

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #59 - Side A

Subject: Eunice Voegtly

Place: Burns, Oregon

Date: June 4, 1978

Interviewer: Eunice Voegtly

PAULINE BRAYMEN: This is Pauline Braymen, and I'm visiting with Eunice Voegtly at her home in Burns, on June 4th, 1978. She's been chosen to represent the Pioneer Association as Queen Mother at this year's Pioneer Day Celebration. Now your parents were Venators. And can you tell me how your family --- where your family came from and how they happened to come to Harney County?

EUNICE VOEGTLY: Well my father would be Alphene Venator, and he came to Lakeview across the plains. And then when he was 13 years old, he moved over to --- established his own Venator Ranch, you see.

PAULINE: When he was 13?

EUNICE: When he was 13. Yeah, he homesteaded when he was 13. Of course you can't put that in, but that is true.

PAULINE: Well I don't know why you can't.

EUNICE: Well that's what he did. Yeah, he did. He had a little dugout, even in the side of the hill there, when he first came there.

PAULINE: And this is out at Crane?

EUNICE: Dead Man Creek.

PAULINE: Dead Man Creek.

EUNICE: It says Crane Creek, but it's actually Dead Man Creek.

PAULINE: Did you ever hear anyone say how Crane Creek got its name?

EUNICE: No, I don't know.

PAULINE: While we're on that subject --- I've asked everyone that's come from that area out there if they know, and no one seems to really know about it.

EUNICE: No, I don't. The South Fork of the Malheur, see Dead Man Creek --- now it's facing this way, comes down this way, and then the Malheur River, the South Fork of the Malheur goes through here. You ought to see that ranch sometime; it's a gorgeous place.

PAULINE: I've been there once for --- on a grass tour, I think.

EUNICE: That must have been when Francis was there. Yeah, see ... But that wasn't a very pretty ranch then, moles, you know, and things just ruined that ranch for one whole year.

PAULINE: Yes, that was about the time when, part of the reason for going there was to see that, and what they were going to do about it.

EUNICE: And the next year, the place was better, whatever it was that stirred the roots up, you know.

PAULINE: He homesteaded there then in 1884, and ---

EUNICE: Yes, I think that's right. Yeah, because I wrote it down it's in his thing right here. Let's see; let's see, well it just doesn't say. It tells how long he had the Venator Ranch, but I don't suppose that would want to go --- that's 68 years it says. Then he turned it over, you see, to his sons.

PAULINE: Then you were born in Burns?

EUNICE: Uh huh. Right up here in the old Vickers house, upstairs.

PAULINE: Who was your mother?

EUNICE: Luella, well she died, you see, when I was only nine, let's see, eleven months

old. Luella McDonald, her name was, but I --- my real mother was Josephine.

PAULINE: Your father remarried?

EUNICE: Uh huh. Because I would naturally have never have known my own mother.

PAULINE: And you were born on May 10, 1898.

EUNICE: '98.

PAULINE: Did you grow up then on the Venator Ranch, or did you grow up here in Burns?

EUNICE: No, I went to grade school at the Venator Ranch, which was a school between there and Charlie Peterson's. You know, in between, three miles each side. And then I went, in high school I went three years to Lakeview. My dad took me, and then the last year I went to finish high school here in Burns.

PAULINE: Were there very many children in the grade school at Venator?

EUNICE: Let's see, three, six --- there was usually about eight. Uh huh. Later we had one Basco, you know, Johnny --- I started to say Madriago, yeah. You see they finished high, graduated from the eighth grades there. Imagine that. But I wouldn't, no, don't put that in.

PAULINE: Can you remember some of the other names of some of the other children that went to school with you?

EUNICE: Oh yes. Nettie Peterson, and Edna Peterson, Jack Peterson, and Paul Peterson, four of them. We all finished grade school. And then we had, my first teacher was Hattie Bartlett, and you know Hattie. She was sweet sixteen, I can remember. Now you see, I never would have thought about those things.

PAULINE: Did you walk to school, or did you ride to school?

EUNICE: We usually rode. We walked sometimes, each way, but most of the time we rode.

PAULINE: What kind of a horse did you have to ride?

EUNICE: Oh, I had a big pacer, and he was a beauty too, Teddy. And then I had a little gray mare for quite a number of years. And when Dad took me to Lakeview, we had to use a buggy, you know. And I had a pinto horse, and he followed, and we took him to Lakeview and I kept him there until after I left high school. My aunt gave him to someone, you know, another family. So, you see, I'm a horsewoman, definitely. Then I lived seven years in Alberson, you see, my husband and I. And we had horses and things like that, so I'm definitely a rancher. Wouldn't mind being one yet.

PAULINE: It's a pretty good life, all right.

EUNICE: Uh huh. But I lived there steady for 14 years, you see, at the Venator Ranch.

