

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #155 - Sides A/B

Subject: George Hibbard

Place: Burns, Oregon

Date: January 1972

Interviewer: James Baker

(Note: The first 18 pages of this transcript are not on the tape.)

JAMES BAKER: Most of the cases I've been getting just a small amount of biographical data, because I'm interested, in the first place, in where people came from to this area, and what kind of practices they brought from the outside that became part of the traditions of this area. And so I want to start with the founding of the area as I talk to different people. You mentioned that your father was from Portland.

GEORGE HIBBARD: Well the original home was up east of Salem in the Waldo Hills, out by Silverton. And my grandfather settled there in 1847, and they had taken a new lease and land claim, and eventually when the state became a state after a territory, they filed for the deeds. Yes, the patent of their claim, and there were six of them in the area that applied at the same time. And each was a sort of witness for the other, and they drew the names out of the hat as to the number, and the patent of the one is the first donation land claim approved. And we have the copy of that in the family, of the lease land claim #1 in the Oregon Territory.

JAMES: Do you still have that land in the family?

GEORGE: No, just this last year we sold.

WOMAN: The patent was turned in for the deed and we have the deed that President ... signed.

GEORGE: It was Buchanan, wasn't it?

WOMAN: No, it was President ...

GEORGE: My father took dentistry, he had some pre-med at Willamette, and then he went into dentistry.

JAMES: I laugh because that's my Alma Mater.

GEORGE: And he went under a dentist in Portland, what they call preceptor, he was a teacher, just like a lawyer going into a lawyer to read law under him. And he started practice about 1888 or 1890, somewhere along there, in Portland on Front Street, or First Street.

WOMAN: First I knew was down there on Morrison in the Marquam Building, no, that wasn't the first one.

GEORGE: Well anyway, along in '96 or '97 along somewhere in there, he contracted tuberculosis and finally had to quit practice. And he and a friend came up in Eastern Oregon and spent two summers living out of a tent up here on the Steens in the outdoors.

WOMAN: In the Deschutes area they spent quite a bit of time.

GEORGE: Yes, but all over Eastern Oregon through here, and he went back in '98 or '99, the fall of '98 to Portland, and the doctor said, "I don't know where you've been traveling, but you'd better go back and stay there, because you're cured."

WOMAN: The doctor had told him he might live six months.

JAMES: How much longer did he live out in this area?

GEORGE: Until he was 81.

JAMES: What was his friend's name?

GEORGE: Shelley Barnes. And then so in the fall of '99, he and my mother and these two sisters took the train up to Ontario and got on the stage.

WOMAN: By horse then, two days and two nights, or two days and three nights. We got

in here at 5 o'clock in the morning, the old Burns Hotel. I remember that. I remember mother held one of us and dad the other, in an open wagon.

GEORGE: They stayed in the hotel a little while, and then he set up offices across from the French Hotel.

JAMES: Where was that?

GEORGE: Well the French Hotel was where the Arrowhead is.

WOMAN: Well, there was a livery stable on the corner, and in 1914 we had a fire and it swept about four blocks and it took that hotel. They had water wells in the middle of the intersection ---

GEORGE: Well, anyway, he made sort of a vow when he started practice that he would spend half of his time in the office and the other half in outdoor life or some sort. So, eventually he got into farming and brought in some of the first blooded Jerseys, purebred.

WOMAN: The very first purebred Jerseys in Harney County.

JAMES: Had he been a farmer in the Waldo Hills, or was this a new thing?

GEORGE: His father was.

JAMES: How was the dentist business in Burns?

GEORGE: Now, that was one of the interesting things about it. It was so scattered, and the town was so small, and people had such a difficult time getting in, so in the early years he fixed up portable equipment and once a year he would load up and go around to all the big ranches and take his equipment along, and do the dental work at each place. He kept that up until 1914 when he bought the first Ford he had, the first automobile, and he took his sister as his assistant, and his brother that lives right over here to drive the car, he was 14 at the time. And they would start and go out to Drewsey and over to Westfall, and down to Juntura, and over to Barren Valley, a little place called ... and then south to the Folly Farm, and on down to the Alvord, and Andrews, and Denio. That was

in 1914. And they left as soon as school was out, along in April, and they'd be gone until along in August.

World War I had been going on about six weeks before he knew about it. He collected as he went along, everything was in currency then, either gold pieces or silver, etc., and it accumulated quite a bit. I should wait and let Genie (Eugenia) tell you about this, because she was there. But he was going from one ranch to the other, the Alvord to the Andrews or vice versa, and some of the fellows at Andrews knew that he was carrying quite a bit and they decided that he was a pretty good prospect, to hold him up along the way. So they, three of them, went ahead and they got to this little wash where the car had to go slowly down across a washout, and they got in this washout up the stream a little ways where it was dry, waiting for him to come along. They knew he would have to go slow coming across there and they were going to hold him up. Well there were three of them, and they just had the one gun, and they got down on their hands and knees to crawl down this wash to apprehend him at the crossing, and the gun went off accidentally and shot one of them in the rear. And they went on back to the ranch.

And after they got on to the next place here, word came that they needed him back at this other ranch, that a man had been shot. Well, when he got back there someone told him what had happened, and so he probed and got the bullet out. And he said, "I didn't do it very gently." One of the other companions developed a nosebleed; he had a problem as a bleeder, so Dad told him, "All I can do is pack your nose." And the man told him he had had that done down before in San Francisco or something. So Dad rigged a little hook on the end of a fine wire and inserted it through his nostril, and put wads of cotton back underneath his tongue and hooked it with this wire and pulled it up into the back of the nasal passage. And then packed it from the front, which was rather severe treatment. But it was the only thing to do to save the man's life. But that was one of the

incidents on that trip.

