

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #368 - Sides A/B

Subject: Earl Tiller - With Video

Place: Harney County Library - Burns, Oregon

Date: December 28, 1994

Interviewers: Barbara Lofgren & Dorothea Purdy

DOROTHEA PURDY: Okay, this is Dorothea Purdy, along with Barbara Lofgren, and today we're visiting with Earl Tiller at the Harney County Library in Burns, Oregon. The date is December the 28th, 1994. Following our interview we'll be doing a short video, which we didn't tell Earl about, but it will be stored along with the transcript and cassette tape, and the number is 368. Okay, Earl we'll start by asking you your full name.

EARL TILLER: Earl Ellis Tiller.

DOROTHEA: And when and where were you born?

EARL: Born August the 30th, 1925, in Caldwell, Idaho.

DOROTHEA: What were your parent's names?

EARL: My dad's name was Pluribus, and mother's name was Tacie.

DOROTHEA: And did they have any brothers or sisters in Plurb's family?

EARL: Yes, there was, I think seven in that family, five boys and two girls.

DOROTHEA: Could you tell us some of their names?

EARL: Okay, there was Herman, Paul, J. C., Bill, Hobert, and the girls were Juanita and Rachel (Griffith).

DOROTHEA: Okay. And they came to Harney County for what reason?

EARL: Well Dad came in 1925, in November of 1925, as manager of Safeway Stores.

DOROTHEA: How long did he work for Safeway?

EARL: Three years, and then he started on his own.

DOROTHEA: And what was that store called, do you remember?

EARL: The Buy-Rite.

DOROTHEA: The Buy-Rite.

BARBARA LOFGREN: And where was that located?

EARL: That was located, well where the saddle shop is now, or right across, or right next to Nyleen's there, what Nyleen's used to be Harris Hardware. Where Lee Reeds was for a long time --- that little ---

BARBARA: Was it just a general market, or a meat market, or all combined?

EARL: All combined.

DOROTHEA: Did he have people working for him, or how did he start this business?

EARL: Yes, he had a couple employees at the time he started, and then it grew from there. And then he moved over to the, what we know as the Bob Smith Building now, where the used furniture store is there, and enlarged.

BARBARA: Was it pretty scary competing with a chain like Safeway, to pull out and start out on your own? Or did he feel that it was really, the community needed more?

EARL: Well at that time Safeway was, the old Brown Brothers Grocery Store had closed up, and Safeway was the only grocery store in the community. And he felt that there needed to be some competition. And it was really scary and troublesome for those times because, you know, they weren't too encouraging about competition coming in. But he has always said that he had a lot of good suppliers of merchandise that helped him through the tough times.

BARBARA: Wasn't this pretty much around depression time too?

EARL: Yes, yes. It was, and a lot of people that he charged to, you know, had trouble paying, and that made it more difficult for him to stay in business. In them days there was

a lot of charge accounts.

DOROTHEA: Why did he permit charge accounts?

EARL: Well, it was just a service to the community. As you know this is a timber and agricultural community and most of the time people didn't sell their product, especially in the agricultural business, until fall. And so they didn't have any cash flow until fall when they sold their product, so that's why.

DOROTHEA: Did Safeway tend to do this at the same time?

EARL: Safeway did this on a real restricted basis. They picked the customers, and most of the time those were big, large ranches, commercial ranches that they did business. But the every day citizen was not allowed to charge.

DOROTHEA: Just kind of like it is today.

EARL: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Did your brother, did your uncles, his brothers come in and help him at this time, or did he have family help, or ---

EARL: Homer Richey came early, and he came out of the Safeway organization also. He came over and helped Dad, and then Bill came, and he assisted. The rest of the brothers came, not to help in the store, but to do other business. Some of them had an equipment business, and a shop, and J. C. at one time had a furnace or heating business, and that kind of thing. But they weren't involved in the store.

BARBARA: And why did they decide to come over here too?

EARL: Well as had mentioned, it was hard times, and there wasn't any work around. The family had come from Missouri to Idaho and were farming, and it was really tough times then, and so they were just looking for something to do, and this was kind of a new community and a new area, so they were just looking for work.

DOROTHEA: So, did --- who came first, Bill?

EARL: Bill came first.

DOROTHEA: And did he have a family at that time?

EARL: Yeah, I think Bill had two children at that time, Roger --- let's see, Roger, Raymond, Robert, Ronnie, and then twin girls. So I think Roger and Raymond he had at that time, and the rest were born here.

DOROTHEA: And then what brother followed?

EARL: Let's see, J. C. followed, and Hobert followed.

DOROTHEA: And Vest ---

EARL: And Vesti (Vestus) followed and helped in the store when he came at a later date.

BARBARA: Okay, as they came over Bill was the first one, and he helped your dad.

EARL: Uh huh.

BARBARA: And then the next one, what did he do?

EARL: Well Vesti came, and he helped Dad. And J. C. came and started an implement business, and a furnace business. And Hobert then came and started a produce business. And he run a truck to California hauling produce back to Burns and John Day.

BARBARA: Did he not later go into the furniture business?

EARL: Yes, Hobert did at a later date, went into the furniture business.

DOROTHEA: Did he buy Harvey Lehr's business, is that how he got into the ---

EARL: Yes.

DOROTHEA: That's what I thought, into the furniture business. But your dad ran this store with Richey. He eventually sold to Richey, did he not?

EARL: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And why was that?

EARL: Well he, you know, he'd been at it a long time, and I think kind of got burned out in the grocery business. But there was, he had a son by the name of Earl that had came

back from the service, and said that he wanted to be a rancher. And while I was in the service he had purchased some property with that in mind, that it was going to be something for Earl to do, and of course brother Joe also. And a daughter that had just been married and her husband was interested in doing it, so that's why Dad purchased the property at Rye Grass.

DOROTHEA: And that was at Rye Grass?

EARL: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Since we went into that he did have a son, why don't you tell us your mother's maiden name, and then we'll go on to how many children that were born in that Tacie and Plurb family.

EARL: Let's see, Mom's maiden name was Lundy. And they came to Idaho the same way the Tillers did from Missouri. And they were also farmers themselves, but they stayed in Sunny Slope, Idaho, right out of Nampa, that is her folks. Now out of that union of Pluribus and Tacie came, you know, Joe which is the oldest, and then Virginia my sister, and myself, and then twins, a boy and a girl that died at birth, and then another son that died at nine months old. He had peritonitis, he had a ruptured appendix and he died at nine months old. That's out of that union.

DOROTHEA: So were they born here then?

EARL: Yes. The twins and Donny were born here.

BARBARA: And who did your sister marry?

EARL: Roy Swindlehurst. Now he was a boy that was, had went to the service and was shot down over Germany and was AWOL for 51 days, and served his country well. And came back and was an active member of the National Guard, and was killed in a car wreck in 1951 at Grants Pass, on active duty with the National Guard.

DOROTHEA: And included in that wreck was Hale Baird, I think too.

EARL: And Frank Kaiser, and Frank was killed.

DOROTHEA: Frank, and he was killed also. And we might go into a little bit of that history, since we don't have much of that. Frank Kaiser was the son-in-law of Gus Bardwell?

EARL: That's true.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And what did he do?

EARL: Well originally when he came from the service he, Gus Bardwell put him on this place, which is the Eggleston place now, which is Barbara Eggleston's place. And he operated that, but still kept active in the National Guard.

DOROTHEA: And his wife's name was Geraldine?

EARL: Yes, she was a Bardwell.

DOROTHEA: Okay, back to your family. You said you served in the service, how many years and what service did you serve for?

