

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #296 - Sides A/B

Subject: Ed Koeneman

Place: Dog Mountain

Date: June 6, 1972

Interviewer: Marcus Haines

MARCUS HAINES: ... on June the 6th, 1972, by Marcus Haines and Ed Koeneman. Ed Koeneman lived in Sunset Valley from the time he was born, you might say, which was in 1907, until he left here in the early '30's. So he's pretty well acquainted with that area, and he was there during the land boom which he will tell you about, and he will also tell you about the old Newell House which sets nearby his place, which is on the north, or the south side of Dog Mountain, facing out, looking out over Sunset Valley. And then he will tell you about the oil well that was drilled nearby, and it was probably a mile away from the Newell House. And I think it was probably the first oil well that was drilled in Harney County. Well Ed, you just told me you came from Washington when you were three months old. And I suppose your dad moved down here and homesteaded this present place where you live now.

ED KOENEMAN: Well yeah, dad homesteaded this place in June 1907. That's right, I was born in Snohomish, Washington, but my folks moved to Payette, Idaho first. Dad had a small ranch over there, but he got run out of there because that land he had all went to alkali. And at the same time he was broke and he had to find someplace, some cheap land. And so he wound up here in Burns, and the land locator brought him out and showed him this property where we live now, the old Koeneman homestead. And so he went back to Idaho and packed everything on his old wagon, and tied the old milk cow on

the back and come to Harney County. I was three months old at that time.

MARCUS: Well you came from Idaho to here then?

ED: Yes.

MARCUS: I see.

ED: Mother and Dad they were married up in Washington, and Dad got a place over there at Payette first, farm he had.

MARCUS: Yeah, there's plenty of alkali around over there in that country all right. You bet.

ED: But later I think they washed that land out, and I was over there a few years ago and the same land that Dad had has got a big crop of alfalfa on it. They washed the alkali out by a leeching process.

MARCUS: Yeah, if they got water enough and the drainage they can reclaim the land. I've noticed, and you have too, where the brick plant used to be there at Vale, just beyond Vale, it's an alkali son-of-a-gun in there, and they've leveled that and reclaimed it, and they raised dandy crops there now. They just keep working up towards the Devine Hill there a little more all the time with that reclamation. You can see their drainage ditches, they're putting their dragline, in fact maybe 20 feet deep, and there's a little stream of water running in the bottom of it. If they can get the drainage down why they can wash the alkali down and get rid of it. But if they can't, well then you got something else again.

Well Ed, at the time that your folks came in here we were having pretty good seasons.

ED: Yeah, we were getting more rainfall, Marcus. Much more than we're getting --- I would say at least 20 inches of precipitation a year.

MARCUS: Yeah.

ED: Because we could raise wheat, and later years couldn't raise wheat at all, because it's --- You could raise rye by summer fallowing it, you could raise rye, get a good crop.

But it would just getting dryer and dryer. At one time there was --- at the time I started to school here, there was practically a family on every 160 acres in this country. And to look at it now, you'd never think it was farmed, because the sagebrush has taken over again. But that's how the whole country was all cleared, and people were making a living. Of course they did it the hard way.

MARCUS: There wasn't any other way to do it at that time. You bet.

ED: There wasn't any rocking chair money then.

MARCUS: No, you bet. No rocking chair money, and no modern way of doing it. It was mostly handwork, wasn't it?

ED: Well some, most of these guys would work out and the family would hold down the -- Someone had to live on the homestead, I think it was nine months out of the year in order to qualify to prove up on these places. Well, the man would go out and work wherever he could. Work at the Island Ranch, or over at the Double O during the haying season. And in the wintertime, they cut posts and sell them, and cut wood. And there was a lot of juniper at that time up on Dog Mountain. Most all the posts that are around, over there around the Island Ranch all came off of Dog Mountain.

MARCUS: Yes, I'll bet they did.

ED: So people would work. Of course they only got a dollar, probably a dollar a day, but that was a dollar made in those days. No income tax to pay, and taxes were cheap. And they got by the best way they could.

MARCUS: Well, Ed, how many acres did your dad take up here in the homestead, you got 320, would it be?

ED: Well no, you could only file on 160 first, Marcus. But then later, after you proved up on your first, on your original, then you could take an additional within a certain radius of the farm, so Dad took another 160 additional up on the hill. It didn't join ours; my uncle

had 320 acres between them, between Dads's original and his additional.

MARCUS: Oh, you had an uncle here now? Your father's or mother's brother?

ED: My mother's brother, his name was Frank Klitzke. He was from Snohomish too.

MARCUS: Klitzke?

ED: Klitzke, K L I T Z K E.

MARCUS: I never heard of him I don't believe.

ED: He took his right, adjoining, he took his homestead right joining ours on the north, see. And he also took up an additional which give him a 320. And then he got disgusted with this country and he left here in about 1917, I guess.

MARCUS: When did your folks leave out here, at the time of your father's death? Your mother moved in, in 1923 and sent you kids to school.

ED: Yeah, that's right.

MARCUS: And that your father stayed out here, didn't he?

ED: Uh huh. Well, we had a little bunch of cattle there and he didn't want to turn loose of them, you know. And he couldn't stand town life anyway.

MARCUS: No.

ED: And so in order for us to go to school, my brother and I were in high school, my sister was going to public school, why we, Dad built a little house in Burns and we moved to Burns. Weekends, we'd come out and give him a hand. But, let's see, in about 1937, Dad's health went bad and he had a stroke. So we sold the cattle and the horses and rented the place.

MARCUS: That was about --- well he wasn't ---

ED: He died in '42.

MARCUS: He went through some pretty tough droughts there then while he was here?

ED: Oh, you bet.

MARCUS: You're darn right. Through those early '30's, along with the drought and the depression there to.

ED: Well the army worms in 19---, you remember when they hit this country in 1919?

MARCUS: Yes, I do.

ED: We put in; we cut three acres of rye hay that year, that's all that was left when they got through.

MARCUS: Ed, it was along about that time in the late teens that this drought actually begin to take a hold, wasn't it?

ED: Yes.

MARCUS: Up until about that time we had pretty darn good years.

ED: Pretty good years.

MARCUS: I can remember people telling about it. Well then getting back, Ed, to the people who homesteaded in this country here. The schoolhouse was around this side of, on the south side of Wright's Point, three miles or four miles, such a matter. Lyle Hill bought the old building and moved it in for a shop over there at his place. But I understand that the Sunset precinct at one time was the biggest voting precinct in Harney County, with the exception of Burns.

ED: Yes, yes.

MARCUS: And that's where they voted was at that schoolhouse, I think.

ED: Well they took in, more than that, they took in this precinct and also Weaver Springs, see they had a school there and one here at Dog Mountain.

MARCUS: Yes, uh huh.

ED: And all these people went to Sunset to vote. That's why they gave us a big, they had a big count there, see.

MARCUS: There was a schoolhouse right directly below us here, from the Newell house I

remember.

ED: Right on the corner of Dad's place there.

MARCUS: Yes. I don't recall what happened to it? Who got it?

ED: Hughet, Bob Hughet bought it.

MARCUS: Bob Hughet bought it.

ED: And moved it up someplace and built a machine shed, or barn or something like that.

And then just got it finished and it burnt down.

MARCUS: Well.

ED: The old foundation is still there, the old rock foundation.

MARCUS: Well talking, you were telling me here earlier, Ed, about hunting geese and ducks down here where you, what would be just high greasewood now and sand dunes. You'd never think there'd ever been a drop of water in there during its history. And that would be just east of the present highway down here, close to the Weaver Springs junction?

ED: Yeah. Well, it was a little bit south of that, Marcus. I'd say about a half a mile south. We drove down to there.

MARCUS: You go south a half a mile and then ---

ED: The old Burns-Narrows road used to go along there, although there was quite a jog in the road.

MARCUS: Yes. The old Berry Corner, we called it, was where the road turned back toward Dog Mountain. There must have been a reason for that.

ED: It was water.

MARCUS: The lake would come out in there, didn't it? You bet.

ED: In the spring water would come clear up to this present highway between Burns and The Narrows. So they stayed closer to Dog Mountain, a mile or so, so they could just skirt

the edge of it.

MARCUS: Yes.

ED: I tell people this, they don't believe it.

MARCUS: And that's where you did your duck hunting?

ED: Yes, just east of the Berry Corner down there. Charlie Berry was a county surveyor at that time, and they lived there. We left the car there and walked a half a mile east and Dad and his friends started shooting there. We brought home a whole carload of ducks and geese.

MARCUS: And then something else now. I can, I tell people and they look at me like I've got a hole in my head, just like your hunting experiences here. But when I was a kid we'd leave The Narrows with a team and buggy and we wouldn't be out of sight of a house all the way to Burns.

ED: That's right.

MARCUS: And there was a livery stable and a hotel at the foot of Wright's Point on the south side, and I've stayed there, and you probably have too.

ED: That's right. I'm trying to recall those people's names that owned that.

MARCUS: Tomlins.

ED: Tomlins, that's right.

MARCUS: Yes, Tomlins was their name.

ED: That's right. But the reason for that is if you pulled up to there, you had that damned grade to face.

MARCUS: You bet.

ED: You wanted a fresh team that was in pretty good shape, to make that first pull up that hill, because it was really steep.

MARCUS: Yeah, and then when you got to the Model-T stage, then you wanted

somebody to help you push just before you got out on top.

ED: I know when Dad bought his first Model-T, if you didn't have that damned tank clear full of gasoline you wound up backing up the grade ---

MARCUS: Right.

ED: --- in order to get gas to the carburetor. ... pumps, or vacuum tanks ... You back up that several times.

MARCUS: You bet.

ED: Dad always kept a can of gas sitting around just to top that old tank off before he started for Burns, just in order to make that hill.

MARCUS: But then Ed, along --- now we moved out here, we'll say, well the spring of 1923, and these folks are pretty well gone. We moved out on the Charlie Needham place out here near Weaver Springs. And he had leased the Ringer place and the Vanburger place, and oh two or three more there and put them into, all into rye. And 1923 was a good year. And we had a tremendous crop of rye out there; we cut it with the headers.

