

BUCK HERMANN

July 15, 2005

Interviewed by Micheal Minthorn

Transcribed by Ryan Shearer

Transcription revised by Paula Helten (11/16/2011)

I: That's okay, you can say it. So, let's try again, and go ahead and include your nickname.

BH: My name is Lawrence William Hermann, better known as Buck. And I was born May the 9th, 1918, in Hester, Missouri.

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I: So, is that how you would fix that if you made that sort of mistake, you would just have to keep heating the container that it was in, the liquefied--

BH: Well, I'd just-- thing, or...?

I: thing, or was there a better way to--?

[phone rings - recording clicks - no interruption]

I: So, we were talking about the wrong-- the wrong fuel being put in the container, and that that might work for awhile. But if it didn't, what did you have to do to a--?

BH: In warmer weather, if you put flemmis oil into a space heater instead of stove oil, it would probably work all right, but it smoked up. It was heavier oil, and it caused a regular space heater type stove to soot up. And it wouldn't burn good, it wouldn't heat good. And if we made that mistake, if we put too much in there, we would have to go pump it out. That seldom ever happened, but a rare occasion did we make a mistake like that.

I: Did you have a-- did you have any major clients that represented a major portion of your income business? Did you have any big clients like that?

BH: Well, now the biggest client I think I-- I had probably was the old

Foley Hotel. They heated that building which is now gone. It was across the street from the Foley Annex there. The Foley Hotel, I think, was right in there where the phone company's at now. And they had that building there with oil. And I had that account. That was about the time when they built the armory down there, and I had-- I had that account down there when they was building up and heating up. And so was a lot of-- lot of logging accounts I had then. Later on with the oil company out here we had a good logging account business, M & R Logging Company and such as that. Why-- but-- as I recall right now that was our major accounts. I think-- I think probably the Foley Hotel was the biggest.

I: Now, it went from-- my notes show that we went from Fletcher Oil to Signal Oil. Was that the company that you owned, the Signal Oil? I'm looking at my notes for it.

BH: Mm-hmm, that's good, but no, I didn't own it. During the war, after I left Fletcher, they-- they put me in 4-F and I didn't get into the service. So, I followed construction work. I'd already quit my job with Fletcher, and I followed construction work. And we worked on _____ light and electric. And then we went down, worked summer doing work out here at the airport. I started drivin' trucks for I think Squeak Albano Trucking Company, I believe was the guy's name. And it was-- I followed them around on construction work for several years. And then for two years I--

LH: [Lenna Hermann]. About two years.

BH: and then we quit that. I worked on-- when they started that when they was building Hanford over here, and we moved trucks in there. And I worked there for awhile, and then I quit and went to-- into the woods and doin' some logging. And then I was logging over out of Spray, Oregon, and my brother Bud was running the service station here. And it was a Signal station and he called over there one time and says, "If you wanna get back in the oil business, why, I think that we can take over this station. I'll run the station, and you can run the wholesale plant." And that was-- at that point in time was when I went into the heating oil business with little _____.

I: About when was that?

BH: Oh, it had been about '44.

LH: '45.

BH: '45, or around in there. I think that would have been about right.

I: Now was this doing basically the same things that you'd done with Fletcher?

BH: Same things.

I: Except the issue to think that there was a gas station attached to it as well, or fuel station?

BH: Well, it was a fuel station. At that time it was on the corner of where Lackey's Realtor office is, right by the underpass there. And the street from Jefferson, come between the service station and the underpass. That was before they widened that underpass. And then we had the Signal station out on the highway there right where Klondike is at now. They have a service station-- they put a service station out there where the _____ plant was. Do you need that there?

I: Now you say your brother ran the service station, and you ran the business.

BH: The oil business, wholesale.

I: And what did that-- what did that involve? Is that basically what we've already talked about where you processed and moved it out to where it needed to go?

BH: Same type of operation, different company, but still it was a commissioned operation. And we worked strictly on commission. If you didn't sell any oil, you didn't make any money. You paid your own operating expenses. You owned your-- you owned all of your own equipment, trucks and-- we had two trucks. I had a little pickup and a delivery truck.

I: What would have been the lure or the advantage to doing that?

BH: Well, it was a job makin' a livin', putting bird seed on the table.

I: Well, I guess-- was it-- was it better, like to be your own boss than to work for somebody else? Was-- I'm just wondering if there was an advantage that made you say, "This was what we need to do." when you took it over?

BH: Well, you were in business for yourself the same as these oil distributors are in business. Lynn Anderson was with Union. Jake Zarrod was with 76, I think. Carl Erickson was a Shell distributor then. And it was-- it was the difference between working for somebody else and working for yourself.

I: Okay.

BH: And you work for somebody else you put in your eight hours. And if you were a good employee, why, you'd give a little extra and kept a better job. But if you was on your own, the harder you worked the more money you made. Or digging deeper in debt it seemed like.

I: I know what you mean, yeah.

BH: But very little time I-- I spent some time in the woods and driving truck during the war. But most of the rest of the time I've been in business for myself one way or the other all the way through.

I: So when it was Fletcher and then later when it was Signal, did you have competitors in the immediate area?

BH: Oh yeah, yeah, we had Dennis Lee. We-- we had --oh, we had Shell, and we had Texaco, and we had the Union Oil Company, and we had 76 out on the highway there.

LH: Standard.

BH: And Standard Oil. And when we first went into that business, they didn't have no tanks or anything. All of the oil that we sold through the Signal station, I had to pick it up with my own truck over at the Standard Oil Plant from Miles Smith. He was the distributor then. And then after he left, why, Dick Spout was the distributor there.

I: So did you all buy your same basic stuff from the same spot?

BH: Well, Signal did, and the rest of them had their own tanks. But Signal-- we didn't have our own tanks so we had to buy 'em out. And Signal Oil Company was owned by Standard Oil. The ownership of Standard-- it was owned once by Standard of Jersey and Standard of Delaware, and various Standard Oil branches owned Signal Oil Company. I don't recall for sure just what they were.

I: Okay. What was the-- what was the catalyst that next brought you into the trailer business from oil? How did that happen?

BH: We were, for a number of years through the service station, we was U-Haul's distributor. And U-Haul Company went into renting. Of course, they rent all kinds of trailers and trucks now. And they took on renting vacation trailers at that time, and they had fifteen-foot Allure vacation trailers that they rented. And we-- it wasn't successful because they rented 'em through their U-haul dealers at various stations. And the dealers was either using them themselves on weekends or lettin' 'em freeze up and not take care of them. So U-Haul Company seen that that was not a good venture. So they went out of business with that, and they sold the trailers to any of their dealers that wanted to buy 'em. And we bought a fifteen-foot U-Haul trailer in real good shape from the U-Haul Company, a lower trailer from the U-Haul Company. And we brought it home, and we was gonna use it as a rental at the service station here to kinda help subsidize the station. And we used it one week. And we went to the coast, or went to Portland to pick it up, and we went down to the coast. We then come back, and it was rented all the time. So we decided that might be a good thing to do. So we-- on our way home we had stopped at Lloyd's Center, and they was having a trailer show there. And we met a fellow by the name of Ray Casey who was at that time a lower trailer representative for this area. And he said, "I'm looking for a dealer up there in La Grande." So after that was pretty successful, why, we bought a couple a more. And he said, "Well, you're a dealer." [chuckles]. So, when we got ready to sell them, then we had to get a bond, and get a dealer's license, and it just went from then on.

