

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #321 - Sides A & B

Subject: Bill Renwick - With Video

Place: Renwick Home, Burns, Oregon

Date: May 7, 1992

Interviewers: Barbara Lofgren & Dorothea Purdy

DOROTHEA PURDY: This is Dorothea Purdy, along with Barbara Lofgren and today we'll be talking to Bill Renwick at his home in Burns, Oregon. Today's date is May the 7th, 1992. Following our interview we will be doing a short video of Bill, and possibly his wife Ida, and it will be stored at the library along with the transcript and cassette tape, the number is #321. Can you tell us your full name?

BILL RENWICK: William Roy Renwick.

DOROTHEA: And when and where were you born?

BILL: I was born at Folly Farm, Oregon, November 4th, 1918.

DOROTHEA: And what were your parent's names?

BILL: My --- maiden name for my mother? It was Ada Rebecca Neal Renwick. And my dad's name was just plain William Renwick.

DOROTHEA: And what were their parent's names, can you tell us their parent's names?

BILL: Well her father's name was John Henry Neal, and her mother's was Dorcas N. Johns, her maiden name. But my dad's was Robert Renwick, and he was born in the old country, Scotland.

DOROTHEA: Of Scotland. When and how did they come about coming to Harney County?

BILL: Well my mother's parents originally was in Grant County, lived over there, and the

girls, two of the girls was born over there, and one of them died early in childbirth. But then my granddad also instigated a farm in Harney County. See he was a civil engineer, plus being a newspaperman. And see at this time this part of Grant County when they first come here --- And he was instrumental in getting Harney County formed out of the big Grant County.

Anyway they had, were married over there, at that time was Canyon City, there was no John Day, and that was 1885. And then they lived there awhile, and then they moved over here and liked the area, so then they decided they would settle over here and live here.

And so immediately he worked, being a surveyor he worked for Pete French and several of the other ranchers and stuff around here, plus the forming of the Harney County boundaries and all this type of thing. And of course then they had to survey out all the section lines and the township lines and this type of stuff and get them identified. And that's what accounted for a lot of these old purple bottles that people picked up, you know, that was landmarks and stuff. But that's what they done to preserve the records then in a lot of these.

BARBARA LOFGREN: How did he come about being an engineer? Did he go to college, or school to learn this trade, how did they do that?

BILL: Then he went to a trade school type of thing.

BARBARA: I see.

BILL: They didn't have that much university work then, you know, it was just more or less from scratch, you just started from --- get a degree in engineering. Now I think he done a lot of correspondence work too. Now he had to do it the hard way, he was the youngest of the family, there was five girls, and he was the youngest one of the family, of the

Neal's. And of course that was the only male member.

And then of course they lost their mother when he was a young boy, and of course then his father he took off kind of on his own way. The girls started growing up on their own, and they all become teachers, because they had to survive someway.

And so then he followed his oldest sister out to California when she got married, and they lived down near what they called Blacks Junction, now it is Zamora, California. Do you want me to continue on the grandparent's thing? Okay.

John Neal, that was my mother's father, was born at Hiram, Ohio, 1857. After his mother's death, he lived with an uncle, H. G. Neal, until his oldest sister Mary was married and moved to California over the old gold trail to Blacks Junction. Upon Mary's death, which she had a short life, he moved to Hillsboro to live with the next oldest sister, which was Candice Luce. And her husband was a newspaperman, and this is how come my grandfather got introduced to newspaper.

And so he moved to Grant County in 1878, and he started publishing the Grant County News. Also he was a two term county surveyor over there, and he was a professional civil engineer. He visited Harney Valley and liked it, and helped in creating Harney County, and served as a county surveyor one term. In 1886 he established the meander line out here on Malheur Lake which was still --- this meander line has held up to two or three court cases since, and it's still recognized.

Mr. and Mrs. Neal lived in Burns after several years, for the reason of better schooling for their two daughters, which had become older now. Mr. Neal, thorough in his methods, created many irrigation systems, dams, so on and so forth, in his various land holdings.

Later he acquired holdings at Folly Farm in 1905, and they erected a stage stop

there, a store, and everything else, and they had a post office moved there in 1909, and my grandmother was the postmistress. And they created an extensive irrigation system out there, and storage of water for themselves as well as several other people in the surrounding area. They built roads to the South End, what was known as Neal Hill and Summit Springs where 78 breaks over the north end of the Steens Mountain now. And they got the county road changed to that area which enhanced their stage stop and stuff back in the freight team days, because then the only way to the South End was over the dreaded Juniper Grade, and that was a disaster for a lot of people that went down there.

So they, he was one of the first to introduce sheep into this area, and he was very - -- which was very profitable during the early 1900's through World War I.

After my mother married my dad, they took over the operation, which was pared down a lot, and the grandparents retired to the Beaverton area until his death.

DOROTHEA: Well do you know how they met? Were they both living in that area at that time?

BILL: Yes. My mother lived on the Neal properties out there, and my dad he worked for Tom Turnbull, which is one of the first sheep men in this country. And they, I would say they probably met at dances and something like that. Because my dad was a very good fiddle player, I call. But he was very good and he played at all the dances, and I'm sure that's where my mother met him. Because down there they had dances every Saturday night, someplace, you know, just people got together and mixed that way.

DOROTHEA: I believe, well the way we talk to people, that's about the only way that they did meet.

BILL: The only recreation they had.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

BILL: But as a whole, I think people was more communicative then, then they ever are today on account of television and this type of thing.

DOROTHEA: No TV.

BILL: Yeah, right. I'm very much against television, especially for younger generation.

BARBARA: Well you say they got the Folly Station going. Now it's called the Folly Farm area. Was it someone that had that ranch, or what before, how did it get its name?

BILL: They homesteaded.

BARBARA: How did it get its name, do you know?

BILL: It was my, either my mother or my Aunt Mary that named it. They said they called it Foolish Farm, is what --- meant Folly Farm, see.

BARBARA: Oh, I see.

BILL: They said any person would be a fool to move out in that area. There wasn't nothing there, and they moved out there, and they also instigated moving thirteen other families out there. There was carpenters, well drillers, and everything, and they had quite a community out there, a schoolhouse and the whole bit, see.

BARBARA: Oh, is that right.

BILL: So this is how people, you know, got along in those days.

BARBARA: So the Neal's started the Folly Farm.

BILL: I would say they originated the original Folly --- I know that.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

BILL: But they brought all these other people in, just through communication and stuff, people from Ontario and around.

BARBARA: So is Folly Farm one word then, or is it two?

BILL: Two words.

BARBARA: Two words.

BILL: Yeah, two words.

BARBARA: Okay. Because I've seen it both ways, and I've never really known for sure whether it's one word or whether it's two.

BILL: I think the post office address is two words.

BARBARA: It's two words.

BILL: Yeah.

BARBARA: Okay.

BILL: Okay, now we'll go in a little bit on my grandmother. She was a quiet person, never said much. Now Dorcas N. Johns is daughter of James McLellan and Elizabeth Ann Darby Johns. Mr. Johns' mother, Sara Adams was a cousin of John Quincy Adams, and her father James Adams was a brother of John Adams, the second president of the United States. One brother of hers was chief justice of the Philippines. They were all judicial people; all her people were into the courts and this type of thing. But she chose, after getting her education, to be a teacher herself, she didn't want to follow the political field.

Dorcas Johns was the first graduating class of Willamette University in Salem. She moved to John Day, being a teacher. She married John H. Neal on May 14th, 1885. She helped her husband with ranching enterprises at both Hardscrabble Ranch, that's what the place was known as out there on Smyth Creek or Happy Valley. And the reason they call it Hardscrabble was because there was no way you could make a living there. But they made it work. And so the reason they moved from the area, little did they know that under the water rights back in those days, see he built an earthen dam there, and that was on Smyth Creek, but the Smyth pioneer family was down below, and they had

established water rights on that. So they couldn't use the water. So later on they sold this place off to Smyth. And there is still some of the old existing, oh block building one thing that is still there, and the reservoir. But that's the reason they moved to the Folly Farm area, and they started over again there.

BARBARA: You can't do much if you don't have water.

BILL: No. But the original Folly Farm was under what they called the Desert Entry Act, see. He had exercised his homestead rights on this Hardscrabble Ranch. So then he got a, what they called the Desert Entry Act, and I think that was 320 acres, and then my grandmother also took up 320 acres and I believe it was part of Mary --- but the original Folly Farm was 800 acres.

But in the meantime, the girls helping and working with their dad they had homestead up on the Steens Mountain area. My mother homestead up in what was known as Hole In The Ground, and Mud Creek. And my grandmother homesteaded up in Hole In The Ground, and several other places. Now the reason they done this was to enhance the sheep population of John Neal. See then you controlled the land around where there was water holes and stuff like that if you had a homestead right, see 160 acres here, a 160 acres there. Well you most certainly commanded the range around it. There was no Bureau of Land Management then.

So John Neal he was a smart man that way, he figured out, had a large operation, which he had several thousand head of sheep see. Well then you didn't have to, you know, pay range fees or no Bureau of Land Management. Just run your operation properly, and you couldn't help but make money, providing the weather cooperated.