EARL: I was a radio operator in the Navy, from 1943 to 1946. I went in in November and came out in April of '46, after the war was over.

DOROTHEA: Were you drafted?

EARL: Yes, I was drafted. I was working for Bob Smith's father, Dr. B. F. Smith, at the time on the ranch. And of course at the time of war there, help was scare and he really needed me. But I was patriotic enough, or naive enough, I don't know which you could say, but I --- Morgan Timms was chairman of the draft board and I told him to put my name through, that I didn't want a deferment. Two weeks later I was gone, so that was handled.

BARBARA: Maybe we can back up just a little bit, and you got all of your schooling in Burns?

EARL: Yes.

BARBARA: Is that right? And when you were in school, were you active in other things, other than academic part, sports, or music or whatever?

EARL: Yeah, I was --- both really, I was active in all athletics. And in those days we didn't have baseball and we didn't have track. And we didn't have girls involved like they are today. But basketball and football mainly, some baseball. Then just continued on with those kinds of sports.

BARBARA: You didn't go to college?

EARL: No, I didn't go to college, I was drafted. I got out of school in June, and I was drafted in November.

BARBARA: Okay, so you didn't have much of an opportunity to think of anything else.

EARL: No.

BARBARA: And during the time that you were in high school did you summer times works on Mr., Doctor Smith's ranch?

EARL: Yes.

BARBARA: Was that the reason that you thought you might like to go into ranching as a livelihood?

EARL: Yes, yes. That's where I got really the basics of, and decided, you know, that I really wanted to do that. And so I did that. I served in the South Pacific for 18 months, went overseas in '44, and got out in '46. We put the ship out of commission in Norfolk, Virginia, and then I came on home.

DOROTHEA: What kind of teachers did you have? Can you remember the teachers and some of the principals?

EARL: Yeah, I really had good teachers. You know, I think pretty much in those days that it seemed like to me that all teachers that I had were really dedicated people that were interested in getting kids an education, a bona fide education, and worked at it. And

I really had the feeling that I had, you know, excellent teachers. Good coaches, good teachers in all basic studies, sometimes we didn't apply. Great music teachers, and had a great music system going, you know, at that time.

BARBARA: And what instrument did you play?

EARL: Trombone.

BARBARA: Can you tell us some of your experiences in playing in school, and then later on with the Reed Band?

EARL: Yeah. Yeah, we had a fellow by the name of Don Reese who was the band, the high school band instructor, was really a great instructor.

BARBARA: Do you remember that?

EARL: Oh yeah.

BARBARA: Showing a picture in the newspaper of the Reed Band.

EARL: We had a great band. We competed in Spokane for the region, and were graded, you know, excellent. Just had a good band. And then out of that group this little dance band that Dick Reed established of local kids, and you know some of them like Austin Goodman has gone on to make a professional career out of it, and has done really well. He's, let's see he's been what, Dorothea, part of the renowned group of --- can't say the name now.

DOROTHEA: Does it say in there (newspaper)?

BARBARA: Ah --- I might mention I went to Las Vegas to visit Jeff (Lofgren) at one time, we went to a show and he was performing, and when they announced where they were from, Burns, Oregon, of course we all went "Yes", you know. And people were looking around, who are these people?

EARL: Yeah.

BARBARA: We tried to see him after the show, but he got away before we had the



opportunity. He played and sang with the Four Freshman.

EARL: Yes, and the Modernaires.

DOROTHEA: Modernaires. That's what I was trying to think of.

BARBARA: Vaughn Monroe, Ray Eberly, Tex Beneke, Billy Eckstine, Woody Herman, and Duke Ellington.

EARL: Really an excellent musician, and had a good voice, and played the tenor sax. In those days we played for --- some places in Bend, some in Lakeview, played at the Gayway between Ontario and Boise. But, you know, just close here. But some of that time the rationing was on because the war was on, and so it was, you know, really difficult to travel, to get gas and travel.

BARBARA: Was it something that you really enjoyed doing?

EARL: Oh yeah, yeah it was really a lot of enjoyment out of it. And people --- played a lot for the Elks in Lakeview, and just a lot of things. It was something to keep one active, and some activities. In those days when you played, you played from 9 o'clock in the evening until daylight the next day. You didn't quit at two, or anything, you just played all night.

BARBARA: Until there was no one left, huh?

EARL: That's right.

DOROTHEA: They used to dance all night too.

EARL: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: And now I don't think they do so much of that.

EARL: No.

BARBARA: Well they pretty much close everything down at two.

EARL: Yeah, yeah.

BARBARA: Okay, we might mention when and where did you meet your wife, and who is she?

EARL: Well she was a school sweetheart. I went all through school with her, from the first grade clear on through. And so we were serious about each other when I went to the service, and just remained there, and come back and got married in 1946.

BARBARA: And her name is?

EARL: Verda Culp. She is from a pioneer family. And lived just down the road a little bit from where we live right now, about a mile. So she isn't far from home.

BARBARA: You didn't let her get away very far then did you? And you have one son, Ted.

EARL: Uh huh, Ted. And he works for Big Country Distributing. He's been there, I think, for ten years.

DOROTHEA: And he's also interested in music, right?

EARL: Yes, yeah he's quite interested in music. He's been on tour with a couple of bands, and he's been on tour with a little band that he had of his own. So he's had quite a little bit of --- And he has some recordings out, and he's been, you know, fairly successful in it. But ---

BARBARA: If the opportunities had arose, do you think that's what he would just do for a living if he had the chance?

EARL: Yeah. Yeah, other than the, you know ---

BARBARA: It's a lot of traveling around.

EARL: Yeah, and he just --- he loved the music, and still does love the music, he just really didn't like the life style. He'd play all night and then pack up and move. But if he had a, you know, the right kind of an opportunity, I'm sure that ---

BARBARA: He'd have to live in a different area in order to be able to do that without doing a lot of traveling.

EARL: Yeah, yeah, that's right.

DOROTHEA: He also sings, which I've heard, I think he sang at my daughter's wedding. So I know he sings.

EARL: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Let's go back a little bit and talk about maybe some of your courtship time when you and Verda were first dating, actually dating.

EARL: Yeah, well we were dating when we were seniors in high school, started dating then, and just continued on. I went to the service, and I was back to Madison, Wisconsin to radio school during my service stint. And her and Mom took the train out of Burns and came clear to Madison to see me, which I appreciated. But it was kind of a, you know, different experience for her to come all the way to Chicago, came through Chicago to Madison. At the University of Wisconsin is where I went to radio school. And then after that it was letter writing until I came home from the service.

BARBARA: Did you pretty much just go to grange dances, and movies and that sort of thing, sporting activities?

EARL: Yes.

DOROTHEA: School dances and all that?

EARL: Yeah. Yeah, we never missed very many, you know. Most of the time in this country, as you are aware, that you know the school is kind of the center for all the involvement as far as young people are concerned, especially. So that's where most of us were at the time was at school.

DOROTHEA: And they had lots more dances then than they do now I think too.

EARL: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: I know we were always having dances in school. Getting queens and kings and all this stuff.

EARL: Oh yeah.

BARBARA: And what did, and what does Verda like to do?

EARL: Well she still likes to dance. But we're getting so we don't enjoy it quite as much. But any kind of outdoor activity, why she likes. And she likes lots of movies, you know, if they're qualified good movies, which are getting harder to come by. But she likes that kind of entertainment.

BARBARA: What keeps her busy in the daytime?

EARL: Well mostly, of course she's been a ranch wife. And when we worked for Congressman Smith, which we did for twenty years, why we always had somebody to cook for. And he had some young people that came out of Portland that were --- one of them started when he was a junior in high school, and came every summer until he graduated from vet school. And so we always had somebody around that she was responsible to take care of and cook for. So she had plenty of work there. And of course we had the regular crew that worked for Congressman Smith, when we did that.

