

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #153 - Sides A/B

Subject: Jessie Foley Ritchey

Place: Burns, Oregon

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Interviewer: James Baker

JESSIE FOLEY RITCHEY: John Charles Foley who was born in Wisconsin, Buffalo, Wisconsin, the son of James Foley and Mary McNulty, who were Irish immigrants. They had homesteaded a farm in Wisconsin, built a log cabin, and in this log cabin J. C. Foley was born in 1858. At the age of 6 years he, with his parents and one brother, moved into a large farmhouse, which is still owned by his nephew, Dr. Mark Foley.

JAMES BAKER: So, from Wisconsin he moved west, probably as a young man?

JESSIE: Yes, he was 25 years old when he came West, but not to Oregon. He came to California to join an uncle, John McNulty, who had painted a bright picture of California as a possible place for him to settle. But J. C., being of the pioneering spirit and wanting to have his own independent spread, soon found that the land barons of California had largely taken up the lands. And he heard of this wonderful homestead land still available in Eastern Oregon, which was, and basically is, still a last frontier.

JAMES: It really is still.

JESSIE: Yes, it is. And so he joined, and there is some confusion somewhat because I was born late in Dad's life, and was not interested in historical facts and data then, but he came to the country either with John Devine or Miller and Lux. An older sister feels, and Mrs. Ella Whiting Luckey felt that this was more factual that he came to Oregon on a cattle drive with Miller and Lux.

JAMES: I see.

JESSIE: And he continued working for them for many years, while he was homesteading his ranch, which lay 3 miles north of Burns. The homestead law, as I understand it, only required a certain amount of domicile per year.

JAMES: So he didn't need to live there the entire time?

JESSIE: No, no a certain number of years, but a residence must be established. And his first year or so, while a permanent log cabin was being constructed, he lived in a dugout.

JAMES: Is this part of the log cabin right here that's on your doorstep?

JESSIE: Yes, this is part of it.

JAMES: How did that get to your doorstep?

JESSIE: Well, that's another story, and it involves a pioneer friendship. In fact, the Bob Baker family who contracted hay for my father for quite a number of years, and lived in the log cabin after he had retired from active management of the ranch, and even during the active management of the ranch, he would sometimes contract the wild hay to them while he did the alfalfa and grain; because it was quite a large section under irrigation, and too much for one man to handle. And it was sold in 1943, approximately, to some men named Barnhart and Koches. The cabin was left there for quite a number of years, and then for no reason that anyone could understand, the cabin was going to be torn down. And one of the Baker boys, Fred --- I say boys, they are men now, was so upset because he had lived in this, and it was definitely a pioneer landmark. It was about the oldest residence up in that area. Asked if he could have the log cabin if it were, if he would take it away. And they said, "Gladly." And so he hired a man to take the cabin apart, and workmen swore most of the time he was taking it down that it was really a sacrilege and a horrible thing to tear apart so well built a building, because all of the ends were dove-tailed and notched. In fact, the cabin part was put together entirely without nails.

JAMES: Isn't there a peg that comes up in this triangle?

JESSIE: Yes, there's a peg that goes down, a wooden peg that holds the cabin corners firmly. So at any rate, the Bakers got the log cabin, except for the fireplace, which the new owners wanted to leave standing, thinking they would have it as an outdoor fireplace, for a large farmhouse which was never built, a ranch house. But, interestingly enough, my father had then apprenticed as a blacksmith as a young man, and he was a very talented as a blacksmith. And the Bakers erected it on their upper Silvie's ranch place, and it is now serving as a blacksmith shop for a pioneer family, because Harold Baker now owns the place. And they told us rather jocularly that the old log cabin now was electrified.

JAMES: Before the log cabin was built, with its notched corners, and its shingled roof ---

JESSIE: Hand shaped, basically they were, and it had a wonderful fireplace, or at least we thought it was wonderful. Because our home in town did not have a fireplace, and it was a very cozy thing when we moved out in the early spring, and before we moved into town for school in the middle fall, why we had the coziness of that fireplace. And the people who came out to visit us always enjoyed that too. And try as they might, the wreckers could not get that fireplace down, even with a tractor. And yet it was put together with what was just apparently adobe. But eventually vandals, and so on, kept working at it until it was destroyed. I think there is a pile of stone now, and the new owner, who is, as I understand a Portland woman, has made the cut stones that were left into a flower box.

But I must get back to the dugout that he lived in the first year. And adjoining him, or very near him, was a bachelor of about his age named Mel Fenwick, who was something of a personality and character in his own right. My father told myself and my sister, Teresa, who lives here, Mrs. Richard Guinie, who is now retired from the Burns

School system, a story of dugout days, which we loved and had him repeat.

