

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #373 - Sides A/B

Subject: Joe Tiller - With Video

Place: Harney County Library - Burns, Oregon

Date: March 8, 1995

Interviewers: Dorothea Purdy & Barbara Lofgren

DOROTHEA PURDY: This is Dorothea Purdy, along with Barbara Lofgren, and today we'll be visiting with Joe Tiller at the Harney County Library in Burns, Oregon. The date is March 8th, 1995. And following our interview we will be doing a short video, and it will be stored here at the library along with the transcript and the cassette tape. Joe, we'll start out by asking you your full name.

JOE TILLER: Joseph Cassell Tiller.

DOROTHEA: And what were your parent's names?

JOE: Tacie and Pluribus Tiller.

DOROTHEA: And where were you born?

JOE: I was born in Caldwell, Idaho.

DOROTHEA: And when?

JOE: 1922, in July.

DOROTHEA: What day?

JOE: The 31st.

DOROTHEA: 31st of July. Do you have brothers and sisters?

JOE: Yes, I have one brother living now.

BARBARA LOFGREN: And his name?

JOE: Earl Ellis Tiller.

BARBARA: Okay. Other members of the, other brothers and sisters?

JOE: They are all deceased.

BARBARA: Can you tell us what their names were?

JOE: Okay. Virginia, of course, was between Earl and I in the scope of things. She passed away in; I think it was when she was 50 years old. I forget now the year, '74, something like that. And then after that, after the folks came to Burns, they had a set of twins, Ruthie Elaine and Royce. And they, neither one survived very long. Royce I think something like 7 hours, and Ruthie lasted something like a month, or six weeks, or something. The problem was respiratory, and they did not ---

BARBARA: Didn't fully develop.

JOE: Didn't fully develop, and they just couldn't make it. And little Donnie came along later, and one of the freak things of this world that it doesn't seem possible nowadays, because of the advancement in medical practices. But Donnie died with a ruptured appendix at the age of 9 months, 9 to 10 months. And the doctors couldn't respond quick enough, because of their lack of knowledge and things at that time. And when they finally did tumble to a terrible white count, they opened him up and found out that it was too late. Peritonitis had completely engulfed him. So we lost him early.

DOROTHEA: Now were they both, all three born in Burns?

JOE: Yes.

DOROTHEA: So then are you the oldest?

JOE: Yes.

DOROTHEA: And how much older are you than Virginia was?

JOE: About a year and a half.

DOROTHEA: And then she was just about the same ---

JOE: About the same ahead of Earl.

DOROTHEA: Ahead of Earl, okay. Do you remember why they decided, your parents decided to come to Harney County? Had they been here before, or ---

JOE: No, they had never been here. My dad was in the grocery business with another person in Nampa, Idaho, Nampa and Caldwell area. And the Safeway Stores called him and wanted him to come to Burns and manage the Safeway Store here.

BARBARA: Was he working for Safeway in Idaho, or another grocery?

JOE: He started with Consumer Grocery, which later his brother Herman took over. And I think, if memory serves me, he did work awhile at the Safeway Store. And they saw what they wanted to see, so they sent him over here, \$25 a week for manager.

BARBARA: Hard to imagine, isn't it?

JOE: Yes, it surely is. And he had a lot of responsibilities because of the remoteness of Burns to John Day --- or Caldwell, Nampa, and Boise, and that area. And to say the least the roads were something else. Whenever he was called to a meeting there, which they had several of; he had to figure on at least a day each way just to get there. And so they had to put up with that.

BARBARA: So a day meeting meant three days, really.

JOE: Right, that's absolutely right. Because they just couldn't leave unless they had all day. And one of the instances they tell me about is when they were coming to Burns, and Earl was tiny, maybe, I don't know, 8, 9 months, something like that. Out here in the flat a rooster pheasant flew right through the side window of that car, and just shattered all over everything. Virginia and I were in the back; we didn't know what was going on. That was quite a shock to them, because in those days, you know, glass didn't act like it does nowadays. And it really shattered. But they got stopped and uncovered Earl, and Mom and got things straightened back up, and come on home, or come on in here.

DOROTHEA: What kind of a car were they driving, do you ---

JOE: A Model-A Ford.

DOROTHEA: Everybody drove a Model-A Ford.

JOE: A Model-A Ford, sedan.

BARBARA: And so you were about how old when they moved here? About what year was it that your family moved to Burns?

JOE: They came here in 1925, and I was 3 years old.

BARBARA: Do you remember any of that, during that time?

JOE: I don't remember that particular trip. I do kind of remember a subsequent trip or two when, like I say, he was called to a meeting or something.

BARBARA: Did the whole family go with ---

JOE: Oh yes, yes. Well Mother had family there, and so did Dad, so, you know, it was a big deal. We'd, like you say, 2 or 3 days to make these trips.

BARBARA: So were the trips usually back to Idaho? Was the headquarters of Safeway for the Burns area located in Idaho then, rather than on the west side of Oregon?

JOE: Right, yes. The main office was through, or the main store I should say, was in Caldwell at that time.

BARBARA: Oh, okay, I see.

JOE: I think, now that you've brought that up, that the break was Caldwell this way, Boise that way, towards Eastern Idaho.

BARBARA: I see, okay.

JOE: So he didn't have to go all the way on into Boise. After he was here a few years, you know, they called him and said we're going to transfer you back to the Caldwell store because it's in trouble. And he says, "No, you ain't going to do that to me again." So because of his association with all of the suppliers for merchandise to sell said, "Hey Tiller, find the spot, we'll fix it." And they did. He just went across the street and started

right there where, let's see, oh it's right in there below the old Nyleen's Store, 25 feet wide, and the full length. They furnished the material, or the groceries, the stuff to sell, and he got started right there.

BARBARA: So was he manager of Safeway about 3 or 4 years before this happened, or how long ---

JOE: I think it was a little bit longer than that. I don't recall exactly, but he got --- no it was a little bit longer than that because it took him awhile to get, this one was almost dead when he got here, and he had to revive it. But he got a couple of breaks in that about that time the railroad from Crane on into Burns was being built, and this meant of course a crew in those days. And there was some highway work, as you recall, from Buchanan up through that rocky thing there, that the people went broke doing it. But there was another crew there. And some of the ranchers, a lot of the ranchers, in fact most of them, finally decided that they could trust him and they started coming and he got this store going, and going good. They wanted to pull him.

Some of the things that you would, you just wouldn't believe that Dad has told me about that they encouraged. They, being Safeway hierarchy, would come ever so often, come over and say, "How you doing Tiller? We got some things for you." But you'd be surprised at some of the things that they asked him to do to cheat. And they showed him how to do it. They could set a pound of coffee right there on the check stand and sell that same pound of coffee all day long.

DOROTHEA: Oh, yeah.

JOE: They'd say, oh well that wasn't yours, if somebody said anything. Oh, I thought that was yours, I'm sorry. No ---

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

JOE: And in those days' things like, they'd get a truckload of picnic hams for instance,

and he got those in here for these crews that he was talking about. And they'd just throw them in pile in the corner. And then when they'd come to get them they'd have them all set out and the order filled. And he said while you're carrying those, put a foot under one of those, and just kick it back into the pile and who is going to know. Shake the apples, water the vinegar, I mean lots and lots and lots of things.

BARBARA: I would never have dreamed that at that time, early on like that.

JOE: But, yeah, right.

BARBARA: You might think about it now, but ---

JOE: It was, it was, and he just says --- If I got to do it that way, you come and get it, I'm not going to do it that way. And it turned out that he didn't have to, because people caught on to that and heard about some of those things. So he was successful, very much. And then of course when he got started on his own, and he got a push from all the guys to help him, and that took right off.

DOROTHEA: Well then how did he start getting so many of his brothers to come over here? And maybe before we get into that we might want to mention his brother's and sister's names.

JOE: Well Bill, and J. C., and Hobert were the three that, and Vesti later, Vestus. See Vestus was working at Lovelock, Nevada in a grocery store. And he was a mining bug, and that was, he wanted to be close to those mines. So they tried a stint at mining, but like most of them, you know, they --- and in fact Dad had to furnish them a lot of groceries. Finally they went broke at that and they come up here.

DOROTHEA: And they are who?

JOE: They are brothers.

DOROTHEA: Besides, I mean they, you're saying they came up here. Is this Vesti and who else?

