

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #142 - Sides A/B

Subject: Eldon Currey

Place: Burns, Oregon

Date: May 5, 1972

Interviewer: Pauline Braymen

PAULINE BRAYMEN: This is Pauline Braymen; I'm interviewing Eldon Currey at his home in Burns on April --- What day is this?

MRS. CURREY: It's May the 5th.

PAULINE: Oh my goodness, on May the 5th, 1972. I always do that. That way I know I'm recording and I don't go for an hour and a half and find out that nothing happened. Now a piece of paper and a pencil.

ELDON CURREY: Doesn't that have a stop on it?

PAULINE: No, this one doesn't. Now my cassette does.

ELDON: Usually they have a ... right here.

PAULINE: Yeah, it does.

ELDON: You want me to put it on?

PAULINE: No.

MRS. CURREY: ...

PAULINE: Maybe I'll just hire you to go along with me to operate that thing. I have a terrible time with it. I'll be glad when they get mine fixed, if they can get it fixed. Because I didn't have so much trouble with it.

MRS. CURREY: Is it recording all this?

PAULINE: Yes.

ELDON: Well, Dad was born in Lake County and raised over there. And then they came to Harney County about 1912. I'm not really sure on the date. And he homesteaded over in what they call Road Canyon. It's north and west of Fields, in Catlow Valley.

PAULINE: Road Canyon?

ELDON: Road, Road Canyon. The road used to go through there.

PAULINE: Yeah, that's just what they called it then.

ELDON: Is this recording, do you think?

PAULINE: Yes, yes. It's making a funny noise but I think it's working.

ELDON: Yeah. He homesteaded there, and then my mother's folks came from Washington to Catlow Valley when all the homesteaders came in there. And they were married in Catlow Valley. Well they were married in Burns, but --- And I don't know when they were married either, but --- And I was born in 1918, but not down there. My folks had went back to Washington at that time and I was born up, at Spokane. They came back to town when I was six months old. Lived down in the South End the rest of the time till I was grown.

PAULINE: Well what was your dad's name now?

ELDON: Chester Currey.

PAULINE: Chester Currey.

ELDON: Or H. C. Currey.

PAULINE: And what was your mother's name?

ELDON: Alice.

PAULINE: Alice.

ELDON: Alice Clayton.

PAULINE: Now do I have this straight? She came here with her family and they

homesteaded out in the Catlow Valley.

ELDON: In Catlow Valley, out by Blitzen.

PAULINE: And then when she married your dad --- Did he come alone or did he come with his parents, or ---

ELDON: No, he came by himself. He was a grown man.

MRS. CURREY: He had cattle or something.

ELDON: He'd had sheep, and they'd run sheep out toward, oh Abert Lake or in that part of the country. And then I don't know he got out of the sheep business and came over here and took this home-stead and was going to farm, and of course the farming didn't turn out so good. So then he ranched the rest of the time.

PAULINE: Did he have sheep then, or cattle?

ELDON: Well cattle after that mostly. He worked for the PLS Company for a long time. After I was born he worked --- he was on the Juniper Ranch for several years and on the, no I guess he wasn't on Serrano. He was on Juniper.

PAULINE: Now that's a new name, Serrano. How do you spell that? I don't know.

MRS. CURREY: S O N O R A.

ELDON: No, S O R A N A. Sorana Point. (Corrected to Serrano.)

PAULINE: Serrano Point.

MRS. CURREY: It's Crumps, Leland Crumps was ---

ELDON: Crumps, where Leland Crumps owned it later.

PAULINE: I just hadn't heard it mentioned ever, so I wanted to get straight, what it was.

ELDON: Let's see, I was born in 1918, and then by the time I was about 3 years old we moved to Andrews, and bought a little place there. Is it going to blow up? (Tape recorder)

PAULINE: Well, I don't know. It's making a funny little noise that it doesn't usually make.  
But I guess it's ---

ELDON: I think it's probably the belts in it, they slip.

PAULINE: I maybe just haven't set it --- I usually set it down on the floor, and I guess I just haven't ---

MRS. CURREY: It must be the ...

PAULINE: No, I know what it is. I usually set it down on the floor, and I'm not that close to it.

ELDON: You want a cup of coffee? Do you drink coffee?

PAULINE: Yeah, if you've got a cup of coffee, I'd love some. Okay, so you were born in 1918, and then when you said when you were a little older ---

ELDON: Yeah, well what do you mean, when ---

PAULINE: Well you started to say something, and I interrupted you.

ELDON: Well when we moved down to Andrews, got a place just south of Andrews about the time I was --- oh, I must have been about 3, I guess.

MRS. CURREY: Would you like some?

ELDON: Cream? Sugar?

PAULINE: This is fine, thank you. Did you go to school at Andrews?

ELDON: Yeah, yeah, I started to school. I went to Gene Freiz's (sp.?) mother the first year.

PAULINE: Is that Susan Freiz? I see her name in the Ontario paper once in a while.

ELDON: Yeah, half the people in Harney and Malheur County I think went to school to her at one time or another.

PAULINE: She's probably somebody I ought to go interview, isn't she?

