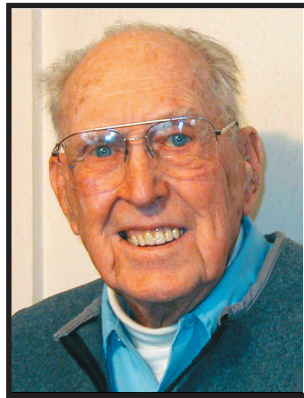


# **CLAUDE ANSON**

**Union County resident for 92 years**

## **AN ORAL HISTORY**



Interviews in January, 1973 and January & May, 2003  
at his home in La Grande OR

Interviewers: Dorothy Swart Fleshman & Eugene Smith

**UNION COUNTY, OREGON HISTORY PROJECT**

2004

(revised from 2003)

## **UNION COUNTY, OREGON HISTORY PROJECT**

**An Affiliate of the Oregon Historical Society**

A non-profit, tax-exempt corporation formed in 2002

In collaboration with Eastern Oregon University  
Cove Improvement Club History Committee  
Elgin Museum & Historical Society  
Union Museum Society

### **Purposes**

To record & publish oral histories of long-time Union County residents  
&

To create a community encyclopedia

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copies of transcripts are \$4.00 each + shipping & handling

## **Preface**

Much of the history of a place is stored in the memories of people who have lived there. Their stories may be told to family members, but, unless someone makes a special effort to record these stories, they become lost to future generations.

Each of the historical societies in Union County, Oregon has begun to make that effort. Tape recordings exist in several locations, some of them transcribed in written form, others not. A more ambitious and thorough effort seemed necessary so that more of the oral history of Union County could be captured and preserved.

The Union County, Oregon History Project, begun in 2002, is making that more ambitious effort. One of its principal purposes is to collect as many oral histories of older Union County residents as possible and to make them available in both taped and written form. This edited transcript is part of the series of oral histories to be produced by that project.





### **About the Interviews and This Edited Version**

The interviews with Claude Anson took place at his home in La Grande. At age 92, Claude moves more slowly than he did in his competitive running days, though he still drives a tractor occasionally at his farm. His memory of events and ability to recall details are remarkable.

The interviewers were Dorothy Swart Fleshman and Eugene Smith, volunteers with the Union County, Oregon History Project. She completed a one-hour interview on January 8, 1973; he completed two two-hour interviews on January 31 and May 9, 2003.

Heather Pilling's full transcription (available for research purposes) presents the literal contents of the interview. The edited version presented here differs from the literal transcription in the following characteristics:

- reorganization of content
- deletion of some extraneous comments
- omission of false sentence starts and other normal speech fillers that detract from readability
- normalization of pronunciation and grammar in conformity with standards of written English.

CA designates Claude Anson's words, / the interviewers'.



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## **Born into a Pioneer Union County Family**

I: Please give me your full name.

CA: Claude W. Anson.

I: What does the W stand for?

CA: Wilfred.

I: This is a family name, I suppose.

CA: Yes.

I: What was your father's name?

CA: Orlin.

I: And his father's name?

CA: Joseph.

I: Where did the name *Claude* come from? Was it a previous family member's name?



Claude's parents,  
Mabel & Orlin Anson, 1930s  
Photo courtesy of Claude Anson

CA: No. I asked Mother one time, and she said she wanted a name that they couldn't make\_nickname out of.

I: Were you born in Union County?

CA: Yes.

I: Where?

CA: About a mile east of Island City.

I: In your parents' house?

CA: Yes.

I: On what date?

CA: February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1911.

I: How did they get here?

CA: My dad, Orlin, was born and raised here. My mother was born in Nebraska. She lived in Nebraska and Colorado; they moved around a lot.



Claude in 1911  
Photo courtesy of Claude Anson

I: Do you know about when your father's parents came here?

CA: As soon as the Civil War was over. His brother had come before and got eighty acres from the government, before the Homestead Act. He built the log house that was out there.

I: Where your farm now is, you mean?

CA: Yes. Then my grandfather came out right after the war, in 1865, I think it was. He started out with two oxen. They died on the way; he ended up using his saddle horse to bring a cart the rest of the way.

I: Did your father tell you why his father chose Union County?

CA: He chose Union County mostly because his brother was already situated here. Why did the brother choose it? He didn't stay. His wife didn't like it, though. They had dug a well there, and it was about the only really good water around. There was water all over the valley then, instead of in the river channel. The Indians had to stay on the other side the river channel till they got out about Island City. There, where the water was lower, they could cross. They went on out past the homestead place and always stopped to get water. His wife didn't like to have those Indians messing around all the time, so they went back to Nebraska. My grandfather stayed and farmed; he was one of the school board members and spent his lifetime here.

I: So the land that you farmed was the land that your grandfather's brother

had claimed and then he took over, is that it?

CA: His brother had claimed eighty acres and then, when my grandfather came, they had the Homestead Act. There was a deed signed by the president at that time.

I: So he got more?

CA: He got a hundred sixty. That made the twl hunbdred forty acres we have out there now. My grandfather farmed it until he couldn't go any longer; my father, Olin, took over. After him, I farmed it, and now my grandson farms it.

### **Maintaining the Family Farming Tradition**

I: Tell me some of your early memories of learning what was involved in farming.

CA: I started farming right at the change in farming from horses to tractors. As long as my father was running the farm, we used horses till just the last couple of years and then he bought a tractor.

I: Did you start farming when you were about twenty?

CA: I helped on the farm all my life and then got into farming with my brother and father when I was about nineteen.

I: Do you remember what your father said to you and your brother about what he hoped you would do with the farm?

CA: No, he never said what he hoped I'd do for the farm, but he wanted to be sure I kept the farm.

I: How did he say that to you?

CA: Well, in regular words, I wouldn't know. He give me the impression that he would like to have me stay on the farm because he stayed on the farm. He didn't want to see the farm get out of the family name.

I: At any rate, you got the impression he wished and very much hoped you would.

CA: Yes, he hoped I would. I quit the farm only one year, when I worked in Larison Fries' garage here in La Grande. I had to go to work at a certain time and do everything just the way somebody else wanted it done. After I worked a year for wages, I thought to heck with that, so I went back to being on the farm with my brother and dad. They had picked up a total of 400 acres by that time. There was plenty for me to do.

I: What was the total number of acres?

CA: First, there were two hundred forty, then three twenty, and finally four hundred. That kept us busy, farming entirely by tractors by that time. I was never very happy with horses.

I: What was the main crop?

CA: Wheat, mostly, with some alfalfa hay.

I: When did you plant the wheat, usually?

CA: Fall wheat.

I: Was the rainfall or other moisture at that time enough so that it usually would come up well by spring?

CA: Yes. We had better moisture--a lot more winter--then than we do now.

I: And of course you didn't have any kind of irrigation.

CA: No, not at that time.

### **Plowing with Horses**

I: Tell me what you remember about plowing with a horse and doing the planting.

CA: For the plowing we had a team of eight horses. I didn't like it because it was slow.

I: What did the plow look like?

CA: We used a two-bottom gang plow we could ride on. It had a seat or Dad had a plank he could stand on behind the horses. After we had used a team very long, the furrow horses knew they were supposed to be in the furrows; they'd get in the furrow and take the plow around the field. Then, if it was too cold to sit still, we could get off and walk and keep warm.

I: About how many hours at a time would you plow?

CA: We usually had the horses out in the field by 7:00 and worked till 5:30. We brought the horses in--watered, fed, and curried them.

I: Did you take a break and rest for lunch?

CA: Yes, from 12:00 to 1:00. We had to give the horse a chance to eat, too. I got away from that after I got the tractor. Why, I'd go in and eat and then I'd get back out on the tractor. But we had to give the horses a break.

I: What kind of horses were they?

CA: Mostly Percheron. Dad had a Percheron stallion, and we raised mostly Percheron horses.

I: You bred them yourselves?

CA: Yes. But he was always buying and trading. I never got into that, but Dad was quite a horseman. He liked to fool with horses.

I: Did you have something to do with caring for the horses, too?

CA: Oh, yes. I had to clean out the barn, feed and curry them, and harness and unharness them.

I: Did they get sicknesses very often?

CA: We never had much trouble that way.

I: How many years would a good plow horse last?

CA: I would say about twelve. They were usually about two or three years old when we broke them, and we'd use them ten or twelve years.

I: What did you do to break them?

CA: We had to break them to work. Usually, we started them, if we were plowing or had a four-horse team, by putting the unbroken one in the team and tying him up against another horse; we put him in the back, and he'd have to go along with everybody else. But if we wanted to break him to pull a wagon, we'd put him on with another horse and headed them near a plowed field; they'd want to run but soon got tired and slowed down. We only had to do that a couple of times; most horses were willing to go ahead and walk.

I: Did you have any accidents with horses that you can remember?



Claude's class of 1927, La Grande High School  
Photo courtesy of Claude Anson



CA: I got kicked in the stomach once. I guess you'd call that an accident. I was out getting ready for high school and walked up behind a watering trough with the work horses. Evidently, the horse thought it was another horse because they weren't trying to kick, but it wiped me right square in the stomach and knocked me down. I had my school clothes on. It made me sick in my stomach for a while, but I went on in, put on other clothes, and went to school anyhow. I was all right, but it sure emptied my stomach.

I: I should think that the plows that you mentioned would have had fairly sharp cutting surfaces.

CA: Yes, they had what we call plow shear. When it got dull, we took it off and took it over to the blacksmith shop. There were blacksmith shops everywhere at that time. He put it in the forge, heated it up, and then pound it and smooth it out; that made it sharp again.

I: How often did you need to do that?

CA: It depended entirely on how wet the ground was. If the ground was wet, we could go several days, but, if the ground was dry, after two or three days we needed to have a change shear.

I: I suppose that hitting rocks often would affect the sharpness of the plow.

CA: Yes.

I: Was it rocky around here?

CA: We only had a few little rocky spots but that wasn't a huge problem.

I: Exactly when in the year did you do the plowing?

CA: Usually we'd try to get the plowing done in the fall.

I: In October?

CA: Yes, if there was moisture enough--and usually there was--we could get the plowing done in October.

I: How could you tell when you had enough moisture?

### **Saturday Nights in La Grande**

If we came to town, no matter whether you were coming in for five minutes, we always dressed up. It was custom. Saturday night you cleaned up, had your Saturday night bath, put on your good clothes, and went to town, whether you wanted to go to the show or just come to town. During the summer, when people had automobiles, everybody came to town and parked along the street. We'd see them walking down the street, visiting with all their neighbors. That was fun, even when I was a kid. I could usually talk my dad out of a little money for candy or a show. If it was a western, we went to the Star Theater, which is the Granada now. Higher class shows were at the Arcade. Sherry's was the next one, but we didn't go to Sherry's very much; it was narrow, didn't have a very good screen, and had cheaper shows, too.

CA: I usually took a shovel out and dug down as deep as I would want to plow.

I: Would that be a foot?

CA: No, usually about eight inches. If you want to plow deep, you plow a foot, but most of the time you plow about eight inches.

I: If you dug down eight or nine inches, what would the soil look like to tell you that it had enough moisture?

CA: I looked at the darkness of it and then squeezed it. Of course, if there was lots of moisture, it would be muddy or make a big ball. If it showed dust, it was usually too dry.

I: Would you have to test several places in your fields before you could be sure it was time to plow?

CA: Not usually. Our fields were all pretty even. There were some alkali strips that were different, but we went ahead and plowed them anyhow. Some years were a lot drier than others.

I: How could you tell that it was an alkali strip?

CA: It's a light colored soil, and the ground isn't nearly as fertile as the other soil; it doesn't leave a stubble. We could tell it was there.

I: Did you or your father use soil-testing information provided by the extension service or the Agricultural Experiment Station in Union?

CA: We got some literature, like different

types of cattle and grain that they'd tried--different varieties of grain. I read those and similar things.

## **Weed Control**

CA: When I first started out, I did go over to some of their meetings and to the field to see what they were doing. We were starting to get noxious weeds, and they were trying to figure out a way to stop them. That was before we had any kind of spray. I was quite interested in that and checked some of the things that they were doing. They were saying that to prevent morning glory you should put it in alfalfa. Of course, that wasn't the thing to do, but that was the only thing they knew at that time. The morning glory got bigger all the time; there wasn't any way to kill it. After they developed sprays, we got a chance to slow it down.

I: What other kinds of noxious weeds were in your land?

CA: Canadian thistle was about the worst one of noxious weeds we had. That takes a lot of spraying.

I: Before there were sprays, was there anything you could do at all to get rid of it?

CA: For Canadian thistle I had pretty good luck with summer fallow. During the summer of the year, we don't raise any crop on that land. I had a plow that could go down about fourteen inches; those Canadian thistles go really deep. I'd work it all summer long--every once in a while I'd go out and work it--and kept the soil dry. Cutting them

off that deep and keeping the soil dry would slim the noxious weeds down pretty well--at least the Canadian thistle, but not the morning glory.

I: Had your father ever talked about the problem of noxious weeds?

CA: No. He had hardly any weeds at that time.

I: Why do you think the weeds came into this valley?

CA: People brought the stuff in. Our worst weed right now is Kosia, brought over from the other side of the mountain. It started out at the middle of the valley. He planted a bunch of wheat, and it had the weed seed in it. Now it's all over the valley.

I: Did this come from not knowing that there was weed seed in the wheat?

CA: Yes. It hadn't been cleaned well enough to get the seed out.