DOROTHEA: Tell us, we're going to kind of jump around here, but tell us something about your ranching out in the Rye Grass area. I knew that you and Joe worked together, and Roy worked together, and where was it located and ---

EARL: Well it was on Rye Grass Lane and was right across the road from the Duhaime ranch, on the north side. And there was a full section, there was 640 acres. When we went there all of it was in sagebrush but a 160 along the road, and we cleared the rest of the land. Worked there a couple of years until it became obvious that the little ranch was not going to support three or four married families, you know. So it was a decision that some of us had to make to go, and so I went. And, you know, without any hard feelings or anything, it was just realistic that it was not going to support that many people, so I didn't stay there that long. But it was farming; we raised alfalfa and grain mostly, like most other of those ranches in that area did at that time. Most of the time while we were there we

had adequate irrigation water, which makes a difference between raising a crop and not raising a crop. And of course you're fully aware of that area.

DOROTHEA: Fully aware of the water, that is. You lived on up the road from us, so you got more water than we did.

EARL: Yes.

BARBARA: And did you also have cattle?

EARL: Yes. We started there on cattle, and run some cattle on shares. Didn't own them, but just took them on shares and took care of them. That's kind of how we got started on the cows.

DOROTHEA: While you were working down there, you lived on the Culp place, which was, originally belonged to my grandfather, and he built that wonderful house that you lived in.

EARL: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: With the crooked walls, and the crooked doors. And my grandmother had a fit, and straightened some of them up, but I don't know whether you could tell or not.

EARL: Oh yeah.

DOROTHEA: But, do you remember some of the Halloween times when you had a bunch of kids come knock on your door?

EARL: Oh yeah, I remember a lot of those. (Laughter) Yeah, you know, it was like, it seemed like in those days that kids could enjoy themselves without destroying property. And it's too bad that we can't go back to some of that today for kids. But there was all kinds of those pranks without hurting anybody, or without necessarily destroying property. So a lot of times, lots of fun, and lots to eat, and still enjoyed it and still didn't destroy property.

DOROTHEA: And were you among some of them that used to tip the toilet houses over?

EARL: Oh yes, that was the going thing. If you could accomplish that, yeah.

BARBARA: You almost had to do that, huh?

EARL: If you tipped over the outhouse why you had accomplished about the greatest prank that you could accomplish.

DOROTHEA: One time, during when I was in high school, they put a wagon on top of the high school. No, that wasn't either, I wasn't in high school, my brother was. He was probably one of them that put the wagon on the high school. How did they get that down?

EARL: I don't remember how they got that down, honestly.

DOROTHEA: I don't either. I wondered, but I never remembered.

EARL: I don't know either. I did know at one time. I think maybe they took a self-loader or a logging truck and just reached up and picked it up and set it off of there.

DOROTHEA: I didn't know how they got it up there.

EARL: Well I think the kids just took some planks and put some planks up along side and just pulled it up there with main strength and awkwardness.

DOROTHEA: Kid's pranks. Not mentioning any names, but I'm sure my brother was involved.

EARL: Yeah, yeah.

BARBARA: So after Rye Grass you went to?

EARL: Bob Smiths.

BARBARA: To Bob Smith's place.

EARL: Yeah.

BARBARA: And where was this located?

EARL: Well it's where I live now. He owned it at that time, and I since have bought it from him. But at the old Allen Jones place, which is along the river, and I went to work for Bob there. BARBARA: And did you acquire other property, other places in the area too?

EARL: Yeah, I have another place down, well it's kind of right in the middle of the Ted Graves place; down just north of the Island Ranch where I summer my cattle, and I have that. That's 240 acres down there, but it's mostly meadow. If you get water it runs quite a few cattle, if you get water.

BARBARA: And have you had other places too? Or have you done things for other people in different places?

EARL: I've leased, after I left Congressman Smith, I leased Alice Baker's property, both her grazing and her base properties for four or five years and run more cattle. Since then I've done away with that, and just cut back to what I can run on my own deeded land. I said we'll either make it there, or we won't make it. But we won't have to depend upon ---

DOROTHEA: Did you also lease where the Brinkleys now live for a while?

EARL: Yes, I did. I leased that and put alfalfa in, and raised alfalfa there for, I don't know, four or five years I think.

DOROTHEA: And who has that now?

EARL: Brinkleys has got it, but Castor Idoeta has it now, he has it leased.

DOROTHEA: Has it leased. So he does the farming?

EARL: Yeah, and the haying.

DOROTHEA: Cutting, hay cutting.

BARBARA: Talk about Congressman Smith, and working for him, he had the property, but you basically ran everything for him after he went into politics, is that right?

EARL: Yes.

BARBARA: Okay. And he had people coming and working for him/you then in other words?

EARL: Yes. I was just the manager.

BARBARA: I see.

EARL: And he was an absentee owner, pretty much. So he just hired people.

BARBARA: And how many people did it take to run these different places that you had?

EARL: Well most of the time on that ranch, other than haying time, when we had a hay crew, you know, up to six or seven people, most of the time we operated it with three people. Myself and two others.

BARBARA: Who have you had work for you then?

EARL: Well I've had this young fellow that, as I told you came when he was a junior in high school, that is now a veterinary in Portland. I had him for eight years, and his name is Dr. McNeil, Kirk McNeil. Then I had Scott Swindlehurst for a good portion of that time, which he now works for, runs a ranch for Mr. Nelson in Izee.

BARBARA: And now, who do you have helping?

EARL: I don't have any, no hired help now. Only in haying, me and my brother, Joe helps me hay. So we can't get mad at the crew, because it's not very big. (Laughter)

BARBARA: You mentioned when you first started out, after the service, you had the place on Rye Grass that your father had purchased, and Joe was working there. Has he always just done ranching, or has he been in other businesses too?

EARL: No, as soon as Dad disposed of the property, Joe contracted hay for a while. And then he became a certified appraiser and worked for the county for several years. And then went back to contracting hay until he retired.

DOROTHEA: Is he retired now, or does he still work part time?

EARL: Yes. No, he's retired.

DOROTHEA: He's retired.

BARBARA: Just sends Ruby off.

EARL: That's right. And he helps me when I'm haying, he's semi-retired.

DOROTHEA: Well I think he keeps pretty busy out there too, because I see him working



a lot.

EARL: Oh yeah, a putterer, you bet.

DOROTHEA: Let's go back again and talk a little bit more about your dad as a grocery person. What, where did they get their meat and supplies at that time?

EARL: Well at that time most of the, let's say canned good merchandise, and at that time why there was lots of bulk flour, we bought it by the barrel. Most of that merchandise came in by train. All of the canned goods, all of the fifty pound sacks of flour, there was lots of bulk beans, and soaps and that kind of stuff all came by rail. And of course we would get, to get a rate on it to where you could be competitive, why we would order, Dad would order several car loads. And it came normally three times a year, or sometimes four. Well that was a big chore to gather that off the train and take it to the store and get it unloaded. The meats was handled directly, and most of it came by truck, after federal inspection came. Before that, why a lot of it was local. But once federal inspection was required, and we didn't have a federal inspector here, so you couldn't buy it here so it had to come from, most of the time from Ontario.

DOROTHEA: What was it like --- nowadays we see old pictures on movies and things like this, where they had barrels in their store, and really not what we would call very sanitary today.

EARL: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Is that how it was worked at that time?

EARL: Yeah, barrels of vinegar, barrels of cider, and those kind of things all come in big wooden barrels.