Another one, they were fishing a stream and ... she jumped off a little ledge or cliff along the stream to get a good hole, and no more than landed, and in between her and the creek there were two rattlesnakes all reared up and on the prod. And she let a scream out of her, and my dad was down the stream a little ways and he heard her and he came running up and saw these rattlesnakes had her cornered. And he grabbed a stick and jumped across the creek, waded across, and killed them and got her free. They were high and they were on the prod too, they were on the attack. Usually, you know, snakes are very much defensive, and if you let them have a chance, they'll get away. But not these two. They had quite an experience, the whole trip.

There were several near accidents. They lost the bridge into the Malheur over at Drewsey, things like that. It was quite an experience. That was his last trip as far as I know of them making those tours. It was just like circuit riding.

JAMES: I was going to ask what other people besides the dentists, and probably the preachers were circuit riders, did that sort of thing?

WOMAN: Be sure and tell him about Bill and Carol's experience.

GEORGE: Well, I know the attorneys, there were some here, but quite often the attorneys who were brought in from Vale or Baker would come in here on certain cases. And of course, the Judges had to also. But I don't know as to other than that, as far as the circuit-riding sort of thing.

JAMES: What is the history, probably after the First World War, so that people were able to come to a place where ---

GEORGE: Well, roads and our automobile transportation. Have you been over the county at all? You know, Harney County is the biggest county in the state, about 10,000 square miles, and now there is a little over 7,000 people in it. And in those early days I

don't suppose there was over 2,000 or 3,000. It runs from 15 miles north of here to 150 miles south. They made this the county seat. I suppose you got that story about how they moved it from Harney.

JAMES: I've heard about two or three versions of it.

GEORGE: So, it was just the distance and the poor roads until they began getting some gravel on and things like that, why lot of times in the year, you just couldn't go anywhere.

JAMES: People would be isolated then for winter, wouldn't they?

GEORGE: Oh yes, very much so. And you bought your supplies for the winter. And it is such a high altitude in here and it isn't much of a fruit county, and John Day was quite a bit lower, and each fall (here he identifies a man from John Day), he used to load up a wagon full of apples, and he and his wife and some of his kids who needed dental work, he'd load up and come driving over here with his wagon load of apples, and he'd stay with us, and we'd fill the bins in the basement. And he'd peddle them around town, and my dad would do the dental work for him in trade for the apples. We could raise potatoes and cabbage and that sort of thing for the winter supplies, but as far as produce and that sort of thing, you had to make do with what you had. Of course, in those days there were lots of dried fruits that they could store. They don't have them any more except for fancy dishes. It was that sort of thing that ---

Of course in John Day, or rather Canyon City, county seat of over all Grant County, of which Harney and Malheur were a part. Then they were sub-divided, Malheur first and then Harney later, and made their county seat at Harney and then over here. But it was just the tremendous distances.

JAMES: The railroad must have had a big impact, too, in 1924?

GEORGE: Yes, see it was a long time in getting here. It was at Crane, I don't know when it got to Crane, but it was there several years before they brought it up here, the 30 miles

to Burns. It was at several places down the line, at Riverside, and Juntura, they were the end of the line for a time. The Oregon Shortline, it was called, a subsidiary of the Union Pacific. But it was gradually getting built into the country, but people, in anticipation of where there might be a railhead, would try and set up a town. They would buy up an area and sub-divide it and put up a hotel or something like that and think that that was where the railroad was going to make its next stop. And it was this side of Crane there where two or three little towns that were sort of set up where they thought that they would grab the rail land, one called Harriman and one called Albritton. And those still show on the old county maps as sub-divided. There is nothing there. Albritton was on the north side of Saddle Butte.

JAMES: That's coming this way from Crane?

GEORGE: Yes, and the other one, Harriman, was just about 10 miles this side of Crane, just west of the road that goes down to Princeton, Highway 78. And then they thought it was going to go on across and join at Bend with the Airman Hill Road, started building through Bend. One on each side of the river, and had their race, and finally one of them gave up and sold out to the other and went out across the desert between here and Bend. There were also these little towns where they thought they would get hit by the railroad. There was one called Imperial, just west of Halfway House, or Hampton, and it was sub-divided out there and it never materialized. So they had, thought that this railroad would go clear across and join Bend. At that time it wasn't feasible, there wasn't enough demand for it.

JAMES: Did the speculators go about trying to promote settling in these areas to build them up?

GEORGE: There was Eastern Oregon Colonization, and there was another one. They had their men, their promoters in here, especially during the early 1900's and teens. And

at that time of the year, the wet cycle, enough precipitation in any of this desert land could be broken up. And get enough rain and precipitation during the year to raise grain and alfalfa, or dry land farming it was called, and all this country was selling. Some of it, just like it is now, by Californians and back Easterners, who didn't have any idea of what it took to make a living. And they would buy 40 and 80 and 160 acres out here. And you drive through it now, and you wouldn't think anybody had ever been there. They fenced it and improved up on it, and some of it was just homesteaded. But others had to buy it because in the early days a lot of cattlemen like French and Devine, and those old early comers, had acquired vast amounts of the land under various means, and ---

JAMES: You say that with somewhat of a ---

GEORGE: Well if you've read the Pete French book ---

JAMES: I don't know how much of that book is true.

GEORGE: Well, there's two of them. One of them by French, and the other by Wood. Wood's is fiction and romanticized to quite an extent. So it doesn't necessarily hold true in lots of ways. But the ... book, and have you read Hanley's book called "Feeling Fine"?

MAN: Who was that, Russell Smith, he was telling me once about when they had the Swamp Act and those guys riding around in a wagon with a rowboat in it.