ED: That's right.

MARCUS: But these folks are gone.

ED: Yep, that's right, they're all gone.

MARCUS: And they, probably this siege of armyworms that you had in 1919 finished off a lot of people, didn't they?

ED: Well between the jackrabbits and the armyworms, 1919 and 1920 were real tough years. In fact, we hauled hay from The Narrows in order to get through the winters. We bought hay from Jim Henderson. We bought hay, wild hay from Jim Henderson and we hauled it up here, it was an endless job. In the wintertime you could only haul about a ton.

MARCUS: You bet, you bet.

ED: It was just all a team of horses could do to pull her through the snow. We didn't have a bobsled, some guys did. But we were poor people, we only had a wagon.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

ED: Yeah, they was tough times.

MARCUS: But I imagine along in 1914, '15 there was probably the peak of the ---

ED: I believe it was 1914, or 1915, Marcus. This is hard to believe, but Dad had about a 15 or 20 acre patch of wheat down there and it went 45 bushels to the acre. And from then on it ---of course everything was right, we had good, we had lots of snow, and good runoff, and then we got some early June, we got a tremendous rain. Seemed to me it rained for a week there.

MARCUS: Well it used to, you know.

ED: Yeah, you could depend on it.

MARCUS: Get June rains.

ED: At that time you could depend on a June, or late May or June good rain.

MARCUS: That's the key to the production in Harney County, is those late rains.

ED: That's right.

MARCUS: You bet.

ED: You get them at the right time; you've got it made.

MARCUS: You can look back over your weather records and maybe this years had 15 inches of precip, but maybe you'll find that you had a better growing year, you've only got 10 sometime. But it's just when it comes.

ED: That's right. At just the right time.

MARCUS: Like on the mountains here on both sides, a good snow packs, but it turns off dry and no storm to bring this snow out and it just isn't running at all. They say the water is all gone in the Burns country here, and gosh they had above normal snow pack, and

there is a lot of snow up there yet. But in talking to a fellow the other day he told me that it just isn't running off. It just runs out there, be a good stream of water coming from this snow bank, it just goes out there and disappears. It doesn't come on out. That's on account of the lack of moisture here to burn things up.

Well, we're up here in front of the old Newell house, Ed, so why don't we talk a little bit about it. I think you probably know the history of this Newell house better than anybody in the country. And I, someone has attempted to get it together, but I think you're the best source we can have. You lived right here in the shade of the house here ever since you can remember, knew the family well.

ED: Well, this house was started before my folks came to this country, Marcus. That is it was in the process of being built. They didn't just build it in 30 or 60 days like they build houses now.

MARCUS: No, they couldn't.

ED: A lot of this rock that you see in this --- now some of it was brought from those bluffs south of The Narrows. Then they had a little rock quarry north of the old house here where they pick out this grey rock.

MARCUS: Yes, I wondered where it came from. I recognized the yellow.

ED: They got a pit right back here, just north of here, oh maybe a quarter of a mile. And that's where the grey rock came from. Of course they, you notice there is some --- in the back part is mostly lava rock which they just picked up here on the grounds.

MARCUS: Yes.

ED: The man that built this, the stonemason, his name was Charlie Backus. He is a German, and that was his trade, he was a stonemason by trade. Learned it in the old country.

MARCUS: You bet, I knew Charlie well. I always enjoyed Charlie. He always had one

saying about --- you know he liked his beer.

ED: Yes.

MARCUS: Charlie said, "Too much beer, just right." (Laughter)

ED: That sounds like Charlie.

MARCUS: Doesn't that sound like Charlie? You bet. Well Ed ---

ED: Charlie told me one time he could have built this house in a lot less time, but to get the boys to haul the rocks was sometimes a problem.

MARCUS: I'll bet.

ED: If they could do it a horseback, he'd have had lots of rocks, but they didn't like the idea of pulling it ...

MARCUS: Well now by golly, it's quite a trip to haul this yellow rock from south of The Narrows there. It must be 12, 15 miles, isn't it from here?

ED: Well the trouble was, Marcus, you see they just pick it out in the raw down there, and bring it up here and he'd cut it on a table. He'd chip it with a chisel and a little axe. And they'd lose fifty percent of the rocks.

MARCUS: Sure they would. You bet.

ED: If you'll notice that a lot of this rock isn't all square. Some of it is six cornered, and especially on these window openings. You'll notice the different angles that that rock is cut.

MARCUS: Yes, you bet. It's a design all of its own here. Now I think this building is about 50 feet square, Ed.

ED: I don't know what the dimensions are. I imagine it's about that.

MARCUS: Well I think I stepped it here when I was here this spring. I was kind of curious to know about it. But we'll go in there pretty quick, and I want to talk to you a little bit about some of the rooms here.

ED: You'll notice the rock on the windowsills there, Marcus. At one time those was all in one piece clear across those window, see. And the vandals have taken axes and sledge hammers and broke them all up.

MARCUS: Yes, they're all out on this side here, yeah.

ED: It's a shame, because the weather hasn't, didn't affected it very much.

MARCUS: No, gosh no.

ED: It really weathered good. But its --- I don't know why people like to break up something like this.

MARCUS: Well Ed, about what year would you say this was built, or completed? It probably wasn't built in a year for that matter, was it, now that we mention it here.

ED: It was a period of 10 or 12 years.

MARCUS: Oh, it was that long?

ED: Yes, they got it in shape so they could live in it, and then they just kept adding, or finishing and adding to it until you, it's what you see now. I think, of course, I was only small then, but it looked to me like it was completed when --- that I can remember.

MARCUS: The first time you remember it?

ED: But I think it was started in the late 1900's. But these people were already here and established. They didn't run many cattle. They had a wonderful herd of horses though, and horses were worth money, you know.

MARCUS: That was their business was running horses, wasn't it?

ED: Yes. Dad bought a horse from them, an unbroke horse, and he paid \$150 for it.

MARCUS: That was a lot of money in those days.

ED: And he was so damn wild it took all summer to tame him down so you could hook him up to something. But they did have wonderful horses. During World War I they sold a lot of horses to the Cavalry, the United States Cavalry. That was the --- They gathered

up everything, everything that qualified they got a good piece of money for. But then after, why the price of horses just dropped off to just practically nothing. Because people were getting, buying tractors.

MARCUS: Yeah. Well Ed, let's --- can you establish fairly close when they finally left here? They were gone in 1923 when we came out here.

ED: Oh yes, they left here; they must have left here --- well right after World War I. I'd say in about 19--- I think Buck Newell was, he hung out here tougher than any of them. But he finally left, I think, about that time.

MARCUS: He used to work for my mother, and it would be long about that time too. He was married to Rose Crowley, and then they had a ---

ED: Yeah, that's right. They lived at Lawen, didn't they Marcus?

MARCUS: They were over in that --- yeah back this way, west of Lawen there a little ways. And then they had a daughter named Vera.

ED: That's right.

MARCUS: And she was just 2 or 3 years old when she was around there.

ED: I saw Rose a couple of years ago at the Old Timer's picnic.

MARCUS: Yes, I did too, and Vera was with her.

ED: Yes.

MARCUS: Yes, in fact I've got a picture of them. But, yeah I think the house, Ed, as I recall in 1923, was vacant.

ED: Yes, but there were some people after that that lived here, Marcus.

MARCUS: Yes, I see that there is paper on the wall in there that's dated 1938.

ED: Yes. And there's some people came here from Idaho with the idea of raising turkeys. And it only took them one season to find out that they either had to be in the coyote business, or the turkey business, but they couldn't be in both.

MARCUS: Both of them wouldn't work, huh?

ED: They went out of the turkey business pretty fast. They finally got discouraged and they left. They had some plans to buy the place, because it would be dry and ideal for turkeys. And lots of grasshoppers to feed them with. And if it hadn't been for the coyotes, I think they could have made it. But it was just another failure. Their name was Jones, Sam and John Jones.

MARCUS: Oh, no relation to the Jones out below us here then?

ED: No, huh uh.

MARCUS: Well now that family of Joneses lived here at one time, did they?

ED: Who is that?

MARCUS: Lawrence and ---

ED: Oh yeah.

MARCUS: --- Teddy, didn't they?

ED: Oh yeah, right where they were living was their dad's home-stead see, down there, you can see it right down there in the flat. They're still living there.

MARCUS: They lived in this house at one time though?

ED: No.

MARCUS: They never did?

ED: No, Lawrence bought this on delinquent taxes one time, but he didn't live here. He lived at our place adjoining see, here. He lived over there. Here is quite a water problem because you notice the spring is down there 300-400 feet below the house. And if they lived here they'd have to carry the water, or else they'd have to put in a pumping system. They had a well here by the back door of the kitchen with a windmill on it for years, but it barely would, if they were careful they could get enough water to run the kitchen, and that was all.

MARCUS: Well, I'll be darned.

ED: And most of the time they carried water. Ben Newell and Molly Newell carried many thousands of gallons of water from this spring up to this house.

MARCUS: By gosh that's quite a trip.

ED: It's all up hill.

MARCUS: You'd go a little easy with the bath water, wouldn't you?

ED: Yeah, Ben said, "I wish this spring was on the upper side of the house, I'd carry water downhill and empty buckets uphill."

MARCUS: Ed, name the family for me. I've been asked that by people, and I didn't know them well enough to tell them.

ED: I may not get them in order.

MARCUS: Well, that doesn't matter so much.

ED: I'll start out with the oldest girl, her name was Dolly.

MARCUS: Dolly Newell.

ED: She married a man by the name of Julius Chandler. And Julius was a good worker, in fact he helped Charlie on this rockwork a lot of the time, he didn't have anything else to do. He was kind of a hay contractor; he put up hay over in the Double O country. In fact, one summer my mother done the cooking over there and Dad run the hay crew for Julius Chandler. Now that was Dolly. And then there was Mannie and Todd. I'm not sure which one was the older of the two boys, of those two. But they also homesteaded north of here about two and a half miles east, each had a homestead up there. Then there was Buck and Rack.

