

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #391 - Side A

Subject: Elva Springer

Date: June 21, 1994

Place: Salem, Oregon

Interviewer: Edward Gray

EDWARD GRAY: ... This is Edward Gray in Salem, Oregon, at the residence of Elva Springer, on June 21st, 1994. We're going to talk a little bit in reference to Pete French, and the Springer family on the south side of Malheur Lake. Elva, how old are you?

ELVA SPRINGER: 74.

EDWARD: 74. You married Wilbur when? Wilbur Springer.

ELVA: 1976. I'm wife number two.

EDWARD: Oh, you're wife number two. Oh, that's --- When was Wilbur born? 19---

ELVA: January 2nd, 1906.

EDWARD: '06, okay. Clara Springer Tucke was born 1907, okay.

ELVA: Uh huh, in August.

EDWARD: The Springer, to the tape recorder, the Springer family was, knew Pete French for a while.

ELVA: They were one of the first families that went in there, I think.

EDWARD: Did --- well what was your maiden name, Elva?

ELVA: Waddley.

EDWARD: Waddley. And you came from where?

ELVA: Colorado. My family, I'm the eleventh off the Mayflower on the Brewster side.

EDWARD: You mean the Mayflower, Plymouth Rock type thing?

ELVA: Uh huh. Elder Brewster was my ---

EDWARD: Well, that's a long time ago. And you married Wilbur in 1976. And Wilbur is the son of?

ELVA: Alva.

EDWARD: Alva, or Eddie?

ELVA: Or Eddie, yeah.

EDWARD: Eddie.

ELVA: Eddie.

EDWARD: Springer.

ELVA: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Eddie Springer was born in 1885.

ELVA: Yes.

EDWARD: Alva Springer was his, Eddie Springer's father. And Lewis B. Springer was Alva's father. When did they come, or, let's back up a little bit. Did Wilbur ever tell you when they came to Harney County?

ELVA: 1885. Because Eddie was born there just after they arrived.

EDWARD: Do you recall where Eddie was born? Out on some homestead shack or something.

ELVA: Yeah, but I couldn't tell you. I kind of turned this off, because both of the kids had it, and I wouldn't hear anything.

EDWARD: Well don't worry about it, don't worry. All we're trying to do, Elva, is just bring up some of the things Wilbur may have mentioned to you. Because I know Wilbur was, seemed to be quite a historian and loved that kind of stuff.

ELVA: Yeah. I wished I had a record player on when I first went out there, when we was first married. Because he told me so much stuff.

EDWARD: Where were you married, in Burns?

ELVA: Vale.

EDWARD: Vale. Okay, Vale, 110 miles. And what, you mentioned a while ago, it wasn't on tape, that Wilbur had told you that when Lewis Springer arrived at the South End of Malheur Lake he staked out his claim?

ELVA: This was Alva, with his horse.

EDWARD: Alva.

ELVA: They went to LaGrande first, but they were looking for grass. And the grass was better at ---

EDWARD: ...

ELVA: --- there, so they moved down there. They were in Harney for, oh the first little bit. So maybe he was born at Harney, because they were there for a little bit before they moved down there at ---

EDWARD: And what happened with Alva? He staked out his horse and he had to do what?

ELVA: He said he just had to stake him right there, and sleep right on the end of his reins or somebody would have stole him right out from under his --- oh, the stuff he told. Paul has still got Eddie's spurs and his gun, Aunt Alva's gun.

EDWARD: His gun?

ELVA: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Oh boy.

ELVA: He lives at Twin Falls.

EDWARD: Wow.

ELVA: The last trip he made to Burns, Paul took a recording of him and his dad talking, and I have asked him for a copy of that, and he hasn't gotten it to me yet.

EDWARD: Now who is Paul?

ELVA: That's his son, Wilbur's son. And so when I go over in August I'm going to get that if I have to beat him over the head

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EDWARD: Paul Springer has a tape of Wilbur talking about ---

ELVA: Well they were, we were just traveling around and he was telling Paul about some of the things that went on there. So I don't know what's on it for sure. But ---

EDWARD: Back to Wilbur.

ELVA: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Wilbur was born in 1906, passed away in 1992.

ELVA: Uh huh.

EDWARD: 82, 86?