ELDON: I don't know, I don't think she's alive yet.

PAULINE: Oh, I think so, because we take the Ontario paper and I know I've read her name.

MRS. CURREY: I think she's in a nursing home over there.

ELDON: I thought she was --- Then the year I was in the first grade, and that was, as near as I can figure it was 1924 was the year the hotel at Andrews burnt. And Lloyd Sweeney got burned real bad getting his boy out.

MRS. CURREY: Wasn't that when Gilbert got burnt too, Gilbert Urizar?

ELDON: Yeah, his folks owned the hotel.

PAULINE: Gilbert Urizar's folks owned the hotel?

ELDON: Yeah, owned the hotel.

PAULINE: Do you know what started the fire?

ELDON: No, not that I know of.

PAULINE: It was just a wood building I suppose.

ELDON: Yeah, a wooden building. Two stories, big building, or it seemed awful big to me. And the Sweeney boy, they'd left him up-stairs asleep, and they were having the Christmas dance. The dance hall was right behind it. It was about 24 below zero that night and they had --- A lot of those Model-T Fords, they couldn't get them started. They couldn't even shove some of them away from the building hardly, they were frozen up so bad. They finally got one car started and drove up to the Juniper Ranch. And there was a telephone at Juniper then, and called into Burns for a doctor for him.

MRS. CURREY: How long did it take him to get him out? I'm asking questions!

PAULINE: Good, good.

ELDON: The doctor came out there. And he was a --- Well, it was early the next morning before they ever got to Juniper, and it was late the next night before he ever got there.

PAULINE: The doctor got there. The father went into the building and ---

ELDON: Yeah, he went in and ---

PAULINE: I imagine they were both burned real bad.

ELDON: Well no, he wrapped the boy up in a wool blanket, see. And started out down the hall, and it got too much for him, so he run back the other way. And he threw his coat over his head, but it still burned him. And run out the other way and slid down the, jumped out a window, and slid down that little shed roof and got out.

PAULINE: How old was the boy, do you know?

ELDON: Oh, he was about 3 or 4.

PAULINE: Is he still alive?

ELDON: Yeah.

PAULINE: What was his name?

ELDON: Harold Sweeney.

PAULINE: Harold.

ELDON: Yeah. They've got a place in Idaho somewhere now. Stub would know where they are.

PAULINE: Stub?

ELDON: Currey.

PAULINE: Currey.

ELDON: Well, I bet you get into a lot of names on this.

PAULINE: Well, I'm finding out who everybody is related to.

MRS. CURREY: Horton is his real name.

ELDON: And I don't know, and then we had the place south of Andrews there is how I happen to remember about the cattle drives when Warren McLean had the Alvord. They drove to Winnemucca all the time, or a lot of time. But this one-year they'd stayed to our

place because we took all our steers with them, and that was in '28. Now I think that was more than one year. Well I think it was '28 and probably '29 that I know they made drives down there.

PAULINE: And where did you say they took the cattle to? Winnemucca?

ELDON: Winnemucca, yeah. No, to Jungle. It's just out a ways.

PAULINE: Yeah, that's a new name too. Tell me about Jungle.

ELDON: Well, it was just a siding and stockyards there on the main line. That was just out of Winnemucca see, and its east, northeast of Winnemucca, but it's closer to drive to.

PAULINE: Than to go on to Winnemucca.

ELDON: Go on to Winnemucca:

PAULINE: Well then it's the first available siding.

ELDON: Yeah.

PAULINE: Is it still in use now, or ---

ELDON: I don't know.

PAULINE: I've never heard it before.

ELDON: Don't have any idea.

PAULINE: I'm not very familiar with the Winnemucca area anyway. I'm not too familiar about this Andrews area.

ELDON: You should go down there.

PAULINE: Yeah. Well I've been. I've been once or twice, and I guess I'll be going again because there are several people down there to talk to.

ELDON: I don't know how long it took them. It must have taken--- I was just a big kid, but it seemed to me like it must have taken the biggest part of two weeks to ---

MRS. CURREY: To drive them that far?

ELDON: Why sure, that's a long ways, and a cow don't go very fast. They sure don't.

You've got to find water for them ---

MRS. CURREY: Right through that, what do you call it? Rabbit-brush?

ELDON: Greasewood.

PAULINE: I can think of things I'd rather do.

ELDON: And I don't know. If you give me an idea, I'll ---

PAULINE: Well about how many men do you remember they had on the crew when they drove the cattle, and about how many cattle did they have, do you know? Do you remember that?

ELDON: I don't know. They must have had two, three hundred head of cattle. They were mostly steers I think that they drove. And I don't know; they had quite a crew. They had an old truck fixed up for a cook wagon.

MRS. CURREY: In '28 they had trucks that they did that with?

ELDON: Huh?

MRS. CURREY: In '28 they had trucks that they did that with?

ELDON: Oh sure, they had trucks in '28. An old International truck, I remember that.

PAULINE: They put the cook wagon in the --- the cooking supplies into the truck.

ELDON: Yeah, yeah. They'd camp wherever ---

MAN: Then they'd follow the roads.