But in the meantime these girls had homesteaded up, exercised all their rights and homestead and stuff back in the homestead days, which did help. And then of course

they built a shearing plant and stuff on my mother's homestead, the one that she bought down on what is known as Burnt Flat on the north end of Steens. And they, a lot of sheep people, you know, stopped there on their trailing up the mountain in the summer months. Stopped there and had their sheep sheared. And it was quite an enterprise, because there were several hundred thousand head of sheep in the early days, a lot more so than there is cattle now days.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

BILL: And there was a lot of money made there. And then of course this was what happened like my dad coming to this country. I think it was through Tom Turnbull, or through cousins of his or something, he first went to Canada and lived up there when he was a young man. Then he found out about some relatives of Tom Turnbull, they said well there is a great opportunity here in Eastern Oregon. So he come down here, and he worked for Tom Turnbull, I don't know how many years. But then I think it was through going to these, you know, dances and this type of thing that he met my mother. And then of course he saw his opportunity then. There was a man with two daughters (Laughter) and lots of sheep, what am I waiting for? (Laughter) So --- and I'm not saying anything about courtship or anything else, but it just looks like that's the way it turned out. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Just had to decide which girl to put the moves on, huh?

BILL: Yeah. Well you see Mary was the youngest, and she was pretty backward, you know, she wasn't a mixer herself.

IDA RENWICK: Shy.

BILL: Well neither was my mother for that matter, but she was the oldest. And I think people looked to her more that way. And then of course after she was married she was

busy raising a family.

IDA: Teaching.

BILL: Besides, you know, trying to make a living on the ranch or whatever.

DOROTHEA: Well did you ever hear how they found the country when they came here? Was it barren or just ---

BILL: The conditions?

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

BILL: I'll tell you, you can't believe what the conditions of the country was then. You know the average precipitation here, you see this was another thing that John Neal did, he had a U.S. Weather Bureau Station out there to keep track of records of precipitation and this type of thing. Average rainfall then was around nineteen inches a year. Can you imagine that? And we're less than half of that now. And I heard my mother said there wasn't near the sagebrush then as there is now. And you could ride up on that mountain there, and they said the bunchgrass was clear up stirrup high anywhere you wanted to ride. It was just like a giant sea, like you was going up to Pendleton, you know, in the wheat fields. And there was very little sagebrush then. And then of course the sheep was the ones that brought the sagebrush in here, packed the seed in their wool.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BILL: But it was phenomenal conditions then. That's the reason these homesteaders all survived because they could raise a crop. And of course as the country dried out, that was the end of them right there. And the same thing in Catlow Valley, look at three hundred people out there at one time. Several little communities, once they even had a high school out there. Now what have you got, nothing! So the country just dried up and blowed away. And they can't blame it on overgrazing or nothing like that, because it's just

plain old weather. If you don't have the moisture, well you don't have nothing.

BARBARA: You don't grow anything.

BILL: No. I think we're finding that out more so here now. If you don't have a watershed, and commanding water under irrigation system or something, you don't have anything.

DOROTHEA: Did you have some more that you wanted to tell us about?

BILL: No, this pretty much covered my grandparents. Now I've got a little on my mother and Mary Kueny if you want to hear about that.

DOROTHEA: Okay, let's go ahead with that then.

BILL: I'll start with my mother, well it's little notes. Both Ada and Mary were great horsewomen. They broke all their own saddle horses, and they also broke workhorses for the freight teams, which I'll tell you about later on. They also drove freight teams for their father from Vale, Ontario, to Folly Farm and all around. But they were very avid horse people. Both girls homesteaded on the Steens Mountain to enhance their father's sheep operation.

Ada and my father were married August 14th, 1914, and they devoted their lives to ranching and raising their three sons. The first-born died as an infant over in Boise. And they lived their lives down in the Snake River Valley due to her health, they had to move to a lower elevation and they lived down there until she passed away in 1962, and then he passed on in 1964, down in the Vale area.

And then Mary, her and Frank Kueny married in 1928, they had no children. They compiled vast land holdings around Andrews, and sixteen sections of land on Steens Mountain in the Little and Big Indian area. After Frank Kueny died June 20th, 1945, she gave her entire holdings to Shriner's Hospital, including another ranch property around Battle Mountain. At the time of her death, also a house in Winnemucca which they had

erected for her, give her a place to live, and take care of her, this was part of the agreement in giving all this property to the Shriners. The Shriners provided her a house with medical care until her death. Her donations accumulated over the years from 1951, until March of 1978, amounted to the sum of two and three-quarter million dollars.

She was also a teacher for many years around Southeastern Oregon, and then she went to Benke Walker Business College in Boise, and she enhanced herself up to teaching high school. Her typing class took first place in the state at Enterprise one year while she was up in that area.

Other than that, the rest of her life was devoted to ranch operations, and this type of thing. But she was a believer in helping other people, and this was the positive thing she looked at through Shriners. Because at that time, they didn't have no money for nothing, you know, they was just practically begging to get things. And she just give her whole fortune to them, which I think was a good idea.

She talked to us about our family, and we said, "Well if we can't make it on our own, that's our problem, you know." So she done a good deal on it.

BARBARA: Yeah, well yeah she is helping lots and lots of people.

BILL: Oh yeah.

BARBARA: Yes.

BILL: Of course a lot of people don't know that.

BARBARA: Yeah.

BILL: She put a lot of money into it.

BARBARA: I hadn't heard that before either, so that's good to know.

BILL: Well I was at the reading of her will, I know. So it was a fact.

BARBARA: And so you say then your mother and father moved, went over to Boise

then?

BILL: Yeah, in about 1936.

IDA: Vale.

BILL: Yeah, Vale area.

BARBARA: Vale area.

BILL: Yeah.

BARBARA: So that's where you grew up and went to school then?

BILL: No, I went to school out here at Crane.

BARBARA: Oh, you did?

BILL: I took my first year of school, rural school --- first of all was down at old Alberson Station. You probably have never even heard of that.

BARBARA: Oh yeah.

DOROTHEA: We've heard of it, yeah.

BILL: Okay. Well both George and I went to school there one year, and then of course my mother had to learn to drive a car, which was a Model-T, with no heater or nothing in it. And she said she'd never go through that again, because it was one of those cold winters. She'd get up at 4 o'clock in the morning and heat rocks, put in there to keep our feet warm, from freezing you know. We'd pile in the back seat, and we had a big bear skin robe, and she'd bundle us up in that, and keep our feet on these hot rocks to keep from freezing to death. I can remember she got stuck two or three times in snow drifts, and we'd help her get out. (Laughter) But she had quite a mess, you know.

BARBARA: You really had to go through a lot in order to get yourself to school then.

BILL: Yeah. Well it was eighteen miles.

BARBARA: Yeah.

BILL: And it was dark most of the time. Of course those old Model-T's didn't have too good of lights, and there was no roads, you just more or less, cow trails and stuff you followed. So I can see why she never drove a vehicle after that. She said, "I'll never drive a car again."

DOROTHEA: Oh, and she didn't?

BILL: She never did, no.

BARBARA: So did you go to grade school then out there too?

BILL: Yeah. Went to, up to Folly Farm, we got the school district moved up to there. And then after they purchased the Juniper Ranch, which was in 1927, they had the school moved down there because there was some kids from the Alvord Ranch and stuff too. They come there, and then I finished my eighth grade there at the Juniper Ranch, and then I went on to Crane High School. And then of course my younger brother he started to school there, at the old Juniper Ranch. And of course George and I, we was together. And he stayed out while I went to high school, you know, to run the Folly Farm operation. And so I went on through high school, and then I think my sophomore year he started as a freshman then. My kid brother got out of the eighth grade, and then he run the ranch. So this was after my folks had moved down to Vale. They decided, well at that time, she had to move out on account of health reasons and stuff, so we took over what was left.

Of course what happened there at the Juniper Ranch, they went through bankruptcy there due to the drought and the depression all at the same time, which folded up a lot of people in this country. So we started out at scratch on the old Folly Farm, might as well say. We had a few cattle, and started out on us boys, on our own.

BARBARA: So there was just the two of you boys, then George and yourself?

BILL: Three of us.

BARBARA: Three of us?

BILL: Yeah.

BARBARA: And who was the other?

BILL: Jim, he is the one that is up at Council, Idaho. He's got a big ranch up there.

BARBARA: And he's the youngest then?

BILL: Yeah, he is the youngest.

BARBARA: George, and then you, and then Jim, is that right?

BILL: Yeah, yeah.

BARBARA: Okay.

BILL: But the oldest boy, he died as an infant. He was about eighteen months old, he died, he was deformed, or something.

IDA: Spleen was on the outside of the body.

BILL: Yeah, the spleen was on the outside of his body. And at that time they was afraid to do anything for him, so he passed on. But no, we had a good life, we all went to the military and got out of it alive, so --- World War II. (Laughter)

BARBARA: So you say that, was it your folks then that bought the Juniper Ranch then you say?

BILL: Yeah.

BARBARA: You had the Folly Farm, and then they bought the Juniper Ranch?

BILL: Yeah.

BARBARA: And you were working both?

BILL: Yeah. Well what they done when they moved to the Juniper Ranch, they leased the Folly Farm out.

BARBARA: I see.

BILL: At that time, the people they leased to they didn't do much only just run horses, and this type of thing. Back then, those days, everybody you know, farmed the mustangs and stuff out on the desert, made a living that way.

BARBARA: So what years are we talking about then?

BILL: Well we're looking at the, in '30's. I would say from 1927 to 1937, that's when they moved out there. '36 they went down to Vale.