MARCUS: Rack, I'd forgotten about him.

ED: He married the --- you remember the Kendall's that used to be related to the Joneses, you know.

MARCUS: Yes, ... Kendall.

ED: Mrs. Kendall was Mr. Jones' sister.

MARCUS: I didn't know that, but I remember where they lived.

ED: No, Mr. Kendall was a brother to Mrs. Jones. That's the way it was.

MARCUS: That's the way it ---

ED: I almost got that all balled up. And Rack married their daughter Blanche. Now getting back to the Newell's, then there was, the younger boy was named Ben. And Molly was the youngest daughter. And they had another daughter, and they called her, what was her name, I want to say Tina but that's not right. Anyway, we called her Sis, everybody called her Sis. She was a very happy go lucky girl. She married a, do you remember Newton, do you remember Frank Newton?

MARCUS: You bet.

ED: He was a schoolteacher.

MARCUS: Bill Newton's brother.

ED: There was two brothers, there was Frank and Bill.

MARCUS: Yes, Bill lived just south of The Narrows there.

ED: Bill taught school at The Narrows for years and years.

MARCUS: I graduated from the eighth grade under Bill.

ED: Well Frank taught this school down here, one year. And a year or two later he and Sis got married. And whatever happened to them I don't know, Marcus, I've lost track of them. I've never run into anybody that could give me any information.

MARCUS: I think the last time I heard of Frank Newton, through Bill would be, he was over around the Nyssa country in Eastern Oregon.

ED: So that makes a family of eight children, Marcus. Five boys and three girls.

MARCUS: Now the father was a one-armed man, is that right?

ED: Yes, he was. A well educated man.

MARCUS: He was the school superintendent for Harney County here at one time.

ED: Yes, uh huh. I'm not sure whether he was the first or second.

MARCUS: Second one, I think.

ED: Second one.

MARCUS: I believe. I've got the dates at home; I'll put them in this tape. I should have picked them up today, but I forgot my tape. Hank Slater got them for me.

**MARCUS: I'm going to interrupt here and list the school superintendents here. I have a listing up to Mrs. Weittenhiller. And apparently our first school superintendent was Adele R. Baker, and that was in 1889; then Charles Newell from 1890 to '95; C. W. Byrd '96 to '99; J. C. Bartlett 1900 to 1904; M. E. Rigby 1904 to 1908; L. M. Hamilton 1908 to 1916; Francis Clark 1916 to 1920; Mary Griffin 1920 to '32; and then Myra Weittenhiller from 1932 to '40. The first Harney County High School was organized in the fall of 1904. In 1903 Professor Finn then principal of the Burns Grade School taught a 9th grade to several pupils who wished to further their education.

ED: I can't recall the first man. Maybe you know.

MARCUS: No, no I don't.

ED: Well anyway, he was school superintendent there for years. At the same time he had already filed a homestead right on this place, see. And during a vacation and so forth he'd come out here and fence it, and put this homestead in shape in order to live here. And later, after that, he worked also in the newspaper, setting type and so forth. In fact, I guess he was the editor.

MARCUS: Oh.

ED: Then later the Griffins took over the paper, Mary Griffin and her husband. They worked in the ---

MARCUS: What paper would that have been?

ED: It was called the Harney County News.

MARCUS: Harney County News, yes there is a Harney County News, I know that.

ED: Yeah, that's as far as I know. If it had another name, I don't recall it. But we used to, Dad subscribed to it all the time, it was a weekly. And we always looked forward to getting it because it was about the only source of news you could collect.

MARCUS: Right, you didn't have the radio or a telephone.

ED: Unless you met someone on the road, why that was the biggest way of finding, getting the news, somebody traveling through. In the paper, was really ---

MARCUS: You really waited for the paper, didn't you?

ED: It was really expensive; I think it cost a dollar a year.

MARCUS: Oh, all of that.

ED: Yes, all of a dollar a year. I ought to tell Hinshaw that, shouldn't I?

MARCUS: You bet. Well, Ed, the family then, they spent a lot of time in Burns, until they got this place --- until this was ---

ED: Yeah, the first year, yeah.

MARCUS: Yeah, when they first came they were in Burns, and then later ---

ED: Most of them all were going to school at that time, see the older ones.

MARCUS: Yes.

ED: Until they came out here. Now Buck, and Rack, and Sis, and Molly, and Ben all went to school down here on the corner. Buck and Rack were eighth graders at that time; they only went there one year. And I think Sis went two or three years. And Molly and I were just about the same age at that time. I've kind of lost track of all of them except a nephew, one of Mannie's, either Mannie's boy or Todd's boy came through and stopped, and we had quite a bull session. He told me that, I believe its Mannie, works for BLM

over at Vale.

MARCUS: Oh, he does?

ED: He's in the BLM office at Vale. Every time I've gone through there its either been a holiday or too late to contact him, and I've never been able to ---

MARCUS: Well he'd be darn near ready for retirement, wouldn't he Ed?

ED: Way past retirement, that's for sure.

MARCUS: Well yes.

ED: Maybe he's only an advisor or something. Maybe he doesn't have a regular office, maybe he's just on the --- He knew so much about this country and the sagebrush, and the coyotes ... Maybe he's just an advisor, or on the board or something. But he has something to do with the BLM program, so he told me. ... old man Charlie Newell's grandson.

MARCUS: Oh, he's a grandson, oh I see.

ED: Of the old Charlie.

MARCUS: Oh I see. I thought he was one of the boys.

ED: Mr. Newell was a scout for the United States Army in Montana and that's where, I understand that he lost that arm was in a Indian skirmish up there.

MARCUS: Indian fight. I was going to mention that to you, I thought maybe he might have lost it in the Civil War. He could have been about right for that too.

ED: Well he could have been.

MARCUS: Well, I mean I was just guessing there. But being a scout, he could have lost it that way too, you bet.

ED: He was a powerful man. He could --- he lost his right arm, and of course he was forced then to use his left arm. And he could chop more wood with that left hand than an ordinary man could in an all day chopping, he could cut that much in two hours. You

never saw a man could swing an axe --- and he didn't just take a short cut on the handle, he got right out on the end of that handle and you wanted to stand back because the chips would really fly.

MARCUS: Holy smokes.

ED: He was really a ---

MARCUS: He got a fellow by the neck he'd really bounce you around.

... do this again.

ED: Are you ready to go?

MARCUS: You bet.

ED: Mrs. Newell was a very ... person in this neighborhood. Any time there was anybody sick in the neighborhood, why you could depend on Mrs. Newell to help them out. She'd be right there to help. She was a very charming person. Well let's go in the house.

MARCUS: Yeah, we'll go in and we'll talk about the house a little bit here. I'll shut the tape off until we get in there.

We're standing here in front of the old Newell house. I have some pictures, Ed, taken here and around, so let's --- I'll just, I can use this tape with these pictures here. The thing that bothers me is these two rooms out here on this end when you get in them they are partitioned off. In order to get in either one of these rooms, you came out on the porch and went in. And then you get to looking in the ceiling and the roof and there's no sign of a stovepipe hole. I wondered how they heated these rooms.

ED: They had only one chimney that connected the front room there in the kitchen, Marcus.

MARCUS: That's all I can see. I was going to mention that to you.

ED: They had a big old heating stove there in the front room, and it took up so much room that in the summertime they'd set it out. And then in the fall, they'd set it back in

there. And that was the only source of heat in that whole house, was that one chimney there next to the kitchen. One stovepipe served both purposes. Now you see these two rooms you spoke about Marcus, this one on our left here was the old man's, what they called the parlor.

MARCUS: Oh, the parlor.

ED: Unless you were a special guest you didn't get in there. The old man had a lot of Indian relics in there, bows and arrows, and a wonderful display of arrowheads. And that room was completely wall-to-wall with, just lined with old, old time stuff like that. And the one on the right was his library, he had thousands of books. At one time all those walls were lined with bookshelves, and any subject you wanted to look up why you could find it in that library. I'm sure it was a better library than any in the country at that time.

MARCUS: Well that accounts then for the two rooms being more or less isolated from the rest of the house, doesn't it?

ED: Yes, yeah. He didn't call it his library, he called it his study.

MARCUS: His study, uh huh.

ED: When he wanted to get away from all the noise and everything, why he'd go in there and lock himself up and he'd dig out a book. He was well versed in anything. Any subjects you wanted to talk about, why you could say he was an authority on it. A well-educated man, well educated. I don't know where he got his schooling, but if he got it the hard way, why he sure did a good job of it.

MARCUS: It stayed with him anyway.

ED: You bet.

MARCUS: Well Charlie Backus, on down, he had probably some of the old buildings in the old country in mind when he built this house.

ED: Yes, I'm sure he did, Marcus, yes. Because he said he kind of designed this on

some castle in Germany.

MARCUS: I suspected that.

ED: He said it was a miniature reproduction, you might say, of that. He said the one he copied from was, covered acres, but he said he was afraid that it would take him too long to make one that big so he cut it down a little. He said it was supposed to resemble a castle in Germany.

MARCUS: Well getting back to the front of the house, you know, the rooms that Ed has just mentioned are separated by a porch that is probably twelve feet wide. And you come out of; I imagine the living room, Ed, out onto the porch here.

ED: Yes, you'll notice there is three doors, one to each side room there, and then one to the main floor.

MARCUS: And then you came out on the porch, and then you went into these two rooms from this porch. That would be from the outside. There's no inside entrance to these rooms, and I can understand why now that Ed has told me the history of the place here.

ED: You notice those two windows on each side of the door there, Marcus, and the door was leaded colored glass at one time, all of it.

MARCUS: Holy smokes.

ED: In fact there wasn't enough clear glass in that door, I don't believe, to look out. In order to look out you had to open the door.

MARCUS: Had to open the door. (Laughter)

ED: But it was beautiful.

MARCUS: I'll bet it was.

ED: Pinks and greens and blues and yellows, and it was all leaded glass. And where it came from, I don't know.

MARCUS: And the two windows too, Ed?

ED: And the two windows. It was a beautiful ...

MARCUS: Kind of a matching set, in other words.

