father wanted to call me Courtney, the accepted name, and my mother wanted to call me Wesley. And they flipped a coin, and my mother won, and so that's why they hung the name of Wesley onto me.

HELEN LANDERS: What was your mother's name?

PETE: Lotta McCloud.

HELEN: McCloud?

PETE: Lotta Jane McCloud. Yes.

PAULINE: She spelled that L O T T I E ?

PETE: No, A.

PAULINE: L O T T A, Lotta.

PETE: She didn't like people to call her --- she liked Lotta. So many people called her Lottie, you know.

PAULINE: Well, that's what I can remember, Lottie.

HELEN: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

PETE: Yes, I had one sister, and she died in 1940. And --- she was older than I. So, but I had no other brothers or sisters.

HELEN: What was her name? What was her name, Pete?

PETE: Her name was Irene, Irene. Petersen was her married name. She was about 29 when she died, maybe a little bit older. She was about three years older than I. She died very suddenly, and so that left me the only child of the family.

PAULINE: Did you have to walk to school from clear out here, up to the top of the hill?

PETE: Well, of course I'm in the city limits here, you see. But

--- Oh, in good weather we'd walk, but in bad weather Mother would take us in the buggy.

And in those days there was no school buses. And if you wanted to go to school, you either walked, or rode a horse; you had to furnish your own transportation. There was none of these buses meeting you at the corner to take you to school.

HELEN: Not like they do these days, huh?

PETE: I know there was a lot of boys that went to high school that rode, the McPheeters. And a lot of those boys clear out there at Rye Grass, they all came in and rode horses into Burns. And I know the Whitings, Hilton Whiting and all the Whiting boys they had a buggy. And like where the present museum is, right now is where the Whitings used to

keep their horse during the day. Right on the corner there, there was a little barn, and for years that's where they --- They all went through grade school. When they got into high school though, they didn't bring the buggy any more, but --- During grade school they always rode in the buggy, that was the only way you could get to school. You had to get you --- They furnished the school, but you had to get your own way there. That was the rule in those days.

PAULINE: Well did you ever go to school in the building that is now the Slater gymnasium? The one that Peter and I started to school in?

PETE: Uh huh. Well that's the one --- I graduated from the eighth grade under W. M. Sutton, in the building that you are referring to, before they made a gymnasium out of it. And then in high school, where the present Lincoln School is now, the old Harney County High School, and then right across where the Episcopal Church, well that was a commercial building. And whenever the wind would blow real hard like it is today, they let us all out of school, because the building would shake. It was a big two story wooden building, and --- But the place would just rattle, so they would always turn us out when the, you know, when the wind was blowing. But we got by, it was the best they had here, so that was it.

PAULINE: That was located where the Episcopal Church is now?

PETE: The commercial building. Where they had typing and --- but over where the present Lincoln School is was the main school.

PAULINE: Okay.

HELEN: I can remember Mom used to say that she took typing over there, at the Episcopal Church.

PETE: But originally that had been the --- That had been a commercial college there at one time, I guess, years ago in that building. And then --- At first that was the, the

building they had first there, when we first went to high school, and then they built the other big place, and just used that for the commercial end of it, your typing and your shorthand, and so forth, like that. But along in, I think it was 1928, they tore the building down and built that what is the present Lincoln School. But at that time it was the high school here. Then it was one --- at the time it was built, it was probably one of the best high schools in Eastern Oregon. It was pretty new, and had a good gymnasium in it. And we were quite proud of it.

And then later they decided to build a new school out here at the present sight. But the first one that they built out there, like it is now, burnt down. And I think you both remember that.

PAULINE: Yes, sure do.

PETE: It was quite a catastrophe here for the people of Harney County to see their high school. But fortunately we had enough insurance to rebuild the structure the same as it was supposed to be.

HELEN: When did you meet Betty?

PETE: Well I met Betty in 1935, 1935. Betty came into Burns to, to Dr. Ground at the hospital, as a bacteriologist, and take the blood samples and so forth. And so that's where I first met Betty. The first time I saw her, I'd came off a loop-a-plane, and she was there with the cook and her husband from the hospital. And that's where we first met.

HELEN: That was quite a meeting then, wasn't it?

PETE: Yeah. So --- But we didn't start going together. I went, I was going back to school in California. Then I came home that Christmas and we dated a little bit, and that's when the thing started. (Laughter)

HELEN: How many children do you have?

PETE: I have three. I have two boys and a daughter. And our daughter is here in Burns

at the present time. Our oldest son lives in Walla Walla, and my youngest son is in Medford, in Jacksonville.

HELEN: How many grandchildren?

PETE: I have seven grandchildren, five granddaughters, and two grandsons.

HELEN: When did you go onto the Fair Board?

PETE: Well, let's see.

HELEN: The Fair Association, or Fair Board, or ---

PETE: Oh gosh, it's --- it was in the '50's. I couldn't tell you exactly, but it was in the '50's. I think, '52 or '53. And then my association with the Fair Board, well in a way it was --- When I was a boy of 16, I used to go there with a team and harrow the race track and drag it down so --- because in those days nobody had any equipment and horse was all there was. So I used to do that a lot so my father and Joe Fine, and those fellows could train their racehorses. And then my father would send me over with the harrow, and disk, and stuff, with those three horses, and work up the track. About all I did was to stir up a little dust up, but anyway that was the best we had in those days. But I didn't --- Finally I went in to help them sometime in the '50's. I'd have to look it up, but ---

HELEN: You just looked it up, Betty, did it say?

BETTY CLEMENS: I thought it might be on the plaque, but I guess it doesn't have it on it.

PETE: But Jimmy, at that time, Jimmy Richardson was in charge of the racing, and he asked me to help him, and be the racing secretary and do the stock and stuff. And Werner Arntz, he was also in it. And the three of us, we got by the best we could. We didn't have very much money to operate on, but we were, we managed to have some pretty good races for what we had to work with. And then up through the --- we just kept going finally --- When I first started riding races, I just leaned against the sagebrush down there. Finally I got, we used to have a little ticket stand out there, as you come in you



paid. And about all I could do was get in there, and I'd write the races in that. So finally then we built a building down there, an office. And we just kept progressing, and I kept after them for more racehorse barns all the time, and finally I did build them a pretty good plant down there. It, it's --- I know we were complemented one time that on the sport page of the Oregonian that there was only three places that were up to standards for racing and sanitation and so forth and so on, was Portland Meadows, Salem State Fair, and Burns, Oregon. Other towns like Klamath Falls they all had to straighten up. You know, fix their facilities better for their jockeys and everything else, so we felt pretty good about that, that we had a plant that outside of the two big ones, that we were the best in the state.

We always used to have some good race meets there, so that was the way that would go. And we have finally built into a real nice plant down there. We have pari-mutuel racing and so forth, and I think it'll still get better all the time.

HELEN: Well you were --- you started out in the association, and then went to the board?

PETE: Yes, I started out as just the racing secretary. And then I was on the Fair Board.

HELEN: When were you appointed?

PETE: I mean the Fair Board. Let's see ---

HELEN: When were you appointed to the Fair Board?

PETE: Well, it was about the time when Butch (Werner) died; I think 1963. I think that was the year that Butch was in that accident and got killed. And I went on the board before that, I really wanted to, I didn't want to be tied down because I had to --- My dad had the racehorses and everything, and I used to, you know, go places. So then finally I took it over, and so then --- Oh, it was about, later on, oh, I'd been there for quite a while, then they put me on the county board, and I served on there until I resigned

and quit.

We had a lot of ups and downs down there, because the bunch of the younger fellows, we were all young, and some of our older men that had been on there, they decided just to save some money. And so when we got to looking through that place, our grandstands and everything else, if we didn't do something about it, it will fall down. So there was Jim Tackman, who at that time was the building and grounds chairman, and he was really, he knew his stuff. And we shored the grandstands and stuff up like that. And then we started buying Powder River and the facilities there instead of putting wooden corrals and so forth on, we used the Powder River, which it seemed like that soil down there had so much alkali that if you plant wooden stuff it rots out in a few years. So now they have kept building it up to where they have a pretty decent plant, I think, down there.

