

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #237 - Sides A & B

Subject: Ralph Hankins

Place: Ralph Hankins Home, Burns, Oregon

Date: September 15, 1988

Interviewers: Dorothea Purdy & Barbara Lofgren

DOROTHEA PURDY: This is Dorothea Purdy and Barbara Lofgren and we're at the home of Ralph Hankins, and we're going to talk to him about his life in Silvies Valley, and some of the interesting parts of growing up. The date is September 15th, 1988. Okay Ralph, first let's ask you your name, and when you were born, where you were born, and who your parents are.

RALPH HANKINS: Do you want me to make a statement to cover all of them questions at the same time? Or each one separately?

DOROTHEA: Well --- however you want to answer that. First, let's ask you what your name is.

RALPH: Well, my name is Ralph Hankins, and no middle initial.

DOROTHEA: No middle initial. Okay.

RALPH: And I guess it isn't hard to spell that.

DOROTHEA: Okay, yeah. (Laughter) What was your parent's name?

RALPH: My father's name was Charles Cordell Hankins.

DOROTHEA: And Cordell is C O R ---

RALPH: D E L L.

DOROTHEA: D E L L. Okay.

RALPH: C. C. Hankins, he was known.

DOROTHEA: He was known as C. C. Hankins. Okay. And your mother's name was?

RALPH: Clara Catherine Pierce.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and is her Catherine spelled with a K or ---

RALPH: C.

DOROTHEA: C.

RALPH: It was kind of odd, I mean, that both of their names were C. C. I mean it don't --- it's immaterial, but I mean it don't happen very often.

DOROTHEA: Right.

BARBARA LOFGREN: Is Pierce, P E A R C E, or P I E R C E?

RALPH: P I.

BARBARA: E R C E. Okay.

DOROTHEA: And Clara is C L A R A?

RALPH: That's right.

DOROTHEA: Okay. When were you born?

RALPH: Well I was born in 1902, the 7th of June.

DOROTHEA: The 7th of June in 1902. You're not as old as I thought you were, Ralph.

RALPH: Oh, gee whiz.

DOROTHEA: You're quite a young man yet.

RALPH: No, when you make a statement like that, that's --- you appear older than you are, see.

DOROTHEA: Uh oh, (Laughter).

RALPH: You see what I mean now.

DOROTHEA: Now, see ---

BARBARA: She said it backwards.

DOROTHEA: Now I put my foot in my mouth, didn't I. I didn't mean to do that.

RALPH: That's right, because ---

DOROTHEA: No, for some reason or other, I guess I've known you for so long that I just -- since I'm getting up in those years, I just figured that you had to be too, but you're not. So you're still a young man. You were born where?

RALPH: Well in --- it would be the upper end of the Silvies Valley where Camp Creek comes in. No doubt you ---

DOROTHEA: And this is probably known as what? Just Camp Creek?

RALPH: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Can you tell us something about the valley as you remember, as a small boy?

RALPH: Well, those kind of questions is similar to --- well leading like we mentioned a while ago. There is things that you remember, and then there will be a gap of several years that you don't never record anything.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: But, of course I don't remember when I was born, to start out with. And possibly about the earliest thing that I can recall, that I remember was a Christmas tree. And I think that happens to a, lots of children. Christmas has always been quite an occasion for children.

BARBARA: Very special.

RALPH: Even now. But it has changed immensely in as long a life as I've lived. The commercial part of it now has changed a lot of the meaning, I think.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: And pardon me for making such statements as that, but that's the way I see it.

DOROTHEA: Well I think we probably all feel that way. We've kind of made it a party time, rather than a celebration.

RALPH: Now this Christmas tree was at my grandparents, on my mother's side of the family, Pierce family. Was in a log house, with what we call a loft up overhead. Not two full stories. And that was a common thing at that time. People slept up overhead. But no need to describe that. But this Christmas tree was of course a native tree. And the kind of lights that was on that tree, and that was pretty special because it cost money. And anything that cost money meant something in them days. And they had little tin candleholders that you pinched over a bough, and made little tiny candles --- they make the candles even yet for decoration. And you stick them and pinch them onto the boughs of the Christmas tree. And when you went around with a match and light them, why that was something.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: And my first Christmas present, that's what sets in my mind at that age. Now I don't know whether I was two or four or, I don't think I was over four. They was one of the neighbors by the name of Pickens. William Pickens, that had deeded a homestead there. Pretty heavy man. And he was elected to be Santa Claus. And he already had a white beard, and didn't have to have much decoration. And what presents that was on that tree, averaged today, why we'd say, oh don't put that junk on there, you know. Because everything was hand made. And my present, when I got a present, one of my uncles that's been gone several years now, he was holding me, and there was a little piece of clothesline rope about six or eight feet long, with a loop tied in it as a lasso rope. And when that was given to me, my uncle made a loop in that and he lassoed Santa Claus.

DOROTHEA: Oh. (Laughter)

RALPH: Santa Claus threw a big fit like he was going to the hills, you know. And I went to bawling because I thought he had run away with my rope. (Laughter) Now isn't it funny that you would remember things like that.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

RALPH: As many Christmases as I have witnessed.

DOROTHEA: Well describe the Christmases that you can remember. Some of the homemade ornaments and what all --- how did you decorate your trees?

RALPH: Well it went from there. We never had electricity there in Silvie until 1946.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: Maybe you would even know that.

DOROTHEA: Well I didn't live there then. But Clinton told me about that.

RALPH: Well, as I say --- And so your lights, if you didn't have an independent light plant, and they was pretty prohibitive for success and expense both, why it was still candles. But I often wonder, I'm a dreamer anyhow, the way the fire hazard is today, that there must have been a guiding hand over things like that. When you have an open flame of candles all around a tree ---

BARBARA: It's a wonder they didn't all burn up, isn't it? Or didn't set the house on fire, or something.

RALPH: Well, that's right. And it would have burnt the house up. Had to of because nobody had anymore than a bucket full of water.

BARBARA: Right.

DOROTHEA: You bet. Uh huh.

BARBARA: Did you string popcorn and things like that to put on the tree?

RALPH: Popcorn we strang on a string.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

RALPH: And ---

BARBARA: Make paper ropes and things like that?

RALPH: Little twist paper.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

RALPH: Them kind of decorations.

BARBARA: Pretty, weren't they?

RALPH: I think they had a meaning to them, that we don't appreciate today.

BARBARA: Yes. You worked hard at making the tree look pretty, out of things that you could do yourself.

