

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #464

Subject: Early Days of Aviation in Harney County

Place: Felt Recording Room, Harney County Library, Burns, Oregon

Date: July 1, 2008

Interviewee: Dale Eggleston

Interviewer: Matt Simek

MATT SIMEK: This is an interview of Dale Eggleston taken on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. This interview is part of the Harney County Oral History Program, and the History of Aviation in Oregon Project, and was recorded at the Harney County Library. The interviewer is Matt Simek of Newberg, Oregon.

And Dale I'm just delighted to be able to talk to you as one of the early pioneer aviators of the Harney County area. And there are two things that I would like to talk with you about today. One of them is an overview of aviation as you know it in this area. And then beyond that, your specific role in that, and the interesting highlights of aviation in Harney County as you remember it.

DALE EGGLESTON: Fantastic.

MATT: So, I'm going to turn it over to you, and every now and then I might jump in with a question. But I would love it if you would give me an overview of when aviation in Harney County began, and who were the key participants.

DALE: Well in the early '30's, the 1930's, there was a fellow who lived here who had a bi-plane, an OX-5. And he would fly around Burns and generate --- young people who were interested in aviation, they would all collect at the airport so they could see this airplane and talk to the pilot and find out what is going to go from there. Well that sort of activity spread all over the Burns area and the county, and it developed into a lot of aviation here at the Burns Airport.

MATT: Do you know what his name was?

DALE: His name was Bill Dibble, D I B B L E.

MATT: And what year was that? Or approximately?

DALE: Oh, approximately, well it was probably in the, maybe in 1928 or '29, in there somewhere.

MATT: So when you say he had an OX-5 powered airplane, was that likely a JM4-D Jenny?

DALE: Not, I don't think it was a Jenny. I didn't get to fly the darned thing, but I don't know if they said in here anywhere in his recordings what, you know, what that really was. Anyway, he was the one that generated the interest in aviation out in this country. And from there on why the people in town were interested, including my brother Darrel, and entered in there with Roe Davis and Oscar Davis, and a lot of other local people that became interested. And eventually they bought all kinds of old airplanes to get started, and there were a few bi-planes, but most of them were mono-planes.

MATT: Do any of the names of the airplanes come out?

DALE: Well yes, there are some. For instance here is an old mono-coach they called it that Roe Davis owned. And then there was a, let's see here ---

MATT: I should state that you are referring to the Times-Herald of Burns, Oregon, page 11 from Wednesday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1988, A Review of Aviation in the Burns Area.

DALE: Right, exactly. Looking at this picture, most of the airplanes were mono-planes. They were early productions. There was one pilot that used to come in here with a bi-plane and --- let's see, what was he flying? Oh shoot --- I can't see it.

MATT: Well, we'll be able to look it up in the article.

DALE: Probably.

MATT: Okay. Well now you and your brother flew.

DALE: Yes, my brother learned to fly, he was one of the first ones that learned to fly an airplane in Burns, Oregon. And from that he went to other places to learn more about flying, in California for instance. And when he located in Burns he developed a flying school. And he was the principal person who generated aviation and flying and trained most of the pilots who pertained to, who really wanted to get going. And ---

MATT: What was his name?

DALE: Darrel. D A R R E L.

MATT: And Darrel first started flying when?

DALE: Well this article shows that Darrel was 18 years old when he started flying. His instructor was a person by the name of Bill Dibble, and Tex Rankin out of Portland.

MATT: Did he go to Portland to learn from Tex?

DALE: Tex came to Burns.

MATT: Really.

DALE: He sure did. And, let's see, I'm trying to see if there is a date in here pertaining to that.

MATT: Well how old was he?

DALE: Eighteen years old.

MATT: And he was born when?

DALE: In 1917.

MATT: Okay. So 17 and 18, 35.

DALE: Uh huh. Yeah.

MATT: So he first flew in 1935. And then you were the younger brother?

DALE: Yeah, I was the younger brother.

MATT: And when did you start flying?

DALE: In 1938.

MATT: Did you take lessons from your brother?

DALE: I sure did, he taught me everything he knew. Scared my pants off a time or two.

MATT: How so?

DALE: Well, you know, I didn't know anything about aviation, and when he'd go up there and practice tail spins and loops and that sort of thing, it takes a while to get used to that, as you probably know. And so anyway we had a marvelous time though. It was one of the nicest times I ever had.

MATT: Let me just back up for a second, and get a little bit of basic information from you. Where were you born?

DALE: Burns, Oregon.

MATT: You were from here.

DALE: 1920.

MATT: And was your family living here that whole time, or had they just arrived?

DALE: No, they were pioneers here.

MATT: Wow. And how did they get here?

DALE: My family, say the Eggleston's for instance, they arrived in Harney County in 1906. Came from Colorado, of all places. But they settled here. And my father was born in Colorado in 1896, and my mother was born in Harney County in 1899. And they ended up being married in 1916. And then along came my brother in 1917, and I came in 1920.

MATT: What was your mother's maiden name?

DALE: Henrietta Richardson. And she was a pianist. And my father was Alexander Eggleston, he was a violinist. And they made music in this country for all the dances, for the silent movies and that sort of thing, until they got to the point where it wasn't sensible to do it anymore because silent movies went out of business, and etc., etc.

MATT: Did they live in town or were they ranchers?

DALE: They lived in town. They were right here in Burns. And my mother came from a family of, let's see, two brothers and a sister. And they were all musicians, they were pianists principally. And so they provided a lot of music in this town. And of course my dad learned the violin before he even came to Harney County. And he was a professional, he established dance bands, and well concert bands for the celebrations and this sort of thing. Made a nice career for himself here.

MATT: So that was his living, was music.

DALE: Yes, yeah.

MATT: Wonderful.

DALE: He could play almost any instrument there was. He used that to gather the people together for their fancy dinners and celebrations, and that sort of thing. He did fine. I'm sorry to say though, he died in 1938.

MATT: Oh, very young.

DALE: Yeah..

MATT: What happened?

DALE: Tuberculosis. He was interested in the local, the people who lived here, the natives you know. And he worked with the Indians to record their music. And of course he experienced the early Indian writings all over the county, and he made a record of that sort of thing. And he developed this tuberculosis and it killed him in 1938, which is just about a year before penicillin came along.

MATT: Yeah.

DALE: Anyway.

MATT: And your mother?

DALE: She was a pianist, as I said.

MATT: She lived until when?

DALE: She lived until golly, that was 1978.

MATT: So she had a good long life.

DALE: She had a good long life, yeah.

MATT: And you and your brother, and were there others, other kids?

DALE: No, just the two of us.

MATT: Both pilots.

DALE: Both pilots, yeah.

MATT: Okay. Alright, now we have sort of a sense of where we came from.

DALE: Where we started.

MATT: Yeah.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: So you were both Burns boys. And you said your brother established a flying school when he came back.

DALE: Well he went to California for flying training, after he had soloed with the local people and what not. He wanted to open up a school and get a license so he could teach flying. And that's what he did. And he came back and established a little flying school here. And he taught almost all of the young people that ever were interested in flying in Harney County, until World War II came along.

MATT: Yeah, I would sort of like to go up to the World War II period and then go from World War II on. So let's do focus on that early days. What was his primary training plane, do you know?

DALE: Yes, he ended up using a high-wing Taylorcub.

MATT: Taylorcraft.

DALE: Yeah, Taylorcraft.

MATT: Now was that ---

DALE: That's what he taught me on.

MATT: Was that the Taylorcub before Piper got involved, before Bill Piper?

DALE: Yeah, it was.

MATT: So that was the very first Cub.

DALE: One of the first ones, yeah, yeah.

MATT: Uh huh.

DALE: And he did very well with that. And he had lots of interest from the local people, the younger people that wanted to get into aviation. I don't know how many people he really taught, I don't have those records. But ---

MATT: Any idea what happened to his log book?

DALE: You know, that's a good question. I thought about that considerably. I have a feeling that one of his daughters who lives in Canada has possession of his log books. But I haven't gotten up to look at them yet.

MATT: Is that a possibility that you might contact them and find out if they have them?

DALE: Yes, it is a possibility. In a matter of fact I will be seeing his daughter probably in the next two months. And I'm going to ask her about, where are those log books? Because I'm sure they were in his house when he died.

MATT: If you have an opportunity, would you also ask her if she has photographs of that flying school?

DALE: Yes, that would be very rewarding if we could develop those, get copies of those.

MATT: Yeah. He had how many children?



DALE: He had one son and, let's see, Marsha and Mary Ann --- two daughters. One son and two daughters. And the son is deceased, but the daughters are still alive.

MATT: You were married also?

DALE: Not until after the war. So my contribution to civilization is one son and one daughter.

MATT: Well there is no hurry, is there?

DALE: No hurry, no. Well I had so darn many things to do, just like everybody else did at that time. We didn't get married until 1940.

MATT: Local girl?

DALE: Yeah, in a way, in a way. She came to Burns for about six months and we got acquainted, and then she went to Florida and Arizona, not Arizona but Arkansas, then Idaho. Her father was a construction engineer, and so she went along with that family. And we didn't see one another for six years, and, but we corresponded. Then we decided to get married.

MATT: Obviously something stuck.

DALE: Yeah, something stuck.

MATT: Yeah.

DALE: And so anyway ---

MATT: How about Darrel, a local girl?

DALE: Yes he did, he married his first wife who was, who came from the east coast, but was living in John Day. And they got acquainted through flying, because they were both interested.

MATT: What was her name?

DALE: Her name was Margaret.

MATT: Do you remember her maiden name?

DALE: I'm trying to resurrect that.

MATT: The reason I asked is because we talked with Dennis Smith the other day and he has a handle on the early aviators of John Day.

DALE: Oh, John Day. Good. Yeah.

MATT: So I'd like to see if there is a connection, where the connection is.

DALE: Let's see, what the devil was her last name? I'll have to look that up.

MATT: I'm sure we'll find it. Yeah.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: So they got acquainted through flying, they would fly back and forth.

DALE: Well she would drive back and forth, and he would fly back and forth. And he taught her to fly here in Burns. So anyway --- They connected and had a nice marriage. Their first marriage was with --- let's see, they generated a boy and a girl, yeah. And they separated eventually. And Darrel is married again and generated a girl.

MATT: Did he have just the one airplane, or did he eventually have other airplanes?

DALE: He eventually had other airplanes, the first one that he bought was a, other than his training airplane was this old OX-5.

MATT: Oh, okay, and this is a photograph from the Times Herald of Burns, Oregon, page 16, dated Wednesday October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1988. And the picture is of Roe Davis and

Darrel Eggleston with Darrel's OX-5 powered Travel Air. And Travel Air was a beautiful airplane. And OX-5, no doubt he was a member of the OX-5 Club.