ELDON: Yeah, the cattle would cut across but there was always a road for them to go around.

PAULINE: What time of the year was it?

ELDON: Fall. Yeah, they always went in the fall, well September, because school was starting. It always made me made because I couldn't go because I had to go to school. Couldn't go on important things like cattle drives. I'd have rather gone on the cattle drive.

PAULINE: Do you know about how long they continued to drive cattle, or were these



some of the last ones?

ELDON: Well, I think --- well about that time, it wasn't too long after that, that they started driving to Crane because it was a little shorter. At that time they went to Winnemucca because it was on the main line. Crane was out here, and it was easier on the cows after they got them loaded they'd be back to where they were going so much faster.

PAULINE: Than from Crane?

ELDON: But then they got to --- I don't know to drive them to Crane, because it was closer after that. I know they drove quite a lot after that, but I don't think they drove too often.

PAULINE: Did they have Fourth of July celebrations down at Andrews, or did you come into Crane?

ELDON: No, no they didn't. Crane was a full day's trip. Well, it was two days. The stage at that time went from Crane to Overton's Station which is, well, there's nothing there now. But one day, and then the next day it went from there to Denio.

PAULINE: Now is the stage, was it an automobile?

ELDON: Yeah, an old Model-T Ford. And incidentally Fitchett drove the stage then too. They were somewhat related.

PAULINE: Well I wonder, daddy was telling me, and when you called and talk to Dad, he was telling me about it, he said that he thought that it was Curreys that had this old Model-T and they drove back and forth between Crane and ---

ELDON: Yeah, they did. But that's Marvin Curry and his dad, and they were actually no relation, I guess. Or a very, very distant relation.

PAULINE: Well he said they had some wild trips, and they used to make it in real fast time.

ELDON: Oh yeah, them kids --- Well, the old man had the contracts. He had two or

three, three boys I think, and they'd drive the stage. And I can remember people cussing because they'd never stopped at a mailbox. They just had the mail in the sack and they'd just threw it, you know, and your mail was in the sagebrush or in the ditch, or hard to tell where.

PAULINE: They made good time.

ELDON: Oh yeah, they made good time.

PAULINE: Daddy was telling me a story about how they hauled a, I don't know, I think he said it was a sheepherder and his dog, and the dog got sick and oh, they had an awful time. (Laughter) And when they got there the sheepherder asked him how, what he owed him for the trip and the driver said there wouldn't be anything for him, but \$20 for the dog. (Laughter) So he seemed to think they were pretty comical people. You say that was Marvin Curry?

ELDON: Yeah.

MRS. CURREY: He's got a filling station, didn't he ...

ELDON: Yeah, later. He's got a place over by Prineville somewhere now. He married Bill Catterson's sister.

PAULINE: Well, he sounds like somebody that I ought to look up, get him to talk. (Laughter)

ELDON: Yeah, he's quite a little older than I am. He could tell --- I think he was the youngest. I think they had three boys ...

MRS. CURREY: Are those the ones from Juntura?

ELDON: No.

PAULINE: I'm making notes to myself here.

ELDON: Yeah, every Fourth of July they had horse races and foot races, a good time. And a little moonshine here and there. ... I was really young.

PAULINE: Very innocent, pure innocence sitting over there. Horse races and foot races you said. The foot races were mostly for the kids, or did the adults take over?

ELDON: Yeah, for the kids. Oh no, just for the kids. Horse races were first ... Everybody would bring their favorite horse. Then they'd have a few fistfights, and this or that too, but I can remember that.

PAULINE: Great big potluck lunch?

ELDON: Yeah, usually I think. I remember ---

MRS. CURRY: Ice cream ... a while back, we brought ice down from the mountains.

ELDON: Oh yeah, once in a while.

PAULINE: From the top of the Steens?

ELDON: From the top of the Steens. Of course we done that, that was after they quit having very big celebrations. We --- one year Warren McLean and somebody else went clear up on top there to a snow bank, with three packhorses, and got ---

MRS. CURREY: There were no icehouses then.

ELDON: --- and filled the alforjas with the ice and then made ice cream for Fourth of July.

PAULINE: Well that's interesting.

ELDON: Of course they didn't do this all the time.

PAULINE: Yeah, once in a while, for instance. Well, did you know this Claire McGill Luce that ---

ELDON: Yeah. What I mean is I didn't really know her, when I was in the first grade her parents were there at Andrews, and she was just a little kid about like Leslie. And I couldn't place her for a long time, and I asked Grace Smyth then before I ever remembered her, about the little kid that --- I did remember then after that they had that little kid.

PAULINE: No, I think she was born in 1923, but she'd have been, well that was just about

right.

ELDON: Yeah, see that was in 1924 --- the spring of '25 that would have been, so she would just have been about the size of ---

PAULINE: Well she is the one that is paying for all this.

MRS. CURREY: Oh!

PAULINE: She lived with her grandfather, I guess, and he ... most of the time. So she left this money to be used for, well really

--- actually she left the money to the library to be used to gather history, historical material. But when she passed away, she had cancer, and when she passed away, her husband said that in lieu of flowers to send money to be used, to gather information about Harney County.