ED: Yes. I don't know where they had those made, but it was a beautiful job. You noticed they've all disappeared, you can't even find a piece of the glass.

MARCUS: No, I'll bet you can't, gosh no.

ED: Well shall we go inside, Marcus?

MARCUS: Yeah, you bet, we'll go on in.

ED: Better take it easy, this floor is pretty rotten. Shetland ponies has even wintered in here.

MARCUS: They have, huh?

ED: At some time or other. Evidence is still on the floor.

MARCUS: Besides a fellow might run on to a rattlesnake here too, wouldn't he?

ED: ... but I see some blue there.

MARCUS: There is a little of it laying there, right out on the porch.

ED: Small pieces, but people have picked up the larger chunks, I'm sure. Yeah, you better be careful, you might drop through this old floor any place.

MARCUS: Well this, Ed, was the living room then?

ED: This long room, yes. You'll notice there on the north side there's a little wainscoting left on there.

MARCUS: Yes.

ED: I don't know whether everybody would know what wainscoting is; because I'm sure it's not used much more nowadays. It was made of wood, looked like high-grade flooring, and stained or painted.

MARCUS: That's about a good four feet, isn't it?

ED: Yes, about four feet high. That went clear around this room, all the way around. And

above that was papered. You can still see some of the old paper hanging here on the wall.

MARCUS: Yes.

ED: Now, this is one of the bedrooms here on our right, Marcus. I think this was the girl's room, as I remember it. And this other room here with a border paintings on it, you'll notice there are small diamond shapes, or half diamond.

MARCUS: Yes, I saw that.

ED: This was the master bedroom, and they had, I used to marvel at the furniture they had in here. It was real nice, dressers, and easy chairs, and a beautiful bed, a big double bed. And this was the master bedroom.

MARCUS: Now this master bedroom is in the northeast corner of the house, isn't it?

ED: Yes, you'll notice it has two windows in it, see?

MARCUS: Yes.

ED: The girl's room only had one, see.

MARCUS: Well, Ed, now these walls here are over a foot thick, aren't they, and then these bedrooms here, this has been plastered. Is that true with all the outside walls? It probably is, huh?

ED: Most of the --- no, I think that this one was the only one was --- these two bedrooms and the parlor and the library I think were the only ones that were plastered, Marcus. They used a lime, and I don't know whether they had cement in those days or not, do you?

MARCUS: Yes, I think they did, they had something.

ED: They had something to hold it together.

MARCUS: It stayed together anyway, hasn't it? You bet.

ED: Yes, pretty good shape. It was, you'll notice it was plastered right over the stone,

except around the window framing. These walls must be 16, 17 inches thick, aren't they?

MARCUS: Well yes, they must --- they're well over a foot. You can see right here on this --- I would guess 18 inches probably, Ed. Now this I suppose was the kitchen here on the northwest corner of the house?

ED: Yes, and that door led right into the kitchen. You'll notice the old stove pipe hole up there, see I tell you about it came out. Now they had the stove sitting out here, quite a ways out into the room here. And the stovepipe, and of course there horizontally, connected up with the stove in the kitchen. Which was a great big old, great big old iron stove.

MARCUS: Probably an old, Old Comfort, huh?

ED: Now you see this other hole cut here, that was done later by somebody else; to get heat into that bedroom on that side, see.

MARCUS: Now that was a bedroom in there then. There was three bedrooms in the house.

ED: Just one in that boys, some of the boys slept in there.

MARCUS: Well, Ed, tell me about the attic or the upstairs here. We've got a stairway.

ED: It was never completely finished, Marcus.

MARCUS: I wondered about that. I looked at these 2 x 6's, these ceiling joists, and I couldn't see any nail holes in them, like there had been a flooring laid on them, or somebody had taken it out.

ED: Well on that east side over there, facing the east there, Marcus, it was floored over, but it never was sealed in, see.

MARCUS: Yes.

ED: And a couple of the boys kept that for their --- they did have a bed up there. I think in the summertime when it wasn't too cold why some of the boys slept up there. Anyway

when they had company, why somebody had to sleep up there in order to have enough room. You understand they had quite a family of their own.

MARCUS: You bet. Gosh eight kids, they had to put them someplace, didn't they?

ED: Yes. The kids probably sacrificed their bed and went up there in the attic. It was partially floored on that side, I'm sure. Now you notice the ceiling is completely gone on this, and I don't know what was in there, but I think it was just this ceiling, a good deal like this flooring here, see, was nailed up there and then papered over.

MARCUS: Probably.

ED: This was a beautiful room when they lived here. They had pictures and paintings that they brought with them when they moved in here, when they came to live here.

MARCUS: Yeah, this is quite a roof structure here too. The engineers would probably tell you that the way Charlie Backus put this roof on here nearly 70 years ago, that it wouldn't stand. But here the shingles on the north side are in pretty good shape yet, not to mention the 2 x 4 rafters.

ED: I think one reason that those, some of those shingles are left, or a good part of them are left, Marcus, is because on the pitch of the roof, you notice is very steep.

MARCUS: Right, oh golly, yeah.

ED: And it didn't hold any moisture. As soon as the snow went off why it dried off, and I'm sure that helped preserve it. Speaking about the building of that, with 2 x 4's and everything, you notice how straight up and down those are? There's very few of them has come loose.

MARCUS: Right, it's well constructed.

ED: It's built like a bridge, you know.

MARCUS: You bet.

ED: The cross bracing is perfect, and it really has taken the storms, and the wind. You

notice the vandals have pulled some shingles off so they could use the crosspieces there; the shingles are nailed to, as a ladder so they could get up on the roof.

MARCUS: Yes.

ED: For what reason, I don't know. Because you can see quite a bit of this country just from the front door.

MARCUS: See enough without getting on top of this roof. Besides if you ever missed a step up there, you'd be on the flat of your back here on the ground before you knew what happened.

ED: At least you'd have slivers to pull out.

MARCUS: You bet, you sure would.

ED: This was one of the showplaces for a long time in this part of the country. I don't think there's a house constructed and set on such a nice view spot where you could look clear across the valley. You could look clear over there to Jack Mountain, The Narrows, the Steens Mountain. You can't hardly see the Double O because this point sticks out there see, from here. But you can look right over to Harney Lake, Mud Lake, it was a beautiful building site. I'm sure he spent a lot of time figuring out just exactly where to built this house. ... right in a good location where you could look out over the valley.

MARCUS: Yes. Well I think we've got this pretty well described, Ed, so shall we drive on around to the oil well now?

ED: Have you ever been down to the spring?

MARCUS: Well I've been there, yeah let's go down and we'll talk a little bit about that. I'd forgotten about that.

ED: If you have time.

MARCUS: Well we've got --- that's all we've got is time.

ED: Okay.

MARCUS: You bet.

ED: The day is yours.

SIDE B

...

MARCUS: Ed, we see quite a few junipers growing around here. Have you seen much of a change in these trees during your lifetime here?

ED: Well you see this tree right down in front of us, Marcus, I'd say four or five hundred feet, just kind of to the left of us down there, that lonely one?

MARCUS: Yes.

ED: When my folks came to this country Mother told me that the first week or ten days they pitched their tent by this little tree. And so in 1942, no, in 1942, 1943 when Louise and I came back from Panama, Mother said, "Are you going over to Burns?" And I said, "Yes." She said, "Well I'd like to go with you."

MARCUS: She was living in Portland at the time.

ED: She was living in Portland at the time. So we brought her with us, and we drove down there to the old homestead and looked around. The Jones boys were living there then. And she said, "I'd like to go up to the old Newell house." I said, "Okay, let's go." And the road passes right near this tree and she says, "Why I believe," she says, "that tree hasn't grown two feet since I saw it the first time." And I said, "Oh Mother, your eyesight is getting bad." And she says, "No, you just watch it from now on, out here in this country." And that tree, I'll say is practically the same size as when I saw it for the first time. So it really takes a long time for a juniper to grow.

MARCUS: Yes, well she knew the tree, and you've known the tree for over 60 years then. You bet, yes.

ED: It's grown, it may have grown two or three feet in height in that time, but that's all, I'm sure.

MARCUS: Well we'll slip on down to the spring here now. We're up here at the spring, Ed, we're down at the spring I should say, below the house here a couple of hundred yards. And I see there's a tunnel driven back into the hill. What's the purpose of that?

ED: Well in order to get as much water collected --- that goes back there and then it, there's a "Y" in it. Goes back there about 60 feet and then branches off, to cover and drain as much area as they could. You notice that's kind of a conglomerate sandstone ...

MARCUS: Yes, yes I've seen that.

ED: There's a air hole there at the top there for ventilation. I imagine they put it --- or else to get daylight in there while they were digging. It could have served two purposes. If you'll notice you can still see the old pick marks in that wall, of that hole there. At one time this --- when I was a boy, there was about a inch and a half stream of water run out of this all the time. There were some troughs here where they could water their horses, and a few cows, and also water for their house. And it was a dry years, it just kept diminishing until you see what it is now, barely a trickle coming out under there.

MARCUS: Well, Ed, what has bothered me a little bit here, how they got next to this water supply here.

ED: Yes, well Mr. Newell said when he came up here and looked at this place that there was enormous sagebrush here. The damn sagebrush was 7 and 8 feet tall, and grass was really something around this area. So he just dug a kind of a post hole down here, just below us here, and the next morning it was full of water, so he just started tunneling from there, and they just kept going up hill here keeping on it just about a grade, see more or less a level grade. And they got in there, and the farther they went the more water they got, and the time they got there in the back why they had plenty of water for their needs.

And in those days the drilling machines were not very good, or not very, couldn't go very deep, so he figured well this is a good place to build his home. A natural spring, just what he needed.

MARCUS: I think I'd have built down here a little closer to the spring if I'd have had to pack the water though, wouldn't you?

ED: Yeah, I would too. But I think he was looking at the view site more than he was the water.

MARCUS: And all those boys, those boys he had too, probably.

ED: Maybe he thought he could keep them boy's busy carrying water; they wouldn't get into so damn much meanness.