JOE: Vestus and Bill.

DOROTHEA: And Bill.

JOE: And J. C.

DOROTHEA: Oh, all of them were down there?

JOE: And Hobert. And they came here. At that time there was jobs to be had, the mill was hiring, and --- I think if I recall now Bill went to work with Dad for a while. And then you remember when the Finley Store --- Tillers got that. Those Tillers was Bill and J. C., and Hobert helped some there.

BARBARA: Finley's was what kind of a store?

DOROTHEA: Grocery.

JOE: Grocery store.

BARBARA: It was a grocery store.

JOE: Right there where A Parts is now.

BARBARA: Oh.

JOE: Or not A Parts ---

DOROTHEA: Not A Parts, NAPA.

JOE: NAPA, right.

DOROTHEA: And that was a Tiller Grocery also, besides your dad's?

JOE: Uh huh. That was Tiller's Grocery. Well Dad had quit by then.

DOROTHEA: Oh.

JOE: He had sold his to Homer Ritchey. So Dad went down and helped them.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

JOE: And give them the expertise that he had, which was a good number of years at that time. And they just got along fine, and they outgrew it, and moved down to where, oh what's there now?

DOROTHEA: Big A.

JOE: Country Store and More, all of that.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. So then he has Hobert, Vestus, J. C. --- what was J. C.'s real name?

JOE: James Cruthers.

DOROTHEA: Cruthers. Spell it.

JOE: I don't think I can.

DOROTHEA: C A R O T H E R S, something like that.

JOE: Yeah, that's pretty close.

DOROTHEA: Okay. No wonder he went by J. C. And Hobert, and you mentioned earlier a Herbert?

JOE: Hobert.

DOROTHEA: No, Herman.

BARBARA: Herman?

JOE: Herman. He stayed in Idaho, and had Consumer Grocery over there.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Was there a Paul?

JOE: Paul was the oldest of the family, and he was the wayward one.

DOROTHEA: And how many sisters?

JOE: He had two sisters. Rachel who still lives, and lives in Battle Mountain, unless she happens to be right now with her daughter down in Northern California. And Juanita, the youngest of the clan was the first one that we lost on a crazy freak accident you just can't hardly believe. That she would be sitting on a log beside the lake watching the water skiers, and a pickup run away from a guy up on the mountain and run over her. Come all the way down off of that mountain, and when she heard it she --- it was too late.

DOROTHEA: Couldn't get out of the way.



JOE: It run over her.

DOROTHEA: Huh.

JOE: Well it didn't kill her immediately, but ---

DOROTHEA: So you say Paul was the wayward son.

JOE: Uh huh, he was the one he had problems with. He was here for a while. Dad had a terrible time, had to go get him and take care of him. Tried to get him sobered up.

DOROTHEA: In other words he had a drinking problem.

JOE: He sure did, oh.

DOROTHEA: And what did you say, Herman, is he still in the grocery business?

JOE: No, no.

DOROTHEA: Or descendants of his?

JOE: No, even the boys, they sold out. Well they sold the store up town oh a good number of years ago. And then the one out on 19th Avenue going towards Caldwell, they moved, they built right behind one of those huge Fred Meyer Stores. And it just killed them, so they walked away. Herman is still living.

BARBARA: So there was 9 children in that family?

JOE: Right.

DOROTHEA: Let's go a little further and say, you had the grocery store, and at one time Bill, J. C., and Vestus were all in the grocery store together?

JOE: They were after Dad had left the store.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and your Dad sold to Homer Ritchey, which at that time was where --  
-

JOE: And that store sold to Jess Ereno. And I think Jess, well he, no Jess sold it to another guy, I can't hardly remember his name now.

DOROTHEA: Okay, Homer was where Wagner's Second Hand Store is now, right?

JOE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And then when he went out of business, he sold to Jess.

JOE: He sold it to Jess ---

BARBARA: Jess Ereno?

JOE: Ereno, Jess Ereno bought that store and run it a few years, and sold it to this --- I can almost say it, it begins with a W. And he just run it a little while and went out. So it quit being a grocery store there in ---

DOROTHEA: Well for a while didn't Vern Cady have that same store?

JOE: He had --- Vern Cady had the store where, next to Ruthie.

DOROTHEA: Next to Ruthie?

JOE: Yeah, where the ---

DOROTHEA: Oh, Sprouse Reitz.

JOE: Sprouse Reitz.

DOROTHEA: But I thought that he at one time had also where Nyleen's --- and maybe that's who this other man sold to was to Vern.

JOE: That's very possible. I can remember him being down there.

DOROTHEA: And see he and his wife also had the Western Auto, which is where the Saddle Shop is now, right?

JOE: Right there, right in one of those ---

DOROTHEA: In there, one of those stores right in there. I think the Saddle Shop, it was Reed's Sign, and it opened up, now it was Reed's Sign and Western Auto. And I think now it's opened up to where both of those stores are one.

JOE: You remember Bachelder is the one, wasn't it, that started that Western Auto.

DOROTHEA: I only ---

JOE: Bill ... folk's is ---

DOROTHEA: Bachelor?

JOE: Yeah. And I think they sold it to Cady, didn't they?

DOROTHEA: Yeah, I think you're right there. This is getting back when I'm too young to remember. But I think, I know that they were in there somewhere before Cadys were.

JOE: Where Ruthie is was a tobacco shop, Richardson.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

JOE: And then the First Interstate --- or First --- what did they call that?

DOROTHEA: National Bank.

JOE: First National Bank was on the corner.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. And then Gaylord Shook was in where Ruthie is.

JOE: Yeah, where Ruthie is.

DOROTHEA: Now he must have bought out the tobacco place.

JOE: Yeah, I think old man Richardson, I don't remember whether he, I think he got to the age where he couldn't handle it anymore and he sold it out. And that's about the time that Gale got out.

DOROTHEA: In there.

BARBARA: Okay, so when your dad quit Safeway and started up his own store, and he called it Buy-Rite Grocery, is that right?

JOE: Right.

BARBARA: Okay. And his brother Bill helped him out to begin with, is that right?

JOE: Bill wasn't there that soon, but later on, yeah.

BARBARA: But I mean later on he came to help him.

JOE: Yeah.

BARBARA: And then he went in with Homer Ritchey as a partner after that.

JOE: Right.

BARBARA: And then he sold out to Homer Ritchey.

JOE: Uh huh.

BARBARA: Okay. And during this time other brothers came at different times. And can you tell us some of the other business, Tiller business, that have been in Burns over the years?

JOE: Well Hobert's, you know, had that furniture store for several years. Furniture and carpets and what not.

BARBARA: That's where Trent (Tiller) has the Carpets to Go now, about?

JOE: That's where it ended up, but it started up, oh let's see, right next to --- where was it Harvey Lehr --- it was the next block up. Let's see ---

DOROTHEA: It, right over the exercise, yeah, Body Wise.

JOE: --- it would be part of that fitness thing. Yeah, yeah.

BARBARA: Body Wise is.

JOE: It started there, and then he needed more room and he moved it down there.

BARBARA: Okay. Then he was always in the furniture-carpet line. Did he have any other business?

JOE: Yeah, he had that ---

DOROTHEA: Kelley Tires.

JOE: Well him and Harry George's was in that too.

DOROTHEA: Harry George and him, yeah.

BARBARA: Eric George?

DOROTHEA: Harry.

JOE: Harry. And that was in the Jim McCullough Service Station, dealership.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. That's where; let's see Francis Estep has his body shop now. Then he also had a car wash, now this is Hobert we're talking about.

JOE: Yeah, and he had that drive-in.

DOROTHEA: And that drive-in, which we call the Dairy Queen, but it wasn't. It was called the Dairy --- it was a Dairy something it seemed like, Dairy Cone or --- what was it?

JOE: What the heck did he call that? It was right there where the parking lot for ---

DOROTHEA: NAPA.

JOE: NAPA is, is where it set. I don't remember the name.

DOROTHEA: It was a drive-in, and you could also eat inside, just like the Dairy Queen, only it wasn't the Dairy Queen. It was ---

JOE: Now see the one down in the next block, or down a ways was Rich-Maid.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

JOE: This one --- gosh I let that one get away. But they tried that for a while.

BARBARA: So those were the 3, 4 businesses that he had over the years. The furniture-carpet, the Kelley Tires, the car wash, and then the drive-in.