I: What is an Aloha trailer?

BH: That's a brand name that was made down at Beaverton.

I: Was that a hauling trailer, or is that a recreational trailer?

BH: Aloha is the name of the trailer company.

I: Oh, I see.

BH: The Aloha trailer was the brand of trailers that they had at that time.

I: Was it the recreational--?

BH: Recreation trailers.

I: I see. Campers, kind of that trailer?

BH: Uh-huh.

I: And these were rented out to people?

BH: They sold 'em. The factory sold 'em, and I got into selling them. But when we started the only thing that we rented then was a couple or three of those Aloha trailers.

I: All Alohas?

BH: That's the brand that we had. Later on we had-- we had a few Aladdin's. We had Jenkins, um, Motor Homes.

LH: Chip Trailers.

BH: Chip Trailers from over at Caldwell. We got into that, and then we had pickup campers from _____, uh, Sport _____, and Champion. And we had several brands.

I: Now was this a-- would this have been considered a new service or a new-- a new business sort of thing? Did-- were people routinely renting camper trailers at that time?

BH: Not-- no, they really weren't. That was-- that was just coming online at that time. In fact, we tried to get enough money from the bank to

buy the _____, as they say. The banker, a friend of ours, he warned me. He said, "Now Buck." He said, "Don't get yourself too involved in this because this trailer business is a passing fancy." Because he says, "There ain't nobody in their right mind is gonna pull a big house behind their car just to have a place to sleep when they get to the end of the road."

I: Uh-huh. [chuckles].

LH: If he could 'em all! [chuckles].

BH: And I've often wished that I-- that I had him so he can look at these seven hundred to million dollar RV's that sits down there in that desert out. And thousands of 'em out at Port _____ and all down through that southern country that we've seen, he would change his thinking about it because it never was a passing fancy. But we were right in here at the start of it. And then Bill _____, he sold Kit at the time. And we were two of the main dealers here at the time.

I: Yeah.

LH: Well, we had the biggest operation between Portland and Boise.

BH: As far as parts and sales concerned at that one time, the part's people-- we-- we'd borrow all of our parts from trailer equipment distributors out of Portland. They were out on 82nd. And they at that one time they said-- they told us that we were their largest account between Portland and Boise as far as trailer, after-market things for trailers.

I: Okay, so you-- you kind of started out with a business while you were still doing the oil business. Did you give up the oil business to do the trailer?

BH: Sold out the oil business in '69.

I: As you were picking up the trailer business.

BH: Mm-hmm.

I: Now-- so you obviously didn't-- must not have listened to this banker.

You must have sold a few trailers. So you moved from renting a trailer as a part of your fuel business to doing that full time.

LH: Yes.

I: And that was out here at Hermann Square?

BH: That's correct.

I: What was the name of that business?

BH: Hermann Trailer Sales.

I: And how long did you do that?

LH: Until in '80. That'd be _____.

I: So, from '69 to '80?

BH: Yeah, something like that.

I: Uh-huh, um--

BH: Twenty-eight-- we was dabblin' in it close to twenty-eight years altogether. But we really got in seriously then when we sold out in '69.

I: So, what was your product line that you-- trailers and--?

BH: Well, then-- trailers is a seasonal type thing. At that time they were used in the summertime. So then we started looking for something to take up the winter, and we got into the snowmobiles. And we had one or two brands of snowmobiles that didn't work. And we finally got a dealership for Arctic Cat, and we've done real well with Arctic Cat. And then to subsidize some more of the trailers in the summertime we took on motorcycles. And Roly Voss and--

LH: And boats.

BH: and he was a-- he would have been in motorcycles and so forth in

Salem. He went to work for us. Then we took on boats. We handled fiberform boats and Johnson Outboard Motors, and had a pretty well-rounded, vacation, RV business out there.

I: And so you-- you sort of worked it into a year-round business so that when this wasn't going on, there was something else that could take its place and would keep the shop going.

BH: Yeah, that's right. That's one of the reasons which started us into the snowmobile business was to have something in the wintertime. And then it developed where at one time, including myself as an employee of the corporation that we formed out there that we had ten employees out there. And our trailer business, repair business, snowmobiles-- a couple of fellows here in town, or three, still work for us out there, or four. And we had a good repair business. We had good well-rounded business.

I: So you did service and repair, and you did sales. Did you do rentals anymore?

BH: Yeah, at one time we had twenty-one rentals out including trailers and a couple of motor homes.

I: Uh-huh. Sales, service, rental and repair.

BH: Mm-hmm.

I: That sounds like a big business.

BH: Herman Trailer Sales and Rentals, Incorporated.

I: Now when you left the-- when you left the trailer business, were you already-- were you-- when did you do this politics, the running for the city council? Was that after you retired or before you retired?

BH: It was before I retired. It was still when I was in the oil business.

I: And what-- because my father has been a politician most of his older, adult life, I have to ask: What possesses one to do that? What made you want to run for City Council? Did you have a beef? Were you

just interested in contributing?

BH: Frankly, Lynn Anderson, one of the oil distributors was on the city council, and he went off of it. And he come and talk to me, and at that point in time you couldn't unload a truck and trailer in the city limits. You had to haul-- right now they can dump a truck and trailer load of gas in the city limit or wherever. At that point in time, you couldn't drop a bulk truck in the city limits. You had to drop at one of the wholesale spots. I moved that. And they were trying to put restrictions on the oil business that we didn't like, and Lynn come and talked to me about it. He says, "I think you'd oughta run." He says, "I think that the oil industry here needs someone on that city council." And I guess that's what started it. Something we figured might be able to help protect some of our volume amongst the six or seven distributors that we've got here and some of the changes that was being made.

I: Why do you-- why were the rules existing at that time that said you couldn't drop-- well, it used to be you couldn't drop bulk oil in the city limits? Why was that?