RALPH: And that's the reason that I made the --- recovering the statement I made previous that I think we have lost --- Now I was in Houston, Texas, at my daughters last Christmas. She give seventy-five dollars for a tree. And gosh knows what went on that tree, just to decorate it. Because they've got anything made now that you want to put on. And the same way with what was put on that tree as gifts. There was nothing handmade. And I'm so old fashioned, I come back again, I think we have lost something there.

BARBARA: Did your parents make clothing for you, or did they whittle out toys and that sort of thing?

RALPH: Oh yes. My first wagon I ever had was a handmade wagon. And I don't know where the --- it was an uncle made that. And he even painted it red. Now I don't know where he got the paint.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

RALPH: I've often dreamed about that. Because nothing was painted around the house. But somehow red paint ---

BARBARA: Made it a special wagon, didn't it?

RALPH: Oh, well I'll tell you. I mean that was worth more than anyone that --- I've had a dozen after that, nice factory made wagons with rubber tires and things. But --- that's the reason that I'm a dreamer, I guess. I wonder, so much of our life, I don't know whether we're appreciating it right now as much as we did.

BARBARA: You say that your mother's family --- did they live close to you at that time?

RALPH: Well, it was about four miles.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Where did they live in the valley at that time? What is the place called today?

RALPH: It --- south, on Jump Creek. Camp Creek and Jump Creek and Flat Creek there in the Silvies Valley, all come in on the west side of the Silvies River, as tributaries to the river. And they was practically parallel.

DOROTHEA: Now is this the Silvies River?

RALPH: Yes. We're talking about --- that's in the country we are describing is in Grant County. North of the county line.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Most of Silvies Valley kind of separates the Grant and Harney County line. But Silvies that we're talking about right now is in Grant County.

RALPH: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Can you remember how long your folks lived there before you were born?

RALPH: Well, my father come there in 1898. And he married my mother --- they was already living there, in 1900.

DOROTHEA: And so the valley consisted of quite a few families before your parents, or your father especially moved to the valley.

RALPH: Yeah. He had an uncle --- this is how he come here from Kansas. He had an uncle that already had an established ranch there. The Bridge Creek Ranch there on the Silvies.

DOROTHEA: That used to belong to the Hankins. Bridge Creek.

RALPH: It was deeded to Roland Hankins. Where the old Craddock place used to be.

DOROTHEA: Is that R O L L I N or R O L A N D?

RALPH: A N D.

DOROTHEA: A N D.

RALPH: Roland.

DOROTHEA: Land --- Hankins. Now the old Pierce place behind the Silvies Store right now, and one that you in the future owned and hayed, is that where your mother was brought up?

RALPH: Well, the old Pierce place, the one where we was talking about even this Christmas tree ---

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: You know, I never did own any part of that.

DOROTHEA: You never owned any of that.

RALPH: That was a little bit south, Jump Creek was, of the land that I owned.

DOROTHEA: Okay, that's on further up north, isn't it, than the land that you owned?

RALPH: No, its south.

DOROTHEA: Oh, it's south? Jump Creek. I don't ---

RALPH: Yes. Well --- if I can get some of this junk out of here --- they tell me how to vote and this and that. (Draws a map.) Now we're setting --- you're south and north, the way this envelope is.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: Silvies River comes down through here this way, just the way we're drawing. The highway is on this side.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: This Camp Creek comes in here. Jump Creek comes in here. Only I mean they come the other way. And Flat Creek comes in here.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And from here, where is, on this map that we're drawing here,



where is the Silvies Store?

RALPH: Well the Silvies Store would be just about here.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

RALPH: On this side of the river.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

RALPH: Are we getting anywhere?

DOROTHEA: Just a little bit. I'm a little backwards. I think I come from Oklahoma someplace, my feet show it. Let's go onto then how your father got started in --- with the Silvies Store.

RALPH: Well, after he, after he and mother got married, why he deeded that place on Camp Creek right up next to the forest reserve there. PLS Company owned a lot of land in Silvies Valley, when he come here.

DOROTHEA: PLS Company.

RALPH: Yeah. And now, I don't know, they had a lot of deeded land here.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: And the record of their deeded land was --- a person would have to go to a county record to find that. Because there is no-body living that knows anything about it.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Uh huh.

RALPH: But they owned a lot of good land here, because they --- all over the country they knew where the good land was. And they'd have their buckaroos file on that land and deed it, and go right ahead a working with the company, you know. They deeded the water. And of course that was before BLM was ever thought of. And it give them access.

When you had the ---

DOROTHEA: Let's just put this down here. (Microphone cord)

RALPH: I'll be careful and not run away here!

DOROTHEA: But the PLS Company owned a lot of the land up there, so how did he get a piece of ground?

RALPH: Yes. Well, there was always parts of open land that the company had only taken you might say, the cream of it. And this place, they was already, it was already filed on by a fellow by the name of Frank Landing. And my father traded him a horse, a saddle horse and saddle for relinquishment on 160 acres.

DOROTHEA: Now who was Frank Landing?

RALPH: Now that's all that I can say.

DOROTHEA: Just a man.

RALPH: That was the man that used this ranch up ---

DOROTHEA: Just a man. He didn't belong to PLS?

RALPH: No. So, that's where my father and mother started in their life together there.

DOROTHEA: Can you --- this was before they started the store?

RALPH: Oh, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Can you remember some of the families, and approximately the population of Silvies when you were living there at its peak?

RALPH: Well, I'd have to kind of numerate that now. Well, let's see. I might have a pretty heavy pencil. Let's see, we're --- this is going into the valley from down where Clinton and ---

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Wayne.

RALPH: The Purdy family, where they, when they moved there on the old Phil Metschan place. That was a big stage stop there.

Here's ---

DOROTHEA: Okay, now is that the Chritchell --- the Cross place?

RALPH: No.

DOROTHEA: Okay, it's down where ---

RALPH: It's on --- that's in the edge of Silvies. When you go below the Cross place, I mean go north on down Trout Creek ---

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Used to be Shorty? There where Shorty Michell's place is? Was that the stage ---

RALPH: Well I --- Shorty --- this Shorty Mitchell, I can't recall. But the original owners of this place here, was a big two story white house. And it was Phil Metschan.

DOROTHEA: Phil.

RALPH: That was the way it was known at the time, when I first come in there.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

RALPH: And the Bell Telephone Company had a one-wire line strung from Baker City to Burns. And the neighbors here could go; they had a old crank wall telephone at that Metschan place. And you could put in a call there. On one blue telephone line that was strung through the country.