GEORGE: And they would mark anything that they could claim as swamp with a red S. Well, there was one field down here called the Red S Field, because it was marked down there ... with a Red S as swamp. Well, there was a little swamp on it, but that was the way they could claim it. And that field was a township, 6 miles each way, 36 sections in that one field. It's still known as the Red S Field, part of it, and its been whittled off of here and there. That was one field with 36 sections, that's a pretty good-sized field. You multiply 640 x 36 and find out how many acres there is in it.

JAMES: One thing I've been curious about is the kind of promotional appeal that the

speculators made to those Easterners, and to those Californians, what could they offer?

GEORGE: The Californians weren't coming at that time. Well, they did too, Dr. Glenn, Pete French's father-in-law, that's what he did. He just sent Pete French with his herd and said go find a good place to raise these cattle. And French came up from California with this herd of cattle and a bunch of Mexican buckaroos, not all Mexicans. Because Mrs. Hossman's father, he was one of the original old cowboys with them. And Joe Fine's father, ... Fine was another one. And then just like the typical old western stories you hear about crowding out the squatters, buying them out, or shooting them, or anyway you could acquire this land. Nesters, as they were called sometimes. And these old cattlemen were not very friendly.

JAMES: That's probably an under statement.

GEORGE: Well, Pete French was shot by one of these nesters that he was trying to crowd out. Some of the old western stories have a ring of truth to them. they aren't all made up.

JAMES: What do you think attracted the Easterners to come out here?

GEORGE: These claims of wonderful land for low prices, primarily economic.

JAMES: Nothing like today, city people attracted by the space, that wouldn't have been a consideration would it?

GEORGE: Well, some of them, and some of them thought they could find their health here. One of our first librarians moved from back in Boston, and she and her maiden sister, no her sister was a widow, wasn't she? They lived right down here in a little tent house, took up land out here, but they soon found they couldn't make a living off of it. And she was, I guess, the first librarian ... Miss McKenzie. The women here in the community had formed their Library Club and each donated books, and one of them kept them in their home as a place where you could come and get books.

WOMAN: The thing that amazes me is that some of the boys that were here during the CCC Camps and spent some time in this area from the congested areas, just as some of the Job Corps boys did, they were attracted because of the --- they liked the bigness of the country. I think that has attracted many, because of the room.

GEORGE: Well that was undoubtedly some of the attraction in the early days, because it was such a free country. Guess that's why those ... are still trying to sell this country.

JAMES: I'll bet the kinds of promotions that they are using are fairly similar.

GEORGE: Yes, because they used to run ads in Eastern papers. Genie, what was the other one besides the Eastern Oregon Colonization Company? That was Davidson. Was he with the E.O.C.? Believe so, Davidson from Minneapolis or some place. He was with the E.O.C. Company.

JAMES: What was Davidson's practice, what was the Company's practice, how did they go about ---

GEORGE: I think they bought land in here, and then they tried to sell their development by putting in irrigation and things like that too, and then re-sell it. Now Mr. McConnell was an attorney, their local representative for a long time, along with Davidson, but he was an attorney in this area. He's long gone. But he was one of those that they used as the local legal man to transfer deeds and things like that. Really, a lot of the first irrigation and that sort of thing, as Clarence has probably told you, is sort of cooperatives. There were several early developments in this country where, while they were set up as corporations, they were sort of cooperatives, like the first grist mill, flour mill up here on the river. They formed a corporation, but it was sort of like a cooperative, ranchers and some of the town people formed a cooperative corporation to build that flourmill. And they did the same thing with the slaughterhouse. And then in later years they built a creamery. Not the same corporation, but this form of --- to get the things that they needed in this area.

The sawmills were never like that. They were nearly all privately owned, and various different early saw millers. The earliest I know of was Mr. Robie that set up one on Rattlesnake above Harney to saw the lumber for Fort Harney when it was built. And he furnished most of the lumber for all the valley, like the ranchers down around Diamond. And when they built their homes, they had to come to the sawmill out by Harney and haul their lumber down to wherever their ranch was to build their homes. Because there isn't much timber, you know, in the South End. All the timber is here in the ... That Robie later went on to Boise, and set up a sawmill up on what is now Robie Creek over by Boise. And as far as I know, he was the first saw miller. There were lots of early saw millers that put up little mills, and usually they had a man in town that had the money ... There was Perrington Mill and McKinney Mill. What's your next question?

JAMES: I'm interested in such a variety of things, it all fits together. See, I'm curious now about where the money for these things came from. I want to know if it came from the outside.

GEORGE: Not very much of it. My father brought those first Jerseys in, he did. I'm not sure but what he was an attorney in Portland, to go in with him to furnish the money to buy those purebred Jerseys. And they hauled the milk to Huntington at that time. And drove them across in here, and that was in 1907 or 1908. They drove those; you'll see some pictures in the Museum room of the library of that, when that herd arrived down here on Main Street.

Not too long after that they had sort of what turned out to be the County Agent. He was an Agriculturist out of Oregon State College, who came in here. And the College set up an Experiment Station out here about 5 or 6 miles east of town, and they tried to develop crops that would mature in this climate and soil. I don't know just when that finally closed out, but that Experiment Station out here ran for 20 or 30 years.

JAMES: Did it benefit the country, the land?

GEORGE: Very much so. They tested well irrigation and that sort of thing as to whether it was financially feasible. And what types of crops would work, and brought in new types of hay, alfalfa, that was adapted to this type of dry land farming. And on controlling the pests and things like that.

JAMES: Did the money for these projects, being local, must have come mostly from banks?

GEORGE: A lot of it did. There were two banks at that time. There was both Harney County National and First National Bank.

JAMES: Were the bankers part of the community, or were they resented and outside the community as in some places?

GEORGE: No, they were part of the community. Al Brown down here, his father and his father's brother had the Harney County National Bank. And I don't know the real history of the First National Bank, but their bankers were really sent in, more or less. But the ownership of the bank was here; it was formed by local people.