MARCUS: Right. Now did this go dry during the, will this go dry during the dry years?

ED: No, it has never gone dry, it's never gone completely dry.

MARCUS: Never seen it dry.

ED: It's always, always runs a little trickle of water out here. Did you see the little pond there where the birds come in to drink, and the deer come here, what few there is left here, come here and get water. Now also, you see right over here southwest of us, Marcus, is that dam.

MARCUS: Yes, I saw that last spring up here. I hadn't seen it before, I didn't remember it anyway.

ED: Many times in the good years I've seen the water right up to the --- of course they had an overflow in it to take care of the, in case it got high. But I've seen it right up to the edge of that many times.

MARCUS: In the wash down here where the road crosses, that runs a lot of water at times, Ed. It drains a lot of country back up in here, doesn't it?

ED: Yeah. A few years ago, well quite a few years ago, the old wooden flume there

rotted away and that left an opening and then we got a big runoff, and it completely cut a hole through it. Since then there hasn't been any water in it. But behind that dam was all clear at one time; there wasn't a brush in there. I imagine the water kept it killed off.

MARCUS: Well they should have raised excellent crops right down in it, by the looks of the big brush and all this. This should be good producing ground, Ed, is that true?

ED: They raised a lot of rye hay here, Marcus. When they lived here they had some wonderful crops.

MARCUS: Well now the barn and corrals were just down below us here, is that right? It looks like the remainder of a barn and corrals maybe.

ED: Yeah, the water troughs were down there by the corral there, where the horses could come in to water there.

MARCUS: Now this undoubtedly was made for a catch pan here for water sometime?

ED: This was done later.

MARCUS: I assumed probably it was.

ED: I would say that this little basin here in front of it is not over 15 years old. This was done with a bulldozer. You can see by the piles of dirt here. But when the Newell's lived here this pond wasn't here, I mean this basin wasn't here. There was a pipeline went directly over the ragged ---

MARCUS: Right on down ---

ED: --- edge. And then they had a little rock catch basin here at the bottom where they got water from the house, it ran in there. And when it overflowed, well then it went down to the corral.

MARCUS: Oh, they got a little, they had to start a little bit lower down on the hill from where we are standing now here at the mouth of the tunnel. He made it as tough as he could for those little kids, I guess.

ED: Yeah. Well he enjoyed working, and I guess he wanted the boys to get in on it.

MARCUS: He enjoyed making them work too, probably. That's the way it generally went.

ED: They were good cowboys. They didn't mind doing anything they could do if they could get on a horseback.

MARCUS: Yeah, if they could do it horseback. I imagine they packed most of the water horseback, didn't they?

ED: If there is a horse with a saddle on handy, I imagine they---

MARCUS: I think you told me one time about one of the boys came in from The Narrows that was pretty well loaded, and had a bottle of whiskey or two with him. And you met him and visited with him off down ---

ED: That was my dad and I. We was cutting brush down there, Marcus. You want a comment on it?

MARCUS: Sure, you bet.

ED: Well I don't know whether it was Mannie or Todd, but Todd had been down to The Narrows to a dance on Saturday night. And this was Sunday afternoon when he came back through. And Dad was grubbing brush out there south of the house, and I was burning for him, burning the brush. And he come along and he said, my dad's name was Ed too, Edward, but everybody called him Ed. Said, "Ed, would you like a drink?" And Dad says, "Sure," he says, "it's warm and I'm thirsty, I could stand a drink." And Mannie was kind of rocking around in the saddle, you know, hadn't completely sobered up. Maybe he'd been hitting that bottle a little bit coming home. Anyway, Dad didn't take a drink, just pulled the cork out of it and held it along side of his leg and run the whiskey down the mattock (a mattock is a tool for grubbing brush) handle. And he poured out; I imagine the bottle was about half full when Mannie handed it to him. And Dad left him just one good drink, put the cork back in and handed it to Mannie and he rode away. Dad

thanked him for the drink. And later he told a neighbor down here, Mr. Huffman, he said, "If you ever get a bottle of whiskey don't ever give it to that Koeneman, because he can really suck her dry."

MARCUS: He's really a drinking man, huh?

ED: Yeah, really a drinking man. And Dad said that he never offered him another drink after that. He thought too much of his whiskey to give Koeneman a drink.

MARCUS: Well let's go on around to the oil well now, huh.

ED: Well, all right.

MARCUS: We're up here at the site of the old, what I spoke of as the Dog Mountain Oil Well, Ed. Why don't you sit down on this well casing here ---

ED: I'll take a chance; I don't think it will go down in the well.

MARCUS: Yeah, if you fall in there why I'll tell them where you went anyway. So why don't you give us the history on this.

ED: Well this started in about 1912 or '13. I remember they were moving in the equipment by our homestead there the same day that my sister was born. She was born right there in the old house. They were going by then, there were four or five big teams hauling casing and material for building the tower, and all that. We thought it would never end. Because these teams were about a mile apart, and they just kept a stringing along there all afternoon. They hauled the lumber for their tent camp, and drilling tools. And after that it was a no ending process. Every few days they would be hauling more material up here. Everybody was excited, because everyone was going to get rich on the oil that flowed out of this well.

MARCUS: I'll bet.

ED: And the first superintendent, his name was, a great big fat man, must have weighed about 300 pounds. And he had a great big fat bulldog too. I was scared to death of that

damn bulldog. Oh, he was very gentle, and anyone could pet him, he wasn't vicious at all. The damn dog was half as big as a man, I think, an English bulldog with the broken nose, you know.

MARCUS: Oh, they scare you to death whether they tried to get you or not.

ED: That's right, just looking at you would scare you.

MARCUS: You bet.

ED: But anyway, he was the first superintendent of the works, you know. This was called the Oregon Oil and Gas Company Project. And everybody that had a few dollars couldn't stand still till they had some of the stock, even before they got squatted in. And the neighbors all give them a hand, and a lot of this lumber was just, dimension lumber, you know, rough. And it took thousands of feet of it to build this derrick.

MARCUS: Yeah, I'll bet it did.

ED: All the carpenters around, anybody that had a hammer and a saw could get a job butchering timber here. Putting up frames for the tents, and they built a barn for an old team of horses, so they could haul the fuel. They burned sagebrush in this boiler, that was their source of fuel, was sagebrush and some juniper that they could haul, as much sagebrush to keep her a going. And Mr. Jones down here, Lawrence and Ted's dad, he, as I recall he was one of the chief carpenters on the job. He, at least they had all the blueprints, and he would mark off the lumber, and these guy ... butcher, you get on her and cut them all on all them angles, you know. And gosh you cut them 2 x 12's, you know, on an angle it took one hell of a lot of elbow grease.

MARCUS: You bet, and they had to be cut right too.

ED: And they had to match them. And that old tower was, anyway you wanted to look at it, it was perfect. It just had a perfect taper to it.

MARCUS: How high was it, Ed?

ED: Well we was speaking about that a while ago. I'm sure it was 85, but then when you mentioned 105, I'm not so sure that you aren't right. But I went up on it a time or two, and I know it was quite a haul to go up that old ladder that was on the side.

MARCUS: Well Charlie Backus used to tell me quite a little bit about the Dog Mountain Oil Well. I had been to it once here in 1923, and it was closed down then, and I was always curious about it. And back in the early 1930's, mid '30's I worked with Charlie Backus quite a little bit, and he told me about --- He was a driller here at one time, wasn't he?

ED: Yeah, on the tail end of it he was, Marcus. The way Charlie got, Charlie and Arthur Hahn, do you remember Arthur Hahn?

MARCUS: Yes.

ED: They were kinda partners, and wherever you'd see one, you'd generally see the other one. They'd work on the haying jobs or building jobs, and later they went into the well drilling business too. After they left here, they bought an old rig and started well drilling. They were both good capable men, as far as that was concerned, when it came to drilling. But they got their drilling experience right here on this site where I'm sitting here, Marcus.

MARCUS: How deep did this well finally end up to be?

ED: Just a little over 3800 feet, Marcus.

MARCUS: Well what happened, Ed, did they run out of money? It was kind of fly-by-night thing to begin with, wasn't it?

ED: No, Marcus, I think it started out all right. People were all conscientious about it. But as it went along, and they got deeper and it cost more money, and people just weren't making the money they make nowadays, they didn't dare plunge too much. I know my dad had \$500 or \$600 in this, and my mother didn't, she didn't think much of oil wells. But

whenever he could slip a ten-dollar bill or a twenty-dollar bill away, why he'd buy another piece of stock, see. And when my mother found it, why then there was kinda hell to pay around the house for a day or two. Because she could see a lot of use for buying kids shoes, and overcoats, and over-shoes for the kids rather than buying stocks. But Dad said, "Ah Mom," he said, "some day," he said, "we're going to be rich, that's going to really blow in," he said. "I think old Charlie Backus is right, it's down there someplace, and if we could just go down we're going to get her." That was Charlie's by-word, "Ed, we're going to get her."

MARCUS: Well Charlie told me something about a string of tools being dropped in the well here. He always felt that there was oil here, and somebody --- there was a driller sent in here, as I remember the story, and about the first thing he did was to drop a string of tools in the well. And Charlie always felt that he was sent in by a big oil company to close the hole on him. And he felt that there would be a time when they would come in and drill right here, and maybe there will be.

ED: Yes, you're right about that, Marcus. One of the big Harney County shareholders in this project was Charlie Voegtly, that owned a hardware store in Burns. I'm sure that he was one of the larger stockholders in the company. And they got down there a ways and hit some awful hard rock, and the driller they had on here was a conscientious man, but in those days, you know, you had no hard surfacing to put on bits. And you'd run a bit for a few hours and you had to come out and change it. And gosh when you're pulling out of a hole, with that old time equipment, you know, 2500 feet, why it would take quite a bit of time to come up and change those bits and go back in. They had three bits, they had one in the slack tub a tapping it, and one in the fire, and one on the string of tools. And they wasn't eight hour days, those were twelve-hour days those guys were working.

MARCUS: I'll bet.

ED: Some of those stockholders got kind of discouraged and they thought that they should get an expert from Texas.