DOROTHEA: Clear to Baker City?

RALPH: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Okay. So there was a stagecoach line in there some-where.

RALPH: It stopped right there and changed horses.

DOROTHEA: Changed horses.

RALPH: Uh huh. Ever so far when they were using horses, you had a change of horses.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: And the distance varied only --- for one thing, how many hills you had to pull. If the ground was fairly level, why I mean horses would have a lot more endurance. But there was some rough country. Well you come up out of Canyon Creek ---

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: --- that was quite a pull. And they didn't think anything about water grade like they do nowadays with the highway. Coming from Bear Valley into Silvies Valley you climb up over that mountain there. And right there at this Mitchell place, in place of coming up Trout Creek, you went right up over that sagebrush hill there, and down into the place where the Cross place is now.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: I mean, so it made a lot of difference.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: Well, I shouldn't go into detail there, but ---

DOROTHEA: Well we kind of, we kind of want to know, you know, the people that lived there. If at one time --- I know they did have a school there. I don't know for sure just where, but they did have a school. Now where did you go to school?

RALPH: I went to school on a place --- now this is north here. I'm still holding this just the way the country lays. I went to school in the schoolhouse over here. And the Craddock children where the upper red barn is, where Easter Craddock is the only one left in the family now.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: Chester, and Ardith, and Easter Craddock ---

DOROTHEA: Were all Craddock's.

RALPH: They lived over here right by that upper red barn is there now.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: They was about two miles across Camp Creek here to this schoolhouse. My sister and I come down here about two or two and a half miles down Camp Creek, down here. And Chester Bennett that lived over on the old original Ruel Hankins place that was

deeded when my father come to the country, and Bennett's bought it.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: They was the original, from Lawen down here. And Chester Bennett was --- I don't know whether you know any of the Bennett family or not.

DOROTHEA: I know the Bennett's, but just vaguely.

RALPH: This is probably the second generation that you know better.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: They lived over here to the right. Well three quarters of a mile about from where the store is now. Now we come to school three different directions there, to that school.

BARBARA: So the school was located about how far west of where the Silvies Store is now?

RALPH: Oh, I'd say about two and a half miles.

BARBARA: Okay.

RALPH: Or maybe two miles.

BARBARA: And it was a one-room school, one teacher?

RALPH: Oh, yes.

DOROTHEA: Is it where it is now, or have they moved it?

RALPH: When the district dissolved, and well everybody moved away, and there wasn't no need of a school anymore, I bought the schoolhouse and moved it over there for a garage where the store is now. And it is still a good building. But where the windows was, why it is just track doors now for a garage. But right down where the old truck barn is across there ---

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: --- there was another schoolhouse, and it's still standing right on the same foundation. And there was some pictures even taken of that. It was in the Oregon

Journal, I think, at one time.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: These children from Flat Creek and Jump Creek, they went to this school here. So there was two schools there at one time.

DOROTHEA: Not too far apart from each other.

RALPH: No.

BARBARA: So you had about five, seven students then in your school? Something like that?

RALPH: They was one time, they was --- this upper school had eight pupils.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

RALPH: And this lower school at one time had twelve.

DOROTHEA: Well, bigger families or something.

RALPH: Well yes, and --- but there wasn't no school buses standing around.

DOROTHEA: You rode horses or shanks mare, huh?

RALPH: You had --- this school that I went to, why of course we, didn't nobody walk. I mean everybody had got wealthy and was riding a horse. And the same way --- here I don't recall anybody walking to any of these. Because it was the horse and buggy days.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: And that was the first thing in place of buying your child a automobile, like is parked down here now. You always had some gentle old horse that would take care of a kid, and as soon as they could --- you could put them on why they was safe. Because if a horse stopped, they fell off.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, yeah.

RALPH: I appreciate some of them old horses.

BARBARA: Do you recall any of your teacher's names, or did you have the same teacher

during the time that you went to school there?

RALPH: Oh, I --- they had to have a new teacher every year, because the kids were so rough. They'd never come back!

BARBARA: They wouldn't stay long enough.

RALPH: They'd never come back.

DOROTHEA: Did they --- some of them get married while they were teaching school?

RALPH: Practically every one of them.

DOROTHEA: And so they just left the country, huh?

RALPH: You know, the hillbillies, that's always a laughable thing. Every young woman that come in the country was from outside, you see. So every young man was after that schoolteacher. She was quite a prize, you know. (Laughter)

BARBARA: What did you say the name of that school was? Was it just called the Silvies School?

RALPH: It was called by districts.

BARBARA: I see.

RALPH: Now this one that I went to school was District 49.

BARBARA: I see. And then the other one was?

RALPH: The other one was 52.

BARBARA: 52. You went grades one through eight there?

RALPH: Yes.

BARBARA: And then after eighth grade did you go on to high school?

RALPH: I come here.

BARBARA: To Burns?

RALPH: To --- that's --- I don't know how I come to come here, but it was just about the same ---

BARBARA: Distance.

RALPH: Change of counties, but just about the same distance.

BARBARA: Uh huh. And then you went through, graduated from high school at Burns?

RALPH: No, I never graduated.

BARBARA: You never did.

RALPH: I hate to say that.

BARBARA: Well, a lot of the people just went as long as they could afford to not help their families, and things like that.

RALPH: Well, it seemed to me like there was a period there that

--- well, you take a, you become a man and a woman earlier in life then. I mean you assumed responsibilities different than children does today.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

RALPH: Now, well these teachers that we would get out in them districts come right out of high school. They could get a permit to teach school when they come out of high school.

BARBARA: Very few went on to college. If you graduated high school, then you were eligible to teach.

RALPH: But now, you ain't nowhere getting out of high school. Is that right?

BARBARA: That's right.

DOROTHEA: That's right.

RALPH: I don't know --- I'm talking. I'm so old that I maybe say things that I shouldn't, but do a lot of times. But I'm just speaking the way I see it. And ---

BARBARA: So in those days when you got a little older, maybe tenth grade or so, and the family needed you to help on the ranch or whatever, you took the responsibility to go home and work instead of go to school.



RALPH: Sure. They was, you could start in, well when you was sixteen years old --- a boy when he was sixteen years old, you could take a job feeding cattle for the Pacific Livestock Company. Make a dollar a day.

DOROTHEA: And a dollar a day in those days took you quite a ways.

RALPH: And you got your board.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: So, and there wasn't no Uncle Sam, he wasn't withholding any taxes out of it.