Between Mel and my father, there was an Englishman lived in a dugout, and he had a small land holding in there, mostly hill land, and he definitely was not pioneer caliber because he didn't stay long. He was terrified of the animals that at that time roamed freely down into the valley. And the bobcats seemed to be especially terrifying to him. And Mel and my dad discovered this, and of course they were young men and full of pranks and laughter, which sometimes was far between in those hardship days. But the Englishman would often get on his horse and come to town for sociability and to get out of this wild atmosphere, and lonely atmosphere basically that they were in.

And so Mel and my father decided to kill a bobcat and play a joke on the Englishman, and I do not remember his name. They killed a bobcat, it was in midwinter and it was cold then as it is now, and let it freeze stiff in a standing position. And then they waited until a day when the Englishman decided to go to the little hamlet, then, of Burns for his day's visit and amusement. They planted the frozen stiff bobcat in his unlocked dugout, because no one locked their doors for years around here, it wasn't necessary. And they worked at it so its eyes would be open, and when he'd open the dugout door, strike a match, and look; here would be an apparent live bobcat ready to attack him.

So that night Mel came down and visited Dad until, there was some sort of a light in his dugout, so he knew that there was someone up at Foleys, and I imagine he saw Mel's horse, and they waited for about the proper length of time, because his horse had been tired by the time he got there and it was going "plod, plod". When he came back, it was on a dead run and he threw the dugout door open and said, "There's a wild cat in my dugout, and it's ready to attack me. Will you come and help me?" So they said surely they would go to his assistance. And Dad said, "Why don't you stay here and close the

door firmly in my dugout and I'll ride your horse and Mel and I'll go up and kill the bobcat."

So they went up and went through all the procedure of killing the wildcat, or bobcat, and gave him plenty of time to properly be dead, and of course had their hilarious young laughter over it, and discarded it out to the side. And then went back to my father's dugout and assured the Englishmen that the cat was dead, and that he could safely go home. I don't know whether this had anything to do with his departure, or whether they had that in mind, but he didn't stay much longer after that. That is one highlight of his dugout living days that my father himself told me.

JAMES: I wanted to ask you if you remember his describing the dugout?

JESSIE: The dugout was still in use when I was a child, but it was then a potato cellar. And my sister and I definitely hated to go down in that root cellar. Dad had divided it very methodically off into bins for the different types of potatoes and other roots which he had saved. And it seemed very spidery, and it had a chute up through it, which had been, of course, Dad's chimney at one time, an air chute, to ventilate it properly, but it still was a most spiderous place. And we also felt that we never knew when we were going to meet a rattlesnake face to face in this. Because about a mile and a half distant in the next canyon, there was a rattlesnake den. And my father and the hired man, or my brother as it would work out, would go over in the spring while the snakes were lethargic, and take some dynamite and blow up as many as they could, and that way they kept the snake population down.

JAMES: The dugout goes into the ground?

JESSIE: Well it was in the hillside. There was quite a precipitous hill, there was a hill on either side of our ranch, and most settlers tried to build on the, I don't know whether you call it the windward or the leeward side of the hill, to get the protection. It goes into the hill, and then over it is put lumber and then there's a roof built over that. And the front of it

was not altogether dirt; there was some lumber and a very crude door. But the interior had a board roof, and 2 x 4's to hold up the roof, and on top of this roof was placed dirt for added protection, it was not shingled. But in the manner in which most pioneers did, it was saved after it had served its purpose as a temporary dwelling for him to start proving up on his homestead claim, why then it was used as a storage place. And in my memory as a child, it was used as a storage for food and for potatoes, and so on, we grew on our own ranch.

JAMES: Did he think back to these times as particularly pleasant, or were these times that were hard and he was glad to be done with?

JESSIE: Oh no, I never did hear my father say that he had regretted his life at all, not at all! In fact, he seemed to take great joy in telling us, he had not gotten to the place of old age, one might say, because he was young in mind even when he died, he died at 66. But he didn't ramble on and reminisce a lot and this is why it's a little difficult for me to have as many stories as I would have very much loved to have now. But my sister and I had happened on to this bobcat story in the dugout, and we asked for that repeatedly. And I suppose there were others too, that he told us, but we couldn't remember. But, of course, we were living then as children do, not in the past or in the future, in a very happy then. And it was an unusual childhood. I know our son has said, "I think you and Dad lived in the most wonderful time there was, Mother, because it was really an uncomplicated life." He doesn't realize that for the older pioneers like my father and mother and some of these, how dreadfully complicated it was to start out in a raw, new land. But still it was basically compared to the era now. And of course, we'll go into the social old scene later, but you'll want a biographical sketch on my father and mother.