PAULINE: You were 14 when you went to Lakeview?

EUNICE: Yes, uh huh.

PAULINE: And you stayed with your aunt?

EUNICE: Yes, Aunt Rose. She was a teacher out here. I noticed

--- Mrs. Richardson, she's a past --- at Crane, you know. She said that her first teacher was here on the Island Ranch, and that was my Aunt Rose.

PAULINE: What was her last name?

EUNICE: Vanderpool.

PAULINE: Vanderpool. Now I have heard that name. That's probably where I heard it.

EUNICE: Probably. Because she had it that little history. I remember ---

PAULINE: Okay. And you married Nick Voegtly in 1916. How did you happen to meet him?

EUNICE: Well at the Three P Ball, and he'd, he'd finished high school, he graduated in 1914. And he'd gone to Portland and was working there. He came back and went to the Three P Ball, and Don Hotchkiss brought him over and introduced him, and that was it!

PAULINE: Were you married in Burns?

EUNICE: No, married in Vale.

PAULINE: Married in Vale.

EUNICE: My dad went with us, and he went on to Mexico to help out with a brother that he had. He had to take some cattle down there, and one thing and another. And he stayed in, stood up for us when we was married in Vale.

PAULINE: And then you homesteaded or ranched at Alberson?

EUNICE: No, I stayed there over the winter, while Dad was gone, so someone would take care of the ranch, you see. So Nick and I stayed there. And then when he came home, he had a little, a store at Alberson. It's out just this side of Andrews, about 60 miles this side of --- Maybe, you know where the Juniper Ranch is, used to be there? Dad gave that to us, and so we came in and we ran it for about seven years. And then the sheep, you know, got bad. The cattle, they just simply didn't go, and there was so much drought. It was in that second war, you know. So we sold the place, I think for \$500, or something like that.

PAULINE: Oh my goodness.

EUNICE: And we, then we came to Burns, and he got into his plumbing trade here.

PAULINE: He was a plumber?

EUNICE: After he came here, yes. He learned his trade here. Yes, he was a plumber here for a good many years.

PAULINE: I don't remember him. He's been gone for a long, long time, hasn't he?

EUNICE: He's been only gone twelve years.

PAULINE: Is that all?

EUNICE: Well of course that's --- I don't have any good pictures of him though, not a one. The only one I've got of him, you must know him. I think you do. This was his high

school picture, and this was him, here. So, you see, I just --- Oh, I've got some, oh a lot of pictures of ... and stuff like that. Well, you know, he got cancer and we just hated to get a picture taken of him, and so I just never did.

PAULINE: He was a handsome man.

EUNICE: He was a good looking --- Well, you know Allan, he looked like him, only he wasn't quite as bald as Allan is.

PAULINE: Well, I guess, I've known you all my life, and seen you at the store and at church. And I didn't ---

EUNICE: Well he never came to church very much. He wasn't much of a --- He was a Christian man, I'm sure, but he wasn't much, you know, he'd come once in awhile.

PAULINE: Well my impression of you, of course, is to buy candy at the dime store. That's really my first memory of you.

EUNICE: Sure. I remember, I told Ed Eberly, I said, "You know, I'm just an awfully honest woman." I said, "But you know, once in awhile I helped myself to a piece of candy." And of course I put a lot of weight on too.

PAULINE: That would have been a great temptation.

EUNICE: Oh yeah. But you get --- after awhile I got so I didn't get tempted at all then. Ed was a wonderful man, though. He was awful nice.

PAULINE: So you worked at the dime store for ---

EUNICE: 23 years.

PAULINE: For 23 years for Ed Eberly. And ---

EUNICE: And then I owned the Pink and Blue.

PAULINE: Owned the Pink and Blue. Boy, I have a lot of good memories from the Pink and Blue too.

EUNICE: Yeah. I'm sorry, kind of afterward, but I said when I was 70 I was going to sell

it, you now, and so I did. Caroline, she'd been wanting it for a long time, and she kept pushing me, and I probably wouldn't have sold quite as quick as I did. Then she didn't keep it very long. It was a lovely little store. I made good money off of it too, you know. I liked it. When I came in there though, there just wasn't hardly anything in it, you know. I bought fixtures and fixed it all up nice. And it was --- but Ruthie has a nice store, Ruthie. She has the same brands and everything that I had. Everything's a little higher, but why not? Everything is higher.

PAULINE: Oh everything is higher.

EUNICE: Yeah.

PAULINE: Allan had a sick calf yesterday, and we used the last of the mineral oil, a gallon of mineral oil that I'd bought, oh probably 15 years ago. Just to have on hand for that kind of an emergency. And so I'd come back to town to get another gallon to replace it. It cost \$4.15 when I bought it, probably about 15 years ago, and it cost me \$11.25 for a gallon yesterday.