HELEN: Do you remember when the fairs came in and joined the racing?

PETE: Who?

HELEN: When the fair itself joined the racing?

PETE: Well it was along about 1935. I mean they didn't have much down there then. But before that, we had just the rodeo. And it was put on by --- it was a private organization. But around 1935, that was when they first got the state legalized for pari-mutuel betting. And that's where they first got some money to have these county fairs. And that was the beginning, because before there was no money before that. So the only way they had racing, they had to, even when these three gentlemen, Gus Bardwell, and Nollie Reed and Thompson, they had the rodeo. But it was a private deal, and finally they just couldn't make it, and so that's when they, the sold the grandstand and the whole works. It was a white elephant as far as they were concerned. And so they sold it to the fair, when this new fair board was formed. They sold it to them for \$10,000. I don't know who all the members were on the fair board at that time. I was going to college at that

time. But I think there was Don Hotchkiss, and several of the men around town here were all in on that, the original fair directors, you know. But that was why they ---

Oh, years ago they used to have the county fair. I remember it was up there right now about where the armory is. When I was a little boy, and you'd go in, there was a gate you went in with a,

about there were the Pine Room is, that was the entrance. And then you take Egan, that was the backstretch of the racetrack they built. And the grandstand set over there about where the armory is, it was facing the east. Which was real nice using that --- it's too bad they haven't got the one down there like that, because the wind was behind you all the time, and it was cool in the afternoon, and pleasant.

And the ground was very good soil, and everything. But they moved it down there, and they bought some land down there, and put up that rodeo grounds down there. Anyway, that's when the real fair, the Harney County Fair started to really amount to something when we were getting funds from the state, who helps us put it together. Of course it took a lot of know how by the men at that time to start the thing. And a lot of them worked pretty hard and they put in a lot of time out there, the men did. I know I was just a young boy at the time, but I could see what they were doing. There was a lot of men there. There was Hotchkiss, Don Hotchkiss, and Cecil Bennett, and Morgan Timms, and you go right down the line. It was mostly gentlemen, and Nollie Reed, and Bardwell. They all worked at it there, and got the ball rolling when we really started.

Then they started to bringing in --- at first under the grandstand was where they had all their displays, the flowers and stuff. Because that was the only building they had down there. And then after three or four years or something like that, then they up and built that first exhibit building. And then they just went from there.

They'd moved down, like the racetrack, they had some old stalls that were up

there. They moved them down there, and they were terrible, but they were better than just tying your horse to a fence post, you know, your racehorse. But then later they tore them all down. It's too bad they didn't save that lumber. They could have made a fortune out of that old lumber because it was so old, you know. And, but anyway they started building some respectful barns down there. So that's about the end of the Fair Association, and up to the present day.

It's pretty nice and clean looking plant now down there. Well, when people are getting money, you know, they could do those things, you know. Like out there where the parking was, you know, it used to be a nightmare when the wind would blow, alkali dust. But since they've got the grass in there, it's pretty good.

I remember the first year they built those lagoons down there, and they hadn't put any water in them yet. I never will forget this, I went out and they was putting this saddle pads out in the paddock there for the horses. And here come a wind storm along, and I dodged in there and got down and held some things on my head and when I got up and looked up there wasn't a sole in that grandstand. (Laughter) Everybody had taken off, and the race meet was cancelled for the rest of the afternoon. But it's so funny, really, to place a lot of people in there, and that dust was just solid, you know. And to come off that, that alkali dust that come off of that lagoon they had built, you know. And to see the people there, and then get up and the horses are all gone and everybody. So they had to cancel the meet the rest of the day there. So the next day we just added more money to the purses to help the boys out. But it amused me at the time there. Just to show you how the dust can blow in Harney County.

HELEN: A real good old Harney County dust storm, huh?

PETE: Yeah, I'll say.

PAULINE: What about the old sale barn, the round sale barn? What was the history of

that building?

PETE: Well they had to have some place to exhibit their cattle, and also, you know, they have the sale of the 4-H calves. They had to have some place to exhibit these cattle and have the sales like they do right now, and they built that barn. It was kind of a --- the way they built it, it was pretty hard to --- The lumber and stuff for the building was all furnished, you know, free. But they built that there, and it was a little rough around the edges, and everything. But it worked pretty good there for a while, until the roof started to leak. Then after that it wasn't so good, but it got them by, you know, for quite a few years. I would say 20 years or better before they tore it down, and put another building in there. And ---

HELEN: I can remember selling my 4-H calves in that building.

PETE: Uh huh. That's where their 4-H calves were sold, and then they had some bull sales here. They had Hereford bull sales, and they had Angus and different breeds of stock they'd bring in here. And that's what it was used for. There was --- of course there was sheep, you know, and pigs and everything else that were brought into the sale, for sale there, you know. And it wasn't the best thing in the world, but it was the best we had and we got by with it.

And then of course they've --- now, down there they've put in places to wash the calves and things are really handy. But used to be, they just have to take them out there on the graveled road and wash them off. But they've improved down there now, until they have facilities and hydrants and everything else to was the cattle, or sheep, or whatever they are going to wash, or pigs. But when we started out it was really --- everything was small, but you know when you start out, you don't always have everything 100% class until you have been in it a few years.

And then the 4-H calves I could notice the difference. You'd go out there every year and you'd see the caves were just a little bit better than they was the year before,

you know, because they had the --- in those days they --- Oh, the different Purina and those people put out stuff that you could feed your animals and make them look better, you know. And then other children, they got, they got more interested in it and were better educated on how to take care of their animals, and so it's a pretty good deal. I like to go around and look at all the animals because you can see where those kids have put in a lot of work on those animals. And you like to see them get a little something out of it, which they do.

PAULINE: How did your dad happen to get started in racing? I know that he had a few horses that ran.

PETE: Well, to start with my grandfather loved horses --- Clemens, he used to --- In the days when he first started out, horses were a better commodity than cattle, because they were more mobile. See, you could trail a bunch of horse to Huntington, or wherever you went to a sale, and sell them, where cattle were harder to move. He run them both, and he had pretty good horses. Always had good horses, and that's where my dad, he got the fever. And so even as a boy, my father run horses down here at the --- this track over here where the armory was and also there was another race track out here where Turley's cabins, right in that area --- Jack Catterson lives.

And I remember looking back over the history; my dad had a horse called Bird that he run. And I think he run third in it, but of course he got the fever then. And then when he was able to afford it that's when he went into the race horse business, and so he had some real good horses at last, and I wish that someday I could get some as good as my father had. I'm working at it. I've got some good horses now, some good mare, and babies, and colts. I've got one promising two year old in training. Cady's are training him down at Lebanon. And I don't know whether he'll be able to run her at Burns, because they hardly have two-year-old races. But he has another horse of mine, Steel Cutter, who

went two races; he'll probably be here this year too. So, I'm now running a maternity ward over here. I've got five mares who are going to have babies, and so we're getting on the road, Betty and I are. (Laughter) But, oh well.

That's how my dad, he got the fever, and of course I had the fever too, you know. So, but I had to wait until I could afford it to go into it myself. Because you can't run a cow ranch and run race horses at the same time. Ones gonna win. You're going to loose one or the other, or maybe both of them.

PAULINE: They are both a certain amount of gamble in either one alone.

PETE: Yeah, that's right. Yeah. I remember one time Henry Slater, who was the principal up at the school, we were talking and he said, "You know Pete," he said, "we think these gamblers around town in the pool halls are big time gamblers." But he said, "They are nothing compared to the ranchers out here." Or a wheat ranch, or I mean a grain ranch, or anybody. What's the gamble you have to take to raise your crops? You put a lot of money into them and, he said, "Those are the fellows that are really the gamblers, you know." And so it's --- it's a way of life though, and I don't know whether I'd want any other kind of life myself. That's the way I think a lot of our ranchers in Harney County feel about it. Because this year, we are all kind of feeling kind of bad. It don't look very good, but like Mrs. Hanley said, "We always got by." So, maybe we will, we hope.