JAMES: You said something about the complication of life at this point, is that because of the --- is it something to do with the land, is there something in this land that ---

JESSIE: Well the land has been complicated by laws, even. For instance, the Taylor Grazing Act, if you are familiar with that, cut many ranchers out of grazing in the forest, cut the amount of cattle they could own, cut the value of their land. And then, of course, in order to combat this feuding over water, the Harney Valley Dam and Ditch Company was started. And my father was first president of it, and I can remember a childhood memory of that. I do not have the facts and figures on it because the books were kept locked in the great oak desk, which he had in a nostalgic way had built in Wisconsin. It was quarter-sawn oak. And he'd drawn the design and had it made in Wisconsin and shipped out piece-by-piece and put together. There were library mirror doors, or glass doors on each side for my mother's treasured books and his great desk with a plate glass mirror over it. But every door had a combination lock, and only he knew the combination to the desk. And these books which were precious that we children were not supposed to touch, and would probably have been punished had we--- were kept in there. Where they went, I do not know. But these are part of the history; they are in someone's possession.

However, there is a very fine pioneer gentleman making quite a study of this first cooperative in Harney County, actually. Clarence Young is making a fine study of the Harney Valley Dam and Ditch Company, which helped to give the first settlers their just water rights. And then there is the Burns Flour Milling Company, and the Burns Slaughter House. And my memory of the flourmill, of course, is a childish one. It was an interesting three-story building, and on top of it was a cupola which in my day was just about as far as you could see of the whole wide world. And how there wasn't a child killed in climbing up and down those torturous stairs, with those unprotected belts whirling around, I don't know. But every child who could get within range of it did it. And there was a fascinating old water wheel that made all the power for this mill, all made of wood, wood cogs, and it was turning constantly.

JAMES: It had cogs, rather than a millstone?

JESSIE: Cogs, yes, wooden cogs. And I can remember stopping and watching that, because I was something of a scientific-minded child, and trying to figure out how the water flowing on that wheel, and turning it could make power to run all this horrendous machinery in this building. But, as I say, Mr. Young is getting, is researching into county records in the courthouse, and so on. This I will leave to him because he can do it much more adequately than I, because he worked for my father and the other ranchers at the mill.

JAMES: Do you have any other memories of those three cooperatives?

JESSIE: Well they met at our house. And there were two entries to our home, which is nearby here, and it's only been owned by two families, one was ours, and the other, rather sentimentally we reserved it and sold it to a native born Irishman, whose name is Tim Doherty. And he has preserved it in its Victorian stage, which was very wise. I had a number of other buyers, they wanted to tear it apart and make it into an apartment house, and so on. We wanted a family who loved it, and this has been true.

But no, these men met, as I started to say, there were two doors, and the door then into the general living quarters was shut off and the parlor door was opened. And Dad closed these ponderous big double doors against any intrusion, and we were supposed to be very quiet as children. While this meeting was going on we could hear the gavel banging, it was all conducted obviously in a very business-like manner, minutes kept, etc.

It was a corporation, or a co-op and the mumble of men's voices and the very strange smell of cigar smoke, which was alien to our house. And Mother always "whoosed" the whole house out the next day, because that cigar smoke is rather penetrating. That's my memory and it isn't a lot of knowledge actually, but I do know that this governed waters of the Silvies and of its main tributary, which is the Foley Slough, which was named for my

father. Probably so named because it branched off, started its branching in our ranch, and it ran clear through the valley and emptied into Malheur Lake.

JAMES: Now you were just mentioning that your father working with John Devine?

JESSIE: Yes, he had large land holdings for a number of years, but according to local story and also some historical data, that he wasn't as provident and careful as Mr. Miller of Miller and Lux, and therefore he lost his holdings. But Mr. Miller kept him on as a general superintendent, and my father worked closely with him and became very good friends with John Devine. I can remember his mentioning John Devine, and the blacksmith shop, which he later owned. There were quite a few Devine brands, although Miller and Lux did take over that brand when they took the Devine holdings. But Miller, in spite of being a hard headed business man, proved rather a softie at the last minute and gave John Devine the Alvord Ranch, gave it to him outright, and he lived there the rest of his life. And in a trip down to the South End with my father, which I might touch on later, why there were still two old ranch hands there who had worked at the time that my father was in a supervisory capacity for Miller and Lux, and working down through that country. But I know Dad's headquarters, perhaps to begin with, were at the Island Ranch here, because it made it handier to go back and forth to his homestead claim, and also we stayed at Mann Lake Ranch, in a log cabin. And Dad showed us some ... which his office had been in on that side of the mountain. These were all Miller and Lux holdings at that time.