I: At that time was there a government certification program for the wheat content?

CA: No, there wasn't. You could move your wheat around or hay around without problems. Wallowa County got a lot of Canadian thistle brought in by hunters; they had Canadian thistle all over the place. They got smart and wouldn't let anybody bring outside hay in. But I don't think we have a hay quarantine here in Union County.

I: When did you start spraying the weeds?

CA: I was one of the first ones--right after the war.

I: The Second World War?

CA: Yes. Late '40s.

I: Do you remember what the spray was?

CA: 2-4-D.

I: That's no longer being used, is it?

CA: That's all there was at that time, I think. We didn't have Round-Up, but we did have 2-4-D; that was a selective spray, that is, you could spray it over your wheat and you'd get any broad-leaf weed. I bought a spray outfit and rigged it up on a John Deere tractor I had. I had a platform that I put three 50-gallon drums on. I'd pump a power take-off, put it on the pump, and then put a little boom across the front.

I: Am I right in thinking that, if it was windy, you wouldn't be spraying?

CA: Yes, if it was very bad. You can see spray flying around and know you're not doing much good.

I: Did you wear a mask or any kind of protection?

CA: No.

I: Were you aware it might hurt you?

CA: I don't know whether we even knew it at that time. After they did tell us about it, we never paid any attention because we'd been doing it for so many years. Of course, there's a lot of

spray that is a real danger. Nowadays there's a lot of it that I wouldn't want to fool with; you need a mask. But a lot of that stuff I never worried about.

I: When was the best time of the year to apply weed spray?

CA: Normally just as soon as the weeds get started.

I: In early spring?

CA: At the beginning of spring--usually April or May. But you have to wait for the wheat to get big enough, too, so sometimes it's along towards June before you can get in there to spray.

I: Were you satisfied generally with the results?

CA: For a lot of the weeds, yes, but, after we've used a spray several years, it doesn't do any harm to the weeds, so we have to change sprays. And so there are times when you don't have good luck spraying.

I: Did that mean that, if you didn't get all the weeds, some weed seed would get into the harvested wheat?

CA: Yes.

## Grain Cleaning

I: Would you have to take it somewhere to have it cleaned?

CA: We didn't really have too much trouble after we sprayed it; not enough weeds got through that we'd have to have it cleaned. But if there were a lot of green weeds in it, we'd sometimes have to get it cleaned before the mill would take it. It would heat up in their bin and they wouldn't take it.

I: Who would do the cleaning?

CA: There were two or three places, one at Alicel; that cleaner was torn down in the last year or two. The Hamanns in Island City used to clean stuff; then Willie Hamann a cleaner on his ranch.

I: Does the grass seed cleaner work the same way as the wheat cleaner?

CA: A grain cleaner doesn't have to be nearly as accurate as a grass seed cleaner, but it's the same theory.

I: Did the wheat go through more than one screen?

CA: No, just one. Sometimes you'd have to clean it twice if you were going to



John Deere combines, 1950s  
Photo courtesy of Claude Anson

CA: We got one of the first three John Deere self-propels in the valley right after the war. They've been improved a lot since then. This one has a pick-up header that can be taken off and replaced by a regular header for the rest of the grains--wheat, barley, and oats.

use it for seed, but for storage it isn't necessary.

### **Testing Wheat for Purity**

I: I suppose there was someone there to test every once in a while to make sure that the weed count was low enough.

CA: If it's your own bin, you put a metal rod down in there and if the rod gets hot when you pull it back up, you figure you're in trouble. Then you have to take it out. I have had to take the wheat out and put it in all the neighbors' trucks I could find. Taking it out, putting it in the trucks, leaving it a day or two, and putting it back in made it all right.

I: What did the rod's getting hot have to do with the weed seeds?

CA: The moisture in the weed, when it's compressed and gets no air, heats up and eventually combusts.

I: When you finished cleaning your wheat--when you needed to do that--where did you store it until you could send it to market?

CA: Originally, the only place I could store it was at the mills in Island City or Alicel. But I built a crib bin a good many years ago, and I put it there. I could put in close to 10,000 bushels; that took care of the most of it.

I: Did it make any difference, as far as marketing is concerned, whether you stored your own wheat separately or whether you mixed it in with another farmer's wheat?

CA: It hasn't been making any difference, but they tested each farmer's wheat when he brought it in. We got paid for the kind of wheat we brought in if it was to be community stored. But now there are different kinds of wheat that they don't want commingled, so it makes it a lot better if you have your own storage.

### **Types of Wheat**

I: Did you always grow the same kind of wheat?

CA: Yes.

I: What was it?

CA: Forty-fold was the old standby--what Dad raised when I was a kid. Farmers could get forty bushels an acre. It was really good wheat, though, if we had a bad windstorm harvest, it shattered badly.

Then they came out with a club wheat. It has a shorter, fatter head, and it wouldn't shatter, but it was hard to harvest because the straw was so stiff. That stiffness was bred into it so it wouldn't fall over so badly. So it had advantages and disadvantages.

They got busy about ten years ago and started breeding a different kind of wheat. It's still a soft, white wheat, but it yields much better than it used to. With the same moisture and same ground, you jump from forty bushels to the acre to a hundred bushels to the acre. We've lost all our big share of places to sell our soft white. They're mad at us and won't buy it. A lot of

the countries want hard red, but they haven't developed a hard red we can raise in this climate. It takes a hot, dry climate. We're hot enough, but it doesn't seem to work very well. That kind of wheat is worth quite a bit more, and people keep trying it.

I: Over the years you were raising wheat, what were you hearing from the buyers of wheat about the kind of wheat they wanted and why they wanted it?

CA: I never heard so much about that, but I did hear a lot about the type of wheat we were sending them. When I saw the ships being loaded, I saw them put so much good wheat in and a bunch of trash as well--dust and hulls and things like that. That's what made everybody mad at us.

I: So that reduction in quality had nothing to do with the farmers, but the farmers got the blame, is that right?

CA: Yes, that's right. They said we didn't clean it well enough.

I: Did you make your case?

CA: Yes. Several countries won't take it now unless it's in a lot better condition.



Holt combine owned by Claude's father;  
first used with twelve head of horses  
Photo courtesy of Claude Anson

## Wheat Purchasers

I: Did you ordinarily know over the years you were raising wheat where your wheat was being shipped and who was buying it?

CA: Yes, at times. When I sold wheat to Mark Kiddle's Island City mill, he was very active in getting around and finding foreign markets; he went to Japan every year to make contact. I know quite a bit of our wheat went there at that time.

I: I imagine there were a lot of price variations in the wheat over all those years.

CA: I made more clear money during the war years than I ever did before or after. But the early '90s were pretty good. There was quite a margin.

I: Were there some years when you just about went broke?

CA: In two years freezes took everything. But two years out of the seventy or eighty I was in farming I guess isn't too bad.

## A Lifetime of Farming

I: Am I correct in thinking that, except for that year you worked in the garage in La Grande, you had maybe seventy years of farming experience?

CA: Probably more than that. Even after the grandson took over, I've been farming. I was still running the tractor when I got sick last fall and had to go to the hospital. I had never stopped.



- I: Why did you keep with it so long?
- CA: I could see people out running up and down the road and walking around just to get exercise. I think that's crazy; I might just as well go out and do some good. I thoroughly enjoyed farming, and so I just stayed with it.
- I: Could you tell me some of the aspects of farming that you enjoyed? Or maybe everything?
- CA: Even though it was tough, we'd have a feeling of accomplishing something when we had done a good job with it. So I really enjoyed it whether it was tough or too hard.

### **Designation of the Anson Farm as a Century Farm**

- I: How did your farm happen to be designated a Century Farm?
- CA: My mother applied for it by turning in the dates; her application made us one of the first two called Century Farm.

- I: Did she think there would be some benefit in having it called a Century Farm?
- CA: Yes, I think that she thought it would be an advantage. The governor invited her to Salem; that probably suited her, too. They're developing a new program right now to give us new signs to go on the place--both the original owners and the person who is farming it now.

The barn, the cow barn, the original log house, and the buggy shed all burned down. The second house that my grandfather built and raised his family in was there until seven or eight years ago; I had it rented to a family, and the little kid was playing with matches, I guess, and burned that house down. When my grandson took over, he built a big house; he and his wife have four kids, so I guess he needed a big house.

- I: What do you remember about the log cabin?

### **Combine Crew Operations**

The combine crew included a horse or tractor driver, a header puncher who gauged how high or how low to cut that, and, in the earlier days a burlap-sack sewer. He sewed 135-pound sacks by hand--zip, zip, zip--thirteen stitches per sack. With the last stitch, he made a double half-hitch on the ear, sewed across, and made another double half-hitch. The six-inch needle had a cutter inside of it so he could zip it back and cut the string. He had to be able to do one sack a minute. He threw sacks up to a chute on the edge of the combine, shoved them down the chute, and the combine left them in windrows about every five feet. We tried to keep them in windrows so we wouldn't lose them out in the stubble.

When we got threshing machines in the 1930s, we stopped using sacks and hauled in bulk. It was better to take it in bulk because it saved a lot of hard work not having to pick up all those sacks. We couldn't do it earlier because none of the mills were set up for it. No one had ever done that before. They gradually changed over.

CA: My grandfather's brother built the log cabin before the Civil War. When grandfather moved there, they lived in the log cabin for a while. Then he built the other house and raised his family there. His wife died when the fourth child was born, so he raised the family alone.

I: What did you use the log cabin for?

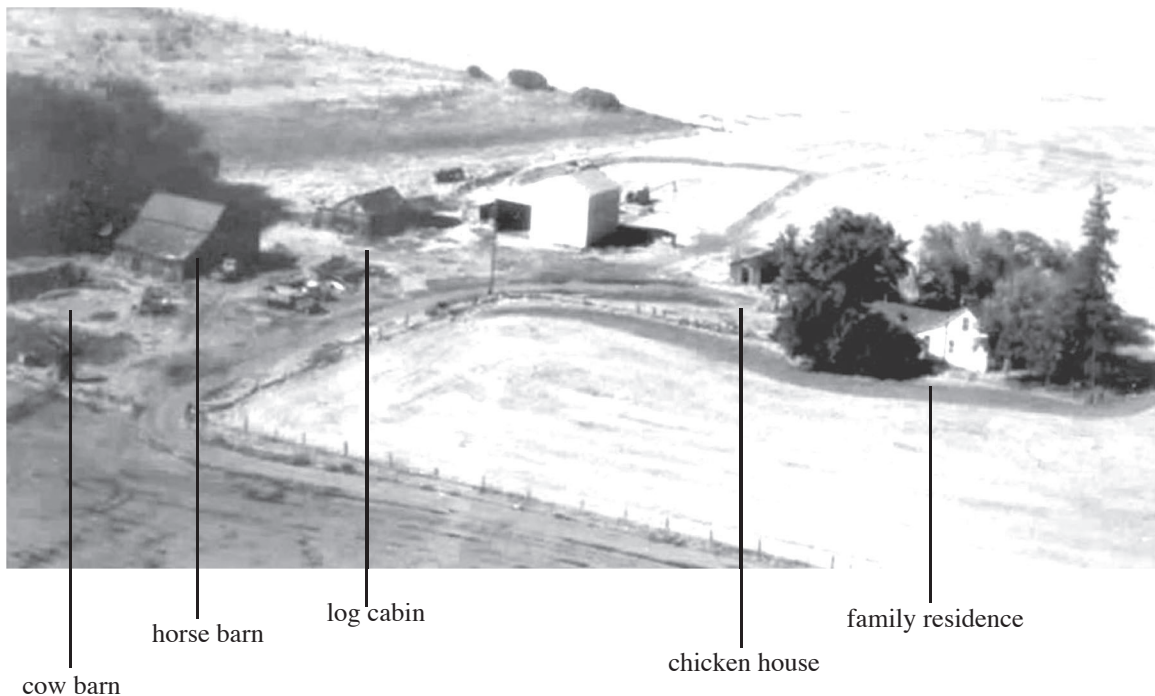
CA: We used it for storage. We had a grain bin with a hand grain cleaner in the back.

I: Was it near the house you were living in?

CA: Yes. It had a dug well with rocks

around it--a really good well and the pitcher pump. When I was a kid, my job was to pump the trough full of water for the horses when they come in from working. Originally, the farm was on a trail for people going out across the valley; they'd come by and get a drink from that old well.

When I was a kid, my grandfather had gotten well acquainted with some of the Umatilla Indians, who come over here to get camas roots. They used to camp where they had good water. He got a lot of pleasure from them, but, as a little kid, I'd see the Indians there and make myself scarce. I was scared to death of them!



### **Anson Century Farm**

Photo courtesy of Claude Anson



Grandpa used to take me fishing at the creek; we'd sit there for hours while he told me about what he'd done in the war and things like that. Of course, as a kid I never paid much attention. I'm sorry I didn't. It's your own life you're thinking of; you're not worried about somebody's that's already had their life.

### School Attendance

- I: I suppose that, when you were quite young, you went to a one-room school nearby.
- CA: No, I didn't go to a one-room school. I went to Island City School--a four-room school.
- I: Do you have any vivid memories about that school experience?
- CA: Yes. I think it was a good school. Later on, I was on the school board. When I told the kids that I graduated from there, I told them they were going to go to La Grande, where the kids think they are a lot smarter. I said, "You just remember you get as good



Log cabin at Anson farm, built by Claude's grandfather as first family residence, late 1860s  
Photo courtesy of Claude Anson

or better education as they get in La Grande." That's the way I felt about it, too. We had a really good school, not one where you could go out and have a lot of athletics, but we always got along all right.