DALE: No doubt.

MATT: Now tell me what the relationship was between Darrel and Roe Davis?

DALE: Well it was very close because Roe Davis and his brother Oscar came to Burns right at the time that aviation was growing. And Roe was a mechanic and he just got into flying because he loved it. And he ended up with, I think his first airplane was, oh shoot, I can't think of the name of it.

MATT: That wasn't a Waco was it?

DALE: No, it was, shoot, I can't remember the name of it. And his brother Oscar took training and learned to be an instructor for pilots. And between Roe and Oscar and Darrel they just took over the whole scheme and kept it together.

MATT: Was Roe the older brother?

DALE: Roe was the older brother.

MATT: Uh huh. And where were Roe and Oscar from?

DALE: They were from Western Idaho.

MATT: Were they already flying when they came here?

DALE: No.

MATT: They learned here.

DALE: They learned here.

MATT: From Darrel.

DALE: A lot of it was from Darrel, and there was some other pilots in here at that time. So they came together and helped construct the whole system here for this area.

MATT: Now when you soloed did you take ground school, or did you just do that as part of learning to fly?

DALE: That was part of learning to fly. But we had books to look at, and of course had to learn the process of taking the exam and all that sort of thing. I think, I didn't look at my log books, but I soloed in 1938 in a Taylorcraft.

MATT: And who was your examiner when you went for your license?

DALE: A fellow from Boise.

MATT: An FAA examiner?

DALE: An FAA examiner. And let me see, he had a very interesting name. I thought I'd never forget that. You know those exams, and when you had to fly the doggone thing, it was quite exciting. I thought I'd never forget that fellow's name. He was a good guy. So anyway ---

MATT: So you flew to Boise for the exam?

DALE: No, he came over here.

MATT: Oh, he came over here.

DALE: Yeah, he was a traveling examiner. And he'd come to Burns maybe once a month, or every two months or something like that to see how much traffic there was over here for him. And he'd come all the way from Boise and take care of it.

MATT: What was your radius of operations, was it primarily just Burns or did you ---

DALE: Well, you know in those days the skies were free in this area. You could fly anywhere within 150 miles of Burns and never see anything but buzzards and ducks and geese. So the main thing was that the, a lot of the early flyers were hunters and they would land in the fields and they'd go out and shoot their ducks and geese and then they'd fly home. And they also did hunting for coyotes, because they were really thick in this country, and they were a nuisance to all the livestock that was growing in this country. And they made, Roe Davis made quite a business out of coyote hunting. And there should be a picture in here ---

MATT: That was from his airplane?

DALE: From his airplane, yeah.

MATT: Or did they land?

DALE: No, they do it all from the air.

MATT: Oh.

DALE: And then if they were in an area where they could land, why that's where they'd pick up their --- here's a picture. This is the front of his hangar, with his acquiring of coyote hides.

MATT: My goodness. Once again, this is the Times Herald of Burns, page 15, Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1988. And pioneer aviators brave thin air in slow heavy planes, it says. That's Billy Dibble's hangar, and that's the first at Burns. And it looks like Bert Vinson, Darrel Eggleston, Hal Hibbard, Paul Hibbard, and Billy Dibble with the flight helmet, with Dibble's Waco 10, one of the first airplanes in Harney County. And you said that Roe Davis had a different airplane.

DALE: Oh, it will be in here somewhere. It was an old, it was a bi-plane. Funny I don't remember that man's name. There is a picture of it in one of these things. Travel air ---

MATT: Now also in this same newspaper on page 15, there is a picture as you said of the coyote hides. And Bill Stevenson and Roe Davis with their coyote kill of 1944-45, and there must be fifty hides on that hangar wall. And that was all just hunted from airplanes?

DALE: Yeah. Isn't that incredible?

MATT: Yeah, it is.

DALE: They made a big dent in the coyote population here.

MATT: Yeah. Who was Shorty Curtis?

DALE: Well sir, Shorty Curtis was a mechanic that worked on the cars and that sort of thing. But he was interested in aviation, but I don't remember that he ever owned an airplane, but, and I don't know if he ever acquired a license. But he was always around to help everybody, anytime you needed something to fix on a darn airplane, he was there to do it.

MATT: Now there was an airplane called a Curtis-Junior. Did he design that airplane and build it?

DALE: No, he didn't. Curtis-Junior, there is a copy of it right here, my brother owned it. That was a manufactured airplane by a factory, and I don't know where it was built, but they built a whole lot of those Curtis-Juniors. They were a pusher, the engine was back of the first, right back of the, right on the top of the wing, in the center of the airplane.

The pilot had, was set out in front where the, where you see everything. And then there was a spare seat behind the pilot.

MATT: It was a high-wing mono-plane with the engine mounted on a pylon up on top of the wing.

DALE: On top of the wing, yeah.

MATT: Yeah.

DALE: Curtis Junior.

MATT: Yeah. Well let me ask about some of these other fellows. Russ McCauley ---

DALE: Russ McCauley, what did he do? He doesn't ring a bell with me.

MATT: Okay. Grant Green.

DALE: And Grant Green was a mechanic at one of the car dealers here in Burns. A lot of these people were working in garages. And they become interested in aviation. And I think maybe one or two of them may have acquired an airplane. But they usually did what flying they could with the owners of the airplanes that were here.

MATT: Uh huh. What was the gasoline like in those days? Was it a problem?

DALE: (Laughter) Yeah, it all came in barrels. And you had to pump the doggone barrel dry to get it into the airplane. And I can't tell you what octane those barrels produced, because it wasn't very high.

MATT: I would imagine not. Yeah.

DALE: Because ---

MATT: I think there wasn't a 100 octane until the war, was there?

DALE: No, I don't think so.

MATT: It was 80, 87 or below.

DALE: Yeah, or below that. Yeah. Because most of those engines on those airplanes were, you know, little 4 cylinder jobbies or maybe a round engine that could get by on almost any gasoline. And so --- but yet no facility on the airport for gassing airplanes, you had to have your own storage of gasoline from a barrel. And some of them put them on dollies, they'd roll them out to the airplane, put the pump on, put the hose in the wings, because --- either in the fuselage as you well know, and some had wing tanks in them.

MATT: Where did the fuel come from in these barrels?

DALE: Well they was ordered from the service stations in town, and the people who were in the business of oils and gasoline and that sort of thing.

MATT: So this was the same as automobile gas?

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: There wasn't a separate aviation gas?

DALE: Well there was some later on. But the first was just automobile gasoline.

MATT: Did you have a problem with carburetor icing, or any kind of water in the ---

DALE: Well one of the things you had to be careful of when you're running the gasoline into the airplane tanks, the gasoline was strained through leather to take the water out of it, and any other nonsense that was in the gas.

MATT: I've seen that before where they had a big chamois skin, and they would just soak up the water as it went --- hopefully soak it all up.



DALE: That's right. They put the chamois over the tank and run the gas slowly through it. And it worked really good. Had very few accidents regarding water in the gas lines, and that sort of thing. Of course all the lines had spigots to drain the water off of it as you well know. And that was part of the whole process of getting the airplane ready to go.

MATT: Was carburetor icing a problem then?

DALE: Not very much so. It really pertained mostly to the fuel that was going through the carburetor. If there was much water in it, why naturally the darned stuff would freeze up. And they had to be very careful. Most of those airplanes had --- what do you call it, well they had --- heaters coming from the exhaust to the carburetor.

MATT: Carburetor heat.

DALE: Carburetor heaters to keep them warm. So if there was any gasoline going through there it would be a very small amount that would freeze up.

MATT: So they were already aware then at that point of the problem with carburetor icing and they had already built carb heaters from a jacket around the exhaust manifold, or exhaust pipe.

DALE: Yeah. Right. And you know we used to --- we had a ... to pull, you know. Get to the engine --- start to backfire or lose it's power, why pull on the heater and get the ice out of the carburetor, and then you can get home with it. As you well know I'm sure.

MATT: Let's see, Charles Davis was the younger brother?

DALE: He was the younger brother. As a matter of fact he still lives here. The others are deceased. And there were four brothers. But Charlie still lives here. But I don't

remember him as being interested hardly at all in aviation. He was, he worked in the mills around here. He played music. Roe Davis was a musician, Oscar was too. They all loved music. And Charlie is still here, but you don't see him very often anymore, because he is older than I am.

MATT: Now what was your profession?

DALE: Well, of course when I was going to high school and that sort of thing I worked wherever I could get a job, what was needed, whether it was sweeping something, or carrying something, or driving something. Somebody wanted something moved somewhere. But my principal profession was generated after World War II. And I was in the land title insurance business. And also just ordinary insurance, those two things.

MATT: So in the pre-war period then you had a lot of time to be flying around, and how did you afford that? What did you do, you just did odd jobs?

DALE: Odd jobs. I worked for an automobile dealer, I was in his office. I had some accounting education. And of course you do funny things around the garage that needs to be done when nobody else is there, and that sort of thing. So anyway, I was you know, I wasn't making a lot of money. But in those days nobody made a lot of money on, just working in the --- rather than being a financier of some kind.

MATT: What did it cost to fly then?

DALE: Not much. My first airplane I bought for --- well I owned a car. And I noticed in a paper in Salem, Oregon that there was a bi-plane over there, and it was called Aero-Sport, and it was for sale. So I called the fellow up, and I had a Chevrolet car, two door, and told the guy to fly his airplane over here and we could probably make a deal. Well

he did. And I traded my car to him and he drove it home. And I think I paid him maybe four or five hundred dollars for the airplane.

MATT: In addition to the car?

DALE: In addition to the car. (Laughter) And that was an Aero-Sport, and I don't know if you have ever seen one of those.

MATT: Not up in person, no.

DALE: Uh huh. Well it had a Kinner engine on it, a bi-plane, two-seaters in the front seat. No pilot in the back, there wasn't any. It was just a two-seater. And ---

MATT: Open cockpit?

DALE: Open cockpit. And it was a beautiful little airplane. The construction of its wings were a little bit different than the ordinary construction. They were, let's see, convex wings. And they were not single, what would you call that? They were strength to wing tip to wing tip. The top wing was sawed, and the bottom wing --- had two down at the bottom of the fuselage, and they were shorter than the top wing of course. And it was very, very well stressed. It was licensed for all kinds of aerobatics if you could do it. Well the engine was a 100 horse Kinner. You probably are familiar with Kinner.

MATT: Is that the one where the engine turns, and the prop is bolted to the engine?

DALE: No, that wasn't it. It was a solid engine, and the prop was geared, it was attached to the propeller of course with a, what do you call it ---

MATT: Drive shaft.