BH: Gasoline at these service stations you couldn't. They considered it a major fire hazard with a big truck and trailer with six or eight thousand gallons of gasoline on it. They figured that was more of a fire hazard than one of our trucks with a thousand gallons a dumpin' it. That was the major concern of the city council as I recall at that time. They didn't-- they didn't want-- once you start dumping, why then, the fumes from those tanks you can-- if the wind is not be still or anything you can smell those fumes down on the ground. Otherwise the wind is blowing it carries it away and back to the service station and whatever then. I don't think it was any more of a danger then than there was dumpin' a thousand gallon-- out of a thousand gallon tank, small tank. But they had to take 'em out like at Standard Oil plant and Phillips plant was out here on the highway going out of town to the east right in the _____. Oh, it's part of the Forest Service, I think. It's got that property that it was on at that time down here. And the other plants was over there on Jefferson. The Shell plant and Veltex, Texaco, and 76 was right there across from-- I think they were right across from what is Les Schwab's area on this side of the street. I think the 76 Oil Station was the one right across from that side, as I

remember.

I: So anyway, it was-- it was kind of local legislation that was the motivating factor to get you on the-- to run for the council?

BH: I suppose that was probably it at the time, one of the big factors. And maybe-- maybe it got kind of like that I knew more than some of the commissioners. [chuckles].

I: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

BH: I think that motivates a lot of people that they wanted to get in and make some changes about some rules and regulations that they don't like. And probably that was it.

I: Did you expect to get elected when you tried out?

BH: I did the first time. And pretty much-- pretty much the second time I did. The third time I didn't really care.

I: You were ready to be done?

BH: I was ready to be done. The third time that I run for four-- I think it was a four-year term then. I didn't-- I didn't do much hard politickin' because I just really didn't want it.

I: By that third time?

BH: By the third time.

I: Did you-- what do you have to do to run for office in La Grande here? Do you have to gather signatures first to get nominated? How do you get nominated to run?

BH: I don't remember. I don't know what it is now, and I don't remember for sure at that time. I think we just signed up as a candidate and went out and done our own politickin'. Went around and glad-hand people and told 'em what they could expect out of us. And hopefully we could follow through on the promises we made. I don't think politickin' then is too much different than it is now. You make a lot of

promises. Some of 'em you can keep, and some of them you find that you run into a loggerhead that you can't change. But about all any of 'em can do if they've got a better program is try for it. I think that's what we all did.

I: Now if I recall right, the mayor was not the mayor at that time. They were called the president of the city council? Either that,--

LH: Yeah, right. _____.

I: or is this the position they now call major?

BH: That's correct.

I: Uh-huh. So, you were essentially the mayor, or the president of the city council.

LH: For the last four years _____ it was-- the title was mayor.

BH: Yeah, it was. I was for the last four years. I think the first-- the first two or four years on there I wasn't. And then the last four years I was elected the president of-- I believe that's correct now.

I: Now when it was the former way, when it was the president of the city council, how do you become the president of the city council? Is that by election of the council members, or do you actually run for the president yourself?

BH: At that point in time, as I recall, it was by the council members appointed or elected the president.

I: Elected the president.

BH: Mm-hmm.

I: And what were the duties of the president of the city council, in a nutshell I guess?

BH: Just try and keep things going on an even keel. And try and help as many people as you could. And council with the rest of the

councilmen and talk about what was the best for the town and the people and try and promote it that way. Granted, it was just kind of a leadership role there. We all-- we all had a part in it. But basically you have to have a leader who called the shots and talked about what we're doing now.

I: Was it a paid position?

BH: Yeah, yeah. I think all of us got \$60 a month, and I think that's still about what they make. I don't know. No-- we got-- I think we got \$60 a month there. But I think all of the councilmen got \$60 a month. The president didn't get any more for being the president in those days.

I: So it was a part-time position, then? It wasn't a full time--

LH: No.

I: Monday through Friday--?

BH: No, no, no, it was just whenever I could take off the time from work. It cost me a lot of business in the oil business. The politics then are the same as it is now. You can't please-- please all the people any of that time. You can please of 'em part of the time, you know. So I'm sure that-- I know Lynn Anderson when he-- one of the reasons he got off the council was because it was costing him too much business. That was one of the reasons I didn't care to go on with it anymore after the eighth term. And there was other faction here that was opposed to my runnin' it and so that's just the way it was. I didn't spend any money for politickin'. I just let her go as it went. I wasn't elected after the third/fourth term, four year term which suited me fine.

I: Now, I know after you-- I don't remember if it was your first or your second term or not, but we had a major flood here in the area. Was that your first or your second term?

BH: You know, I don't--

I: It probably doesn't matter.

BH: I don't think it matters, but--

LH: _____.

I: Uh-huh.

BH: Yeah, yeah, we did have a major flood here.

I: So, tell me about that. Obviously, that brought duties upon you that you didn't expect to have to cope with.

BH: Yes, the city manager was out of town, and the city attorney was out of town. There was no management in town except me. I pray-- I guess that would have been the term when I was president of the council. And they had Corp of Engineers people here, and I know-- [throat clearing] I hauled the Corp of Engineers one of the guys around with me in the pickup day and night for two or three days there. We-- we would-- they headquartered at the courthouse. And I had a CB in my pickup, and we would go out wherever we could--
[END OF TAPE]

I: We're talking about you had a CB in your pickup when you were out looking for soft spots.

BH: Yeah, we-- this gentleman from the Corp of Engineering, I think he-- at that time I think he was out of Walla Walla. We just went from place to place wherever. But up-- I think that _____ had a meat-packing plant then that was out on Lake Street, I believe it was. But anyway the river was cuttin' in the bank there all the time, and we'd call up to the courthouse and order a bunch of big rocks dumped in there. And then we went down-- I recall one down off of May Lane back in there. Walt-- Walt Levry-- we was down there. We'd route that two or three times. And we were there at the time to see Walt's house and the whole bank crumble of it underneath of it and watched his whole house go into the river back there. He lost his house. There was no way we could save it. It was comin' right downtown. The under-- underpass was level full. And it was coming right through town. The telephone company was right in across from where the city building's at now. Right across the street in there about where Foley Station moved out, right along in there. We sandbagged the telephone

company for the purpose of communication over on Jefferson Street and out around in the alley. We had to sandbag that. I don't know how many bags of sand we hauled in there. But, it was-- it was bad. It was-- we lost about-- it come right down to Lake Street over on the other side down past the old schoolhouse over there at the end of the overpass. It was floodin' all through the-- all through the town runnin' down.

I: What caused that flood?

BH: We had a-- as I recall, we had frozen ground here. We had a real deep freeze, and the ground was all frozen. And then we had two or three feet of snow on top of it. And then, through the best of my recollection, we had a warm-up and heavy warm rain that melted the snow. And due to the fact that the ground was frozen underneath, it couldn't get away.

I: Oh.

BH: The water couldn't seep into the ground and get away, so it had to stay on top and just flood. I know of one time when I was delivering oil, and I don't-- I believe that was just prior to that. We had twenty-eight consecutive days here that it didn't get above zero. And I think that was the time. I could be mistaken on that. But that's what caused the flood. We had frozen ground that it couldn't-- that the water couldn't seep into. And then we had a big snowstorm, and then we had warm weather and rain. That was basically it.