JAMES: I've talked some about the bank, and I've been trying to get a feeling for financial and economic aspects, as well as the social and personal. And I don't imagine much of that has been written up.

GEORGE: No. I haven't re-read, I should, some of the, like "Harney County and Its Rangeland," of course he got a lot of his information just directly from Archie McGowan who underwrote the book, so it is a bit biased, but I don't know any history that isn't. Of course, you've seen the big book of the "History of Harney, Malheur and Grant Counties," well; you know how it was published. They ... like an agent would come through an area and he'd say we'd like to have your family history in our history of this county, and if you'll write it up and buy one of our book when it is published, why we'll see that it is in there.

And that's the way that book was compiled. And you agreed to buy one of the copies of that book. Of course, maybe it sold for \$20 or \$25, and if they got commitments of so many, it made it worthwhile to publish the book, and that was published in 1902. And you couldn't find a more ... history. Everybody told their own story the way they wanted it ... of the families that were here, and where they were located, and what they did.

JAMES: I would imagine that the use of the land would be most important, intelligent use of the land, because of the difficulty in making a living out here.

GEORGE: It took a great many acres to make a living-producing unit. If you were in range cattle it took so many acres and so much bottomland of hay producing land, and in the early days all of it was wild hay, it wasn't planted. You might plant grain, but then later the alfalfa came in where they could raise it, and you got water to it, because just straight dry land ranching began to fade along the end of the teens.

And after World War I, the cycle started going the other way into a dry cycle, and then these little outlying semi-communities, like Sunset Valley down here, and Rye Grass district, and Blitzen up in the Catlow, and Catlow Valley, and down around Crane and Albritton. Of course Albritton was set up for the railroad to come through. They just began to starve out and each of them took a little longer time to die than the others, and then the places fell into disrepair. Through all the years though, each one stayed fenced, and each little homesteader's cabin was all right, but as the change came why people began appropriating and tearing down the cabins and fences and things like that.

JAMES: Did the land beat them, or did they make some pretty terrible mistakes out here?

GEORGE: Well, there was both of that. These early people, some of them made the mistake of thinking they could make a living on a small piece of land, and poor judgment. But others, there was an economic change at the end of the war, into the '20's, and prices and all, along with the dry cycle; both the factors forced them out.

JAMES: Did they have practices, which have made living out here, subsequent let's say from the 1930's and 1940's on into the '60's and '70's more difficult? Were the early practices that were, in terms of conservation and ecology, disastrous?

GEORGE: In some ways. These attempts to put in a dam on the Silvies and irrigate with it, probably with a combination of recreation and power development, have been resisted, and the dam has never been built. Partially because those that have the water rights along the water way on the Silvies, there's no easier way to make a living than to have wild hay and acquire a lot of land right along where you get the flood plain area of the Silvies, and have the dam that will put it out on your land. You can just sit there and let the grass grow, and run your cattle on the public domain to take care of the summer range and then come into your ranch with the hay from the summer crop. And they'd only get maybe a ton and a half or two tons maybe at the most to an acre of wild hay. But if you had 200 or 300 acres of bottom land, and run your cattle out on the forest or on what is now BLM land.

There were some of them, you know, they had these Railroad Acts and School Acts where they gave sections to build schools with, or the remaining sections on each side of the proposed rail-road to the Railroad Company to build the railroad through there. Why you could acquire these big sections of land, and then you had a lot of grazing rights until the Taylor Gazing Act came along and ---

MAN: At one time this was nearly all-native grass here and the older grazing turned it into the sagebrush.

GEORGE: It was a much more productive grazing when the first cattlemen and sheep men came into it. And they did over-graze, and the sheep, of course, they'd kill out as much as they eat as they over-used the land. And then that affected the wild life balance a great deal. For instance, on the Steens you see the wild mountain sheep, the rock

mountain sheep, well when the sheep men came in and started competing, and they also brought with them the sheep diseases which some of the wild sheep caught, why then they started declining. And I think about 1914 the last mountain sheep, the wild ones, were gone from the Steens Mountain. They have tried elk down in that area too, but it wasn't elk country. My father killed some of the last mountain sheep and elk that were left in that area, four specimens. Partly for the Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland in 1905. And then he used to send exhibits down to the State Fair, wild life usually, because that was what it was the most famous for.

MAN: When did these guys first start putting hay up around here, George?

GEORGE: Well, I couldn't answer that, because it goes so far back, as far as stacking it.

GENIE (EUGENIA SKIENS): I don't think this land could support too many people without more water, and I think these big land owners, that's why the other fellows couldn't make it, they had all the water that was available. And they couldn't make it out of the dry land, and I think why some of these homesteaders stayed on, they got jobs on the ranches, to supplement a little, you know, their finances to try it a little longer. That's why some lasted longer than others. But most of them had to supplement their income by working someplace else. Hence, they didn't have the time to do too much on their own places.

JAMES: That water must have been the source of a lot of conflict?

GEORGE: Yes, it was. And Clarence is your best information on that because he was Water Master of the county for a long time. He was an engineer to begin with, and helped work on this.

GENIE: And his father was a rancher.

JAMES: Were there any water issues that your family; your father was involved with?

GEORGE: No, because our ranching consisted of a place out here, 2 or 3 miles that

belonged really, he got the use of it from Mr. Hanley. That was in later years too.

JAMES: What year would be the difference that you are talking about, what are the years, the earlier time and the later time in which the water was particularly important?

GEORGE: Well, I imagine from the late '80's and '90's there was lots of water for the number of ranches. And then as I said before, in the teens it began to ---

GENIE: From 1908 on until '14 or, '15, or '16, in there, was the time of the influx of the homesteader. The Homesteader Act had gone through. And people wanted the land. Land, to the American people, meant money, you see, and security. And these people that didn't have it back in the Midwest started to come out a little further west to acquire land. And coming before they knew it would support them, and it wouldn't support the numbers that came.