DALE: --- drive shaft, yeah. Okay. But it only was producing a 100 horses in power. And I, it didn't occur to me that that made any difference, because the airplane was

coming from Salem, Oregon, and it flew really good down there. Well it got up here, that airplane would not fly higher than one thousand feet above our elevation here. So it was, it would conk out at five thousand feet. Well shoot, you could hardly get out of the valley here because of the elevation. Well that didn't last very long, because I wanted an airplane that I could get up in the air for ---and have some fun with it. So I bought a Waco out of Southern California that was for sale. And it had a 165 inch horsepower, I think it was a five cylinder. It wasn't a Kinner, it was a ---- what was the name of that darn --- Anyway it was a different engine. They started flying it to Burns, and the person that was flying it didn't, wasn't paying attention to where he was going I guess, because he had to land in a dry lake in Northern California, because he run out of gas. Took about two weeks for him to get the airplane to Burns.

MATT: Oh my gosh. What year was that?

DALE: Oh, what year was that, probably 19 --- let's see, probably 1936 or '37 in there somewhere.

MATT: I had read a newspaper article somewhere about, somewhere landing in the desert, running out of gas, and they had to walk ten miles to a ranch because they didn't know where they were. Was that the one?

DALE: Could have been that one. Because it took him about ten days to get it to Burns.

(Laughter) It was a good airplane, it was a Waco, a PSO with the stuff on it. And it had a good engine, it was a Warner engine.

MATT: Warner.

DALE: Warner.

MATT: And you liked how it flew?

DALE: Oh yeah. Roe Davis checked me out in it, because he had more experience at that time than I did. And it was two place up front, and the pilot in the back. Open of course, everything.

MATT: So what happened to the Sport?

DALE: I traded it off.

MATT: Oh trade.

DALE: I traded it off when I bought the Waco. There is a little bit of a story about that a little later on. But anyway, I enjoyed that Waco very much. Because it would fly more than five thousand feet above the ground. (Laughter)

MATT: Was your flying seasonal, or was it year-round?

DALE: It was pretty seasonal, because the winters were more severe at that time than they are now. And of course you fly in the winter in those open airplanes, you had to cover up, and you didn't have any heat in the cockpits or anything like that. And --- but we survived that, because we didn't want to stop flying in the wintertime, because that's when you have the best air out through here.

MATT: Yes, indeed.

DALE: You could do anything you wanted, or go anywhere you wanted. And so we did a lot of winter flying. But it took a lot of clothes and this sort of thing.

MATT: Did you have a special outfit to do that, or did you just bundle up?

DALE: Oh, just bundled up, yeah. And tied a white necklace around your neck, you know, under your flying cap. Just like you'd see in the movies, and away you'd go. It was fun.

MATT: What did you do about your exposed face?

DALE: Well you stayed down behind the windshield as much as possible. You didn't stick your neck out anyplace. So it wasn't too bad, because there wasn't direct cold air coming on you. That windshield would spread it out above you, and if you didn't stick your neck out why you would do pretty darned good as far as the cold. And it was interesting, that Waco, you know when you have the rudder control, some of those planes had nothing but just a bar for a control of the rudders, or the tail rudder. So you had to get used to this bar. And then you had to get used to the brakes for the main gear, which were attached to the bars on the end. So it was kind of tricky if you were landing in a cross-wind or something like that. When you touched down you'd have to be, or have one leg out where the brake is, for the side you're keeping from doing, running off the runway. So anyway, you get used to it.

MATT: So it used differential braking?

DALE: Oh yeah, yeah.

MATT: Steering. Gimble tail wheel.

DALE: Yeah. And one thing about that Aero-Sport that I had, it didn't have brakes on it. And the tail reel was loose. For a few times I landed that airplane, I went right off through the brush, because you couldn't control it. You'd just wait until the darned thing,

the brush would stop it, you know. Then you'd get out and tow it back to the hangar and tighten up the tail reel so you could control it on landings. But that was kind of ---

MATT: No brakes, that's amazing.

DALE: Yeah, it didn't have brakes.

MATT: Well I can see why you might, wanted to trade that off eventually.

DALE: Oh yeah, it just wasn't satisfactory for this area at all.

MATT: Now in the Waco you'd take passengers often?

DALE: Once in awhile, yeah. When somebody wanted to take a ride, why you just tuck them in the front seat, you know, and buckle them in, and all that nonsense.

MATT: What was your typical flight like?

DALE: Well to begin with, to get used to the airplane we would, were just doing around the hangar, around the airport, landings and take offs to get a feel for the darned thing. And after you get the feel of it, why there would be people that would want to look over their ranch property somewhere. Or they would want to see what's going on in the timber area someplace. Or go to a lake for fishing. You know in the southern part of this county there is several lakes on the east side of the Steens Mountain with very good fishing. So there were tours we could make. Or somebody wanted to go somewhere, and we, you know, we would take them for the cost of the airplane and that's all. You never made any money off of it. It was just a good flight, you know, have a good time. And there were lots of vacant dry lakes out in this county at that time. And those were nice places to go to, and the lakes were all smooth of course, and dry. And we'd have two or three people go out in the airplanes, and we'd have a little picnic or something on the dry

lake somewhere, just for the fun of it. So that was the interesting thing. But if a person wanted to get somewhere from Burns to say Denio, or Frenchglen, or Diamond, or wherever they wanted to go, there were places for landing. They were not very sophisticated, but they were doable. So we would do that if we had somebody that we knew, that wanted to do this, or someone to look up and see how --- count his cows, how they were doing in a certain area of the fields. And some guy wanted to --- he'd lost a bull someplace. We could go over there around Drewsey to search the hills to find this bull for him, and show him where it is. Then he could bring him home, and he would go out there and find the darned thing. So anyway, that sort of thing was going on, of course. It was just fun in the evenings when the sun went down, or getting low, and the winds were going down, it was just a lot of fun to get in those airplanes and fly them, and just get out in the air. And that was really attractive.

MATT: That was my next question, did you do night flying, or was that not ---

DALE: Not very well. We used to have, once in awhile some fellow would be flying across this country and he'd just, and he'd get lost in the dark and we'd have to put some lights out on the runway so he could make it in. But there was hardly any night flying done, or even training of night flying. Because we didn't have the facilities on the ground, really, to do that adequately. But --- so we didn't do a whole lot of night flying at that time.

MATT: What was the longest pre-war flight you took?

DALE: Pre-war --- oh let's see. Well I flew to Baker City from here one time. And Ontario --- and let's see, Lakeview. There weren't really, really long flights at that time.



MATT: But you got around a bit.

DALE: Oh yeah. There was a lot of activity in Catlow Valley, if you know where that is, just south of Frenchglen.

MATT: Uh huh.

DALE: There was a place out there, with a store and what-not. It was called Blitzen. And they had a good highway, or a driveway, what you call it, that ran right through the middle of the town, and that was a good spot to land. As a matter of fact my brother did this, I never did do it, but he went down there in that country, they were helping to round up horses off of the range. And they do that with these airplanes, and they made a little money off of that. But not a whole lot at that time. Of course there wasn't a lot of money in those days, in the '30's, '20's and '30's.

MATT: Now this, as I understand in Fields they still land on the road. In Fields they still land on the road, but there is a little runway that is on the south side of the school building there. And it is not very long, and nobody pays any attention to it, because nobody uses the darn thing anymore. But anybody that didn't want to land on a highway, and coast into Fields, why they can land on that little short runway out there by the school district. But the main one, like you say is, was the highway.

MATT: And still is.

DALE: Still is, yeah. I've been trying to get them to build a new runway north of Fields, you know, there is a good straight road for miles. You leave that Fields store, and mostly the land around that highway is Bureau of Land Management. But as far as I know it is open, they would, you could build a runway just next to the road, off of Bureau of Land

Management property. And I talked to the county about it many times, and they circulate it through their minds, but they soon forget it. They think it would be too expensive or something else. But here recently they have been starting to pave the road from Fields to the Highway 78 that goes out to Idaho. And if they ever get down to the southern part of it, near Fields I for one will put a lot of pressure on. While they're down there building the road they can easily put a strip right along side of it, and people could utilize that for --- Because the main thing I'm thinking about is picking up people from Fields who are sick or has accidents. And the only thing we can send down there is a darned helicopter, and it takes forever to get there. Whereas they have fixed wing airplanes now they can get down there in nothing flat from Bend even, you know. And they don't need a whole lot of runway. Because, with the airplane --- I'm sure you're familiar with their fixed wings, and boy they get in the air fast.

MATT: Yeah. And there are so many of them, like the Caravan, the Helio Courier, and they're a turbo-prop.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: So they are very fast, and yet they can land in like 300 feet.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: So it wouldn't take much.

DALE: It wouldn't take much, no, no. So anyway that's something in the future there. Still in the mill.

MATT: Yeah, yeah. Well it's going to be interesting to see what happens to the Alvord Desert when they pave that.

DALE: Oh yeah.

MATT: The road has been daunting enough to keep the population down a little bit. But when that gets paved, I have a feeling it's going to change the whole character of that area.

DALE: Oh, you know it will.

MATT: Yeah.

DALE: Because those big lakes along there. Everybody goes down there for fishing, they come from all over the West to do it.

MATT: Yeah, yeah. Do you remember stories about when the first airport was built in Burns?

DALE: I don't know any stories about it, I know exactly where it was. That's where we learned to fly. It was a dirt runway. They had two runways, a northwest, southeast runway. There is still evidence of that runway, but it's in private ownership now.

MATT: And where was it?

DALE: Well, what is it, one mile, one and a half mile east of Burns on Highway 78 there is the county road that intersects that highway that runs north and south. And it's where the old Grange Hall is on that corner. And just north of that intersection, about a quarter of a mile is where the east to west runway started, off of the county road. There is a slough that runs along that county road, and they had to cross the slough to get to the airport. But there was, they built a bridge there so it worked pretty good.

MATT: Is that rattlesnake country?

DALE: Not so much there. The rattlesnakes like to stay around where the rocks are principally. But they sure could be out in that country. You don't know where you're going to step on a rattlesnake. Anyway, it was pretty nice to run off of that runway, because we used hay stacks as pylons for our airstrip maneuverings. And I remember learning just where the pattern is going to be, just from two or three haystacks and that was where you were going. You got that haystack, then you go to that one, and you get to that one, then you get back to the airport, you know. That was how you're learning how to build a pattern.

MATT: Haystack navigation.

DALE: Yeah, haystack navigation, it was great.

MATT: So what happened when they moved the haystacks. Well, you know, it's an interesting question because most of those people that were using those haystacks, they never used them all up in the wintertime. There was always some haystack left. So those things were in a corral usually, so that the deer wouldn't eat them all up. Consequently even if the stack was gone you could see where it was. The marks were still there on the ground. They made it really easy to make a pattern.