MARCUS: We got interrupted, Ed, we have to change tape here. You were telling me about getting a driller in from Texas, I think.

ED: Yes, I mentioned some of the larger stockholders, the people that had a lot of this paper bond, or stocks, whatever you may ---I know Dad had a shoe box full of them himself. And they got kind of discouraged and thought they ought to have an expert come in here and really punch this thing down and get it over with, and get the oil, and get it in production. And so they had a big meeting, and they decided that's what they'd do. So they hired this man from Texas, and he came in here, and he worked a week, and the only thing he did was run a bit in there that wasn't tightened, and it hit the bottom two or three times and it was off. And he ran so long that he just buried the end of that stem so badly that they had to ship it to Portland, which was the only big shop in the country then to --- They shipped it on to the Star Drill Company in Portland and had a new joint put on it, and they --- In the meantime this guy got on a big drunk or something and they lost track of him. He evidently went back to Texas. It was rumored afterwards that his pay, his small paycheck come from Eastern Oregon Gas and Oil Company, but his big check come from Standard Oil.

MARCUS: Yes, that's what Charlie Backus told me.

ED: Yeah. Charlie always contended that was it, and I'm sure that he was quite right. And then they weren't able to get anybody else, and so Backus and Hahn, they had worked here for so long, so they got Mr. Jones down here as a chief engineer, and he run the --- fired the boiler, and took care of the engine. And Hahn was the chief driller, and Charlie Backus was the tool rusher. He was a good blacksmith, besides being a good stonemason. And they proceeded from there. And they fished for that old bit, and the

company was so bad off they couldn't buy the tools to fit that, they were down to a four and a half inch hole, Marcus, at this time see. They had gone from twelve-inch hole at the surface, and when they hit a formation that caved, they'd have to run a string of casing. They put in a string of twelve, I think it was a string of twelve, I think it was around three hundred feet. Then they reduced to ten. Now all these strings of casing had to come up here to the top, see, in order to control it. I'm telling you this because I've been a well driller ---

MARCUS: Yeah, you know, you bet.

ED: I can explain this to you.

MARCUS: You bet, you know about it.

ED: You may not understand it, but I'm going to explain it to you anyway.

MARCUS: Fine. Maybe somebody else will that will hear it.

ED: And then they would reduce this hole. Well, by the time they got down there around thirty-five, thirty-six hundred feet, well the last string of casing was four and a half inch pipe. And you may not think a little chuck of four and a half inch pipe weighs very much, but you just string out 3800 feet of it and you'll find it's quite a little weight. And that all had to be handled over this old tower. By this time this old tower was getting pretty rotten, see, and they were constantly putting new boards on there, and taking out the old ones. It was a continuous job. They'd work a few days, and they'd see a brace loose here, well they'd put in a new brace and patch it up.

And to my estimation, Backus and Hahn did more for this, on this project than any man they had. Because they were conscientious and they had stock in it, and they had a lot of labor in it, they lived off of the, whatever they could get. They had a small garden down here, and we always had a garden, and we always helped them out. And they got their eggs, and whenever Dad butchered a beef, he'd always send a chunk of beef up

here to the boys, just to keep them on the job. They weren't interested in wages at that time; they just wanted to see it completed.

MARCUS: Well, Ed, when did they finally abandon the well here, and gave up on it?

ED: Well let's see, Marcus. That's just kind of hard to; anyway, the operation from beginning to end was over a period of 30 years. So you're as good at figuring that out as I am, so you can, started about 1911-12, somewhere along there. In fact I'm not so sure about my sister's birthday. I know it was September 11th.

So they fished around for this here bit. It was impossible to go on until they had that bit out. And I know Dad, he came up here to give them a hand one day, and he came home all smiles and grinning from ear to ear, you know. "By golly we got her."

MARCUS: You got the bit out.

ED: "We got the bit out." A long time Hahn had a camera, and he took a picture of it hanging in the derrick, and they'd worked and fished around and drilled on that bit until it was bent in the middle. Well ---

MARCUS: How long, you speak of the bit, now how long a piece of tool would this be?

ED: The bit was about six feet long.

MARCUS: About six feet.

ED: It came right off of the stem, you see.

MARCUS: It screws into the stem there.

ED: On a tapered thread, see.

MARCUS: Yes.

ED: And they ---

MARCUS: Well Ed, at that depth now, you'd have to have a quite a lot of stem to even get that thing to work, would you, to fall back and forth? It would take a lot of weight down there to pull the cable?

ED: That stem, Marcus, I imagine was 35 or 40 feet long, see. And then above that, you had fishing jars, in case you got it stuck, why you could let down just a little slack and then you could jar it back up, see. And even if the bit, they figured that bit settled down there, a lot of cutting would be left in the bottom, settled around that bit, they didn't expect it would be loose, see. So they had these jars on, and then they had a connection which we call a swivel socket above that, see, that the line is fastened to this part, see. So that gives you one, two, three joints in a string of tools, see.

MARCUS: And you were telling me, something about using rope here to start drilling in those days, rather than the cable, would you explain that a little bit more, and the size of the rope, that's what amazed me.

ED: Well I'll start by explaining. Nowadays, people see these gasoline and diesel operated drilling machines, which are only used nowadays, or some electric. I've run electric machines. But in those days, everything in that kind of power was steam. So they --- What was your question, Marcus, now? I've kind of got off track.

MARCUS: Well you used rope instead of cable there in those days.

ED: Oh yeah, well you see in those old machines, they had no shock absorbers built in the machines. So they depended on the elasticity of this old heavy rope to compensate for the shock absorbers that the modern machines have built in them, see. So they, in this case, I know that they had, they could go a thousand feet with rope. That's where they planned on changing from rope to cable. Well it took more than a thousand feet because you had to have some on the drum, and then up and over your crown shivs and back down to the floor surface here, see?

MARCUS: Yes.

ED: So it took around, at least 1200 feet of cable, of rope, manila rope. And this had to be manila, the old drillers wouldn't settle for anything but manila, and even then it wasn't

cheap. It was three-inch diameter.

MARCUS: Yes, that's the thing that amazed me.

ED: Three inch diameter, and there was tons of that in that one coil.

MARCUS: Well Ed, as we walked up here we were looking at something here you thought maybe was part of the old, what did you call it, the bull wheel?

ED: Bull wheel, yeah. That was the wheel that this rope was spooled on to; so that they could run in and out of the hole, see.

MARCUS: In other words, it was used as a drum to coil the rope on. ED: To coil the rope on.

MARCUS: I believe you told me that would be at least twelve feet in diameter, this wheel was.

ED: The flanges on the wheel were about twelve feet. The center of this wheel, I imagine, was about three feet, Marcus.

MARCUS: Just a big spool, that's what it was then, wasn't it?

ED: A big spool, and then it had --- in those days what they called a divider in the center. So as to the part, the line that you wasn't using was spooled on one side of this divider, and the working part of this line was spooled on the other side of the divider. So it wouldn't cut through the slack line on the storage side of the spool, see. And as you went deeper, you just kept passing this rope over the divider, and on the rope that ... And it did all the drilling with, well they ... it in first which was a slow process until they got down far enough to get the tools buried, see. Then they put on what they call a walking beam, and a temper screw, and a clamp. Now these huge clamps would clamp that rope, and in order to let down slack, they'd just spin this fast threaded screw. They called this a temper screw, see. And then when they run down to the end of that, they loosened the clamps, slipped it up to the top, and turned that screw back up and then you were drilling

again, see. That's the way you controlled the line, the drilling line.

MARCUS: Well now Ed, you're sitting on well casing here, and I think you told me that that isn't the oil well. That the oil well is about what, three feet from this one that you are sitting on here?

ED: Well, yeah, a little more than that, probably. Probably the center of the hole was at least four or five feet ahead of this. This casing I'm sitting on was the water well. As I remember this well was about ninety or a hundred feet deep. It supplied the water for the boiler and the campsite and so forth. Of course there wasn't enough water to have any lawns, and people weren't interested in lawns anyway. And while they were drilling, they had a rod run down from the walking beam down to this, and they had a piston or a reciprocating pump down in this well, and it pumped the water up to a little storage tank they had here above the boiler house. And while they were drilling, why, this pump was operating all the time, pumping the water up.

MARCUS: Kind of a double acting system here actually.

ED: Yes. And then they, the first operation was to get this hole down, and then they started the well four or five feet ahead of this casing, which actually was the well. Or the oil well, which is all, the casing has been pulled out, and it's sunk down here. You can see the evidence of the part there. That little ridge right here in front of us about twelve feet, Marcus, is where sitting on the drill platform, is where this enormous drum set, that held all this cable I was telling you about, see. See all the kind of mud drippings, and cuttings there?

MARCUS: Yes.

ED: That naturally comes up on the cable when you are running in and out of these deep holes. You see some of it collects on where it winds around the drum it drips off and it's accumulated quite a little ridge there, of cuttings that came out of this well.

MARCUS: Well Ed, I'll ask you a little more about this casing. I, maybe I got the wrong opinion about it here now. You started out, they started out with a twelve inch casing and then when they had to go to a ten, now did, that ten had to come clear to the top of the ground, is that right?

ED: That's right, Marcus. In order to control it, to raise it up and down, and add sections to it as they drilled they had to have it up here hung on what us well drillers call elevators, see. A quick acting clamp that clamps right around under the collars of this big pipe. In those days there wasn't any welders, you know, everything was screwed and threaded and coupled pipe. In twenty foot lengths, mostly.

MARCUS: Well that was the purpose of the big high derricks wasn't it, to handle long strings of pipes and tools?

ED: Long strings of pipe. Mostly bailers, Marcus, of course they could handle this pipe in 20-foot sections, but would only take about a forty-foot tower really. But some of those bailers when you're going that far, you don't want to run eight or ten times like you do on a little water well, you know. You can do it, you make one or two passes down there, and when you get down there a mile away, it's take a long time to --- not so much to uncoil it, but to coil that cable back up and get that bailer out, it takes a little doing.

MARCUS: You bet.

ED: It'd take maybe twenty minutes to get out of the hole.