I: How long did you end up on flood duty?

BH: Oh, I think one of the longest trips I was-- I was delivering gas and diesel out at Elgin to-- out at the sawmill out there. And I made a trip out there and back about three o'clock one morning and, I think it was three days later before I got back to bed other than sit down in a chair and take a cat-nap.

I: Mm-hmm.
[recording clicks - no interruption]

I: Was the National Guard called in for that flood as well?

BH: I don't recall. I'm sure there must have been National Guard troops here, but I think they made _____.

I: What else about that city council? Anything you-- any sort of work you did you were particularly proud of having accomplished, or any changes take place?

BH: Not really that I recall. It was pretty much a routine. I don't think there was any major-- major thing that was happening at that time. I was just kinda holdin'-- holdin' things together. I don't recall any major thing at that time.

[recording clicks - no interruption]

I: Check. This is a continuation of the oral history interview with Buck Hermann, and it is July 15th, 2005.

[recording clicks - no interruption]

I: All right, so we're going to move into the last of the major topical items that I wanted to talk about with you. And that is your involvement in snowmobiles and snowmobiling, and specifically snowmobiling in the Union County area. Tell me how you got started in the snowmobiles to begin with. Was that an extension of the trailer business?

BH: It was an extension of the trailer business, yeah. The trailer business was good in the summer time, but we needed something to put bread on the table in the winter time. So snowmobiles would-- at that time was just beginning to take a hold here. So we started dialing up and found-- finally found a dealership and got in. It was an Arctic Cat dealer and went into the business. We rented snowmobiles and raced 'em and sold 'em. We were-- and we carried a line of snowmobile clothing and boots and all of that.

I: In the store?

BH: Mm-hmm.

I: Now how do you-- how do you go about becoming a dealer? Say, you know-- you said it took a little while and you became an Arctic Cat dealer. What does it-- what does it involve becoming a dealer?

BH: I think primarily at the time-- I don't know what it is now. But at the time was find an area where there was not another dealer, and have the ability and knowledge to get a bond to go in and desire to go into sales and service of those. And basically that's what we did. We tried one or two brands that didn't work. We had to get the first one. Well, you couldn't hardly get it over a hill, but-- and we didn't try that one. We had a-- we had a Kawasaki. And finally when we were able to get the-- there was nobody happening with the Arctic Cat here in town so we acquired a dealership from the distributor over at-- he was over in Idaho, Idaho Falls. And we got the dealership there.

I: So you would actually test out a few of these brands before you became a dealer? Say-- because you said some of these snowmobiles didn't work well.

BH: We didn't test 'em out. We had a sense of being able to use 'em for free. We bought 'em. We bought one or two, and tried to ride 'em with the group around here that was riding. And we were not able to even keep up with 'em on some of them.

I: Oh. So, were you a member of the snowmobiling club in this area before you became a dealer even?

LH: Not at that time we weren't in it.

BH: No.

I: Oh, okay.

BH: It wasn't a club itself, but they were getting it started. And Fred Radko, he got in and helped. And Fred was one of the old-timers that got into the grooming program, and he was president of the club at one time. I was the president of the club for awhile.

LH: Ron Loveland was the first one.

BH: And Ron Loveland probably was the first one as I remember back. But we formed the club and it's progressed now.

I: How did you decide to form a club? Do you remember when that

was?

BH: I really don't remember when we formed the club. I know primarily we needed a club to have a better voice on what was going on in the industry. At that point in time snowmobiles was a no-no that made too much noise and was scaring all of the wildlife out of the mountains and various things like that. And the forming the club give us more or less one voice on issues that were against snowmobiling.

I: So the original reason then was to give you a little more clout with the legislation that was going on?

BH: Basically that was it, and the fun of getting together with people, just meeting people and meeting other people. It also involved sales. It helped on sales if you participated in club functions and was riding a good machine. People would come over and start inquiring about your machine and the motor and stuff like that. And this was another way of promoting sales at the store.

I: What was the name of the club?

BH: The La Grande Sno-Drifters. It still is, I guess.

I: It's still the name of the club that-- that belonged in?

BH: Mm-hmm.

I: How did you organize it? Were you the-- were you the chief mover on the organization of the club in the beginning? Did somebody else have the idea and you worked with them?

BH: I kinda-- that's pretty vague in my mind. I don't know whether some of the other fellas had got it started and we joined in to help out.

LH: I think you and Ron _____.

BH: Ron Lovely I think. And he was a teacher here and pretty avid snowmobiler. I think it just happened. [chuckles].

I: [chuckles]. Okay, okay. Well, how does that club function? Is it-- is

it chartered somewhere like with the state or the city? Is it just kind of a special-interest club that was formed then?

BH: It's a special-interest club. It's Union County, and basically they have clubs here. However, they have-- also they like ones to have a membership in the Oregon State Snowmobile Association. And the Oregon State Snowmobile Association is the prime mover of getting legislation passed for or against however they do it. And we at one time-- in fact, at one time I guess I was the fifth president of the Oregon State Snowmobile Association. I think Jim Harbornick was the first one and Ray Benson was the second. And a fella over at Bend, I don't even remember his name, was the third. I forget the name of the fourth one, and I wound up as the fifth president. And normally the presidency at that time was one year. And Don Grubb was the first one to go in, and he moved to Washington. So I was president of the Oregon State Snowmobile Association for two years, and Lenna was the secretary.

I: And what did you do as the president and secretary?

BH: Well, at that time we were quite heavily involved in legislation. The legislation down at Salem didn't want the noise level. They thought they were too noisy, and they created a problem in the mountains. And they were trying to reduce the adjustable rate down to, I believe it was eighty-three or something like that, eighty-two, eighty-three decibels. The manufacturer was having quite a problem of lowering the decibel rates, and they start mufflin' 'em down too much. And then they cut the power, and that created a problem there. And then it also was a time when they were starting a trail grooming project, program that they had. And we worked consistently on that program. I went several times to Salem to meetings and Portland to meetings fighting against trying to lower the decibel rating so low that it would kick us out of business. And there was a faction that didn't want the trails used for anything but skiing, and that was basically what was we were up against at the time.

I: So what was the outcome of the noise legislation?

BH: Well, we got the legislation to remove the noise level into an area that was compatible with the manufacturers the way they wanted 'em. As

far as I know now, I'm not up on it anymore, but I think the noise level was about what it was set at that time, and it's quite compatible. It's-- when you listen to some of these mountain bikes go by you think, "My goodness, with the noise they make the snowmobile's quiet alongside it." But with the new types of snowmobiles which I'm not up on anymore, they're water-cooled, liquid-cooled snowmobiles. And I'm sure they're running quieter than they did at that time.

I: You talked about the Secretary of State, Norma Paulus, was on this bandwagon to enact this legislation? Did you give her a ride? Did she-- did she try-- did she try it out?

LH: Her husband did, and fell off and broke his leg! [laughs].