MATT: Now I think I read from Roe Davis somewhere that they built a second airport, like where the high school is now.

DALE: He did, exactly. And he moved his auto wrecking company to that area. He bought a piece of land in that canyon, it was called Sweek's Canyon, and there was a stream that ran down out of the hills, down through there. And Roe bought that piece of land which joined the highway, it cut through, going to Bend. And so his airport

bordered the highway. And so he had access in and out for all of his business. He built this runway up the canyon, and it was kind of interesting getting in and out of there, but we did. We ran instructions off of that field. It was at that point it was on a good solid base of gravel, because of the flow from the canyon, it had been there for years. So he built a couple of hangars there. Hangared his own airplane, had a shop there he could work in. And he tied down several airplanes on the airport. People came in to that airport from all over the west if they had something to do out here. And because it was right next to town. You know, you could practically walk in to downtown from that airport. It was really a nice spot, actually. And the winds were not too bad. Ordinarily, at that time of day, you'd have a nice little wind coming down the canyon. So it wasn't hard to figure out which way you wanted to land. Of course we always had sacks up, showing where the wind was. And that was easy to come in over the highway, and land on the runway and come back and gas up and all that sort of thing.

MATT: Was it sort of a one way strip?

DALE: Yeah. Well no, it wasn't. We used it two ways, because it was long enough with the smaller airplanes you could come in half-way up the hill, the mountain, and shut her off and let her glide, and glide down the canyon and land on the same spot. It was a beautiful spot to come in to. There was only one time that I have a recollection of anybody having trouble coming in from the west on that runway. And I don't know what happened to him, but he got mixed up when he was down, and almost on the ground, and he ground looped his dam airplane. No reason to, because the wind was coming from the east, you know at that time. Well anyway ---

MATT: Should have been easy.

DALE: Should have been easy, yeah.

MATT: Did anybody have any trouble taking off into the canyon and not being able to climb it?

DALE: Yeah, they sure did. Nobody went up that canyon, except one airplane that I ever saw do that, and it was a little mono-plane. What the heck was that manufacturer? A little two place mono-plane that a guy flew in here from somewhere, and he started out the east end of the runway, and he went right up over the mountain. Never did see anybody else do that, just that one airplane.

MATT: And he made it?

DALE: He made it, yeah.

MATT: Oh.

DALE: Yeah, he just went right up over that, airplane, or I would say mountain. Of course that mountain is a 5,000 foot climb from that airport. (Laughter) Anyway, we sat down there and watched him go. And he just went straight up over that darned thing. Of course he was lightly loaded. One guy in that little airplane. And I don't know how much gas he had in it. He probably didn't even have a tool kit in the back, because he just went right straight up over that darned thing. And I've never seen anybody else do that.

MATT: I'm fascinated by this idea of haystack navigation. Tell me about the navigation of the times. What sort did you have? Any electric navigation at all?

DALE: Nothing out here. You were on your own.

MATT: Compass, and that's it.

DALE: Compass and that's it, yeah. And of course you have lots of landmarks, a lot of mountains, if you're going to Steens Mountain or you're going over to John Day, or --- the course was easy to find, and to exercise with. But no other navigational things in here at all at that time. They didn't come in until World War II. And they built a Burns Airport where it is now. The Air Force built that.

MATT: And what kind of charts did you have?

DALE: We used to have the regular, local chart for the area.

MATT: So you did have aeronautical charts.

DALE: Aeronautical charts.

MATT: Sectionals?

DALE: Sectionals, yeah, that's all we used.

MATT: And it was all pilot age then, there was no other kind of navigation.

DALE: No, you was on your own. If you wanted to go east, why you followed your compass if you could. If you want to go north, you do that same thing. But on the other hand it was easy to go, because we had a railroad, you could follow that railroad clear down to Ontario if you wanted to. We had highways that were very, all paved. You could take the highway to Ontario. You take the highway to John Day. The highway to Bend. The highway to Catlow Valley and, or out to Burns Junction. You know you hit 95 north and south to Winnemucca and all that sort of thing. It was very easy to navigate off the ground in this country.

MATT: So the idea of IFR, meaning I follow roads ---

DALE: Yeah, yeah. (Laughter) You follow the iron compass, you know, the railroads will take you anywhere.

MATT: What were the kinds of, you didn't have any radios at the time then?

DALE: No.

MATT: When did radios come in? Was that after the war or ---

DALE: After the war, yeah, yeah. Then everybody had radios.

MATT: Yeah.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: What kind of safety factory was there here? Were there a lot of accidents, or not many?

DALE: Well that's a good question, because it makes you wonder, well how did we have all this flying going on out here, and everybody is healthy, and no problems with the airplanes. It was principally, I think, because we had good mechanics keeping our airplanes in shape, in the first place. In the second place the people that were flying out of here, they had a purpose to either stay in the valley and do their pleasant flying, or they had a place to go. And it was easy to go from say to Lakeview from here. All you had to do was just go out and follow the damn highway. And the same thing to Reno, you just go out there and follow the highway that goes through Reno. And there wasn't any problem with navigation in that respect, unless you went off of these nice navigational propositions and got out in the brush somewhere, and you didn't know where in the heck you were. Anybody that was doing that shouldn't have been in their airplane, you know. Anyway, we didn't have those kinds of things. Once in awhile somebody would come



from Boise or somewhere like that, and he'd get, he'd disappear. And so we'd all get in our airplanes, we'd go out and find out what direction he was coming from, and where he was headed for, and we'd survey that route. And once in awhile you'd find somebody on a cow pasture somewhere, and he'd run out of gas. Or he got lost and just gave up, you know, something of that nature. But nothing ever serious. I only remember in my experience out here, one airplane came in here and landed after night. I don't know why he did that but he couldn't find the runways anywhere, and he landed in a field of grass. Didn't damage the airplane much, and it didn't hurt him at all. The airplane sat out there for a couple months before they come in and fixed it up and hauled it off. But I don't know why that fellow was in that condition. He was either drunk, or he didn't know where he was going in the first place. He shouldn't have been out there. But he survived.

MATT: Was that ever a problem with people drink and fly?

DALE: No, not that I know of. Most of the people that were working in the aviation here were pretty straight forward people. And like the Davis's and like the Eggleston's, none of us were drinkers. It's amazing how many people were flying off of this airport, that were teetotalers. Never heard of a guy, a drinker, flying out there. If they were drinkers, they stayed in town. They didn't bother us out here at the airport at all.

MATT: Did a lot of the ranchers have airplanes and landing strips?

DALE: No, not very many. There were, some of them were. And this was something that came in a little later. Because we didn't have --- well there was one man that had,

let's see, he had a machine shop, and he learned to fly. And he had a --- what the dickens was that, some kind of a ---

It was my daughter --- look and see what happened to me.

MATT: Why don't we pause here.

DALE: She was looking to see what happened to me.

MATT: Alright, we're talking with Dale Eggleston, and we're going to take a little break here and ---

And, tape is rolling. I shouldn't say tape, that's an old expression. This is an interview with Dale Eggleston on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. This interview is part of the Harney County Oral History Program, and also the Sesquicentennial History of Aviation Project. It was recorded at the Harney County Library in Burns, Oregon. The interviewer is Matt Simek of Newberg. And this is the second hour, of the second cut on an interview with Dale Eggleston. And we're going to pick up where we left off. One of the things I thought I'd like to do is just throw out a few names to you. I've got some parings of people who owned different kinds of airplanes.

DALE: Oh yeah.

MATT: And so if you'd just comment on these to the extent that you would like, that would be great. Roe Davis owned a Alexander Eagle Rock.

DALE: Right, he did. And he started out with that airplane. I don't know what happened to that airplane, because it finally disappeared from the county. I know it wasn't damaged in any way, but he sold it to somebody, I don't know who it was. But Roe was a real interesting guy, and he could fix anything. He loved to fly, and he was

good at it. And he ended up with that old Eagle Rock, and every time we'd go out to the airport, Roe would be out there flying that old airplane. And we'd wonder if it would ever come back, because of the way it was constructed. Anyway he eventually ended up with a Coach --- who made that?

MATT: Mono-Coach.

DALE: Mono-Coach, yeah. And he let me fly that darn thing. And I was surprised because I had been flying these puddle jumpers and what not. And that was a smooth flying airplane in those days, it was good, and the control system worked perfectly, and it was very smooth. I had a really good time flying that airplane.

MATT: How was that powered?

DALE: Well it was a, let's see, I think that was a round engine. I don't remember what the power was on it. And about that same time my brother entered into a Mono-Coupe. They were both here at the airport at the same time.

MATT: Same company?

DALE: Same company, uh huh. I got to fly in it. He showed me how the darned thing handled and that sort of thing. And we went out and did a few aerobatics with it. But he loved it because it was faster than anything else on the field. He loved to fly out there, and go to where he wanted to go when he was ready, and that sort of thing.

MATT: The Mono-Coach was four passenger, four place.

DALE: Uh huh, and four-place.

MATT: And Mono-Coupe was ---

DALE: Two place.

MATT: Uh huh.

DALE: And those, it's interesting how well those two airplanes flew, as compared with some of the other stuff we had been working with. Because he didn't know just how they would respond in various situations. But those two airplanes were very smooth, very stable, and they'd just do exactly what you wanted them to. I've got a picture of that airplane with my brother out here on a dry lake, in the south and the west of Burns. And he used to fly down there a lot, just for the fun of it because he could buzz the lake, you know, and he could turn around and wing over and come back and land on --- the darn thing almost any direction you wanted to, especially on a decent day. Anyway ---

MATT: What kind are you talking about, like Alvord and, or other dry lakes. How many are there?

DALE: Well there used to be a whole bunch, but most of them have kind of disappeared. Like on the Alvord of course, that thing dries up every year. And it's always, got some time of year you can land out there. This lake I'm talking about was a little dry lake just south of, east of, west of Burns about oh 25 miles. And I don't know, we just called it the dry lake, is what it was. It was an interesting one. There is another lake on the road to Lakeview, between Burns and Lakeview. I don't know the name of that valley, it's just south of Wagontire, on the left side of the road going south. And a friend of mine and I used to fly down there and land and just to get the heck out of town, in the country. My friend ran out of gas so we had to go down to a CCC Camp to get a can of gas so he could get home. (Laughter) Those are just fun things we did for fun.

MATT: When were the CCC Camps in existence?

DALE: Well they came in, in the mid '30's. Let's see there was one at the Bird Refuge, and there was one at what they call Buena Vista, which is between the Refuge Headquarters and Frenchglen. And then there was another one, there were two of them on that road to Frenchglen. And then there was one out at the Gap Ranch out here west of town. So we had several of those installations here. As a matter of fact my father-in-law built the refuge buildings on the Malheur Refuge. When he was here he finally brought his family to Burns, and that is where I met his daughter. Six years later we were married. (Laughter) So anyway, there was things going on.