GEORGE: And then too, the annual precipitation dropped off quite a lot and that, along with the change in economic times, of the war times and depression, that's when it went into the ---

JAMES: We went into the depression right after the First World War then?

GEORGE: Well, it started into it, although it wasn't until the late '20's and '31 and '32. The driest years were all in the '30's, '31, and '32. Malheur Lake practically dried clear up. And that's when they found these prehistoric bones that had been under water all these years, and they found the bison. And the Indians, as near as they could tell, it had been 200 years since the bison had left this area.

EUGENIA: There had been another dry cycle years back, because these animals had flocked into this water.

GEORGE: From back in Washington they sent a man out here to study these. Because they were usually in groups, evidently as the water dried up, they would congregate around the water hole, the water spouts. You see the Malheur is the low point of this

great Inland Basin here, and there is no drainage to the sea. And this is all land locked as far as any outflow is concerned, and they would find these bison bones in a big ring, like they had either died around the last water hole or fallen through the ice. And you'd find bison, you'd find types of caribou, and elk, and saber-toothed tigers, and things like that. And this man from the Smithsonian named this as a sub-specie of bison ... because it was a type different to Oregon than the other areas. That was along in '30 and '31 when it was the driest. Even the lakebed caught fire, the peat from the old tules and cattails, 6 and 7 feet deep of a type of peat. And it just burned all summer until the fall rains and winter storms finally put it out around the shore of the lake.

JAMES: Who were some of the community leaders up to the time of the First World War? It sounds like that's about the end of the homesteading period, at least the end of the boom?

EUGENIA: Yes. There were a lot of land promoters in here during that time when they were bringing them in. More or less it seemed like individuals, and they evidently got brochures and sent them out all over the country.

JAMES: I wonder if the library or anyone around here has those kinds of brochures?

EUGENIA: The old newspapers would surely carry the ads.

GEORGE: Well, I don't know if we would be the best ones to tell you that. My oldest sister, you see, she was 5 years old when she came in '99, and Genie was just 2 years old.

JAMES: Maybe I should rephrase the question. I think I'm asking too much. Let's move ahead a little bit.

GEORGE: Well, you should get that, but there are some other people that are better able to tell you, Vella McQueen, Ches Mace out here. Well, I can't tell you who the community leaders were at that time. I can give you lots of names of people that you should

eventually talk to who could help you on a lot of these things.

JAMES: Well, in a little while I might take a list of that. Do you remember anybody that you admired particularly as a child?

GEORGE: Well, not from way back. You see, I was born in 1913; my father had been here 14 years at that time. And of course my earliest recollections really were probably after the First World War, the first things that I can remember. Then, after that, I liked the entertainment; the Chautauqua was one of the big events of the year when it came. They stayed for a week and set up their tent and had their ... and then in the winter the same organization, Alison White Chautauqua. They put on what is called ... in the winter. And they'd have their series of, maybe it was a musical, or maybe there was a play, or lecture, and they would tour through this area and they had it set up in each town, next week in the next town, so they could make their circuit. These old traveling companies of players would come and put on a series of plays and things like that.

JAMES: Would the plays be Shakespeare, or would they be something popular?

GEORGE: Popular. One of the outstanding things that occurred, for instance, the Chautauqua was putting on a play they called, "The Little Shepherd of the Hills." Now I don't suppose you ever heard of it, but it was one of their stock plays that was put on by these road companies. But this was the Chautauqua, and it was a story about a sort of a mentally retarded boy that was a little shepherd in the hills, and goes back into the Ozarks or the Appalachians maybe, and as the story unwound, why there was a shooting in it and as it happened --- this was during the early '20's during prohibition. The city marshal went to arrest a man who lived not far from where the tent was set up down town, and he was taking him to jail for bootlegging. And this guy decided he didn't want to go there at the last minute and he and the marshal were walking down the street right back of the tent, and he pulled a gun and shot the marshal. And that happened within sound of the

performance in the tent, and it happened at the time it ... of the play. Then this marshal, while he was wounded, he was still able to holler and he started yelling, "I'm shot, I'm shot." And the people started to panic in the tent, and they rang down the curtain and come out and said, "Be calm, ladies and gentlemen, we'll resume this when we can, when we get things squared around." And it was a coincidence that ... the story of it on in the play at the time.

My oldest sister's husband tells of the lady sitting in front of him, she stands up and says, "I'm going to faint," and she looked around to see who was going to catch her, and he folded his arms, so she decided she didn't have anybody to catch her, so she just sat down.

I remember in the ... the theater had their own generator, it was just a gas engine set up in the back of the theater, and the presidium was lined with lights, and the lecturer was giving his talk, and the governor on the generator broke and it sounded rather loud and the electric light bulbs started popping all around the stage, and people started to panic in the theater. And he says, "Sit down or I'll knock you down. There's no fire, don't panic." He calmed them down and held them until they got things under control. But that was part of bringing culture to Burns.

JAMES: Was there a school here that you attended?

GEORGE: Yes, what is now the Slater Grade School was where I attended school.

JAMES: It was called Lincoln School?

EUGENIA: Now. No, I said that's what it is called now.

GEORGE: The Slater School is where I attended school. It was built in 1912, it was a three-story or two and a half story, the first story was rally half basement. But the old gym in back of what is the Slater Grade School, is part of the 1912 school. That's where I started school. When my sisters went to school what is now the Lincoln School was a big

old wooden two and a half or three story wood building that was built in 1895 as a grade school. And then it later became the high school after 1912, when they built this grade school. This older sister and the man she's talking to out there were the class of 1914 in this old original high school.

JAMES: I am curious if there are any memorable incidents in school, or memorable characters?