- I: Were you able to walk from the farm to the school?
- CA: It's about a mile-and-a-half. Sometimes that was a pretty rough go; we had some bad winters. I just walked straight across the quarter of a mile from the house till I got to a lined fence. After I got over the fence and went to the next house, which was about a half or a quarter mile, there was a farm road from that house to the other house. I came to an orchard, cut across that, and came out at the school.
- I: Were you walking to school with several other kids?
- CA: Yes. A little over a quarter mile south there were five boys; one was just almost the same age as I was, two were older, and two younger. The one that was my age and I usually walked together; my brother and the older ones walked together.
- I: When you got out of school and were going back home, did you have to get home right away to do chores, or could you fool around on the way home?
- CA: We got home just as soon as we could. In fact, when we got to high school, my dad didn't think I had any time to be up there playing basketball or football. Wood had to be chopped for the stove and taken in. But when it came

- to the last couple years in high school, in the spring I went out for track. I didn't have to spend the whole time up at school because I did most of my running around at home. Then the first year I won the Eastern Oregon Mile, my dad got pretty much interested. So the next year I set the record for Eastern Oregon high schools.
- I: This was La Grande High School?
- CA: Yes.
- I: Island City never did have a high school, did it?
- CA: They did when my dad was young-- just one-room high school. When I went to school there, they had a manual training department, which they didn't use it anymore, from when they did have a high school.
- I: Was that a wooden building?
- CA: It was a wood building.
- I: Do you think it burned?
- CA: No, they took it down.
- I: When might it have been built? In the late 1800s?
- CA: I don't know, but my grandfather was quite a hand at getting that going. The original building was brick, and that's the one my father went to. A brick building was all they had for the school; they put the other four rooms on after he was out of school. Of course, he only went two or three months in the wintertime, but he did go to school.
- I: When you went to school, were you going from September through May or June?

### Claude's High School Racing Career

CA: I ran the mile in the high school. I had the record for Eastern Oregon for years on a dirt track. Running was the only way I traveled out in the country. The neighbors were a little over a quarter-of-a-mile either way. Pretty nearly every place I went I ran. I wasn't training. At La Grande High School, I told the coach I wanted to try track when I got to be a junior--when the folks let me bring a car in. So another neighbor boy and I'd come in in the car. I didn't try any sport in the wintertime. In the spring I thought I'd try track. I told the coach I'd like to go and he said, "Well, make four laps out this time." He lifted his watch and I made four laps and was standing around. I said, "Well, I'm back." He said, "Did you make four around?" I said, "Yeah." He looked at his watch, and it still was pretty good time even after I waited. He said, "I'll sign you up for the race Saturday." So I ran the race and won it and never lost a race in Eastern Oregon. I liked the competition.



Claude on the high school track team, ca. 1927  
Photo courtesy of Claude Anson

CA: Yes, May--usually the third week in May. My father thought it was a good idea to go to school, and Mother was quite a pusher to get me to school because she was a school teacher before she was married. She did really well and made sure I got almost everything done.

I: Had she taught around here?

CA: She taught out at Hot Lake in one of those one-room schools for two or three years. She figured here kids ought to be going to school.

I: All the kids in the Island City School came from farms, I suppose, or were there some merchants' kids there?

CA: Most of the kids that went to Island City were farm kids, but a few lived in Island City.

CA: Everybody figured on getting to school on their own. Down below us, people by the name of Taylor had three kids; they drove a horse and buggy up to school. But it was close enough to walk.

### Reactions to People of Other Races

I: Were any of the kids you knew at that time Black or Asian?

CA: It was all white kids--even in high school, as far as I can remember.

I: Do you remember hearing anyone talk about people of other races?

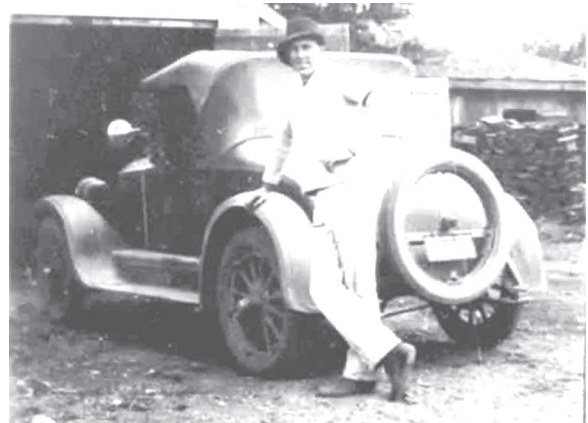
CA: It was quite common to ridicule Negroes.

I: How would they do that?

CA: Oh, different remarks they made. But one Negro kid who was an athlete got by pretty well. He was a very good broad jumper, so they allowed him to be around. But there was quite a bit of friction, when I was young, with anybody who was a foreigner.

I: Do you mean by friction, fights?

CA: No, they'd talk against each other. I don't think it really got to scraps, but they'd just as soon not hire them. We had a Chinatown in La Grande, where old Safeway was [4th Street and Adams Avenue]. One time mother and I were going down the street in our horse and buggy, and a Chinaman was running down the street with another Chinaman shooting at him. She turned the horse around and went back to Adams.



1924 four-cylinder Buick roadster  
given to Claude by his father  
(Claude shown here while in high school)  
Photo courtesy of Claude Anson

## Getting News of World Events

- I: Were you reading a newspaper during those days when you were growing up?
- CA: Not very much. We had newspapers. Dad was quite an avid reader of newspapers, but ...
- I: Were you picking up your news of what was going on around the world just from hearing people talk?
- CA: At home I suppose we talked about it. I don't remember being too much interested in newspapers, but after we got the radios, I turned radio news on all the time. And there were a few programs that we'd listen to, like Amos and Andy.
- I: Do you remember what your first radio looked like?
- CA: It was about two-and-a-half or three feet long--a rectangular box.
- CA: We had a cabinet and the speaker was just down inside the cabinet where the batteries were. We had it hooked up that way. And it had three tuning dials and two or three other little dials--a pretty complicated thing. After I got used to it, I could wiggle the little dials and finally get in just right.
- I: You needed a large outside antenna, didn't you?
- CA: Yes, we had an outside antenna--a big pole stuck up outside.

- I: Did that allow you to get radio stations from all over the West?
- CA: Yes. The first time I heard a radio was when we went to the neighbor's down east of us one night; they'd gotten a radio and asked us to come down. They'd picked up Denver, which didn't seem possible. "That noise," he said, "must be the wind blowing over the Rockies."

## Social Changes

- CA: It was a different world when I was young than it is now. As far as I'm concerned, it was a better world then than it is now.
- I: What would be some of the main reasons for saying it was better then?
- CA: We didn't have the crime. We never drew up a bunch of paper to make an agreement with somebody; we shook hands and that was it and it was depended on. At the house out there, we never even had a key, never had to worry about somebody getting in and raising the devil. We'd be fixing fences along the road, and so many people stopped and visited we had a heck of a time getting anything done! If we needed any help, we just mentioned it to a neighbor, and he was there to help us. For so many jobs--like haying and harvest, butchering, and things like that--we needed temporary help. Neighbors would get together and take care of each other.

## Raising and Butchering Animals

- I: You mentioned butchering. What other animals did you have on your farm?
- CA: Hogs, cattle, and sheep, besides the horses.
- I: Were the hogs, cattle, and sheep kept primarily for food?
- CA: We raised cattle to sell and for our food. We also kept sheep to eat. We'd usually have mutton and butcher a couple of hogs and a beef. That was when I was still living on the home place. After I got married and got to farming on my own, I simplified things a lot because I was doing everything with a tractor and I could get all the help I wanted.
- CA: That was during the war especially, when men could work on a farm and not get caught in the draft. I could pick my help and had good help; it really made a difference. I first started making money during the war.

## Hired Hands

- I: Did you have a place on the farm for the help to live?
- CA: They lived at their own places and showed up to work at 7:00 and were there till 6:00.
- I: Six days a week?
- CA: Six days, sometimes seven days.
- I: Especially during the planting and the harvesting, I imagine.
- CA: Yes. For harvesting we usually worked seven days a week--as much as we could and as long as we could.
- I: The harvest usually goes about two or three weeks, doesn't it?
- CA: Yes, about three weeks. It's faster nowadays because the combines are so big and travel so much faster. We used to figure about a month, but we did our own work and we did custom work.

### Two Highlights of the Work Crew's Day

CA: The crew usually washed up enough to eat our big meal at noon. Especially when we were traveling around different ranches, every farmer's wife was trying to beat the other one. The competition was terrific! They served meat, mashed potatoes and gravy, carrots and beans, and there was always pie, coffee, milk, or water.

At the end of the day, after we got the machine greased up and everything ready to go, we'd jump in the pickup and run over to the river to go swimming. We usually played around, but, by that time the sun had gone down; it was usually starting to get a little chilly, so we didn't fool around too much. It was sure good to get all the dirt out.

## Custom Work

- I: You mean for other people?
- CA: Yes, I did work for other people. When I was starting out farming, a lot of farmers still had their horses and horse-drawn equipment.
- I: They couldn't afford to buy tractors?
- CA: They couldn't afford to buy the new stuff. I got started just at the right time because Dad bought the first tractor and we used it. I did custom work and got paid for doing for the neighbors because they didn't want to fool with the horses; they wanted me to get the work done right away. They were starting to make pretty good money and didn't mind spending it for custom work rather than do it themselves.
- I: How did you charge for the custom work?
- CA: So much an acre. I'd say so much for an acre of plowing. The rate wasn't always the same. For example, for harvesting, if the wheat was down and tangled, I could only get maybe half as much done. I learned to go look at the field; I didn't take their word for it. I got caught with a fellow out of Island City. I told him that, if it was down, it'd be so much, and, if it was up, it'd be so much. One field was good, but one field was down something terrible.
- I: When you say *down*, you mean it was lying flat?
- CA: Lying flat on the ground.

- I: Was that because of wind or hail?
- CA: Usually hail, but wind will do it and a real heavy rain will do it; hail does more damage.
- He wanted to pay just what I'd told him it'd be worth if it was standing, and I spent quite a bit more time than necessary on it. So I told him I'd just go ahead and do it by the hour. Then he could see whether we was getting done on time. He paid me what I had coming, but he sure didn't like it. It was a mess. But I did custom work for years.
- I: Did you ever have a written contract for that work?
- CA: No. It was by oral agreement.
- I: Were you ever told, "I'm not going to pay you"?
- CA: I never did lose any. Sometimes they stalled, but I can understand that because they just didn't have the money. I had a really good luck in that kind of work.
- I: Did they usually pay you in cash?
- CA: Yes.
- I: Hundred dollar bills?
- CA: Sometimes. Quite a few paid by check, but I got some cash payments. Then I bought a hay chopper and chopped hay during the winter. Anytime the wind wasn't blowing and the weather was halfway decent, we chopped hay. The funny part of it was



I had three hired men; during the war they wanted their jobs even though we wouldn't work for only a couple days. But they stayed right with me right through the season.

### **Getting Bank Loans**

I: As you started buying tractors and other kinds of equipment, did you take out loans?

CA: Yes.

I: Did you use a bank in La Grande?

CA: Yes.

I: Was it fairly easy to get a loan, based on your reputation?

CA: Yes. I never had any problems getting loans.

I: What was your preferred payback time?

CA: I always paid out in the fall--after harvest.

I: Less than a year then?

CA: We wouldn't necessarily be paid out by then, but we'd make a payment on a loan that might run a couple or three years.

I: Of course, the prices of equipment have been going up over the years, but, proportionately, were you paying about the same for the first equipment you bought as the later equipment?

CA: The price of the machinery is so much higher than it used to be, but the dollar isn't worth very much anymore. When we dug up a hundred dollars, it was hard to come by. Probably \$100 then was just as hard to get as \$500 or more now.

### **Buying Better Equipment**

I: Can you remember when you got the first piece of tractor equipment that had air-conditioning or some kind of cooling for the driver?

CA: That wasn't too long ago. I suffered through all the cold weather and the old cabs all through the war. I didn't have an enclosed cabin tractor. I bought a big tarp and put a metal frame around and above the steering wheel and I wrapped the whole motor up with that tarp. I'd crank up, and, as soon as I got heat in the tractor, it came right back on me, and I could work right through. I'd wear a cap with earfluffs and a big, heavy coat up around my neck, so I could get by pretty well.

I: Did you do this in below freezing weather?

CA: Not freezing, but close. I did some farm work in freezing weather but very little. After the war, I got a tractor with a cab that had a heater and air conditioning.

I: Did that change the way you worked?

CA: You bet your life! Made it a lot easier.

## Chopping Hay

I: You mentioned chopping hay in the wintertime. What were your other activities during winter?

CA: That was it. I had been raising cattle, but I sold the cattle because chopping hay was really hard work--about all I could possibly do.

I: Could you describe how you chopped the hay?

CA: Originally, I bought a small hammer mill that would do about a half a stack or a little less of hay. After we put the hay in, knives cut it down and around.

I: Did it have to be hand fed?

CA: We put it in a traveling feeder; the fingers grabbed it and took it on into the knives.

I: What was hard about that?

CA: Getting that hay out to the chopper; we had to do it with a pitchfork. There were four of us. I usually did the feeding, but, if we had to put it in the barn, that was awfully hard on us; we had all that dust and debris and whatever.