I: Oh no!

LH: And she was-- she was Secretary of State.

BH: She wasn't at the time. She was fightin' the battle. When you say, "Did you give her a ride?"-- we-- not personally, and not the club here. However, the report came to us over here in eastern Oregon that the snowmobile club, the Mt. Hood Snowmobile Club, took her and her husband out for a ride one Sunday down there. And so that they could see the actual beauty that you can see out in the wilderness on a snowmobile and enjoy the ride and everything. And they had a groomer down showed them some groomed trails as I understood. And just basically around here is same to me. But it was told to us over here that during the ride that there was a mishap in which Norma Paulus' husband broke a leg.

LH: [chuckles].

I: Mmm.

BH: Which didn't help the cause of the snowmobile people at that time.

I: Yeah.

BH: But frankly, that came to us by a rumor, and I presume that that actually happened down there.

- I: Uh-huh, tell me what a groomer is. What's a groomer?
- BH: Oh, it's a big bulldozer pulling a land-leveling type of machine that rolls down and pushes the snow ahead. And grooms it and packs it so that you don't ride snow moguls and beat your machine all to pieces. And you can ride more or less like a highway. We have groomed trails all over. At that point in time when we-- when we were in charge of the operation, I think there were eight licensed groomers in the state that the Oregon State Snowmobile Association had to write the contracts. We took the writing of the contracts from the Fish and Wildlife Service or the Oregon Highway Service, and took 'em over. They were charging 27% of our money for administrative costs, and we done it for about 3%. We took care of it, and wrote out the grooming contracts. I think at that time was eight-- eight groomers was in operation. And to my knowledge now, I understand there's about twenty-five or twenty-eight groomers in operation . And they have gone mostly into the big Tucker machines. And we were into it, those big Tucker machines were seventy-five, eighty-thousand dollar machines, and they were all purchased out of the gas tax money from the snowmobiles and the licensing of snowmobiles. There was never any tax money of the people used for the snowmobile industry's expenditures at all for anything.
- I: So the Tucker machine you're talking about, that's actually a grooming machine?
- BH: It's a big grooming machine, and it's built down-- as far as I recall it's built in Medford, Oregon.
- I: Now when did they start having groomers at all? Did they have groomers when you entered the business and started selling snowmobiles?
- BH: Not as such when we first started. They were start-- starting up. Arctic Cat come up with a small one that when it come right down to it, about all it would groom would be your driveway, your garage to your house. It was a small groomer with about a thirty-two inch blade on it or something like that. We had one here and tried it out. But it-- then they started developing Idaho, Idaho Special. They had a machine I think called Idaho Special. We went to McCall, Idaho one

time. Lenna and I went over there to a grooming seminar, and they had two or three or four different groomers that people were trying to sell to the industry. But it all boiled down to the best machine they could get was the one built down here at Medford.

I: I guess what I mean is, were people grooming trails themselves when you first got started? Did they have people who were designated to groom trails?

BH: No. When we first got started, you rode the trail. And you rode the snowmobiles up and down, and you'd bounce in and out of those holes. And it was hard on bodies and machines.

I: So people were grooming basically themselves in the beginning?

BH: That's right, they were grooming themselves. They were just riding over all the rough snow, and in and out. If they got in too deep of snow, why, you got stuck and had to work your machine out of it, and drop a trailer around and get it back on top of the snow.

I: So are you responsible for the opening or grooming of any trails here in Union County?

BH: I don't know. We have, along with Fred Zackel and Pam Woo and myself, we were active in snowmobiling. And I don't know if you would say we were responsible for it. That we got an area where a lot of people like to ride, then we would try and get out and groom the trails and open up the trail for 'em. We had trails, and I don't even know what they've got out here around here now. We'd groom trails at Ladd Canyon. We groomed trails up that way. We went out all up to the highway between here and Ukiah. And highway number fifty I think or back in there. We groomed back through there, and we could ride through that area. But they started out-- now I understand there's groomed trails clear across the top here and then Mt. Emily. We just groomed some trails off the Mt. Emily Road at that time. Primarily, they were in the Union, Eagle Creek area and grooming over that way towards Cove. At that point in time, Boulder Park Resort was over there and had groomed trails down there.

I: Do we have-- do we have paid groomers in Union County to take care

of these trails, or is it still something the club kinda kicks in to help make happen?

BH: It's a club with all volunteer work, and there always has been as far as I know, and there still is. The machines are bought and paid for by the Oregon State Snowmobile Association, or they used to be at that time. And then wherever a groomer come up with the greatest needs, that's where they would start placing the groomer for 'em. And then it was the club's responsibility to take care of the maintenance, take care of basically everything and volunteer drivers and all.

I: But the grooming machines--?

BH: The grooming and everything. And it was more or less up to the clubs to decide which trail they should groom this week. Because if they were having a big ride like you've seen in pictures here where we had a ride up toward Anthony Lake when Pat Wilkins was up here, or TV companies sent, we had pretty much a groomed trail. If we had an event such as that, they would take and go out and groom that trail out through that area.

I: How would the State Association get a grooming machine over to you to-- did they store these in Salem, or--? How did the machine actually get to the trail you needed to-- you needed it at? Where did they come from?

BH: Well, as I recall they were hauled in on a State-- they might have been hauled in on a State truck and trailer. The grooming club has to furnish, at that time had to furnish their own machine. We-- we had a-- we bought a one-ton Dodge truck with the club here. We promoted a deal. I can recall the club didn't have any money, and this fellow wanted five thousand dollars for the truck. I located, I think it was, oh, about eight or ten guys in the club that would put up five hundred dollars apiece, and he took that. I think we rustled up about twenty-five hundred and paid him down on it. And then we started a wood-cutting project, and we cut wood and sold wood and paid for the whole business. And paid the original snowmobilers that put in the five hundred dollars, they all got paid back. But they would-- we-- we sold wood all over town for awhile that one winter to help out.

I: To raise money for the--?

BH: And then we got a hold of a trailer and bought it basically the same way. But as far as moving and man _____ it, I don't know. These new ones, no doubt, are delivered by a trucker company. I would assume so.

I: What are your favorite trails to ride on here in Union County?

BH: Oh, I think-- 'course we haven't ridden on a trail since '80, I think it was. '79 or '80 was the last time that we were on a snowmobile. But I-- mostly I favored riding-- was from Ladd Canyon up to Anthony Lakes, through there. And then we'd go to Anthony Lakes and go clear down on the North Fork over there to the campground on the North Fork campground and back. That made a nice ride. And then we'd go out to Ukiah, or out to up above Union and take off and ride into Boulder Park. What's that little town over there where we started off from? Anyway, it's where the old mill used to be. My memory's getting bad. But we would ride one of the real good--

LH: Up to Telocaset area.