GEORGE: Oh yes, very much so. Some of the early teachers and principals were ---

JAMES: Can I stop you and turn over my tape. I wouldn't be pulling anything up, would I?

GEORGE: Not a bit. Well of course as far as I'm concerned, the most memorable was the principal of this grade school, who came here in 1912 when they opened this new facility until, I think he was here about, at least 15 years, something like that. His name was Sutton, and he was a regular Hitler the way he ran that grade school. He believed in corporal punishment of various kinds, and of course carrying it out without any interference from the parents very often. He was just a real ---

JAMES: What were his methods, his corporal punishments?

GEORGE: Well, he had various ones, but the stick was about as good as any. He also had an unerring eye with his bundle of keys. And if he saw you weren't paying attention, or doing something you shouldn't, why from anywhere in the room, he could land his keys on the desk right under your nose and scare the lights out of you. But he might come down the aisle and if you didn't have your home-work, why he'd just grab you by the scruff of the neck and pull you out of the seat and lay you down in the aisle and put his foot on you and ask you if you thought you would get it next time, or tomorrow, or something like that.

EUGENIA: ... He ruled by fear really. All the girls were just scared to death of him.

GEORGE: Well, and unless the guy was over-age and big for his age too, why he could handle any of the kids in grade school. And he had an old step ladder stool, in one of the upper floor windows, and the play grounds were in view from there, the whole playground in front of the school. And he would sit up there in that window and he had a little bell, and the kids could be having just a wonderful noon time, or recess playing, and hear that ting-ting-ting, and boy it would just quiet the whole field. And he'd say, "You and you, you come on up here," if he saw them fighting or doing something that they weren't supposed to do. You went up there with fear in your heart. He'd just lots of times tell you to go up to the office and you'd just sit there for an hour, maybe half hour, waiting for him to come to tell you what was wrong, and what he was going to do about it, and things like that.

I had one sister in particular, who lives back East, that even if she'd meet him on the street and even after she got through high school and married, and she'd meet that guy on the street and she'd choke up and get scared and start to cry to see him.

EUGENIA: I never knew him. I think maybe he hit our hands. I never was struck by him.

GEORGE: I never got a real licking from him. He'd call students out of the class, if somebody got caught doing wrong, he'd call the boys out of the class and have you whip the other kid, things like that. I can remember one time when one of these land promoter guys, his boy had gotten in trouble down in the rest room marking up the walls, and he had the other kids whip that ... kid. He had an 18-inch ruler he would use on you.

And another time I saw him take one of the boys, a small boy, and he had these big wire waste baskets right beside his desk, you know, and he just folded that kid up and sat him down in that waste basket with his knees right up beside his cheeks, and let him sit there in front of the class for a while, things like that. Of course, you know, in the early days of school, the stories you've heard about the big kids trying to run the school teacher off, and that sort of thing occurred and really here, too. And especially in the high

school when they were 18 and 20 and 22 years old before they got through high school, and they didn't care whether they went to school much or not.

EUGENIA: I think part of it too, seasons; sometimes kids couldn't get into school. They got behind and they were slower in completing, they just had to take another grade over. If they didn't get it one year, they had to take it the next.

GEORGE: Clarence can tell you some real stories about some of the school episodes and things like that.

EUGENIA: This Mr. Sutton was much later.

JAMES: Were there classmates of yours that were particularly memorable characters?

GEORGE: No, nothing in particular. This ... I was talking about, this kid that got into trouble, one of them ended up in the pen, and the other one was shot in an incident down in California and killed. They were early delinquents and late delinquents, too.

JAMES: Well do you remember if --- did most of the people you went to school with stay in the area as adults?

GEORGE: Most of them don't.

JAMES: Most of them don't. Why did they move?

GEORGE: There's no future for them here if they got an education. If they were good students and went on to college, unless they became a lawyer, or a doctor, or something like that and came back, very few of them ever did. There isn't an attorney in the town, except one, Pat Donegan is the only one I ever knew who was a local boy that came back.

JAMES: Could you guess at a date when kids would be likely to leave home, leave the area? I mean, not necessarily leave home, as quick as they could?

GEORGE: Of course that varied. Like with the war, either war, World War I or World War II, so many of them would go into the service, or something like that. From the World War

I quite a lot of them came back, but, of course, a lot of them didn't. They got out and there wasn't any real incentive for them to come back, other than their family here, things like that. If they developed a profession or a skill that they could find elsewhere, why a lot of them found it easier to go somewhere else. Because unless you wanted to go into ranching, until the sawmill started here in 1930, why there wasn't anything for them to do. Of course, the town had stores and things like that, if you were connected with it to begin with, you might come back to it.

EUGENIA: Not very many of the students up until the '30's got to go on to college, or not for more than a year or two. Those that did stay around here drifted away because there just wasn't enough to support them, just not the variety of industry or occupations.

GEORGE: And then too, it is so isolated, you know, comparatively, that a lot of people just felt it was too much so. They'd rather move to a place where they could get to the city easier or whatever they were wanting to do, this was so isolated. I don't know when the first real good roads came into the area, but there was the father-in-law of Mr. McGowan, the name Smith, they set up a monument to him out here because he was one of the early promoters of getting highways through. Harry Smith, he was the real founder of the Burns Garage down here. His son-in-law, Archie McGowan carried it on. But his father-in-law really started it. He was an early builder too, a stone mason, and had one of the first brick yards here, and built a lot of the buildings in the town. Until the later years when more of them got to going to college, why fewer were coming back.

JAMES: There are some things you can get a feeling for by knowing, something like when the kids of the family leave, or if they stay here and inter-marry here, or if they are anxious to get out. Now there are quite a few stay.

EUGENIA: Oh yes, quite a number that stay, and you can't talk about too many people freely because they are all related more or less, these older families. We felt like

outsiders as we began to grow up as children. We didn't have any cousins or uncles and aunts, there was just our family, you see. And that was 1900. These other families had just inter-married and continued to.