I feel sorry mostly for the young people that have started out and they are getting, they have their ranch on paper, and they have cattle on paper, and I just --- And it just will be suicide here if they don't get some crops to --- Because these banks are getting tough all the time with the loaning institutions, and it's not like it used to be years ago. They'd go on a man's reputation and stuff. But not any more, she's hard cold facts, and people that decide whether they will loan you any money or not, don't even know you, or see you. They just go on what collateral you have, so ---

HELEN: They are not like Hank Dickerson any more.

PETE: No, and they just --- Well they, I know my youngest son, he's in the bank at Medford. And he said that's why he would never take a chance of, if he was offered the Burns branch he said, "Dad, I just couldn't, or of course I wouldn't be happy there. Here would come in one of the boys I went to school with, wanting to borrow some money, and you'd have to turn him down, you know." But that's just the way life is. And, well that's just the way she goes.

PAULINE: Well this looks like this year is probably going to be as dry as '77, or maybe dryer. What do you think?

PETE: Well, Pauline, I don't know, it could be. And we might, now one time, I think it was in '63, we had a year like this, and I know we were going to move some cattle from out in the valley to the lower ranches down here because we felt if we didn't get that grass while it was green it was worthless. And by the time we got our horses ready to move the cattle it started in raining, and for ten days it just poured. And I never will forget my father's younger brother, Glen, he was moaning about no --- Out in Rye Grass there, he had rented a lot of land and was putting it up on the shares, in grain, planting grain. No moisture, and along about the end of ten days, he come down here one day and he was moaning because his grain was all turning yellow, too much water, so --- I don't know, damned if you do, and damned if you don't, I guess. That's the way it is here in Harney County. You never want to predict the weather here. You either haven't been here very long, or you are a damned fool, to try to predict the weather.

But, it --- I never will forget 1924, it was down by the Hines mill, they were laying track and some old boy, I can't remember his name, he said, "You know," he said, "I got, I've got a couple of kids starting in school that has never saw it rain." It was almost that bad here, you know. Just nothing, you know. No feed up in the hills --- You just wouldn't



take your cattle to the hills, I mean, there was nothing for them to eat, you know. But that was the time that all out in the valley, was open people, homesteaders to give up their land, and that was a lifesaver. And then the lake went dry, and then they raised some grass on the lake and between that, that's what --- that's what saved the people of Harney County, you know, the cattlemen. Which at that time was a great industry, and it was even --- Up until the mill came in operation in the late '20's, cattle raising was the big industry in Harney County. And Miller and Lux were the biggest hirer that kept the men working. Because the ordinary rancher could not afford a lot of help. But Miller and Lux hired a lot of men, and they were probably our main source of income for the big end of the people in Harney County at that time.

HELEN: Yeah, my dad worked for Miller and Lux for years.

PETE: Uh huh.

PAULINE: That was when Red Walter worked for Miller and Lux.

PETE: Uh huh. I never will forget your dad, Helen. He and --- your father, and oh, Pete Elmore, they --- when you worked down there, they harnessed all the horses. Those horses were all mean and run-a-way horses, you know. And they'd hook your horse up and everything and say, "Are you ready, old boy?" Then they'd hit those horses in the face, and off you'd go. And they used to go down there and work, and it was a regular city down there. There was about two or three hundred working there see. And I'd say, "Boys, don't hit them," I'd say, "they are going to run fast enough." And then you'd have a ten-foot race and go out through a sixteen-foot gate, and maybe you'd make it and maybe you wouldn't.

HELEN: Maybe you wouldn't, huh?

PETE: And oh, it was something else. But they just --- of course they were all young fellers, you know, and they would just --- they got a kick out of seeing those horses run

with the rake jockeys. But, you know, oh there was a few fellows got skinned up there, but they never had a fatal accident down there. And --- which was lucky. But they would go down to Burnside street in Portland and load up a whole bunch of winos or whatever there was and bring them all up here and put them to work, you know. I'll tell you, it was something.

PAULINE: Okay, when you say, working down there, where is down there?

PETE: Well, it's the Island Ranch.

PAULINE: The Island Ranch.

PETE: And of course they had all this land in the offer, and they'd send you out and maybe you'd be with one crew and you'd be down at Potter Swamp. And another one over in Miller Swamp, or--- or, you know, all the land, down in the hay field. Or the Big Red S, Little Red S, they'd have crews all over, you know. And we'd all get down there and work afterwards, because you could have a good time down there. You know, smoke a little bit when you were boys, but you couldn't up around your folks, you know. But we always used to like to go down there and have --- Well there was a lot of men there, you know.

And everybody they --- there was no --- See now the buckaroos and the steady employees, they had a place to stay. But all them other people did was went out under a shock of hay, that's where you slept, you know. And, but they fed good, they had good cooks. They were Chinese cooks at that time. It was a --- You had a lot of fun down there. You'd meet a lot of people, and I know you'd meet people that later were very good friends of yours that came in here, but they stayed here because they liked the country, you know. I guess the sagebrush, got the smell of sagebrush and thought they liked it.

But it was quite a big place down there, the Island Ranch. They used to bring stuff

in there; they'd freight it in there. They had one whole crew, all they did was put machinery together, put mowing machines together. And manufacture hay bucks, those big rudder bucks. They were kept busy making new ones. And rakes, they put rakes together. And even when they sold out they still had a whole wagon shed there full of rakes and, you know, mowing machines that run with horses. They had never been uncrated, you know.

Of course he was a big operator, you know. He had land from the Canadian border to the Mexican border, and they could stay --- They always boasted that you could stay in a Company Ranch every night. And if you just looked down at the different place at the right --- Or you could drive a herd of cattle one day, just about a days drive to the next one, see. And all the way into Winnemucca. And --- where they used to ship the cattle out of in this country, before they got the Union Pacific in here.

PAULINE: Well your grandmother was the one who drove the golden spike.

PETE: Yeah, that's right.

PAULINE: Into the --- when they brought the railroad into Burns?

PETE: Uh huh. Yes, my Grandmother Clemens. In the --- where it was is about where the Union Oil Bulk Station is down there where, oh, what's his name, Bennett.

HELEN: Stan Bennett.

PETE: Stan Bennett, right there. That was approximately the place, right along in there, where she drove the golden spike. That was in 1924.

PAULINE: Do you remember that day?

PETE: Oh, yes. (Laughter)

PAULINE: Tell us about it.

PETE: Well, I'll tell you. I'd always wanted a pair of Levis, and in those days little fellows, little boys couldn't get overalls, you know. Bib, you had to use bibs, you couldn't wear it

like you do the waste overalls. And Ben Brown sent to San Francisco and got me a pair. And he kind of liked me and he gave me that. So that same day my mother got me a new pair of Indian gloves. And I was proud, and I'm right in there, and I've got a shade over my eyes, you know, and I never will forget that day. And my grandmother was quite displeased because I didn't have a suit on. And my other cousin, that was Glen's oldest boy, who later got killed in an accident, he was younger than I, but he had a little pair of knee pants on, and a shirt. But I got there front row center with my gloves on and everything. I was clean, I had the brand new, and I was proud of those Levis, you know. But my Grandmother thought I should have been dressed in a suit, you know. And ---

PAULINE: You were about --- how old were you, about 10, 11?

PETE: Well, let's see I was, yeah, I was about 10 or 11, because that fall I went into the 8th grade. And we were building this house at the time here. And at that time, while this house was being built, you see, Arthur and Frankie Turner were in the other house over there, they had the place leased. And we were living in a house down on Riverside Drive, down there, until we got this house completed that fall. And it was about Christmas before we got into this house.

But, oh there was quite a crowd there. I look at that picture, and there was an awful lot of people in that picture that are not here today. Oh, there was a lot of --- All the boys that I went with, I remember Ray Voegtly he had a straw hat on, which he was the only one in Harney County that had one, I'll tell you. But, he was standing there with his straw hat on, you know. There was other different people around here that --- Well, it was quite a ceremony, because bringing this into Harney County, you know. So there was quite a crowd there at the time.