But Miller was a man who demanded a full day's work from all of his men, but he respected a good man and proud that he felt in his way that my father had the capacity to supervise men. And in a book, which is in the local museum it states in his handwriting, "Raise this man's wages and give him more responsibility." So for the historical record, that's there for all to see.

And, in going back to the ranch neighbors, and these were more the memories that I have, both because Dad mentioned them more, and because Mrs. Ella Whiting Luckey has spoken to me of them. The late Julian Byrd, who was the editor of the paper here for years, also John Biggs, a pioneer lawyer and close friend of Dad's, and also a close neighbor. And Grover Jameson, who was very historical minded, showed me Henry Miller's chair a number of years ago, and said, "Your father has sat in this many times." And my husband saw some books, ledgers, and so on in my father's handwriting at the Island Ranch. And an elderly gentleman, I believe his name was John Garner, told me some 20 years or so ago how Henry Miller found Dad working out in the field with the hands, and he scolded him and said, "You get back to the office, I hired you for your brains." He says, "I have plenty of men." But Dad would still go out and work with the animals, and with the land and that's where he ended up, because that was his first love, and basically the reason he came to this country.

JAMES: Does the story that you are referring to, by John Biggs, come from this period?

JESSIE: Yes, it does, and it involved Mel Fenwick, who evidently was a man that John Biggs enjoyed too. I guess he was a man of quite tall stature. He never married from what I know; he was a bachelor during the years he owned this ranch up the river. And he and Dad were good friends, and Dad happened to be at the ranch at this one period, and here Mel Fenwick came around the hill on about as rapid a ride as the poor Englishman had, maybe this was divine justice, I don't know. But he had been kicked in the nose by a horse, and Mel had been teased considerably about this rather over-sized nose, it was a very distinctive feature, one could say, of his face. And it had squashed it quite flat, and so he got to the nearest help he could, because he was bleeding badly and in terrible pain. And of course every neighbor took care of the other one if they could. And my father being handy with his hands, as we found later when we were growing up,

he was a pretty good nurse too. And he decided to fix Mel's nose, because there was no doctor within, I don't know how many miles.

So it was spring, the Canadian geese were migrating, and there were goose feathers or quills left on the bank of the slough. So he laid Mel down and he went down to the slough and got two goose quills. These he measured to Mel's nose and hollowed them out, and probably with Mel groaning, and moaning, and screaming in full dilemma ---

SIDE B

JESSIE: --- and hollowed them out and probably with Mel groaning, moaning and screaming in full dilemma of the torture that Foley was inflicting on him, Dad set Mel's nose around the two goose quills, because he figured this would not only serve as splints, but it would help Mel breathe while his new nose healed. And John Biggs told me this story, he said, "Your father molded Mel quite an interesting new nose." And he gave Mel instructions to rotate these quills frequently so that the flesh wouldn't adhere to them. So Mel came out with a new nose that he could breathe through. And that's just one of the highlights of how one neighbor helped another.

JAMES: Was it Biggs who told you the story about your mother arriving on the stage, or was that another man?

JESSIE: No, this was Grover Jameson.

JAMES: Grover Jameson.

JESSIE: Yes, Grover was quite a historian on Harney County affairs. He was born here. And then he followed, he was the superintendent of what had been Miller and Lux Ranches, and then developed into the PLS Company. And he showed me this, Henry Miller's chair, as I have told you prior to this. He said, "Your dad sat in that many a time while he was figuring Henry Miller's books for him."

Now I haven't told you about Mother's arrival because some of these pioneer stories come before her. There is one I would very much like to register, because I might not be here to talk, if it hadn't been for Mother Lone Whiting. There was, I don't know just what year it was, but it was shortly after my father arrived, that there was quite a siege of typhoid fever. And my father was young and alone, and the Whitings were his neighbors on the east on the ranch, and he stopped in there often, according to Ella Whiting Luckey. She was just a little girl but she remembers him well, she remembers presenting him with some wristlets her mother had knitted. But at any rate, Mrs. Whiting, or Mother as she was known to many people, took him in and nursed him back to health from typhoid fever. And therefore there has always been a feeling of close bond between the Whitings and what number of Foleys of us there were. Because perhaps if Dad's life hadn't been changed we would not be here.

This is history of pioneer days in Harney County, and the spirit still prevails in these older families, there is an esprit de corps as it were.

JAMES: That's the wonderful thing about this country, I think.

JESSIE: Yes, many people who have come here still find this is so when they meet older people. Of course we are all moving with the times, and this TV has proven to be a sort of anti-neighbor device in some instances, which is too bad.

But the interesting part of living in this country and being reared in it, it is not the hinterlands as a Portland doctor said to me once, and I objected too strenuously. I said, "I imagine if you would go to the hinterlands and meet those people, you would find that there are as many college degrees, or more, per capita than there are right here in Portland. And regardless of college degrees, the I.Q.'s range considerably above average, and I would put them up against most of your city population. This is just a pioneer daughter speaking.