BARBARA: Bring your own container and fill it up?

EARL: Yeah, bring your own container. Or, if you didn't have one, they always had some --- lots of things like that were, bars of soap would come in huge boxes with a thousand

bars, and you wrapped them four in a package, and done that yourself after it arrived here.

DOROTHEA: And you did that yourself?

EARL: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Did it have papers that come with it, or ---

EARL: No, you just had wrapping paper that you would wrap four bars, or six or whatever was customary at the time. Lots of bulk beans, rice, all dried fruits. There was lots of bulk of that kind of stuff.

DOROTHEA: And that's how Safeway was too?

EARL: Uh huh, yes.

DOROTHEA: Of course you were too young to remember much then. But I mean, I can remember the old Safeway Store and how crooked the floor was, and everything. Is that how it was when your dad

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EARL: Yeah, yeah, it was. And of course in them days when a customer walked in the store you addressed them, you had a sales pad in your hand, and you took down their order, what they wanted, and then you went and gathered it up while the customer waited, and put it in a box and run it through the register. So the customer, it wasn't any self service such as we know it today.

BARBARA: There wasn't five or six or seven different brands of one item like we have to choose from today?

EARL: No, no.

BARBARA: You mentioned unloading things three or four times a year off the train. At any time did you work for your dad in the grocery store before you went to ranching, as you got older?

EARL: Oh yeah, oh yeah. You know when we were big enough we were required to come home from school and go to the store. And there was all --- at that time they had a real adequate delivery service. And most of the orders were called in on the telephone, and you took them down, and put them up, and the delivery truck delivered them all over town.

BARBARA: Was there a charge for that, or was that just expected?

EARL: No, that was just expected. And the roads were terrible then, you know, the streets were really in bad shape. So in the spring of the year normally that was a challenge. But I'd say at that, in those times there was probably at least seventy percent of the groceries were delivered to homes. It was a big items.

DOROTHEA: Even when I was going to school still, that was a big item.

BARBARA: So what did you do in the store to help? Did you sweep the floor?

EARL: Well just stock shelves, yeah. Put up merchandise and that kind of stuff. And when we got, of course, able to run the delivery truck, then that was some of our jobs was to deliver groceries throughout.

BARBARA: Well if the customer, if you took the order as they came in, did you have a back room, a warehouse where things were, or did you have most of the merchandise up front?

EARL: Most of it you got off of the shelf that was up front, and just run it through the cash register and boxed it. The box of groceries went to the back room and you loaded the delivery truck.

BARBARA: So there wasn't a lot of impulse buying as people came in like they do now?

EARL: No, no.

DOROTHEA: Did they do a lot of large buying like twenty pounds of flour, and fifty pounds of flour, and twenty pounds of ---

EARL: Yeah, yeah. Especially in the outlying districts where, of course they didn't have hardly any roads and they were difficult. So they would, normally like the South End of the county would really come to town three times a year to --- and you know, strange as it may seem, we delivered some of them down there with, you know, a truck load.

DOROTHEA: Did they have stores, like say at Princeton and Diamond at that time?

EARL: They had some. Most of those were, didn't have very big, a variety of items, but they had some basics, you know, like flour and shortening, and lard and that kind of stuff. But they didn't have much variety. They got into some more canned vegetables and canned fruits later. But of course no perishable items. So we had a good produce in later years, once the trucks started running out of California, we had good produce. But it came once a week.

DOROTHEA: Did it take him that --- say is that where Hobe started?

EARL: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Did it take him a week to travel that?

EARL: Yeah, it took him a week to go to San Francisco pick it up, and he had some small stops coming through Lakeview and like Alkali Lake and there, and went clear on to John Day and around to Prairie City and then back. And by the time you had done all of that delivering, and drove from San Francisco and then drove back, why it took a week.

BARBARA: Was you mother involved in any of the store business?

EARL: No.

BARBARA: She basically just stayed home with the family?

EARL: Basically a home keeper. Active in a lot of civic organizations like the Mother's Club, and that kind of stuff. But basically she ---

DOROTHEA: Sagebrush ---

EARL: Basically just a homemaker.

DOROTHEA: I never understood where they got the name of the Sagebrush Club. I guess that was a good name.

EARL: I guess.

BARBARA: Was that, what kind of club was that?

EARL: Well it was just a civic organization, kind of like the Mother's Club.

DOROTHEA: They kind of talked like, about their embroidery work, and that kind of thing. Just had meetings, I don't know what they really did.

EARL: Well they sponsored some kind of civic activities at times. I think it was probably, was like you say, a visitation more than anything else.

DOROTHEA: Did she, was she active in PTA, or any of that?

EARL: No, she wasn't really active, too active in that kind of stuff. Of course in them days in athletics we didn't have buses, so they took private cars. And she was almost always a driver of a private car, because of course Dad was running the business and couldn't go at times. And so we just, you know, you just had people that donated their automobiles and the driver to drive them. And it took so many automobiles to take so many kids to Bend, or wherever we was going. And that's how it was done. And no charge by the way.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, I think Truxton Dalton was one of those persons that took carloads of kids all over.

EARL: Yeah.

BARBARA: I've hauled a few cheerleaders around in my day too.

EARL: Sure, true.

BARBARA: And were they involved in church activities too?

EARL: Yes, yeah, quite involved in church activities. Dad and Mom both were active members of the Church of Christ and helped establish it here. Was involved pretty much

at the time of their death.

DOROTHEA: They helped establish it, you're talking like --- I do know that they got a new church built.

EARL: Uh huh. Yeah, they were instrumental in getting a preacher to come, a regular preacher, and getting the building built, you know, with some outside assistance of course.

DOROTHEA: Is that building still active?

EARL: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Is it?

EARL: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Well on back then, let's jump up to where we are now. You've been active in sports; you're a very avid sports person. Can you tell us some of the things you've done that way.

EARL: Well, of course as Barbara mentioned, that you come along, always been interested in sports. So all through the years that the school had had a good strong sports program, with the proper teachers or coaches, that you had a school that had less trouble throughout, and the community had less troubles. So begin to put some emphasis on there, and pledged, you know, four years of football when I was there. And had an opportunity to do some studying while I was in radio school at the University of Wisconsin with their coaching staff. So I had some knowledge of it. So Burns at that time was just kind of a floor mat for the whole league, and the whole area. And really didn't see any reason for that if we had, you know, felt all along that we had capable kids here, just like they did any place else, if we had the proper instructions, that we can improve that. So became active and supportive.

And when John McCormick was hired, why he came out of North Dakota State

with a real active scouting program to assist young people. So he asked me if I would be interested in that. So I did that for ten years for the high school. And I really enjoyed it, it was a challenge. And some things I didn't like about it, because I didn't get to see very many ball games, because when the kids were playing I was scouting the next opponent, most of the time. But it was, and I just felt that if it assisted the kids, well I was more than paid. So I done that for ten years.

BARBARA: I know you were scouting during the time that my boys were playing, and they appreciated that immensely.

EARL: Yeah. Yeah, it was challenging, interesting, and I hope profitable. But it appeared to be that way. You know where they had real competitive teams in that ten years, and went to the state playoffs, what several times.

DOROTHEA: That's what I was going to say; we've got to the state several times. So, including our class was one of the top teams in football and basketball both.

BARBARA: And of course I know you were involved with Booster Club a lot of years.

EARL: Yeah.

BARBARA: I was an officer right along with you for a long time, I know. And we got a lot accomplished during that time.

EARL: Yeah, really did.

BARBARA: We got a new field, football field. We basically went up there on Sundays, blustery days, put up the fence. We built dugouts; we formed the plans for the stadium itself, put up scoreboards.