PAULINE: Well people had looked forward to getting a railroad in here for a lot of years. In going back through the old newspapers of 1887 and 1888, they were talking about the

railroad coming then. And that was, well, that would have been --- 10, it would be 30, almost 35 years later before they finally got a railroad.

PETE: Well, you see ---

PAULINE: And then it came from a different direction than they had anticipated.

PETE: Well now you see the way it was, the railroad was supposed to come into Burns, and go from here over to Adel, that's over there, and connect with the Southern Pacific. And for years and years, they --- it was either Union Pacific, or the Southern Pacific where they were supposed to build it. And they kept stalling and stalling, and finally they got the Interstate Commerce Commission to let them get off the hook. Because they, you see, in those days they would give them land and that's the way they colonized the country, you see. So it was way in, almost 1930 before they got off the hook on that. So if they had finished that, we would have had a road from Ontario, from the main line out there, the Union Pacific, straight through to Adel over there by Bend, which would have connected with the Southern Pacific. But the drought came on and they had a depression there in the '20's, and the desert, the high desert between here and Burns just didn't colonize, so that's what happened. So that's why we didn't get that railroad straight through, which was supposed to have been built. And some way or another they were able to get out of it, you know.

PAULINE: Well I'm about to the end of my tape. I don't know how much tape you have left, Helen. Is there any other questions that we should ask about the fair before we come to an end here?

HELEN: I can't think of anything more, can you Pete? Can you think of anything that we haven't covered about the fair?

PETE: Well, no. I think you have pretty well covered it, because we ---

HELEN: I know last year you had --- you raced what, two horses of your own?

PETE: Yes.

HELEN: They won didn't they?

PETE: Yeah.

PAULINE: That's the nice kind of race to run.

HELEN: That's the kind of races to run.

PETE: Uh huh. I retired one of them, Shy of Cash. The year before that, he won the Burns Mile, and the other horse won the Red S. But he's retired. But Steel Cutter, I didn't run Shy of Cash last year, the year before that he run. But last year Steel Cutter won two for me. He run the first and the second day, and so it's always kind of nice to have a horse.

HELEN: Yeah, and especially when you are at home.

PETE: Yeah. (Laughter) Yeah, if he wins.

PAULINE: Well Pete, I really appreciate your taking time to do this today, and I'd like to come back again and get you to talk some more for the Oral History. We've talked about making a date for years now, and haven't got the job done.

PETE: Well I'll tell you, when I was just a little boy, a lot of people look at me and don't believe it. But I came from Pendleton to Burns in a stagecoach when I was 2 years old. And I never will forget that. My grandmother was telling me about it, she said, she come over along with my mother. And it was bitter cold, it was in the winter, and I remember they got to, my grandmother said they got to Seneca and they figured it was about 40 below zero, and they stopped at Southworth's, was a depot. So my mother and grandfather got out with me, and they started in towards the house and a fellow come and he said, "My god, don't let that, those two women and that child get in, we just took a guy out of here with smallpox." So they loaded them back in and took them down to Lincoln's, which was right where that, you know, that store there that burnt down, well Lincoln's lived

there. So they stayed there that night. And Mother said she was never so glad to see a stove in her life, as that. And so the next morning they waited until about 10 o'clock, and they warmed up the brick and --- You know, in those days they had charcoal or they'd wrap a brick in paper, and that's how you kept your feet warm, you know.

So finally they went from there to Silvies, and then they changed teams, and went up to where the Purdy house was, and that's where those people that owned the Imperial Hotel in Portland, they had a stage stop there. So they took out another pair of horses, and my mother said the snow was deep. They got there and then they went up to Cold Springs, up there where the Widow Griever, up there, have you ever been up there at all? Well, they had another station there that they used in the wintertime, because they had to change horses so often because of the snow. And then they came on into Burns, and instead of coming right into Burns; they just took the folks right over to my grandparent's place. They were accommodating in those days, you know. So they got out and went in and they stayed with my Grandmother Clemens till Dad come and got them.

But I remember my mother said that was a heck of a trip. And then I also went around to Juntura. We'd go to Drewsey, and you'd stay all night in Drewsey, and then you'd go on into Juntura, you'd stay there all night, and at that time the train just went to Juntura. And you'd take the train out the next day to Ontario. So it took about three days to get from Burns to Ontario in those days. And it was almost impossible to --- unless you wanted to go to Canyon City, and then go on up to Prairie, and take the narrow gauge over to Baker. That was quite a deal. You'd go back and forth up a mountain there until you, that was when they ---

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PETE: ... So we'd all get in there with the bear blanket all over. The poor driver was the

only one, he had to take it just like ---

HELEN: He had to get out in the cold.

PETE: But we got by. And it might be 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning when we'd come home from the dance, you know, but everybody --- And they'd put all the kids on the bed to sleep, you know, in the bedroom, you know. And people had a good time in those days. Good entertainment, and the music wasn't maybe like some big orchestra, but it was good. They danced to it, had an accordion and a fiddle, and a piano sometimes. But the people really enjoyed themselves, and had a good time. They'd have a big supper, you know, about midnight. Then they'd dance some more, and the men would spike the coffee. They had several older ladies here were death on liquor, so they would take and spike the coffee. And my father said, "Pretty soon those little girls, they'd get all ---" They'd have three or four cups of coffee, and they were having a good time, you know. They didn't realize they were drinking. The coffee, they used to make it in a big tub, you know. And the boiler tub, they put the copper, you know, they put the lid over the top of it and they'd make the coffee that way. And they used to have a lot of fun with all these, especially these grandmothers here that were death on drinking. So here they were ---

HELEN: Was one of them my grandmother? She was sure death on drinking.

PETE: Yeah, she was, yeah.

HELEN: She was death on that.

PETE: Yeah, your Grandmother Sizemore, you're talking about, aren't you? Oh, yeah.

HELEN: Yeah, she was death on that.

PETE: Well then there was Grandma Cowing, and Grandma Whiting, and oh there was several of them around there, you know. And their husband would like to have a --- And they'd see one of them getting to feeling good, they'd grab them by the ear and make him go home. So --- Oh, we had good times in those days regardless of that.



Whenever you'd build a new barn, everybody had a barn dance. I remember when my dad built this barn over here in 1916, before you ever had put any hay or anything in it; you had a big barn dance. And then out there where Warren Raymond lives, they had a big barn dance, and then the Dickenson place out there where Grandma Dickenson lived, you know that place? Where Stafford has it now, I remember they had a big dance there. And I remember one time Glen, when he built that barn out where Thad Geer, I was away at college at the time. It was cold out there, and they had an upstairs there, you know, colder than the devil, you know, but everybody had a good time though.

HELEN: They had to initiate the barns.

PETE: Oh yes. You always had --- You always had a barn dance. You wouldn't dare build a barn without --- By the time we built this racehorse barn over here, well it wasn't the fad anymore. What ruined it, there was so many people, oh young fellows that come from town out, and they'd start getting into fights. And then a lot of them would come out and go --- the people, they wouldn't bring anything, and everybody else would bring sandwiches and coffee, and stuff, you know. But the same thing happened to your Pioneer Reunion. My Grandmother Clemens, why she'd work for a week getting a big spread to put on the tables. Because everyone, each took pride in what they brought, you know. But it got to the point by the time you got to eat, everything was gone. These free loaders around town, wouldn't bring anything, just stop and help themselves, and so finally it just got to the point where families went off together, you know.

HELEN: I remember when I was a kid, up there on the courthouse lawn you just, they cooked for days, and then just go in there and a big potluck.

PETE: And then after all the white people got through, the Indians would take hold. And boy now I'll tell you there wasn't anything left when they got through. Because poor things, they didn't have any place to --- I remember the first time I really saw the Indians,

we went up there and they were living --- It wasn't where they are now, or it wasn't where the new cemetery is. It wasn't there either, they were in another place. And they were in piano boxes, and old pieces of tin put together. They had no money, and I know there was three or four of those fellows that would come down and --- Of course everybody in those days, you raised your own flour, you know. They'd plant Turkey red wheat and then take it up to the gristmill and they'd either take it on the shares or they paid so much a pound, whatever it was. And by golly they'd come down here and they'd get bacon and flour from my father. They'd always come back in haying though and work it out. The poor things they didn't have any money, you know.