BARBARA: And so then you boys finished school and then went back to the Juniper Ranch to work after you got ---

BILL: Back to the Folly Farm.

BARBARA: To the Folly Farm.

BILL: Yeah. They lost the Juniper Ranch there in bankruptcy.

BARBARA: I see.

BILL: Yeah. And then of course this included all the rangeland and stuff like that see. And then that's when Pollocks out there acquired the Juniper Ranch. They bought it for about ten cents on the dollar. Paul Stewart he bought up all the range land so ---

DOROTHEA: Which is now called the Roaring Springs place, which is now been purchased by the Natural Conservancy.

BILL: Yeah, isn't that something.

DOROTHEA: Which is a sad situation, but ---

BILL: Yeah, well this is happening all over.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

BILL: Yeah, it is. Yeah, we hate to see it, but it's happening.

BARBARA: So then when you went back to the Folly Farm after you were out of school, you and your brothers, did you run sheep at that time or cows?

BILL: Yeah. No, we run cattle and horses.

BARBARA: You ran cattle and horses.

BILL: Yeah, we had, we raised draft horses then. This is before the age of tractors, you know. Tractors were just starting to come into --- the old steel wheeled ones. But we raised draft horses and had a few saddle stock. We had a good string of horses. We never had any trouble selling any of them off.

And then about that time, see they passed the Taylor Grazing Bill, and then you had to have commensurability, raise so much hay for so many animal units, and stuff like that. But we had rights for; I think eighty head of horses, and about fifty, sixty head of cattle, something like that. Continued on until just about the time the draft, they passed the draft bill. I told my brother, I said, "I'm going to get out," you know, I said.

I was a young fellow, eligible for the draft, and so I joined the service then. That was it for me. And then of course I got in early, one thing and another, and wound up over in the Hawaiian Islands, got caught in Pearl Harbor blitz over there. So from then on I was in for the duration. But it, like I say, I got no regrets of being in the service or nothing, I got out of it with my life so --- Seen some pretty hot stuff a time or two, but just part of the ball game.

BARBARA: That's right.

BILL: Yeah.

BARBARA: So when did your family get out of the sheep business then, if they had the Folly Farm and were running sheep at that time, and then got the Juniper Ranch?

BILL: Moved to the Juniper Ranch, but that was, this was ---

BARBARA: Did they have sheep then too?

BILL: Yeah. My dad made a mistake and bought some high priced sheep before the depression see. Paid nine dollars for ewe lambs, and the next year they wasn't worth a dollar and a half. And you got to wait two years before you get a crop out of your sheep. So this is what contributed to his failure, financially.

BARBARA: I see. Okay, so then when he lost the ranch then, and you went back, you got out of the sheep business altogether at that time?

BILL: Yeah. Well they just foreclosed on him, see they took everything.

BARBARA: I see.

BILL: Yeah, they just part of it.

BARBARA: So then you had to start buying up your own cattle and horses then?

BILL: Yeah. Well under the bankruptcy thing they had to allow us I think six head of cows, for us kids. They said, they called it designation milk cows then. Well this included the cows plus their calves, see and one thing and another. We started from scratch. It didn't take us too long, you know, to get several head. At the time I got out we had about a hundred head of cattle, and then the horses and one thing and another. But people didn't have money to buy nothing then, you was just lucky ---

BARBARA: Yeah, I was going to say, is that enough to live on though, that amount?

BILL: Well you had to work out, you know, work in the hay fields or something on the side. Of course then you could live on a hundred dollars a year for groceries, believe it or not. (Laughter)

BARBARA: That's kind of hard to believe.

BILL: Well you could ---

BARBARA: You have to grow your own vegetables, did you?

BILL: Not too much.

IDA: His grandmother and his mother had a hot house out there at Folly Farm.

BILL: Oh yeah, they raised vegetables and stuff all winter long, double glass you know, like they got in the present day ones. But it's amazing how enterprising people was back in those days. And even up until the day my mother died she had an acre of garden. If she didn't can them for herself, she'd give them to her neighbors and stuff like that. But she'd have an acre of garden every year.

IDA: Gave it to her daughter-in-laws.

BILL: But she'd get up at 4 o'clock every morning to go out and work in that garden. She said that's the best time of the day for her. She'd go out there and work a couple hours.

DOROTHEA: That's what my mother did; she'd get up at 4 o'clock and work out until about six, and then go in and cook breakfast.

BILL: Yeah, that's right. No, I'll tell you, you got to give her, her forefathers and her people a lot of credit.

BARBARA: I'll say.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, you bet.

BILL: They went through a lot to have very little. So it's just --- yeah that's one reason I think we ought to recognize the pioneers more than we give them credit for because just think what this country would be like today if you turned everybody loose, say okay make your own way.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BARBARA: Well I was wondering how, if your grandfather was an engineer, and he surveyed a lot in this country, did they ever say why he picked the Folly Farm area? What did he see in that part of the country that would make him think that he could really do well?

BILL: I think it is isolation, you know. After what happened to him over in the Diamond Valley, or Happy Valley area, he seen ---

BARBARA: Where he lost the water rights there.

BILL: Lost the water rights, he had better go to a complete new area where there was nothing around. And so he developed, he drained, well that Neal Lake up there he figured out how he could drain that, run it down Quail Creek there at Folly Farm, and then he built a vast reservoir to store water there. See they raised almost a hundred acres of alfalfa there. He had, you know, head gates and flood irrigated and one thing and another. And they raised ---

BARBARA: So it paid to be an educated man at that time to get it going.

IDA: Yes.

BILL: Yeah. And, you know, he leveled it and everything else, you know. He was quite a --- he had a lot of ideas. And then he built irrigation systems for a lot of other people down there too, you know. Because there are several of those old ditches you can find around different places where they run water sheds down into a reservoir or something. He contributed to a lot of that.

BARBARA: So then how did they get into Burns? You say they, you talk about the Juniper Grade. Did they come to Burns once a year, or what do you think?

BILL: Well most, I would say then traffic went toward Ontario.

BARBARA: Their supplies. I see.

BILL: Barren Valley and down that way. Which at that time I think was almost a hundred miles. But they just figured, say like it took three days to go down and come back, one thing and another. And then of course after, what really I think brought into the --- the thing they started coming this other way was when the railroad come to Venator Siding

first. Well Riverside and then Venator Siding and then Crane. And see that's the reason then people started looking this other way. I think my granddad saw to it, it would be better, a lot shorter for them to haul to the railroad going to Crane then it would be going this other way. And the only other alternative would be to go to Winnemucca, which was a hundred and seventy miles, or more, you know, trailing stock and stuff.

IDA: When the girls were going to high school they moved to Burns.

BILL: Yeah.

IDA: And they both graduated from the Harney County High School.

BARBARA: I see.

BILL: Yeah, the first original Harney County High School. And then of course then they could get a teaching degree just being an eighth grade graduate, if your grades was high enough, and then you could get a certificate for teaching. And both of them taught for quite a few years.

BARBARA: Was that still at the time where a woman could not be married to teach, do you know? What year, I don't remember?

BILL: I can't, I couldn't answer that. I think you've got some food for thought there, because I think ---

IDA: Your mother taught after she was married.

BILL: Yeah.

BARBARA: There was an early time there, and I just couldn't remember the time frame that if a lady got married, then she couldn't teach anymore.

BILL: I think you're right on that issue. But later on then there was a shortage of teachers and I think they started to let married women teach.

BARBARA: So they took whoever they could get that were qualified. Uh huh. So then

your family really basically went to Vale and Ontario then for supplies. The freighting was done back and forth there.

BILL: Right, yeah. Where the railroad was then.

BARBARA: And they took their wool and stuff there.

BILL: Wool and this type of thing went that way.

BARBARA: So did they do their own shearing, or did they have other people come in and do that for them?

BILL: They done their own. Yeah, well what they done they had crews come in, and hire the shearer and one thing and another, but well like my dad he was a pretty fair shearer. Now I wouldn't say he sheared two hundred a day. But he learned when he was a young man to shear with the blades, you know, like they used to. And there was a lot of those people could shear two hundred a day with a pair of blades. They could out shear people with a machine. And, but it was a lost art anymore, I don't think anybody --- I mean they get it done. I tried it, I mean the first one I sheared it died. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Oh dear.

DOROTHEA: You cut him a little?

BILL: Yeah, I cut him too much, bled to death.

BARBARA: Oh, my.

BILL: But, you know, this was a funny thing, they never let anybody start out on a ewe. And they always let a fellow, an apprentice start out on an old wethers, you know. Say well, if he'd kill him, why they'll butcher him, you know, they got meat. (Laughter) This was the way it was then.

BARBARA: When you were a child, do you remember them coming in and shearing?

BILL: Yeah. No, I can remember going to a shearing corral, one of the first things I

remember I was probably about, oh maybe four or five years old. I can remember when my youngest brother was born, that was in 1922, and that's the first thing I remembered. Because when Dad said, "Well," he said, "you've got a new brother," and I'll never forget that. And then after that I started remembering a lot of other incidents, you know.