DOROTHEA: Taking it away from you. Do you happen to know how Silvie's was named? Was it named after a certain person, or how did it come about being called Silvie's?

RALPH: I think the Oregon history says it was named from a trapper from the Hudson Bay Company, by the name of Sylvaille. John Sylvaille.

DOROTHEA: Just Sylvaille.

RALPH: Yeah. And trapping beavers. That valley used to be backed up, shows signs of it yet, by beaver dams. And of course next to the gold rush, the fur trappers was what settled the country first. Because, well you take such parties as Astor and McLoughlin, had them big trading posts is all on the fur trade. And men come out here with their string of packhorses and stay for six months through the trapping season, and dry them beaver hides and pack them. Put them on a horse and take them to Vancouver.

BARBARA: Did you do any trapping as a child?

RALPH: Yeah I --- first dollar I ever had in my life --- that's another thing that you don't forget. I trapped, caught a muskrat.

DOROTHEA: Did you skin it and tan the hide, or?

RALPH: I skinned that, and of course was showed how. Just what to do, and dried it on a board. And it was nice, and I brought it in here to Burns when the folks come in. And there was an old fur buyer here at that time, because there was a lot of people trapping

what was left. And he give me one dollar. Round silver dollar for that. Well, there I had a dollar. And what was a man to do with a dollar, and didn't have no pocketbook? (Laughter) You know about what is a coming.

BARBARA: So what did you spend your dollar on?

RALPH: Well, right up there about where the Burns Department Store is now, there was a drug store. The old Nollie Reed Drug Store. And they had a lot of notions, besides Epsom salts there. And I looked around them old coin purse, you can't buy one now. I'd like to buy one right now. I've got two laying there, and they're both wore out. Because coins nothing but nuisance anymore. I went in there and looked around, and the only purse that I wanted was ninety-five cents.

DOROTHEA: So you had a nickel to put back in your purse. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Buy stick candy or something?

RALPH: I don't recall whether I invested the rest of that then or not. But I'll always remember how I got rid of that dollar. How I got it, and how I got ---

BARBARA: Okay, you said you came into Burns to go to high school. At that time, how did you come to Burns to go --- did you live here with someone?

RALPH: Yes.

BARBARA: Or did you go back and forth?

RALPH: Oh no, you couldn't go back and forth. It was six hours trip with, on a good horse by gosh to get in here then. You wouldn't do that; you'd be too busy on the road, wouldn't you.

DOROTHEA: There wasn't, there wasn't the highway there is now.

RALPH: Oh my gosh, you couldn't afford, even if the highway, you know, a running back and forth to school.

BARBARA: So you boarded with another family here?

RALPH: Yeah.

BARBARA: Uh huh. And you mentioned you had a sister. Do you have just one sister in your family then?

RALPH: Yeah.

BARBARA: She came, did she come into school with you? Was she older or younger than you?

RALPH: She was younger, but I mean yeah, we came to here ---

DOROTHEA: What was her name?

RALPH: Pearl.

DOROTHEA: Pearl. Did she marry someone from the country, or did, what?

RALPH: She, she had awful poor luck, as I call it. She married young to a real promising young man. And it was right at the time when they first started building this railroad from here to Seneca, in 1925 and '26. And we had contract to putting up two miles of railroad grade through the ranch there in Silvies. And it was all put up with horses or course. Everybody had a lot of workhorses then. Because you did your haying with your horses, and everything else you did with horses. And when winter set in, why he had to stop grading when the snow began to fall. He was plowing with a four-horse fresno, evening that grade up. And one of the neighbors at the right of way cut through his barnyard pretty bad, and he wanted to have his barn moved. Just a small barn. Jacked it up and put logs under it, skids we call them. And hooked four horses on each one of those logs come out, from that building. And my brother in-law, Pearl's husband, was driving one of those teams, just walking, just walking and driving them on the ground.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: And when they got that started, another fellow driving another team, why I guess the team kind of got excited when the building started to moving. And he fell down, and

they pulled that barn right over him. And the skids, I mean it rolled him. So it just practically ground his pelvic structure. And there he was, thirty-two miles from a doctor.

BARBARA: Wasn't too much hope in those days, was there?

RALPH: Dr. B. F. Smith was here then. He just was new here in this country. They brought him out here in a car, and take him; his boy's name was Hal Lofton. He was a native from the John Day country. He had taken him in, and the hours, I've often wondered, just the hours that was lost between --- probably couldn't have saved him anyhow. But, why I mean there is no chance at all. He passed away in the old brick, or the old native stone, where the old original hospital. I think it only had about eight or twelve beds in there, or something.

DOROTHEA: That was the Valley View Hospital.

RALPH: I'd forgot what they called it.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. Valley View. The --- your brother in-law's name was Hal Lofton?

RALPH: That's right.

DOROTHEA: L O F T O N.

RALPH: That's right.

DOROTHEA: And so what did your sister do then?

RALPH: Well she --- and they just had a little, a little girl. She called her Bonnie. Beautiful child. And so that was a backset on the whole family, you know, something like that. The whole neighborhood, in fact. And then she, in about three years she married another construction worker by the name of Barkley. William Barkley.

DOROTHEA: And that's spelled B A R K L E Y?

RALPH: That's right.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

RALPH: And he was a working for a construction company when they started building a

better road from, over from Silvies to Bear Valley. And they had a crusher, was setting up a crusher up on the hill north of the old Craddock place where the red barn is there. And they was going to use it --- maybe I'm going into too much detail here.

DOROTHEA: No, you're fine. But we would like to know a little bit about, you know, how the valley has changed from the time you can remember as a child, and now. And can you remember some of the people's names that used to live there as families? You have mentioned some of the Bennett's and the Craddocks, and the Hankinses.

RALPH: This, we're still setting just exactly the same direction (referring to his map), we understand our directions now.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: If you was going from here to Canyon City why you would come in down here, and as your --- There is one Hankins family lived here on Flat Creek, and another one lived on the opposite side of the creek.

DOROTHEA: Now what other Hankins was that?

RALPH: This was --- they was cousins of my father. Their father was Roland Hankins that lived over here on Bridge Creek that was an established place here when my father come to the country. So I imagine that, I never did have any occasion to check the deed on that, but I have an idea that this Bridge Creek place was probably deeded, oh probably around '85. Because it was a deeded place when my father come in '98. You can't, as I say, I never had any occasion to go and check the records, what was. But anyhow they had, George Hankins had one boy, and three girls.