JAMES: That's the meaning of the heritage, though. That's the importance of the history.

JESSIE: This is it.

JAMES: You mentioned that he supervised some of the operations of Miller and Lux, and some details there would be good to know.

JESSIE: Well the details were, of course, somewhat shady in my mind, because of my age. But I know a number of people have said, and it is also recorded in history, that he supervised the system of irrigation for the fields, which are still in use. And there are three dams down through there, one called the Elk, one called the Foley, and one called the Poujade. Now there was a Mr. Poujade who was of that area, and although a granddaughter of his, Mrs. Al Brown, who was Agness Davis, told me that her grandfather didn't work there all the time, they had more of a stage stop or ranch over near Harney. Still he must have worked on the system since a dam was named for him.

But this was to control the floodwaters, and because I believe probably Miller was the first man to raise alfalfa in this country and it needed to be irrigated. And this, plus the recession of the lake waters, and the settlers claiming the land which was, of course, very fertile, left by the receding lake waters, caused quite an amount of litigation. I can remember even when I was a child that it was still in litigation in the federal courts in San Francisco, and my father had to go down and testify as to the systems that he had established for Miller and Lux. And prove their claim in that respect for the waters of that particular watershed area.

JAMES: The story about the birthday?

JESSIE: Well, this was one that was told me by Julian Byrd, who was of an old pioneer family, who followed his father as the editor of the local newspaper here. He and my father chanced to have the same birthday in January, and they lived closer to Burns than father, on this side of the Silvies River. They arrived; I believe the same year, that was

1883. And his mother ... and surprised my father and Julian both with a birthday dinner, and Julian is the one who described this to me. He said the main meal was a large pot, one of these black cast iron affairs that was on a crane hanging over the fireplace fire, and cooked for many hours with molasses and all the seasonings, you know, probably dried meat in it, and with homemade bread. And she had concocted a cake for them. And Julian said of all the birthdays he had ever had, that stood out the most in his mind because it seemed to be so delicious, he didn't think he had ever before or since eaten such good food. And there, of course, was the sociability of associating with pioneer neighbors. There were probably others there, I don't know. But it got to be something of a custom for them to celebrate their birthdays together. But his was the first, and Julian as a young boy remembered it because he was a number of years younger than my father.

JAMES: That reminds me of your recollection of that Christmas, of the chandelier, the sociality I'm thinking of.

JESSIE: Yes. Well of course, that was considerably after, but it shows how childhood memories do linger. This is coming up almost into modern times. I was probably six or seven years old, and the Dr. Hibbard family, who had become Mother and Dad's neighbors in 1890, because I didn't arrive until some years later. They had evidently come over for some sort of a Christmas celebration, and Mother had a silver candelabra of which she was very proud. Most pioneer women had these treasures that they had brought west with them, and it had red candles and the table was lighted entirely by candlelight. And I remember the children's treat was a candy I especially liked; it was butterscotch in honeycomb effect. And I can remember us children sitting and playing until we all drowsed off, while the older people went on visiting. But this is the wonderful part of having lived in the pioneer country, because people were dependent upon people

for their entertainment, and they got to know each other better, and to enjoy each other more, which is something we are getting away from now.

Of course there were many things, enough to write a book, any family could do this, because no one man, or no one man's ability made a country. I want to repeat that. It was all of his families with different desires and different abilities that built this country. But each of us is proud of his own heritage.

There are some interesting facts about the names, which honored Dad. There is a branch off Silvies River, which I may have spoken of previously, which is named Foley Slough because it is a main branch from the Silvies beginning on what was our ranch on the west side, and it went down through the valley giving the people water rights, we've covered the water right thing.

And then when the school was built there, School District #24, it was name Foley School. I imagine this was because that Dad was among about the earliest settlers up in that area. Well, that school remained there for many years until the present system of absorbing the country schools were completed, and here again, an old family and some friends entered in. The Bob Baker family, and Fred, who I spoke of previously, who had saved the log cabin for their place, took down the old schoolhouse. Because all the Baker children had gone there. And numbered it properly, so it could be reassembled, and I think perhaps he had a dream of someday establishing a pioneer village. And there will be two Foley relics on our place anyway. But I think it is wonderful that someone should be so sentimental.