HELEN: Didn't have any money.

PETE: You see the reason, they were considered renegades. Because when they left that agency ranch over there where the Beulah Reservoir is right now, they were outlawed. And so until about 10 or 15 years ago, when an omen finally got them back their tribal status. And that's why the Indians here for along time couldn't get any help. Now they get lots of help, because they're a federated tribe, you see. But before that they --- And the Warm Springs people wouldn't give them much. Why should they give to them? Also your Pendleton Indians, your Umatilla's. I remember they --- there was a young squaw out there, she took about a whole carload of them over there to Pendleton to see the doctor. They had that trachoma, you know, whatever it is with their eyes. And she got the poor things taken care of.

So finally there was a group went over to Pendleton and they got on them over there and they got enough tents out of them, where the new cemetery is been there. That's right up there, you know, high and dry where the wind whipped. The poor things, at least they had tents.

HELEN: Uh huh.

PETE: And then along about in the early '30's they moved back up there. And they finally built them some houses up there in the old camp. And they were just shells, is all they were, but anyway they was better than being out in the open. So the poor things, that was the only help they had, you know. And I remember when they used to all sit in front of the stores on their haunches, you know, and you could smell one of them 20 feet away, you know. Poor things, you know. And --- but nowadays they have certainly improved a lot since they were able to give them something to work with, you know, poor things, you know. But it was bad in those days.

PAULINE: There are some now that are doing very, very well indeed. They have responsible jobs with the forest service and other places.

PETE: Oh yeah. Uh huh. Well, there's ---

PAULINE: And are taking pride, a lot of pride in their ---

PETE: Well there's different, different squaws. Now Rena Beers, she's done a lot for her people. And also one of the Barney girls, she's married to Alfred Kennedy. She has worked a lot of it. And there's other ladies up there too. Actually that reservation right now is being operated more by the women than with men.

HELEN: Uh huh.

PETE: And so it --- They've come a long ways in my time. I can just see it, because they were a pretty sorry lot when I was a little boy here. And --- but they are pretty good people if they just --- were never given a chance, you know.

HELEN: They've cleaned up that Indian Reservation a lot since I was a child.

PETE: Uh huh. Well, they get them paint to paint their houses now. They have a little pride; they want to have something nice. And I know they can get money pretty easily right now. And --- I know ---

HELEN: I used to go over and play with the Indian agent's daughter, and they have

cleaned it up quite a bit since then.

PETE: Now in Pendleton there they built a big school out there on the Agency Ranch. And I know they --- The Indians were going to school there, but the agents, I mean he sent his son and daughter into Saint Joseph's Academy. I think part of the Indians --- Of course those Indians over there had a chance to be ahead of these because they had 50 years start on them, you know. And they had that valuable land over there, which they've procured quite a bit of money for, it was something. But they've come a long ways here just this ... I think, in my estimation.

HELEN: Yeah.

PAULINE: You --- this right where we are here right now is inside the city limits of Burns.

PETE: Yes, this ---

PAULINE: Where does the city limits --- does it include all of your place in here?

PETE: Well, I've got about a 160 acres of the 400 in the city limits. And it goes back over here to where --- You know where, lover's lane, or what they used to call lover's lane, you'd come out just the other side of the veterinary clinic.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

PETE: Well it goes out there in the field and it comes straight across, and it goes down, you know, where the Wolverine is? That's the city limits there, too. And it comes out to the --- This ranch originally, there was a Captain at Camp Harney filed on it, or got it some way or another, and then he in turn sold it to Pete French. Well Pete French was going to bring his socialite wife up here from San Francisco, and build a big home here. Well, of course he never got her up here. They were divorced before --- She never did come. Someone said she was up here, but my grandmother said she was never here. And so he in turn traded it to an old bachelor called McMinemy (sp.?) for a lot of land adjacent to the P Ranch. And so this McMinemy he was a great --- he lived over in the

field there close to, over there close to where Arthur Turners, the --- Well, where Van Decker's is right now. And we lived there, but anyway he lived there too. So one, he used to go to town and get inebriated, and so up there by the crossing, you know, the cattle crossing, well there was a gate there at that time and they found him in the ditch there one morning, and they don't know whether he either drowned or had a heart attack. And so that's when my folks procured the place. They bought it, I think there was better than --- I've looked at the deed here about six months ago, and there was about thirty heirs on this. He was a bachelor, and all these --- They were from back in Kansas and all the way in there. It took forever to get all the quick claims on that thing. But finally the folks did, but that's where this ranch --- Originally that was Pete French's. If everything had been fine, he'd have built a big home here for her.

PAULINE: So that, and you've been Mayor of Burns at least once.

PETE: Yeah, that was enough. (Laughter) Yeah, I was on the council four years, and I enjoyed it but I wouldn't want to do it again. It's a very thankless job. You know the Mayor, it is the funniest thing, I never had to vote or break a tie on anything as long as I was Mayor. I had a very good council, but I got all the blame, you know. The Mayor gets all the blame, he's got to take the guff, you know. But anyway, it was quite an experience. I was on the council four years, and then of course the Mayor, his term is two years. They wanted me to run again, but I wouldn't go to

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PAULINE: I thought you were Mayor longer than that. Just for two years?

PETE: No, no, two years.

PAULINE: One term.

PETE: I could have had it another term, I think at least, if I had wanted it. But I --- Well, it tied me down. I had to be here, because you had to be there at those meetings,

otherwise you'd get the blame for them anyway, see, so --- It was always easy if you were kind of ... spot. They'd say, "Well, go see the Mayor." And, but anyway, I'll tell you it was something.

The judge, the present Judge White, he handed me a really hot potato on this paving. And so, I'd no more than got into office and they had a big meeting, and there was so many we had to go to the grade school to have the meeting. And they were going to do this, and I said, "Now, it has to be figured on the lineal foot." And I said, "It's to the owners. If you've got 50 feet, you've got so much to say, and if a fellows got a 100, he's got twice the say that you have." And of course they voted it down, which was fine. So then these people over here in the valley, or what's it? Pleasant View, or anyway over here by the Armory, all in there, that end of town, they stood up and said, "Well, now if these people," there was a hundred and some thousand, and if we didn't use it that year the state was going to take it back. So Avel Diaz, and a few of them got up and said, "Well, if those people don't want the money over there, how about us? "Well," I said, "you'll have to get petitions and sign it." So they had Muck Blackburn and they got --- and he misrepresented some of the people. But anyway, we got it paved. And oh gosh, I'll tell you

--- More people later, even people three or four months ago a lady said to me, "I'm so glad that you got that paved." She said, "I look down the streets and it looked like nothing but a shack town down there before they put that paving in, and now it's real nice down there, you know." So I kept telling these people, I said, "You wait until you've had it a few years," and I said, "you have been wading in mud up to your knees down there," and I said, "I think you'll appreciate this." Which now they do, you know.

PAULINE: It's hard to imagine those streets not paved, isn't it?

PETE: Uh huh. But I had a real good council and we would decide something and I

never once had to vote off a tie. And only once did I have one member that wouldn't vote on something. He wanted to sit on the fence, and I wouldn't let him do it. Because when you call for a vote, they've either got to say yes --- yea or no, one or the other. And he wanted --- So I just turned to the recorder and said, "We'll just register his vote as a no, and a nay," but that was the only time. And he was a fellow that it didn't matter what board he was on, high school, grade school, he was always sitting on the fence, you know. But I wouldn't let him sit on the fence there because --- But the rest of them went for it, you know. Except for three, if it's a tie, then the Mayor votes it off, you know. But I guess it's been a cyclone since then. I don't --- They have some real, they had one last week up there, I guess. Did you go to that Pauline?

PAULINE: No, I wasn't at that one.