I: Did you put kerchiefs around your mouth and nose?

CA: No, I didn't, but I should have. When I was having my lungs x-rayed several years ago, the doctor said, "You sure have a bunch of dirt in there, but you still have plenty of lung power."

I: After it was chopped, did you put it in

bales or bags? How did you gather it together?

CA: You've seen the snow fences that the county puts up--lath put together with wire? If they didn't want the hay chopped into a building, I'd get a roll of that and make a big circle; we had a snow blower to blow the hay down into there; as it came two-thirds of the way up, I'd get up in there and pull it up. We could take that hay up as high as we wanted to go and then top it out. It kept really well.

I: When you wanted to take it somewhere, would you load it onto a wagon?

CA: Yes.

I: Who would use it then?

CA: Feeders. That'd feed the cattle nicely.

I: All over the valley?

CA: Most of the people I chopped for fed it themselves. Most of them had it chopped so they could get better utilization. Quite often it was a pretty poor quality of hay; by chopping it up they gave cattle a better chance of handling it.

I: I was wondering if you had a little side business of delivering it to cattle growers on the other parts of the valley.

CA: No. I didn't do that. I sold that chopper when I got to where I didn't want to do any more chopping. I had plenty of land by that time, and I didn't have time to do anything else. Besides that,



I had a ski shop. I quit the working out in the country in the wintertime and went to work at the ski shop.

### **Claude as Skier and Ski Repairman**

I: I know skiing has been important in your life. When did you start skiing?

CA: When I was thirty-four. I started skiing because my wife and I had two girls--one five and the other about eight. One of their girlfriends and her mother wanted to ski, and my wife wanted to ski. I'd sold the cattle, so I didn't have anything to do. I decided I'd take them up because of the risk of being up there on the mountain all that time.

I: Where did you first go skiing?

CA: We went to the old stump patch, just up the river [Grande Ronde River, northwest of La Grande]. Off to the right, there used to be quite a clearing there that wasn't very steep but a

pretty good clearing. It's still there, but it's different since the highway has been put through there. But we'd go up there and ski there. Later on, when we got interested enough, we went up to Tollgate [ski area between Elgin and Weston OR, also known as Spout Springs] and skied up there.

I: What was it like up there? Did they have any kind of tows, or did you just walk up the hill and slide down?

CA: We had two rope tows. One went clear to the top, and one was like a baby tow--from the highway to the first pitch where the hill goes up. You could learn to ski on that hill; for the steeper hill, you took the other tow and went to the top.

I: Describe your first ski equipment.

CA: The first pair I had was pine skis. I had to paint the bottoms to get them to slide worth a darn.



Claude on skis at Sprout Springs, Tollgate  
(between Elgin and Weston OR), 1930s  
Photo courtesy of Claude Anson



Tow hook, made by Claude,  
for use by skiers on rope tows  
Photo by Eugene Smith

I: How were they fastened to your shoes?

CA: I think it just had a strap over the toe. Then we got smart and cut a piece of inner tube in a circle and put that over the toe ahead of the strap and stretch it to your heel. That'd keep your foot in and worked pretty well. Of course, it wasn't anywhere near what we got later on.

I: What kind of power did those rope tows use?

CA: Some old, gasoline motor from a car. The tows had wheels at each end, with the rope wrapped tight around them.

I: Was this hemp rope?

CA: Yes. It was pretty good sized.

I: Did skiers have to use fairly thick gloves and then just hang onto this rope all the way?

CA: That's what we did down on the low hill. On the upper hill, where it was real steep, if our gloves were slick, we



Claude demonstrating how tow hook grasps (simulated) tow rope  
Photo by Eugene Smith

couldn't hold on. So we made a little piece of iron about eight inches long. We could bring it up underneath, pull it back, and lock it.

I: How common was that device?

CA: That was common for rope tows. Of course, we made them and sold them for the public.

Then Jim Vaughn started the Little Alps, as they called it, below Anthony Lakes a little ways. He had a metal cable, which people didn't like because it burned their gloves up pretty badly. We cut little pieces of hose to fit over two fingers; that held really well. We could use that clamp even on the cable as we went up the hill.

I: What did you call them?

CA: Tow hooks. We had army belts with D-rings in them and a rope through this D-ring. We made a couple of turns and then let loose of that to let the rope pull us up.

I: That was dangerous, wasn't it?

CA: No. If you turned that rope loose, the hook went on up the tow a ways and then fell off.

I: I should think you could get out of control pretty easily.

CA: You could get out of control all right, but the kids got pretty darn good at it. Lots of times, when the rope was a little too high and our daughter Sue, who was really young then, got picked clear up, she'd hang onto the tow. The

tow would have to go over a pulley to hold it out of the snow. She was short enough that once in a while it picked her up and took her across. She got so that she'd ride those pulleys right over the top of the top.

I: Who started the tows at Tollgate, and what did they charge for the tows?

CA: It was put in by the Blue Mountain Ski Club. You had to be a member of the ski club. We did all our own work. In the summertime, our family went up there; usually, the men went up early in the day to repair the tows and clear the brush. Then at noon, after church, the women brought a potluck dinner in; we met on top, sat around, and visited.

I: Do you remember what the dues were?

CA: I think it was \$15 a year for membership for the whole family.

I was on the ski patrol at Spout Springs; then Jim Vaughn had to have ski patrol on duty in order for the Forest Service to let him open at Anthony Lakes. So two or three of us decided we'd go on up and help him as ski patrol and also ski on a lot more challenging hill.

I: Were you able to ski every weekend?

CA: At Spout we used to ski Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

I: Would you stay up there or make a round trip each time?

CA: We'd drive up and back. It's only around 50 miles. Three or four of us

got together to go up and ski. When we went up to Anthony--I mean the Little Alps--I skied on weekends. But when they opened up Anthony Lakes again, I went up there. There wasn't room for enough people from both places, and Anthony had more money backing and a chairlift that hooked up quite a bit more skiers. They started out skiing every day, but there weren't enough people to make it worthwhile, so then they skied for four days, four days a week.

## Experiences as Ski Patrolman

I: Could you tell me about one or two of your experiences on the ski patrol?

CA: One that sticks in my mind was when I ran across a gentleman that was down; he had a bad leg. I could see he was hurting, so I stopped. I sent word to bring me a toboggan. When they brought me the toboggan, I splinted him, but he was hurting pretty badly. I thought, "I didn't usually do it, but, rather than make him wait around to get a ride back down, I have a Volkswagen station wagon." I laid blankets in the back of it, slid him in, and brought him to the hospital.

While I drove, I'd visited with him quite a bit. He was a veterinarian out of Walla Walla. They took a picture of his leg; it was all really broken up. We figured he'd be laid up for several days, so he decided he'd like to go home. I said, "OK, I'll take you." I slid him back in and took him over to Walla Walla.

What he hadn't told me was that he

was diabetic. After we left La Grande, he said, "I hope to get home at a certain time." He said, "I'll need to have some oranges or something." That scared the devil out of me because I didn't want to get caught with a diabetic. I didn't have a thing to feed him--a candy bar or anything. I usually kept a candy bar in my pocket just for those kinds of things, but I didn't have one with me. I got him home and into the hospital; he was still alive.

That summer I went back over there and stopped by his place where he took care of his animals. I asked him how he had gotten along. He said he was off work for about a month but was thankful to be up and around again.

I: Was that one of the scariest experiences you had on the ski patrol?

CA: No, it wasn't the scariest, but it was one of the things that I remember.

I: Did you have some incidents that really pushed your skills to the limit?

CA: I had some concussions. That always is another worry.

I: People crashing into trees?

CA: Yes, either a tree or running into one another. That's always a worry because you really don't know how badly the person is hurt. A girl skier on the steeper part of the hill at Anthony had fallen down, and somebody up above her fell down; that person didn't have the safety strap on and the ski had come off, came down, and popped her. Boom! She straightened right out,

and I thought she really was hurting. There happened to be a doctor from Pendleton skiing there, too; I asked him if he'd help me a minute while I put a back brace on the girl. He helped me and we took her down on toboggan. When they got her into town and got her x-rayed, she hadn't been hurt badly, but the way she straightened out made me think I had something I wished I didn't have.

I: Why did you want to be on the ski patrol?

CA: I got into ski patrol at Tollgate because, on our Thursday ski trips of several farmers, one of the fellows was badly hurt, and there was no one to take care of him. We found an old piece of metal, laid him on that, and dragged him down to his car; somebody drove him on down from the other side of the mountain. We got to thinking mighty sakes alive! Somebody ought to be trained enough to take care of somebody; we didn't have the training. They had the ski patrol on weekends, but they didn't have anybody on Thursday. Some of us here in town we got somebody from Walla Walla to come over and give us the training that we needed. Later on, I took instructor's training so I could be a ski patrol instructor. I got to skiing all over the Northwest, meeting other ski patrolmen. Pretty soon I get pretty well wrapped up in it.

## **Operating a Ski Repair and Clothing Shop in La Grande**

I: What made you and your wife think that a ski shop in La Grande was some-

thing that you wanted to get involved with?

CA: That was one of those things we walked into and didn't figure on. Willie Hamann and his dad had a warehouse in Island City, where they cleaned grain and fumigated peas. Willie had been in the army, where he had a little skiing experience. When he found out that we were skiing at Spout, he said he'd like to go. He started going with me, Bob Gulzow, and Dick Fuller, other farmers out here. Most of them joined the ski patrol, so we had our own ski patrol.

Jim Bohnenkamp had a ski shop here, but that was the only one in town. We started doing work on our own skis, and then pretty soon people wanted us to do this or do that. People got to bringing their skis out to Willie Hamann at his granary, where he had a good shop. We started doing a little work on the different skis, and that's how I got into the ski business.

I: What kind of work?

CA: They had metal-edge skis at that time, and the spring in the skis would work the little screws loose. That would break a piece of the metal edge out. We did a lot of metal edging. A lot of older skis were a wooden-edge, which didn't work a darn on packed slopes because there wasn't anything to hold them. So we got to putting metal edges on skis for \$7.00 a pair. It was quite a job--a hundred-and-some little screws to put in.

We got busy in Island City and thought

we might just as well have some new equipment. People were always asking if we had this, that, or the other thing. So we decided that we'd go ahead and put a bunch of stuff in. We built a basement here in the house, and Dot [Claude's deceased wife] put in a shop for clothes downstairs. She sold clothes out of the house for three or four years, and then we decided to move to town [La Grande]. We figured we ought to have a better place for our shop. So we moved to town where the bicycle shop is now on Depot Street. She took half of that building, and we took half for a little ski shop.

I: You couldn't do repairs while the farm work was heavy, so was the shop closed then?

CA: Yes, I closed whenever Anthony closed and reopened November 1. One year we kept it open on weekends till the middle of May. I figured that I'd stay open one day a week just in case somebody breaks down and needs repair. But most of the time, the first of April I was back out at the ranch.

I: From the start, was it a successful business?

CA: Yes. I think I knew every man, woman, and child in eastern Oregon. Sometime or other they've been in. I even had people that moved away from here--moved to Portland--come back here to get their equipment, not taking the word from guys there. They had a lot more choices there, but they didn't know what was right and what was wrong. They didn't want to depend on the salesman. They trusted



me that much. I was always kind of proud of that.

It's been a good life because in the wintertime I really enjoyed all the people. But in spring, when the weather gets good and I got tired of being inside, that's the time I could go out on the ranch and be away from people. By Fall, I was glad to get out of the bad weather, get back inside, and visit with all those friends again.

I: Was the shop always profitable?

CA: One year we didn't have any snow and I kept it open, but Dot and I went down to Australia that year. There wasn't any business so we took off on a trip. We didn't make any money because of no snow. They ran on weekends, but it wasn't good skiing--lots of rocks. So there was quite a bit of work to be done on the skis. A fellow I had working for me made enough for his wages.

### **A Memorable Exercise in Winter-survival Techniques**

I: I'd like to hear about one of your cross-country skiing experiences.

CA: In about 1960, three men--Harold Klagis, a farmer out of Joseph, Walt Klagis, also a farmer, and Dan Bishop, a Forest Service man from La Grande--decided they'd attempt a crossing from Wallowa Lake to Halfway, Oregon. After the second day out, they were snowed in and realized they didn't have enough equipment. They were afraid of somebody's getting hurt. So they stayed in a snow cave

for a couple of nights and then turned around and went back.

They decided that on that type of a trip they needed a little more preparation. We were all interested in winter survival, so one of the reasons we took that trip was to try winter survival techniques. They contacted me to see if I'd go with them the next year; there'd be four in case somebody was hurt. They would take a movie of the trip, which made so much gear to pack that the three of them couldn't make it. With that in mind, they made a trip through that country on horseback the following fall, leaving two food caches and gasoline for the stove they hauled in.

On February 5, about 1961, we took off from Wallowa Lake with everything we needed in pretty heavy packs: two of us with sixty-pound packs and two with seventy-pound packs. We climbed from Wallowa Lake the first day, thinking we'd be able to hike part way up, but, as soon as we got away from the lake, the snow was so deep we had to put our skis on, with climbing skins. Climbing skins go onto the bottom of skis so you can walk uphill; they keep you from sliding back when you step along. Also, the hairs on the skins lie in such a way that you can slide downhill.