ELDON: He, her dad --- that year that I was going to school, we lived four miles, over four miles from school. And so when the weather got bad, and after everything on the ranch was pretty well taken care of in the wintertime, there was some cows to feed, and not too much, well then we'd go up to Andrews and rent a house. My mother would, so we wouldn't have so far to ride.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

ELDON: It'd get pretty cold for the small kids. And so that year was my first year in school, and my brother hadn't started to school yet. And we were living in Andrews, when they lived there, and he started a saloon there. He was running the saloon that winter, but I don't think that it was a very paying proposition. Come spring, as I remember, they left.

PAULINE: They left?

ELDON: But that's where I saw her.

PAULINE: Well do you know what her grandfather's name was? I don't think I've ever

heard of that.

ELDON: Oh no, they lived over at Drewsey. I've heard of it. It was in the paper. But I never knew --- In fact I never even knew, whatever happened to her until after this all happened. And I said well I should know her if she was around the South End. And then Grace Smyth, I asked her, and she says well don't you remember the, when Blondie McGill and his wife were there, and Blondie started up that saloon, and they had that little girl. She was just toddling around. And then I remembered her. I remember they had the saloon, and they had a big calendar, a bear picture on it. And one night, we lived pretty close there, and we heard "bang, bang" in there. And this old boy was sitting there, and he got drunk and he looked up and saw that bear, so he pulled his pistol out and shot that bear about three times. Must have had some good whiskey. (Laughter) Must have thought that was really something, to get all excited over that bear.

MRS. CURREY: I suppose that his Luce would like to hear that. (Laughter)

PAULINE: Well, I don't know. You know that sort of thing to me is just plain interesting, and I wouldn't care. I've talked to people out at Drewsey, and they said that Drewsey was really wild.

ELDON: Yes.

MRS. CURREY: Oh it was.

PAULINE: They start to telling me things and then they say, oh well no; we better not talk about that. But to me it's just interesting. I wouldn't care if it was my grandfather that run the saloon, but ... Yeah, it is.

MRS. CURREY: ...

PAULINE: You know, yeah there was a school there down by where the ballpark is now.

ELDON: My uncle, he was over here one time, and he told us a whole bunch of stuff. He went out, right there where, as near as he could figure, where Smerski has got his logging

trucks now, is where that old Egan's Store was that Granddad --- see he started that.

PAULINE: Uh huh. Your grandfather?

ELDON: Yeah.

PAULINE: Was he a Currey now, or --- what was his name?

ELDON: Montz.

PAULINE: I didn't ---

ELDON: M O N T Z.

PAULINE: M O N T Z. That's an unusual name. Well then he was here along about 1870 something?

ELDON: Yeah, he was here before this; he was a surveyor. But he came in --- I don't know how he got over here really, to be honest with you. But he was here during a war --- the Indian. And he worked, he wasn't in the army, he was a scout. He worked with Warm Spring Indians, and was all over the South End and up here. And then his brother was a dispatch rider from Fort Smyth, no it isn't L. C., but I forget the ---

PAULINE: I know which one, I could look it up. I know ---

ELDON: It's Whitehorse, used to be, and Granddad said he was a real small guy and he rode a great big old black horse. And he said he wouldn't even carry a gun. He just figured that horse could outrun the Indians.

PAULINE: And so he just rode.

ELDON: He just rode. Now this is Granddad's story. I don't know, but it's probably right.

PAULINE: Well he ---

ELDON: Granddad, he was all over the South End with those Indians as a scout. He used to tell some --- This is where I missed, if we'd only had sense enough to take down all the things that he --- because he was sharp. He could tell you even to the day, being a surveyor, I think he kept kind of a log of a lot of that stuff. Of course it got lost. But he

could tell you the year, what spring it was, what fall it was, you know, that his or that happened. He really could.

PAULINE: This is the thing that's happened with, you know, so many of the really old timers are gone, and so I think it's really important that we are doing this now.

ELDON: John Henry Penland says, when he moved out here, and he says he wanted to stay and listen to my granddad, but we'd want to go play ball, or play, or something. So out we'd go and he'd go with us and he said he wished he'd of stayed and got my granddad to tell him a lot more. Of course he was from Missouri, and he was really interested in all that old time tales, more than we were. Because we were raised with them, you know, and we didn't pay no attention.

MRS. CURREY: Didn't they live where the Pat Culp place is now?

ELDON: Well I don't know, they took up a pre-emption claim there, part of that, and I don't know just what part that is. Then they went on back to Lake County and he was County Surveyor over there, a good many years until he retired. Then he came back and made boats down at the South End until he died.

MRS. CURREY: Mrs. Pat Cecil, you know her?

PAULINE: Yeah.

MRS. CURREY: Well, she ... down in here someplace for a month or so. They lived down in the flat here someplace, and we wondered where she was when he was over. Because he was kind of elderly then. I remember her, for one thing, ... and I wondered where she was. Apparently they had a little kid ...

PAULINE: Well I guess when the first people came in here, as I understand it, they camped over here near these warm springs, probably because of the warm springs.