GEORGE: Especially in these outlying communities like Drewsey and down around Diamond and Crane. Why, you didn't any more dare go out to Drewsey, even today, and try to talk about anybody but what they were related, all through that whole community. And they still are, very much so.

EUGENIA: They weren't particularly clannish, you know, in the social life, but well there weren't too many available.

JAMES: ... that's what you had to work with. Does this make a better feeling of community, of closeness, or is there more conflict?

GEORGE: Well I think that for instance in the Drewsey country, it tends for a closeness, community cooperation.

EUGENIA: They had to hang together to make it.

GEORGE: They have their little cemetery out there and every year they have their cemetery there and they go there as a community and picnic and clean up the grounds and fix up their community cemetery. They built this community hall that way, they all got in and they hold their own entertainments and put on their own programs out there, even now. They will have a play out at Diamond, they'll put on a --- it's one of these old cornball plays, what is the one about Pumpkin Creek, or something like that, and they'll put that on and everybody turns out.

JAMES: This would be put on by the townspeople themselves?

GEORGE: Yes.

JAMES: Would it be a play that they have scripts for, or would it be a play that they have learned, sort of ad-libbed? There are some communities apparently that have done that, I

don't know of any around here.

GEORGE: No, I don't either.

EUGENIA: Might have been down at Frenchglen. The schoolteacher's a sort of a good --
- makes a good nucleus to work around. She works out through all these families, you see. She brings them in together.

GEORGE: They still do that down in Frenchglen and Diamond and down on the other side of the Steens at Andrews. The schoolteacher is sort of the center.

JAMES: Is that true mostly today, or has this been a traditional thing?

GEORGE: Oh, traditional. So many of the school teachers will come in here as a green teacher out of the normal school, or out of college, and the first thing you know she has married somebody in the local area, and she's part of that area. And so many of the ranchers out around the outlying areas, they find their wives, schoolteachers that came in. Two years ago something happened out at Andrews and they got rid of this teacher, and here came a little gal who had graduated down at Portland State, and she'd never been out here before, and her folks hauled her out here, and the boyfriend came with her, and they dumped her in the trailer out there at Andrews. Her first assignment right out of college. But she has taken hold and she loves the country, and the people like her. And she's part of their little community out there, and they have their Christmas program and get-togethers.

EUGENIA: The thing that I remember that was so pleasurable as a community was the different things that the community would have in the way of entertainment, musicals or plays, or a box social, and everybody took part. Everything we did together.

JAMES: When you say everybody, are you talking about from the cattle king all the way down to the lowliest ranch hand?

EUGENIA: ...

GEORGE: And what about the Indians? They liked free things.

EUGENIA: Yes, they liked to come. They felt sort of on the outside. More and more they are being absorbed some.

GEORGE: There really wasn't much of a social strata in the community itself, other than there was a real difference of country kids and city kids, even here. You wouldn't think that, really, but I don't know whether it still exists in the schools, but the kids that came in from the country just looked different, and were country kids.

EUGENIA: They had a hard time of it.

GEORGE: The city kids were hard on the country kids.

JAMES: You mean in the way we used to poke fun at the Appalachian kids for being hill people?

EUGENIA: The way they dressed. Socially they hadn't had ... life. They were awkward.

GEORGE: They also were probably not as financially able to dress the same way.

JAMES: I'm really interested to find out about this division. I'm surprised, that's something I hadn't thought of.

EUGENIA: Maybe the boys felt it more than the girls. Now quite a lot in my class were girls that had come from out.

GEORGE: But they usually had to work in a home, and live in a home in the city. When I say city, I mean Burns, because it was the center of the county.

EUGENIA: And no other high school. They had the grades to the 8th grade.

GEORGE: Until the Crane High School formed in the '20's, but this was the only high school, and to get to come to high school you had to find a place to live. Some, like from Drewsey, one of the mothers would move into Burns in a big house, and bring maybe four or five from out in the Drewsey area would come in here, and she would mother all of them.

JAMES: That's a nice community activity, the way I understand it.

GEORGE: They still do that. Even though this Crane school, which is a boarding school, I don't know whether you have got into that or not, but a lot of those people out in the outlying districts don't think that it is a big enough school to have a wide enough curriculum, they'll send their kids in here to board with somebody and go to high school here rather than go to Crane where they can live in the dorm. At Crane they can drive there in their cars, but they have to turn their keys in on Sunday night when they come in and they don't get them back until Friday night when they are supposed to go back to their ranch. They have a pretty close-knit school. They really do a good job of taking care of those kids too, keeping them in line as far as doing things that they shouldn't be doing, why they have a pretty good control of them. EUGENIA: Lots of sports activities for both boys and girls.

GEORGE: And self-entertainment.

JAMES: I am anxious to learn more about the musicals, the plays, the box socials that you were referring to just a little bit ago.

GEORGE: Have you heard of this Sagebrush Orchestra that they formed here? ... a Bostonian, Mrs. Dodge came from back in Boston.

JAMES: Did she go to Portland and form the Junior Symphony?

GEORGE: She was the originator of it. Her husband was a civil engineer here and she ...

EUGENIA: She never had a very pretentious place to live here.

GEORGE: But she had a burning desire to teach music and she started what was called the Sagebrush Orchestra, and you'll see pictures of them over here, and that was along in the teens. And they went to Portland to the Rose Festival.

EUGENIA: Early teens, 1912 or something like that was when she---and she had them

organized quite a while before she took them down there.

GEORGE: Madame Schumann-Heink, the great opera and concert singer, they performed for her, and she performed for them in Portland at one of the early concerts there. And then she moved to Portland, Mrs. Dodge did, and she carried it on, starting the Junior Symphony. You will find quite a division down there as to who was really the sponsor, because ... is the man who is claiming, sort of carrying it on, too.