But I do remember then the mode of transportation was the old buggy, I remember that. But they did have an old air-cooled gas car, they called the Sagebrush Annie, but I think it was on the down list, because it was never drove very much. I don't know why, I think the engine was starting to fail in it or something. It was an old high-wheeled car, it was a 1905 International, it looked like a buggy itself. Get a picture of that Ida and show to them. You probably seen it, the one that historical ---

No, I can remember these incidents. And then like my mother and stuff instead of using a buggy they used what they called a buckboard. See that's kind of like a pickup today. You know you had a place to carry something. Of course a buggy was just strictly for riding in, you know, pleasure. But the old buckboard you had one seat in it, you had extra people they rode in the back sitting on boxes or whatever. But I remember several trips in that. Of course there was no roads, you just bounced from one rock to another.

BARBARA: How did they carry the wool? Did they have big sacks, or how did they get that out?

BILL: They were big hemp sacks. And what they done they had a big iron ring, which this tower, that they put this big woolsack in, was probably, I don't know, eight foot long, or something like that. And they'd throw the fleeces up to that, and then they'd drop the wool down, and then the wool tromper he'd get down there and tramp it tight. I don't remember how many --- I even done that one year, tromp wool. And you're supposed to get about a four hundred pound sack, which, that's a real tight sack. You had to really work at it to get

a four hundred pound sack. And then of course there was a contest, especially among big strong boys and the Basque, and one thing and another, see who could pick up a sack of wool, you know, they'd tip it over on their shoulders.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, uh huh.

BARBARA: How big around would it be then?

BILL: And then ---

DOROTHEA: About like that.

BILL: Yeah, you couldn't reach near around it. But it was ---

DOROTHEA: They were probably a good three feet on one side, and then that would be in diameter.

BILL: Yeah. You couldn't get a bear hug on it, nothing like that. You just get about a half an arm length, but I remember that. And the kids, you know, that's how a lot of these Irishmen, one thing and another, they was testing their strength, you know, see how strong they was, see if they could pick up a sack of wool and walk with it. I've never forgot that when I was a kid.

And of course later on in my life, I've seen it a time or two, I've tried it too. But --- And of course like back in the T-Model days, nobody had a jack or nothing, they'd just pick up an old T-Model by one side, and somebody would put a stick under it or something, and change the flat tire. I remember those kind of things. It was interesting.

BARBARA: So who were some of your neighbors then up there, around the Folly Farm?

BILL: Well ---

BARBARA: You say there was a lot of people that came in originally, how long did they stay? How long was the community a thriving community?

BILL: Of the thirteen families that was there, there was only, that I can really remember,

well there was two left. One was a well driller, and the other one was the one you see --- later on they moved the post office, they built a general store over at the new Folly Farm which was Malheur County. Well after my parents had left, and neither of us boys stayed there, well they moved the post office over to there then. And this family was the Pollock family, and they were the ones that later acquired the Juniper Ranch. There was three of those brothers, one of them was a truck driver, they hauled freight. And then one of them was a cowboy, and that was Fred, that's the one that was married to Vivian Pollock down here now.

DOROTHEA: Now was that called Folly Farm too then?

BILL: No, it was another old homestead out there, this Pollock place was. And they really didn't have nothing to deal with agriculture. They just had a, just a place or holdings. They had a well drilled there, and one thing and another. There is a picture of that old car.

BARBARA: That's a dandy.

DOROTHEA: Looks like a wagon, or I mean a regular buggy instead --- horse drawn.

BARBARA: Looks like a buggy almost, doesn't it?

BILL: Yeah. And this is my granddad and grandmother before they homesteaded there at the old Folly Farm. Now he had this kind of a hack, you see, its got a, like a covered wagon.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

BILL: He traveled all over the country with that. He had his bedroll and his grub box and everything right in there.

BARBARA: Yeah.

BILL: He just took it all with him wherever he went.

DOROTHEA: How many horses?

BILL: He just got two on that.

DOROTHEA: Two on that.

BILL: Yeah. And there is where he was a horseback when he was

IDA: Notice the high pommel.

DOROTHEA: Oh, I'd hate to fall over that.

BARBARA: So did you know any of the names of the --- did your family ever tell you the names of those thirteen families then that originally were up there at that time, that we might recognize perhaps?

BILL: Well there was a, let's see, a Collins family, Gardner family, and of course the Pollocks. But I can't remember any of the others, but there was some further down toward Cord. You see this is where Joe Fine family was down there at the time, you know, his first wife and they lost part of their kids.

DOROTHEA: Where is that, Cord?

BILL: Yeah, at Cord. And then of course down at Black Bowl there was, see Dowells and one thing and another, Tom Dowell and one thing and another. And then of course we knew of McEwens and Tom Turnbull and that bunch down at Riverside. But ---

DOROTHEA: The McEwen was the Mc U N E, or the Mc E W E N E, or E N?

IDA: Walt.

BILL: Walt.

DOROTHEA: Walt family.

BILL: Yeah Walt, his dad. But other than that, you see, by the time that I really got up to the age where I could really remember things, you know, they had the ---

BARBARA: Pretty well gone then?

BILL: Well yeah, on account of, mostly on account of the drought and one thing and another. Because people started drying up and there was no livelihood. And then of course after the Taylor Grazing Act come into effect, well that stopped all the sheep men and everything, because none of them owned any land.

DOROTHEA: No land, yeah.

BARBARA: They had to own land in order to do anything.

BILL: They didn't have no commensurability or anything, you know, to hold any grazing rights, so that put them out of business.

BARBARA: Okay, so when you were going to grade school, how many kids were in your classes? Was it a one-room schoolhouse was it?

BILL: One room, all of it. The first year I went I think there was about seven of us.

IDA: In the school.

BILL: In the school. And then the second year, let's see, there was one, two, three, four of us. And that continued on until I graduated from high school, went up to high school. And of course at Crane at that time it was a big school, because that's the first time they opened their dormitory up there. They had grown men going to school, you know, twenty-one, twenty-two year olds. But we had better than a hundred kids there then.

BARBARA: Do you remember what your teacher's name was when you were in grade school?

BILL: Well the principal was Delos Clark, he was our principal. And then one name I'll never forget is Floyd Holt. He was our football coach, and of course that's ---

BARBARA: That was at Crane?

BILL: Yeah. Their sons run the various auto agencies over here at Bend.

BARBARA: Oh, Holt?

BILL: Holt, yeah. Murray and Holt.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

BILL: And then of course now there is Jack and Dave, the boys.

IDA: Well Jack has the Murray and Holt, and Dave has the Mercedes, Toyota.

BILL: Yeah. But their mother is still living, I remember her down there at Crane.

IDA: Irene Pugsley.

BILL: And there was another one.

DOROTHEA: Who?

IDA: Irene Pugsley used to be before she married Floyd. After they left Crane they came down to Vale, and they lived next door to us.

BILL: There was a Homer Oft, he was our FFA teacher, and he just retired here recently.

We got an article, a friend of ours give us from Roseburg, and we brought it over and give it to the school.

IDA: School.

BILL: Yeah to the school, and send down to Crane, and one thing and another. And there was two or three others, a couple of them I despised, an English teacher which was normal for boys. (Laughter)

BARBARA: I think.

BILL: Yeah.

BARBARA: Do you remember your grade school teacher, any of those?

BILL: Well my mother taught me for six years.

BARBARA: Oh.

BILL: And then had another teacher named Hannah May, she was born and raised out here in Wagontire country. And she was an old maid schoolteacher. We didn't --- this was our first single woman that us boys had ever been around, you know, and of course we was full of meanness. Amongst one thing, I've never forgot, it cost us something, I got penalized for it. She never took her coat off, spring or summer, you know, warm weather, she always wore that coat. Well we decided we was going to get that coat off of her, so we got a hold of some of this fast setting glue and we glued the bottom of the seat. And she come in and sat down on that, and she couldn't get loose. Well guess what, we paid for that coat. (Laughter) And that wasn't the only thing; we got whipped from one end to the other when we got home.

BARBARA: Boys will be boys, huh?

BILL: Yeah. Well that's what happens, you get a bunch of boys together. We got the coat off of her. (Laughter) And then my eighth grade teacher was a man teacher, and his name was Robert O. Gibson. He was a trackman, he liked to run and all this type of thing. So he got us old farm boys, you know, trying to get us to run wearing these clodhopper shoes, you know. And we couldn't keep up with him, but at least we tried.

So we got in the habit, see we lived at the Juniper Ranch, a little over a mile down to the mailbox, and we got to running down to the mailbox to pick up the mail, which was good exercise for us. But I'll never forget him for that.

BARBARA: What are some of the other crazy things that you did as a youngster?

IDA: Don't ask him.

BILL: There is some of them I wouldn't dare repeat. Yeah, kids was full of orneriness then, but it wasn't exposed like it is now days.

BARBARA: What kind of chores did you have to do as a child?

BILL: Well ---

BARBARA: What was your day like?

BILL: Mainly when we lived at the old Folly Farm before they bought the Juniper Ranch, they milked cows then, instead of a dairy they called it just milked cows for subsistence. Well what we done we'd milk cows and stuff morning and night, you know. And they had their own separator and everything, and what they called; they'd ship cream then. You was lucky to get two dollars for a can of, a five-gallon can of cream. But that put groceries on the table.