EUNICE: Can you beat it? Yeah, yeah.

PAULINE: Three times as much.

EUNICE: Yeah, yeah, that sounds very typical.

PAULINE: Well let's get into the record here, the story about your grandfather who ---

EUNICE: Oh, well I went and left the thing out ... Well that was Jezreal --- Oh, let's see, it's right in here. Yeah, here it is. Well now do you want that?

PAULINE: Do you just want to read that clipping?

EUNICE: Okay. Maybe I'd better say Jezreal Venator. It just says Venator came west. How would I put it?

PAULINE: I think that; let's get his name in. Jezreal?

EUNICE: Uh huh, J E Z R E A L Venator came west along the Oregon Trail in 1852.

Fought in the Rogue River Indian War, and moved to property just south of Lakeview. And they did, they owned a big ranch there for a long time. They still had it when I lived there. In August of 1881, he set out for a trip to Harney County to buy horses, but his horse bolted and Venator died of thirst. He died in the area of Venator Canyon, which was named for him. I clipped that out one time from the "Oregon Journal", so that's it. And there's nothing, I suppose, in there about my brothers. There's no point in putting them in. I had a sister and two brothers.

PAULINE: Well I think we really should mention them.

EUNICE: Well, Francis was Grassman of the Year in 1955. And Stanley, well let's see. Well they both got married, and Stanley moved to Portland, and he worked in the shipyards for a long time there. He's lived in Portland for, oh I don't know, 35 or 40 years.

PAULINE: And then you sister was?

EUNICE: Helene, but she died when she was 14.

PAULINE: And Francis and Stanley are both deceased now also?

EUNICE: No, Stanley lives in Portland.

PAULINE: Stanley still lives in Portland.

EUNICE: Stanley and Betsy Hanson, you probably knew Butch Hanson.

PAULINE: Okay, yeah.

EUNICE: And then his sister-in-law, you see, was Henrietta, that was Francis' wife. She owns the ranch now. Takes awful good care of it too.

PAULINE: Okay.

EUNICE: And the only other relatives then, I would have would be Stanley's children. Bob Venator, he lives in Anchorage. And the other girl, Judy Glazier (sp.?) lives in Michigan. Can't think of the names, some kind of a valley name. And then I do have a nephew by adoption, you see, and that's Billy Quier, here. Billy Venator Quier if you want

to put it in that way. But he is Billy Quier; he changed his name after Francis died. But he's legally my nephew, and he's very much my nephew. We like each other so much.

PAULINE: I don't really know him very well.

EUNICE: A nice young man though, isn't he?

PAULINE: From what I've seen of him he's a very nice young man.

EUNICE: Yes, he is. And that's all the relatives I've got, except for a few cousins.

PAULINE: Okay, and you've been active in Pioneer Presbyterian Church.

EUNICE: Uh huh, yes I have. And I'm past matron in Eastern Star.

PAULINE: Past matron.

EUNICE: Past president of the Mother's Club too, if you want to add it, but you're going to run into a lot of stuff.

PAULINE: Yes, we want that. Are there any other? You enjoy the Senior Citizens now, but are there any other organizations that you belong to, and have been active in?

EUNICE: No, I was with the Business Women's Club for a long time, but I just quit it, because I'm not a member any longer. That's about all the organizations. And I'll tell you, I do like that Senior Citizens, it's a marvelous place. I eat over there twice a week, and I play cards. And it's so; just enjoyable to have so many friends I didn't really know. I knew people, but I didn't really know them as friends.

PAULINE: Well when you're working, really, you don't get to know people.

EUNICE: Well you do when you're on Main Street, but you just know them, that's it. You don't really have time to get to know them. Well now let's see. Are you going to have that in the paper then this week?

PAULINE: Uh huh.

EUNICE: Well then, I can get it. See Allan's gonna have to get up there and do a little talk. And that way I can get it through his.

PAULINE: Sometimes people add a few things to what I put in the paper, because you can't put everything in.

EUNICE: Yeah. Well I don't want it too long either. I don't want to string it way out. But this Red Thompson, he's a professional entertainer.

PAULINE: Oh, is he going to be here again this year?

EUNICE: He's head chairman.

PAULINE: Oh, that's good. I hadn't heard just who was going ---

EUNICE: Uh huh, yeah. He lives over in Idaho somewhere, in one of those resorts. But I don't know what the name is. And I don't even know his name, but they call him Red, so I don't know.

PAULINE: He was here a few; well he was here for Ethel Fines.

EUNICE: He's been here three times, I think.

PAULINE: He puts on a good show.

EUNICE: Oh, doesn't he though.

PAULINE: I'm not sure I'll be back. I have to go to Portland Wednesday, and I don't know whether I'm going to be back Saturday or not.