ELDON: Over by Hines.

PAULINE: Yeah, out in there.

ELDON: What was it, Laurence he was saying something about ---

MRS. CURREY: He said that road never came in that way. It came over the rise, over there by Potter Swamp. ... Eldon's uncle said that too.

ELDON: Well, that's that old road that goes up over Wright's, I don't know --- not really over Wright's Point, up that draw there on the Hammond's place.

PAULINE: Yeah, well it used to be that. I don't know if it's too passable now, but that is it?

ELDON: They've fenced it up now, but you used to be able to get through there. I come in one time, I'd been out wandering around out there for years, you know, and then come in one time from the other way and he says, "Well this is a short way home." Had the old Jeep station wagon, and he got down there, and there it was all fenced up.

PAULINE: And he had to turn around and go around.

MRS. CURREY: Big sign on it, oh Eldon was mad ...

ELDON: \$25 if they catch you in there. That's about all that I know, really.

PAULINE: How many stores and things did they have in Andrews when you were going to school; can you remember that?

ELDON: They had one store.

PAULINE: One store. Do you know who?

ELDON: One hotel.

PAULINE: What was it called, do you know, I mean the store?

ELDON: Well, it was Smyth's Store. John Smyth, old John Smyth. Johnny that just died a few years ago, it was his uncle.

PAULINE: His uncle.

ELDON: He ran the one at Andrews, and his dad George Smyth had the one at Fields. At that time at the South End there was a store at Pollock's, at Folly Farm there.



PAULINE: Pollock?

ELDON: Yeah, Pollock's had the store there.

MRS. CURREY: Didn't they have one before that over in The Narrows? ELDON: And then there was another store at Andrews, and a store at Fields, and there was a store at Denio.

...

PAULINE: Then you had a hotel? Who run the hotel?

ELDON: Felix Urizar.

PAULINE: Felix Urizar. Even after it burnt down, he built back again?

ELDON: Yeah, they took what had been the ranch house and made it into a hotel. They never did rebuild the old hotel.

PAULINE: What did they call it, just the hotel, or was it the Andrews Hotel, or ---

ELDON: I guess it was the Andrews Hotel, I guess, I don't really.

PAULINE: I'll have to get hold of Gilbert and ---

ELDON: Yeah, his mother could probably tell you a lot.

PAULINE: Okay, a store, and a hotel, and what else? One saloon that didn't last too long.

ELDON: Well they had, well I don't know --- Before that they had the saloon there in the hotel, but then I don't know what kind of prohibition or something, I think, started about that time. I don't know what, there was just four or five houses was all ... that.

PAULINE: Well a lot of people down there run sheep, didn't they?

ELDON: Well there were quite a few sheep men. Now at that time, see sheep men usually didn't really have any land, they just --- they kept them on the desert all winter, and on the mountain all summer. And they'd maybe just come and go somewhere and buy some hay for a little while in the wintertime, and they'd just go through the country

eating just kind of --- They really didn't have any headquarters, like they did a little later.

PAULINE: Did you spend any time up on the Steens when you were a kid?

ELDON: Oh yeah, sometimes in the summertime we'd go up there and camp out for a week or so and go fishing and, not too often, not as often as --- this was quite a trek up there.

PAULINE: Yeah. They didn't have any roads or anything up there then.

ELDON: Oh no. It was all packhorses.

MRS. CURREY: Tell her about the time you went up after juniper poles with that --- Starbuck and the snow fell on your.

PAULINE: Oh, that sounds interesting; tell me about that.

ELDON: Well Gale Starbuck's dad, and my dad, took a contract for fencing this homestead for this Basco. He'd taken up this homestead; he had sheep. And so they fenced --- with the fence--- they were putting the fence up. And we was just kids, we'd go up, one, Gale and my brother would go up one week, and then me and Glenn we'd go up the next weekend. It was in June, about the 28th or 29th of June, and we're up there. It'd been warm, had our summer clothes. We had coats, but not heavy winter coats. And one morning we woke up and there was two feet of snow.

PAULINE: Oh, my goodness. ...

ELDON: So it only lasted about two days, but it sure wasn't very comfortable around there ...

PAULINE: I can imagine.

ELDON: We were in tents.

PAULINE: There wasn't anything you could do but just stay there.

ELDON: Yeah, just stay there. It melted down, it didn't last, you know, it dried up. But those were old, ... tents had two foot walls, and the snow was just even with them walls

the next morning when we woke up.

PAULINE: Oh, for heavens sake.

ELDON: So it can snow up there even in the summertime. And then when I was about --- my brother was, he's two years younger than I am, might have been 4 or 5, the folks and this neighbor family got together and went up for a week, up on the mountain. But we went up by, past the Alvord, they lived below the mountain there. Where is it, above the Mann Lake, on this way from the Mann Lake? They had a little place right next to the hill, and we went up there. Then we took a pack string and went up into the Kiger to fish, and camped out for a week. I remember that. I was just old enough to remember. Dad carried my brother, sat a pillow on the saddle horn and carried him on this old gentle horse on the saddle horn way up there. Took packhorses, and tents, and was up there for a week. That was the first time I ever remember ever being on the Steens. But I was too small, I didn't ---

MRS. CURREY: How long did you usually stay?