JOE: Not necessarily in that order.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

JOE: Okay.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. And then J. C. had a metal shop.

JOE: Him and Bill together in the sheet metal, farm machinery, whatnot.

DOROTHEA: And where was it?

JOE: It's right where the senior center is now.

DOROTHEA: Oh right, okay. Yeah, it was just this side of Burns Lumber Company. Uh huh, that's right. And is that all that he had?

JOE: Well of course when they went out of that, they went into, that's when they went into the grocery store together.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

BARBARA: J. C. and Bill then went into the grocery store?

JOE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: And, let's see, okay and Bill started out in Nevada as a miner, came up and worked with your dad in the grocery store.

JOE: No, that's Vesti.

DOROTHEA: Oh, that's Vesti.

JOE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

JOE: Vestus was working in Lovelock down there in the store, and trying to mine. He came and --- well actually he came when Bill and J. C. had the store. Bill came earlier when Dad had the store, right, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Okay, okay. Well let's talk about Vesti. I understood that he has been married a time or two, and he has some children.

JOE: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Okay, who was his first wife?

JOE: Hazel.

DOROTHEA: Hazel?

JOE: White.

DOROTHEA: They were married in California, or ---

JOE: No, I think they was married over in Idaho, but I'm not sure about that.

DOROTHEA: And they had some ---

JOE: You see we had brothers married sisters. Vesti and Herman married Hazel and Juanita. So there was brothers and sisters, brothers married sisters. So I don't remember when him and Hazel didn't make it, Vesti, but he had two girls.

DOROTHEA: And their names were?

JOE: Fern and Barbara.

DOROTHEA: Fern and Barbara. Did they ever live around here?

JOE: Oh yeah, they went to school here.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And so did they marry someone from here?

JOE: Yeah. Fern married that Barnes boy, Wilber Barnes. Let's see, I don't think Barb married before she left here.

DOROTHEA: Nobody lives here now, okay.

JOE: Well his daughter by his second wife lives here.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, okay. And then so Vesti married Bertha Noble.

JOE: Right.

DOROTHEA: Do you remember all of the Noble boy's names?

JOE: Oh gosh, Arnold and Joe ---

DOROTHEA: Armond.

JOE: Armond and Joe, oh one out to Hines.

DOROTHEA: George.

JOE: George. There is one more boy.

DOROTHEA: And Ernie.

JOE: That's the four.

DOROTHEA: Oh, I thought he had 5 or 6.

JOE: No, just 4 boys.

DOROTHEA: Just 4, okay. Well we've got that many anyway. We could remember that, but we couldn't remember any more. And then he married Bertha, and they had one daughter, Linda.

JOE: Uh huh, Linda.

DOROTHEA: And who is she married to?

JOE: Oh, one of the --- I can't say his name. I can see him as plain as day.

DOROTHEA: And I think this is her second marriage, right?

JOE: No, I don't think so.

DOROTHEA: She has only been married once?

JOE: I think she's only married once.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Okay, now let's go on to Bill then. He came from Idaho to work with your dad in the grocery store. He eventually went to work with J. C. in the sheet metal.

JOE: Right.

DOROTHEA: And from there they went into the grocery store again.

JOE: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And Bill is married to Hollis, what was Hollis' maiden name?

JOE: Oh boy, I don't ---

DOROTHEA: They were married before they came here?

JOE: Yes, oh yeah.

DOROTHEA: And they have 6 children?

JOE: Six.

DOROTHEA: There is Raymond, Roger.

JOE: Roger is the oldest.

DOROTHEA: Roger is the oldest.

JOE: Roger and Raymond and Robert and Ronnie.

DOROTHEA: And Janice and Joyce.

JOE: Janice and Joyce.

DOROTHEA: And how many of those 6 still live here?

JOE: Well let's see, Roger is dead. But Raymond is here, Bob and Ronnie are here, and one girl is here, Janice ---



DOROTHEA: Joyce.

JOE: Joyce.

BARBARA: So did they retire then out of the grocery store? Or did they do anything after the grocery store?

JOE: Let's see, you see when they built the new store out where it is now they got retired.  
(Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

JOE: They got in too deep, and it sucked them under. And so, yeah, they just --- J. C. you remember went and bought the Palace.

DOROTHEA: Oh, that's right, okay.

JOE: He bought the Palace.

BARBARA: Was that after the grocery store?

JOE: Yes.

DOROTHEA: J. C. never really went out to the store in what we'll call Hines.

JOE: No, that's true. See there was some, a little friction there, and Vesti said, "I'll retire," and J. C. says, "I'm going to go get this." So Bill and the two boys went out there.

DOROTHEA: And your dad worked part time as a ---

JOE: Dad worked with them, and tried to help them. He told them not to go, but they had to be modern, you know. And puff.

BARBARA: Just hit at the wrong time too.

JOE: Yeah, when that mill went down it just like it cut their head off.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

JOE: Gee!

BARBARA: So the Palace Cafe then was the last thing that ---

JOE: That's the last thing that J. C. ---

DOROTHEA: J. C. had.

JOE: He kept it for a while and sold it to the guy that's got it now. What's his name?

DOROTHEA: Rich ---

BARBARA: Watkins.

DOROTHEA: Watkins.

JOE: Yeah. He went on a trip one day, and never got home.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Let's get his family then. He was married to Erma.

JOE: Erma.

DOROTHEA: And they had four children.

JOE: Four.

DOROTHEA: There was Billy.

JOE: Leland.

DOROTHEA: Leland, Ardyce, and Gary.

JOE: Gary.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Now where are we at?

BARBARA: Hobert.

DOROTHEA: Hobert. Okay, he married Mildred in Idaho, right?

JOE: She had one child.

DOROTHEA: And she had Darlene.

JOE: Right.

DOROTHEA: Okay. So Trent, John, Kelly, and Treva.

JOE: Kelly?

DOROTHEA: Well, Hobe.

JOE: Okay.

DOROTHEA: Are Hobe's, Hobert's.

JOE: Yeah, Hobert and Mildred's.

DOROTHEA: And Mildred's, okay.

BARBARA: Trent, Treva, John, and ---

JOE: Kim.

DOROTHEA: Well, Kim.

JOE: Kim.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, it's not Kelly, it is Kim.

JOE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

BARBARA: This is a girl or boy?

DOROTHEA: Boy.

JOE: Boy.

BARBARA: His real name is Hobert, but they called him Kim?

JOE: He went by Hobe when he was playing football. But Kim was his name.

DOROTHEA: But he went through of the school, through, up through probably eighth grade as Kim.

BARBARA: Okay.

DOROTHEA: And I wanted to call him Kelly, but his name is Kim.

BARBARA: Kim was his name, but his nickname was Hobe.

JOE: Yeah.

BARBARA: Okay. And so then after, he retired after the furniture, carpet, Kelly Tires, car wash, and drive in, then he retired? Not in that order, but ---

JOE: Right. The furniture store was the last one.

BARBARA: Okay.

DOROTHEA: And he never really retired either.

JOE: Yeah, he still had it.

DOROTHEA: He had the car wash last, after the furniture store.

JOE: Well yeah, that's true, he did have that, but it didn't amount to a whole lot.

DOROTHEA: Well, whatever.

BARBARA: Something to dink around with.

JOE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: But then he got cancer and he died.

JOE: After Mildred was killed in that freaky damn thing.

DOROTHEA: That was another freaky accident.

JOE: Yes.

BARBARA: Okay, and then so the other, Paul worked a little bit around here.

JOE: Paul, no he didn't, I don't think he worked. He just was bumming around mostly.

BARBARA: Okay. And then Juanita, and Herman, and Rachel they didn't, they weren't really here and involved with the community.

JOE: That's right, right.

BARBARA: Okay. And then so we get back to your dad then. And he had, came with the Safeway, then the Buy-Rite Store, and then he sold and started with your ranch out there. Is that right?

JOE: Yeah, uh huh.

BARBARA: Okay. And after ranching, and helping Bill a little bit, that's basically what he did then?

JOE: Yeah.

BARBARA: Okay. Well we pretty well got all that scribbled in there.

JOE: You got something. (Laughter) You really got something there. (Tiller family chart.)