MARCUS: Yeah.

ED: And so they used extra long bailers. Some of those bailers were sixty feet long, so they could dip that out in a hurry, and get back to drilling. Because they figured, well the quicker we get this rock in the hole, in this rock, the quicker we're going to get oil.

MARCUS: Well now then they finally get into the solid formation, and you'll stop with the ten inch.

ED: Yes.

MARCUS: And then you'll stand up the drill so far, you don't know how far then?

ED: Several hundred feet possibly, or more.

MARCUS: And then it starts to cave in, and when that happens, then you have to go to a size smaller and ... to the top of the ground again.

ED: It's a telescoping process.

MARCUS: I see.

ED: Just one string of pipe inside of another.

MARCUS: And you ended up with a, what would that be, a six inch casing?

ED: They ended up here, Marcus, with four and a half inch.

MARCUS: Four and a half.

ED: It was more or less a ... to standard casing, it was more or less what they called tubing on account of the weight. They didn't want to run standard because they cut down a third on the weight by using tubing, see.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

ED: But you had to handle it with kid gloves on because if you dropped that six inches with that weight on, you could fold that bottom joint up just like an accordion.

MARCUS: I'll bet you would.

ED: So you had to know, when you were running that in, you had to know every minute for every inch of, the length of that pipe, and the depth of the hole you were going to. You wouldn't dare bump it on the bottom.

MARCUS: Well they had a terrific expense in casing alone then, didn't they?

ED: Marcus, there was carloads of casing here when it was pulled out.

MARCUS: Yeah, I'll bet there was.

ED: Yes, there was.

MARCUS: I'll bet there was. Who did you tell me pulled the casing, Ed?

ED: An old driller from, well, he was from the Portland --- One of the biggest contractors in the early days down, his name was George Scott. I met him when I was drilling up in Rattlesnake Field, which now is that Hanford Bomb Plant up there, you know.

MARCUS: Oh.

ED: It drills gas wells. And I was working for a man from Walla Walla, his name was A. E. Derrand, and I spent four years. I was drilling up in that area, when I met George Scott the first time. And then when he moved over into the Prineville area, and then--- how he happened to come to this, Backus and Hahn had a labor lien against this thing, because they kept track of all their time, and everything, and they filed a labor lien against it. Well that hung in the courts for several years, and before anything was --- and finally it was brought to a head, and the remainder of the stockholders decided that, well they had more in it, and many a hard knock around here. They were entitled to all the equipment, so they just give them a clear bill of sale for the whole works, casing, derrick, all the equipment that was around here. So Derrand bought some of the drilling tools, the big old twelve and ten inch bits and stems and stuff like that. And I helped him haul it away from this site while I was working for him.

MARCUS: You did?

ED: Yeah, and some old cable that was around here and that. And then later they contacted this man --- You got some ants a walking up your boots there, you might be a busy merchant there pretty quick.

MARCUS: Yeah, I might quit you here pretty quick.

ED: I've got a little protection, sitting on this casing.

MARCUS: Yeah, you're pretty well protected there.

ED: Anyway they contacted this George Scott, and he had a wonderful machine for

pulling them. This also was a steam operated machine, but it was one of the best that he --- He'd taken some old Star parts and heavy equipment, and he'd build a machine like he thought it ought to be built. He built it all with steel, angle irons and plates and derrick. And he had a, to raise the derrick it was even steam operated for that. It just had a big steam piston that would raise that derrick right up there, and in a few minutes he was ready to operate. And he moved over here and pulled the old derrick down and out of the way, and burned it up, and he set his machine over here and went to work. The reason he could pull it was that he was equipped with the first set of hydraulic jacks that I ever saw, and that's what pulled this casing out. He only had the machine here to raise the pipe up and unscrew it, and lay the pipe down on his truck. The jacks did all the heavy pulling, till he got down to where he could handle it on this machine. When you start pulling two thousand feet of eight inch casing, that's quite a load, Marcus.

MARCUS: I'll bet it's quite a load.

ED: Without the aid of these jacks, it would have been impossible. MARCUS: You bet.

ED: You'd just had to abandon it. But these jacks were twelve inches in diameter, and they were five feet long, and he called them his whiskey jacks. In the summertime when it wasn't freezing you could use water in those jacks for fluid, see. But in the wintertime, why he used alcohol. He called them his whiskey jacks. Although he wasn't a drinking man, he called them his whiskey jacks. And he had two of them on each side, and then I'll show you the ring that I have for that same purpose, and then I'm sure you'll understand how they work. It's a big chunk of iron weighing about eight hundred pounds with a hole in the middle just like a donut, see. With a couple big ears on the side where you set these jacks under this. And these slips, we call them ring and wedges. But these wedges are on a taper, and the harder you pull up the closer they go in. And they have teeth on them like the jaws on a pipe wrench, see. And they grab, you can grab the pipe

in any position, any place, and you don't have to weld on or anything. It'll just, you just start raising these jacks and immediately it just catches and, you raise it up and then you clamp with the aid of his machine, and some huge wooden clamps, and you clamp this and slip this ring down another position, see. And when he got twenty feet out, he'd unscrew it and lay it down, and just continue on. In fact he'd be laying down that pipe, because these jacks worked very slowly, see.

MARCUS: Now were they hand operated?

ED: No, no, they run off the steam engine.

MARCUS: They run off the steam engine.

ED: The water pump, the water pump pumped this in. It had a little, each jack had about a seven-eighths or three-quarter or seven-eighths piston in it, and that piston only moved about three-quarters of an inch. But it was tremendous pressure. You get two thousand pounds on that, you had a gauge on each jack, because you had to pull it equal or you'd break the pipe off. So you had to keep the pressure equalized on these jacks, with tremendous timbers underneath to support them. It was very easy to break a, he had some timbers that was twelve to fourteen feet long, and 24 x 24 inches square, and he had them stacked up just like a crib, and then on top of that he had, he had the jacks set on top of that. So he was practically working about eight feet off the ground all the time this operation was going on.

MARCUS: Oh, I see.

ED: But he didn't dig a pit. In some cases you would dig a pit down and set your cribbing in that. But instead of that he put it all on top of the ground, and he was a very successful driller and made lots of money, and he was a very interesting man to talk to. But he done a lot of real --- a lot of drilling in the northwest here and in Seattle, Vancouver, and ...

MARCUS: Well I think you told me they fired the boilers here with, with sagebrush

mainly.

ED: Yes, that's right.

MARCUS: And maybe some juniper. But by gosh that was a never-ending job then just hauling sagebrush to that thing, wasn't it?

ED: Yes, you bet.

MARCUS: It would take quite a few.

ED: I'll tell you a guy here that worked here for years, and maybe you'll remember him. His name was George Seamentrip, down by The Narrows. Had a little cabin this side of The Narrows, about four miles on the right hand side.

MARCUS: Yes, I think I do.

ED: He was their brush cutter.

MARCUS: Yeah.

ED: Riding his old white mares down there, and a hayrack on an old wagon, and get a load in the morning and a load in the after-noon. And that just about kept them up. If they had any slack time, the whole crew would turn out and get a huge pile of brush, so they wouldn't be caught --- They cleared about a 160 acres down there just below our place because the brush was, well some of it was four or five inches in diameter, you know. It was really a good ...

MARCUS: Well they chopped all that off.

ED: Yeah, well, they'd take --- well Dad sometimes, well they would take two or three, four teams together on a drag, and they'd drag it over. Some of them would tear out, and they would chop the roots off, they burned tops and all. They didn't trim it, they just --- and for a long time Mr. Jones was firing, he wasn't a big man, and he'd get a hold of one of them big old brush, and he start to the fire box and he was --- Half of it would catch it, and sometimes he'd swear that half of it was going up the chimney, the smoke stack. But they

kept operating, they were really determined that were going to get oil.

MARCUS: Well Ed, there was another oil well over in the, what they called Swan Lake Field, over on the north side of the Malheur Lake. We called it the Howell Well. Now that was kind of a fly by night thing there when they ended up with a hot artesian well there, I think. Fifteen hundred feet.

ED: Howell, was the man's name, Howell?

MARCUS: Yes.

ED: That promoted that?

MARCUS: Uh huh.

ED: I wasn't too well acquainted with that, Marcus. It was a little bit far away from me, I'd only been over there two or three times while they were drilling it.

MARCUS: Yes, well, that was abandoned ---

ED: Sometimes they, I'd always picked the wrong time, and I'd be over there when they were shut down, or something. So I didn't follow that up very much.

MARCUS: Those folks left overnight, the law was right on them too. They'd built a sod house to live in.

ED: Oh yes, I remember that now.

MARCUS: A four-room house, and they just picked up and left there, and the dishes were on the table, where they had gotten from a meal. The law was right on them there.

ED: Charlie Frazier, or Richard, Charlie Frazier.

MARCUS: Well that was about 1922; no it was before Charlie Frazier's time.

ED: That was before his time, yeah.

MARCUS: Yeah, I think probably you're right there. Lon Richardson was, probably be the one there.

ED: Well I stand corrected on that, but I don't know whether --- I couldn't say for sure.

MARCUS: No, but anyway that's the way they left, and that was the end of that.

ED: Well if Goodman was after them, well they had better be moving in a hurry, because he ---

MARCUS: Well it would have been Goodman, because he was killed in August of 1924. He was sheriff for quite a little while. Yeah, he defeated Richardson, didn't he? Yeah, it would be Austin Goodman, you're right. You bet. I was working for Louis Huguet over here at the Double O when he was killed. I remember quite well, we were living here at the Needham place.

ED: Yeah, everybody liked Goodman; it sure was a sad day when he got killed.

MARCUS: You bet. Well Ed, that just about fixes up a story on the oil well, doesn't it?

ED: If there are any more questions you want to know --- Oh, I want to tell you about this. You know these, you see these rock hounds running around, and these bottle hunters, you know? I'm surprised that they haven't dug out this old ditch and get some real oil shale rock out of here that was dumped right down that, the way it drained down into that canyon. I'm surprised they haven't been a digging in there. Maybe we can promote that.