So it was that besides the buckarooing and all this type of thing, us kids done all of that. And we'd help with the branding and all this. Cattle --- you see there was a long time there my dad never had any sheep or anything. He was wanting to get into it, but they saved their nickels and dimes, you know, and they bought this ranch. And of course it looked like an ideal time to make the big plunge. But who knew, the drought come on and the depression at the same time and that just broke a lot of people. Now see the original price on that Juniper Ranch was \$27,000, which was a lot of money then. They paid half down on it, and I don't remember, I think it was supposed to be spread over ten years, the rest of it. But in the meantime this other thing happened, the depression and the drought. Now they talk about the drought now. There was seven years in a row there we didn't have nothing. Couldn't raise any hay or anything else. So you just left to the elements. You had to buy everything, and stuff was high. It was hard to survive, you know, then.

DOROTHEA: Well let's pause for a moment while we turn this tape over.

SIDE B

DOROTHEA: You told us about your brother getting polio, can you tell us something about how this came about, and what year this was?

BILL: Well I'll tell you what, he was stacking hay down there at the Alvord Ranch, and he had, he had contacted the measles, you know. Of course then nobody paid much attention, said they was three or four day measles. Well I think it tapped his strength too much, or something like that, and he kept on working. But it wasn't long after that, within a week he come down with polio.

DOROTHEA: Did they know what it was then, or was it something that they did not know what was the matter with him?

BILL: They wasn't too familiar with it in this area.

IDA: It was the year of the epidemic though.

BILL: This was the year they had the epidemic here. See there was several people died here with it. There was seven or eight I think.

BARBARA: And about what year was this?

BILL: 1951.

BARBARA: Early 50's, yeah, okay.

BILL: Yeah. But George, see he lived in an iron lung and everything about two and a half years. And he spent a good deal of the time down there at the Elks Rehab Center. But it was a long time. You see he had to learn to breathe with just his neck muscles. He didn't have any diaphragm, you see, he couldn't breathe at all. And even in his later life, up --- he still didn't, his diaphragm wouldn't work, he was just paralyzed. And he learned to breathe with just his neck muscles. He had a neck on him that big. But he, like I say, he fathered three girls after that, got married, and one thing and another. So ---

IDA: Well the oldest girl was born when --- in the hospital in Nyssa. The nurses pushed George up and down the hallway so he could say that he walked, paced the halls.

BILL: See his daughter, yeah.

IDA: When Shirley was born. And they had this portable lung on him.

BILL: Yeah, but he stayed in that Nyssa Hospital for quite awhile.

IDA: Dr. Mauldene said that he gave him ten years to live.

BILL: At the most.

IDA: When did he die, three years ago?

BILL: Yeah. So he outlived his doctors.

DOROTHEA: And he had already served his time in the service at this time?

BILL: Yeah, he had served in the Marine Corp. And I was in the Army Engineers, and my kid brother was a pilot. He was in the Air Force over in Germany.

But another highlight of my life was when I met my brother over --- this was when the war was pretty well along. They had just come back from Iwo Jima and I was on Saipan. And he was on charge of quarters, you know. The charge of quarters is the one that made up the mail, and all this type of stuff you got ready for posting, and one thing and another. So he slipped a note to me, unbeknownst --- see everything was censored then, unbeknownst to me. He said they was on Iwo Jima.

Well of course we had been to Saipan earlier and took it. And so I showed this to my company commander. Well this same outfit he was in was the one that invaded Guam then, they went from Iwo Jima to Guam. So I showed this to my company commander, he took a look at that, and said, "You haven't seen your brother for a long time have you?" I said, "Yeah," I said, "it has been four years." So he says, "We'll see if we can do something about that." So he checked with the Naval Air Force, they called it

NATS, and they said, "Well sure, we'll take him over there." But we had to have a fighter escort because they was still a hostile territory. And we flew over there. Of course they had some other military people along, you know, some of the big brass and stuff was going over too during the invasion. And they just secured the air field and got landed there, and of course they was making their advance up, down the main island there in the Philippines. See the main island was Mindanao, no, where Manila was anyway. And they were, I mean Guam, and they was going up the way so they radioed up there and told them to send George back. Well they said they're not sending anybody back, said I could catch a ride up. So we visited about four hours, and we had quite a time. Took some pictures, and one thing and another. And then I got back out of there, but it was quite a deal in my life, you know, to run on to my brother.

BARBARA: Right, in the middle of the war.

BILL: Yeah. But --- oh then I put in some more time there, and I figured out some way to come back. It was rest and recuperation, the same as a furlough. I come back for that for six months, or for a month. And then I had to sign up and go back for another six months. Well this is when I met Ida, so things started from there.

DOROTHEA: And where were you when you met Ida?

BILL: Down at Vale.

DOROTHEA: In Vale?

BILL: Yeah.

IDA: At a dance.

DOROTHEA: At a dance.

BILL: Yeah, at a dance, yeah.

IDA: Vale in the old days always had a dance on Christmas night. And one of the

neighbors of Bill's parents and Bill were together. And of course Clint, every time we were at a dance, he knew as soon as I went in the hall, well come on Ida, let's dance. So we were dancing, and he said, "I've got somebody I want you to meet." I says, "Okay." So that's how I met Bill.

BILL: Yeah, of all things her mother come over and said, "Don't you get mixed up with that Bill Renwick guy, that soldier." (Laughter) And guess what!

BARBARA: That was the wrong thing to say then, that just got you started.

BILL: That must have been a challenge for her.

BARBARA: So when you got out of the service then, did you get married, or did you get married before you were out?

BILL: We got married after I got discharged.

BARBARA: And that was when? I'll put you on the spot.

BILL: We were married --- I got discharged on the 26th of October, and we got married on the 6th of November.

IDA: Hey!

BILL: Yes.

IDA: Okay, okay, I was thinking of your birthday.

BILL: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: And when is your birthday?

BILL: November 4th.

BARBARA: And what year was this that you got married?

BILL: In 1945.

BARBARA: '45.

BILL: Yeah.

BARBARA: And then so what did you do then, and where did you go?

BILL: Well at the time I went into the service I was working for Harney County. And of course they had this deal then wherever you worked, you know, after the war started, that you could come back and you were assured of a job. So I was assured of a job so I come back. Of course I had really had a lot of training in the mechanical field and this type of thing when I was in the service, because I was a mechanic and welder see all the time I was in.

And of course while I was there this six months I had to go back, why I learned to operate various types of heavy equipment, you know, shovels, carry-alls and all that type of thing. I says what the heck, going to be laying around here for six months so I just as well learn something. So I took advantage of that.

So when I come back I was really qualified to do a lot of different things. But I did like the mechanical field so I went back to Harney County and I worked a little while. And I wasn't too pleased with myself; I said I had better go on to school. So I went to a trade school down in Portland, and I learned body and fender trade, that looked like a real thing because, you know, there was such a shortage of cars and stuff. Everybody had these old wrecks and stuff, and they needed fixed up. So I went into that enterprise and I worked there for oh, probably three or four years. And then it seemed like every service station started doing bodywork, you know, and it just started starving everybody out.

So I just give up and went to work at the mill out here. I started at the mill in 1948. I worked there about two years, working on the green chain out there, and I said there has to be a better way to make a living.

So there was a, they was looking for somebody to take over all the maintenance up here to the grade school system then. We looked at that, and it was a joint deal

between Ida and I, and we could handle it by hiring a little help, so we took that on for one year, and that was enough. We didn't mind the school part of it, but it was the after activities that was afterwards. You'd be up there until 10, 11, 12 o'clock at night. And like in the wintertime you had to be up at 4 o'clock in the morning, because see they didn't have oil boilers on everything. They had that sawdust burner up there, one thing and another, and had to get up and fire it up. I said one year is enough of that.

So then I went back to the mill, and I worked there, and I finally worked over into the shop, truck shop. And I quit them, had an opportunity to go to work for the Bureau of Land Management. They wanted somebody to run their operation and shop. I worked there for seven or eight years in there. And then they decided they wanted to go General Services Administration, which they hired all their work done.

IDA: Sent it to Boise.

BILL: Yeah, they either go to Boise, Seattle, or Medford.

BARBARA: I don't think they had a choice though, did they?

BILL: Well they give me an opportunity to go in one of the places. And they would pay for the move and all that, and I said, "No way." I said, "I lived all my life here."

And of course it just so happened that at the particular time I had to make the move, why they was looking for a mechanic out in the woods, out there at Hines. And of course I had done a lot of maintenance work, one thing and another, and so they talked to me, and I went to work there, and worked in the woods sixteen years until I retired. I worked until Hines sold out, which was, I was on my 64th year. So I was a lot better off than a lot of them because I only had just a few months to go until I was 65. That's just about the story of my life.

BARBARA: So you've done a lot of different things then?

BILL: Yeah. And then amongst other things, I had a hobby, which I took up after World War II, and that was learn to fly an airplane. And of course I had another partner, and we had this plane for quite awhile. And then when he moved, when the Bureau of Land Management moved out, I bought him out. And I flew about ---

BARBARA: Who was that?

BILL: Paul Gibson. Yeah.

BARBARA: What were the years that you worked for the BLM?

BILL: 1961 to 1968. And I done a lot of flying, mostly just local area because I wasn't equipped to go into big airports or anything. But I done a lot of --- it was an old tail dragger we called it. That's the one that don't have the tricycle gear. Used to land on these lakebeds out here. Had a lot of fun, flew over Steens and took a lot of pictures and stuff.

DOROTHEA: Did you ever do any of the ambulance flying that they had in the '50's and '40's?