DOROTHEA: George Hankins.

RALPH: Right across the creek, why Pleasanton Hankins, his brother had two boys and three girls. Now them six, them, let's see I had three boys and --- in the two families. Because two of them was just the right age to go into World War I. They went and they

didn't come back. I mean ---

SIDE B

DOROTHEA: We're on the second side now. When the Purdy's moved to the valley, approximately how many people were living there? Was there quite a bunch?

RALPH: Yes. Some of these folks have moved away, when the Purdy family come there. But today was quite a few people living there then. But, well in 1918 as I refer to again, they started to go in World War I. They was three of these boys, and two of them went and didn't come back. And one of them did come back. And that split up the families. The women folks they --- well people, they was a lot of things to do. Everybody was needed at a job. And so woman folks they got out of a place like Silvies too. I mean they was nothing, only --- nothing left there when you went splitting up your family, you know.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BARBARA: So when the store was started and going there, there was enough families in the area for business to keep them going. And what all did you carry in the store?

RALPH: Well, that store of course, we're going into later history.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

RALPH: After I was married, why --- and started out in the prosperous time just before the great depression, why we began to pool our resources, my father and I. And I mean we went to --- we bought another place down on the river there that was sold through a bank. And that was, put us on farther out of the woods you might say. And when they decided, when this --- we was living down there when this construction started, building the railroad. Well there was quite a lot of activity going through both counties at that time. Nothing like it would be today. But I mean there was a lot of activity. And cars, the way the road was, they didn't pack gas like they do today. You couldn't --- if you went fifty

miles why you better get some more gas. And they didn't --- and they run you, they was a nuisance you might say, to a ranch, being out of gas. Just a nuisance, you know.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

RALPH: So we finally thought, well we just as well put in a gas pump. And so it went from there. And then my wife and my mother went to serving meals. I have an old record book here where some of the peak day they served seventy-five meals.

BARBARA: My goodness.

RALPH: And that was cooked on a wood stove, you know. So it represented something. And the kind of lights you had, and we was up, really up in the money, was them Coleman gaslights. I guess you know what I'm talking about.

BARBARA: Yes.

RALPH: The old two mantle. They made a good light, but they taken a lot of care, you know. They made a good light. But we're talking about the accommodations when they, how they change.

BARBARA: So did you get your gas deliveries from Burns or John Day?

RALPH: John Day.

BARBARA: John Day.

RALPH: Had a, we had a plaque there from the Shell Oil Company for thirty years, customer for the Shell Oil Company. And ---

DOROTHEA: What was the price of the gas when you first started selling?

RALPH: About the only time --- now I don't know about the first, but the, but what I remember mostly was about twenty-six cents.

DOROTHEA: And that was approximately when you first started selling. Can you remember just before you sold out, what the price of gas was? Had it raised, or ---

RALPH: Oh, yes. No, I believe when I left there, it was about eighty-six. But now that,

understand that's just about my recollection of it.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. Of course it's up over a dollar now. But ---RALPH: Oh, yeah.

DOROTHEA: We probably won't ever see those good times again.

RALPH: Well, I look at it this way. You could pay five dollars a gallon for gasoline if you always had the five dollars. Just as easy as paying twenty-six cents. I sold weaner steers, with no market for heifer calves. Now the stockmen don't believe that today, for twelve and a half a head, and they had --- right there at weaning time, the first of November. Twelve and a half a head. DOROTHEA: I can just about remember that, because I think that we're not selling them for much more than that right now. (Laughter)

RALPH: Well, this of course is just open conversation, but referring to --- it don't make no difference what we pay for things, if everything balances. It's when something is in the bite, is where he gets us.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BARBARA: So you did haying and had cattle before you went into the store business, is that right?

RALPH: Well, yes, that's what I had at the ranch there is what---

BARBARA: I see. And you were married. And how many children do you have?

RALPH: I had three, three children.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Twins were Phyllis and Philip.

RALPH: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And the other one was ---

RALPH: Jack.

DOROTHEA: Jack.

BARBARA: And was your wife from the Silvie's Valley too?



RALPH: No, she was one of them unlucky schoolteachers.

BARBARA: She a schoolteacher too? Oh, so you really know about schoolteachers then.

RALPH: And --- yeah. No, she come from over at Elgin.

BARBARA: Oh, I see. Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Did she teach in the Silvies Valley, or John Day area or where did you meet her?

RALPH: Right there at Silvies School.

DOROTHEA: At the Silvies School.

RALPH: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: And her name was what at that time?

RALPH: Elliot, Frankie Elliot.

DOROTHEA: Frankie Elliot.

RALPH: Frankie Estella Elliot. Taking too much pen to write all that.

DOROTHEA: (Laughter) Was it E L L I O T ?

RALPH: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Or two T's?

RALPH: Oh, gosh, I'm ignorant on that. I think it was either double L or double T.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

RALPH: Would that be --- now I ---

BARBARA: Probably one T then.

DOROTHEA: One T, probably.

RALPH: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Now I remember Phyllis and Philip, but Jack --- did he live to a long life, or did he get killed early?

RALPH: Oh no, he get killed early, yeah. It's a, no he --- he's the only one of the kids that --- well not the only one now but--- Bud didn't finish, go to college, but Jack graduated at Corvallis as a machinist.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: And are you a native of this country?

DOROTHEA: Yes, I belong to Wayne Howes. I grew up most of my life out in Ryegrass area.

RALPH: Well you know if you, your --- are you, what relation to Pat?

DOROTHEA: Pat? She is married to my brother.

RALPH: Well, I'm glad that the --- we're getting somewhere, because, you know, I got quite well acquainted when she was running the ---

DOROTHEA: Trailways.

RALPH: Trailways Bus there. I talked to them the other day here at the parade. But --- I don't know where we was now, where was we?

DOROTHEA: We were talking about Jack, and he was college educated.

RALPH: Oh yeah, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And Phyllis, she married --- what's her married name now?

RALPH: O'Keefe.

DOROTHEA: O'Keefe. She married John?

RALPH: Yes.

DOROTHEA: And Bud still lives in John Day?

RALPH: Uh huh. Canyon.

DOROTHEA: Canyon City.

RALPH: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And they grew up, and they didn't go to college, either one of them?

RALPH: No. Well, Phyllis did --- she went to a business college in Houston. After ---

DOROTHEA: How many grandchildren do you have?

RALPH: Six.

DOROTHEA: Six. That means Bud's got two, that means Phyllis has got four.