ELDON: Oh, five or six days, something like that. That's pretty steep up on that side to get up there.

PAULINE: Yes, it is.

ELDON: Then of course, on the Andrews side, up on the lower part of the mountain it isn't near as steep, or near as high either as far as that goes.

MRS. CURREY: ... get up to Fish Lake then, but they had to go by Cat.

ELDON: Yeah, that's a long ways to Fish Lake from down there. The first time I ever went to Wild Horse Lake, I was in high school then. And we went up and borrowed horses from Rube Blair's folks, and rode a half a day up that canyon and got up to Wild Horse Lake, because I'd heard of it all my life, and wanted to see it. And my dad and I decided, we didn't have anything to do one Sunday, so we did that. We borrowed these

horses from Blairs and rode up the canyon. And it was after dark before we got back down. We'd stayed there about an hour or an hour and a half, ate lunch and went back down. The next time that I went up there, well we went from this side and we went --- it was when they first made the road up there. We started out way early in the morning, and decided we'd just cook breakfast when we got hungry, and we went and drove to where we could look down on the lake before we ever got hungry enough to stop and get breakfast.

MRS. CURREY: Yeah, and how we had to keep pumping on the stove too because of the altitude.

ELDON: Are you telling this story, or am I?

MRS. CURREY: That was fun.

PAULINE: Did you have a little gas stove?

ELDON: Yeah, and they don't burn very good up there.

PAULINE: That's pretty high. Is it as pretty when you ride up the canyon, and you ride right down there by the lake? Is it as beautiful as it looks, when you look down from the top?

ELDON: It's pretty nice, yeah. Of course that canyon is pretty steep too, and rocky.

PAULINE: It looks like it. It almost looks like it's too steep to ride up, is what it looks like.

ELDON: Well it isn't a very good trail. Like I was saying, it took us --- we left home just at daylight, and this was in the summertime, and it was after dark before we got back to Blair's place. Which was --- and we just stayed there an hour, or hour and a half. I'd bought a new camera and that was my excuse for going up there. But I'd always wanted to see the place and got this new camera so we decided that was a good place to take some pictures.

...

MRS. CURREY: What was that deal at the Borax Works ...

...

PAULINE: Were they working the borax mine when you were a boy? Or that was before?

ELDON: No, that was way before. There was --- the people that had owned it still lived there when I was there. I knew them.

PAULINE: What was their name?

ELDON: Algard.

PAULINE: Algard.

ELDON: Yeah, and their granddaughter still lives down at Andrews.

PAULINE: Rube Long, or not Rube Long, but Rube Blair gave me their name the other day; he said the Algards was her parents.

MRS. CURREY: That would be ...

ELDON: ... I believe it is Frazier.

PAULINE: Yes, that's it.

ELDON: She would remember a lot --- her and I were in this school, her and I and Jimmy McDade were in the first grade at Andrews at the same time.

MRS. CURREY: Wasn't he in the fire too? ...

ELDON: No, we weren't in the fire, we were big kids and we were over at the dance hall.

MRS. CURREY: Well, didn't they all rush out and you had to get out of their way?

ELDON: Dad said he thought we were going to get trampled. They'd yelled fire and everybody rushed out, so he rushed out with them, and he thought we were going to get mashed by the crowd, of course.

PAULINE: Well a fire that way in the middle of winter --- when you know that you don't have the water to put it out or anything it could certainly be frightening.

ELDON: Of course there was no danger of anything else burning because it was far enough away that --- they had built stuff far enough apart they weren't short of land down there so ---

PAULINE: No, I don't ---

ELDON: It didn't burn anything but just the hotel.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

ELDON: It was kind of bad, so cold too. The cars never had any heaters in them or anything else. My dad and --- I don't know who else was there, there were three of them when they finally got this one car started, they just started out for Juniper. And that's something that seemed funny to me, when they first got the telephone line on the REA poles, or the Harney Electric poles, and had telephones down there --- but I can remember when I was a kid, most all of the houses down there had telephones in them. The McLean's place, down below Andrews, and some of the places in Andrews, and the old Turner place where Bessie Blair lives now, they all had telephones. And some of them they could still use, but some of the lines had got down between --- on up the country, and there was still telephones over the mountain to Juniper Ranch.

MRS. CURREY: So this isn't the first time that the phone lines been down then.

PAULINE: So really, the REA telephones weren't the first telephones?

ELDON: No, they weren't the first telephones in the South End.

PAULINE: I knew that they had some that weren't hooked up to Burns, or was it?

ELDON: Well, I don't know. They must have been hooked to Burns. It went into Crane, and then, yeah, it had to have been hooked to Burns. But of course, about that time was -- then probably a year or so after that they got to where it was down, and you couldn't get --- you couldn't call in at all. Everybody took the telephone wire and used it to wire stuff up. The poles all fell down.

PAULINE: Do you know what --- was it just a community affair to get the phone in?

ELDON: I think it was, but I'm not sure, but I think so, yeah.