MATT: The, let's see, as I remember John Scharff was one of the CCC people.

DALE: Yes he was.

MATT: And he also managed the Malheur Game Refuge. And Marcus Haines used to work for him.

DALE: That's true.

MATT: Used to haul hay and so forth, and do all kinds of stuff.

DALE: Well Marcus Haines and another fellow by the name of Jinks Harris worked for my step-father, or rather father-in-law at the refuge when they were building the refuge buildings. They are all stone as you probably --- I don't know if you've been there or not.

MATT: Yeah, I've been there.

DALE: Yes. So Marcus ended up with a ranch right there at the refuge. But Harris, he had a hardware store here in Burns.

MATT: Does the name Jinks Jenkins say anything to you?

DALE: Well the Jenkins family, actually they were the first people to come to Harney County and raise sheep. And they were from, let's see those people were from Wales. And they had two sons, which we all knew very well. They went into the business here. The grandson still lives here, he has the round barn museum. His name is Dick, that was his father's name, Dick Jenkins. They were pioneers.

MATT: Were any of them pilots?

DALE: Dick, young Dick was a pilot. And his wife is a pilot. She still flies. They have a ranch, a cattle ranch, and she rounds up the cattle with her helicopter. And Dick had a Cessna, I don't remember what size the darn thing was, but he used to fly. But he got into trouble with it, and he quit flying. So he doesn't fly anymore. But his wife still flies her helicopter. And they have an airport right there on their ranch.

MATT: Where did Jinks fall into this group?

DALE: That's a good question. Where did Jinks fall into that?

MATT: And was that the same Jinks Jenkins that was killed in an airplane wreck in California?

DALE: Not to my knowledge.

MATT: Okay, may have been a different one.

DALE: Different Jenkins as far as I know.

MATT: Okay.

DALE: Because all the Jenkins' that are here, they're all buried in Harney County, except the ones that are surviving of the family, which is Dick Jenkins there at the Round Barn.

MATT: Yeah. Okay, Ed Brown.

DALE: Nice guy. He was a banker, and he became interested in aviation for some reason or other, I don't know why, what got him going. But he was probably the lousiest one of all the people around in the sagebrush there trying to fly. And he did learn to fly, and I don't know where it was from. But he did learn to fly. And he bought himself a Fairchild, a high-wing Fairchild, one of the older ones with a radio engine on it. And he had it parked out at the Burns Airport, and when anybody wanted to go on a trip someplace why they'd rent this Fairchild from Mr. Brown. And sometimes he'd go with them, and sometimes he wouldn't. But it was interesting that, he was there in the bank just about the time that I began to get into aviation. And when I bought my first airplane I went to Ed Brown and asked him for a loan in the bank. Of course I didn't have any damn money. Well he lent me \$600.

MATT: It helps when the banker is a pilot.

DALE: It sure does. So I was able to eventually put together enough money to buy that Arrow-Sport that I bought. It wasn't expensive, really.

MATT: Now the Arrow-Sport was powered by what?

DALE: It was the Kinner, 100 horse.

MATT: And then the Waco that you bought later was ---

DALE: That was the ---

MATT: Was that the Jacobs?

DALE: That was the Jacobs, yeah, yeah. It was 165 horsepower.

MATT: And which one had the, as I say the Szekeley, you say the Szekeley engine?

DALE: Well that was a different airplane entirely. As a matter of fact the Szekeley was on the, one of those ---

MATT: Was that the Curtis-Junior.

DALE: Curtis, yeah. Curtis, yeah. Roe Davis owned one of those, or rather --- what do you call it?

MATT: The Szekeley powered, Curtis Junior.

DALE: Curtis Junior. He went to Yakima and bought the darned thing, and stored in his hangar. Never did fly it. He just went, buy pieces, to people that wanted the darned thing. That had a Szekeley on it.

MATT: Were there two Fairchild's? Did Pat Fogerty have a Fairchild?

DALE: I don't know a Pat Fogerty.

MATT: Okay. And did, I saw an article somewhere that said Ed Brown may have also owned a Curtis-Robin.

DALE: Oh he did, that's true. That was one thing --- it took him quite a while to get that airplane. I know, I remember him keep talking about it, but it, never get the deal completed. He never really did bring the Curtis-Robin to Burns. He ended up with a Fairchild, and that's the only airplane he had.

MATT: Oh. How many Curtis-Juniors were there?

DALE: The only one that I remember was the one my brother had. Let's see, there might have been another one here, but I don't recall that. You know that darned thing was so under powered that, all you could see when it was flying, it looked like you could run and catch it. But it didn't get very high. And my brother was flying out in the south



part of the county here with a passenger who was hunting coyotes with that airplane. And they come upon this, they were flying over Sunset Valley which is just south of Wrights Point, and they were on top of the point when they were flying, looking for coyotes. And the weather wasn't all that great, because there were a lot of up drafts and down drafts, and they were flying right on the brush and they hit a doggone down draft and into the ground they went. And that was the last of the Curtis Junior.

MATT: What was the date of that?

DALE: Oh, let's see, that was on December the 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941.

MATT: Another day which will live in infamy.

DALE: Yeah, yeah. I was flying that day, and had parked everything and was driving into town when I heard about Pearl Harbor on the radio. We got to town and found out my brother was in the hospital with a broken back. So I went up there and the doctor was trying to put some plaster-of-Paris on him, straighten his back out and that sort of thing. So I got an experience of putting on plaster-of-Paris for a person who had a broken back. So we got it together. He was tied up for two or three months, you're not supposed to get out and see anybody, recover. Went back in the Navy in the end.

MATT: Yeah. I want to get into World War II, but there are just a few things I want to clear up with some of this. One of them was the importance of the coyote hunting. And it's not that they were an endangered species by any means.

DALE: No.

MATT: They were a real menace.

DALE: Menace, right.

MATT: Problem in the valley.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: And so there were many people who hunted coyotes from the air.

DALE: Yes, there were.

MATT: And even encouraged by the Forest Service.

DALE: Oh, yeah.

MATT: Or was it Forest Service?

DALE: Well I don't know who was in charge out here at that time.

MATT: BLM or somebody.

DALE: Some people like that.

MATT: Do you remember what the bounty was?

DALE: Well it wasn't all that high. Seemed to me the hides brought maybe \$45 or \$50 dollars, something like that. They weren't really, really high payment for hides. And some of the people who were involved with the elimination of those darned animals because of what the wreck and ruin they were doing on their farms, they paid for those hunters. At least their gas and oil and their time to go out and kill those darned things.

MATT: Apparently the BLM squawked at \$12.50 an hour for the airplane to go out and do it. But according to the paper they were paying \$15 dollars a hide.

DALE: Fifteen dollars, yeah.

MATT: And if you rack up three or four hundred hides in a season you could make some significant money.

DALE: You can, it would pay for what you were doing, yeah, yeah.

MATT: Yeah. How about Bill Stevenson, had a J-2 Cub.

DALE: Yeah. He was Roe Davis' uncle.

MATT: Oh.

DALE: His wife's brother. And he was an interesting old guy. He was, you know when we were out there in the '30's we were all young kids, you know, by his term. But he had this Piper, what's the first letter on it? It was a 2.

MATT: J-2.

DALE: J-2, yeah. It had what, 45 horsepower on it, something like that. And he just liked to putt around in the sky all by himself. He'd go out there --- I don't know how he learned to fly, Roe probably taught him how to fly. He had this J-2, and even when we were out there on a weekend, or something, messing around why he would come --- Stevenson --- Stevens, and he'd roll out his J-2 and put a little gas in it and crank it up, you know, all by himself, and away he'd go. And pretty quick, after an hour or two why here he'd come back. The most interesting thing that I ever noticed with him was that one day we were out there and we had fog. We had fog! You don't usually get fog out here.

MATT: I wouldn't think so.

DALE: No. But we had a day of fog, so we were all grounded and doing our things around, washing the planes and that sort of thing. And here comes Stevens --- and he rolled his airplane out of the hangar, all by himself, put gas and oil in. And he just went down the runway and took off. God, you couldn't see the middle of the runway, hardly fifty feet, you know. My god, where is he going to go, and how is he going to get back?

So we all stuck around there for two or three hours waiting for him. You could hear him buzzing around up there in that damn fog. And I'll be darned if he didn't finally find the damned airport. He came in almost blind, and landed the damn thing on the runway when the visibility was probably about thirty feet, you know. Incredible! And it scared the pee out of him.

MATT: I'll bet.

DALE: It did. And he quit flying.

MATT: Oh he did?

DALE: Yeah he quit flying. Yeah. He went home and lived with Roe and his sister. He never did fly again, he sold his airplane. Just, you know, he realized he had gotten into something he didn't know anything about, and he didn't want to try it again.

MATT: Probably the saving grace that the J-2 would land about 30 miles an hour.

DALE: That's right, it was.

MATT: Hard to hurt yourself.

DALE: Exactly.

MATT: Wow, he was lucky.

DALE: He was lucky, yeah.

MATT: Grant Green had a Luscombe.

DALE: Yeah, he did. Grant Green. He was kind of an interesting guy, and he worked for the government. I think there was a CCC Camp that he was working on between Bend and Burns. And you know where Brothers is out here, between Bend and Burns?

MATT: Yeah.

DALE: Well just before you get to Brothers, going west, there is a road that turns off the highway that goes due south, and there is some hills down there, and I've forgotten the names of those hills, but there was a camp down there. So he was working out there, and I don't know where he got his plane for them, or where he learned to fly it. But he flew the damn thing from Burns to that CCC Camp. So they must have run a grader out there or something so they could land on it. And he did that until they closed that camp down. And he left the country. And I don't know where in the heck he came from. I knew the fellow, and had lots of talks, but he was pretty dead set in what he was going to do, and he didn't pay much attention to anybody else. (Laughter) And he had this Luscombe. He did alright with it, never did roll it up anywhere, as far as we know. He came from Mt. Vernon over by, in the valley over there. He had a sister that lived over there. That's where he came from. He disappeared and we never did hear from him again. So I don't know what happened to him.

MATT: Were there any celebrities that used to come through here?

DALE: Well, just Rankin and his crew. And let's see ---

MATT: Nobody like Lindbergh?

DALE: No, Lindbergh never made it.

MATT: He missed out.

DALE: He sure did.

MATT: Tell me about the Tex Rankin flying circus.

DALE: Well you know you're reading about Hester, doing outside loops you know.

MATT: Uh huh. Dorothy Hester.