PETE: I guess they had a real one up there. And --- But it was a good experience. But I thought 6 years was enough to give to the city. I tried; I worked awfully hard to get them that \$700,000 loan. It was a 100% participation so that's how they dug those new wells and put all that new pipe in, was that \$700,000 that Kathy Wenick was a recorder, and this fellow from Bend who was an engineer, and myself. We worked a lot of nights getting that set up, and we finally got it. The same time we got it though, the Indians got a \$700,000 loan too. All they have to do is ask for money, and they'll --- I guess they are trying to make it up to them. It's easier for them to get money, but anybody else; it isn't very easy any more.

But anyway, we cleaned up city that used to be just a regular dust storm, you know, down here. And I had a lady that, oh, she was death against putting the pavement in there. And I was coming up to the lower place, come out this way and I saw the dust, and I come through it and the town that was paved, there was no dust at all. And down here, right through here you couldn't even see. So I made it a point and I said, "Now

come around here I want to show you something." "What do you want to show me?" And I said, "Come out here." I said, "You see that dust storm down there?" "Yeah." I said, "You don't have one here, have you?" She had to say yes, but she didn't want to. (Laughter) And I said, "See, your pavement, you know." "Oh," she said, "in six months or a year it'll all be back, it'll just be gravel, all the streets." And I'll tell you ---

But every time you ever did any paving, they had a regular revolution here. Up on the hill when they had that, and then when we paved Main Street, you know, the side streets, by gosh you should have saw the people buck it.

PAULINE: Really? I've heard so many of the people that I've interviewed, the older ladies especially, talking about walking down the board walks and wading the mud at the intersections, you'd think that they would have been --- welcomed it with open arms.

PETE: Yeah, they had planks across the road, you know. And the funniest thing, Pauline, up on the corner behind Penney's, up there on that other corner you remember where --- Frank Desllets is there now. Well, they had a cleaning establishment up there and there was a fellow by the name of Roundsville. Well he run the Grand Hotel, was right there where Sprouse Reitz are now, there was a two story building, it burned down. And he was always going along, and looking around, look around. And he dressed --- he had pretty fancy pants. So he had been up there, and he had four or five pair of pants, coming down, and he was turning around and looking and the --- At that time, there at Penney's the sidewalk was always that much higher from the --- and then it was all water, mud in there. Old Willis Roundsville, he walked right in off there with all his good clothes. (Laughter) And everybody just roared. I didn't see it, but gosh he got up and oh mad, his hat and every-thing else, and he grabbed it up and right back up there to the street he went to the cleaners again. I guess it ruined all those four or five pair of --- And he had nice clothes too.



Oh, we had --- And in the center of each intersection there was a well. All up and down Main Street. Did you know that?

PAULINE: I knew that, but tell us about it.

PETE: Well they had a, right there they had a lid. And there was about an 8-inch, 8 or 10-inch pipe, and they had a lid they could

--- They'd take and put a snap on it so you couldn't get it open, you know, and they later had to put padlocks on them because people, kids were opening them and throwing stuff down there. They'd run the hose down there and then they'd get the cart, you know, and that's the way they --- Before they got a fire engine, well even after they got the fire engine, they'd have a pump on the fire engine and they'd put it there, but ... off some place out there, there was nothing they could do. You know, we didn't have any water system or anything. But as soon as they put the water and sewer in, in 1928, well they were able to discard those. They didn't discard them, they just, when they paved it they just paved over the top of them.

But starting up at the Tonawama building up there, by Pulliam's, each block down to the end of Main Street is a well, all the way through. Yeah, they'd get on the pump.

I remember when I was just a little boy, when they had that big fire that burned some of the stuff on Main Street. There was a couple --- the men would just work down there and they would throw water on them, on pumping, you know. Everybody, all the men, you could sit back and say, "Well, I don't want to do it." They'd put you to work. And there was a --- remember that time we were standing over there by Nyleen's, well not where they are now, but the old Nyleen's store, that's when that Elkhorn and all that burned down there, plus the French Hotel and all that stuff. And these two salesmen were just looking. So they said, "Well come on and get to work here. Take your coats off and get to work." And they said, "We don't intend to." And they said, "Oh yes, you will."

And boy they put them to work. Made them --- get down there and get --- because the people just --- The men would just faint, and they'd come and just throw a bucket of water on them to revive them, and away they'd go again, you know. But that's all they had, you know. And the only reason the United States Bank didn't burn, they had a sod roof.

PAULINE: A sod roof?

PETE: A sod roof. And see it started up there, over there where the TV place is, at the Red Front barn was there, and on this corner by the Arrowhead was the White Front Livery Stable. Next to the livery stable was the French Hotel, and then there was a grocery store and other stuff on it. I can't remember those exactly. And then when the fire had come, it jumped over, of course, it couldn't burn the bank building because it was stone and a sod roof. It jumped over then and it got a hold of the Elkhorn and then it took that whole block. But they finally got it stopped down there. They didn't get it across the street where Jordan's were. But it stopped it there, but it was a bad one. Well that's all they had to fight with, you know, and just that pump just squirting water, you know. You might as well --- (Laughter) But that was all they had, you know.

HELEN: Had to fight with what they had.

PETE: Yeah.

PAULINE: So would you have two men on a pump? Pumping that or what?

PETE: Oh no, they had eight or ten on each side.

PAULINE: Eight or ten on each side of the ---

PETE: Of the thing to run it up and down, you see. They'd go up and down. One would go up and the other would come down, see.

PAULINE: Kind of like a teeter totter?

PETE: Yeah. Just like this see, and it had a pump on there.

PAULINE: And then a hose on the pump?

PETE: Uh huh. And they just, that was the best they had, see. There was no reservoir, just the water as they had it there. And what they generally would try to do was they would try to save the buildings that weren't on fire yet. And sometimes if the wind was blowing they couldn't stop it. That was just like with that Arrowhead building, I got up on top of my building there and was watching the fire, and all at once that's when that, in the center they had this wood, see. The end and sides were --- That gas and stuff in there would boom and it threw that windows and glass and everything went clear over almost to Pulliam's over there. And I was standing over there, and gee whiz, here come the fire. So I raced down there and was trying to get into the house, there was so much smoke they couldn't get out. I hollered at Avel, and I said, "You can't save that building," I said, "get up here and save mine." And they got up there and ... till Hines, they stopped their truck over there by the Vogue and put a line over there and they had an awful good pump on there and they saved my building.

PAULINE: And your building is the one that Body Wise is in, and Sears, and which was right next door to the Arrowhead?

PETE: Yeah. I sold that to Earl McGee there. But if it hadn't been for, finally when Hines come up, when they come up over the front there, and they had that big, those big spray pumps and they stopped it. And all at once it blew out on the other side and cracked some of the windows over there on the Bank. And the fire, and then the winds changed and went, it came from the North to the South, see. And it was just opposite from what it was before. And with that help then they were able to --- Oh, there was just about a third, it was burning the tarpaper on the roof. But they got it out. So it didn't, only about half of it. But I had --- there was glass, and wood, well it was just a regular bomb, you know. Just boom, that's the way it went. I'm glad I wasn't standing over there. It would probably have killed me if I'd have been over there. But I was just over there as you come up on

the ladder, see. And that was all stone, so it didn't blow out. But I'll tell you that was some fire.

PAULINE: Well, it was awesome. I took pictures of most of it. And I'd had to go home to get my camera. I was in town when it broke out, and I went home and got my camera, and you could see the flames from home. And I guess, I talked to people later, people clear across the valley could see the flames and smoke.

PETE: I'll tell you when that building on the second or third story, there was a bedspread, a red one, and when that blew out, it threw it clear over there to the Burns Department Store's front door. Yeah, it was a good one. Yeah, it was quite a deal.

I was going to tell you, I've got some pictures, I'd have to look them up of that fire, that what I was telling you about when all the horses burned up. I've got a whole picture of that showing some of the leading citizens of Burns standing back behind there. There was Archie McGowan, and different ones. All showing the horses, they were just, you could see the horses laying there. They had been burnt, you know.

PAULINE: Uh huh. I would really be interested in looking at them. We're putting together that --- it's not going to be a big book, it's just going to be really a souvenir book. But we want to get a lot of history into it for the Centennial, and those sound like they'd be really --

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PETE: Well, you know, I've got a picture of that and also a picture where they first built the Burns City Hall. It's all by itself there, and big rock all around it. And ---

PAULINE: That's where Cramer's is now?