ELVA: Almost 87, because it was in November just before his birthday.

EDWARD: Boy it hurts us writers --- Well anyway, okay. Did Wilbur mention --- and just rattle, Elva, just --- You might think it is rattling, but to me it isn't. What did Wilbur say about the early Springer life, do you recall, on the south side of Malheur Lake in Harney County, besides what you just said, anything?

ELVA: Well I don't know just what you're aiming at.

EDWARD: Anything.

ELVA: He stayed with his grandparents most of the time, him and his brother.

EDWARD: Lewis.

ELVA: Yeah, no with Alva.

EDWARD: Oh, that's right.

ELVA: Him and dad didn't get along, that's why his dad left. And so he was with his grandparents nearly all the time. And he just talked about some of the stuff --- his

granddad must have had a sense of humor, because every once in awhile he'd go downtown and pull something funny on one of the neighbors or something. But I can't tell you right off hand now what ---

EDWARD: Did Alva Springer run cattle?

ELVA: For a while he raised mules for the government, at one time. He had a lot of them. Yes, they had cattle.

EDWARD: Did Wilbur ever mention, now again to the tape recorder, we're talking about Wilbur, what Wilbur said to Elva, his wife. Did Wilbur ever mention anything about problems with Pete French?

ELVA: He didn't, they didn't have problems with Pete French.

EDWARD: The Springer's didn't?

ELVA: No, they visited. He come down and he said there was never any problems with them. Said he used to come and visit at the house.

EDWARD: Pete French came to Alva Springer's house?

ELVA: Yes. He ate with them, and visited with them. And Wilbur said that he has been accused in a lot of the books of having hired gunmen, and he said he never did. He said some of those other; oh I can't think of those other companies right off the hat.

EDWARD: Miller, Lux and Hanley?

ELVA: Yeah. And he said they did. He said he never did.

EDWARD: Did Wilbur ever say anything to you about the Springer's loss of the, the Frenchglen lawsuit against them?

ELVA: Yeah, he talked about it. But he just said that Pete come and talked to his grandfather, Alva, before the trial and told him what was coming up. And he said, "I'm not doing this against you particularly, it's just to get started to get this property from all these other --- people."

EDWARD: I wonder what --- I was just going to say that. All these other ---

ELVA: Wilbur said one time, he said, "You swung a long rope back then, or you didn't live, you know." But he said one time, Pete come along, and this fellow was a butchering a beef. They were poor, you know, come in there, and he had a family to feed. So he said he visited with him, he went ahead and helped him butcher the beef, and went on about his business. And it was his own beef that the guy was butchering. But he said he hired the guy later. EDWARD: Oh yeah, yeah. Did Wilbur ever say anything about Pete French's, like Sod House Ranch? Does that ring a bell?

ELVA: Yes.

EDWARD: Sod House.

ELVA: Yes. Well see there was just a dividing line between the house and the Springer property.

EDWARD: Right.

ELVA: And he said one time the, it happened anyhow, anyhow they was always having cattle fights, you know. And some of Pete's guys come along and got a cow. I don't know whether they killed one of their cattle or what it was. But anyhow, L. B., they had an old shack ever so often for the men, you know, and it had a door on one side, and a door on the other side, and that was about the size of it. And he said L. B. went out and hooked a chain onto that cow and drug it into that cabin and just left that big old bloated cow in the cabin.

EDWARD: Oh.

ELVA: Oh, that kind of stuff.

EDWARD: Do --- Springer's were quite "humorical," I mean they were kind of a funny bunch.

ELVA: Well they didn't take any guff off of anybody, I guess. And them and the Dunn's

didn't get along at all.

EDWARD: Old William J. Dunn.

ELVA: And Bill, yeah.

EDWARD: Yeah.

ELVA: And so Wilbur asked his father one day, he said, "Just what was your problem with Dunn's?" And he said his grandfather thought about it a long time, and he said, "Well," he said, "maybe you can get along with them where I didn't." And that was all he ever told him. He didn't tell him what it was about.

EDWARD: You know that Arthur J. Dunn is still alive?

ELVA: I know one of them was not long back, but I don't remember which one it was.

EDWARD: He is 94.

ELVA: Yes.

EDWARD: He is the son of Billy Dunn.