RALPH: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Are they all grown now?

RALPH: Oh yes.

DOROTHEA: And so do you have great grandchildren?

RALPH: One.

DOROTHEA: Just one. And who's that?

RALPH: Well it's --- Phyllis and John's first child was a girl, Colleen. He was an Irishman, you know.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, yeah, I knew John too.

RALPH: So it would have to be Colleen I guess. And she had one child. She married an engineer by the name of Crawford.

DOROTHEA: Now where does she live?

RALPH: She lives there in Houston.

DOROTHEA: In Houston, also.

RALPH: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Well, we have to skip back to Silvies, because this is our purpose of being here. And we have to write this little excerpt on Silvies Valley, and I don't know anything about it. So --- What kind of crops and things were there to draw the people into the valley? Was there hay land or grassland, or what was the drawing card?

RALPH: Well, there was a certain amount of irrigated land there. I mean free irrigation, deeded water rights out of the tributaries. And just native grass. Put up enough, put up

hay to winter on. And that has changed a lot too. Because you didn't--- this moving hay, you didn't see a haystack loaded on the truck and trailer going from here to the Willamette Valley to feed dairy cows then.

DOROTHEA: It was all kept mostly for your own.

RALPH: You fed it to --- and you drove that stock.

DOROTHEA: Drove your stock to the hay rather than the hay to the stock. Some of the valleys, or some of the people that lived up there, the Brandt's, and the Hoppers, and the Schetkeys, and the Scheckels, the Purdy's, the Mechods \*(Metschan) all of these people, can you tell me anything about them? You don't know them?

RALPH: Well, I know something about --- there is only one name there that I didn't recall. You say Mechod \*(Metschan) or ---

DOROTHEA: I think it's Mechod \*(Metschan). Lived up above where Wayne and Carol live in the Cross place now. He had a cabin up there. And it's out of the Hardisty place. Do you recognize Hardisty?

RALPH: Oh yes.

\*Editor correction

DOROTHEA: Okay. It's out of the Hardisty place, and it's before you cross into where that --- I need a map --- there was a stone building there and Carol and Wayne own that now. Cochran place. And where Dr. White lives. Do you know who owned that place?

RALPH: White?

DOROTHEA: Dr. Whites.

RALPH: I don't know whether they deeded that or not by that name. I knew when they lived there.

DOROTHEA: I just, I --- those are some of the names, you know, to some of the families that used to live up there. Remember that old peddler that used to come through and

peddle woolen mill products?

RALPH: Yeah, Lester.

DOROTHEA: Lester, right. I think he had a place up in there someplace too.

RALPH: Yeah. You see that Homestead Act started in with a hundred and sixty acres. And that's all that you could file on at that time under one name. Then all the good land was taken, I mean and begin to be a demand for something else. So they, you could get three hundred and twenty. Come a period that you could deed three hundred and twenty acres.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: Then it ended before the Taylor Grazing Act went into effect, that you could deed a section. And a lot of them places, them later places that was deeded, like the Lamberts and --- when they lived there, you know, was quite a --- you could deed --- It didn't require you to raise hay. But ---

DOROTHEA: Now when Lamberts lived there, he didn't really do any farming or anything did he?

RALPH: Well I --- not anymore than a little patch of rye to feed his team, or something like that. You know, it was all, pretty near all hill land.

DOROTHEA: So, so in other words a lot of people that lived up there just went in and homesteaded the place but didn't really raise much as far as crops.

RALPH: No, no that, so it changed things, and then when the Taylor Grazing Act went into law why that ended the homesteading there. That cut off the homestead right ---

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: And that's what changed the whole stock set-up in the country. What it has did with the Steens Mountain, all this country. There is places that was deeded early that secured a lot of water that was necessary.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: But I mean then when the Taylor Grazing Act went into effect, you know about what it did.

DOROTHEA: It changed a lot of that, yeah. They were allowed only, you know, a certain amount of cattle on a certain allotment.

RALPH: Yeah. And you paid for it.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Can you remember some of the other names of families that I can't remember, number one? And number two, might have been in there before I was ever introduced into the country, so that I would even know some of these names. I know Lester's name was W. T. Lester. Now did he move there at one time before he started selling these woolen products? Or ---

RALPH: I don't know.

DOROTHEA: You don't.

RALPH: I never got acquainted with him only through that agency, you know.

DOROTHEA: Now did you ever sell any of his products through your store?

RALPH: No.

DOROTHEA: He was just a peddler.

RALPH: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Just strictly peddler. How about the Schetkeys and the Scheckels? I'm going to see Irene Gardner tomorrow, and see if we can't get some kind of information from her. And she said Clarence would probably give us more than she can remember.

RALPH: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: But --- How did they get, did they buy a place from someone, or did they homestead those places?

RALPH: Well they bought a place to come in, when they come in there at first.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Was he already married, he and --- John and Wilhelmina?

RALPH: No. No, I remember him before he was married.

DOROTHEA: And so Wilhelmina might have been one of those schoolteachers too then.

RALPH: No, she was raised over on the Calamity country there, ahead of the river above Drewsey there.

DOROTHEA: Oh, she was?

RALPH: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Oh, she came from the Drewsey country then.

RALPH: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Oh, I see. Now see you're telling me stories that I don't know anything about even. How about the Scheckels. I know they had girls grow up on their place. Can you tell me anything about them?

RALPH: Well, if you're going to interview Clarence and Irene, why maybe they could give you --- I remember, they could give you more accurate probably, they should, outside of what happened before either one of them was born.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. And the Schetkeys were just neighbors. I don't know too much about them. But ---

RALPH: Well, L. S. Schetkey, he come there, he was a complete outsider.

DOROTHEA: Where did he come from, do you know?

RALPH: I don't really know. I have an idea probably from California.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: But, when the Pacific Livestock Company decided to liquidate their holdings, why he bought that end of their holdings there in Harney County, up to the county line there. And above, some up above there. But I don't know a thing about; I know what the man looked like.

DOROTHEA: You didn't ---

RALPH: You know, never, I don't know a thing about his history, or anything about him.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. About the Hoppers now, where did they come from? Are they natives of the valley, or did they come into there later, or ---

RALPH: I --- they was quite old there. But now I don't know, of course Darrell could tell you all about that. But I know they was here when my dad come.

DOROTHEA: So there, they were established already then?

RALPH: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Now is this, are they some relation of yours, the Hoppers?

RALPH: Well you might say, the old saying a shirttail relative.