DALE: Yeah. And she was in on that Rankin thing. And they rented a field, not at the airport, but they used the airport, but the field for the show was on a ranch just east of Burns. And it's called the Bell-A Ranch, and it was owned by a fellow that had a ranch over in the Double O country. Oh, what the heck was his name? Well it will come to me. And there is some pictures of that show, and the people that were out there, and all the airplanes that flew in there and lined up. They had all the people from Burns out there to watch this show. And part of it was a parachute drop.

MATT: And you were there.

DALE: Oh yeah. And this upside down thing, and outside loop and all that sort of thing that Hester performed. Never did get to see, or walk around her airplane. But it was kind of located a little away from the other airplanes that were on the field at the time. They kind of lined up like a bunch of cars. And then the other airplanes that were flying had a special place that they were using, aside from the others that were parked out there.

MATT: Do you know what kind of airplanes they were flying at that point?

DALE: Well you had the Piper Cubs, and let me see, anything that had an engine on it, they were there. And I don't remember any Stents (Stinsons) or anything like that, but they weren't out in Harney County at that time. They were too late.

MATT: I know at one point Tex Rankin was a great lake stealer, but I don't know if it was at that time. This was mid, late '30's.

DALE: Yeah. (Cough)

MATT: '37. Would you like some water?

DALE: No thank you. The great lakes was in here, but I don't know who was flying it. I don't know if Tex brought it in, or somebody else in his group. And ---

MATT: Dorothy used to fly it a lot.

DALE: Did she? Well she probably could have flown it here.

MATT: Tex had two brother, Dick and Dud (Dudley), and they also flew stunts. And I understand that one of them would fly the drunk sheepherder ---

DALE: Oh yeah, he did it, because I remember that one. (Laughter)

MATT: What was that like?

DALE: Well they'd do that off of the Burns Airport. And he was flying a Piper Cub. And he'd take off, and wouldn't get very high you know, and he'd go behind a haystack and disappear. Never see him again. Pretty quick he'd come in from the other end of the world, you know, and buzz the field. And then he'd go around and do the same darn thing. He'd disappear, because he'd get out of sight behind a haystack or a bunch of trees, or something like that. And he'd just disappear. Just drove the spectators crazy. It was fun though. (Laughter)

MATT: They were trying to coach him from the ground as to how to fly it so he could get it down safely?

DALE: Yeah, yeah, they were doing that, you know, he was on the loudspeaker.

MATT: What was the, what was the home built community like? Was there any home built effort? I know that there was at least one, because the wings came off of it, and he plunged 300 feet, and didn't survive that one. But I was wondering if other people built their own airplanes.

DALE: That's a good question, you know. Because I don't remember anybody that built their own airplane. The only one that was, you might say locally built was a fellow that had a Eyerly that was built in Salem. And he wouldn't let anybody else fly it, so none of us got to try it or anything. But he had in hangared out there.

MATT: There were two brothers.

DALE: Were there?

MATT: Eyerly brothers.

DALE: Eyerly brothers.

MATT: Lee, and I don't remember the brother's name.

DALE: Yeah. Well this was a local guy, and I don't know where he learned to fly, but he bought a Eyerly, and it was, you know, the darned thing did really well at this altitude. As a matter of fact everybody wanted to go over the Steens Mountain. They'd get in that darned Eyerly and he would take them up there.

MATT: Huh.

DALE: It was really an interesting airplane.

MATT: And how high is Steens?

DALE: Top of it is 98 something.

MATT: So you'd have to have a really good airplane to get up there.

DALE: You've got to have some one that has some power to get up there.

MATT: Yeah. I want to show you some pictures here and see which, if any, of these you might recognize. And I'm going to, for any of these that you do recognize, I'm going to put a little note on them here and then we'll get it copied and find out what it is.



DALE: Okay.

MATT: And I'll tell you on that one, the year is 1920 ---

DALE: 1920.

MATT: And it is a Jenny, OX-5 Jenny.

DALE: It's a Jenny, OX-5. Yeah.

MATT: Do you have any idea what is going on there?

DALE: Well ---

MATT: Of course that was the year you were born, so you weren't there.

DALE: I wasn't there. But it has the feeling of some of the airplanes that didn't belong here come in and they would land in a hay field someplace. And there was also usually some advertising in town about it so that would mean that you would have people out there messing around. Well you see here most of them are kids, very few adults. And of course at this size I don't recognize anybody. Of course I was not there in 1920.

MATT: I'm not sure if that's the same one. Let me look at that and if I'm not mistaken that might be Sweek's Field.

DALE: Sweek's.

MATT: Sweek's Field.

DALE: Sweek's. Had my first airplane ride out of Sweek's Field.

MATT: Yeah, that is Sweek's Field.

DALE: Looks like it, doesn't it.

MATT: And so those people are just coming out in 1920 to see their first airplane.

DALE: See their first airplane, exactly.

MATT: Take a ride. What do you think the fee would have been in those days?

DALE: Oh, I don't know. Two or three dollars probably, something like that. It wouldn't be much.

MATT: Okay.

DALE: Well that's ---

MATT: We'll call this photo number one. Jenny at Sweek's Field.

DALE: Yeah. I had my first airplane ride in the airplane that Lindbergh flew across the ocean in.

MATT: Ryan?

DALE: Ryan, it was a Ryan, but it was a copy. You know they made a couple of those airplanes, you understand, and just like the one Lindbergh ... and eventually made a lot of money flying around the country taking people in it, as you probably know. Well that was where I got my first airplane ride was right there out at Sweek's Field in Burns, Oregon.

MATT: For heaven's sakes. In a Ryan Mono plane, a duplicate of Lindbergh ---

DALE: Yeah, a duplicate of Spirit of St. Louis.

MATT: I had forgotten to ask you what was your first ride.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: Do you remember the first time that it crossed your mind that you wanted to fly? When did you get your fascination?

DALE: Well that's a question I don't think I've ever thought about. Would have to be after my father passed away in 1938. And I knew what my brother was doing at the time,

and I decided it would be fun to be a part of that activity. And he kind of took me by the hand and got me interested over night and away we went.

MATT: Okay, here is another one.

DALE: Oh my gosh, and old Tri-Motor. I rode in that rascal too when he was barnstorming around the country.

MATT: Who was doing the flying?

DALE: I have no idea at this point.

MATT: According to this it says Nick Mamer.

DALE: I don't even know where he came from. But he was here, and he took a lot of people up in the air, and I was one.

MATT: Do you recognize the person in the picture there?

DALE: Oh, let's see. Boy that is pretty dim, isn't it?

MATT: Yeah.

DALE: Hmm, I don't know. It might have been one of the members of the city council or something like that.

MATT: This says it was Bill Hanley.

DALE: Oh, Bill Hanley. Probably was. Now on this picture I can see old Bill with his hair things around his ears. And the Bell A Ranch was owned by Bill Hanley.

MATT: So you think this was at the Bell A Ranch?

DALE: Probably was, yeah, yeah. Gee this picture shows him real good. Yeah he had contacts in Washington, D. C. and he'd go back there all the time. He did a lot of things for Harney County. And I did get to ride in that old Tri-Motor.

MATT: Coast Air Transport, 1929. I think that was the same one as the prior photo that we will call number 2. A Ford Tri-Motor.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: And that one we'll call number 3, and it looks like the same people taking rides up in that Ford Tri-Motor.

DALE: Yeah. Well they're all dressed up.

MATT: Do you recognize any of them?

DALE: I don't right off. If I had a magnifying glass I might be able to.

MATT: Of course again, this was in 1929, so you'd just be 9 years old.

DALE: I was only 9 years old.

MATT: Yeah.

DALE: But they might have been people that I later knew.

MATT: Have you ridden the Tri-Motor that's out at Evergreen?

DALE: No I haven't. Is it one of these that was made by --- was that made by Ford?

MATT: It was made by Ford, yeah.

DALE: Ford, yeah.

MATT: Well there is a lot of them here on the Tri-Motor. And we've probably --- they're all very similar and we've probably exhausted the ... on that one.

DALE: Yeah, right. They didn't put a list of names of those guys.

MATT: No.

DALE: Doggone it, that's too bad.

MATT: Yeah. Okay. What's this one?

DALE: Well it looks like that old airplane that Roe Davis owned. What did I call that thing that Roe had?

MATT: Well let's see, which one.

DALE: Well his, not bi-plane. I had the name of it when I came in here. Now I've forgotten it.

MATT: Oh. It couldn't be the Waco.

DALE: No, it was the ---

MATT: That Roe Davis had?

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: Oh the Alexander Eagle Rock.

DALE: Eagle Rock.

MATT: Oh, let's see.

DALE: Isn't that the picture of the Eagle Rock. It kind of looks like it.

MATT: It could be. We'll call this number 3 and see if there is a legend on it. It is Billy Dibble's.

DALE: Oh, that was something else. Let's see, what was that called.

MATT: Billy left Burns in April of 1928 to attend Tex Rankin's flying school. He graduated as a commercial pilot with a grade of 97 in all of his courses. He was the first one to own and operate an airplane in the Burns area. When he bought the OX-5 powered bi-wing Waco 10 in the area. These are pictures of that airplane.

DALE: Oh yeah, that was a Waco. Uh huh.

MATT: So this is number 3, Billy Dibble's Waco.

DALE: Yeah. Well that's the airplane that my brother learned to fly in, with Bill.

MATT: What did Waco stand for?

DALE: Gee, I don't know. I couldn't tell you. It should have been a manufacturing ---

MATT: It was an abbreviation for the Western Aircraft Company.

DALE: Oh, it was.

MATT: Yeah. W A C O.

DALE: Where in the heck was it made?

MATT: I don't know, I think California wasn't it? Okay, there is number 3, and number 4, I mean the other one is just another view of the same WACO. And let's see, I think this is another Tri-Motor picture. Another Tri-Motor. Yeah, these are all Tri-Motors.

DALE: You know this picture was made on Bill Hanley's Ranch at the Double --- not the Double O, but the Bell A.

MATT: Bell A.

DALE: Bell A Ranch.

MATT: Where was Bill Hanley's ranch?

DALE: Well he had a ranch in the Double O country which is just ---

MATT: That's west of town?

DALE: It's west and south. You know going up the hill there on the Sagehen, there is a road turns off south at the top of the hill. Well that goes to the Double O Ranch.

MATT: I was down there the other day with the Marshall's.

DALE: Oh you were.

MATT: Yeah. And that was a little bit farther to the Double O, right?

DALE: Yeah, yeah.

MATT: Okay, did we say this was number 4. Oh no, number 3 is Billy Dibble's Waco. And there are a couple views of that one.