It was getting dark by the time we got to Aneroid Lake, where we'd planned to stay in the Forest Service cabin. I was glad they knew the country because it was snowing hard by the time we got there. They were a little con-

fused in finding the cabin; it's not easy to walk to it even though you know the country. We thought we were going to spend our first night outside, but we found the cabin in a little while.

We had to take a snow measurement for the Forest Service. We didn't do that till the next morning because it was too late when we got there and it was snowing hard. After we got in and got all set, I told them it was my birthday. I was fifty years old. So Harold, the cook that night, made me a little birthday cake--a biscuit with a candle on it. It was quite a little party that night. The other fellows were considerably younger.

The next day it quit snowing. It was beautiful, clear morning, and we took off as early as we could after taking the snow measurement. The route was down first, across Tenderfoot Basin, and then traversing up Sentinel Mountain. We were working around the edge of it when we made our first mistake: traveling longer than we should have on such a beautiful afternoon. When it started getting dark, we decided we'd better dig a snow cave because we didn't make it clear on around, though we had thought we could. We stopped on the side of the mountain, where it's really steep, and found a reasonably good place to dig our snow cave. The snow wasn't deep because it was so steep, but we got under the snow all right and had a pretty good little house.

Somebody got a little over ambitious. When he got near the roof and shoveled too close, a little bit of the roof

fell in. Rather than try to do it all over again, we decided to cover the hole with a tarp and throw snow on. We had a piece of black plastic with us, so we stretched and staked it down, threw snow over it. We had a little bit of a cutaway so we could put a little Primus stove there and stand right there and cook. We had little shelves cut up against the rock so we could lay our sleeping bags out; I was the farthest one up the hill. During the night, one of those high altitude blizzards came in. We could hear it, but we didn't think anything about it.

The first thing I knew I felt snow sifting around; the snow had broken the roof of our house in. I was lying clear up on the side there, right along the edge, so I never even got out of my sleeping bag. Snow was covering the rest of them, so two of them got up and thought they'd go out and dig another cave, just deep enough so they could get into it. But they couldn't because it was blowing and snowing so hard that, when they'd throw out a shovel of snow, it would drift back in faster than they could dig.

They come back in and decided they'd plug up the hole and close up the cave except just a little spot where we could be protected. They moved their packs, covered all the spots they could, and then put on snow to cover all the openings. That left me in my bag and one of the other fellows in his bag; the other two had to sit huddled up with us the rest of the night.

One thing surprised me: if you take a little candle and set it in the wall of the

snow cave, it lights up the thing just like a light globe. The snow reflects all the light. With about three candles, you can set there and read a magazine anyplace inside the snow cave, and there's plenty of light to cook.

I: You cooked inside the cave?

CA: We cooked inside. You have some kind of shelter to cook in. Of course, in the snow cave you always make a hole straight up with a ski pole or stick for ventilation. When you sleep in a snow cave, you make a ventilation hole and plug the door so the cold air can't get in. It's just like closing the door of a house; the little ventilation hole in the roof works out pretty well.

It was 1:00 the next day before we could see well enough to get out of that place. By that time, a foot of new and several feet of drifted snow had accumulated. It was drifted to where we had a good chance of a slab avalanche, especially on that hill. So we took off just as soon as we could see. After an hour or two, we could be clear around the mountain and up on the ridge where we could drop down into timber. We wanted to be make that if we possibly could and not have to stay out there. As soon as we decided we could see well enough to go on, the flat light was terrible. Do you know what flat light is?

I: No, I don't.

CA: At high altitudes or places where there aren't any trees, you're on snow, and it's snowing and the wind is blowing, everything looks flat. You don't know

whether you on a steep angle; you don't know whether you're standing up or lying down. It's hard to keep your balance, especially with the wind and the snow blowing.

It finally let up so we could see or get an idea where we were going, so we went ahead. Each one of us put on our avalanche cords--light, strong nylon cord--which are long, red ropes tied to our bodies. If you get caught in an avalanche, quite often the string will float to the top so the other people find you quicker. We started out in single file taking turns leading. When it came my turn, I took off. I put my ski pole down, and it was touching the snow and the snow was moving. I thought, "Oh, man, I'm in an avalanche." One of the rules if you get in an avalanche is to jettison your pack so you won't get caught; you have a better chance to swim to the top. I thought I'd do it and loosened it, thinking, "Gee, I'd hate to throw that down and lose my sleeping bag. I'd freeze to death before we could ever find it. Well, I'll just ride it for a little ways, and, if it starts throwing me, I'll dump it." I weaved around quite a little bit, and pretty soon I looked around and saw Harold come up right beside me. "Should we ride it on out?" He said, "What?" I said, "Aren't we on an avalanche?" He said, "No, you're standing still." The wind was blowing so hard and drifting the snow it blew that I thought I was going. Instead I was standing still, and that was the reason my ski pole was sitting solid in the snow.

We managed to make it over to where we wanted to get on the ridge, and,



when we got there, the cornice was about twenty feet high. We couldn't see any place to get up. We decided to take our skis off and set them high enough apart that we climb up on one ski and then jab another ski in; we made our way to the top. I was the last one. I got up on one ski, reached down, pulled out the ski below me, and handed it up. That way we worked ourselves up the cornice, got on top, and were still above timber but across the Tenderfoot Basin--between north fork of Imnaha and the middle fork of Imnaha.

We got up, put our packs back on, and looked around. Walter was lying flat and then got back up. I started to move over there, and I fell flat myself. We couldn't tell whether we were standing up or lying down, with the light the way it was. It was completely flat on top. But by one person standing braced, we could kind of get an idea of which way was up.

We worked our way down to where we could see the trees. Since the trees were standing up, we had a good idea how to go. When we got down to the trees, the light didn't bother us. We still had time to get down into the trees and tried a different kind of quarters that night. Instead of digging a snow cave, which is the warmest, we decided we would dig a trench, line the inside with fir boughs, and cover the whole thing with fir boughs. We all slept down in the trench, which is pretty good but not as warm as a snow cave. Even though it is way below zero outside, the inside of a snow cave is around thirty degrees. If several

people are there, it actually gets above thirty-two degrees and it'll drip. You have to make your snow cave with kind of a cone top to let the water run around the edge instead of dripping on you. The trench isn't as warm, but we got by all right that night.

We were pretty well down to the bottom of the middle fork of the Imnaha by then. So the next morning we started out early--not a bad day nor a really good day, but we could see. We started to angling out, wanting to get to Boner Flat; it's a big flat, and there was a food cache and a lean-to cabin there. We wanted to get there by that night.

We climbed up a side hill, but we'd made a mistake. We should have made the trip from the south to the north instead of from the north to the south. We were climbing the north slopes, which have deep powder snow, and the south slopes, where wind blows hard. We were climbing the best skiing snow, which was several feet deep; it was hard to climb because we sank in so far. When we got over on the south slope, where we were going downhill and the snow was hard, we didn't sink in. If we were to do it again, we'd go the other way.

We had one pair of snowshoes along in case somebody broke his ski in the deep powder; with them, we took turns breaking trail. Walking with the snowshoes was the hardest work, so we'd trade off every little while to break the trail. As soon as the snowshoe tracks were there, we came along with our skis. Even with our heavy packs, we stayed pretty well on top along the snowshoe trail.

I hadn't been through in the summertime and thought, "Man, this will be a heck of a time trying to find that cache." They'd set it in such a way that it was among some trees, with a tree out by itself as a marker. We got to it before dark. We got some of the snow out and got more gas for the Primus stove.

I: What is a Primus stove?

CA: It's a little mountaineering stove--different than regular gas stoves that pump up. You don't have to pump them. Most mountaineers use them.

I: Is it just the one burner?

CA: Yes, it has just the one burner and it folds up to take up little space.

I: Do you light it with a match?

CA: Yes.

I: What did you have in the cache?

CA: Mostly gas and canned fruit so we'd have a little moisture. Otherwise, the food we packed with us was dried but still provided a little energy. At that time, there wasn't much dehydrated food on the market--foods that weigh little but do a lot. Harold had mixed up a conglomerate of oatmeal mush, chocolate, and dried milk; all we had to do was add a little water and cook it. It gave us quite a bit of strength.

We also had dried soup; at that time that was available. We had a lot of soup, especially at night to keep from becoming dehydrated. We didn't live

too high on the hog, but we had good strong food--all that was necessary. The specialty of the house in evenings was dried beef jerky--the only meat we had. That was also available in our pockets during the day to chew on.

I: Did you carry water with you, or did you melt snow?

CA: We carried water in canteens, but water was one of our big problems. After we were out of camp an hour, the canteen was frozen up so we didn't have water again until night. We never stopped at noon. We'd eat a hearty breakfast and fill our pockets with candy bars, or any high-energy food, and lemon drops. On that type of meal, I thought maybe I'd get a sour stomach, but I didn't. When I was using up energy all the time, it kept me going all day long. We'd always had lemon drops for when we got thirsty; we popped in a lemon drop because it gave us a little strength and kept us from getting too thirsty. At night, we melted snow and had tea. We drank tea because we felt it gives you a little more strength; it cuts your thirst better than coffee does.

I: Did you ever eat the snow?

CA: No, that's not good.

I: What is wrong with that?

CA: Eating snow keeps making you thirstier. If you're figuring on traveling for a long time, it doesn't seem to do you a bit of good. You can't get enough snow in your mouth. Becoming dehydrated really is a problem.

That night at the cache it cleared off, and, oh, it got cold! We hadn't expected it to get quite that cold. One man had started out with a plastic air mattress, and the first night it was so cold that, when he started to fold it up the next day, it broke. That left us with three air mattresses, so we turned them crossways and all huddled together in our sleeping bags.

I had a sleeping bag without a mummy top, which let too much cold air in around my clothing. I'd never make a trip with a bag like that again. If we hadn't had hand warmers, I would've been very uncomfortable; I stuck the hand warmers down in my bed with me. Even so, I shivered so much when I first went to bed the others complained about me keeping them awake. It's surprising what the human body will take as long as you don't get excited and overdo.

I noticed all the time we'd been traveling since a little ways above Aneroid Lake there was not a track in the snow --no rabbit track, deer track, or elk track. We went completely above all tracks. But when we looked out that morning, there was a set of tracks coming right down along the trail we'd come in. The sun was so bright on that sparkly, cold snow that we could see how this track came right up to our lean-to, cut off, and went on down. We could tell that it had been a cougar, who had followed our tracks, come up to the camp in the night, and looked us over. I suppose he was going on down to where there was something to eat because there weren't rabbits or other small animals up that high.

I: Why do you think the cougar didn't bother you?

CA: They don't bother anybody.

I: Don't they, though?

CA: Very seldom will a cougar attack a person unless it's a cripple. If the cougar were extremely hungry, I suppose he would. No, he was just curious.

I: Do you think, if you had been awake, he might have come into the tent?

CA: I don't think we were in any danger at all. I've been out in the mountains all my life, and I've never even seen a cougar. I've seen their tracks where they followed me, but I've never actually seen one.

It was such a beautiful morning we took time to ski, but, of course, every time we skied down, we had to walk back up. So we skied without our packs for a little and then took off.

Since this was the first clear morning, it was the first day a plane could fly. Klegis had made arrangement with somebody at Joseph to fly in and check on us. We were starting down the divide into the south fork of the Imnaha when the pilot spotted our tracks. He followed them, found us, and threw down an aluminum pole and a roll of toilet paper. It unwound as it came down and let down slowly. We went over and saw that he had put a message inside, asking us if we were all right; if we weren't, we should stomp out in the snow what we needed. We were all right, although we were way

off course from where we intended to go. Without trails, we had to go completely with compass and terrain. Since the day was clear, we could see where we wanted to climb the mountain on the other side. The brush wasn't too thick, and, by going further up the south fork of the Imnaha, we climbed out, intending to come out on Blue Creek Pass. But we came out two or three miles upriver of Blue Creek Pass because we couldn't see the trail up Blue Creek Pass. We eventually got out on top of Blue Creek Pass, above Cornucopia three or four miles, at about 4:00. It was still clear and nice, warmed up pretty well. We took a vote on whether to stay there all night or to risk skiing. We decided we didn't want to spend another night out if we didn't have to, so we'd ski on down. It was all downhill from there, but we were quite a ways further up the river than we wanted to be. We didn't dare go straight down because we were afraid that slope might avalanche, so we had to do quite a bit of traversing. All that new snow was thawing on the south side of the mountain. We followed the ridge top back until it widened out, and by that time it had turned cold and everything had set up. That was the second mistake we made on the trip. We decided to ski down in the bright moonlight. But the crust was breakable by that time. That's tricky skiing at best--skiing in moonlight with a pack on your back. We did some dandy falls, but no one got hurt.

When we got near Cornucopia, we had to cross a creek. There wasn't any place where the water had kept the

creek open. There were probably four feet between drifts, which meant that the creek had a four-foot ravine cut down to a depth of about ten feet. We decided we'd throw our packs across, get back, and see if we could ski across. Three of us made it. By that time, evidently, enough of us had gone across to probably weaken it. When the fourth man came, instead of jumping on across, he fell to the bottom. He was hanging by his skis so that it didn't hurt him.

After we fished him out and put our packs back on, we saw a wagon road from there on down to Cornucopia. We thought, "Gee, this'll be a cinch now that we're on a good road." Down that low, it had warmed up enough during the day that the snow had set up to where it was bare ice. With the packs on our back, it was almost impossible to hold our speed down on our skis. Under the trees, where it had been shaded, there was new snow. We spotted a tree down a little ways, skied to it, and held ourselves the best we could with snow. But it was so icy we couldn't even do that. We kept sliding and controlled our speed and direction to a certain amount to stay on the road. We went till we hit one of those shady spots, where the loose snow was, and stop. We did that for quite a ways. By about 9:00, we made it down to Cornucopia, a little mining town.