ELVA: Yeah. That's another thing. He said old Billy, you said, harness up his horses. And they wore that harness winter, and summer, day and night.

EDWARD: Whatever, he's too lazy to take it off or something?

ELVA: I guess, I don't know.

EDWARD: Was there ever any shooting, did the Springer's ever shoot at anybody?

ELVA: Have you got guns for nothing, let's put it that way. I don't know who they ever shot at, but --- It must have been the Dunn's, was running the cattle, you know, there was a roadway up by their house. And they just turned them out there and let them run. And they got in a battle up there one night, and Clara says she remembers that they were shooting, and they shot toward the house out there. I don't know that her parent --- they was in on it, so who knows what went on. But anyway the other guys shot toward the house.

EDWARD: Did you ever hear of, did Wilbur ever mention Curtis?

ELVA: Which one? Orin was related to him, you know.

EDWARD: He was shot and killed too.

ELVA: Yeah, and his brother said that if he had been speaking to him, he could have saved him that night. But they weren't speaking and ---

EDWARD: George?

ELVA: Yeah. And Alva had some things to do, or some things that Wilbur wasn't too sure what went on. But anyway George told me he had until noon the next day to get out of the country, and he did.

EDWARD: George Curtis?

ELVA: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Who told him that, do you know? Was it the Springer's, or was it the Dunn's?

ELVA: Well I don't know, but I think Alva had a lot to do with some of this kind of stuff. And also at the time Warren was killed ---

EDWARD: About 1904.

ELVA: Wilbur said in a round about way, and some of the tales, that up there in one of those old toilets there is some guns that has been buried up there. And he said in one of those court cases the guy said they had the gun that killed --- I don't know whether it was Warren or who now, I wouldn't say for sure, but one of those guys got killed up there. And they said they knew they didn't, because Alva knew where that gun was, and it wasn't the gun that the courts thought they had. So ---

EDWARD: Where was this, where was up there, Elva, do you know?

ELVA: No, not for sure.

EDWARD: Yeah.

ELVA: In court there, probably Burns.



EDWARD: Burns, yeah. Did Wilbur ever mention anything about Comegys?

ELVA: Oh yeah.

EDWARD: Sidney, Fay?

ELVA: Yeah.

EDWARD: Do you recall what he said about them?

ELVA: No I don't, I remember him talking about them, but --- I thought he wasn't related to anybody up there, but the more I look into it he had kinfolk all over the country up there.

EDWARD: Well that's kind of the way it is today.

ELVA: Yeah.

EDWARD: They're all related somehow.

ELVA: Well he wasn't interested in the family, you know.

EDWARD: Yeah.

ELVA: You know the family come, and they were related to him, and he didn't think anything about it. And then later --- well he didn't even know much of the family and I went back to see what I could find of the family, genealogy, that was what I was working on here. I found out some of it, but --- I'll tell you what kind of a guy Wilbur was.

EDWARD: Yeah, I was going to get to that.

ELVA: His aunt come out, Iowa, or back there somewhere, and they fished a lot up there, you know. And he never went anywhere without his .22. But he said usually when he went fishing he didn't take it. But that day, for some reason, he did. And there was a guy sitting across the springs up there, I guess he was hunting rabbits or something, I don't know. But anyway he wasn't as careful as he could have been. And Wilbur was real particular about a gun, and where it was pointed, and how it was used, and how it was loaded. And this guy shot and he just missed him a little bit. Well Wilbur had a little bit of a short fuse, and he just turned right around, and he was a good enough shot that he,

right almost at that guy's toe. And the guy hollered at him, and he said --- I don't remember what he said to him. But anyway the guy didn't shoot it again. Anyway his aunt thought that was the most horrible Wild West she had ever been in, I guess. She --- how terrible!

EDWARD: Did Wilbur ever mention to you about Alva, his granddad, being involved with Ed Oliver?

ELVA: Well he talked about him, but I don't know, he said he did know that Pete French had threatened him with his whip once. But I don't remember what all he said about it. I just had turned this off till I ---

EDWARD: Well that's all right, all right, don't worry about it. Did he ever mention Alvie; I don't know whether you want to call him Alvie, or Alva.

ELVA: They called him Alvie.

EDWARD: Alvie.

ELVA: But his name was Alva.