BARBARA: Well we were just, we knew that there had been so many businesses, but we

didn't track down who did what, and where, and all that sort of thing. So it's good to finally get this ---

DOROTHEA: And we didn't get any of this from Earl, see, so this is all new business here.

JOE: Oh, really?

DOROTHEA: Yeah, we didn't cover any of this with him. Because we really --- and we want to go a little further and say of Bill's kids, how many grandkids and kids does he have that are still here?

JOE: Oh boy.

DOROTHEA: Does Raymond have any children here?

JOE: No.

DOROTHEA: Okay, so Robert has two here.

JOE: He's got, well yeah, Rocky is gone, but Randy is here.

DOROTHEA: Randy is here.

JOE: Where is the girl now, is she still around?

DOROTHEA: She's still here, Karen is still here.

JOE: Okay.

DOROTHEA: And I can't think of her last name.

JOE: Weir.

DOROTHEA: Rick Weir, right, W E I R, isn't it? And Randy and his wife, he's married to Connie Harris.

JOE: Connie, I knew that, but I didn't know what their last name was.

DOROTHEA: And they have two children, and they're still here. Now then, let's go to Ronnie, and he's married to Aeola Dunn, and they had three children, but none of them of are still here, right?

JOE: I don't think any of the kids are here now.

DOROTHEA: And then there is Joyce; she's married to Stan Cronin.

JOE: Cronin.

DOROTHEA: And they had ---

JOE: They've got, let's see they've got three, haven't they?

DOROTHEA: Three kids. Were they all girls?

JOE: No, no. There is one Cronin boy. Boy, I've kind of lost track of that myself.

DOROTHEA: But I think there is two of Joyce's kids, girls here.

JOE: I think so.

DOROTHEA: I don't know about the boy.

JOE: To be honest with you, I'm not sure there was a boy, but it seemed like there was. One of the Cronin boys.

DOROTHEA: And Janice doesn't live here, she lives somewhere else.

JOE: Right, she lives down in the valley. You know she lost her husband on that freak dang thing. Power pole fell over.

BARBARA: Your family has had some weird endings then, haven't they?

JOE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: And she has just two children, right?

JOE: I think just two. Rick, what you call it here at the, what do you call it, the television station down here?

BARBARA: TCI.

JOE: MCI, TCI.

DOROTHEA: TCI.

JOE: He's the main boy there.

DOROTHEA: And I don't know what his name is.

JOE: And I don't know the other boy. Mark ---

DOROTHEA: See, I don't know what her kids, what her last name.

JOE: Case.

DOROTHEA: Case.

JOE: She was married to Case ---

DOROTHEA: Oh, okay.

JOE: --- when he got killed. Isn't it Mark? Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, there is a Mark.

JOE: Yeah. A big tall ---

DOROTHEA: And he's kind of sickly.

JOE: No, not this one.

DOROTHEA: Not this one. Well I knew that there was one Mark Case that's kind of sickly. But maybe he is over it now.

JOE: Yeah, could be.

DOROTHEA: I think he had cancer or something.

JOE: Oh, I did hear something about some little old thing. Yeah, that could be. That's probably the same boy.

DOROTHEA: Okay, now where are we at?

BARBARA: Well why don't we talk a little bit about your dad acquiring the property out on Rye Grass.

JOE: Uh huh.

BARBARA: And you were of an age to --- Well let's maybe talk about, you went to school, all your schooling here in Burns. Did you go to college at all?

JOE: No.

BARBARA: Okay. And did you decide that you wanted to be a rancher somewhere along

the line? Or what did you really want to do?

JOE: I think, Barb, that Earl and I had that in our blood. See, you see Dad farmed, and his parents farmed before they came to Idaho.

BARBARA: Oh, okay.

JOE: And then when they first got to Idaho that was a way to make a living. He even had a team of horses that he hauled cinders for the county for, to build roads. And of course there is no dump truck, you know, it's just a wagon. So they ingeniously fixed little traps, and you'd drive your team under this thing, and this other team would come up and drive over the hole and pull the cinders, and it would drop in your wagon. When you got to the site you took the floorboards, and they were just 2 x 4's, and you'd shake them like that and the stuff would fall through. You'd go back and get another load. So farming was a basis for his, well I shouldn't say, it didn't seem like any of the other brothers much cared about farming. They wanted to mine, and things like that. But ---

BARBARA: So when your dad had the chance to buy some property, you were glad that you had a chance to get in and do something?

JOE: A couple young fellows a pushing on him, and pushing on him. But Rye Grass wasn't the first place; we got the Charlie Kuhl place out here.

BARBARA: The Charlie who?

JOE: Kuhl.

BARBARA: Kuhl.

DOROTHEA: It's Dora Johnson's ---

BARBARA: How do you spell that, Kuhl?

JOE: K U H L, was that one.

BARBARA: Okay.

DOROTHEA: No that isn't Kuhl, that's not Doris', Dora's.



JOE: No.

BARBARA: Okay.

JOE: That was Cooley.

DOROTHEA: Cooley, that's right.

BARBARA: Okay, so where was this property located?

JOE: Sure --- he's about to die --- Clarence Gardner place.

BARBARA: Oh, okay. You were out there first.

JOE: They bought that first.

BARBARA: And then you got the Rye Grass --- did you have both of them at the same time, or sell then to get the other?

JOE: Oh, there was a short time when we had them both. And the running around got to be too much. And oh, what was their name, you know, Hazel ---

DOROTHEA: Williams is all I ---

JOE: Hazel Williams, what was her husband's name? Anyway ---

DOROTHEA: Norm.

JOE: Norm, they wanted a dairy, and they come along and bought that.

DOROTHEA: Okay, I was trying to think who had that place before Clarence had it, and that's who it was. Okay. Did your dad just ranch there then? Or did he dairy a little bit, or ---

JOE: No, there was no dairy. We had, he got into the purebred hogs ... And we had, he bought ten sows from Tom's nephew or something over up around LaGrande some place. So he got a start there with purebred hogs. And of course grain and hay. We had a few cows. We sent, you know where --- well up at the Baker place, around in there, the Baker Corrals I should say, we summered the cattle up there with Wallace Baker and those guys. But it wasn't, very few; I think 50 head, something like that. But he got a chance to

sell that, and develop over to Rye Grass. Now there wasn't any buildings on that, and so they built a garage, which was going to be a garage as soon as they could. And when they left they was still living in it. (Laughter) It was very small, but --- The problem with the ranch was, that there was just too many mouth's to feed and ---

DOROTHEA: And at that time Virginia and her husband also worked for your dad, at that time.

JOE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: What did Roy do before?

JOE: Oh, let's see. When he got out of school, he fooled around a little. He worked with Buchanan's at the coke plant for a while, I can remember that. Then he went to the service.

DOROTHEA: So he went to school here also?

JOE: I think it was only the last year or two of his high school.

DOROTHEA: And this is how Virginia met him?

JOE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Did they go to school together, or was she younger?

JOE: Yes. She was younger, but they were still, went to school together. I think his last year.

DOROTHEA: His last name was Swindlehurst.

JOE: Right.

DOROTHEA: Did, when he went into the service, did she go with him?

JOE: No, she stayed home.

DOROTHEA: She stayed here.

BARBARA: Did you go into the service too, or did you stay here?

JOE: Me?

BARBARA: Uh huh.

JOE: They wouldn't take me, I had a chronic ear problem, and they said no way. So I went down to Portland and worked in the shipyards as a welder to help out that way for a while. Then they called me to the draft, and I came and they decided they didn't want to fight that problem, so they said, "No, you better not." Well at that time Dad was, he was just rolling in the store there, and no help, no guys. So I decided to stay here and help him. So I never did go.

DOROTHEA: And some time in here you met and married --- how did you meet your wife, and whom did you marry?

JOE: Well I married Lisa Ramirez, and I went to school all my life, all my school life with her, one through eight.

DOROTHEA: Did you not go to high school, is that what you're saying, or what?

JOE: What?

DOROTHEA: Did you go to high school?

JOE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: And you went clear up through with her, or did she leave at this ---

JOE: Yeah, from the first grade clear through twelve.

DOROTHEA: Twelve, okay.

BARBARA: Ramirez?

JOE: R A M I R E Z.

BARBARA: R A M I R E Z, okay.

JOE: Right.

DOROTHEA: And you have three children. Can you tell us their names?

JOE: Well Julie is the oldest, and Angela, and Melanie.