PAULINE: That's something that I might ask Rube Blair, he might know more about that. I'm looking forward to visiting with him. We're on the pioneer board together. He --- he goes to a lot of stuff, and he was really helpful.

ELDON: He's sure showing his age though.

PAULINE: Yeah, he is. He was at the last meeting a couple of weeks ago, and he looks awful --- much feebler than he did last year even. But he's real interested in this. But he gave me a long list of names of people that I'd ought to see. So I told him that I was going to come talk to him too. And he wanted to be sure that I know about Stella Calderwood, and some of the other ones down there.

ELDON: Yeah, she would know a lot.

MRS. CURREY: Jessie could tell her a lot ...

ELDON: She wasn't down there at that time. She came in when I was --- they came into the country after ---

MRS. CURREY: Oh, that's ...

PAULINE: Did your folks have a car --- some time that you could remember, or do you remember when they first got their first car?

ELDON: Oh, they had a car of sorts, an old Model-T, ever since I can remember. And everybody almost down there had a car.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

ELDON: Ever since I can remember.

MRS. CURREY: It was amazing how many people lived down in that part of the country. He'll go along and tell me this person lived here, and this person lived there.

ELDON: Well there used to be a lot of people lived down there.

PAULINE: Well, you know, just down here on the other side of Wrights Point; that was all settled up at one time. You know you look out there now, and it's just unbelievable that there was --- And I guess all across the desert between, you know, out around Hampton, and all out in there was all taken up in homesteads at one time.

ELDON: And all of Catlow Valley, you know, it was taken.

PAULINE: Yeah, yeah.

ELDON: Somebody said that if they had all the money that had been put in wells in Catlow Valley, they'd have a maid. They wouldn't have to worry at all.

PAULINE: Well, I can believe it.

MRS. CURREY: Old Mr. and Mrs. Sizemore, they used to tell different things about Sunset Valley. They used to know the people that lived there and --- it's fascinating the history.

PAULINE: Well, I'm looking for people that can tell about Sunset Valley. Now that's Edith Sizemore that you're talking about?

MRS. CURREY: No, no, Nora.

PAULINE: Nora Sizemore, and she died.

ELDON: That's going to be the trouble, you know.

PAULINE: Well I just don't --- Well I talked to my Aunt Gladys, whose uncle and grandmother took up a homestead. But she was just a little girl, and about all she could remember was going there to visit a couple of times. And, she was never out there much.

MRS. CURREY: Was it you that said there was a doctor lived over there ... eye doctor ...

ELDON: Yeah, that was even after I was in high school.

MAN: What was his name, Nelson?

ELDON: But that was just the other side of Wright's Point, over there on one ... Over there, and I can't remember now, you know, roads were different then. So I don't



remember which one, it was a pretty good-sized house though. It must have been one of those places that's just over the hill there.

SIDE B

PAULINE: Was the schoolhouse in Andrews a one-room school, or did you have more than one teacher?

ELDON: Yeah, just one room. One year there was three of us went the whole year.

PAULINE: Oh, my goodness.

MRS. CURREY: ...

... (Unrelated conversation.)

PAULINE: I go over there once a month, and I'm saving up, and when I get three or four names then I'll go over there and I'll just spend the day there.

ELDON: I haven't seen him for three or four years.

PAULINE: They were thinking about moving back over here several years ago. They were checking to see if there was a possibility of putting a trailer there on my folks' place there, you know, down the airport road where Jim and Mary have their trailer house.

ELDON: Oh.

PAULINE: Or they were going to buy some of that property across the road or something. I don't know --- but maybe that's what they wanted to do, they changed their mind. ...

ELDON: ...

PAULINE: Ned Pierce, and Leao Pierce?

MAN: Who? No, Ed Peer.

PAULINE: Oh.

MAN: ... He brought my father over here from Idaho, and he went fishing with me. Later on that summer he got to talking with his cousin from Orofino, about the Blitzen River.

And Ed said, "Yeah, I know where it's at, I've been there." And I guess he'd been all over the Steens Mountain.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

...

MAN: ... He might know something about Harney County. The next time I see him I'll talk to him.

PAULINE: I've found out I have a tiger by the tail.

ELDON: The farther you go, the more you ---

PAULINE: Yeah, well it was going to last a couple of months, and I thought they said the deadline was June 1st ... and it's turning into be longer than that now, and I have more time. Everybody I talk to know such and such people that I'd ought to talk to. And then that article in the Oregonian, takes part of the week. I've had two phone calls from Portland, and two letters from --- one from Portland and one from Eugene, and one from Corvallis with information. So it's really mushrooming. But the library is delighted, they just think it's great, so I guess we'll just keep plugging along.

ELDON: That is going to be some kind of history after you get it compiled.

PAULINE: Well it is, I think, it really is.

ELDON: What are they going to do with it?

PAULINE: Well at this time all they are doing is compiling it. People ask me, well are you going to write a book? Well at this time, no I'm not writing a book. But when we get all of this stuff compiled I think that that is a logical thing to happen to it. But it will take a lot of research and then after it is all compiled ... and putting it together.

ELDON: ...