EDWARD: Alva, Alvie.

ELVA: Yeah, Alvie.

EDWARD: Getting hard to figure out. Did Wilbur ever mention any-thing about his Granddad Alva Springer, on a hill before Pete French was killed, with Ed Oliver, being on a hill with Ed Oliver? Do you recall that by any chance?

ELVA: I don't remember that in particular.

EDWARD: Did Wilbur ever say anything, why Pete French was shot?

ELVA: Well he threatened ---

EDWARD: Ed Oliver.

ELVA: --- with a whip. That's something else; Wilbur talked about being up in a courtroom with some of those guys. Billy Dunn and --- was it Oliver? Somebody anyhow,

and they went up and got up in court and raised old Ned. Who in the world was that?

EDWARD: Raised what, Elva?

ELVA: Oh they got in a fuss in the courtroom there about some-thing.

EDWARD: (Laughter)

ELVA: I don't ---

EDWARD: This happens over there all the time.

ELVA: Oh, ain't that a wild bunch. Honest to Pete. I wasn't raised that way; I couldn't believe it when I first heard this stuff.

EDWARD: It's all true.

ELVA: I know.

EDWARD: They were fighting over one inch of land.

ELVA: Well, water.

EDWARD: Water, basically.

ELVA: His father blew the dam up, I don't know how many times up there.

EDWARD: (Laughter)

ELVA: Well I think that was with Billy, I'm not sure. But anyway ---

EDWARD: Well it was probably on Pete French's; I mean Frenchglen property, probably, the dam.

ELVA: Anyway ---

EDWARD: It cut off water through his place.

ELVA: Yeah. (Laughter) Oh dear.

EDWARD: Did Wilbur say anything that you recall, and if you do recall, Elva, when I leave, will you write it down? Because all these things come back, you know.

ELVA: Yeah. Well I took a, Wilbur told me a bunch of stuff and I wrote it down in a stenographic notebook and one of the kids got away with it, and I'm trying to find it. So if I

ever find that

--- the kids don't know which --- They were pretty upset about Wilbur's death, and so they just kind of boxed the stuff up and took it home.

EDWARD: Oh I hope they didn't throw it away.

ELVA: Oh no, they didn't throw it away. But I know David has the old papers, because I know those papers went to him, and I know he got some pictures, but I don't know which ones he got. But ---

EDWARD: This will help, that photo of the four generations will help immensely, immensely. Let's move to something else just for "funzies". What the heck happened to Ed Springer, Wilbur's dad?

ELVA: What do you mean happen? After he left?

EDWARD: Where did he go?

ELVA: I don't know. Wilbur said he got, I guess his, Eddie's mother got some letters from him several times. But Wilbur got one from him in Wyoming, and he wanted money for a new, you know he lost a foot, and he wanted a new prosthesis. And so Alva come to Wilbur and he said, "What are you going to do about it?" And he said, "I'm not going to do a," excuse the expression, "damn thing about it." And so that was that. And then later, how they heard about it, I don't know, they heard that he was driving a bus in California somewhere. But we don't know who, or where, or why. And that's the last --- well Wilbur did say he was in Burns one day, and he called, what did he call that guy, I can't think of his name now. Betsy would know who it was. But anyway he was a gambler up there. And he met Wilbur on the street and he asked Wilbur what he would do if his dad showed up there? And Wilbur, I guess, told that guy in no uncertain terms that if his dad ever, if he ever wrote a check on Wilbur or anybody, you know, he said, "I'll run him and you both right through the road." And he said, "Well that's a hell of a way to feel about your dad."

And he said, "Well that's just the way things are." And I said, "I bet you a dime Eddie was right there in Burns that day."

EDWARD: Was that after 1926 or '28?

ELVA: Oh yeah, that was ---

EDWARD: Way later?

ELVA: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Did he by chance, did he ever hear --- Clara says that she thought Eddie was murdered.

ELVA: Oh that story got out up there, and Wilbur said there is nothing to it. There was a story that they found his prosthesis thing and one thing and another, and Wilbur said there wasn't any-thing to it.

EDWARD: Okay, we'll put an end to that. That's not that important.