BH: from Telocaset area we would ride into Boulder-- Boulder Park at that resort over there. At that time Don Jordan used to run that resort, and we'd have a dandy time over there. We'd take in-- go in and stay overnight there and everything and have a steak feed in there.

LH: We rode the Tollgate area a lot, too which would be Umatilla County _____. We had a cabin at Tollgate.

BH: Then later we bought a cabin at Tollgate, and we rode the Tollgate area all the time up there. And they groomed the trails. And I think right now they may have one or two new groomers. I'm not sure whether they have up there or not. But we also were at that time when we was part of that-- was the instigator of forming the Tollgate Trail Finders. A club that--three of us went over to Dick Miller's cabin which was just across from the ski area up there now. We rode from over at the little store across there one night, and formed the Tollgate Trail Finders which developed into the largest club in the state at that time.

- I: Are there people from La Grande and Union County besides you involved in that?
- BH: Most of 'em were from Walla Walla and Washington side of it over there. And they come up from there. I can't remember who the first president of it was, but Dick Miller I think was one of 'em, and then the guy that run the store up there at the time. They were one of the larger clubs and one of the largest in the state at that time. I still get the Oregon State Snowmobile Association paper, and as far as I know, they're still one of the largest, if not the very largest club.
- I: You told me once about riding across this ridge on this mountain ridge on the far side. Do you know what the name of that is over there on the eastern side? Did you say you've ridden snowmobiles across the top?
- BH: No, I think what I said, and maybe I misled you on that, there is a road across that top over there. I don't think I've ever ridden across there on it.
- [END OF SIDE 1- recording clicks - no interruption]
- I: We're still talking about this ridge that-- what we're looking at is we're looking to the east at this mountain ridge that helps form the Grande Ronde Valley. And I had thought that there was--
- LH: Mt. Harris and Mt. Fanny.
- I: Mt. Harris and Mt. Fanny are on that side of the valley. Did you incorporate a road? Did you say you had snowmobiled across part of this, then?
- BH: I can't say that I went across there on a snowmobile. I went on part of it up there, but the road goes up this side of Mt. Harris over here and goes clear back to the Minam Canyon. And then it takes off from the Minam Canyon and then goes over back of Hat Point and on through and comes in over here at Cove is where it comes in. And to the best of my knowledge, they might even have a groomed trail across there now. They're grooming trails all over. I have gone across there in dry weather in the pickup _____.

I: I thought we were talking about driving back roads? [recording clicks]. Sorry everybody. That's what I-- that's what I-- I think that's what we were talking about.

BH: Well, that would be a back road. It looks like it would be.

I: Tell me about this-- tell me about this incident with-- that was picked up by Pat Wilkins from-- was that KATU, TV Channel 2? You're telling me about an incident with him when he came up to join the snowmobiler's club or go on a ride with 'em. Tell me that story about him.

BH: No, at that time Pat Wilkins made two trips into this area to film snowmobilers and the fun they were having and just kind of promoting it. One of the trips that he made was into Boulder Park, and we furnished machines for various people from Salem to ride in there. And then the other one, we were having a camp-out and we went up to Ladd Canyon. And I would say there was thirty, thirty-five machines up there, as I can recall. And we gathered around the bonfire, and everybody was enjoying their hot dogs and hamburgers. And Pat came to me and says, "I would like some jump-scenes on a snowmobile. Do you have anybody here that could jump a machine?" I says, "I've got a guy that is workin' for me in here, and he's a wild man. And if there's anybody that can jump a machine, he can." So anyways, we went out and hunted up an area where he could come down off the hill and then find a rock. There apparently was a rock under a big mound of snow, and so we run a trail back and forth across that up and down there. And another fella had just joined the club here with a new machine, and his name I think was Miller. I'm not sure. But anyway, he seen us secretly movin' off away from the crowd 'cause we didn't want a bunch of people out there. Pretty soon he followed out that way. And about the time we were all set up to have the ride down off the hill, what's his name? Keith Gribbing done the ride for us. He gets on top of this hill, and goes down a packed trail to hit that mound. And Pat got his cameraman all set up and everything was go. So, he waves Keith on to come down, and here come Bob Miller the other way up the other end of the trail and decides that we go up there and see what happen. Well, as Keith made the jump Bob Miller was coming up the other side and they hit head on.

I: In mid air?

BH: In mid air. And we thought Bob was laying doubled up out in the snow. We wasn't sure whether he was mortally wounded or what. He was in bad shape. I have pictures here of the machine. He got his front end of his machine pounded out, and he rode it out of there. The other one, it was like scrap metal. It was loaded on a sled, and we hauled it out. But Pat Wilkins, I asked him not to put that on the TV. But he said, "I can't." He says, "I gotta put that on. That's snowmobiling." But I gave him credit for that, and I called him later and told him I appreciate the way he brought it out. He showed it, and he said, "The following scenes is what you don't want to do when you go snowmobiling." So, when that came on, why, there was that crash in mid-air with the two machines. [chuckles]. And it showed up pretty good, but he said that "Now don't do this when you go snowmobiling."

I: For the benefit of the editor, Pat Wilkins was a newscaster on KATU, Channel 2 in Portland. And often Pat like what you recalled what today might be called The Play of the Day, or a Blooper of the Day, or something like that on his show. And he happened to be in the area. That's what we're talking about here. What else about this area of snowmobiling did you-- did that club grow in numbers over the years? Is it popular today still? I know you haven't been on a snowmobile in awhile, but--

BH: As far as I know, the club is quite active. I know several of the members. I don't even-- I think Blackman--

LH: _____. They had you be the guest speaker at the banquet to tell 'em about snowmobiling.

BH: Yeah.

I: _____?

BH: One time I was invited to be the guest speaker of the club down at the Elk's, year before last, and took a bunch of pictures down and showed 'em. And there was quite a number of 'em there. I think their club numbers is probably fifty, sixty people involved in it now.

I: Do their-- do a portion of their fees, their club fees, still go to support the State Snowmobile Association for the area?

BH: I assume that the license fee that we paid all went to the state to support our sport. And also you estimated the number of miles you rode your snowmobile, and you got the gas tax money off of those numbers of miles. We used to fill out a card and send in how many miles we had traveled on snow, an estimate. And they give us the gasoline tax money, the road tax money off of that into our fund then. And that's the way it was then, and as far as I know, that's probably still the way it operates.

I: Would they do this county by county? Is that how they would distribute it?

BH: No, I think that it was statewide distribution. But if we got any groomer or anything here we had to submit an application for it, and provide the-- give them mobility to see how bad our needs were. And then as I recall, they would distribute the funds out for whatever county or whatever area might have the greatest need. And I think they don't know how they do it now.

I: Let's go back and talk about just a few odd and end things here. How much schooling did you do? Did you-- did you go to college?