DALE: Oh yeah. Gee whiz, that's where we got this shot. ... darn airplane was airborne.

MATT: Yes.

DALE: How about that.

MATT: Alright, here is a Ryan Mono plane. What's that about?

DALE: That must have been somebody that was going through. Because I don't remember ever seeing a Ryan in a local aircraft --- Let's see, you got a lot of guys around there. Looks like they are trying to put some fuel in the top tank. Huh. C-2071 Ryan. I don't ever remember seeing that one here.

MATT: Do you recognize these two characters?

DALE: Gosh darn.

MATT: We don't have any names for those guys.

DALE: Doggone.

MATT: That's a lot of geese.

DALE: Isn't that terrible to clean out a mess of geese --- on one trip. Where were they when they did that?

MATT: You don't recognize them?

DALE: Sure don't. Sure do not, I'm sorry to say.

MATT: Here is some more guys, maybe you would recognize some of them. It's the same picture, 105695. Goose hunters. Nobody comes to mind, huh?

DALE: Nobody is popping out at all. I wonder where that thing was taken. Do you have any idea?

MATT: No. Well here is one I think you'll recognize.

DALE: This baby. I knew every one of those coyotes.

MATT: (Laughter) We're going to call this one number 5, and you can tell us what it is. Maybe.

DALE: Maybe.

MATT: I'm thinking that that is Roe Davis' hangar.

DALE: I think it is too.

MATT: And is that his airplane inside?

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: What kind is it?

DALE: It's probably --- You know there was ---

MATT: That wasn't a Curtis Junior was it?

DALE: I don't think so.

MATT: No, not that one.

DALE: And I don't think it was a Piper.

MATT: It's hard to tell just by the nose isn't it?

DALE: Yes. But Roe had --- Let's see, what the devil was he using for this thing? I'm trying to think of the other --- two-place rig that was kind of like a Cub. But it wasn't a



Cub, it was something else. And I was trying to think of what the dickens the name of it was.

MATT: Not a Taylorcraft?

DALE: No it wasn't a Taylor. But it was --- it wasn't side by side, the seats were in line. There was another one of those that we used to fly. What the dickens was it named?

MATT: A Champ?

DALE: No, that doesn't sound right. You noticed the landing gear on this thing is a reasonable distance, so it was a pretty good sized airplane there.

MATT: Well we can come back to it. How about this one? Whose airplane is that, do you know?

DALE: Well that's a Junior, isn't it?

MATT: That's a Curtis-Junior.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: And it's full of hides.

DALE: Hides. That could be the one that my brother had and wrecked it up there on the hill. I was trying to look at the numbers on it. I think there were two of those darned things in Burns at one time, about the time that they were doing this coyote hunting. And the engine up there is what, 3 cylinder Szekeley?

MATT: Uh huh.

DALE: Yeah. Well the darned thing, you know, flew fairly slow.

MATT: Yeah.

DALE: And you could round up coyotes pretty fast if they're out there.

MATT: Yeah. That will be number 6, Curtis Junior with coyote hides.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: Who is this? It's a big airplane.

DALE: Yeah. Looks like Catlow Valley to me. That would be Roaring Springs Ranch.

He had a strip there for a long time. Now they've got a better strip there than Burns has.

MATT: I've seen that strip. And I may be wrong. Does this have anything on the back of it?

DALE: Roaring Springs Ranch, yeah. Portrait Levens Studio. Doesn't have a date on it.

MATT: Well you really did a good job in identifying that as the Roaring Springs.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: Is that a Beech 18?

DALE: Yeah, that's what it is, a Beech 18. I was trying to remember what the engines were on that 18.

MATT: They were radials.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: But I don't know what kind they are.

DALE: I've forgotten now. I've flown that darned airplane.

MATT: Did they use Continentals, or was that ---

DALE: That's a good point. There were a lot of Continentals on some of the Air Force stuff.

MATT: More like a, let's see a rotary, would that be more like a Jacobs or a Warner or a Wright Whirlwind?

DALE: A Wright would be on some of those too. Yeah.

MATT: Okay. Well good, I'm glad that you identified that. When you're ready I think, that's all the photographs I've got here. And so we'll call this one number 7, the Beech 18 at the Roaring Springs Ranch. And let's move on now to, I think we've pretty well covered the early years.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: And let's go on to what happened at wartime. You drove back from the airport, you heard on the news that the Japanese had attacked Pear Harbor. And then what? What happened to aviation?

DALE: Aviation had a collapse because a lot of people had already enlisted in the Air Force, and we had extra airplanes here. And of course the Japanese were on the Pacific Coast, and consequently every airplane that was within a certain mileage, distance of the coast that wasn't in use had to be dismantled. I don't know if you remember that one.

MATT: Uh huh, I do.

DALE: So there were several airplanes here in Burns that were dismantled. As a matter of fact I owned one of them. Because there wasn't anything going on out here, and they didn't want anybody running into these unused airplanes and taking off and doing whatever they were going to do to them. And they had this flying, I guess it was just a course, I've forgotten what the devil they called that.

MATT: You're talking about CPT?

DALE: Yeah, CPT.

MATT: Civilian pilot training.

DALE: Right. And my brother was brought into that as an instructor.

MATT: How did that happen, how was he contacted? Or did he join up?

DALE: Well they had people going around finding these instructors to go into that. And it didn't matter much about what their ages were, as long as they had a license and had some experience, they put them into that organization. But it was not in Burns, it was in the Central Oregon area, Redmond, Bend, Madras probably. It had an air base up there. And probably Klamath Falls, I don't know if Lakeview did, I don't remember that. But the ones that were on that stream there just east of the valley, east of the Cascades. And so he joined that. They petitioned him and he went for it and he was flying, instructing and I don't know who they were working with. Wherever they were getting their pilots or who those people were. Whether they were just bringing them in off the street or what, what they were doing. Never did get into that.

But at that time, after Pearl Harbor I was working for an automobile dealership. And of course I had an airplane and I had a license and that sort of thing. And when my brother went into the training system he had --- just before that happened, we had made an arrangement, he had acquired a little old 40 horsepower airplane. And I don't remember who made it, whether it was a Piper or a T-Craft or what it was. At this point I have forgotten. He wanted my Waco, so I traded it to him. And I kept the little old T-Craft whatever it was, 40 horsepower jobbie, it was in the hanger out there at the airport. I wasn't flying the darned thing, and in my job at the automobile dealership I found out that all of the new cars they had there for sale were confiscated by the US Government. All of the new parts for those car was also confiscated. What did I say?

MATT: Confiscated.

DALE: Confiscated.

MATT: Why? Well, because they wanted those things for the military. And of course they rounded these things up that were not being used, and hadn't been sold in the dealerships. That's where they acquired all their, that part of the government utilization in the Army, Air Force, and Navy and that sort of thing. They bought these cars, or rather confiscated the darn things. I'm sure the dealers were compensated for it. But anyway it just put them out of business, so that means I was out of business because I was working for them. So I had a friend, we were talking about it, says well looks like we're going to have to get in the service somehow. So we went to Portland and signed up in the Air Corp. I didn't do anything with my little puddle jumper. I just left it in the hangar, and they came along with the deal that it had to be dismantled. So they took the wings off of it and stored it there. My brother went off, and he was working for the --- what was that PT ---

MATT: CPT.

DALE: CPT organization.

MATT: And he was in Redmond do you think?

DALE: Well he was in Redmond, or Bend or one of those stations, just close here. So I was involved, I was signed up with the Air Corps on January the 13<sup>th</sup>, 1942, just a month after Pearl Harbor. And of course I went down to the induction centers, and went to Fort Lewis and Wichita Falls, Texas, etc. I went to a mechanics school in Chanute.

MATT: That's in Illinois?

DALE: In Illinois. Then something came along and really wanted to make me want to get into a pilot institution there at Randolph field. So I petitioned and sent in an application there after I had finished the mechanics school, and I was accepted. So I went to, I don't remember the field there, the one just north of San Antonio.

MATT: Oh there was so many.

DALE: There were so many in the holding area. At that time the government was making airplanes like they were going out of style. And they woke up to the fact, McDonald, that ... (Tell her to wait a minute. I saw my family out there.)

MATT: Oh.

DALE: Anyway Hap Arnold was in charge. And he finally came to the conclusion that they had all these damned airlines but nobody to fly them. So when I was in San Antonio the system came to a halt and was revised. And they sent all of us guys that were waiting there to go to a flying school to tests. And if we qualified for pilots program why that was fine, you'd get into another section. And if you didn't why you go to be a bombardier or you'd be a navigator or etc. Well I ended up in a pilots program. And at that time the Air Force had classes, you know, started in, in January and February and March, clear through to 12 months. And we had, they established a new class and it was called 42-X, and that's what I got into, because I passed all the pilots stuff. And what that was done for is the 42-X people were being trained to be instructors. I hadn't flown any military airplanes, but we went to Randolph Field for that stuff. And not all of them graduated from that, because it was too strenuous. But I had enough background I got along just fine with it.

MATT: Well what did you teach in?

DALE: Well alright, the Air Force at that time had three categories, primary, basic, and advanced. Well I ended up in basic. So that was, they made a new airport in Garden City, Kansas, for all of us guys that were coming out of those instructor programs. And they had them all over Kansas. And there were some also in Missouri, I think. We were in the Central Flying Command then. Anyway I ended up instructing in Garden City, Kansas, at the new air base there.

MATT: Now the basics were flying --- not the basics, the primaries were the PT-17.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: And that essentially was the steer man.

DALE: Steer man, yeah.

MATT: And then the basic graduated to what?

DALE: BT-13's.

MATT: The Vultee Vibrator.

DALE: Yeah, the old Vibrator.

MATT: And you taught in those?

DALE: Oh yeah.

MATT: What were they like to fly?

DALE: They were a damn good airplane, they really were. And they were easy to fly, and the engines were good, you know they all had P and W's on them. There wasn't any problems with maintenance. When your turn came up to use your students, why you always had a good airplane. And we went through a whole damn scheme --- the first

thing you had to do was teach them how to fly this single engine, low wing airplane that had lots of power on it, and a controllable propeller and all this. It didn't have retractable on it, it was fixed wheels. Anyway, that was the first thing you had to do. Get these guys oriented from the old 17 into a BT-13. And we had some 8's and 9's also, those old, old BT's. But anyway, we all had five students that come to us. And you had to get those guys oriented to those airplanes within about four weeks.

MATT: Roughly how many hours of flying would that be?

DALE: Well it turned out to be only about 20, let's see 25 or 30 hours. The thing was gung-ho, it was a priority to get those people through those airplanes so they could fly.

MATT: And then at that point they would go to advanced?

DALE: They would go to advanced, uh huh.