ELVA: Some guy that Wilbur knew up there cornered him one day and said something about my dad, I don't remember what the word was he asked him, and Wilbur said, "No." And he said, "Well you're in for a surprise someday." And Wilbur never found out what it was, so he wondered if his dad might not have --- See he was only 40 when he left home. He could have married and had more kids for all we know.

EDWARD: Well this gets right into the thing with Edward Lee Oliver, the man who shot Pete French. Nobody knows what happened to him.

ELVA: To Oliver?

EDWARD: Yeah.

ELVA: Oh yes, what did he tell me about him.

EDWARD: Take your time, Elva.

ELVA: I had a TIA last spring, and my memory just went psst. But beings I'm old besides

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EDWARD: Psst. You're only 20 years older than I am, Elva.

ELVA: You're between the age of my two oldest girls, so there!

EDWARD: Ed Oliver, what happened to him?

ELVA: What did he say happened to him anyway? I hope I can get a hold of that stenographic notebook, and I ---

EDWARD: Me too.

ELVA: I sure didn't write everything down, but I did write some things down. I can't do much about Carol's, because her's is stowed away in a storage shed and probably won't get it. And Charles was going to look for his, but I haven't heard from him. He was over here to Toledo.

EDWARD: Well we got to get these guys fired up.

ELVA: Well I try to rattle their cage, but David doesn't keep too much contact with the rest of the family. Partly, both sides, you know.

EDWARD: Simmons. Ever did, Wilbur ever mention the Simmons?

ELVA: Simmons. Let's see now there was --- Simmons from Burns?

EDWARD: Uh huh.

ELVA: Well his aunt's daughter was married to a Simmons, but I'm not sure it was that Simmons. They lived in Ontario.

EDWARD: Simmons. Ed Oliver's wife, at the time of the shooting, was a Simmons.

ELVA: Yeah, right.

EDWARD: Ida Parilee Simmons Oliver. And then Ed Oliver took off with a common whore ---

ELVA: Oh, they didn't have those things in Burns.

EDWARD: Oh yeah?

ELVA: Yeah, I know why I've heard about it. Wilbur wouldn't let me wear a red dress

because that's what the whores wore.

EDWARD: He was sharp. (Laughter)

ELVA: Oh, he was nobody's fool, that's for sure. He wanted to be an attorney, but after his grandparents needed him, he said after they raised us kids he said I just felt like I needed to be with them.

EDWARD: When, before I forget, when did the Springer's get rid of all their holdings on Malheur and Harney County?

ELVA: You know what happened there?

EDWARD: No.

ELVA: Lord, he wouldn't speak a good word from the government from that day till this.

EDWARD: Did the government force them out?

ELVA: Yes. And they had a --- they had a big; maybe that's what that thing was. No, that was after his grandfather passed away. He was living there after his grandfather --- well with his grandparents, then his grandparents passed away.

EDWARD: Okay, yeah.

ELVA: But the government, what do they call it when they ---

EDWARD: Reclaimed?

ELVA: No.

EDWARD: Oh, I know the word.

ELVA: You know what I mean.

EDWARD: Yeah.

ELVA: Like they take a road out of your property.

EDWARD: Right.

ELVA: Well anyway they come in there and did that, whatever it was. And he come to Portland, and he said, "It don't pay to get anything but the best lawyer in the country." So

I can't think of his name right now, but anyway he come and got an attorney here in Portland and he said, "There is only one thing the government can do to take that, and they have never ---" They pulled some kind of a suit, I can't think now what it was. And he said, "They've never done it ..." I didn't know what they did with that.

EDWARD: I know, what's that called?

ELVA: And this guy come, anyway one of the guys come in there, the appraiser, and he talked to Wilbur. No witnesses. And he appraised that property at a real low price, and he told Wilbur right there in the hall that if he had known what was going on and everything, it wouldn't have been at that price. So they just --- I don't know, somehow or another he traded the property for property at Crane and he went up there. But anyway, oh he hated the government more than ---

EDWARD: Because the Malheur, they made that the Malheur Game Refuge.

ELVA: Yeah.

EDWARD: And they forced these guys out. Then they tore down all the houses.

ELVA: Yeah.

EDWARD: Lewis' house, Alva's house.

ELVA: Yeah, we got a picture of Alva's house when the trees was first planted. I mean one of the kids does somewhere.