PAULINE: Did you miss out on the Steens Mountain book?

ELDON: Yeah, I did. Did you get ---

PAULINE: Yeah, my mom got Allan and I one for Christmas.

... (Discussion of book.)

ELDON: But that's about all I know I think, unless you got something that you want to ---

PAULINE: Well, I can't think of anything else right off. ...

MRS. CURREY: Have you ever been to the Borax Works?

...

PAULINE: No, no. Have you ever been to the Borax Works?

ELDON: Oh yes. You haven't been there? You should go there some time.

PAULINE: I know about where it's at.

MRS. CURREY: ...

PAULINE: Did you kids used to go down there to play around or ...

ELDON: No --- after we were bigger, and worked in haying we did sometimes. It was a good place to bathe. We'd run down there after work and ---

...

ELDON: It was quite a place. Actually no --- nothing --- there's hot springs and there's cold spring, and there's a warm lake. The lake was built up; it's on kind of a top of a knoll. Actually I think it was built through the years from the mineral in the water.

MRS. CURREY: ...

ELDON: The springs there --- some of them are lukewarm and then maybe two feet from there, there will be one that's just so hot it's bubbling or boiling. It's quite a thing.

MRS. CURREY: It's kind of like Yellowstone. That's why I can't figure out why they never did anything with it.

PAULINE: Well, it's so far away from everything, and ---

ELDON: And Yellowstone has the forest, and the big canyons. And out there, there's just the hot springs and that's it --- and the greasewood and the alkali ---

PAULINE: We've been down on the Alvord Lake, yeah the alkali, isn't that the Alvord? ...

MRS. CURREY: They used to go down and take their Saturday night bath --- Maybe I should say that ... It'll take the calluses off your feet.

PAULINE: It will huh? The mineral in the water, or the borax in the water?

ELDON: Oh yeah, there is a lot of minerals in the water. The mud in it is just like soap. You rub that on you and it really cleans you up.

PAULINE: Well that's what they mined it out of there for.

ELDON: No, it was for a health spa down around there, and they ...

MRS. CURREY: ... We went down one Fourth of July and we camped down there, almost by it. And she couldn't remember, she was only about what, 6 months old. It was fun.

...

PAULINE: Did you hay there, when you hayed down there did you set net and hay in that manner?

ELDON: Yeah, with nets and slides, and horse bucks and ---

PAULINE: What part did you usually do? What did you usually do in the hay fields?

ELDON: Oh, when I was smaller they always stuck me on the rake which I hated. And then eventually I guess I did about everything.

...

PAULINE: The team ran away?

ELDON: Yeah, the team ran away and hit a ditch and flipped me under the rake, and scratched me up a little.

PAULINE: You still have a mark on your back; you must have got scratched a little all right.

...

MRS. CURREY: Did you roll right in it?

ELDON: Sure I rolled in it, the team was running out through the field and ... out rolls of hay, naturally that was one place I was glad to get out of, I'll tell you.

PAULINE: Did the team finally stop, or did you finally roll out of it?

ELDON: Oh, it tripped. It got so much hay in there that it tripped, and I don't know. No, the team ran back to the corral. They tore the rake up going through the corral gate. The horse flies were bad you see, and they were kind of, oh they weren't ---they were gentle, but they weren't old slow pokes either. And this one horse he got to fighting flies, and took and reached over the other horse and wrapped the lines and checks right around the hames on the other horse. Well then I was just pulling against that other horse's collar. And I was doing fine, I was just running them in a circle, and they got kittled of course, and started to run --- and I was just a kid. But I was doing fine, running them in a circle until the rake hit a ditch, washed out through the field, and that flipped me off. Then's when I lost everything.

PAULINE: Lost control. Did you ever find rattlesnakes in the hay, or did anybody ever get bit?

ELDON: No, never did hear of anybody ever getting --- we used to throw one on a stack once in a while, in a load of hay too, that's when things got a little touchy then. (Laughter) Because you couldn't get away, but you know on a rake or a mower, you didn't have much to worry about. But on a stack you never knew just where the snake was, and where you wanted to be.

PAULINE: I've heard of them putting a snake on the stack to really stir things up, and I wondered if you'd ever heard of anyone ever getting bit.

ELDON: No, I never did hear of anyone getting bit.

...

ELDON: ... I was a grown man, we were haying and we had these old horse bucks, you know, sweep rakes, or bucks --- hay bucks, whatever you want to call them. And this one fellow was worrying about working. Had this small buck that we put four horses on, so it would pull a bigger load, and he was worrying about them horses running away from him. And he's setting there, and of course the spring in the old seat was kind of sprung, so he was down pretty low, and he hit this bunch of hay that this old sow had had a litter of pigs in. And these pigs started to squealing and here come this old sow, and she took after him, her old teeth was a click, click, clicking at the seat of his pants. And he was a whipping them old horses and trying to go and a hollering. Finally he got out from under the hay, and got the horses turned around and out from under the hay. And when he got back to the stack, he said we thought you was worrying about them horses running away, and there you were trying to scare them and everything else.

PAULINE: Yeah, an old sow with a litter of pigs can be kind of---

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