PETE: Pardon?

PAULINE: Where Cramer is now?

PETE: Uh huh. I've got a picture of that. And then I've got some other pictures too. But did you know that the original main street of Burns was on Alder?

PAULINE: No, I didn't know that.

PETE: Wally, Wally (Welcome) looked that up.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

PETE: And then they moved on to the present Main Street, or Broadway. But originally the main drag was on Alder Street.

PAULINE: Well that sort of makes sense, now that you mention it. When you look at the -  
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HELEN: Which one's Alder Street?

PETE: This side where the old Trailways Bus Depot is there. You know that street there?

BETTY CLEMENS: The first street off of main street.

PAULINE: When you look at some of the old houses that are built along there, that makes sense, doesn't it?

PETE: Uh huh. No, that was the main street before the other one. And then of course those fellows would get competitive and they'd build one in another other place, see, trying to draw the trade over there. So eventually it moved on to the present Broadway. But originally the main street was where Alder Street was.

And Wally did quite a bit of research on a lot of that stuff. A lot of these --- Wally --- I had contact with people. A lot of the characters around here, a lot more than Wally, because we even had some of them work for us, you know. And that's where you really got to know these people, you know. Because they'd tell you things that happen. And I know Johnny Crow's dad, Dave Crow, he --- In around there where those old boys would move to town, just wanted to be buckaroos, you know. And so they would come and help us move cattle, you know. And they knew where to take that cow just as well as you did. And lots of times when he was haying, Dad would get those old boys like that that would just dearly love to --- They had their horses here in town and they'd pick up a few bucks,

you know, working like that. And they would come, and I would ride on --- I was great on history, I loved history, and I would quiz them just like I quizzed my grandmother on all the Indian Wars and stuff. And just like you said about Pete French, he said, "In a lot of ways, he was a wonderful man when he came into Burns, but down around the lake and in there, he was ruthless, like all cattle barons are." And, but she said he was a little man, he only weighed about a 125 pounds, and he was only about five foot two. And he'd ride up to, well that man that killed him, he was a big six footer. He rode up to him two or three times, and he'd take his quirk and just work him over, horseback. Well this fellow was afraid to do anything; there was about 15 of those Mexican vaqueros there that would just as soon kill you as look at you. And you could see why, because when they tried the guy he was turned loose, you remember.

PAULINE: Well the transcript describes the bruises and contusions that he had.

PETE: Yeah. And my grandmother said he was always very wonderful to all those people out there, but as long as you didn't get in his hair. But boy, if you did! And he would come in, now Grover Jameson told me that he would always leave his horse there at the White Front Livery Stable. That was where the Arrowhead was at. And the kids would hear that Pete French had come to town, and they would always gather there because he would take maybe ten or fifteen silver dollars and throw them at the kids, you know. And Grover said you always --- They always said, "Pete French is in town, or has come to town." And he said, Grover was just a little boy, you know, and he said we would run there and get the coins, you know. And he said sometimes he would throw dollars, or half dollars, and just for the kids, you know.

And he was a --- They claimed that at that time he was quite sweet on Rose Howser, who was Darrell Howser's mother. That was before she was married. But then -- he was quite a ladies man, I guess, Pete French was from what I understand.

HELEN: I've always heard the rumor that Nellie Miller was --- is it Nellie?

PETE: Yeah. I was just going to tell you that.

HELEN: Was his illegitimate daughter.

PETE: Yeah. My grandmother, my grandmother didn't tell me, but she told my folks that Nellie Miller, that she thought Nellie Miller was his illegitimate daughter.

HELEN: That's what I've always heard.

PAULINE: Well what was Nellie's name before she was Miller then?

PETE: I can't think of it. I know it just as well as I know my own name too. Ask Beulah, ask Beulah Clemens, she'd know. (Laughter)

HELEN: I can't think of it either, and I know it too.

PETE: I know just as well as I'm sitting here too.

PAULINE: Now Beulah and Glen told me some good stories, all right. (Laughter)

PETE: Oh yeah, they could tell you some good ones. I'll never will forget one time after they had moved into town here, that was about the time that Newt Hotchkiss, you know, had started to taking his exercises, you know, walking. I know the first time he was coming out of the city hall; he was coming down there almost on the run. And I said, "What --- I wonder what the excitement is, where's Newt going?" And they said, "Oh, that's the way he comes by here every day." But anyway, I was down to Aunt Beulah's and Uncle Glen's, and so Aunt Beulah said, "Come here, I want to show you something." It had been raining, and he had these garages there, he had so many trips around that ... was a mile I guess. And Beulah said, "The first time I saw that, I didn't know what was going on." So she said, "I called up Jessie and asked her what was the matter with Newt?" "Well," she said, "he's just taking his exercise, and he don't want to get wet." (Laughter) But they, that Beulah will tell you some good stories, you know, that --- about different things that happened around here, you know. Get them going, and they'd just

keep you entertained all evening.

PAULINE: Well I --- some of the stories that I laughed the most about, I think were, she was telling about when they used the hearse for an ambulance and other things.  
(Laughter)

BETTY: Well that's very modern. Because when I came here, they didn't even have an ambulance. They brought them in on a --- in the back end of a pickup.

PETE: The funniest thing, Clevenger, he was a --- he had a furniture store in there where the, oh what's her name, the French gal?

HELEN: Micheline's.

PETE: Micheline's, there in the, the Odd Fellows building. And anyway he had his, that was his mortuary in the back end. And so he had to go down to Portland to buy caskets or something, and was gone. And he lived up there just across from the Catholic Church, that house on the corner, that was the Clevenger house. He built it; he had a big barn there. And of course everybody had a cow, you know, and he milked, and he had a couple. And so Gary, that was his boy, and he milked the cows and then he had to deliver the milk around while pop went to Portland. He used the hearse to deliver the milk. (Laughter)

So everything was fine. That Saturday night they got in and the boys got them some booze and they got drunk, and they rolled that thing. And it was all wood, see, and it just broke up like an apple box, you know. And poor Clevenger come back and his hearse was all-broke to pieces. And before he could get another one they had to just take and they hired Mr. Skiens and his little, his little --- he used to go around and deliver groceries and stuff from all the stores. He lived, Skiens lived down there next to, oh, the other side of Earl Browning's, in there. And that's where ... and all those boys were raised. And Poleman Skiens, and he had to take it until he got another hearse made. But



old Gary didn't get to fool around with the hearse anymore after that happened.

(Laughter)

Oh, I'll tell you there was some characters in this town. And just imagine delivering milk in a hearse, you know. And it was grey, you know, and a lot of fancy on the outside, was fancy woodwork and stuff, you know.

But I never will forget I went in, and I was just a little tyke, so my mother went in there to look at some furniture, and like a kid, you know, I'd mosey around. And in the meanwhile, there had been an old homesteader out there on, out there by Wagontire someplace, and they found him dead. Bitter cold, and they brought him into Burns, put him back there on a slab, you know. And so being a kid, I walked back in there and I looked back in there and I saw that fellow there, and pretty soon an arm raised, you know.

(Laughter) And I come running up to my mother and I said, "There's a man back there," I said, "and he is supposed to be dead and he's raising his arm." And so Clevenger said, "Well that happens all the time. With the muscular reaction, when they thaw out." See, they was thawing him out. But anyway, my mother said, "You keep your nose in, don't you go in those places."

HELEN: Well that would be scary.

PETE: Yeah. But I'll tell you, that was quite a thing. You know what, what I wished they would have changed that, or kept the name of Tonawama on that building up there, instead of calling it what they did, you know. Because, you know, they fixed all that siding on there real nice, you know, it looks real nice. It looked like the devil there for a while.

PAULINE: Oh, the Burnstowne Apartments?

PETE: Yeah, uh huh. It's too bad they just couldn't keep the name of Tonawama, 'cause

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HELEN: Well that's what it was known as all along.