EARL: And that just shows, you know, what can happen.

BARBARA: Volunteer work.

DOROTHEA: Are you talking about the Corbett Field?

EARL: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: I needed to get the name in there.

BARBARA: Oh, okay. Are we about ready to turn over (tape)?

DOROTHEA: Yeah. During this time, how did you manage to do this and still run your ranch?

EARL: Good question. Even at the time I was still working for Congressman Smith --- So when Coach McCormick asked me if I would I said, "Well, you know, I'd be interested but I'd have to clear that with Congressman Smith." And I did that with his blessings. And, you know, that was one of the good things I really appreciated about him. Because if I was going to scout at Mac Hi on Friday night, I wasn't worth much Saturday when I got back, you know. So, but he was very understanding and very supportive. And I never stayed overnight; I always come back and worked some the next day. Sometimes it wasn't real early, but ---

DOROTHEA: Did Verda travel with you when you went on these trips?

EARL: No.

DOROTHEA: Did you go by yourself?

EARL: Most of the time I went by myself. I found out it was, not that I didn't like company, but if you could sit down immediately after the contest and fill out your scouting report, it was more fresh in your mind, there was no distractions, and so that's the way I done it. And then I had a meeting with the coaching staff on Sunday night so they could be ready for the following week's practice. And so to have that ready, I just needed time to do that. And I tried to do it just as soon after the ball game as I could do it. Most of the time I'd just go to a restaurant and have a cup of coffee.

McCormick was, because he had scouted for North Dakota State, was very good, because he had some forms that made it abbreviated. It was a little hard to get down, because he coded everything. I could stand on the sidelines and write all this information



down, and if you were the opponent you wouldn't have any idea what I was writing because it was all coded. He knew what it was, but nobody else would know. So, once we got that down --- But Congressman Smith was very understanding, very supportive.

BARBARA: And you scouted for Dick Cloud too when he was coach.

EARL: Oh yes, uh huh. And he was very good, you know. I really liked them all, and I think they were, as a rule, really quite capable and quite dedicated people.

DOROTHEA: Who has taken your place?

EARL: I don't really know, Dorothy, I don't think anybody. I think Coach Graham is occasionally sending some of the staff, if they're available. And the way the scheduling is nowadays, some of them are having games on Friday night, and some of them on Saturday. So he is able to go a considerable amount of the time. He, by the way, has asked me to --- But I thought, well I've served my time.

DOROTHEA: This probably ---

BARBARA: And they send videos around where they didn't do that early on too, so they can watch, the teams can watch the films.

EARL: Yeah, see that was illegal when I was scouting, you couldn't do that, you couldn't film.

DOROTHEA: So they couldn't watch the game, yeah.

BARBARA: So everyone does that now.

EARL: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Let's pause for a moment while we turn the tape.

EARL: Okay.

SIDE B

DOROTHEA: Okay, we're back on.

BARBARA: How many years were you involved actively with the Booster Club, do you remember?

EARL: No, I don't remember. I'd say ten years, Barbara.

BARBARA: And did you ever go in and talk to the boys at meetings when you were scouting?

EARL: Yeah, at times.

BARBARA: Did they have questions of you?

EARL: Yeah, you know, the coach would ask me to appear, and an individual might have a technical question about, without getting too technical, whether the tackle slanted down, or closed down, or what he done, or what he tended to do. What we tried to do is get tendencies. What a team would like to do in a certain situation. And so we wrote down every play that they run, and every situation. Where they were, what down it was, what the distance was to go so we could get a tendency of what they liked to do in situations. And then, you know, as you say that brought forth particular questions about what another team would do. So they would ask me to just come in and give the kids an opportunity to ask a question, whatever they wanted. But it was a real close knit, and you know I knew kids appreciated it being done, and so it was obvious that it was paying off. And the team got better, and better, and better as it went along. And, you know, the whole system, it got a lot of kids involved that necessarily in the past hadn't been involved because they'd been losers, and now all at once they are winners. Found out they could win, and did win, and the whole thing just elevated.

BARBARA: Okay, some of the other things that you have been involved with over the years, one thing you became a County Commissioner. Can you tell us something about your, why you got involved in politics, and how you got involved. Who might have encouraged you to do this, or you felt it was a duty, or what happened there?

EARL: Well, I got involved first with the Education Service District, or the ESD Board. And that was a board at that time that kind of controlled all of education in Harney County. Because it was, the county was an equalized area. All the money came to the ESD and it was apportioned out. Well that opportunity to study budgets, and incomes, and receipts, and expenditures, I was encouraged to look at the commissioner thing. Because there was some dissatisfaction of the direction it was going, and so, you know --- I have always had the feeling that if you don't want to get involved, why you don't really have the right to complain, so I got involved.

BARBARA: Keep your mouth shut.

EARL: So I did that. But it was interesting, and I think productive.

DOROTHEA: Who were some, both of the judges? Did you work under Newt Hotchkiss?

EARL: No, no. I worked under, only Dale White. And Frank White was the other commissioner.

BARBARA: What are some of the things that you felt were accomplished during your time of service?

EARL: Well I think mainly, you know, the court is responsible for, physically responsible for all of the receipts that comes into the county. And of course within that includes timber receipts, and 25% of that goes to schools, and so you are influential in that department. The other thing I felt that, you know, we needed a five-year, or at least a five-year, and probably a twenty-year program on our road system. That we needed a system that we were going to eventually see a paved road from here clear to the South End of the county. So people living a hundred and fifty miles away could at least come and bring their product to town, and it was an all weather road. So we started in on those kind of things, and I think, you know, that's been accomplished and now we have some of them and it continues to improve, roads.

Statutorily the law says there has to be a commissioner on the board of equalization. Which in fact is the group that evaluates taxes. And the most important thing about taxes is equality. Is like property being taxed the same, or is there inequities where this property is being valued at so much, and this property which is like it is being valued way less. And so I was appointed to serve in that area. And it took six years really to get that, along with the department of revenue and instruction, to get that equity into taxation.

Of course the basic thing is, is to, you know, see --- At that time, you know, we had a hospital that was really struggling. We were putting two to six hundred thousand dollars a year into it, to supplement it so it could stay open. I was then, and still am, convinced that, you know, we need a hospital. And so I supported that supplement. It was unpopular at times to, you know, talk about the management and so forth and so on. But that takes away nothing. To me, as far as I'm concerned, is you needed; I needed to support the hospital.

Doctors and hospital districts every place told me that there is situations where you just don't have time to get people, if you're hemorrhaging from whatever the cause, you just don't have time to get to Bend. You have to have that capability here. And the other thing, you know, we have more and more older people that are living longer in here, and that's a real service to those people. I just felt that to have a viable community you have to have a hospital, I still feel that way.

BARBARA: That's right.

DOROTHEA: Well I for one, personally, know that their staff performs 100% better now than they did ten years ago. I think that we have better educated people, and better working relations.

EARL: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: I think probably you gained a lot right there.

EARL: Oh yeah.

DOROTHEA: How long were you a commissioner?

EARL: Eight years, two terms.

DOROTHEA: Two terms. Did you miss it when you first got out of it?

EARL: Yeah, I missed it. I tell you what, I don't think you can do the job justice by spending only the time that's required, and that's twice a month when the court meets. You just can't do the job justice. So I spent considerable more time than that just to try to become knowledgeable and affective. I would like, person-ally like to see that changed. I would like the commissioners --- because things are so much more involved now with so much more regulations, so much more pass through money in home health, and all of those kinds of things, that I really think it is a full time job. It will require as much time as you will give it, and then some, if you want to give it to them. You know I had a little ranch to run, and it was a problem, because I was the only one there. And when I wasn't there, the work didn't go on, on the ranch. And I probably sacrificed the ranch in some areas. But, you know, the best interest of Harney County is what I served for, and, you know, as long as you have that feeling I think that you are all right.