BH: I finished the eighth grade in Palmyra, Missouri. And then I went out to Hester on my grandparent's farm there, and the teacher had education so she could teach the ninth grade. I walked to Scott's School House which was two miles across the hill, and took the ninth grade. And two weeks before school was out, she said, "Well, you have a book report that you haven't turned in." And I said, "Well where's the book?" She says, "It's in the library in Palmyra." Which was twelve miles down there, and I had no way of going to Palmyra to get it. So that night when I picked up my books I took 'em home, and I never went back. So basically I got a full year of the ninth grade and graduated from the eighth grade. I never went to college or anything, never went to high school.

I: You have-- how about-- I'd like to talk about this uncle of mine, Bill Burt. You say that he worked for you at Signal Oil when you were--

when he was young and going to college. Tell us about that.

BH: Yeah, I'm gonna have to call on my wife to help me remember some of those things.

I: That's okay.

BH: But yeah, we had the service station down here. And Bill was goin' to college, and he was a hustlin' boy. And we needed help in the station, and we hired him at that time. And then I think that was after we had moved out to on the Island City Highway. And I don't recall whether we had put the station-- built the station there or not. But yeah, Bill--

LH: When we had it, Bill said he was in high school. We had the-- Bill was on a _____ when we first moved out there.

BH: So it would have been about the time we moved out there. And I don't know. We had him employed for about a year, didn't we?

LH: Probably.

BH: As far as I know. I know he was a good worker, and we enjoyed having him.

I: Did you have interactions or experiences with any other Native Americans in this county over the years?

BH: Not that I recall, just with Bill. We have seen him from time to time at one or two meetings and visited with him. I think he was a speaker at one of the meetings that Lenna attends over at-- was that over in Pendleton?

LH: _____.

BH: And I know at the time I saw him over there he spotted us and singled us out, and come over and shook hands and had a nice visit when I saw him over there at the meeting. But that's been years ago now. I'd like to see him again!

I: Well I'm gonna let him know.

BH: [chuckles].

LH: [chuckles].

I: But I typically do ask everybody about any possible interactions with the _____ natives in this county because this actually was a native area before it was settled.

LH: Oh yes.

I: So I've gotten various responses on that. It's kind of interesting to see. Do you have anything you'd like to contribute that we didn't talk about?

BH: [coughs]. Well, probably after you leave I'll think of two or three things.

I: Well, that's okay because after I leave I might think of a few things--

LH: [laughs].

I: and I told you I may need to come back.

LH: You can come back.

I: Yeah, well--

BH: When you talk about this being Native American I have a book here about the Indian fight that they had at the mouth of the canyon right here as I recall. I read about that over a few years ago. Don't recall what started it or anything. It was just a fight here in the Grande Ronde Valley.

I: I do have one other odd question here. Going back to the oil business, and I'm doing this because I haven't reviewed this tape yet. And I just wanted to make sure I caught that we had talked about how the business worked, you know. And you said that it was a bulk operation-- that you would go and get your oil products from a bulk operation and deliver from there. When you say you went and got it from bulk were these products already mixed in the right proportion

the way they were supposed to be at this bulk plant? And you just simply transferred it to your truck and then delivered it to where it needed to go?

BH: Well, basically it was just about the same as it is here right now. At the present time your gasoline, diesel, and stove oil, such as that comes in from the refinery. All of them here enter the bulk plant like you see scattered-- scattered all the big plants out there overhead. At the time, we set up a signal plant on the Island City Highway we had underground storage tanks. Which under the present rules and regulations, if they're underground they have to be built in the well that would protect the ground from the store-- from the leakage from one of the tanks and so forth. But products were pre-mixed and everything from the refinery and dumped into the distributor's tank here. And when I first started with Signal Oil, they did not have a bulk plant of their own. Standard Oil Company supplied all of our products. So basically we sold a Signal products, but it still came from Standard Oil Plant. Then later on, when they built the plant on the Island City Highway they buried 12,000 gallon tanks for the different fuels there. They would bring it in in a truck and trailer load and dump it in our tanks, and then of course I'd pump it out into mine and sale it wholesale to the dealers, Farmcrest, _____ Loggers. We had a tremendous logging account. We had loggers that I delivered to all over the mountains around here.

I: So the-- the-- originally they-- before they had their bulk plant you had to go get this and then move it. But after they had the bulk operations they did deliver to you to your tanks?

BH: That's correct. We-- Signal Oil, the one that started here was an offshoot owned by Standard Oil Company. And since Standard had the wholesale plant-- Lyle Smith was the distributor out there then, and I would just go out and we would bill out to Signal Oil Company a thousand gallons by the truck full of it. A thousand gallons our truck held. He would fill it out to Signal Oil, and that would be charged out to my account. And then I had to wholesale it out to my customers. Consequently, I would-- I didn't--the only place that I had any storage was on my truck. So if I sold somebody two hundred gallons of fuel, I would go and pick up two hundred gallons from him and then just deliver it to my customer and sell it to them wholesale.

But then after they got the wholesale plant they'd bring me in a six-thousand gallon truck and trailer load. At that time, they held about six thousand. I think they're up to about eight thousand, nine thousand now.

I: These were your holding tanks?

BH: Yeah, we had four twelve-thousand gallon tanks buried underground out there where the big Hermann Square sign is at now. Why, two of them were out in what is now the first two lanes, right hand lanes of the highway. They took that much off the front of the property there. And I even have pictures of those tanks opened up when we was plumbin' 'em in. And the guy that done that plumbing in there, the mechanic and everything that came out from Portland to do the work, I got his picture of his service truck which is a 1936 GMC pickup with a box on the back of it. [chuckles].

I: Mr. Hermann, I want to thank you for your interview time. It's been interesting and enjoyable talking to you. I may be back for more information so just make sure you know--

BH: Well, I hope you do. I think the interview goes both ways. I've enjoyed visiting with you. Really, really enjoyed it very much and I hope you do come back.

I: Oh, well--
[recording clicks - no interruption]

I: Back-- let's go back a step on this. I was asking if there was a relationship between any of this family, and I've seen recently the name Hermann pop on the faculty roster at the university. And you're telling me there is. Go ahead and tell us that. Who is it first of all, on campus? Is it Tom Herrmann?

LH: Tom Herrmann.

BH: Tom Herrmann would be--

LH: Your cousin's son.

BH: my cousin's son. And his name, as well as my parent's name, is spelled with two R's and two N's: H-E-R-R-M-A-N-N. And mine is spelled with one R and two N's. The reason being for that-- when they didn't accept me in the army I came back, and I'd already quit the gas station job. And I started following construction work, and I wound up over at Hanford working on that project over there which was hush-hush as it could be. And one day they came and called me off the job. And I went in to an interrogation room, and they talked and talked and talked. And I finally said, "Well, what's going on here?" "Well, what we had discovered is that your name has two R's and two N's. Your birth certificate has one R and two N's. So we are looking at everybody like they do now as a criminal." So I was no longer employed there until I could get it straightened out. So consequently I came over here, and Carl Helm the--

LH: Lawyer.