DOROTHEA: And are any of them still around here in Burns?

JOE: Yes, Angie is still here.

BARBARA: Where are your other daughters?

JOE: Julie is in Salt Lake City, or Twin Falls, Idaho. And Melanie is down here in Long Beach, Washington, right on the coast down there.

DOROTHEA: Do you have any grandchildren?

JOE: One adopted.

DOROTHEA: That's a boy, and what's his name?

JOE: Nathan Muilenburg.

DOROTHEA: And that's Julie's. Melanie doesn't have any?

JOE: Nope. That didn't work for her.

DOROTHEA: And Angie isn't married, so ---

JOE: She had one of those, you gals probably know more about it than what I'm saying, but she had one of those tubular type things.

DOROTHEA: Melanie?

JOE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, that's kind of destroys your luck.

JOE: Yeah.

BARBARA: Are we about to turn over here? (Tape.)

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

SIDE B

BARBARA: Okay, let's go on here. And we'll talk about after you came back from working in the shipyards and then started ranching again. And you were married at this time, and what was going on then?

JOE: Well, you know, after, as I said when I came back from the shipyards I helped Dad

in the store until he sold it. And then we went out to the ranch and we had to take in custom work in order to make ends meet, because of the expensive machinery involved. And so we did a lot of that, and we had a few cows, and worked at trying to develop the Section 21 out to Rye Grass, which had been neglected for years.

DOROTHEA: Tell us something about that place. What all, how big a property did you have there? Did you have what let's call the Weittenhiller place?

JOE: The Weittenhiller place we had for awhile, which adjoined the Section 21. We didn't keep that very long because we, it became apparent quite soon that it would be too long for us to clean this one up and clean that one up too. And so somebody come along, I think it was Pete Clemens, and decided he wanted that. So that helped us in our project on the home place, in getting some of the --- like a couple of wells drilled for instance, and pipe, ditches and things that was going to be hard for us to do without some.

DOROTHEA: Okay, so did you run from where your mom and dad built their house, clear down to where Shepards live?

JOE: Yes, a mile square, one section.

DOROTHEA: So that included that granary there which we called the Smith Granary or something.

JOE: Yes. I forget what the name of that was. I think old Duhaime used it for a while.

DOROTHEA: I think everybody used it. But ---

JOE: Yeah, pretty near everybody in the ---

DOROTHEA: So it was a mile square, your place was.

JOE: Right. It run to the Weittenhiller place at the back.

DOROTHEA: Okay. A lot of ryegrass.

JOE: Yeah. A lot of the, well named.

DOROTHEA: I think it's got a good name there. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Well you say you contracted out, contract work out. Was that just in Harney County, or ---

JOE: Oh yes, just neighbors. We did some custom work like for instance we went over to the east side right against the mountains and would lease a piece of property on a share type thing. And one year, two years we went to the refuge on a share type thing. A couple of years we went down, clear down to Barton Lake on the same type of a thing. And we took all the chances, and if we made anything, well those folks got a few dollars and we got a few.

But I think by in large the custom work was haying. When haying time come everybody needed it done immediately. And so we had a chance to use this machinery and, ourselves, most of the time. And that kind of helped to keep us together for a few years. BARBARA: Did you have anybody outside of the family working on this too? When you had to go around and do all this it was just you then?

JOE: No, no, no.

DOROTHEA: Now did Earl help custom, do this custom work, or did he go to work for Bob Smith and you did most of the contracting?

JOE: Okay. He didn't do too much of that until him and his brother-in-law got the Texaco Station down here, you remember. And they were in partners there; oh gosh I don't remember how long, it wasn't too long, two, three, four years. And there again one little business trying to support two, three families, it just wasn't going to make it. And then he helped, what was that guy's name, the butcher that did the butchering out here --- Bob Short, Bob Short. And he helped him awhile in the butchering business.

BARBARA: Now who did this?

JOE: Earl.

DOROTHEA: Earl.

BARBARA: And you talk about brother-in-law with the Texaco, who is this?

JOE: Fred Culp.

BARBARA: Fred Culp, okay.

JOE: Yeah. Then they give that up, somewhere in there he went to the service, I don't remember just how that fit in. But he was in the navy for a while. But most of the custom work --- well Roy helped me a little, but most of the time it was me. And we would try to fit it into our program so that we could both get our hay put up, and taken care of.

BARBARA: So you probably had some long days there during the peak season.

JOE: Oh mercy, yeah. Oh, you'd be out there a lot of times, especially in alfalfa, if it got a little bit dry you had to be there on the dew, which was daylight, and sometimes sooner.

DOROTHEA: And people did a lot of baling at this time.

JOE: That's what I was, the baler man. So there was --- you're right, there was some pretty tough ones there for a while. Finally the handwriting was kind of on the wall, and by then, as you mentioned, Earl was working for Bob. And Bob wanted some land, so we just sold it to Bob. We stayed there long enough to seed it down the way he wanted it. He even took the machinery, so we just kind of walked away.

BARBARA: So this was your property around Rye Grass then?

JOE: Yes.

BARBARA: That you and your dad and Swindlehurst's sold to Bob Smith?

JOE: Swindlehurst didn't have anything to do with it.

BARBARA: Oh, okay.

JOE: He was in the service I think by then.

BARBARA: Okay. So just you and your dad then sold it to him.

JOE: Yeah, I never did have anything on paper as far as, you know, me being an owner or anything. I was just --- I loved to do it, and still do. And then after we sold out, you

know, I had to do some other things for a while until we could get ---

BARBARA: Okay, about what time was it then that you and your dad gave up this property out here, and you quit doing that?

JOE: Well I worked for Wooster for a little while.

BARBARA: Who?

JOE: John Wooster.

BARBARA: Oh, Wooster, okay.

JOE: On construction. And then I helped Bill and J. C. in that metal shop for a while. I even worked for Harry Pon one summer out here, until I could get into the assessors office. And I got an appraiser's license and I worked at that for ---

BARBARA: Okay, when are we talking about, what years are we talking about?

JOE: '62 to '72 I was in the assessor's office.

DOROTHEA: And when did you sell the place to Bob?

JOE: Oh, it would have been right around '60, right there.

DOROTHEA: Because I know it was after we got married, so ---

JOE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: I was thinking around '59 or so.

JOE: Yeah, right in that area there someplace. And then I got ten years service in there, and then I --- Oh, the regulation stuff it just drove me nuts. So I got a chance to get started back in the haying business, and so I took it.

BARBARA: So then did you start ---

JOE: Custom haying.

BARBARA: --- custom haying after, after you quit in '72?

JOE: Right.

DOROTHEA: Now you didn't do all of the haying, did you? Did you just do the cutting



and someone else ---

JOE: No, the first three years, Dorothy, I did the stacking. I had three stackers, the harrow beds. Then it got more and more plain, the folks, the customers wanted me to do it all, instead of just the stacking. So I let a couple of the harrow beds go and got balers and swathers and did the whole program then for, I don't even know how long I did do that.

DOROTHEA: A long time.

JOE: Quite awhile. Well, until I retired.

BARBARA: '72 until, when did you retire?

JOE: When did I retire, '88, '89?

DOROTHEA: I think you hayed for us ---

JOE: Let's see Dad passed away in '88, did I still have it? Yeah, I still had the machinery.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, you were, yeah because I was thinking you hayed for us.

JOE: Because they called me out of the hay field when he broke his hip that time.

DOROTHEA: I think you were haying for us in about '87, '88, something like that.

JOE: Okay.

BARBARA: So there again, did you just do it in Harney County, or all over the state, or you didn't go around a whole lot then.

JOE: Oh yeah. I went to like Juntura, I went to Wagontire, but you know ---

BARBARA: Okay, Eastern Oregon.

JOE: Right, yeah, it was just around home here.

BARBARA: Okay.

JOE: I might have snuck over into Malheur County a foot or two.

BARBARA: We won't tell.

JOE: Yeah, don't tell anybody. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Did you do any haying up in the Silvies area?

JOE: No, I almost got caught into that once, and which it turned out I'm glad I didn't.

DOROTHEA: Because I was going to say, everybody's hayed for Harry Pon, or Wolfwinkle (Cliff Wolfswinkles), or whatever his name was up there. And I thought maybe you were one of the ones that got caught up there like you said.