MARCUS: Might do it. We'd probably have to educate them, you know. If there is too much digging connected with it, they back off from you pretty quick there.

ED: Well I'm a pretty good well driller, and a hell of a good liar, you know, I could tell them all about ---

MARCUS: You're a good talker, I know that. You bet, you might--- It's a little hard getting up here, you might fix the road a little bit and put a gate across it and make a toll out of it, you see.

ED: Well they have no trouble getting into my place when they are hunting deer.

MARCUS: No.

ED: I think if they were interested in coming up here, that would just be on their own

power. I'll show them where it is, and from there on they are on their own.

MARCUS: They can ... as far as you are concerned.

ED: Yeah, that's right. Everything was dumped right down this hill here, and I spent many an hour digging around in that, and collecting samples. I don't know what I ever did with them, but I had bottles and bottles of the damn samples that come out of this well.

MARCUS: That's when you were a kid, and you were watching them work here.

ED: When I could sneak away from Dad, you know, long enough to get up here. Why he always knew where I was at. I was always up here at this damn well. He asked me one time how much stock I had in it, and I said, "Well, I'm going to have a lot of it one day, when you're gone, and that damn stuff that's still in the shoe box."

MARCUS: (Laughter) Well, it looks like you are going to have to import another well driller, Ed, in order to do it now, doesn't it?

ED: Yeah, well it's too bad because, you know, after all these years, you know, and following this well drilling, I never drilled --- oil wells was kind of out of my line. I was a water well driller. There's a big ant going down your machine.

But when I was a kid, and remember back, there was a lot of shale. Now geologists say there is no such a thing as shale, it's hard clay.

MARCUS: Oh.

ED: But I still contest it because the old drillers taught me that anything that was soft formation like that, blues and black, that was clay, and anything that was hard and you had to use a pick on it, or hard drilling, well that was a shale. Well I've seen chunks of shale come out of here that was really slippery and greasy, you know. And I'm sure that down there someplace was some indications of oil. And I think that's what kept the old boys around here enthused all the time, to finish this up.

MARCUS: Well, Ed, this was the first attempt in Harney County to drill for oil, wasn't it?

ED: As far as I know, yes.

MARCUS: I think so too.

ED: I don't think there was ---

MARCUS: Well something sure fired up Fred Haines. Do you remember Fred Haines, my Uncle there at Harney? He was, he had a well drilling outfit dumped off right here at Burns for him one time. It laid up there on the siding. You remember it?

ED: I borrowed tools from Fred a lot of times, on some particular job I needed, instead of getting them out of Portland. Why I'd go to see Fred and he'd say, "Well there's a whole pile of it there, if you can find anything there that you can use, why go ahead, but don't forget the address," he said.

MARCUS: And I think he had the oil leases, all over the country.

ED: Yes, he did. He was too old a man, and I think if he had been twenty or thirty years younger at that time, I think he would have done something about it.

MARCUS: I think he would have too.

ED: I think age slipped up on him faster than he figured on. But he had tons and tons of drilling equipment there.

MARCUS: He had the equipment to do it with, didn't he?

ED: Yes, he sure did. All he would have had to do was build a tower, and he had the engines and he had the boiler, and all the tools. Well I think some of those bits that he had there, I'll bet weighed a ton. He had a twenty-four inch bit there, Marcus.

MARCUS: Holy smokes.

ED: A twenty-four inch bit, and that was ten foot long, and by golly it wasn't aluminum, it was all steel.

MARCUS: I'll bet.

ED: ...

MARCUS: That cost a buck or two too, didn't it?

ED: You bet, even now that drilling equipment don't come cheap.

MARCUS: Well I think the ants are going to eat me up here, Ed, so we'll shut off and get out of here, huh?

ED: Yeah, this old pipe is getting kind of hard anyway.

MARCUS: Okay.

ED: Well Marcus, I've got a couple of corrections we should make on that first tape. I said in there that Dolly Newell was married to Julius Chandler. I was kind of mixed up on that, it's Laura Newell is the wife of Julius Chandler. And Dolly married a fellow by the name of Smitten Miller. I was set straight on this by Mrs. Long, who is Julius Chandler's oldest daughter; they visited me here a while back. And I'm glad I got that straightened out. So there is not much more to add to that, Marcus, that I know of.

(END OF TAPE)

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*A LETTER FROM VERNA DOROTHY NEWELL VIDULICH, DAUGHTER OF CHARLIE
NEWELL, OF THE NEWELL HOUSE.

Charles Backus did plan the house, together with my mother, but my brothers Mannie and Todd did a very great deal of the heavy labor. I was born in 1900 in Burns, Oregon, and was three years old when we moved to Dog Mountain. Cabins had been built to accommodate the family while the "big" house was being built. So since the family moved there in 1903, I do not think the building begun before that time. Our family consisted at that time of my parents and nine children, five boys and four girls. I was number seven. Ben was a new baby when we moved, and Molly Joy was born in 1907 at Dog Mountain. My father had a son and a daughter by a previous marriage. The mother deserted them, and my mother helped to finish the job of raising them. The girl, Alice, was almost as old as my mother. My information concerning the loss of my father's arm was that the Indians did this because of their anger over Buffalo Bill, and my father killing their buffalo.

I have to smile about the boys having to carry the water from the spring, because if there is one chore I remember above all, it was carrying water, which begun at a very early age and lasted until a well was drilled near the house, and a windmill installed, and water was piped in the kitchen.

As to Indian artifacts, they were kept in the library. The parlor held only beautiful things, we thought. As to the front door, I have no memory of its being a "fortress type", but the windows did not. The wainscoting was not really red; it was a reddish brown, which the wood grain showed through. And "red wallpaper"? Edgar K. must have been color blind. The paper was off white, with large green leaf pattern, and even the ceiling was papered! Only the one large central room had wainscoting. I was of the opinion that all the rooms were quite "roomy". The boy's room had two double beds, and I never

thought it was crowded. My eldest sister, Laura, was married by the time we moved in, so my sister Dolly and I had one double bed in the girl's room. The two little ones slept in Mother and Father's room and "graduated" as the older ones married and moved.

I never saw my father take a drink of any alcoholic beverage, nor any signs of his having done so. My two eldest brothers bought some beer one time, and their girl friends cried at the wickedness of it. As to my father being fun loving, this is the only time. I have heard him spoken of as such. We considered him very low key, and quite stern. My mother was the fun loving person. She was always singing and laughing. She worked like a man, and yet always appeared ladylike, and all of we children worshiped her.

I have never heard of anyone speak of the house as having a "fortress look", but at least we felt safe there. We loved our home.

My parents came west on their honeymoon in a covered wagon. Mother was fifteen, and father twenty some odd years older than she. I don't know at what point father's two children joined them.

Harney, a small town now extinct, is where Laura and Mannie were born. The rest in Burns, except for Molly Joy. My mother was born in Arkansas.

I'm very sorry that I cannot shed more light on mother's life, she was a wonderful woman. Exceptionally intelligent, and deeply religious, and loving. She was the 'doctor' of our community and I'm sure she delivered every baby for twenty miles around. We girls did the housework and cooking by and large, for she worked as hard as any man in the fields. Before we moved from Burns, she was running a newspaper at the same time Father was running one. I don't really know how come. But could be that he didn't like competition, and bought it to keep the news business in the family?? We girls were taught to wash and iron clothes, keep house, and cook at a very early age, also to sew. I can say in all truth that my mother was the most outstanding personage, and loved by

everyone. She truly was one in a thousand. I know she was my Grandfather Stubblefield's favorite child. He also was very fond of Father. He was the only grandparent I ever knew, even though I was named for my paternal Grandmother Dorothy Newell.

It was nice hearing from you folks. Jean's brother Newell is one of our favorite persons. Jean, do you remember how you used to fight with my Ivan when you were kids? My dear Ivan passed on in 1979. I will always suffer from that great sorrow. Grover lost a leg a few years back, but otherwise fine. Retired now. Leatrice is strong and well, and busy as the proverbial "cat on a tin roof". John plays golf twice a week. I'll send you pictures to show that we are not yet decrepit. We will return to Fort Bragg in a week or so now. We just worked our heads off this past few weeks renovating our summer home. Which is a 40-foot trailer in the redwoods, 2 miles from the Pacific. We spend a good deal of time on the beach. We are about 200 feet from Leatrice's house and do enjoy her so very much. I will pass your letter and document on to Leatrice and then Danny.

Love to all,

Aunt Verna Dorothy

*There were also some poems, which she wrote called "The Castle on a Hill", that are stored elsewhere in the Library with the Newell documents.

THE CASTLE ON A HILL

HE COULDN'T SEE AS WE WHO KNOW

THAT BEAUTY REIGNED HERE LONG AGO,

THAT ONCE THIS HOUSE WAS WARM AND BRIGHT,

THAT ONCE IT HARBORED LOVE AND LIGHT.

WE SEE WITH STRENGTH OF FAMILY TIES
A HOUSE WHERE MEMORY NEVER DIES.
THIS HOUSE, THIS HOME THIS FOND ABODE
HEARTS PICTURE, TIME CANNOT ERODE.

A MOTHER'S TOUCH, A FATHER'S WORD,
A FLOWER'S SWEET FRAGRANCE, SONG OF BIRD,
A WINDSWEPT VALLEY, SHADY TREE
ARE ALL A PART OF YOU AND ME.

THE TREASURES FROM OUR CHILDHOODS STORE
THE HAUNTING THINGS FROM DAYS OF YORE
I TOUCH THEM SOFTLY WITH MY HEART
A TENDER MOMENT SET APART.

TIME CANNOT CHANGE THE THINGS WHICH TOUCHED
OUR HEARTS AND SOULS SO VERY MUCH,
AND THO THE YEARS MAY COME AND GO
THERE'S ONE THING EACH OF US WILL KNOW.

A MONUMENT FOREVER STANDS
TO THOSE WHOSE LIFE AND LOVING HANDS
HAVE FASHIONED THAT WHICH ALWAYS WILL

REMAIN A CASTLE ON A HILL.

VERNA DOROTHY NEWELL VIDULICH