MATT: And what were they flying in advanced, was that ---

DALE: AT-6's, (Texan) uh huh. Well they had some others. Some of those people when they'd go to advanced, they were transferred, or rather changed to twin-engine. I don't know how they selected that, because we didn't have any twins in our school. But we had to run them through, not only the airplane and it's capacity, how it could fly, and what it could do. But we had to teach them formation flying, aerobatics, night flying, radios, cross country, and in just a very, very short time. Just about a month you had to run them through all of that damn rigmarole so they could go on to advanced. So we didn't get much sleep during that time.

MATT: How many did you teach at a time?



DALE: Five. Fortunately I didn't have to wash anybody out. They were pretty damn good kids.

MATT: That was unusual.

DALE: Very unusual. And so I was one of the lucky's that had some good kids to teach. So it wasn't all that difficult, they caught on right away in what to do, and how to fly that damn old Vultee Vibrator.

MATT: How long did you teach?

DALE: Well I taught there in Garden City, Kansas until the war stopped in Europe in '45.

MATT: And then came back to Burns?

DALE: No, I was transferred to Eagle Pass, Texas, which was an advanced school. And so I don't know why they did that because most of, all of the basics were being cut down and those guys were running through advanced real fast. But we were, stayed on duty until the basics were all gone. Then we were transferred to some of the advanced places, and they had been kicking those guys out too. They sent them to the South Pacific's and what not. And anyway I ended there in Eagle Pass, Texas, in the AT-6. I was there about, on let's see, not very long. I went there I think in February and we were out of there in June or something like that because the war was slowing down. So we were transferred back to Randolph field, and what they had set up there was a new school to re-train POW's coming back who were pilots. And they were training them so that they get back into the swing of things. And getting the P-40's and all that other stuff and fly

it. And they were sending them off to the South Pacific. We were just kind of a transition job there.

MATT: On returning POW's.

DALE: POW's.

MATT: That was a little tough.

DALE: Well you know some of them weren't worth a damn, but others they were trying to get into the program again. And the ones that did why they succeeded. But the ones that, you know, they were done with what they were going to do with the Air Force. They didn't get any place, and I don't know where they ended up, they just disappeared. So I was a squadron commander for that transition. And so it was very interesting. But after, it didn't take very long for that program to die. And consequently we had all of these people and all these air bases, didn't have anything to do. So, they started sending us home. And they sent me home in September.

MATT: Still in '45 or '46?

DALE: '45.

MATT: Wow.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: That was pretty quick.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: When you came back, what did you do?

DALE: Well I had a job in Burns, Oregon, fortunately. I went in to the land title insurance business, and insurance and what not.

MATT: Did you pick up flying again?

DALE: Oh yeah, I did. I started an air school, flying school.

MATT: With your brother?

DALE: No, he was gone into the Navy. And he didn't come back until, oh golly, another three or four months out of the Navy.

MATT: Was he also teaching?

DALE: He ended up, well they assigned him --- they took off this PTT thing and scattered those guys where they wanted to go, and he ended up in the Navy in Corpus Christy, Texas. He was, they trained him in all the airplanes the Navy was using. And he ended up transporting, or flying airplanes from the factory for the Navy. And he was apparently so good at it that hell, they'd assign him four, five, or six or even ten guys that he would have to lead to the Navy deposit area, where they wanted those airplanes. He just flew all over this damn country, it was incredible.

MATT: So he didn't wind up in combat either.

DALE: No, he didn't.

MATT: Fortunate.

DALE: I never did either. They wouldn't let us quit. And of course the war was over by the time they decided they didn't need us anymore so they sent us home.

MATT: So what happened with that little airplane with the wings taken off before the war?

DALE: Well that's a good point. You know this girl I was telling you about that I saw in Burns, Oregon when we were in high school. She just was there for six months. We had

a couple of dates, we kind of fell in love. And then she went around the world, in the country, with her family. And she settled in Pocatello, Idaho, while I was back to Burns flying airplanes and instructing in my school. And I had to go back east to pick up a car. And so I went through Pocatello, Idaho and we picked up where we left off several years ago. But anyway we got married in Berkeley, California. And we had two kids at the end of the war. And we brought our kids home here to Burns. There were two houses available in Burns at the end of the war. One was where I lived, and one of them was another two blocks west of where I lived. So I got the one that was closest to town. (Laughter) So anyway, that's where we have been ever since.

MATT: And then you found that airplane again. Was it still where you left it?

DALE: No, it --- while I was in Garden City, Kansas I sold it for, what was it, \$465 or something like that. I don't know who bought it, I've forgotten now.

MATT: And when you came back, what did you buy?

DALE: I bought a Belanca. It was an older one, '46.

MATT: With the wooden wings?

DALE: With the wooden wings and ... on the tail, you know.

MATT: That was the Belanca ---

DALE: It was a '46 I think. It had 165 horse engine in it. Flew beautifully. I just loved that airplane.

MATT: They were sort of Cadillac airplanes.

DALE: Yeah, they were at that time.

MATT: So did you reunite with all your old buddies, not only your brother but Roland and Oscar?

DALE: Oscar, yeah we got together.

MATT: You started a flying school.

DALE: Flying school, and we worked together with various types of airplanes, Piper Cubs, you know, and T-Birds. Had a good time, real good time.

MATT: Are you still flying?

DALE: No, I'm not. Let's see we stayed here until 19 --- let's see after the war, 1960.

We had two kids and we sent them to college. And we decided since we had not got to go to college because of the damn war interrupted our education, we decided we'd quit what we were doing and we enrolled in college. Spent ten years going to college.

MATT: How wonderful.

DALE: Yeah. And got ourselves re-educated. And my wife ended up with a PhD in psychology. And I ended up with a doctors, not a doctors, but a masters in geography because I loved it. You know the air thing and the areas that you got to get to go to and all that sort of thing. So from there on after college we took, well we were kind of --- interesting jobs --- started out in South Dakota because I wanted to, they had a job there for somebody that knew how to generate title insurance. They were all doing abstracts, I don't know if you are interested in those darn things, but title insurance was a new thing, and I had lots of experience in that. And so they came and got me out of school. So I went with them after they, after I had graduated, and we settled into the business in South Dakota.

MATT: How long were you there?

DALE: Well we were only there a couple of years. My wife, who went to work for the state in child business, what do you call it, child education. And I was in the title business bringing all their land title problems under control. And ---

MATT: Then you came back to Burns, or elsewhere?

DALE: Well we didn't, because one of my cousins was living in Rapid City and she had a husband and two children, so we got acquainted with them. We hadn't seen them for a long, long time. And I was down at the university there in Rapid City where my cousin worked, and on a board --- I don't know what you call it --- anyways this stuff to pick up, or put up notices and that sort of thing. Here was an article there that the University of Idaho at Moscow is instituting a PhD program in agricultural economics. Geeze, that just struck me right on top of the head. So I quit my damn job and put in an application and they accepted me, and my wife and I moved to Moscow, Idaho. While I went to school again in economic --- agriculture economics. Well we stayed there two years and she had a job with the state in her business. And low and behold the damn university decided they didn't have enough instructors in that business, in that field to grant the PhD program. So they pulled the rug out from all of us that were in that program. So we moved back to Oregon. I went to work with a title insurance company in Oregon City.

MATT: Oh, Oregon City.

DALE: Yeah

MATT: So when did you come back here?

DALE: When did I come back here?

MATT: Yeah.

DALE: Well in the meantime my wife's parents who were living in California, in Richmond, they needed help. So my wife and I went with her two sisters into Richmond and helped them through their end of life. Then we came back to Beaverton, Oregon and bought a house. Was messing around, didn't have anything to do. So we looked around and decided well god damn we've got to finish our education here. So we took a few courses down at Portland State.

Then we found out that there was a guy in --- where in the hell was he --- in Nebraska, I think, or ---- Oh it was in Central Oregon, I mean central U.S. He was advertising for people to go on a tour of, people that wanted to go to the, the people that were running countries all over the world. So we signed up with him, and so we went all over the world, like Japan, and China, other places, ended up in India. Got to meet all the high politicians in all those countries. We were headed for Moscow, they had a big conference going on there, so they couldn't accommodate us. So they sent us back, they detoured us. So we went back to Frankfurt in Germany for a --- oh we were there probably two or three weeks. And then we got to go over to, well we were in --- what the hell is it, the old town up on the Balkans in Germany, not Germany, but in Moscow. What the heck is the name of that place? Anyway, I can't think of the name of it. Anyway we went back to there to ---

VALERIA EGGLESTON: Mrs. Eggleston is worried.

MATT: (Laughter) Tell her everything is copasetic, copasetic.

DALE: We went to, gosh I can't think of the name of this big Russian city on the Baltic, and went through all of that, and all the interesting things up there. And then we went down to Kiev, and went through all of Kiev. And when we got through there we went over to Czechoslovakia and Prague and just messed around. Because we'd been to Egypt, they wanted to go to Egypt, but we'd been to Egypt, so from there --- ... honey.

VALERIA: All good things have to come to an end.

DALE: Have to come to an end.

MATT: Now we're being joined by Mrs. Eggleston.

DALE: Yes, my wife Valeria.

MATT: Nice to meet you.

VALERIA: I've heard nice things about you when he came home for lunch. And you've been at it all day.

DALE: Gee whiz, it's only four o'clock.

VALERIA: Come on, we're going home.

DALE: We're going home.

VALERIA: Yeah.

DALE: What do you do with something like that.

MATT: So you last flew then when?

DALE: Well, let's see my Belanca burned up in a fire in the hangar. So we didn't have an airplane when we came home from college. So I haven't done much flying since then.

MATT: Now you're going to see if you can find your brother's log books.

DALE: Yeah.



MATT: And any photographs that they may have, and that you still may have.

DALE: Right.

MATT: And the library would be glad to take copies of those if that's alright.

DALE: Sure, alright. No problem.

MATT: Okay.

VALERIA: The library took a lot of your pictures.

DALE: Yeah, they have.

VALERIA: And they have those.

DALE: Yeah, they do have mine. But I don't know if they have got any of Darrel's pictures. And I don't know where they are, what Marsha did with them.

VALERIA: Marsha has them. She took them home. So we'll just call her and ask her.

DALE: Yeah, we'll have them shipped down here.

MATT: Alright. Well we've been talking with Dale Eggleston, and very briefly Mrs. Eggleston, on June, I'm sorry, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 at the Harney County Library. This interview is part of the Harney County Oral History Program, and was recorded at the Harney County Library on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. Interviewer is Matt Simek, from Newberg. And this concludes part two of two on this beautiful summer day.

DALE: Yeah.

MATT: Thank you very much, what a pleasure this has been.

DALE: Well, it's been a lot of fun.

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