BARBARA: Is there anyone in particular that encouraged you to get into politics? Bob Smith ever say anything to you?

EARL: Well really --- Yeah, you know, he just made the statement that, you know, you don't really have any say, any reason to complain if you're not willing to get involved and try to improve it. And that's kind of the basis of the thing.

DOROTHEA: Were you working for Bob at the time that you first ran?

EARL: Yeah, just barely. I left soon after that. He changed his operation.

BARBARA: What were the years that you were a commissioner?

EARL: '80 to '88. '80 through '88, yeah.

BARBARA: And during that time you were also on the Advisory Board for BLM, is that right?

EARL: Uh huh.

BARBARA: Okay, what did you learn from that little experience?

EARL: Well, you know, that's the same thing and it's --- we had a nice relationship. Half of the revenue that comes off of grazing fees comes back to the county, and it's earmarked for improvements, for grazing improvements, whether it is a fence, or stock water, or --- So you had the opportunity to work with good people, like Ev Lofgren (with BLM), and those people that were knowledgeable about what was needed, and you had the responsibility to dedicate that money towards that effort. And that's what we did. And people were of one mind, you know, over here for range improvement, and that's what we earmarked it for, and that's what we tried to do. And we worked with good people that were on the range every day, that were well informed and knowledgeable about what was the best thing to do. And it has been a very productive thing.

BARBARA: Do you feel that it's, the Advisory Boards are good for districts, BLM districts to have?

EARL: Oh yeah, I really do.

BARBARA: That you get some input from the community then?

EARL: Yes. Yeah, I really do.

DOROTHEA: How do you feel that the mill closing now is going to affect our school system, and our town?

EARL: Oh, it's going to impact it terrifically, you know. That domino effect of that, of losing that many jobs is --- plus the income off of forest receipts, that 25% goes to the school, and 75% to the road department, is going to be dramatic. We need to manage

our natural resources, that's all we have in the West, and if we're not going to manage them in --- It's just absolutely criminal. So it's going to vitally impact.

Well I am optimistic, you know, I think they are going to get Frenchglen sold, and I think it is going to be operated. They have a couple people on line already that are interested, one fellow out of Emmett, Idaho, or Weiser. I think if we can resolve the problem of managing, or getting forests released so we can manage them and harvest those, we need not cut a green tree for five years if we start in today. We need to get that resolved.

Now I firmly believe that with this natural resource here we are going to have a sawmill here. Now I don't think it is going to be, as we have known it, I think it is going to be a modern, small log sawmill; it's going to be highly efficient. But I think they are going to cut logs here if we get this management problem of releasing these timber sales. I think that is going to come. We have to manage natural resources. It's criminal not to manage them. I think we have to go back to the sustained yield philosophy that we had through the many, many good years of where we'll go into an area and we'll cut the diseased and undesirables, and the mature trees, and leave the young trees. And we'll plant that understudy after we leave, and we'll go back in ten years and log it again, and in ten years log it again, and that's perpetual if we manage it. But we have to manage it. In the meantime it's going to be very difficult to finance road departments and schools. It's just ---

DOROTHEA: Well right now from what I hear, that it's going to go back to the time when we'll be plowing our own roads because the county doesn't have the money to plow the rural roads. And the state is in the same situation.

EARL: Yeah, I think the county road department today has enough reserves that they can maintain about the present level of maintenance. They will not have enough funds to

do any additional paving. That's a hundred thousand dollars a mile, that's expensive to do. I think that they're going to be able to maintain about this level as far as maintenance, blading roads and blah, blah, until we get this natural resource thing solved. I think we're going to solve it. I think the people are going to demand ---

Now all you have to do at the Congress level at this point is to change, or amend, you don't have to do away with it, you just amend the Endangered Species Act a little bit, and you're going to change the whole philosophy of this thing. If Congress acts on that, and I'm going to be optimistic enough to think that they're going to. So I, you know, it's going to be tough here for a while, but I think that we're going to come through it.

The thing we need in this community, as we all know, we need a little more diversity as far as our economic base is concerned. It's timber, or secondary timber, or agriculture. And if we had a little more diversity --- now I don't think those things are out of consideration. If you had a computer chip plant here, freight is not a problem, because you can put a million dollars worth on a little truck. So some of those special things I think we need to look for, and give the incentive that we can draw some of those things.

And I think, you know, one of the requirements of industry when I was commissioner was, we need, we want, one of the requests is we want a college close. We want trained young people. We want educated young people. This new thing at the high school now is making ---

BARBARA: This EdNet thing.

EARL: Yeah. It is going to make some of that available. I think that's going to help us. It's going to take awhile, but that's going to help us, those kinds of things that they look for. Of course incentives and tax breaks in the State of Oregon is unlawful, so you've got to go some other direction. The law says that the county can own the land, they can even own the business, but they cannot operate it, it's against the law. So, but there is



numerous incentives that you can do to invite some kind of light industry, or manufacturer of something that freight is not an issue.

BARBARA: Everything has to be trucked in and out of here ---

EARL: Yeah.

BARBARA: --- because we lost our rail system, so --- But trucking is pretty much the mainstay of the country anymore, anyway.

EARL: Yes, it is. And it's not a problem with those kind of light industry, or light things, because you can, you know, you can put a hundred, two or three hundred thousand dollars worth of computer chips, you know, on a little truck. So it's not a major problem.

DOROTHEA: Do you feel that there is a chance of us getting some kind of an industry like that?

EARL: Yeah, I do.

DOROTHEA: What would be the draw to that kind of people to this area?

EARL: Well number one, we have land. Number two we have adequate water. Number three we don't have all of the problems that the urban or the inner city has as far as crime and blah, blah, blah. And more and more industry are looking to get away from those kind of problems. So if we have the labor force, and I think once we get the industry here, we will get the labor force. We have some of course available now with the displacing of these jobs that are --- But I think that the high-tech more and more, you know, in the secondary timber industry is, they do everything with the wood, you know, even the bark anymore. So those more technical things such as, instead of plywood, is different kind of boards, you know. So I think those things are going to come too, but I think there is going to be some other kind of industry.

BARBARA: Well I think most every community has found that it's become vital that they do that.

EARL: Yeah.

BARBARA: You can't rely on one, or even two things in a community and survive. You have to have something else. And our school systems are going to really hurt if we don't do something else.

EARL: Oh yeah.

BARBARA: The classroom sizes are going to expand, our good teachers are not going to put up with that and are going to leave. You know you can't have forty kids in a primary class and expect to get anything done. So, you know, they're going to be hurting for money for a while I'm afraid.

EARL: Well, and I notice on Boise television right now, Intel you know is going to build a new thirty million dollar plant. And Vale is one of the cities in Oregon that's really been after it, you know. They want, they said we want a hundred acres of land at least. We need a large supply of water, and I don't know why a computer chip company would need a large supply of water, but they need that. So those incentives --- and there is of course several cities in Idaho that are really after it. You know they're starting out with a thirty million dollar plant with four thousand employees, just --- Of course we couldn't handle that if it was offered today. But we can handle an offshoot of that by some company like Boeing, you know, is expanding all the time now. And they're starting to get out of Tacoma and Seattle into areas like this. If you're making, you know, the radio system for a 727, or something like that, smaller engine, it's an offshoot from that. But they get away from that problem. And, you know, let's face it, they're getting a lot of incentive from communities, saying hey, you know, we want you, we're willing to provide some incentives. But I think it's coming.