PETE: Uh huh. Anybody ask me, and I say, "Well it's up there in the Tonawama Building." "Well, where's that at?" "Well," I said, "it's up there across from Pulliam's." And no there's just --- And for years, you know, there I might not know what streets somebody is on, but I could tell them how to get to that house, you know. Oh, I'll have a name, you know, and ---

HELEN: I still can't. I still don't know the streets in Burns.

PETE: Somebody's ---

HELEN: If you can tell me who you live by, I can tell you how to get there.

PAULINE: Yeah.

PETE: Uh huh.

BETTY: Well I don't even know why they started, you know, it's Madison and Monroe, Monroe and Madison and on up. And then all of a sudden it's A, B, C, further up.

PETE: Uh huh. Well, they started up to Washington Street, and they started coming this way with the presidents. And just there on the Burns city limits, that's Grant, that's Grant Avenue. And I remember when Sandy Hughet got petitions and got it all closed. I wasn't going to let him close Grant, because we needed an outlet to go through on a straight street. And then he said, "Well," he said, "if you need it," he said, "we'll put a gate in there and you can always use it." So it was okay. And finally we went this other way. But, you know, it used to be when you would drive cattle every way, that was a good way to come in.

But no, I saw this town --- I remember down there where Copeland's is, that was the end of Main Street. All that back out in there was Voegtly's cow pasture. And then right there where the Shell Station, Pearl Hagey's father lived there. And then across on the other side there was a --- it was a hospital at one time, a little hospital they had there. And then over there where the Texaco was, there, that belonged to Lou Reed, you

remember her, don't you?

HELEN: Uh huh.

PETE: That's where she was born. And it belonged to Red Cawfield, her father was Red Cawfield. See, she wasn't Teddy and Julia's, she was his stepdaughter. And then another place, then over on the other corner, that was --- I forget who was there, but it burned down. And then you went down there and of course there was a shingle house over there back behind where the cleaning establishment is, you know. And then over there where the Shell Station, that was a livery stable too. Then next door there they had a business college. I know my father was going there, and they were upstairs, and they could look out there and they were breaking horses for the Spanish American War. So finally they come back the next day and the man that, the boss there at the business college had taken Bon-Ami and painted the window so they couldn't look out, see, because they weren't doing their work, you know. (Laughter) They were watching them fellows ride broncos, you know. There was a lot of history up through that, and down that town.

PAULINE: Well every house had a windmill in the backyard.

PETE: Yeah, yeah. Up on the hill there everybody had a windmill, you know, barn. Down there where Hotchkiss had a house down there across from the Meeder place, well Leonard's had a barn too. And then there was some boys here in the summertime, they made the rounds, they'd go up one street and down the other, and pick up all the cows and they'd take them up to Pleasant Valley up there, and free grazing, you know. And then at night they'd bring them back and they'd stop and open the gate. Them old cows knew where they belonged, and they'd let them in, and then the next morning they'd pick them up. That's the way they --- There was a lot of dairy cows in town. You'd see them going across Washington Street up, and nobody paid any attention. Pretty soon here

they'd come down another street, you know. And they'd get them all and then they'd take them up there horseback. And the Reed boys, Forey Reed and Lee Reed, they had that business one year I remember, when they were just young fellows. But here they'd come with the milk cows, you know, all over town.

PAULINE: Pick up some spare cash like you would with a paper route.

PETE: Uh huh. Yeah, that was it.

PAULINE: That was the diary cow route.

PETE: And then during Halloween they let all the cows out. Oh, I'll tell you, this was quite a town. I got in on some of that. Yeah. And then one time there, all the main street, at that time we didn't have that highway going through to Ontario. So they'd clog that main street up with wagons and privies till you couldn't get up and down it. And I remember I didn't get in on that, it was before my time. But that Judge Biggs, who was the circuit judge, you know, his offices when he was in private practice was upstairs in the Voegtly building. So they, they moved that big privy out there and they put up on it, "A. A. Biggs, Attorney at Law, Walk In." (Laughter) Oh, he was mad.

And then Charlie Leonard up there, he had a very fancy chick sales out there, and so just before Halloween he'd always have a couple fellows go up there and pay them to lay it down. 'Cause he didn't want to get it broke up. And the kids found that and they'd come and put it back up, you know, just the opposite, you know. And then they took and put Mrs. Hotchkiss', they had a barn there on the corner there, and they put the, her cart that she would go back and forth to the ranch when she wanted to, they put it up on top of the barn. And they took a wagon down there from I. S. Gee's, and they took it up to the high school there, and put it all back together upstairs. That was before my time. About the time Hal Hibbard and all those boys were going to high school, you know. Oh, they had, they had a lot of fun in those days, you know. And there wasn't really, they, as

far as doing anything serious, the young people didn't get into anything too much serious. Really, they didn't, they'd maybe get looped once in a while, but not very often. It wasn't a bad little town.

PAULINE: Well there's a difference between mischief and maliciousness.

PETE: Yeah, uh huh. And oh, it's changed a lot. I --- of course the world, all the world is changing now. And then they used to every summer bring the Chautauqua in here. And down there where, by the Alpine Creamery, about half of that house on the corner down Alder wasn't there, and that's where they'd set up their Chautauqua. And they'd have these plays; of course everybody would go to Chautauqua, you know, because that was the only entertainment we had. We'd had, we had only about two movies a week. Generally on Wednesday, or Tuesday and Wednesday, and Friday and Saturday nights, you know. And they'd have little theaters.

And I remember up there, they had some kind of a generator system up there in the Sweek Dam. That's up there just before you cross that bridge after you leave Turley's. In there at that, where Bob Bailey lives, in there. They had a --- They'd be half through a movie, and everything would go black. Well, they'd have to go up and see what was the matter. So they'd light up a couple of lamps up there, and Julian and Annette and Madge, they'd all get up there and sing, you know. And, what was the name, Henrietta?

HELEN: Bardwell.

PETE: What?

HELEN: Bardwell.

PETE: Bardwell, yeah, but there's a --- She would play the piano, and they'd sing, to entertain the people, you know. Then if they couldn't fix it, they'd say, "Well, come back tomorrow night," and they'd give you a ticket as you went out, see. And it was a typical

little small town. But the first theater that I remember going to was over in the Levens building. That's where the Arrowhead Hotel, right where the lobby was, you know, in the Arrowhead? That was the first theater, as I remember. And I know even after it burned down, you could see where they had the upstairs where the projection room had been. I know I never will forget, they showed these ... news, and it would just flicker, and you couldn't hardly, like a snowstorm, you know, on the movies, on a TV. And they showed the picture on the Kaiser and everybody hiss, and "Kill the S.B.", you know. And they just, because everybody hated the Kaiser so, you know. And it showed him hurting little children and stuff, you know. It was propaganda a lot of it too, but they were the meanies, and everybody else was goodies, the clean boys, you know.

Then finally then after Combs, he came in here and built the Ideal Theater there. That's where the Silver Sage is now, you know. So then times got better all the time. Right across by the Palace, that's where the old City Hotel was. And they always had those country meals in all those places. They had meals on Saturday; they'd come out and ring the bell. And up on the Summit up there, where the Whittier is, that was the Summit, they'd come out and ring the bell, and all the fellows down there that boarded up there they'd see them walking up the hill, you know.

And then over there where the Chinaman's is, that was the Cole Hotel there. They'd ring their bell too. Everybody, they all had the meals, you know. About the only one that didn't have meals was the Levens Hotel. And to get in there, you had to go around on the side street and go up them steps, stairs. You know those steps going up to the Odd Fellows Hall; they were just about like that. That's how you got up, because the hotel was up on top, because underneath was, well Yee Wong, down there, going down towards Alder Street at the end of the building, he had a cafe in there and Pete Kvekskas, and ... had a cleaning shop there. And then of course the theater was around there in

front. And then later after they moved over and built the Liberty, Home Drug Store came in. And that was in the early '20's, around '22, '23, '24, that's where the Home Drug Store was. Then later they moved it on down to the Voegtly Building there, you know, where let's see, what's in there now? That floral shop is now, I think. But I can see a lot of changes in this community. It had to improve, you know, it was --- But after we got the railroad in here, and the mill, it started changing rapidly around here to a different type of local ---

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