And in this respect, his mother told me a story of her entry into the country with her parents, their name was Merritt. And you've interviewed her, I believe, her name is Tressa Baker. And she said when they came into Harney Valley, and approached Burns, there was a dreadful sandstorm, you could hardly see Burns. But she said the blacksmith

shop, which Dad owned at the time, loomed up quite a bit. And her dad, whose name was Jerry I believe, said, "Let's go in behind that big building and see whoever owns it will let us use the shelter." And it proved to be my father, J. C. Foley. And he had a ... pump out in front so there would be water for them and for their animals. And he said, "Yes, you can use the shelter of the building and the water, and I'll leave the door unlocked and you can go in and use the forge to cook on. You won't have to cook out in this dreadful weather." So she said, "Your father was the first to welcome us to Harney County."

And so through this all there have been these contacts that have been made and remain in our hearts, even if we don't see each other often. And it always will be so, I believe. And then in connection with the naming in honor of my father, of which naturally anyone is proud, the voting precinct was also named for him because voting was held in the schoolhouse.

Also, to begin with, there was the lane up to the ranch, beyond the Silvies, up to my father's ranch, and Dad traveled it the most and longest, and himself improved the road largely, and until it became a county road, and then they extended it. People in the summer used to say, "Well let's drive out and visit the Foleys in the evenings." And so it began to be called Foley Drive. And then when the county road system began to name roads, they named it Foley Drive, and so it still remains.

Anyways, while we are talking about transportation and going short distances was the arrival of the railroad. Those in Crane, and first ... the whole of Harney County that could get there, went to see the train come into Crane. Because in that day there were none of these big semi-trucks, because if there had been they wouldn't have made it over these roads they had then. And of course this meant the shipping of cattle and the shipping in ... The amusing part about that is that now there are these refrigerated trucks come in with fruit, and we think nothing of picking up fresh oranges. Then they were a

luxury, and dried fruit we got very tired of. And now dried fruit is the luxury and fresh fruit is the opposite.

But my father, we were very thankful, lived until he saw the golden spike driven here in Burns. And he died later in that year. But I think it is about time that I recognize the fact that I had a mother. A rather remarkable, wonderful woman, I would say. And as everyone thinks about his own particular parent, she was, as I have said, of all these pioneers, a very distinctive personality. And the late Grover Jameson, well, maybe I'd better begin where she was born. She was also Wisconsin born, and a relatively near neighbor of my father's family. She was Mary Ellen Barnham, and her father's name was Peter Richard Barnham, and her mother was Kathryn McCarthy. They were also from Ireland. She was born in 1869 in Kingston, Wisconsin, and she was also born on a ranch homesteaded by her father. But she didn't make the log cabin era; she was born in a regular house.

But Dad lived here for 15 years before he was married. He and Mother were not married until 1898. And in 1897, he had not gone home to visit for 14 years because he was so involved in improving his land, fencing it, and remnants of the first fence still remain, which were, it was a stone fence into his place. I remember at the time, when I was just a small child, it was still fenced off, and a county road you had to open a gate to go through everyone's place.

But at any rate, he went back to visit his family in 1897, and found the young little girl that he'd left in the neighborhood when he'd come west, had grown into a very handsome woman. And had been teaching for some years in Wisconsin, after graduating from Oshkosh Normal School. And she was not one to be swept off her feet easily though, and neither was J. C. Foley one to make hasty decisions. So he came back and they corresponded, and he went back earlier the next fall and stayed all winter. And

successfully completed, the courtship resulted in marriage in April 1898. And they came West on the train through Sat Lake, up to Baker, and then from Baker it was stagecoach all the way in. And it was an overnight stop up in Silvies Valley, some place before they got into Burns, which is quite a difference in the speed with which we travel today.

And Grover Jameson told me that of course everyone was curious, perhaps not everyone, but a great many of the populace were curious as to who, and what type of woman that J. C. Foley had finally married after all these years. And he was among the curious young fellows that went down to meet the stagecoach when it came in. And he said, "We were not disappointed." He said, "We decided J. C. Foley had chosen well when he saw your mother." "Because," he said, "how she could travel all the way from Baker, stay overnight in a ranch house, and then step off that stagecoach looking as if she had just come out of her own boudoir, fully and freshly clothed, everyone marveled." And he described her dress, as a brown Marino (sp.?) suit, and a very sharp looking hat with ostrich feathers, and white gloves.

JAMES: Some of us don't know what a Marino suit is?

JESSIE: Well, it's a wool cloth, it isn't a style, the Marino is a cloth.

JAMES: Oh, Marino ...

JESSIE: Yes, uh huh. This is it, it was just brown and it was made of this Marino cloth, which was considered, I guess, a rather luxury cloth, I don't know. But it was her traveling suit for her honeymoon. Of course, it served, I guess, for a good many years. I never saw it, because people used to wear their clothes out, she wasn't one to save things, she wore them. At any rate, this is an interesting highlight to me to hear about Mother's arrival in the country.