EUNICE: Well later I suppose they'll put in then too about the --- Now Floyd Burden and Bob Dean --- and then they, I got Karl Christ to do the invocation, you see. He's going to do that. I don't know who they'll have for the other one, but I asked him first. I think the Queen Mother has the right to ask that first, I believe, so I did. And they're coming, and glad to do it, he said. He's such a nice man.

PAULINE: Yes, he is. Well can you think of any other things that happened to you as a girl, or in the earlier days around here in Burns that would be interesting to tell to the people?

EUNICE: Well, actually, you know, I never knew Burns too much. I was here just one

year, and then I was gone for a while. And then, of course, when I came back to Burns, why I learned a lot over the years. No, I really can't. I don't know much about anything. I love that Venator Ranch; it's such a beautiful place. And then, you know, she's put alfalfa in, and drained the swamp, and oh she's done so much. Of course Francis was alive then, too, you see. Oh, he started home and there was a slick alkali. He'd come over here to Burns to get his brakes fixed, and it was so late they didn't get it done. So he came back home, and he started through that gate there at the Venator Ranch, and it's that alkali stuff, you know, and he slid and started sliding, and started sliding, and he tried getting up hill and he hit a, hit that power pole. Oh he lived, they brought him in, in the ambulance, but he didn't live very long. But that's one of those things.

PAULINE: Did your father raise mostly horses, or did he raise cattle also?

EUNICE: He raised sheep for a long time, and then he raised cattle, then he raised sheep, then he raised cattle. One time he owned 9,000 head with Stanfield and Company down here in Denio. But he's always been either a rancher of some kind, you know. He's always been a very, oh progressive man. He's a Mason and a Knight Templar man, you know, and he's one of the charter members of the Masonic Lodge up here. He's quite a man. When he was almost 70 years old, he went to the shipyards with Stanley and worked. Imagine that. They all called him Granddad. He got along, and he worked in there about, oh I don't know, until the shipyards stopped, you know, the war got over.

PAULINE: This was during the war.

EUNICE: Yeah, he was quite a man. He stayed with me the last four years. He was, had a stroke, after stroke, you know. He was never a man that fussed, you know, he was good-natured. And Nick was wonderful to him, I'll tell you. When he got sick, I mean, he just never, you know, so many people will fuss and say --- He had cancer of the throat,

and then it went into his lungs, you see. And he had one kidney taken out right here in Burns. We took him to Boise all the time for cobalt treatments, you know. He lived six years after that. But, I mean he never fussed, he never complained, and his mind was good, always, you see. That's very lucky.

PAULINE: Yes it is.

EUNICE: But he died when he was all alone. He went to Boise to get his cobalt treatment, and he was coming home the next day. And the man said that they'd been giving him awfully strong treatments, you see, and apparently, because his heart had been good, but he just dropped over.

PAULINE: When you dad came to start, he had a dugout in the side of the hill?

EUNICE: Yes, he did. And then he built, after that, then he and his brother, Uncle Ira built that home, you know, and it's a beautiful home. It's just a nice old thing, but it burned in 1927, I think it was. I have a good picture of it somewhere. This thing should go in the museum sometime, because see, I've got, I fixed everything up so good, and I've got everything listed, and where everything is. Oh, I don't know where it is, but there's a picture of the ranch in here somewhere. I don't want to keep you too long now.

PAULINE: No, I ---

EUNICE: Oh, there it is, right there. There's my dad, and there's the ranch.

PAULINE: Nick looks very much like his dad, didn't he?

EUNICE: No, huh uh.

PAULINE: Don't you think so?

EUNICE: No, no. This is would be my, this is Charlie Voegtly, see. No, they didn't look alike. Allan looks quite a little like him, because Allan has the same face down here that I have. No, it seems to me it was Charlie Voegtly. See over here, this ranch, or this house over here? That's where I used to come quite a bit. Here's a picture of Lee Miller. Look

how he looks now, and what he is now up here in the nursing home. He looks so thin and tired. We finished high school together, that's how I happen to have that. Oh fiddle; I don't know where it is.

PAULINE: Well yeah, I can see. It just, I think more or less it's more the clothes, the pose than anything else when I stop to think about what I said.

EUNICE: He was a little short man, you know, Charlie Voegtly. You know Ray is a big man, and Bob --- Here he is. ... His mother died, my husband's too. He married Ella then, you see --- That's a beautiful picture of Ella. So much like her.

PAULINE: It does, really does.

EUNICE: I didn't like this one, but I kept it anyway. She and I were mighty good friends, I'll tell you. You don't run into mother's-in-laws like that so often.

PAULINE: It's good when it can be that way.

EUNICE: Oh, yes. We used to go on trips, and we just liked each other.

PAULINE: That's good.

EUNICE: Right from the start.

PAULINE: Well, I think that will give me plenty to put together.

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