DOROTHEA: Do you work with the city, PRIDE, or any of that?

EARL: No, I haven't. I've been involved with the Stewards of the Range, because I've

been concerned about the direction that, you know, the Department of Interior has been going on some of their philosophy and those kind of things. And so it seems to me that we're a people of extremes. We're either here, or here, and we belong here in the middle, but the only time we're there is when we're crossing from one extreme to the other.

(Laughter) And so

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DOROTHEA: Well that's the problem right now is these kids that are going to school to learn range management, and things like that, are getting out, like we were so many years ago again, and not having a job.

EARL: Yes.

DOROTHEA: And not having one even open, because they've cut down on the employees, they've cut down on their money.

EARL: Well you see there again, if you're not going to manage your natural resources, whether it is grass, or whether it is timber, you don't need all these people. If they're not going to cut any trees, or harvest the grass, you don't need these people. We need to manage those things, and manage them right, you know. And that opens up jobs. You don't do that by restricting. And I think that's what you have to learn is government. And that's what people really said in the last election. We don't want more government, we don't want more regulations, we want less. Turn us loose, let us do --- When you turn us loose and don't burden us with these regulations we will provide jobs, we will do things. I don't know of a rancher, if he makes money, that don't spend it. I guarantee he'll spend it, or anybody else, if he's making money, he'll do those --- That's what creates jobs, not more government regulations. We just have to get away from that philosophy.

But it's scary, because at this point we have so many people that are on the other side saying take care of me, and I don't want to do anything, just take care of me. And its

become a burden that there is not enough of us paying to pay for that. We have to change it, and I think we're going to change it.

BARBARA: Okay, let's maybe talk about some of the other things that you have been involved with.

EARL: Okay.

BARBARA: Library Board, you mentioned once here about the ESD, you worked with the ESD.

EARL: Yeah, ESD I felt was very important because as I said, all the money came to the ESD and they distribute it out to every school district in the community. So that's why I got involved. Now the law has changed, and there is no more --- there is an ESD but there is no more equalization. And since the people of the community have voted in for, to consolidate the school districts in Burns and Hines. That was a very important thing then, because you had a kid at Denio that was entitled to an education just like a kid at Burns. So, and that's what equalization said. You had the only school district in the nation at this level that had a dorm, you know. It is terribly expensive. At one time you could almost send a kid to Harvard for what it was costing to send a kid to Crane. So, but ---

BARBARA: So how much does a family have to pay to have their children board at Crane?

EARL: Nothing.

BARBARA: Oh, I did not realize that.

EARL: See that's what equalization does.

BARBARA: Wow, that is pretty spendy.

EARL: So what happened, the people of Burns and Hines was paying a considerable amount of the bill for the kid at Crane. Because when I first went on the board it cost them \$2000 to educate a student at Burns, and it was costing \$10,000 to educate a kid at

Crane.

DOROTHEA: One student?

EARL: One student. It's more than that now. So --- Well all I wanted was --- there was some terrible inequities. And let me give you an example. You put a kid on a bus at Crane and you send him to Culver to wrestle, and he got everything paid for. He got a steak for dinner, and blah, blah, blah, and motel. But you put a kid on it this time, you put a kid on the bus at Burns and send him to Madras to wrestle, he ain't getting anything.

BARBARA: You sent money from home, or you sent a sack lunch.

EARL: You sent money, and you sent a sack lunch, and so forth and so on. I said, "Well I don't care how we're going to do this, but we're going to do it fair. If we're going to pay all of that student's expenses at Crane, then we're going to do it for the Burns kids. Now if we're not going to do it for Burns kids, then we're not going to do it for Crane kids." Well of course that made for some interesting discussions. But anyway we worked through those things and took the equity, the inequities out of those things.

Equalization said, we're not going to be involved in numerous things, and they had a list, and one of them was capitol outlay. Citizens of Burns are not going to help you build a school at Crane. By the same token the citizens of Crane are not going to help you build a school at Burns. Well, because that's equalized money, and that's a local district's responsibility. Well that wasn't happening. The people of Burns and Hines paid for, or helped pay for \$150,000 vo-ag building at Crane. And I said, "It's not right. That's a local district's responsibility." Well, we got those things resolved. And, you know, it was kind of controversial, of course. But that was mostly, at that time was, an administrative thing. But anyway, we got those kind of things handled. But it just took somebody that was interested enough to dig into it, and it took some digging. School finance is very, very difficult.

BARBARA: There are an awful lot of people that don't understand what the ESD Board did, what it was there for, and exactly how our monies were spent in the area.

EARL: That's right, that's right.

BARBARA: You just assume that you pay your money here, that it is going to take care of your kids here, and not all over the place.

EARL: Yep.

BARBARA: And how long were you with the ESD Board?

EARL: Eight years.

BARBARA: Eight years. During the same time that you were commissioner?

EARL: Uh huh. Well the last four years, I said well it's, you know, its really kind of becoming a conflict. Because, you know, I was responsible one thing over here is forest receipts, and 25% of that is going to schools. And so I have a voice there, or a responsibility there. Now all of a sudden I got a responsibility here at the ESD level, I shouldn't do that. And so I resigned from the ESD Board.

DOROTHEA: It's kind of like playing pinochle, and walk around and look at everybody's hand, and then you're trying to help this one learn.

EARL: Yeah, that's right.

DOROTHEA: Say, well play this card because that one is going to help you.

EARL: Yeah.

BARBARA: And you've been on the Library Board, I think you're on your second term now?

EARL: Yeah.

BARBARA: And what made you interested in doing that?

EARL: Well just the ---

BARBARA: A continuation on?

EARL: Yeah, just the same thing, being community minded enough to think, you know, that it is important to the community to have a good library. It's important to school kids. It's just one of those things that you can serve and do things. You know, it's --- we got a new roof.

BARBARA: Amen.

EARL: That was a problem, a problem upon problem.

DOROTHEA: Maybe we need you on the Historical Society.

EARL: And, you know, I just finally said, you know, let's don't continue to do this, you know. Because it is not working, and let's just get it done, let's just put a false roof on it, and put a metal roof on it and stop this because --- got that done. And it's been a progressive board, I've really liked the board, you know. A lot of this new tape books, you know, that you can read while you're going on a trip, and those kind of things. So it's a progressive board, and yet it has been conservative enough, and it's done a lot of community minded things. And it's just one of those things I think is worthwhile serving on.

BARBARA: Okay. What other organizations have you belonged to, and what do you like to do for fun things that you are involved with?

EARL: Well of course I'm still involved in athletics. I don't participate much anymore, but I like to attend, and root, and so forth and so on. But like I say, I'm involved in the Board of Equalization again. The law has changed; you no longer have to be a commissioner on it. And Lee Wallace didn't like it because the main job of the Board of Equalization now is to look at appeals that people send in, and petitions about the value that you receive, and try to resolve those problems. And they asked me if I'd serve, just because I was experienced in it. And I said, "Yeah, it's a community thing, I'll serve." I'm not qualified yet, because now the law says you have to go to school for four or five hours or

something like that before you can be certified. So I have to do that. But I'm going to be involved in that.

But like I said I've been appointed by the court to assist in the new county comprehensive plan update. And that's the whole ramification of everything that is going on in the county, land use. And as I said, I'm involved in Stewards of the Range, those kind of things that are interested in grazing, and timber, and those kind of things. So on and on.

DOROTHEA: So what do you do in your spare time?

EARL: Yeah. That's what my wife says, "You get on another board ---"

BARBARA: So what do you and Verda like to do? Do you travel at all?