BILL: Not then, but I packed a lot of parts and stuff for Hines. Fly over to John Day and pick up parts and then drop them out in the woods where they was working, different things like that. One time I made a mistake though, I had been over to John Day and come back, and this happened in September, and I decided to go out and look over some sage chicken country out here toward Potato Hill, out the other side, this side of Glass Butte, you know. I thought I'll go out there and do a little looking around. Come back I hit a big head wind and I had to make a forced landing out here in Potter Swamp. (Laughter) So that was my first emergency airplane landing. But I got it down in one piece. Ida was out there watching me, said, "I thought you was going to lose the wings off of that thing."

IDA: The wings were going like this. He landed in the old feed, where cows had been

feeding, and in mud.

BILL: Full of cow tracks. But I got airborne, but ---

DOROTHEA: Who did you take your pilot training from?

BILL: From Oscar Davis out here. Yeah, he trained a lot of pilots here after World War II. We took it under the G.I. Bill of Rights. And I enjoyed flying. In fact I'd probably still been flying, but I got, started getting physical problems, high blood pressure. Started taking medication for that, and that's a no, no. You don't take no medication and fly.

DOROTHEA: You don't even take allergy tablets.

IDA: Not even an aspirin.

BILL: No aspirin or nothing.

DOROTHEA: My son made the mistake of, he went into get his physical and they said, "Are you under any medication?" And that morning he had had an allergy attack, and he said, "Yes, I took an allergy tablet." And that's it.

BILL: That's all she wrote.

DOROTHEA: That's all it took.

BILL: Well I'll tell you another thing that happened too about that time, and then they had to have this twice a year inspection. There was just too many rules and regulations.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BILL: And then they upgraded, you had to have a certain type of radio and all this and that. It was just too expensive for a hobby flyer.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

BILL: But like I say, I flew about twenty-five years, and I really enjoyed it. And I finally got her halfway involved in flying; go with me, and one thing and another.

IDA: I'm a white-knuckle flyer.

DOROTHEA: Hang on tight. And how many children do you have?

BILL: We have two, a son and a daughter. And of course he lives up here in the Portland area, Tualatin. They have two kids. And our daughter is unmarried, she is in Texas now. She is down there working on this super glider, out on construction work. So ---

BARBARA: And what are their names?

BILL: Lois, and the boy's name is William R. the II.

IDA: And our grandson is William R. the III.

BILL: Yeah. And our daughter-in-law said there would never be another number in the William R. And so after he was born, says, "Well I changed my mind." Call him William R. the III.

BARBARA: That's nice. Good-looking children.

BILL: Six years old, and the girl is four, her name is Casey.

IDA: We waited a long time for them.

BILL: Casey Jean is the girl's name.

BARBARA: That's cute.

IDA: They were married sixteen years before he came along.

BILL: Well at the time they got married that's when all this trouble they was having, people said zero population growth, and they says, "No way." And then they decided well, the old folks are getting pretty old, better ---

BARBARA: Better give them one, huh?

BILL: Yeah, better give them a child, or a grandchild.

BARBARA: Yeah.

BILL: So low and behold we had two.

BARBARA: That's very nice. Can you think of some of the other things that maybe you

did as you were growing up that might be of interest to people down the road? What kind of things you had to go through as a child?

BILL: Well we, like I say when we was younger, young men and stuff, we buckarood, and worked in the hay fields. And then another thing we done quite a bit of then, that was trapping of fur bearing animals, coyotes, bobcats. They were nothing but a predator then see. They was classified --- even jackrabbits. See at that time why they used jackrabbit pelts for fur hats, you know, felt hats that all the men wore in those days. There was a market for that type of thing. But it actually put groceries on the table, you know. You could make enough trapping, one thing and another, and besides working a little bit in the hay field or something.

IDA: It put you through high school.

BILL: Yeah, I put myself through high school, just working in the hay fields. Of course a hundred dollars worth of clothes put you through school then. Like at that dormitory see, all the food was provided, and they figured it cost two fifty per student there to go to that school, you know, just for the dormitory. So couldn't beat that. No, that was a wonderful thing for the kids of Harney County.

IDA: Still is.

DOROTHEA: Now were you there when the school burned down?

BILL: No.

DOROTHEA: Were you going to school then?

BILL: I knew of it being burned down, but I didn't go there until '32. And see the first year the dormitory; the brick building was in 1931.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BILL: I wasn't the first class there. But I remember when the other one burnt down,

because they had one death in the bunch when that burnt down, the dormitory.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, they didn't get the, I think Glen Sitz was involved in, somehow that.

BILL: The Weittenhiller boy I think, wasn't it?

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

BILL: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, didn't get him awake or something.

BILL: Yeah, something like that happened. But like you say, your life wasn't too full of events then, you spent most of your time trying to make a living or something, you know, feed yourself, put clothes on your back. In fact we never had a vehicle until we was out of high school, couldn't afford it.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BILL: In fact the first car we bought was a Model-A, a one-year-old Model-A for \$250. We was proud as punch of that. Of course then we buckarood a few wild mustangs out there, and sold enough of them to pay for it.

BARBARA: Who were some of the people that you worked for, haying and buckarooing?

BILL: Well first of all I worked for the Bunyard family, which was down at Crane. And they contracted hay all over the country, mostly down in the South End. I worked for them all the time during high school. Jim Bunyard was the parent's name. Of course their children was Hank Bunyard, and Pat Bunyard, and Jess, the three boys. And the only one left of that family is Pat. The rest of them are all gone. But they usually hayed down there, oh three or four places down in the South End. They hayed out here on the lake, and one thing and another. But I worked all summer for them; I was a good hay hand. And we got along good, their kids, and one thing and another. We had a lot of fun together. Of course this carried on through school, and one thing and another too.

But that's about the main one that I worked for in the hay field. Then I worked for Paul Stewart down there at the Mann Lake Ranch. He had me buckarooing for him, and working on the ranch, just general ranch work, haying and this type of thing. Build fence, everything affiliated with a ranch operation.

BARBARA: Did they brand much then, horses and things?

BILL: Yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Can you remember some of the men you worked with?

BILL: Well one out here was Sam Gunderson, he and I worked together several years. That's before he was married. And then there was a Joe Wakefield, and he --- I don't know, I think he is gone now. Another one was Ford Dornam; he was killed during World War II. And then there was Red Purcell, another one; he was a part time worker. And then Todd Wolverton was another one I worked with.

IDA: How about the Greek?

BILL: Who?

IDA: The Greek down there at ---

BILL: Oh, at the Alvord?

IDA: Uh huh.

BILL: Gus Davis. Well that was a different operation.

IDA: No, no, the one that had the place over at Nyssa.

BILL: Oh, Alex Yokum. Well he was a sheep man.

IDA: Okay.

BILL: Yeah. And they was with the Gus Davis outfit there at the Alvord Ranch. But I knew him there, and they run a bar and stuff over there at Homedale, wasn't it?

IDA: Nyssa.

BILL: Nyssa. Of course I knew them. And other than that was some of the Dowell boys, run horses with them. That was down there in Barren Valley. They was, oh one might say the head honcho of this horse roundup, his name was Everett Mickey. And of course he was the supervisor, and he told everybody else what to do, and one thing and another.

One thing I'll never forget, they butchered a colt out there for meat, and I thought to myself I don't want no meat. (Laughter) Cooked it in a coal oil can, a five gallon can, cooked it out there in the rocks, you know, just built a fire up out there and boiled it up. I wasn't very hungry. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: After raising horses they are not ---

BILL: You learn to change your ways when you get a little older. Just little things like that. And then of course, oh we had an accident or two chasing horses, because that was pretty dangerous work, you know. You going full speed downhill and the horse trip and fall with you, and one thing and another, you know. A lot of people got hurt. But you didn't hear too much about those things unless they was broke up pretty bad.

BARBARA: Kind of home doctored instead of bringing them into town or anything, to find a doctor.

BILL: More or less, yeah.

BARBARA: Or did the doctors come out there if anything bad happened, did they?

BILL: Well they toted them in one way or the other, back of a car or something like that if somebody was seriously hurt. I know one time I was working for Paul Stewart one summer; I got pulled off of a haystack. Of course I was a stacking the hay, and this young guy was a setting net, that's when they was using the slides and pulling it up, and they was using these four-horse rudder bucks, you know, these great big bunches, you know,

to build stacks in a hurry. And of course the stacker was the one that was in charge, and I didn't give him a signal. But the boss come down there and he thought he was going to make a show, you know, and he whipped that net back, and I hadn't given the signal, and he caught me and flipped me and went down over this stack. I probably fell about forty feet, but I landed in hay. And fortunate for that, but I got a broken arm out of it, and back all messed up, and one thing and another. They hauled me to town, and I survived.

DOROTHEA: Who was the doctor at that time?

BILL: Dr. Smith, yeah, old Dr. B. F. Smith.

DOROTHEA: In the old Harney Valley Hospital.

BILL: Yeah, at the old rock building up there.

DOROTHEA: Or Valley View, that's what it was, the Valley View.

BILL: The Valley View Hospital, that was quite a place. It was pretty important in Harney County in those days.

IDA: It served its purpose at that time.

BILL: Yeah.

BARBARA: And so what did you do for entertainment as a school age child, or high school, did you guys go to dances too? Was that about, that was about your only entertainment, was it?