EDWARD: Oh, got to find that stuff. That would probably be the only pictures anywhere, I would guess. Because I wouldn't know Alva's house from ---

ELVA: Well I'd know it if I saw it. But ---

EDWARD: --- anybody's.

ELVA: Then there is pictures of him with his mules. There is pictures of Eddie riding a horse.

EDWARD: Boy, I hope those kids could find that stuff.



ELVA: Well they've got it, I know, but whether they're going to find it in time to do any good or not, that's ---

EDWARD: Well it will be awhile, no hurry.

ELVA: Well I'm going to roust them out. When I go over there I'll --- I know I can get to Betsy's and Paul's. And Carol's is packed away. And I'll get hold of Charles here one of these days and rattle his cage.

EDWARD: Kick some butt.

ELVA: Well he is moving, you know, he is having a house built, and so he's packing and unpacking. But David is going to be the one that I don't know what we can get out of him.

EDWARD: Alva's house.

ELVA: Oh there was a lot --- there was pictures of the birds that used to be there in the, you know.

EDWARD: Cranes ---

ELVA: All sorts of, some big, you know, professional pictures.

EDWARD: What else did Wilbur say, if you recall now, about Ed Oliver? Now don't worry about it, Elva, remember don't worry about it.

ELVA: Well not right off bat, I don't. I remember him talking about it. There was so much went on up there that ---

EDWARD: Oh, it was crazy. Again, all these lawsuits. Just one right after another.

ELVA: Just continual. Well he was talking about some of the guys, who was the guy, one of the guys up there, he said every time he turned around he had a lawsuit against somebody over something, a little of nothing. Alva was always running up to court somewhere.

EDWARD: I think that was an excuse to go to court, to go to Burns.

ELVA: Only entertainment they had.

EDWARD: Yeah, to go to ... Because see court was held in April, and was held in October, see. So it probably gave them a stupid excuse to go to Burns to get drunk.

ELVA: Well they, yeah, they didn't have to go to Burns to do that.

EDWARD: When did Wilbur say, again if you recall, Elva, about his grandfather's house and ranch? Did he ever mention anything about what was there? Big house, small house?

ELVA: Well he built a house there, a nice looking house. Wish I had kept a picture of it. Well I'm going to round them up and see what I can find. Yeah, his grandfather built that house.

EDWARD: Okay. Go ahead.

ELVA: One day, he and his grandfather were real close, and so they was playing ---

EDWARD: Wilbur and Alva were real close?

ELVA: --- and they were playing mumble peg on the door, on the backside of a closet door or something.

EDWARD: Wilbur must have had a good time remembering all that stuff.

ELVA: He had a real good memory, yes. And then he had lived there, well it kind of stuck with him, I don't know, just kind of

--- And Clara left there when she was younger, you know, married and left.

EDWARD: Oh, was she?

ELVA: And so she was just kind of away from it.

EDWARD: So Wilbur Springer, your husband, was the last Springer there?

ELVA: Uh huh.

EDWARD: About 1930 --- Well I'm going back ---

ELVA: Well let's see, I forgot when that trial was.

EDWARD: 1897, '98.

ELVA: No, I mean on the spring there.

EDWARD: Oh, 1932.

ELVA: No, '38, wasn't it?

EDWARD: '32.

ELVA: '30---

EDWARD: But it didn't end. It took a long time, four or five years.

ELVA: Yeah, well --- It was after his grandparents died that he moved to Crane.

EDWARD: Okay, that's what I was looking. Okay, Alva Springer died March 15th, 1935.

ELVA: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Right in there. Lewis Springer died the same ---

ELVA: He died a month earlier.

EDWARD: Yeah, 1935.

ELVA: Well Alva was subject to pneumonia. And he got pneumonia and he got real bad. And so when Wilbur come in one day from doing chores, well his grandmother told him that he was bad. And so he just turned and started to walk out. And she said, "Where you going?" And he said, "I'm going after the doctor." And she said, "He won't pay it." And he said, "He will pay it." Well by the time he got the doctor back there, they got him up to the hospital, but he had just gone too long. Back in those days, you know, he didn't last very long.

EDWARD: Who was Lewis' wife's name?

ELVA: He was married four times, which one?

EDWARD: Oh, forget it. What was Alva's wife's name?