We looked around at some of the cabins; by that time, we certainly wanted to get inside and get dried out. We hadn't been warmed up all the time we were gone. A sign on one

cabin said “Fine for trespassing. If you really need to come in, come on in.” We took the screen off, went in, and saw the owner’s name sign. We took down the name and address. We found a heating stove and all kinds of dry wood, got busy, and cooked up a big meal. We took all our clothes off and dried them out. While we were hiking, when our socks were usually wet, we kept one pair of dry socks in our packs to put on at night to try to keep our feet warm and pulled our wet socks in the sleeping bags with us; that was the only way we could dry anything. Even though they were very wet, sleeping on them all night would dry them enough to wear the next day.

I: Where did you go after Cornucopia?

CA: The next day we skied on down to Halfway. They don’t keep the road open to Cornucopia, but they did have the road cleared for a mile or two at Halfway. We skied right on down into town, with bunch of people looking at us. We all had whiskers, quite a bit of whiskers, and that’s when whiskers weren’t common. We went into a restaurant, cleaned up a little bit, and got something to eat. When people found out where we had come from, quite a few visited with us. They’d never known of anybody crossing at that time of the year.

I: What did you conclude from this trip about winter survival techniques?

CA: We found out that, before anybody makes a trip like that, it should be well planned.

I: What do you mean by *planned*?

CA: You should have somebody that knows quite a bit about winter survival to make that kind of trip.

I: This was a forty-mile trip, was it?

CA: Yes, around forty miles the way we went. Second, you should not take any chances, though we did. Either of our two mistakes could have been fatal.

Third, there are some things you don’t think of, like zippers on your clothes; a guy wants to be sure the zippers are waxed on his coat in case, during the day, sleet ices them up. When you’re traveling and the wind isn’t blowing, quite often you have to undo your coat to get cool, but the minute you stop you have to zip it back up. If you end up with a zipper that won’t work, you could very easily freeze to death when a storm come up.

Fourth, we hadn’t thought about being without water during the day. Can-teens froze up hanging on our packs.

I: What about food and cooking fuel?

CA: My partners had that planned out. Where they had gone the year before, they had everything figured out pretty closely. We figured on enough food for two more days than was in the caches in case we did have problems. We had no idea just how long it would take us to go across.

There’s no reason for anybody to get panicky, wear themselves out, and die. With just what I have on today, I could

go out in the mountains and spend the night. I wouldn't be comfortable, but I wouldn't die. So if people could realize that they don't want to try anything like that without proper preparation, they can do most anything of that type.

I: How long did it take?

CA: It took one day to Aneroid, one day going around Tenderfoot Basin, a day from Tenderfoot Basin down into the bottom of middle fork, and one day out of middle fork up on Boner Flat. That's four days. And a day from Boner Flat into the south fork, up Blue Creek, and into Cornucopia--five days. It took us only a couple or three hours from Cornucopia to Halfway. I knew a fellow in Richland from the Maxima Ski Patrol; we called him to come up and bring us back.

I: When you got out, did you feel in good shape?

CA: Yes. The first day I was awfully tired from climbing--shoulders sore from the pack. After the second day, I got toughened into it; then I never took my pack off because I'd rather rest over my ski poles with my pack on than to put it back on. But we never rested more than a minute to catch our breath. We could get a long ways if we kept a steady pace. Being in a hurry at high altitude causes you to run out of breath very fast.

I: About how high were you?

CA: Near Sentinel Mountain, the passes are about seven thousand feet, I think. We didn't climb to the top of anything but

tried to work our way across the easiest route.

No one was hurt and no one was sick. No one had a cold after that. Of course, we were glad to get out. Dave Lane and I walked across the next summer just to see where we'd been that winter. I was surprised that we could ski places that you can't walk in summertime because it was so steep in the summer.

I: Did you use your knowledge from your ski-patrol experience?

CA: Oh, yes. I'm a member of the Anthony Lake Ski Patrol now. Every year in our training, we have an overnight that involves hiking so many miles and spending a night out. What I learned on that trip helped us a lot. Now we do have quite a few educational leaflets put out by the National Ski Patrol, but they weren't available at that time.



The National Ski Patrol System hereby presents the  
**Service Recognition Award**

to  
**Claude Anson**  
in recognition and acknowledgment for  
20 years  
of dedicated and compassionate service

Dated 1976

For the National Ski Patrol  
*H. Hoffmann*  
National Director

Certificate of recognition for Claude's twenty-year  
service to the National Ski Patrol System  
Original courtesy of Claude Anson



I: Are you an officer in the ski patrol?

CA: I've been patrol leader, and I do have a national number, 3996--an honorary number given to outstanding patrolmen of the United States. At present, we have two others in Anthony Lakes who have their numbers.

I: Who is that?

CA: Mike Gooderham and Gerald Maxwell. You have to have done quite a bit in ski patrol work to be honored by the division that spins out the numbers. Usually, five or six from the Northwest are honored. My number, 3996, means I'm about the 4,000<sup>th</sup> one honored since the night the ski patrol was organized. It's given all over the United States--close to 5,000 by now.

I: When did you get yours?

CA: Six or seven years ago.

### **Importance of Living in the Grande Ronde Valley**

I: Apparently you're satisfied with the choices you made in your life. Is there anything about the Grande Ronde Valley that you would mention as particularly important to your life, aside from the fact that you needed the land for the farming and you enjoyed the skiing? Is there anything else about the valley that really stands out in your mind as important?

CA: The way things are right now it's not as important as it was, but it seemed to me we had a pretty good round of seasons: winter in winter and summer in summer. Usually, we had good ice skating by Thanksgiving; there was lots more water in the creeks and ponds in those days. It was good and it was fun to ice skate. In summertime we had pretty good weather--probably as hot as or hotter than it gets now.

I: So it's the environment and the distinctions between the seasons that are important to you?

CA: Yes, and there's good hunting. I never did much fishing--I'm always too busy--but I could always find time to get my hunting in.

I: Elk? Deer?

CA: Elk and deer, yes. We used to have really good bird hunting, too. But we don't have as many ducks as we used to have, and the pheasants aren't nearly as plentiful as they used to be. I haven't hunted for birds for several years. But this is an all-around good place to live. I thought it was a good place to raise the two kids. I don't like some of the things that are going on nowadays, but I'm old-fashioned, too.

I: You're entitled to that.

**Appendix**  
Excerpts from a family newsletter edited by  
Wilbur Anson, Claude's cousin,  
devoted to pursuing the trail of Anson ancestors and relatives

# The Anson Quest

Issue 2 June 2000

This issue is devoted to items that are biographical in nature.

## A CENTURY OF ANSONS

*Eastern Oregon Review -  
Thursday, March 20, 1969*

At the State Fair in 1965 Governor Hatfield of Oregon officially certified Oregon's first two century farms. One of these two is the Anson farm at Island City. This farm and its owners have been involved in many interesting changes that have taken place. We wish to relate some of them.

First let us form a mind's picture of what the area looked like in 1862 when two Anson brothers drifted into Grande Ronde Valley, liked it, and in the fall started a cabin. In those days the river entered the valley's flat land and like all streams under such circumstances, wandered first one way and then another to form a delta as it deposited sediment when the current slowed down. Willows, cottonwoods, hawthornes and other brush grew over this area.

Man later confined the river, but we had a good example of its natural tendency to spread during the flood of January 1965. Had it not been for the quick action by the then newly appointed Civil Defense Director Earl Misener, 24 hour effort by Commissioner Schaad and many other residents of La Grande, the river would have again started sending some of its waters south directly through the city.

It was in a little opening in the bush on a higher part of this brushy delta just east of the present town of Island City that the Anson boys started their cabin. The next summer they finished the building. Three years later they traded it to another brother Joseph who had just returned from the Civil War.

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## ANSON FAMILY IN VALLEY NEARLY A CENTURY 7/29/65

~~UNKNOWN SOURCE~~  
~~EASTERN OREGON REVIEW~~

Mrs. Mabel Anson of La Grande, widow of the late J. Orlin Anson, relates an interesting history of the pioneer Anson family here in the Grande Ronde Valley which had its beginning with Joseph Anson, Sr.

Born in August 1837, in Staffordshire, England, Joseph Anson emigrated to this country with his family at the age of 10. They lived in the eastern states of Maryland and New Jersey for a time before moving west to Ohio and then Iowa, in which later state the boy grew to manhood and attained his education.

He was among the first to enlist in the Grand Army of the Republic during the Civil War. Following his discharge he determined to go to Oregon to join his brother, George.

He arrived in the Grande Ronde Valley in the spring of 1866, nearly a century ago, following a long and arduous trip made by oxcart. He took out a homestead of 160 acres and purchased an additional 80, one and a half miles southeast of the present location of Island City.

He remained here throughout the balance of his lifetime, passing on at the age of 95 in January of 1933. Joseph played an important role in the early development of the valley, both as a citizen and a farmer. He was active in the organization of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and at one time was its district deputy patriarch.

Joseph Orlin Anson, son, was born

*Continued on page 4*

## ANSON AND MILLER FARMS ACHIEVE OREGON "CENTURY MARK" DISTINCTION

Information from the State of Oregon, Department of Agriculture, Monday of this week reveals that two Union County farms will be added to the 1965 Century Farm list of the Agriculture Department and of the Oregon Historical Society.

One farm, owned by Mabel F. Anson of La Grande, is located southeast of Island City and is operated by Mrs. Hanson's [Anson's] son, Claude. The quarter section of 160 acres was first lived on by William Anson in 1862. Later his brother, Joseph, homesteaded the land and purchased an additional 80 acres from another brother, George, which made a total of 240. Of this total Mrs. Anson retains 193, and some of the original buildings yet stand on the property. Mrs. Anson is the daughter-in-law of Joseph Anson who resided on the farm until his death at the age of 95 in January, 1933. Her husband, Joseph Orlin Anson, passed on in 1963.

The Rodney E. Miller farm in Union is on land settled in 1863 by Simon Miller, grandfather of Rodney. Simon, a native of Switzerland, came to the United States as a youth, and shortly thereafter moved west, living

*.....Continued on page 5*

*Editors note: Care is taken to preserve the exact wording and spelling, even when incorrect, of the original articles. My editorial corrections, when I am sure of them, are enclosed in brackets [sample correction].*



*A Century of Ansons...*

*continued from page 1*

At this point, let's take a closer look at Joseph Anson. He was one of eighteen children born to George and Margaret (Denny) Anson of Staffordshire, England, on August 15, 1837. His father was a younger son of the Earl of Litchfield, and because of the inheritance laws of England he stood no chance of inheriting property there, so immigrated with his family to America when Joseph was 10 years old.

After a stormy 6 weeks crossing the Atlantic the family landed in Baltimore, Maryland.

Joseph's mother was a Welsh woman. Her parents being sea faring folks who owned sailing vessels putting out to different ports, Joseph often spoke of going on some of the voyages with them. One time when he was quite small he climbed so high in the rigging that they had a hard time getting him safely back down.

After staying in Maryland for some time, where Joseph's father plyed his trade as a silver smith, the family moved to Medina, Ohio, and then later to Quasqueton [Quasqueton], Iowa where Joseph finished his education.

The Ansons belonged to the Episcopal Church and when a boy Joseph acted as choir boy. Later, when the Civil War started he enlisted in the 5<sup>th</sup> Iowa Infantry, later being transferred to the 5<sup>th</sup> Iowa Cavalry. He served in the battles at Corinth, Iuka, Vicksburg, Missionary Ridge, and the Atlantic Campaign, then was ordered to remount and serve under General Wilson until the close of the war. He was mustered out on August 29, 1865 and returned to Iowa where he married Amelia B. Nenell [Newell] on November 30, 1865.

Due to exposure and injuries during the war, Joseph's health was not good. Hoping that a change of climate would do him good he and Amelia decided to come to Oregon. They ended their ox team journey at the present location of Island City where Joseph took up a homestead and traded

for the cabin his brothers had built then later bought an additional eighty acres. This became the Anson Century Farm.

Joseph and Amelia were the parents of five children, Minnie (Probasco) Nanell (*Ed: Nanell is the spelling in the article, but I don't make the connection. Maybe it is a misspelling.*); Nellie (Stubblefield); J. Orlin, and James G. All are now deceased. The mother passed away when James was a week old. All were born in the old log cabin. Much praise goes to the father who kept the children together in the wilderness of a new country.

Grandfather Joseph used to tell stories of those days: how during the Indian scare he took the children through the tall grass from the homestead to the fort on the Buchanan homestead; of going to old town (La Grande) shopping; of going to town in a boat in the spring when the only dry spot was on the slight rise at the homestead; of a Newfoundland dog that saved Minnie's life when she was a toddler by dragging her by the dress away from some deep water.

Mr. Anson broke the sod with oxen and raised grain and different kinds of livestock. He supplemented the family budget by freighting from Umatilla Landing to Boise.

In 1877 Mr. Anson built a new house near the old log cabin and moved his family into it. This was a sturdy, well built frame house constructed of saw mill lumber, and, with but few minor changes, still serves as the residence on the farm.