JOE: No, I got lucky enough to --- well I was just too busy, I think. And I was a lot of the time, you know. You'd lose one once in awhile because they'd get their own machinery, but there'd be two to take their place.

DOROTHEA: Okay, let's catch up a little bit on today. You're kind of a free lander now, are you?

JOE: I'm just a retired bum now.

DOROTHEA: But you seem to have a knack of fixing up homes. Let's talk a little bit about that. How did you get into that business?

JOE: Well fixing up, now what do you ---

DOROTHEA: Well I know you've lived in two or three places, and I always enjoy watching the improvements that happen in the places that you've lived. And where you're living now, you have changed a lot.

JOE: That's the thing that I love to do, you know. Not too long after Ruby and I got married, we had that big old two-story house there where the Pioneer Federal is now. We started in to re-do that thing.

BARBARA: Was that the Dalton house?

DOROTHEA: Which the old Chester Dalton house.

BARBARA: The Dalton house, was that the old Dalton house?

JOE: Yeah, we owned that, and we took it down. I got up there to paint it, and that stripe in my back got about that wide. (Laughter) And I said I don't want to do this. Well about

that time they come along and offered us enough that we could get out of it. So we just tore it down for them.

BARBARA: Okay, you mentioned Ruby. Let's put in here that you have married Ruby, and when.

JOE: Gosh, when did I marry --- 24 years ago, when was that, '71.

BARBARA: '71.

JOE: Got to be right there pretty close, I think it was '71.

DOROTHEA: And she was Ruby Castle, C A S T L E, with no S. She was not Castles, she was Castle.

JOE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Moss. And she has two boys, and what are their names?

JOE: Gary is the oldest boy, and Mike is the youngest.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And does she have grandchildren?

JOE: Mike has four now, three boys and a little girl. And Gary is raising two, but they're not his.

DOROTHEA: And Gary at one time was married to ---

JOE: Denstedt.

DOROTHEA: Denstedt girl. I can't think of her first name.

JOE: I'm trying to say it too.

BARBARA: So how long have you been out on the place, just the edge of town here?

JOE: Where I'm at?

BARBARA: Uh huh.

JOE: Well let's see, gee time flies, don't it? Holy smokes!

DOROTHEA: Yeah, I think you've been there ten years or more.

JOE: I was just going to say ten or eleven.

DOROTHEA: Now your dad moved on to a place when they sold their ranch, they bought a place out by the river. Did you build that house?

JOE: Helped build it.

DOROTHEA: And that's where Pink Catterson lives, Patti. Was that going to be a garage too, or was that a regular, going to be a home?

JOE: No, they didn't have much money, Dorothy, when they come out of this ranch thing. So they had to build it with a concrete floor, and a shed roof, and cut some corners like that in order to make it work. And then they had a preacher friend and myself that done the building so that we could get that, get them in a house. And they still had problems, quite a lot of problems with that. So after, well you see Mother passed away, and then it just wasn't long until Sister passed away, and so that left him out there alone. And we had just tore down this thing up here. We had bought a little house down the road there a ways, and fixed it up. So we made a deal with Dad to come and take care of him, and he would just sell us the place. And he just, he said put a price on it, I don't care. You know, he is getting to that age. So we just paid him so much a year and took care of him.

DOROTHEA: And then he lived there alone for a while?

JOE: No, Sis was, just shortly after Sister died that we went out there. And then, you know, we was there, well we built that big shed out to the side there, for the harrow beds. And got that, let's see, no he had the well drilled. And we got some things done around there. I was living up across the river right there, in that house that I built. We decided to, that we wanted something bigger, and so we went up where Pielstick is now, bought that place. And Dad went with us, so we did all right there.

DOROTHEA: Now did you put the swimming pool in there where Pielstick is?

JOE: No, no. He put that in.

DOROTHEA: He put that in.

JOE: And he put that upper level thing on it. We had added to the front, and made it a little bigger. It had a little basement in it, so they didn't want to go down, and the water table wouldn't allow that anyway there, so they went above.

DOROTHEA: Okay, now Virginia lived there for a while, didn't she, also?

JOE: Yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Because I remember, I think, when she died I took food out to that place. Then you went from there to where you are now?

JOE: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And Virginia died in what, '74?

JOE: '74, I think.

DOROTHEA: '70 something, it was after we moved down here. It had to have been maybe '76, '75.

JOE: Well she was exactly 50 years old, I remember that.

DOROTHEA: She was born in '24?

JOE: Yeah. '74.

DOROTHEA: Now you lived, or I mean your dad lived in town for awhile, right next to Frank Dazley, was that with Virginia, or did they ---

JOE: Virginia was there a lot, especially when Roy was in the service. They had three youngsters, and no income, and him in the service, so she stayed there with them. Because they had the up-stairs, you know, it was big enough for them.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. And that's where Helen Vickers has her fancy house now.

JOE: They just destroyed that house this spring, or this fall, last fall.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. But your dad and mom lived there for a while also.

JOE: Oh, years.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. Is that where they lived when they first, right after they first came

here?

JOE: No, no they lived down here, North Broadway out there. They rented a house there. They decided that they were going to build a home. And you know what home it is; it's the one that --- Goldie Racine, they built that home.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

JOE: And they couldn't pay for it, so they lost it. Wilford Racine come along and bought it from them, got them out from under that. And then they went up to this house, and us kids went to school, almost all of our school right there. It was just two blocks either direction to school.

BARBARA: Let's talk a little bit about some of the things that you did when you were in school. Did you play sports like Earl did?

JOE: I reckon I did, that's what kept me alive. (Laughter)

BARBARA: That's what made you stay in school, right?

JOE: Right.

BARBARA: To play ball, huh?

JOE: Play ball, and played in the orchestra, I liked ---

BARBARA: What instrument did you play?

JOE: Trumpet.

BARBARA: Trumpet.

JOE: Uh huh.

BARBARA: And did you ever play in any of the bands like Earl did?

JOE: Uh huh, yeah, in a dance orchestra?

BARBARA: Uh huh.

JOE: Yeah, Dick Reed's dance orchestra.

BARBARA: Okay. And how long did you do that sort of thing?

JOE: Oh, it wasn't too awful long for me. Seemed like Dick Reed disbanded and moved away, but I don't know, it seems like it was three or four years of that, you know, off and on. We'd go clear over to the Gay Way at Ontario, played. And then that Joaquin Resort at the foot of the mountain, going over to John Day. We played there lots of times.

DOROTHEA: I think that's called J Bar L now, isn't it? (Laughter) But that was a big place in the earlier days.

JOE: Oh yeah, you bet.

DOROTHEA: They had a big dance hall there, and I don't know what's there now.

JOE: A bunch of cabins, and kind of a resort type thing.

DOROTHEA: Swimming pool.

JOE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Apparently they had a hot spring, or something.

JOE: There was a hot spring there.

BARBARA: That was really big stuff then, huh?

JOE: You bet.

DOROTHEA: It was, that was the going place.

JOE: Boy they did have some dances too. And I mean if you even thought about quitting before daylight, you were in trouble.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

BARBARA: But it was something that the family members did. Music was important to ---

JOE: Oh yeah, very much. Virginia had the clarinet. Mom got all of us involved in one kind of an instrument or another.

DOROTHEA: Did either of your mom or dad play anything?

JOE: No.

BARBARA: They just enjoyed listening to you kids play?

JOE: Well I don't know whether they enjoyed it or not. But ---

BARBARA: So what are some of the things that you have been involved with, organization wise, or whatever, during the years?

JOE: Well I spent five years on the high school, school board. And right now I'm a member of the board of directors at the credit union. You know, other little things here and there, short term type things but they didn't amount to too much.

DOROTHEA: Are you an Elk?

JOE: Nope.

DOROTHEA: Are you a Mason?

JOE: Nope.

DOROTHEA: Don't belong to any of that?

JOE: Nope. I belong to the Hillcrest Church of Christ.

DOROTHEA: And that's it?

JOE: And I'm very proud of that.

DOROTHEA: Now did you help build that church too?

JOE: Yes, with the same guy that built Dad's house. Him and I built that.

DOROTHEA: And who are we talking about?

JOE: Walter Skelton. He's gone now.

DOROTHEA: He also had the Skelton acres, didn't he?

JOE: Right.

BARBARA: Your family was very involved with getting the church started here.