ELVA: Sarah --- oh Alva's was Martha, she was Martha Walker.

EDWARD: Martha. Oh, there it is, okay.

ELVA: Alva's mother's name was Sarah Lees, and she come from, we think Kentucky as

near as we can figure out. But then she died, and she is buried there at Burns. And then he married another lady and she is buried at Burns, and that's the grandmother that Wilbur remembers. But she died in the flu epidemic in 1918.

EDWARD: Oh, '18, yeah.

ELVA: And then he was married twice after that, and Wilbur didn't like one of them, and the other one I don't think he stayed married to her very long or something, but ---

EDWARD: I get a kick out of this newspaper article when Alva Springer died. It says Mr. Springer is survived by his wife whom he married over 50 years ago. One son, Eddie Springer, whose whereabouts are not known. (Laughter)

ELVA: Well, it wasn't.

EDWARD: We don't know where dear old Eddie is.

ELVA: Well he probably isn't anymore. But he would have been 108 by now.

EDWARD: Oh yeah. Oh, god. Is there anything else about Pete French that you recall that Wilbur said?

ELVA: Oh yeah, he talked about him a lot, but I ---

EDWARD: Okay. So we need to find that stuff.

ELVA: And we also had a picture of one of Pete's foreman, I think it was.

EDWARD: Tebo?

ELVA: Yeah, we had a picture of him.

EDWARD: I got a picture of Tebo.

ELVA: Did you?

EDWARD: There is only two known pictures of Pete French.

ELVA: Oh, we had some of him.

EDWARD: Oh --- And do the kids have those?

ELVA: Uh huh. They've got them, and they won't throw them away. But getting them

rounded up ---

EDWARD: You know Elva; I just think you're like a Springer. I think you got enough guts to get them.

ELVA: I don't know whether that's Springer or ... but anyway.

EDWARD: Will you make sure ---

ELVA: Well I'm going to roust them out. But like I say, Carol would have been really glad to have gotten them, but she just don't know where her's is.

EDWARD: Oh boy.

ELVA: She is selling her house in Boise, and so they're cleaning it up and painting it up and everything, getting ready to sell. And they're afraid they won't get started on their other house until next year.

EDWARD: Now Carol is one of Wilbur's daughters?

ELVA: Uh huh, that's the oldest daughter.

EDWARD: And they live in Boise. Who did I write --- Caldwell, Idaho?

ELVA: Must have been Betsy.

EDWARD: ...

ELVA: Oh, that's ---

EDWARD: Curtis.

ELVA: That's a Curtis.

EDWARD: That's a Curtis.

ELVA: But I've never talked to her. I got her address from Gloria, and Gloria didn't know for anything, because Allen took off with all the pictures and everything. And I tried to talk to one of, Allen's ex-wife, I guess it was. Well she is not ex, but then she should have been. Because he is living with somebody else for how many years.

EDWARD: Took ---

... (Pause in tape)

EDWARD: All the Springer's like Wilbur --- well first of all, were they hardheaded, or would they listen to you? Wilbur, I mean?

ELVA: Well Wilbur would listen to you, but like I said he wanted to be an attorney. And he sorted everything through, and tried to see all sides of everything.

EDWARD: Analyze the whole thing?

ELVA: And then he made up his mind. And then when he made up his mind, if you didn't believe like he did, you were wrong.

EDWARD: You were wrong. Do you think Alva was like that?

ELVA: I kind of wonder from some things that I've heard. And of course being raised right there with him, and he just thought his grandfather was all of it, you know.

EDWARD: One thing --- when did you first go to Harney County?

ELVA: Oh, it was just after we were married.

EDWARD: Okay, just afterwards.

ELVA: Well the first time was just before we was married. We had to go up there and settle some property of, his first wife's mother lived at Hines, and that was a property.

EDWARD: So that was 1970 ---

ELVA: 1976, May 7 and 8.

EDWARD: Yeah.

ELVA: Yeah, we made several trips up there. Then we have gone up with the kids a couple times.

EDWARD: Did Wilbur ever take you down to where his grandparents and great-grandfather was?

ELVA: Oh yeah. We've been out to the, where Pete was killed, and out to the round barn. That's what I say, he talked to Paul on that record, if I can get that record I'll see

what he said on it.