BH: lawyer here. And he says, "Well, for you to get back on the job and do the thing the quickest-- since your birth certificate came out of Jefferson City, Missouri the best thing for you to do is to change your name to one R and two N's to conform to your birth certificate." So that's the way that happened. And my brother, Bud, who died two years ago, was in the service, and the exact same thing happened to him in the service. He come up with a birth certificate that had one R and two N's, and he had to change his name in the service to conform to that. I have another brother at Pendleton, and his--

LH: Bend.

BH: at Bend, and his name has two R's and two N's.

I: He didn't change his.

BH: He didn't change because his birth certificate--

LH: It had the two of them.

BH: had the two R's and two N's in it.

I: Oh, but did you have to go to court to make that change, or just file

paperwork?

BH: File paperwork and the attorney handled it. I don't know just how it was. I know I took the paperwork back over to Hanford and they put me back to work over there then.

I: Did you feel stigmatized because of that, feel like you were being persecuted?

BH: Well, yeah it bothered me quite a little bit because I didn't want to change-- change my name from the family name. But by the same token, we had to put bread on the table and pay the bills. And I had a job there. We was making a dollar and ten cents an hour drivin' truck over there, and every once in awhile we'd get in four or five hours of overtime which was just gravy on the bread.

I: Was that good-- was that a good wage for that time?

LH: Yes.

BH: It was good, a real good wage for that time. So that-- that's the history of the difference in my family name and the rest of the Herrmann's. There's cousins and relatives scattered around here that are mine, but their names are spelled different.

I: Just depending on whether they had to go through that business or not at that particular time?

LH: Here in _____ they all made do with it.

I: Is that right?

BH: Yeah, just the two of us in our family was the only one that changed.

I: Did all of you-- how many brothers and sisters do you or did you have?

BH: Well I've got three brothers and one sister.

LH: Two brothers.

BH: Two brothers and one sister, yeah. There was three-- three others, I mean.

LH: Two boys and one girl.

BH: Two boys and one girl. I'm the oldest. My sister is two years younger, and Bud, my brother that died was two years younger than her. And then Bob that's over at Bend, he's twelve years younger.

I: And you all ended up here. Did they come-- were you the oldest or the youngest? I forget.

BH: I'm the oldest.

I: You're the oldest. So they were already here when you came to-- because they were younger or maybe not even born yet were they over here before you?

BH: They were all here before. They came out in 1935. Bob was just a baby at the time. They stayed out at my grandmother's place, Grandma Herrmann's place. And they went to school, but-- they went to school here and went through high school and everything. When I came out I was eighteen. I come out the next year in '36, and I was eighteen years old then. And I went to work on a-- first place I went to work was on a farm up here, worked for balin' hay and fifteen cents an hour. That was a pretty good job. Worked if you got-- if the baler broke down and you were down a half an hour you got docked eight cents.

I: Why?

BH: Because I wasn't workin' while they was workin' on the baler.

I: Oh, I see, I see.

BH: [chuckles]. I wasn't fixin' any hay!

I: Sounds like most of your family came out to Oregon then from Missouri.

BH: Yes. My grandparents-- I frankly don't even know what year they came out, but they had the place where they're workin' on the roads right in here going into May Lane and where that complex is. What do they call it out there now?

LH: Bear Cove

BH: Bear Cove. They had ten acre orchards right in there. And then my Uncle Henry, he was first settled up around North Powder, and then he brought the ranch down where Weishaar's at on the way out to Cove. And after my Granddad Herrmann died in '33 or '34, the orchard was more than mom could probably handle it. So that's when my folks moved out there then in '35. And they had mom worked there. And then when I come out in '36 I stayed there. Stayed there with them and then moved to Boise after I got transferred over there and worked at Fletcher Oil Company. Then we got married in '39, and we lived in Boise and then back here.

I: What sort of fruit was in your parent's orchard?

BH: Mostly, as I recall at that time was apples. They did raise cherries too, but I frankly think most of it was apples at the time. But I was more interested in finding a job and chasing girls--

LH: [laughs].

I: Really?

BH: than I was what was hanging in the orchard.

I: Uh-huh, yeah. Well, by my timeframe here looking at this piece of paper that I've taken notes on it doesn't look like you had a whole lot of time to chase a lot of girls between the time you got here and the time you got married. [chuckles].

BH: Well, I didn't.

LH: I didn't give him that much time.

I: You didn't, huh?

BH: And the thing of it was when you was makin' twenty-five cents an hour you didn't have much money to do any chasing.

I: Yeah.

BH: It was a little skimpy in those days, but we got by, we got by. She and I-- when she and I were married I had gotten a raise. When I went to Boise I got a raise from seventy five dollars a month to a hundred dollars a month. And she searched around. We spend twenty-five dollars for an apartment, and she searched around and found one that would be good for eighteen dollars a month.

LH: That was a good savings then.

BH: Yes.

I: Wow.

BH: And then if we-- we-- we charged our milk bill, and if we paid it our--

LH: It was nine cents a quart.

BH: Nine cents a quart for milk, and if we paid the bill on time they gave us a pint of cottage cheese.

LH: So, we always paid it on time.

BH: So, we always paid it on time so we got-- and one of the-- one of the places we lived was at 16th and State, and Albertsons was buildin' there first store right across the street from us at the time. As I recall. Wasn't that right, Lenn?

LH: That was on 6th Street. It was down a ways, but--

BH: Yeah, it was down--

LH: 16th and State was _____.

BH: 16th and State was where there's--

LH: But that was Albertson's originated in 1939.

BH: They originated there. When we were over there about two or three years ago at the doctor's appointment-- I think the last place that we lived was 27th and State. 27th and Idaho was the name of the street.

LH: Okay.

BH: And we went by there, and it's pretty much surrounded-- at that time was pretty much surrounded by business ventures, business houses. But the little old house that we lived in was still there.

I: Was it really?

BH: Yeah.

I: Uh-huh, wow. Are your other houses that you lived in before here still standing in La Grande?

LH: There's some of them here.

I: Yeah.

LH: Yeah, there at _____ Square where the beauty shop is right there at North _____ that was our house. We lived there.

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

LH: And then we lived down here on-- at 202 Walnut. One block from here, and that's well, I know we _____ our very first house at _____. It sat around. It's still there. And they're all still-- still there.

BH: Then we lived at two places before we lived at _____. We lived down on 2nd Street once. We rented a place down there, and then over here by Bohnenkamp's on 1st.

LH: Yeah.

BH: 1st, we had a place there, and then we went to 2nd Street. Then we bought a home on S Avenue, 1413 S Avenue. And then we sold that

and bought the house.

LH: And moved out there.

BH: Out there where the Hair Shacks at now. And that-- and that old house was built in 1889.

I: Oh.

BH: And its still-- still standing there and pretty good old house.
[END OF TAPE]