JOE: Oh yes, yeah.

BARBARA: And so the church was an important part of your life growing up, and still is then?

JOE: Certainly has, certainly. Oh, let's see, there was, you know, wasn't any here for a



good number of years. And to, what will I say, to keep us involved and that kind of thinking, we went to the Nazarene, and we went to the Baptist, and until such time as they could get enough people here to get one going. And we rented that little, well it's the one right down there on Egan, that little fellow, we rented that. The SDA had it, the Seventh Day Adventist. So they use it on Saturday, and we use it on Sunday, that way, you know, the building was producing something, and it satisfied both of us, until we got this one built.

DOROTHEA: Well your dad also worked, I can't really call him a minister, because I don't know if he ever went to the school of ministry.

JOE: No, he didn't.

DOROTHEA: He worked in and served as a ---

BARBARA: They call them lay preachers, do they?

JOE: Well there has been lots of names come out. There is just more or less a leader, and in that capacity he could give lessons, or go visit, or whatever was required.

DOROTHEA: I think he did some counseling as well.

JOE: Yeah, that's what I mean, whatever was required. It was, he was the foundation. Mrs. Bob, or Bob Gullett and his wife was another one that showed up here. And then the Skelton that I mentioned and --- see Warren worked at the Section 5 out there, and that was Walter's son. And so there finally got to be enough here that we could make something, get it to going. So there was quite an interim in there that there wasn't any church here. But it flourished along, and we got along, and we got that --- it's like everyone else, you've got a big mortgage payment, but you finally get it done and start breathing again.

DOROTHEA: I think you burned it, didn't you?

JOE: We don't, to this day, have a preacher as such. There is two or three guys that are

very capable, and some are singers, some are teachers, and me I just take care of the building, and take care of the finances. I'm not a talker; I don't get up in front of people and talk. But it tells us pretty well there, that we don't all have the same talent.

BARBARA: Well that's what makes it work, you do what you can do, and it all goes together and it works.

JOE: Right. You take your part and ---

BARBARA: Everybody has to put in their time. So what do you like to do for fun?

JOE: Bowl and hunt.

BARBARA: Well I remember bowling, when I used to, you were down there a lot. Ruby and I bowled at the same time, and went to state tournaments and that sort of thing. Do you still bowl?

JOE: Oh yes. I just --- if we wasn't on the air here, I would tell you guys a story about --- just got back from Reno.

BARBARA: Oh yeah.

JOE: To that new \$46,000,000 bowling alley.

DOROTHEA: Oh, I saw that on TV. Oh, is that pretty.

JOE: Oh --- you can't imagine. I mean, you know, the team captains, I happen to be one, we sent four teams down there. We get all this information, keeps coming in, because we've been signed up since, well October or something like that. And you see those pictures, but you don't see it until you walk in that building. You walk in on the main floor and there is escalators like this, takes you up to that mezzanine, I guess you might call it, or main floor, or whatever you call it. And you walk out there, and there is 80 alleys stretched out there.

BARBARA: Oh, 80.

JOE: And people just like maggots down there, I mean, golly, you can't imagine.

DOROTHEA: How are they like, did you bowl there?

JOE: I went through the motion. (Laughter) They were ---

DOROTHEA: What are they like on the approach, is it really nice?

JOE: They were so much different than what we are used to here. None of the local guys --- see we don't have the new plastic lanes, and stuff like that.

BARBARA: You have to learn to bowl all over again.

JOE: Oh, sure you do, absolutely. But there was things like, you know, just the pro shop where they sell the stuff, has it's own regulation alley, one alley, just in that pro shop. So if you went in there and wanted to buy a ball, and the guy says ---

DOROTHEA: You can throw it.

JOE: Throw a ball and let me see what you're doing. And then he'll go drill it for you. You go back and throw it again, you know.

BARBARA: My goodness.

JOE: They got everything to buy that has anything to do, and a lot that don't have anything to do with bowling. And then of course those little shops that are expensive, some of that stuff, because it is curios and that. But they'll take you into, us, as we got near our time were taken into a 400 seat squad room. And every seat is marked with a number, and you go by these two things here, and the ball is measured, and weighed, and balanced, and every-thing. And if it doesn't meet it, zzzz, they just drill a hole in the side of it to get that weight like it is supposed to be, according to the rules. And if you don't like it, that's tough.

BARBARA: Then you don't want to bowl here.

JOE: Don't bring that kind of a ball in here.

DOROTHEA: You don't bowl. Oh, no.

JOE: So you go sit down and they program you, tell you what you're going to do. They

line you up so that when you go down the aisle, alley 1 goes this way, and alley 80 goes this way, and when you stop you're standing at your alley, the one that you're supposed to bowl on. They get you back there behind that; nobody can see that up front. That seating capacity, oh man. And they're not just benches, they're, oh boy, they're nice. But they have a big fan fare, and the curtains open, and here we come, right down the center of the alley, split like that. Oh, they put on the dog.

BARBARA: Quite a production.

JOE: Oh yes. But what a plant. And they're not through; they say there'll be more.

DOROTHEA: What did they say, where was it, I saw it on TV. It was on some, it was either on PBS, or one of the news items that was shown. And man, I mean, it's gorgeous. I don't know what it would look like in life, but it was really pretty.

JOE: Four hundred-car storage, two levels.

BARBARA: Parking garage.

DOROTHEA: Now do they have the motels or hotels right ---

JOE: There is lots of them around there, but they're not theirs.

DOROTHEA: Right close.

JOE: But this covers one full block, curb to curb, all the way. And it's, well there is two stories of cars. But the front end goes clear to the sidewalk, and you've got the little restaurant here, and something else here, and these escalators will take you up. Oh, man, it's nice. But, just take for instance this, there is 91,000 bowlers already signed up for this particular tournament. A little better than 91,000. And they pay \$85 a piece, and that calculates to seven and three-quarter million, just for this tournament. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Not too shabby.

DOROTHEA: Just for that little tournament. Well that's what ---

JOE: Just for a five-month tournament.

DOROTHEA: That's what our dream is, and this year we didn't even get on a team, so ---  
That was ours, so ---

JOE: Next year the women go.

DOROTHEA: Is it the women?

JOE: Yeah, for the women next year.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, well that's what we wanted to do, was bowl long enough we could go back to Reno. Because we went once, and we want to go again. But we're not even bowling this year.

JOE: You would just love it. Get going, and just the trip is worth it. I mean, just to see that plant. Boy!

DOROTHEA: Okay.

BARBARA: So what did you say for fun, you like to bowl and what was the other one?

JOE: Deer hunt.

BARBARA: Deer hunt.

JOE: Deer and elk hunt.

BARBARA: Okay, do you have any good hunting stories to tell us?

JOE: Well, no. Well actually last year we got a beautiful six point bull the first morning, brother Earl, and I, and Ted. Silver tip, he was a beautiful animal.

DOROTHEA: Silver tip, what does that mean?

JOE: Tips of the horn, is about that far are white, tipped out. He had a little age on him, and he was sharpening them on some-thing. But the deer hasn't been too good the last few years.

DOROTHEA: Well there aren't any deer.

JOE: I know it.

DOROTHEA: There is lots of elk though. I also think that you might like gardening and

flowers.

JOE: I do like to work in the yard. I spend a lot of hours out there, because I enjoy it. And I didn't get that from a stranger, my mother and dad both, where Dazley's house is, used to be a beautiful garden. And I just, you know, it's ridiculous to grow a garden for two of us, because we are just frantically giving away stuff to get rid of it. But I just like to see it grow.

DOROTHEA: I like to see it grow too, it's so pretty.

JOE: Yeah, I just love to see it grow.

DOROTHEA: I'm not a gardener, but I drive by there and see that, and I wonder how you keep the deer out of it.

JOE: I don't. They come and go whenever they want.

DOROTHEA: I almost collided with one in there.

JOE: You sure will.

DOROTHEA: Boy, she jumped out of that, where Ruth lives, Ruth Culp lives.

JOE: Yeah, right.

DOROTHEA: And jumped out of those bushes into the highway just as I come about 60 miles an hour up that road.

JOE: Yeah, it's a dangerous thing.

DOROTHEA: Boy, I'll tell you, I --- Oh, I thought this is it. But I missed, I don't know where she went, but I missed. But ---

BARBARA: Have you ever had any political aspirations like Earl?