BILL: Yeah, yeah, we didn't have television, we had radio. But we all played a lot of athletics, you know, football, intramural basketball, and basketball, and track, and baseball and everything like that. Just everything they've got nowadays, only they didn't make a big ---

And one thing that I remember there, we paid our own way. They didn't have money for cars. Family members would come up with transportation, a vehicle, and then

everybody chipped in on gas or something. And you packed your own lunch if you wanted to eat. You didn't get nothing furnished. And athletic money, well that, what they took in at athletic events that went to pay for, like football uniforms, basketball uniforms, but there was nothing for the athletes. They had to pay their own way, which is far different now days.

BARBARA: Well I think the transportation is the only thing they get, because the kids have to provide their own meals.

BILL: Oh, do they?

BARBARA: Oh yeah, you buy your ---

IDA: Unless they stay overnight.

BARBARA: When my kids were playing in high school we had to send money for all their meals.

BILL: You did?

BARBARA: Yes. And you had to buy your own shirt in football; you had to pay for your own shirt, your own shoes.

IDA: Oh really.

BILL: Hasn't improved too much.

IDA: When did your kids go to school here?

BARBARA: In the early '80's.

IDA: My son graduated in '64, and his uniform was furnished. And if they went to state or anything, well they paid, the school district paid the motel and ---

BARBARA: State, if you went to state the OSAA picked up the meal and the motels.

IDA: Okay.

BARBARA: But just during the regular league, no we had to either send a lunch or send

money, and we paid for their own shoes. Track, I know he did three different things, and we had to buy three different pairs of shoes, so it was expensive to have your kids participate in athletics.

BILL: Yeah. We know. Now we took our kids through --- In fact we took in everything in high school, every activity there was.

BARBARA: We did too.

BILL: We just grew up with our kids. And I think they appreciated it.

BARBARA: Yeah, I know ours did too.

BILL: Made better kids out of them.

BARBARA: Yeah.

BILL: We was short on money and all that, but we still made it one-way or the other.

BARBARA: I was going to ask you, as you were growing up living on a ranch and doing ranch things, and cattle, and sheep and all this, did you ever think about making that your livelihood, or had you had enough of that growing up and wanted to do something else? What changed your mind about not going back?

BILL: Well this was the problem, I said to myself when I come back from the service, I'll never go back on a ranch, because everything then you devoted to the ranch. Like my dad, I wanted a bicycle in the worst way in the world, and he says, "Buy a saddle, something you can use, something to work with." And we never had any money of our own; it was always went for something special.

BARBARA: Always went into the pot for the family.

BILL: Something to work for. It was probably a good theory, or whatever, but I started thinking to myself when I got out of the service, I says, "I don't want anymore of that." And I'm not sorry the decision I made, because I think we've done all right.

BARBARA: So did your, either of your brothers do any ranching or anything, or did they both go on to different things?

BILL: My younger brother, he followed through on the ranching, he has a big operation up there at Council, Idaho. Of course he is retired now, and turned it over more or less to one of his son-in-laws to run it. But too much money for anybody to buy it, you know. Run up into over a million dollars or so, and nobody has got that kind of money nowadays.

DOROTHEA: Well our younger children, that's like with us, we're wondering how in the world he is going to be able to afford to buy it, because with everything the price it is now, there is no way, you know ---

BILL: Yeah. Interest rates too high.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BILL: No, this is true.

IDA: I think Janice and Mike are more or less running Jim's place on a share basis.

BILL: Share.

DOROTHEA: Share basis.

BILL: Yeah.

IDA: Jim is there to help them when they need help and so forth.

BILL: See Jim's wife was a full time teacher and she taught until she retired. And of course they have to look at the money angle and not make too much money, because they really get nailed for taxes, you know. So they have to be pretty careful what they do.

BARBARA: So what did George do as an adult?

BILL: Well after the polio thing, well this really brought him downhill. He kept the Folly Farm for a while, and then seen he couldn't run it, couldn't manage it. So then he moved

to town, or he sold out. He went to, oh he got started working for the county down there as a caretaker when Roy Beede, you know, was about ready to retire. And so then he took over that for, how many years?

IDA: I don't know how many years.

BILL: Twenty years maybe, something like that until he retired. And then of course he didn't last too much longer. But he couldn't do anything actively because, you know, he just started going down hill more and more all the time.

But, of course at that time when he left the Folly Farm out there it wasn't a viable enterprise anyway because you needed water, and there is no water, only just, you know, drinking water and stuff.

DOROTHEA: By that time the Folly Farm community had been cut down to about one person, one family.

IDA: Yes.

BILL: Yeah. And I don't know, when the country dried up, why that excluded that place too.

DOROTHEA: You said that at one time it was a, kind of town in itself in a community. You had a school, did you have a church?

BILL: No, they didn't have a church there.

DOROTHEA: They didn't have a church.

BILL: They had then, what they called the riding pastor, horseback. He didn't come around with a vehicle, he might have a buggy.

IDA: He'd come around once a month and preach over at the house.

BILL: Circuit ---

IDA: Preacher.

DOROTHEA: Right.

BILL: And the case, whatever the case may be, but pretty much then one pastor, whatever, he covered the whole county. You know he'd be here one day, it wasn't particularly on Sunday.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BILL: But they would visit communities and people like that.

DOROTHEA: Did you have a special meeting place, or did you meet in people's homes?

BILL: Oh, I would say the schoolhouse.

IDA: It was in the homes.

BILL: Yeah.

IDA: You mother remembers when she was a girl, the traveling minister where it was out there at the house.

BILL: Yeah, yeah, in fact put them up over night, and feed them. Well you had to then.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BILL: Oh, just like that one winter down by the Juniper Ranch, had a real tough winter. Well from the month of December through March, they only got mail three times, the snow was so deep. The first time they come through the guy come through on skis and snow shoes. It took him two weeks to go down to the South End. And then the second time the guy come through horseback. He come through on the wind blown ridges and stuff like that where he could get through. And the third time they come through was in March, come down with a big V-plow and a cat and plowed it open. But we had four foot of snow on the level down there. In fact the stock walked right over the top of the fences it was so deep.

If you've ever been down in that country, those big junipers out there on the lower

end of the Juniper Ranch, they blowed clear full of snow.

DOROTHEA: Lived here most all of my life and never been in that country.

BILL: Is that right, well you better make a trip.

IDA: It's beautiful Dorothea.

BILL: Yeah.

IDA: I recommend go down by Roaring Springs, and come back up through Andrews and Folly Farm.

DOROTHEA: Is that where you went?

BARBARA: We went to Frenchglen and up into Catlow Valley and then just turned around and came back down that day.

IDA: Oh.

BILL: The thing to do if you go that way ---

BARBARA: We haven't gone the loop either.

BILL: Figure out the time of the day you go down, if you go this other way around Frenchglen, around that way then you got the afternoon shadows on the Steens Mountain see, going back. But you go the other way and then you got the sun in your eyes all the time, you know. This is the experience we've had; it's best to go around through Catlow --
-

IDA: But going south down through Roaring Springs and that way, you get a better view into the gulches.

BILL: But we make a trip down there once a year maybe, sometimes more if people is interested in it. But it looks pretty bad this year, pretty barren. In fact we stopped there at Fields and had lunch, and they told us there they hadn't had a storm since last October. Even the cheat grass hasn't started, not enough moisture. Boy, it looks bad.

BARBARA: No, it's going to be really bad this year, it really is.

BILL: Yeah, I think so.

DOROTHEA: I think maybe we're looking at one of those seven-year droughts again, if we don't get some moisture here pretty quick.

BILL: They say it goes in cycles, so ---

DOROTHEA: Yeah. We talked about sports when you were in school. Did you play against other communities, or schools?

BILL: Yeah. We was a small school there at Crane, we played like Prairie City. When I first started out --- and we played Burns which was a bigger school. Of course then we had men, our line averaged two hundred pounds, one thing and another. We never did beat them, but we played them pretty close a time or two. And then we played John Day, where later on we played John Day and we played Vale, Lakeview, and that was about, just a circuit of about four schools is about all we played. But we had a lot of fun; we got the usual amount of knocks and lumps. (Laughter) Yeah.

And then basketball usually took in a little more territory. They would go to, they would play in places like Paisley, and they went all over, you know. But football, there was too many boys, you know, to transport, so they kept it --- Well Lakeview was a big trip, you know, that was a hundred, well a hundred and seventy miles to go to Lakeview. But Prairie City was one of our main opponents, they was a big school then at that time.

DOROTHEA: Prairie City is about like Burns, it is about nothing anymore.

BILL: I suppose. Well Burns was the same way; they had a bunch of big kids here too. Because a lot of those kids was older people that started to school, you know. Because they had to work, or their parents kept them out, and a lot of those kids was twenty, twenty-one years old when they was going to school. So---

BARBARA: Well at least you had to give them credit for hanging in there and finally finishing up though.

BILL: Yeah.

BARBARA: I mean they could have just said to heck with it and not done that.

IDA: In our day and age it was a privilege to finish high school.

BILL: Yeah. And then of course we didn't have all this fantastic stuff like they got nowadays. We just had the basic education; the 3-R's might as well say. We was introduced to oh, science, and a little higher math, algebra. Now I couldn't get geometry, which I wanted to get the geometry, and get introduced to that, but nobody was interested in it. So then of course we took a foreign language and this type of thing. And four years of good old hard English, and history, which I liked, you know. Civil government and all that type of thing, but we had a pretty well rounded education then.