EARL: No, we really don't. We haven't done very much traveling because, you know, as Dorothy knows it's, springtime it's calving, summertime it's haying, and the fall of the year it's gathering the cows, and in the winter it's feeding. So there really isn't much time, and the operation hasn't been big enough that it could afford a hired hand. So it's been, you know, just kind of stay there. So, you know, we haven't done very much. And we hope to change that. I'll be, you know, as the date says, I'll be 70 years old in August, so ---

BARBARA: Going to slow down a little bit maybe, and have a little fun along the way?

EARL: Yeah, that's what we are going to try to do.

BARBARA: So for enjoyment you take Verda out for dinner, is that about it?

EARL: Oh yeah, that's about it at this point.

BARBARA: Do you like to go out for dinner?

EARL: Oh yes.

BARBARA: Make the rounds.

EARL: Yeah, we do, you know, quite a lot of that. And until just recently, we, she has



always loved to dance, and so we've been, square danced a lot. A lot of dancing. And then of course when Ted was involved in playing in places, that was another incentive to hang around. So we went quite often.

BARBARA: You go to watch him perform and that sort of thing?

EARL: Yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Is he still playing?

EARL: No, Randy Graven was on, and Randy moved to Boise so they --- and they were kind of burned out, so I think they just backed off for a while. They'll probably start up again if they can get another guitar player here.

DOROTHEA: Well Jim doesn't play guitar, lead?

EARL: Yeah, but they need a base.

DOROTHEA: Oh, they need a base.

BARBARA: Is Ted home with you again?

EARL: Yes.

BARBARA: So Verda gets a chance to do a little mothering again?

EARL: Oh, yes, and bossing too.

DOROTHEA: And a little cooking?

EARL: Yeah, a lot of cooking.

DOROTHEA: I understand you have a couple big dogs at your house also.

EARL: Oh yeah, yeah. He inherited the dogs, and then we inherited the dogs.

DOROTHEA: That's the way that goes.

EARL: Yeah, that's the way that goes.

BARBARA: Are there some things that you would like to get involved in that you haven't done yet? Some areas that you would really like to get in and stir up?

EARL: Well, you know, not really. I think that this comprehensive plan update is a vitally

important area. It's an area that has to be approved by the court, and then has to be approved by the state. But if you can get that accomplished, the comprehensive plan that is the county comprehensive plan has stood the test in court throughout the state. So if you can get those things that you want done in this comprehensive plan, then I think you have accomplished quite a lot as far as getting them to withstand appeals and so forth. So that's what we're trying to do when we update this comprehensive plan.

BARBARA: Who else is involved in this project?

EARL: Well of course the court is involved, because it has to be approved by them. But they've appointed, they've hired an attorney by the name of Ron Yokum who has done a lot of work in this area to kind of oversee. And this is a committee made up of kind of a cross-section of people. Some in agriculture, some in timber, some in, some professional people from, like Section Five and Game Commission and so forth. Because all of these items are --- so it's kind of a cross-section. I think it is an eight or nine man board, eight or nine-person board. (Laughter)

BARBARA: There you go.

EARL: But I, you know, I think it is, you know ---

BARBARA: Do you meet on a weekly or monthly basis?

EARL: No, we, normally on a monthly basis. And this thing is, to tell you how far reaching, it doesn't have to be approved until the year 2000, so it's going to go along quite awhile. And that bothers me that it can string out that long. Because there are some things I think it is important to ---

BARBARA: Need to be done before four years?

EARL: Yeah, yeah.

BARBARA: Well 2000 isn't, like only four, or five years away. It's not ---

EARL: That's right. And, you know, one of the issues is, you know, water. Another is,

you know, land use, and another is the economy. We need to be addressing that today, you know.

BARBARA: Or we may not be here four years down the road.

EARL: That's right. I said let's don't wait until the year 2000 to start, '98 to start talking about the economy. There may not be anything to talk about. So I think it's worthwhile.

DOROTHEA: Are there any things that we haven't discussed that you'd like to bring up?

EARL: Well not really that I can think of.

DOROTHEA: Would you like to see it go back more in our county to like it was thirty years ago?

EARL: Well, to a point. I, you know, I think one of two things. I don't think you can stand still. I think you're either going to go back, or you're going to go ahead. Now I'd like to see us progressive, but I'd like to see it stable. I don't really, would not like to see the county, you know, run out here and make a big splurge and not have it stable, and not have it last very long. I think a slow reliable steady growth, but we do need some variety as we spoke in industry to our economy base. And we can work towards that.

The other thing is we just have to; we just have to do some-thing about our natural resources. That's really the only things we got going for us. You know there is those that think it can be accomplished from tourism.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

EARL: And I think you're going to see more and more of that, and I think that's part of the steady growth that we can absorb and not ruin our community. The thing that concerns me, and that I think that I have seen in other communities, is they went out after industry, or to try to build their economy, and they ruined the very thing they were trying to save. Now I think that you have to be concerned about that. Or I am concerned about it. I look back and I see Steens Mountain as I knew it 60 years ago, and I see it today where its

been promoted, and promoted, and to me they have ruined it. And they're trying to ruin it even more so by modernizing it until you get so many people there you don't want to go. I don't think that we should ruin the very thing we try to save. A lot of us live here because of the small community, and it's a good place to raise kids, and blah, blah, blah. I don't want to ruin that. At the same time I think we have to be progressive enough that we can accept industry or whatever it is on a stable basis, rather than just try to go wild. That's just an opinion. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Well what I was getting at is, I mean, you know, it seems like 30 years ago that we weren't really hurting as far as community was concerned. We had teachers, we had doctors, we had the hospital. Now we're having to fight every inch to have any of these things.

EARL: Yeah, well I sure would.

BARBARA: That's because the mill was stable at that time. The money was always coming in.

EARL: Yeah.

BARBARA: Now, a few years back the mill was sold, and we were in a really down period for a number of years. We just got built up again, and then we have the problem again. So we just can't base our whole community's, whether it's going to go or not, on one thing. Because it just affects everyone.

EARL: No, like I said, I think this thing is going to resolve. I think it's going to take some time. I think the factory is going to sell, and they're even talking about another twenty employees if this guy buys it. And that is going to help. And I honestly think that with the raw material, and this thing setting up here, in these forests, that you have to manage them. And to do that, this is the proper place to cut the logs because this is the cheapest way to get them there and manufacture them. I think that somebody is going to cut logs

right here in Hines. Now I don't think it's going to be the 1200 people we were used to, you know, through the years past, it's going to be a small log mill, it's going to be highly efficient, highly technical. But out of that comes a lot of other things.

And I think if you see us go back to managed forests, and managed grazing and these things, you see a lot more things happening. The first thing you do when you start to cut logs, you talk about the Allison's and all of those gypo loggers starting--- you know they've got a million dollars worth of equipment, and they hire ten or twelve guys, or eight or six, or whatever, and that's what makes a community, not a big plant necessarily, but lots of little businesses. That's what makes a community, really. And I'd like to see it go --- I think we have to go back to manage our natural resources. But I think they're going to do that.

DOROTHEA: So with this, we are getting a little blinker light again, that means our tape is coming to an end. If you think we can go on to another tape, we will do that. If not, we'll stop ---

EARL: I don't know what we'd say.

DOROTHEA: --- and do a video, and kind of go over some of the same things that we have done. But we would like to thank you so much for your time.

EARL: Sure, my pleasure.

DOROTHEA: And spending the afternoon with you. And we've enjoyed visiting with you.

EARL: Sure, my pleasure.

BARBARA: Thanks, Earl.

EARL: You bet.

(END OF TAPE) b1