JOE: None whatsoever.

BARBARA: You let him take care of ---

JOE: I don't want nothing to do with that. No, he's got that gift, that I just don't have that.

DOROTHEA: He's the speaker, and you're the ---

JOE: Right.

BARBARA: You're the doer.

JOE: Right.

DOROTHEA: Doer.

JOE: I keep playing with that thing. (Microphone)

DOROTHEA: Well that's why I should have this undone too (cord).

JOE: No, no political.

BARBARA: Well when you were an appraiser, is that correct?

JOE: Uh huh.

BARBARA: Was it just for the Harney County? What did you appraise?

JOE: All of Harney County. Everything in Harney County, except we didn't do industrial and large commercial, we just, land and homes. That took quite a little bit of schooling to get started on that. Then after you get started, that's when the schooling starts.  
(Laughter)

BARBARA: You learn by doing.

JOE: Right.

DOROTHEA: Well what is the job of an appraiser? Do you go out and re-do all these houses? Or only when they rebuild, or how do you ---

BARBARA: Is it every six years, is it?

JOE: Well the law requires that they will inspect every property in the county within a six-year cycle. Well many, many, many times Mom and Dad both work, and there is no one at home, but you're there, you've looked at the house as best you can, and you can pretty well tell. And then you put this down on this card, and then the inspectors will come and say --- they might quiz you a little bit about, to see if you was really there. Because there is a point there, that if you say you're there and you weren't there, that gets kind of hairy.

So you have to, you have to go to the property and see it, and if it's a new construction, or what we call a red tag, which comes from a building permit, you have to go and make arrangements to see the house, and see what they done. So many, many times, you know, they may put \$20,000 in a remodeling job, and it doesn't come out that way at all. Because half of the twenty was tearing out, instead of adding on, you know.

So there is things that you have to do to satisfy the powers that be, and of course that's the Department of Revenue. And their job from Congress, or from, yeah, from the state legislature and all of that is, that you will get as much value as you can in this state so that we can borrow against it. That's all in the world it is. So they make you stay up there.

And you have to run a ratio study every year, and that's simply a ratio between what it sold for, and what you've got it on for. And if that ratio falls too much, they'll say hey, put on a blanket until you get there. Blankets are terrible in many cases, because a lot of them just don't deserve that. I mean they are junkers. But you stick 15% on a little old cheapie, and it just don't fit. On the other hand you put 15% on a hundred thousand dollar home and you've over done it. So it's a means that they can use, until that --- nobody can have the personnel to do every property every year. Because we've got a big county to cover.

BARBARA: I know they drive up your driveway, they get out, they look at the front, they come in, stand inside your, the door, and walk out again, and that was it, the two times that our house has been appraised. I mean they didn't walk all the way around the house, or they didn't go inside, other than right inside the front door. So it makes you wonder how do they come up with the figures.

JOE: What they're looking at, when they just, most of the time, unless they have reason to believe otherwise, that they just, they get a picture right quick of the business end of a



home, which is living, dining, kitchen, and maybe a utility area. The bedrooms, so what if you put something in there, you know. What they're looking at is have you changed its value as far as the market is concerned. They may say, well since they did this, and this, and this, the percent good is slightly better than it was the last time I was here. Make a little adjustment. It could be the other way; it's not quite as good as it was.

So there again, as I mentioned a while ago, it's being on the job is, and doing it, is the best schooling that you can have. And of course every year we had to go to school to keep updated. And then when I went out on my own in '62, I think it was '62, I went out on my own as a fee appraiser, well I had to get a license then. And it required schooling every year to keep that license up.

I enjoyed that kind of work. I kind of --- especially you see, there is, can you imagine the difference between doing it for a guy that wants to borrow money, or a guy that wants to pay his taxes. (Laughter) So you're not welcome this time, but you're --- boy, come in, get you some coffee here, you know. So it makes a ton of difference. But your job out there is to protect the investor. That's just as simple as you can say it. If you over appraise it and something would happen, they would lose it. And they can't get market out of that, then you're in trouble. So it's ---

DOROTHEA: So you're not any longer with there, you're retired, Wort Smyth died, who is the appraisers now?

JOE: John Clemens is still there. And they have a Don, whatever, Cox, whatever his name is, is there. And they got an apprentice working in there, its one of those work program things, where the county don't have to pay him. Well maybe it is just a tad.

BARBARA: Learn on the job.

JOE: Yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Kind of a grant type thing.

JOE: That creates a problem sometimes in being able to get done, you've got to cut your county up in pieces so that you can do this piece this year, and this year, and get around it in six years. And when you go to the South End, you know, you're 150 miles from home. But most of the time down there you can go down and get a cabin, room somewhere, and work that out in say a week, or some-thing like that. But I enjoyed doing it, after I got away from the tax side of it. There was so many regulations that it just got clear up to here. And they were forcing me to do things, I just, god I just couldn't hardly do it. It wasn't right. Talk to those people, man.

BARBARA: So you've done that, and you retired from all of this now, and you're basically retired until its time to hay for Earl in the summertime. Is that basically what it is?

JOE: Right, right. Right now I'm doing a little bit of work for Equi-Fax.

BARBARA: For who?

JOE: Equi-Fax.

BARBARA: What is that?

JOE: That's a new, that's a new system, I guess that's the right word, for loaning institutions to get an idea of the value of the property that they want to loan money on, without paying \$400, \$500, \$600 for an appraisal. And what that amounts to, see they only charge \$85, and any cost go to the guy that is borrowing, of course, unless they split it up with the seller. But anyway, they'll send me a thing and say so and so, go take a picture. So I run out and take a picture, and then I go up to the courthouse, and if I can find three comps in the ballpark, I give it to them and send it to them. Anything under a \$100,000 now they'll accept. So it's up to them after I get through with it, it doesn't amount to much, but it saves the consumer quite a package of money. Because closing costs are high enough as it is. So with Equi-Fax type thing, there is some common sense

and judgment has to be thrown into it. But it's just; it's just a lot cheaper. And there is a lot of people that can't pay that, and still buy that home. I mean, you know, that's tough.

BARBARA: Yeah. You're programmed for certain things, if it goes beyond it; you're out of the ball game.

JOE: Take kids coming out of school, they want to start raising a family, and have a home, and boy, you know, \$400 or \$500 is either in or out. So they've come up with this, and it's relatively new now. And it is not called, and will not be called an appraisal. It is just an estimate. I call it a swag appraisal.

BARBARA: A swag?

JOE: Uh huh. That's, "Systematic Wild Ass Guess!" (Laughter) Now you don't have that on tape, do you?

DOROTHEA: Yeah, that's on tape too.

BARBARA: Well we're almost to the end of our tape here. Is there anything else that you would like to add on here today? Or do you think we have pretty much covered everything?

JOE: Well, we've covered a pretty good field, haven't we?

DOROTHEA: Well before we get shut off then, we'd better thank you for the afternoon.

JOE: Well, no problem. I didn't know what in the world I was going to talk about. But ---

DOROTHEA: It wasn't hard, was it?

BARBARA: We did pretty good, didn't we?

JOE: Yeah, you just sucked it right out of me.

(END OF TAPE)

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TILLER FAMILY

WILLIAM & EVA (SCISM) TILLER

CHILDREN

BILL - WIFE = HOLLIS

CHILDREN: RAYMOND - ROGER - ROBERT - RONALD - JOYCE - JANICE

VESTUS - 1ST WIFE = HAZEL WHITE - 2ND WIFE - BERTHA NOBLE

CHILDREN (BY HAZEL) - BARBARA - FERN

CHILDREN (BY BERTHA) - LINDA

BERTHA'S CHILDREN BY PREVIOUS MARRIAGE - ARMOND - JOE - GEORGE -  
ERNIE

J. C. - WIFE = ERMA

CHILDREN - BILL - ARDYCE - LELAND - GARY

HOBERT - WIFE = MILDRED

CHILDREN - JOHNNY - KIM (HOBE) - TRENT - TREVA

MILDRED'S CHILD BY PREVIOUS MARRIAGE - DARLENE

PLURIBUS - WIFE = TACIE LUNDY

CHILDREN - JOE - VIRGINIA - EARL - RUTHIE - ROYCE - DONNIE

PAUL

JUANITA

HERMAN

RACHEL (GRIFFITH)