EDWARD: Did he ever take you to where the old Springer houses were?

ELVA: Oh yeah.

EDWARD: You say that was Grandpa Alva's house?

ELVA: Yeah, and then Eddie lived up the road about a half a mile or so. And that house was, gone kaput in that flood they had.

EDWARD: Oh they ---

ELVA: Just wiped everything out.

EDWARD: Yeah.

ELVA: And then he showed me where they had that post office.

EDWARD: The Narrows Post Office?

ELVA: No, yeah that too, but that other one that ---

EDWARD: The Springer?

ELVA: Yeah, where the Springer Post Office, and the ---

EDWARD: Voltage?

ELVA: Voltage?

EDWARD: Diamond.

ELVA: Well I haven't been to Diamond.

EDWARD: Okay.

ELVA: And then Eddie had a homestead out to heck and gone some-where. I can't remember now where it was. But we saw it too.

EDWARD: Man.

ELVA: Wilbur didn't start to school until he was 8, because they lived way out in the boonies.

EDWARD: (Laughter) Boonies, haven't heard that for a while. It was the boonies. Still

is.

ELVA: Well there was a fellow that lived about a half a mile from us there at Vale after we were married that had lived there for awhile too. So they'd get together and talk sometimes. Oh dear, oh dear.

EDWARD: Yeah, that's what I was going to say.

ELVA: Well it was interesting and entertaining.

EDWARD: That's when they needed a tape recorder. You know just to listen to those guys.

ELVA: Yes.

EDWARD: But I tell you, Elva, I get a kick out of it. You have a brother and sister, brother is here, you're there --- they just go, I've seen them just fight it out. That you're lying, that's not true, you know.

ELVA: Yeah, well they saw things different for one thing.

EDWARD: Yeah, yeah.

ELVA: But Clara after, Clara and Wilbur didn't speak for 20 years.

EDWARD: Oh geeze.

ELVA: So ---

EDWARD: Oh god.

ELVA: And so then on her 80th birthday --- well this, this son, oldest son of Clara's is just --- pretty well Wilbur right over again, and he knows Wilbur to a T. And so he is another one.

EDWARD: They didn't talk to one another for 20 years?

ELVA: Oh I don't know, it was just family to-do, you know. And then on her 80th birthday, why Clara's oldest son was having their family together for Clara's birthday at a cafe down there. And he said, "This is enough of this old stuff." So he asked Wilbur and I if we didn't



want to go. And he told us what was going on. Well Wilbur was ready to go. And he didn't tell Clara. And so she come in, and of course she was all flustered and excited, the elderly lady, you know, and nervous. And here the whole family was. And pretty soon John says, "Hey I've got somebody I want you to meet." She walked over to him and both of them threw their arms around each other --- and all that 20 years wasted.

EDWARD: Oh ---

ELVA: Families, I'll tell you, they're something else.

EDWARD: Oh they are at times, it's crazy.

ELVA: I never had that kind of commotion much in my tribe, so I

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EDWARD: Oh sometimes it's horrible, they just don't get along.

ELVA: Wilbur was real, into politics all the time. He'd read everything on the --- I guess his, Alva was that way too. He'd read --- because I've heard from people in Burns that knew them. He'd read everything on everybody, and maybe make up his mind who he was going to vote for, and he was an avid Republican. And boy, I --- well I went back on my side of the house --- Mother, two sides of her side of the house, they'd get together for family dinners every once in awhile, and they was in to politics too, and it was always somebody on the school board, somebody on ... board, somebody on this, that and the other. And they'd get louder, and louder, and louder, and I think that's what turned me off of listening to him. I thought sure they was going to come to blows, they never did.

EDWARD: Now I can't even stand --- most of us don't like politics anymore.

ELVA: Well, what have you got?

EDWARD: It's gotten out of hand.

ELVA: There is no difference between the parties, and politicians are --- if they're not crooks they're going to be.

EDWARD: Oh god, they're horrible, horrible.

ELVA: There was a guy told Wilbur one day, he said, "If you've got any friends that you would like to see in politics, or they want to go into it," he said, "vote against them because you're not doing them a good deed."

EDWARD: It's bad.

ELVA: So ---

EDWARD: Well ---

(END OF TAPE)

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