DOROTHEA: Shirttail.

RALPH: Yeah. Darrell's mother and my uncle's wife were sisters.

DOROTHEA: Okay. But that doesn't make them a Pierce or something like this?

RALPH: Oh, no, no. They was a complete, way off that way.

DOROTHEA: Okay, how is Leo then, is he a cousin of yours?

RALPH: He's an uncle.

DOROTHEA: Uncle. Okay. And how --- he must have been your mother's brother?

RALPH: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Can you tell me, the Pierces --- mother and father's names then? Leo's mother and father's names.

RALPH: Well his father's name was Andrew Jackson Pierce. A. J. Pierce.

DOROTHEA: That's your grandfather.

RALPH: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: And your grandmother's name was?

RALPH: Elizabeth Fry. And I don't remember her, whether she had a --- what her middle



name was if she had a middle name.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. A lot of them didn't in those days, yeah. Well I think we've pretty well covered a lot of the valley in the names. Is there anything else that you would want to mention that you can remember that's really stuck in your heart, and you want to ---

RALPH: No, they is lots of things stuck in my heart, in my memory, but I'm going to keep it there.

DOROTHEA: You're going to not share it with us, huh?

RALPH: Well, there is no need, you know, just open conversation. I could talk from now until seven o'clock, just reviewing different things that would come to me.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: But this is of no interest to what you're looking for.

DOROTHEA: Well let's just kind of reminisce a little thing on here. Can you remember your first automobile? And tell me what you felt and thought about that.

RALPH: Well, the first one I got a hold of, why of course you had to practically pull it with a team. (Laughter) But I well remember the first new one I ever bought.

DOROTHEA: First new car?

RALPH: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: What kind was it?

RALPH: It was a Model-A Ford. A 1930 Model-A Ford. And I'd buy another one today if I could.

DOROTHEA: It was a good car?

RALPH: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Got you around. How were the roads to drive in those, in 1930?

RALPH: Well, they, they was some graded road, but no black top. We was a long time right there in Silvies before there was any black top road. I mean, they graded it up, and

would maintain it with a grader ever little while, you know. And the snow removal in the wintertime was the big sticker. Now they was one winter in about '36, I think it was. I wouldn't want to swear, but along in that period. We had a winter there, and the road blocked through Bear Valley and through Silvies Valley, drifted. They was a big snowfall and it just piled, piled the snow over the road. And just brought traffic to a stand still. And they even fought it hard enough that they could, you could drive a car early of a morning over some of them drifts, if you was fortunate enough to do it before it started melting. But, but there wasn't no maintenance ---

BARBARA: So you'd have to go back to the horses again?

RALPH: So Chester Craddock made a big V. Well there was several neighbors help make it. But we hooked ten horses on that V to open them cuts. Well they tromped down a lot of snow, ten horses hooked in a string. But they finally wore enough trips out that they opened them cuts. Trouble with a V, the first time through, and the next time through, why you have to buck that same snow out on the end of that V. So it was a pretty tough deal. But when you talk about maintenance through the time of things in my life, what has happened about this transportation.

BARBARA: You, in talking about your store again, you say that you had gas which was delivered from John Day.

RALPH: Yes.

BARBARA: And you served meals to the construction people around there, and to travelers through.

RALPH: Yeah.

BARBARAS: What else did you carry in your store, staples, grocery staples?

RALPH: Well we just, you know, just started in when the demand why --- this and that. Why somebody wanted candy ---

BARBARA: Uh huh.

RALPH: --- and beer, and pop, and similar to what we've got today. But one of the worst troubles at first was getting perishable stuff.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

RALPH: You couldn't, before you got refrigeration, you couldn't keep ---

BARBARA: Meats and ---

RALPH: No.

BARBARA: --- and dairy products and things like that.

RALPH: Now the first milk that they ever kept there was Eben Ray, was from the Willow Ray Dairy here, in glass bottles. Them quart, glass quarts with their cardboard seal on them.

BARBARA: Right.

RALPH: But that was after we got refrigeration.

BARBARA: Uh huh. Did you carry coffee, and sugar, and flour, and things like that?

RALPH: Oh yes.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

RALPH: You know, stuff that wasn't --- But it was just kind of a sideline, you know, for accommodation.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

RALPH: When this construction, this timber operation here, was a boom to this country. It just seemed a gold rush there when that opened up. When they was a building this mill and a building this railroad.

BARBARA: You were pretty busy then, huh?

RALPH: They was a lot of people ---

BARBARA: Uh huh.

RALPH: --- coming through here.

BARBARA: Uh huh. So your mother and your wife worked in the store. And who else? Did your children eventually work in the store?

RALPH: Well about the time they wasn't going to school, you know.

BARBARA: Uh huh. I mean in the summertime's when they weren't in school.

RALPH: Yeah, yeah. But kids always had something to do, you know, in them days.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

RALPH: Well, I guess they do yet.

BARBARA: One sort or another. So when was it that you retired then from your store?

RALPH: Well I left; I left there in '49.

BARBARA: Uh huh. And you moved to Burns at that time?

RALPH: Uh huh.

BARBARA: Or did you stay up there?

RALPH: Yeah.

BARBARA: I see. So you've been in Burns since 1949?

RALPH: Oh, no. No, I come over here and stayed a short time. And went back to Grant County.

BARBARA: I see.

DOROTHEA: Then you liked Harney County better, because it had better women over here, that's what it was. (Laughter)

RALPH: Well, I'm about as well acquainted with one county as the other. I was over there yesterday, all day. Or day before yesterday it was now, all day. I go over there quite frequently, about once a week. So a man --- the trouble I find here and there both, ever --- most of my acquaintances are on the hill.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, uh huh. Yeah, that happens in our lifetime.

RALPH: When you live a long time.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Is Bud remarried, or ---

RALPH: No.

DOROTHEA: He's not remarried. Does any --- either one of his kids live in John Day?

RALPH: No, they're both in Houston.

DOROTHEA: They're both; they're both over in Houston too?

RALPH: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Huh. They like Texas, huh?

RALPH: Well they was more opportunities there than they was here. And I think they --- they was quite awhile a getting Oregon out of them. But I think they're getting pretty well located now.

DOROTHEA: Pretty established now. In your travels back and forth from Grant County to Harney County, I mean Grant County to Harney County; do you see a lot of changes since you first can remember to now? Can you tell us about some of the changes?

RALPH: Well, I'll have to think more about what you call changes. DOROTHEA: Well, changes in the, say the forest and the highways, and towns. Can you see any differences in them?