In the community Joseph Anson, who was called "Jody" Anson by his neighbors, was known as a man of sterling qualities. He was a charter member of the IOOF lodge that was organized at Island City and later moved to La Grande. He helped to organize the Odd Fellows Lodge, was active in the G.A.R., and was member of the first grange organized in the valley.

In his older years he turned the operation of the farm over to his son J. Orlin Anson and wife Mabel and lived with them until his death on January 13, 1933. Thus he had lived on the farm for 68 years before his GAR comrades, conducted his funeral.

Orlin and Mabel continued to live on the place until Orlin's death on October 14, 1963. Mabel still lives in an apartment in town while her son Claude farms the old home place.

On January 30, 1961 the writer visited the Anson farm to learn more of its history and made notes of the things that were told. Orlin was mentally active and active enough that he can walk about with the aid of a cane. Let us listen to him:

"The old cabin that my Uncle Wm. Anson started to build in 1862 is a hundred yards or so south of the house. Uncle William sold it to Uncle John Anson and he sold it to father, Joe Anson in 1866 when father came to the valley. In 1877 father built this house where we are living. The old Indian Trail, which is now called the "Black Hawk Trail" came down the north side of the river and ran between

**Participate in the Quest !!!**

Please send copies of clippings about Ansons and their relatives and I will include them in one of the next issues!!

**The Anson Quest**

Published sporadically by:

Wilbur Anson  
345 S. 41st Street  
Boulder, CO 80303  
(303) 499-5024

The mission is to pursue the trail of the Anson ancestors and relatives wherever it might lead and try to understand a little about the life that they led.

*A Century of Ansons....*

*continued from page 2*

the old cabin and this house. Lots of folks camped here when I was a boy, because we had a good well that was walled up with rocks and this was a good camping place.

"The old trail, that later became a road, went on east from here. On [One] road turned north from it where Island City now stands, and went to the Summerville country and over the mountains by way of Ruckle [Ruckel]. About three miles east of Island City another road turned north down the Sand Ridge to connect with the old Walla Walla Trail and the trail to Wallawa.

"The old flour mill at Island City was built, I think before I was born, by a man of the name Sterling. John Cavinass [Caviness?] was in the mill with him, but I am not sure if he helped built it or not. It was the only building there at the time I first remember. Later Charles Goodnaugh ran a store for quite a while, and I think he built the first house; then McClean, Whitehead, Church, Fred Holms, Cavinass [Caviness?]. Tap Thomas had the first blacksmith shop. Mr. Bear ran a hotel soon after the mill was built. It was a two story, wooden building about 50 x 150 feet and probably had 25 rooms. Mr. Lindsay had a dance hall that was built about the same time. Both buildings burned down after some ten years.

"Island City got its name from the location. On the old Caveness [Caviness?] place about 1 1/2 miles above town the river forked. The main river, and the only water in the dry season, went south of Island City and our place. During high water there were sloughs and wet weather channels north of us. The country between was covered with brush and most of it was subject to overflow. Our own place, only, had about forty acres that the water did not come over. The island between the river and the sloughs to the north was about seven miles long and a little more than a mile wide at the widest part. At the lower east end

the water again went into one channel.

"When the railroad built into La Grande they had to straighten the river to keep the water from the depot and yards. When the road was built to Elgin they extended the drainage to keep the water away from Island City. The present channel of the river is the old railroad drain ditch, washed out to become the main river channel. The old river to the south has filled in to become just sloughs and strips of brush.

"When I was a boy, father was the biggest horse raiser around here. He had 1500 horses and owned 800 acres on Whisky Creek up the Grande Ronde and ran his horses in that county during the range season. He had an unusual way of telling the ages of his range horses, in that he used three different brands. Each year he would brand the colts with a different brand.

"One of my early jobs was riding range. Our horses would go over on the Umatilla side and we had to gather them up. I became well acquainted with an old squaw, who we all called "Old Lady Long Hair," because she wore her hair in long braids that reached nearly to her knees. Her cabin was south of Deadman's Pass, down in the deep canyon. I used to visit her at her cabin, and have stayed over night at her place.

"One year we had about 40 of her horses in our band when we brought them in to feed. We sent her word that we had them and for her not to worry about them as we had plenty of feed and were taking care of them. That was the last time we had to do much riding on the Umatilla side. She always had her riders bring our horses in and would keep them for us. She kept us informed as to where they were. She died before many years."

In visiting with Indian friends I have learned that this fine old Indian lady was known by them as "Lucy Long Braids," and is the ancestor of one of the accomplished musicians who appeared on an Indian Festival of Arts program in La Grande.

"In 1886, when I was 14 years old, I went to the Snake River country for several years and pastured our horses on the hills there. While there I rode range for over a year on one side of the canyon and a girl about my age rode on the other side of the canyon. We ate our lunch across from each other, but never spoke to each other. It was 1 1/2 miles to where she was. Her father was crippled and could not ride well. He would sit out on a point with a big spyglass and watch her and the stock.

"One day I shot a deer. She heard the gun and I waved to her to come over. She had to ride seven miles to get across to where I was. Her father came with her and we visited all night. I offered them some meat. They did not want to take half of it, but I told them that they could throw it away as I could not use all of it. Her father said they would take it and not throw it away, as he would salt it down. She was a pretty woman and seemed like a wonderful person. It was 30 years before I ever talked to her again. She was in Baker and that was the last time I ever saw her."

Orlin Anson, near his nineteenth [ninetieth] birthday got his heavy cap and cane and we walked to see the old cabin where he was born. It showed the many years but stood straight and solid; used as a place to store blacksmith irons and various items. The old man pointed to the building so dear to him with his cane and said, "I think it will last out the hundred years." It did. It burned in 1966.

Inside the building I remarked that is [it] had been reroofed.

He said, "No that is the same old roof."

I protested, "Those rafters and sheeting show circular saw marks. They had no circular saw mills here when it was built.

The old man grinned and said, "Oh, I see what you mean. It was built before I was born, but what I was told will explain. My uncles were handy at



*A Century of Ansons...*

*Continued from page 3*

finding ways to do things. They got hold of a small circle saw, put it on a shaft with a heavy fly-wheel, fixed a crank on the end of the shaft so they could turn it by hand. They would get the saw going fast and then slide a log up into the saw, then back off to get up speed and push it in again. The[y] thought this was easier than using a whipsaw to make lumber."

I felt sure the old man was relating what had actually happened a century before. The circular marks looked like it.

The following is a record of Joseph Anson's five children:

**MINNIE ELLA ANSON** (eldest child) born to Joseph and Amelia Anson Sept. 18, 1866 near Island City. Married Charles Probasco Jan. 21, 1890. Two children were born to them; George Probasco, a business man of Reno, Nevada; Nellie Probasco (Handcock), a housewife of Whittier, Calif. Charles and Minnie first settled at Pomeroy, Wash., later going to Pendleton and then to California where he died in Lone Pine. Minnie remarried Ed Dunn at Long Beach. They then moved to San Jose where she died Sept. 11, 1922.

**NUWELL [NEWELL] HENRY ANSON** was born Jan. 26, 1868 near Island City and married Sarah Jane Conrad April 22, 1891. Five children were born to them: Joseph Edward Anson married to Edna Keiltz [Keltz] and farming in the Grande Ronde Valley. Stella married to Leslie Haller—She passed away on Jan. 8, 1955. Cecile married Alvah Dodson and is living in Medford, Ore. Jesse Roy is presently living in Hermiston, Ore. Charles is also living in Hermiston. Nuwell [Newell] and Sarah lived in the Grande Ronde Valley all their lives. They engaged in farming, stock raising, after retiring he owned and operated a grocery in South La Grande. He was injured in a car accident and died July 29, 1920.

**NELLIE ELIZA ANSON** was born Nov. 21, 1869, married A. P. Stubblefield Dec. 25, 1892, and had three children: Minnie passed away as a small child; Grace married John McVan and is living in San Jose, Ca. Lorena married Maplon Fales and lives in Santa Cruz, Calif. Nellie and Mr. Stubblefield lived in Idaho for a while and several different places in Oregon, finally locating in California where she passed away in San Jose, Nov. 19, 1962.

**JOSEPH ORLIN ANSON** was born July 17, 1972 [1872] and married Mabel McMurry Nov. 28, 1901. They were the parents of two children: Delbert M. Anson lives in Hermiston, Ore. Claude W. Anson and his family live in the Grande Ronde Valley. Orlin, a farmer and stock raiser spent his entire life on the place where he was born and died, Oct. 14, 1963.

**JAMES GRANVILLE ANSON** was born Feb. 16, 1874, married Ethel Ragain in 1897. They had one child, Lloyd W. Anson who lives in San Jose, Calif. James was engaged in farming and stock raising and lived all his life in Union County. He passed away Sept. 25, 1951.

*Anson Family in Valley.....*

*Continued from page 1*

on his fathers homestead in July, 1872. He married Mabel, daughter of Marion and Olive McMurry, on Nov. 28, 1901, and to this union two sons were born: Claude, who farms the original homestead along with his own land, and Delbert who now operates a livestock sales yard in Hermiston. Orlin resided in the valley throughout his lifetime, and like his father, lived to an advanced age. He was 91 when he passed away in October 1963.

Mabel Anson, surviving widow of Orlin, was born in Nebraska. She moved to the valley with her family in 1900 and married the following year. In addition to her two sons, she has four grandchildren and six great grand-

children. Two sisters live in LaGrande, Mrs. Hattie Kelly and Mrs. Tressie Colver. In the 65 years she has lived here she has been and remains active and interested in community affairs. Membership is held in the Island City Ladies Aid, the Frances Brown Auxiliary, the First Methodist Church and its womens society, and the Crystal Rebekah Lodge.

Another member of the sturdy Anson family, Joseph E. Anson grandson of Joseph, Sr., and son of Newell, continues actively engaged in farming on his property on Rte. 2, La Grande.

*(Newspaper clipping. Location of original clipping unknown, copy possessed by Claude Anson. Newspaper is probably the La Grande Observer because that was the main newspaper in the Grand Ron de Valley. Date is after Orlin's death and before Mabel's, Hattie Kelley's and Tressie Colver's death and 65 years since Mabel moved to valley and after four grand children's birth and six great grandchildren's birth.)*

**OLD LOG CABIN ERECTED DURING CIVIL WAR STILL STANDS TODAY**

*(SEE PHOTO AT END OF NEWSLETTER)*

A cabin which was in its initial stages in 1863, during the Civil War, still stands today as the oldest existing building in the county—and without doubt, one of the oldest in the entire state.

Its owner, 88-year-old Joseph Orlin (Joe) Anson, was born in the roughly hewn structure near Island City and has spent most of his life in a house almost as old, only about 100 yards from its location.

Begun by two of Anson's uncles, work on the cabin was completed in 1865. The uncles then decided to move to the East and Joe's father, Jo-

seph Sr., bought the cabin as a home for his family.

"There were five of us kids born in that little cabin," Joe recalls.

#### House Was Built

But in 1883, when the cabin became too small for comfortable living, Joe Sr. built the house in which Anson now resides with his wife, and converted the cabin into a granary.

It was used for that purposed until just four years ago when Anson suffered a stroke and sold his 64 head of cattle. I planned to buy more after I got better but my wife said we didn't need them and I just never got around to it," Anson remarked.

Except for nine years, when the family moved into the Snake River Region, Joe has spent his entire life in Union County.

At 29, he was married and when he was 31, he and his wife moved into the original house which they still occupy.

Joe recalls that an old trail ran between the house and the original cabin when he was a boy, and he remembers watching Indians ride through. The trail, now called the Black Hawk Trail, was well-known for its camping advantages because his father had a good well, Joe declared.

#### Spring Floods

Anson also recalled when the river flowed south of the home and spring floods overflowed all but about 40 acres of the property creating a small island on his father's land.

Most of the year a wet weather channel ran north of the homestead creating an island about seven miles long to the point where it met the main river again. This island came to be known as Island City as a result.

Since that time, however, the building of the railroad in LaGrande caused a need to divert the river from its natural path and there are no longer floods running over the land in the spring.

Other changes have come about also, but amid them all, the old cabin still stands. Beaten by heavy winters and long years, the cabin remains as one of the few vestiges of the real Old West.

*(La Grande Observer Union County Centennial issue, Friday, February, 24, 1961, page B-10)*

#### Anson and Miller Farms.....

*.....continued from page 1*

first in the western part of Oregon before settling on the Union property. Two of the original buildings on the farm are still in use: the barn, which was put together with wooden pegs and has the sheeting nailed with square nails, and the structure now used as a shop.

These farms are the first from Union County to qualify for Century Farm honors since the program was established in 1958 by the Department of Agriculture and the Oregon Historical Society.

Two other Eastern Oregon counties, Grant and Umatilla, also have Century Farms this year. The one in Umatilla County is owned by Mr. and Mrs. James E. Lieuellen, Sr. of Weston, which was settled in 1864 by William Lieuellen. The Grant County farm is owned by Virgil Belshaw and was settled by Charles Belshaw in the year 1864.

Owners of these century farms will be honored Aug. 31 at a special program at the Oregon State Fair, and be presented their Century Farm Certificates by Gov. Mark O. Hatfield.