JAMES: What kind of music would you hear at the box socials and dances?

EUGENIA: Usually just someone at the piano and there might be a violin along with it.

JAMES: Do you remember any tune titles, and song titles?

GEORGE: Well, you know, there is an early family here that I want you to eventually get to, named Foleys, and the oldest Foley girl is a woman named Mrs. Donald Kennedy, her husband has been in the State Department in Washington, and they are retired now and living in Portland. But she has two sisters here, and she is trying to compile a sort of a history of the Symphony. And we found a bunch of the old programs of these musicals, and we sent them to her because she was working on this musical history, Mrs. Dodge.

EUGENIA: We had wonderful piano teachers and violin teachers. Some of them, I know the violin teacher came in as a homesteader. That was ... He worked with Mrs. Dodge for a while in this first orchestra here. And then the voice teachers, and every once in a while they would bring in one of the Portland's best singers, you know. And what an occasion it was for our community to have that. And these were the things that you turned out for. And then, I know one of the music teachers organized the Treble Clef Club, a group of women, and it was a wonderful organization, and we'd go down to Crane and perform for them. We'd go over to John Day and perform there, and out to Drewsey, that's as far as we would get, you know. It was just wonderful, the musical end of it that way.

NOTE: ... In this part of the tape George's sister, Roberta, is talking about the

Presbyterian Church and a minister who walked from Burns down to Lawen to hold services, about the old Presbyterian Ladies Aid Book Club, oilcloth covered. All the ladies would send in a recipe and they had this cookbook to raise some money. They, the Hubbard's, said they thought they had a copy of this cookbook and it was probably put together about 1912. Probably the first cookbook from this area.

JAMES: Sometimes those recipes show a lot of what is going on, because it tells you what is available, and so forth.

GEORGE: There is several of those old cookbooks around, I'm sure. We use some of those recipes to this day. Ethel Hotchkiss' husband, Don, is the oldest boy, he had an older sister, she's gone, and the County Judge is Newton Hotchkiss.

EUGENIA: They are away back, before us, before the 1900's.

JAMES: What are some of the names that you think would be important for me to contact?

GEORGE: Well, Mrs. Hossman, her father was this old Mart Brenton, who was one of Pete French's riders, and cowboy. And there is a Brenton cabin in the area; I guess maybe the cabin is still there, up on the Blitzen that is still known as the Brenton Cabin. And it is part of the Refuge now. She has his diary, but she is very touchy, jealous about it.

JAMES: About the diary, or about the father?

GEORGE: About both, because his career was quite checkered and some of the parts of his life she would just as leave not be publicized. He was a saloonkeeper and the saloon entailed a lot of things. A crib behind it, things like that, all of which she isn't very anxious to have publicized. He was a character. Later he was bailiff of the court, the circuit court, and he had a language all his own.

ROBERTA: He'd come down, I was deputy county clerk, and Mr. Carroll, the county

clerk, he had to be in court when court was on, but sometimes the jury would be out and there wouldn't be much doing and old Mart would come down and somebody would say, what are they doing up there. He'd say the jury had called a recess, to break the monopoly. He knew better than that, monotony. He manufactures words.

GEORGE: Like Dizzy Dean used to say, "slud into 3rd base".

SIDE B

ROBERTA: And we had one murder trial on, and they had to clear the court room at noon and people wanted to get in so bad, and they jammed into the courthouse doors and up the stairs, and when he, Brenton, couldn't get up, he got a ladder and went out back and went up in the second story and got through a window in the court room to open the court doors.

JAMES: Breaking and entering, I think.

ROBERTA: ...

JAMES: What was his name again?

ROBERT: Brenton, Mart, M A R T.

GEORGE: The Star Saloon down here on ...

JAMES: Was his saloon during the '20's, during prohibition?

GEORGE: Well he kept it as a soft drink place and a card room during prohibition, but it wasn't a saloon any more as far as selling anything stronger than soda water.

EUGENIA: At least not over the counter.

ROBERTA: ...

GEORGE: Now, like I say now, his daughter, Mrs. Hossman, you can see why she isn't, she isn't very happy with the library either, because she used to come up there, and for a time they allowed them to take the periodicals the library subscribed to, and when they

had to change the policy she still thought she ought to be able to take any current magazine and take it home like you would a library book. And she just isn't very happy that the library doesn't allow them to do that any more.

JAMES: I'm going to save tape ... Ella McQueen ---

GEORGE: Vella McQueen, she was a Welcome, she was married to a Welcome, but her maiden name was Mace, and they are old timers.

Her brother is Ches Mace.

EUGENIA: And he is still living.

GEORGE: And his wife is another old family named Spencer from Silver Creek, and she is probably more alert than Ches, I imagine. ... And then a Mrs. Cowing, whose husband's father was the first sheriff in this county.

JAMES: Yes, Clarence and I talked about him.

GEORGE: Now Mrs. Cowing is just back of us up here about three or four blocks. And he died a couple of years ago, but she would be one that would be very good at giving early, her name was Jennings, the Jennings family was early times too.

I don't know whether Mrs. Slater has told you about a woman named Kueny or not, but she lives in Winnemucca. She is another who is full of information, and she has wonderful scrapbooks, and her father was named Neal. And he was one of the early civil engineers in here, and he did a lot of the surveying and did some of the early ranching that was quite revolutionary at the Folly Farm where he put in reservoirs. There are some relatives of hers that live here in town. But she is one that has been very unhappy with the results of her philanthropy and donations. She sold her ranches and gave, I think, something like a million and a half dollars to the Shrine. And yet her relations with the community and the county and the publicity about the things that she has done have been poorly ---

(END OF TAPE)

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