DOROTHEA: Were you allowed to have family pets, and what kind? You weren't?

BILL: The only thing we had for a family pets was the work dog.

IDA: And that was at home.

BILL: That was at home, nothing at school. No, no, we had a pretty strict dormitory down there at Crane. Of course you look at it today, they've got the usual problems of boys and girls. At least it is not like these coed institutions they got nowadays.

BARBARA: At the university, yeah.

BILL: Same rooms, or whatever. But they watched us pretty close down there then. Yeah, the girls was upstairs and the boys was downstairs. And of course they had a matron, which was in charge. But also the principal stayed in the dormitory then. Yeah, he rode herd on the boys.

DOROTHEA: They don't stay in the dormitory now?

BILL: No, they don't.

DOROTHEA: They have their own private home?

BILL: Yeah. Living quarters, I think it's furnished by the school, now I'm not sure.

IDA: I would think so.

BARBARA: In your growing up, what kind of family outings did you have? Did you go on picnics, or did you ever go on vacations, or was it just always work?

BILL: Work. Yeah, it was work, different forms. Maybe you was out buckarooing one day, or trapping or something like that, but there was no ----

BARBARA: You didn't go on picnics or anything on Sunday afternoon or anything?

BILL: Nothing scheduled like that at all.

BARBARA: Uh huh, uh huh.

BILL: No.

BARBARA: And what about holidays, at Christmas time, was it a big deal? Or ---

BILL: Well we had a Christmas, but they was all homemade toys, and this type of thing. We recognized Christmas and Thanksgiving. That's about the only two that was recognized then, Christmas and Thanksgiving.

DOROTHEA: What was your meals like on these holidays?

BILL: Well you might have a turkey, because we raised turkeys, you know, to sell, and one thing and another. Have one for ourselves like for holidays. But, you know, then people preserved meat, you know, they cured their own hams. They even put eggs down in water glass and saved them for the winter, you know, when the hens was molting, and one thing and another. They had eggs year round. They get kind of stale by spring, but they still make hot cakes or something. They made their own bread, you didn't buy a loaf of bread then, you made your own. And the same way with the meat, you know, if you

was lucky enough to get some fresh meat why --- at that time why the game laws wasn't enforced too strong. I mean somebody would get a deer or something they'd split it up with somebody else or something like that.

And then of course there was always sage chickens and this type of thing. This was before all this stuff was protected, and there was an abundance of sage chickens back in those days, that was before disease and stuff got into them.

BARBARA: What about your birthday, did you have a birthday cake?

BILL: Oh ---

BARBARA: Was anything special made for birthdays?

BILL: Well probably, probably the same old thing, a raisin cake or something like that, we had some kind of dessert.

I remember ice cream, in order to get ice cream, homemade ice cream, we had to take pack horses and several animals, we'd go clear up to the top of the mountain, probably about a fifteen, eighteen mile trip to fill these alforjas, saddle bags full of snow, and then come back. It wouldn't be melted by the time we got back, and we'd have ice cream. But that was a real treat to have ice cream. But I can remember that several times. About once a year that would happen. We'd call that the picnic when we went to make some ice cream or something.

BARBARA: I see.

BILL: And of course another thing, a big problem then, they didn't have refrigeration like they got nowadays. The first refrigeration they had these old flamo type refrigerators, and then people could, you know, preserve meat and other foods, or otherwise why they had these cool rooms, pantries, milk house, and all that kind of stuff, you know. You had to be a little bit inventive to figure out how to keep things from spoiling.

BARBARA: Yeah.

BILL: Yeah, more than once we'd wrapped meat up at night and bury it in the straw in the daytime, and then dig it out at night, hang it out to cool. But that's the only way to keep it.

I remember working in the hay fields down there; we figured it would be lucky to keep a quarter of beef a week. But of course they didn't have any refrigeration either. So what they'd do, they'd split up maybe so and so would take a quarter, and so and so, and then they'd utilize it that way. Of course mutton, or something like that, they could probably eat it up in less time. But we never shorted for food, you know, always had plenty to eat. Lots of beans, macaroni, cheeses, and that type of thing. But nobody went hungry.

DOROTHEA: Did you have hired help, or did you, how did you work? Did you exchange work with each other?

BILL: There was a lot of neighborhood type of helping one another. But like when the folks went to the Juniper Ranch, they hired quite a bit of help, because they had to on account of the sheep operation, and putting up the hay, and all this and that. And they probably had a work force of about six or eight people besides themselves working on, besides us kids.

But we started out as rake jockeys, scatter raking and all this type of thing, you know, when you was very young. And then you worked up to a mowing machine, and then from there you got into other enterprises, stacking hay, and one thing and another. But ---

DOROTHEA: Did you do this with tractors or horses?

BILL: Did I what?

DOROTHEA: Did you use horses to do this?

BILL: All horses.

DOROTHEA: All horses.

BILL: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Did you ever have a run away?

BILL: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Were you ever hurt?

BILL: I had a couple of them. I got throwed off one time in a rake when I was a little kid. Of course I got pulled, I was trying to hang onto the lines and pulled me down in front of the rake and of course it just kept a rolling me, rolling me. They jumped a ditch, and of course when it hit the ditch it dumped, you know, the rake did and there I was, and I finally come to. The team was up the field there about a quarter of a mile from me.

DOROTHEA: Somehow or other every time they jumped that ditch they got loose.

BILL: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Dumped, dumped the kid in the rake, and the horses got loose.

BILL: Yeah. But there was a lot of that happened because you take like the Pacific Land and Livestock, you know, they didn't have gentle horses, they had lots of wild horse, you know. They work in the hay fields and stuff, and they got a lot of these green people out and wouldn't even know how to harness a horse or nothing. They'd just take off, and they had run a ways with mowing machines, rakes, and everything else.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

BILL: They said out at the Island Ranch out here, they start out with about a hundred mowers, and by that night they might have forty of them still in the field, and the rest of them were all tore up, and run a ways. Well they had buckaroos out there just wrangling the horses, the teams that got away from them. Yeah, they just had to have buckaroos

out there to collect the pieces. Oh, it was quite an experience.

DOROTHEA: Well we're coming to the end of the tape again. And can you think of anything that happened, or anything about your grandparents that was particularly interesting that you can especially remember?

BILL: Well like I say, they were more or less quiet people. They never said much, but they probably thought a lot. But my granddad he never, he could go for I would say two or three days at a time and never say a word, you know, he was just that quiet type of person. But he done a lot of thinking.

And my grandmother she was great for all women's activities. Because she served the Library Club and everything like that up here in Harney County. And Eastern Star, and I don't know what all, she was into all kinds of activities. Of course being a teacher why she more or less sponsored this type of thing. And she was very active herself. In fact I think you give the women more credit than the men back in the early days, because they helped the community more than the men did. Because they were too busy out doing this or that, and they figured that was women's work, you know, to have these type of things.

BARBARA: Did you live with your grandparents when you were growing up?

BILL: Never did, no. But they come and visit us once in awhile, and I remember them when I was a small kid. I can remember when my grandfather died; of course I was in school, pretty much up in school then. He was buried up here, and so was my grandmother. But they were very active people all their life. They traveled a lot, went around the world, and one thing and another. And that's back then, there was no planes, they sailed around, took them eighty days or something. But they enjoyed themselves. Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Well do you think that we could fill another tape, or do we want to close?

BILL: No really, I can't think --- I think we pretty well covered it, unless you've got some questions.

DOROTHEA: My questions have run out, how about yours?

BARBARA: Well pretty much.

BILL: We probably had some repetitions here, one thing and another.

BARBARA: Oh well.

DOROTHEA: Well, that's okay.

BARBARA: That's not important.

DOROTHEA: That's okay. We might ---

BARBARA: I didn't get to read that.

IDA: That's fine. I was just looking to see ---

BARBARA: If there might be something on there about the Kuenys a little bit, since they were a well-known name in our history here too. You might have a little bit maybe to say about Mary Kueny.

BILL: Well my mother and her, after my mother was married, they didn't get along too good for what reason I don't know. But they more or less went their own ways, you know. There was something that happened between them.

DOROTHEA: I think a lot of older families were that way, brothers and sisters.

BILL: Yeah. Just probably a little incident, something ---

IDA: Although Mary was very good to us.

BILL: Yeah.

IDA: Whenever she come to town, she'd take us out for dinner and visit with us. And there were a few years there that she didn't communicate with us. But we got back into it.

I always sent her a card on special occasions, and I think she appreciated it.

BILL: And we moved up on the mountain several years.

IDA: And we'd go up to the mountain and visit with her, and we'd go to Winnemucca and visit with her, and she always appreciated that. And she wanted our daughter to go up and stay the summer with her on the mountain. But of course our daughter was going to college, and she couldn't very well do it.

BILL: She had to, you know, look at different things that she wanted to. But we tried to, I'd say the last ten years of her life why we helped her all we could, because we knew that she was getting old. And we'd take her out to Winnemucca and go someplace to eat, and one thing and another, because I liked her myself. But like I say, this thing, this wedge happened between her and my mother back in her earlier years. And like you say, she said, "Well I probably done things wrong, you know, in her life."

DOROTHEA: Well my little red light is ---

(End of Tape) bl