*(Newspaper clipping possessed by Claude Anson as of July 1999. Newspaper probably was The La Grande Observer. Article is undated, but date would have been 1965 from reference in article.)*

## JOSEPH ANSON, SR. of Grand Ronde Valley, Oregon

*Prepared for*

*The Anson Family Reunion  
LaGrande, Oregon, June 17,  
1979*

*By George Anson Probasco*

Most of those who read this will be descendants of Joseph Anson, Sr., who was born the 16<sup>th</sup> of August, 1837, at Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, England, his parents being George Anson and Margaret Anson, formerly Dinning. Because George Anson, member of a titled family, had married outside of the autocracy, to an uneducated commoner girl who could only sign her name with an "x", he was ostracized by his family. Under English laws, the eldest brother of a family controlled the family income and doled out to his younger brothers or sisters whatever he saw fit. Thus, George Anson was cut off entirely from his income, and not having been educated for any remunerative profession to which he might have been mentally capable of fulfilling, it was necessary for him to accept a job as a steel toy finisher.

According to Mary Anson, of London, England, who married her distant cousin who was probably the son of one of Joseph Anson, Sr.'s brothers who settled in Texas, and who returned to England, George Anson did not leave England because of the English inheritance laws, but because of the fact that his oldest brother, the Earl, believed he married the wrong girl, and if anything, the older brother probably furnished funds to provide for their immigration to the United States which event took place in 1845 when our Joseph Anson, Sr. was 11 years of age.

Incidentally, Mary Anson was the best source of the Anson family history



that I have known. She escorted me to the British Naval Museum and secured permission for me to read the original log book of George Lord Anson on his trip around the world; also to the General Registry office where I could review birth records and secure certified copies of same if I so desired, etc. She also arranged for me to meet our distant cousin, the present Earl of Litchfield, Patrick Lord Anson, and have him as my guest for dinner at the Savoy Hotel. From his mother's side of the family, he is a cousin of the Queen and is her favorite photographer.

We discussed some of the Anson family history and Shugborough, where I had previously inspected the 39 rooms which were being improved to make a residence for his sister, Lady Elizabeth and himself, to be retained by them after the property was turned over to the British National Trust. He told me of his earlier life, and of his business ambitions for a chain of restaurants in the British Isles, a haberdashery in New York, and other possible businesses in the Bahamas. He was very cordial, and certainly exhibited none of the egotism that some of his titled ancestors were supposed to have possessed. Regretfully, Mary Anson has now passed to her final reward.

After a rough six weeks sailing the Atlantic, through almost constant storms, during which several others on ship died, the George Anson family first settled in Baltimore, Maryland, and then after a short time moved to Newark, New Jersey, and after another six months moved to Medina, Ohio, remaining there for six years, and then moved to Quasqueton, Iowa, where they remained, and acquired a 125 acre farm with a home surrounded by a fine grove and orchard. During these years, George Anson was occupied both as a gunsmith and a silversmith. The fine metal dust developed by this occupation eventually adversely affected his lungs, and made him an invalid.

Joseph Anson, Sr. was one of 16 children born to Margaret Dinning Anson, Three of whom died in childbirth. Unquestionably, Margaret Dinning Anson was a resourceful woman of tremendous courage, strength of character and mental ability, or she could not have coped with or survived under the stress of the responsibilities occasioned by this large family and an invalid husband. Incidentally, when given the opportunity, she had rapidly acquired an education.

Although Joseph Anson, Sr. is to many of you a great, great grandfather, to me he is my grandfather, and I may refer to him as such herein. I regret that I have very little information on his brothers and sisters, so I must leave the recording of their history to others.

At Quasqueton he worked hard during the summers and whenever possible in order to be able to assist, and to attend school through the winter months, and thus he secured what was considered a very good education for those days.

Grandfather Joseph Anson was a courageous man who, like earlier generations of the Anson family, fought for what he believed in, and with a strong heart faced what most people would have considered insurmountable conditions. Although not a native American, he believed in the cause of the North in the Civil War—and at a time when enlistments for 90 days were being taken, he joined the Fifth Iowa Infantry in his 24<sup>th</sup> year—and although severely injured on three occasions, he carried on to the end of the war, having served in the battles of Corinth, Iuka, Vicksburg, Missionary Ridge and the Atlanta campaign, after which he was transferred to the Fifth Iowa Cavalry and was in the Tennessee campaign with Wilson's Cavalry Corps where he served until the end of the war, when he was mustered out with an honorable and excellent record on August 29, 1865.

He then returned to his old home in Iowa, where on November 30, 1865, he married a brave and determined young lady—Amelia B. Newell—and the two of them, with an ox team and wagon, headed westward on a trip of many months' duration, fraught [fraught] with the numerous perils and extreme hardships of such travel in those days—which only the bravest would attempt and only the hardiest could survive—finally arriving in the Grand Ronde Valley, Oregon, near where Island City now stands, their ox cart being drawn during the final days of the trip by their one surviving ox and a saddle horse hooked up together. Here he acquired the ranch and log cabin of his brother George, who had preceded him some years before.

He also took up a homestead on land adjoining the George Anson property, and later purchased additional adjoining acreage. At first he tried general farming, which was quite difficult. Much of the land was covered with trees which first had to be cut down and the stumps removed before the land could be cultivated. After a few years of this, as he was able to build up his herd of cattle, he devoted his efforts almost entirely to stock raising which he continued until he retired at the age of 70.

Grandmother Amelia Anson, who was unquestionably a person of strong will and very fine character, set to work to build a home and a family, no doubt suffering hardships that few of us could even conceive today. My mother, Minnie Ella, was the first of five children born to this fine lady—who, in my mother's 7<sup>th</sup> year, suffering from the complete lack of medical care in that wild country, died a few days after the birth of her fifth child at the age of 30, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, 1874. The children born in the old log cabin to Joseph and Amelia Anson were the following, all of whom are

.....Continued on page 8

The following three biographies are from "History of Union and Wallowa Counties" published in 1902. The book is in the La Grande Public Library.

## Joseph Anson      Newell H. Anson      James G. Anson

Across the waters of the Atlantic came the subject of this sketch to make for himself a home and a name in the foster land of his choice. Here he has done nobly in the endeavors of his life, and while he has demonstrated an ability that is commendable in the affairs of business, and uprightness and integrity in all of his ways, he has also shown in an emphatic manner his love for his country, by taking up the weapons of warfare to defend the flag and preserve intact the Union, when the dark days of fratricidal strife seemed to be portending the destruction of Freedom's institutions. At such a crisis our subject came to the front and joined his hand to the many who stood faithfully through the long struggle for principles of government and stability.

Joseph Anson was born in Staffordshire, England, on August 15, 1837, and ten years later in company with his parents, he crossed the deep and settled in Baltimore, Maryland. From there the family went to Newark, New Jersey, whence, six months later, they went to Medina, Ohio. In these various places our subject attended the schools and gained a good education. In 1856 they went to Quasqueton, Iowa, and there he continued the educational discipline for some years longer, working during the summers. At the beginning of the war he was stirred to action and was among the first to offer his services in the Civil war, enlisting in Company E, Fifth Iowa Infantry. For a time he was under General Pope, and he did service at the siege of Corinth; was in the battle

.....Continued on page 8

Among the younger men of Union county who are rising to take the places that are being vacated by the worthy pioneers who are going one by one to the "bourne whence no traveler returns," mention must be made of the industrious vigorous agriculturist and stockman whose name is placed at the head of this article, since he has demonstrated in personal endeavor the qualities of which he is composed to be those of stanch and sturdy grain and of a very high order, while also his moral attributes are quite commensurate with his commendable record in achievement in the county.

On the old parental homestead near Island City, on January 26, 1868, the subject of this sketch first saw light. He was reared among the surroundings that pertain to a frontier home, receiving a good common-school education from the schools of the time, spending the summers in vigorous exercise on his father's farm and the winters in the pursuit of wisdom. This continued until he had arrived at the age of nineteen, and then he stepped from his seat in the family circle and girded himself for the duties of life on his own account. He first started to herd stock in the mountains, and for ten years he steadily pursued this weary and dangerous occupation, thus demonstrating his tenacity and perseverance in accomplishing his start. This was practically his start in life, for from the proceeds of this service he was enabled to purchase a farm of one hundred and sixty acres. In 1890 he took a pre-emption claim and added that to his

.....Continued on page 8

Enterprising, industrious and capable, the young man of whom we now have the pleasure to speak is eminently worthy of a place in the history of Union county, since he has shown in the years in which he has striven here that he is made of material which is bound to win success and since he has also shown that he is possessed of a sagacity and energy that is capable of grappling with the problems of life that are to be met with here in his native place. And especially is it pleasant to recount the career of one who has been born in the county and has here spent his life, gaining here also his prestige and accumulating his holdings within its precincts.

James G. is the son of Joseph Anson and was born in Island City on the old parental homestead on February 16, 1875. The common schools furnished the educational training that he received, which he gained in the winters, his summers being spent in assisting his father on the latter's farm. This continued until he had arrived at his eighteenth year, then he spent two years more working his father's farm and in herding. He rented his father's cattle, one hundred and twenty-five in number, and for four years he gave himself to the attention of them and then he had gained fifty for himself. At this critical time an unknown disease swept away many of the cattle of the county and our subject sold his fifty for twenty dollars per head and invested the proceeds in land, where he now lives. He owns there one quarter-section and for this he paid two

....Continued on page 8



**Joseph Anson.....**

*.....Continued from page 7*

of Iuka, then went to the Vicksburg camps, fought in the battle of Missionary Ridge, and was in the Atlanta campaign. He was transferred to the Fifth Iowa Cavalry and sent to Louisville to remount. Following this he was in Tennessee in the campaign under General Wilson, known as Wilson's Cavalry Corps, and here he did service until the close of the war. Being mustered out with an honorable and excellent record, he returned to Iowa, whence he soon came to Union county, Oregon, making the entire trip with the oxen teams of the day. He had a brother in this county, who had made the trip in 1862, and was one of the earliest pioneers of our county. Our subject at once took a homestead, and began general farming and stock-raising. He added eighty acres to his home place, and in 1872 turned his attention mainly to stock. He was numbered with the leading stockmen of the county until three years since, when he sold the bands and herds, and retained only enough to handle his estate successfully.

In October, 1865, Mr. Anson married Miss Amelia B., daughter of John Newell, and to them have been born five children, as follows: Minnie, Newell, Nellie, J. Orlin and James. All of the children are married, three living in Union county, one in California and one in Lake View, Oregon. In political matters Mr. Anson is allied with the Republicans, and he has always taken the part of a good citizen in the affairs of government. Fraternally he is affiliated with the I.O.O.F., having passed all the chairs and now holds the position of district deputy patriarch. In 1872 Mrs. Anson passed from the labors of life and the loved ones of her home.

In March 1900, Mr. Anson contracted a second marriage, the lady of his choice being Mrs. Annie G. Sparks, of Pendleton. Mr. Anson is esteemed

by all who know him, and has made a record of worthy achievement and upright demeanor, ever manifesting unswerving integrity and sound principles.

*Source: Page 311 of An Illustrated History of Union and Wallowa Counties published by the Western Historical Publishing Company in 1902. The book is in the LaGrande public library.*

**Newell Anson.....**

*.....Continued from page 7*

real estate holdings, thus making one half section of land owned by him in the Rock creek country. In 1897 he was in shape to purchase another quarter, half of which was wild land; all this he put in cultivation, and his estate is utilized to raise grain and hay for his stock. He has now lumber on the ground for the erection of a good dwelling, and is also putting out an orchard. Thus is seen that our subject has had a worthy part in the development of the county and in materially adding to its wealth and improvements.

In 1891 Mr. Anson married Miss Sarah J., daughter of James C. and Amanda (Rutledge [Ruttledge]) Conrad, and to them have been born the following offspring: Joseph E., Stella C., Cecil E. and Jesse R. Mrs. Anson was born in Perry county, Missouri, in 1871, and came west with her parents in 1889, settling in Island City after they had spent some time in Wallowa county. Mr. Anson is actively interested in politics and is allied with the Republican party, ever showing a marked interest in local matters and school affairs. While still a young man, the subject of this sketch has demonstrated what skill, pluck and perseverance can do in this excellent country, and his work is eminently successful, while he is admired by all.

*Source: Page 404 of An Illustrated History of Union and Wallowa Counties published by the Western Historical Publishing Company in 1902. The book is in the LaGrande public library.*

**James Anson.....**

*.....Continued from page 7*

thousand, six hundred and sixty dollars, and in 1899 he settled upon it and took up the life of the agriculturist. He handles some stock, having a small herd of dairy cows and other stock as the farm demands. His farm is mostly given to small grain, and he has also a good orchard and comfortable improvements.

In 1897 Mr. Anson married Miss Ethel, daughter of William S. and Malissa M. (Hedgecock) Ragain, and they have become the parents of one child, William Lloyd Anson, born November 13, 1899. Mrs. Anson was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1878, and the family removed to White Hill, where she was educated. Mr. Anson is active and interested in the local affairs of the county and as becomes the intelligent citizen he is ever ready to take his part in the political questions of the day, being allied with the Republican party. Mr. and Mrs. Anson are highly esteemed and respected members of society and are worthy residents of our county, where they make a valuable addition to her population.

*Source: Page 400 of An Illustrated History of Union and Wallowa Counties published by the Western Historical Publishing Company in 1902. The book is in the LaGrande public library.*

**Joseph Anson, Sr by Probasco.....**

*.....Continued from page 6*

now deceased:

**Minnie Ella Anson**

Born September 13, 1866  
Married Charles Probasco  
.....January 21, 1890  
Died September 11, 1952

**Newell Henry Anson**

Born January 26, 1868





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