One of the first things that she and Dad did as a marital team in the community-wise was to help start the Catholic Church here. There were several families, the names I

remember are Mr. and Mrs. Paul Walker, and there were some bachelor brothers, Lewig, their name was, and there was James Donegan. But the interesting part about this Catholic Church here was that it was really what you could say ecumenical long before this word was coined. Because, in spite of the fact that this was the Catholic Church, and the Presbyterian was the pioneer church, the whole community was interested in the building of this Catholic Church, and contributed toward it and helped with it. And the Grand Worthy Master, I guess it is, of the Masons ---

JAMES: Huh, that would be ecumenical then, if the Catholics and the Masons got together.

JESSIE: --- laid the cornerstone and gave a speech. His name was Mr. ... I think a lawyer. And this was so recorded, and at the 50th Anniversary, Father Vincent Egan had the grand or the --- excuse me, I don't know, but the head of the Masonic Lodge speak in memory of this very open-minded event. It was open-minded both on the part of the Protestant people and the Catholic people. And this is the thing that the whole Christian world is striving for now. And I'm happy to say that Burns was in advance of its time.

JAMES: Always ... from Burns.

JESSIE: Yes. There were many remarkable and fine women in this area. And mother and they, I probably should say, were eager to make this a place that was desirable culturally for their children and for other people. And before my time I know the Locker Hall saw many plays and community dances. It burned down. It was very small.

But she and some other pioneer women started two particular clubs, which were of benefit to the community, the first being the Library Club, which was established in 1903. She was a charter member and the first president, and I'm sorry I do not have the other officers. But the first librarian was Mrs. Phoebe Geary, the wife of Dr. Geary. And because she had just one child and her mother was living with her, and would take care of

the child, she seemed to have a little more leisure time that they chose the Geary home as the first library. And, of course, that story has been told many times. And it started with 12 books bought by these twelve women. And from this very modest beginning started our present fine system, which has resulted in a magnificent library. And in the taping of the history of Harney County now being conducted, as the result of the generosity of another Harney County born woman, Claire McGill Luce, is that not right?

JAMES: That's absolutely correct.

JESSIE: And in 1906 the Mother's Club was started. Now this was a club for the betterment of the children in the community, and is still active. It did many things, especially in the school area. And it gives a scholarship yet for a college student of junior or senior standing. The women work very hard to raise this money and it sometimes meant the difference between a college student finishing or not finishing.

There were many community events, too, that were outstanding in our minds, in which everyone joined. Naturally the Fourth of July was the great day when we celebrated. And there was the preparation before which began with mother trying to bleach the freckles off and so on, and get us all starched properly for the great event. Of course we'd be completely a mess afterwards, but we had a great time, running races, and so on, because both adult and children ...

And then the first Pioneer Day I vaguely remember. And I remember the others well after that because at that time the charter members of the Pioneer organization, this was stated in 1916, and they had come 30 years before, which made the charter members had to have arrived in 1886 or before. And that's on record both in the Museum and with the secretary of the Pioneer Association.

And, of course, one of my happy memories of it was that my brother, Charles B. Foley, now deceased, had quite a lovely singing voice and he always sang Mother

McCree to the reigning Queen Mother. And then others carried on this tradition after his death.

JAMES: You were mentioning that he had other occupations besides the ---

JESSIE: Yes, well, I was telling about his marriage, and of course he had not really actively run his ranch himself, he had had families on it that he was supervising, and they were running it for him. And he was building up his herd while he was working for Miller and Lux. But upon his marriage, why he decided that he'd better settle a family in town and have a business that would occupy him in town. And he could supervise the ranch easily from town because it was only three miles. So he, with George Shelley, opened a blacksmith shop. Now my father had the blacksmithing ability, and George Shelley worked more with the leatherwork. And this partnership started I believe in 1898, and continued until 1903 when ---

At any rate, my father kept this until 1905, when the demands of the ranch proved to be too much in conjunction with this, and he sold his blacksmith shop to Mr. Short, ... I believe his initials were, and his son, Frank. The son continued up until his death. It was only razed about eight years ago, and before Mr. Frank Short died, he had promised me some brand boards. He had told me, he said, "These are all Foley brands on a certain wall," and he said, "These on these other walls are Short brand boards made by my father and myself." And he gave me a very interesting piece of historical work. And when I asked him what it was, he said, "You should be ashamed, your own father made that, and it is called a traveler, and it is to measure wagon wheels and wagon tire rims. And by soaking wood and by making the rim smaller, why they made the wheel come out." And this is the circular device running around and fit them. But these boards, it was too bad too many were lost before it was found the building was being destroyed. Because the man who had the contract for tearing it down and hauling it away, gave permission for us

to go down and see what we could find. My son got a few of the brand boards of his grandfather's. The first one we found had my father's own brand on it, which was Bar T. And there was also the brand which had been John Devine's and that the Miller and Lux had used, it was a backward S. And then the Miller and Lux brand was a Double H, and then there was the Bell A brand, and a lot of others that we were not familiar with which can be looked up or could be checked in the registry at the State.