RALPH: Well, yes there is a lot of difference in all of them three questions.

DOROTHEA: How has the forest changed for instance, to you?

RALPH: Well, I, I'm radical on the forest.

DOROTHEA: Well, maybe we don't want to discuss that. No, is there more or less timber do you think? Or are the bugs worse, or --- this is what I'm trying to get at. Can you see some changes in that direction? Are there worse bugs, or --- how do you feel? You're an old timber faller, so I know that ---

RALPH: Well, now I have just taken a faint hint that top of the mountain going to Canyon,

that --- when that bunch of little fir all died with that spruce worm there, that people thought, oh my gosh.

DOROTHEA: It's --- do you think that the people are bringing in some of these bugs, or do you think that these are just coming out of the air, or ---

RALPH: Well, I don't know whether we got too much bugs or not.

DOROTHEA: You don't know.

RALPH: You, and I've questioned this quite a bit since we had that big kill on that one place. Because everybody seen that on the highway. It just looked --- my gosh the whole forest is going to go.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: You drive down there now, and without you knew that happened, you'd never know that was there.

DOROTHEA: So in other words you feel it was kind of a nature's way of ---

RALPH: Well, there was more timber on that, on that ground there than could ever have matured. And it will only produce, that kind of ground, that steep ground there, and very little soil on them hills. And right now the pine, the pine, you never knew there was pine in there. It all looked like it was fir. Right now the pine is taking over, and the ones, just like weeding your garden. When that fir, the thickness of that fir was killed by the bugs, the pine is already, them young pine has come up through there so they practically got it covered up already.

DOROTHEA: And it's well established. How about the highways? Now I know that when you were driving your Model-T, that it was a lot of gravel and --- Do you think that they have improved the highways through there?

RALPH: Since --- through what period now?

DOROTHEA: Since 1930 to today.

RALPH: Well, we didn't have any highway in 1932.

DOROTHEA: What kind of roads did you have through there? Was it mostly mud, or ---

RALPH: Well they kept, this lumber business there, this vast timber sale, and this mill operation is what developed that road. I mean at that period.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: Because, the Hines Lumber Company after they had taken over from Fred Herrick, I mean and went to carrying that, developing that whole country, they was an awful lot of travel.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. So they had to build the roads to accommodate it.

RALPH: So they had to make a road. Well when they secured the right of way for the railroad, well quite a lot of that right of way is carrying the same thing, only right on the opposite side of the railroad today.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: It required a water grade, you might say. But previous to that, why you just went up over the hill.

DOROTHEA: Wasn't really a road. You just, you made your own trails?

RALPH: Well it followed --- the demand was --- when you was using horses you could, with a team, could pioneer a road through over a pretty rough country.

DOROTHEA: You said something about the stagecoach line that came through from Baker City. Now is that how the highway went? Did they follow the stage line or did they make new roads?

RALPH: Well there isn't hardly any of this highway today that followed any part of the old original road.

DOROTHEA: So that's all built on new ground.

RALPH: Yes, it tips it in a few times, places. But even right there where the Silvies Store

is, there is just a little spot there that was on the old original road.

DOROTHEA: Was there a stage line that came right by the Silvies Store? Was there a stage stop there?

RALPH: There was over what they call the old Bennett place, right over on Bridge Creek there.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: Just about a half-mile from --- well that, they got a sign up there, Ponderosa Ranch I think now. But it, I mean it's all did away with, the old original.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: Used to be a big barn there. Old story and a half house. Barn burned down, and the house burned down.

DOROTHEA: Well Barbara, can you think of anything ---

BARBARA: I was just wondering where the stage lines went. Did it come from Burns up towards John Day country? Or which direction did the stage go?

RALPH: Well it come from --- it went out of Burns here, and right there at the foot of the hill when you tip over out of Burns here, you take in that camp, we call the Indian camp road now.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

RALPH: You didn't go on like it does there. Went out there about three quarters of a mile, and turned a square, a square corner. Do you know where the old Willow Ray Dairy was?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: That was right on the old road. There is where you crossed the Silvies River, right there.

DOROTHEA: Is that approximately where Lois and Stockey (Stockwell) live?



RALPH: That was right ---

DOROTHEA: Right there.

RALPH: --- right there.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: That was the old Willow Ray Dairy right where they live.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. Yeah.

RALPH: Then that, in place of going up Poison Creek now on that nice water grade, you know where all that development is on the hillside now that they're pumping water on, on the west side of the highway.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

RALPH: That road, the old road kept out around that high ground. Because they saved bridges and mud holes and things to keep on as high a ground as possible.

DOROTHEA: There where Lois and Stockey live, there's an old, kind of a log cabin on the other side of the --- was that a stage stop or anything?

RALPH: No. That was the old Stancliff cabin. Used log cabin, and they kept it well preserved. And that's a very nice piece of history to look at ---

DOROTHEA: Historic site right there, yeah.

RALPH: That's been there all my life.

DOROTHEA: So, so that's kind of how we went out of Burns on into Seneca, and Silvies, and John Day, and was just right out through like that. We didn't have that turn that made out --- And there is, there is an old stage road that goes by the Baker Corrals. Now that, did that, was that part of this stage line that went out, and out through Cold Spring, and out through Purdy's? Was that a stage line through there?

RALPH: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And that was part of it? Or was that a different part of it?

RALPH: Well it was all on the same artery, I mean when you say part of it. It was part of the same road. I mean ---

DOROTHEA: Just part of the same road, in other words, the stage road.

RALPH: Yeah, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Well, I think that probably we'd like to get with you next week sometime, at your convenience, and go out and photograph some of these things. We are going to take a slight picture of you today so that we can get a picture of you as we interviewed you. And then next week we'd like to go out and do some of these scenes and get them on video tapes, so that we can keep this as a, kind of a scenic site, and they'll know what we're talking about when we discuss certain things in this tape. So, I thank you for all your information, and we've enjoyed your visit.

RALPH: What percent have our conversation, now do you think is the truth?

DOROTHEA: Well, I hope most of it. (Laughter)

BARBARA: As you remember it.

DOROTHEA: As you remember it, right. We'll put that in there.

RALPH: I should have wrote down everything I said so I could, next time I can --- you say well that isn't --- like a court case you know. That, well no, here's what you said.

DOROTHEA: Well, we won't hold it against you. But I will have to get you to sign one of these papers. And I'm going to shut all of us off. And we're going to say --- bid adieu.

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