But this was an area I don't remember, but many do, and told how fascinated they were as children to go and watch the blacksmith. And, of course, my father loved this work and we had a very fully equipped blacksmith shop of the ranch. And I loved to be his assistant, because it is fascinating to see a piece of shapeless metal put in a forge and brought out and shaped into a thing of beauty and utility. And this, I think, was the objective of the pioneer, was to take this rough land and shape it into homes and into a place of goodness and beauty in which to rear their children, and which they could give to the future.

JAMES: Did your parents feel any spiritual quality about these lands and the spaces, and the animals, and so forth?

JESSIE: Oh, I think so, very definitely. Because my father took just as good care of his animals, almost, as one would say of his family. Every animal had its name, they all responded to his kindness and his touch. We never had a mean animal on the place, and I think, usually, the animal reflects its master's disposition. And in taking us children out into the fields, especially my sister Teresa and myself, or --- I know he did this with the older children too, why he would tell us to listen to the birds, observe the flowers, even the tiniest flower. And there were some that grew along the irrigation bank, a white flower that both Mother and Dad called forget-me-nots ... irrigation waters, there were tiny flowers that were almost like orchids, only they were in miniature, just very, very much in

miniature. And yet this rather rough young man, you would say looking at him, would bend down and pick these flowers and show them to his little girls, so that they would love nature. And then he'd often point to the hills and say how beautiful the shadows were, and at sunset, why a lovely sunset, what a beautiful sunset. And if some animal had a particularly glossy coat, he'd stroke it and say, "Isn't that a beautiful coat?" And I believe this --- and of course Mother would take us out each evening when the dishes were done, and a hard day's work done, and there was a rock behind the barn, the hay corral, there were two corrals, one for milking cows, and so on, and the other was for keeping hay. But there was a large boulder, which had fallen off the hill many years before, and we would, of course, it was Mother and my sisters because my brother was helping my father.

But, I know ... and then later my brother would do his practicing on his coronet. And I can tell you an amusing story about that. But at any rate, Mother would have us say our evening prayers and sing a hymn in praise of God and the world's beauty. And then we would have the game of identifying the singing birds. And it was interesting, there were a great variety, of course the sun was first starting to sink, and then as the evening wore on they grew less and less. There was all the way from the tiny rock wren and its trill to the last singer or songster, you might call it that, was the ... owl. And he always seemed to come from a particular place, and we never did get to see him. And he got his name honestly, because this is what he said, "..."

But I don't think anyone in an organized, or one of these super modern churches ever had a greater feeling of spirituality than we children were given in these evening sessions. The beauty surrounded by beauty of God's own making, the song of the birds, the beauty of the sunset, and the lovely interplay of light and shadow when the sun went down.

(Note: Additional information about family given.)

In making this tape, I spoke of my brother, my sisters, etc. These of course, are the son and daughters of J. C. and Mary E. Foley, and we were all born in Burns, Oregon. And as adults we fully realized and appreciated our pioneer heritage. And even our brother, who died when he was 37, had been very active in the Pioneer Association in starting the Pioneer Sons and Daughters, so that it would continue to live. We were born in this order: Charles B. Foley was the only son, and Burns attorney, and he died in 1937. He is survived by his widow, Gertrude of Richland, Washington. She lives there to be near a son, Charles John, who is married and has a family. He is employed as an Electronic Engineer. A daughter, Mary M. Foley Shearing, lives in Illinois, is a wife, a mother, and college instructor.

The second born, Agnes Jean, of the Burns Foley family, taught in the Foley School District for three years, before going east where she met and married Donald D. Kennedy. The Kennedy's have now lived in Portland, Oregon for some four years since Dr. Kennedy's retirement from the State Department.

Teresa M., third born, was a career teacher in the Harney County schools, before her retirement in 1971. She is the widow of the late Richard Guinie, who for some 35 years was employed by the Edward Hines Company.

Jessie E., last born, taught in Harney County until her marriage to Homer Ritchey. After living away from Burns, largely in Eugene for 16 years, they returned to Burns in 1948 to stay permanently, because they both agreed that here was the area that offered their growing son the greatest opportunity to become an individual. Mr. Ritchey is a merchant, and he and the late Hal Hibbard, started the Burns Surplus Store. It continues under the management of Mr. Ritchey. They have one son, Dr. Donald Foley Ritchey, M.D., who with his family lives in California.

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