

Charles Cater, narrator  
Ron Brand, interviewer  
August 3, 2005  
tape 1, side 1

RB: \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ This is August 3, 2004. We're at Charlie's home in La Grande, and [uh] the first question I have would be—what incidents have you run into related to your legal practice, which goes from 1939-79 in La Grande?

CC: Well, I came here in 1939. I didn't really know anybody here. All I knew is that I liked the country. I had been exposed to eastern Oregon when I worked during summer vacations, when I was in the university. [uh] [uh]

RB: University of ...?

CC: [uh] Well, [laughs], It is not a secret. [laughs] It's Willamette University.

RB: O.k.

CC: And I had come over here on work crews for the highway department, several places, and I loved the eastern Oregon country. So, when I had an opportunity to come up here, and somebody brought me up, I came here, and I have never left, except to take trips to go hunting or fishing or to go to California in the spring when the grass is green down there and before it starts here [laughs]. Alright!

RB: O.k. You were going to give me a first case that was interesting \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_.

CC: That is true. So, [uh], I know this kind of ridiculous, and I told this before on another tape, but [uh], anyway, a man came to see me one day. I didn't have anything to do. All I had was a typewriter, and old Underwood. His name was James Moore, and he was the manager of the eastern Oregon ... not eastern Oregon... the Grande Ronde Hospital. And he had with him a thick book, and this book had ... the only thing it had in it was a whole series of partially or [uh] totally unpaid bills. This was near the end of the depression of the depression. And people hadn't, had, hadn't been able to pay their hospital bill. So, he wanted me to see if I could collect them on a fee basis—so much for whatever I was able to collect. So, I undertook that, and then that's what I did for awhile.

RB: What was the name of the hospital?

CC: Grande Ronde Hospital.

RB: It was Grande Ronde.

CC: Yes.

RB: O.k.

CC: Yeah.

RB: Do you remember the name of the man who came to you?

CC: James Moore.

RB: O.k. Go ahead.

CC: He was the manager, and a good man, and a quiet man ... a good man. Anyway, [uh], not long after that, the Japanese jumped on us at Pearl Harbor, and we started gathering ourselves together in the United States to fight a war. And, one thing they did here, in La Grande, was to take everybody out of the local college and replace them with a group of young men they were going to train for certain military duty. And, we had a whole bunch of them. And, one night, in the dark,

one of these young men that was here as a part of the military preparation was walking down the road just outside of La Grande, and a car hit him and killed him. [pause] Well, there were three people in the car, a young woman and two men, and the district attorney and the other law enforcement people thought that they could make a case, and that, this, one of these men was the driver of the car, and therefore, they charged him with [uh], [uh], negligent homicide.

RB: Do you remember any of the names of these people, the [uh] ...

CC: I certainly do. The name of the one they charged was Johnny Jennings Lewis, L-e-w-i-s. An added piece of information about Mr. Lewis, and one of the reasons they charged him rather the [uh] other two, was the fact that he was a five-time felony loser. He had been convicted five separate times before this incident. He had been convicted of felonies and served time in a penitentiary some place.

RB: Was he ... Were these felonies in the La Grande area, in Union County?

CC: No, no; someplace else.

RB: O.k.

CC: I don't know where they were.

RB: Do you remember the name of the District Attorney?

CC: Yeah, it was [uh] probably Carl Helm Sr. or [wind chimes?] [pause] I can't think of the other name.

RB: O.k., let's go ahead then.

CC: Anyhow, [uh], this, [uh], th, this Lewis didn't have any assets. He couldn't pay, a, for an attorney, and it was the requirement, by constitutional mandate, U.S. Supreme Court, that a person charged with offenses of one kind or another had to be provided with a, a counsel, attorney, so he could make [more wind chimes] his defense. Well, [uh], in those days they, they didn't have a contract public defender. They ... The judge would pick somebody out of the attorneys and say, "You are going to be the counsel for this man. So, the judge at that time was R. J. Green [?]

RB: Does that have an "e" on the end?

CC: No.

RB: O.k.

CC: And [uh], in his infinite wisdom, he appointed me to defend Mr. Lewis. Now [uh] really never tried a case. My experience had been very limited, and [uh], I have thought since then, looking back, and I did not think this at the time, but looking back over the years, and with other things that have happened here and there in the United States, I came to the conclusion that Judge Green made a mistake when he appointed me to represent Mr. Lewis.

RB: This was your first course case?

CC: One of the first.

RB: One of the first.

CC: They ... I don't remember others.

RB: The year was 1939 or 1940?

CC: Well, it was \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ [wind chimes]... You see, [uh], th, this Japanese thing happened in '41.

RB: O.k.

CC: And it was right after that—very shortly after that, that they brought these young men here, and, to train ‘em at the college, and one of ‘em was killed. So, the judge appointed me, and I have said, in looking back and noticing how the criminal justice system worked, as well as I could from my own experience and reading the newspapers and stuff, I came to the conclusion that my judge, Judge Green, had made a mistake. It didn’t turn out that way. I defended the man. He was found not guilty, and, [uh], as a matter of fact, the jury that sat in that case must have come to some conclusion about me, and I don’t hesitate at all to say that purely as a matter of guesswork, I, looking back, have come to the conclusion that that case and that jury was the foundation of my later practice, and my reputation.

RB: O.k.

CC: See, reputation hangs on what you do and what other people perceive as what you do, and that jury saw what looked like a real, real tough case, and I was defending a man who was found not guilty.

RB: Do you remember the name of the man who was killed?

CC: No, I never knew it, er, oh, I must have known it, but, no, I do not know.

RB: But he was a .... He was here?

CC: He was going to, [uh], attending the college in a military preparatory study.

RB: What was the name of the college at that time?

CC: Eastern Oregon College.

RB: Eastern Oregon College?

CC: It’s now called a university, but it was called Eastern Oregon College at that time. So, after the trial was over, I had a little talk with Mr. Lewis. And, as young as I was, and [laughs], and inexperienced, I gave him some advice. And I said, “Johnny, you are not very popular here, and you’re, you’re lucky this time. I suggest that you go someplace else and where you’re not known, and where you’d have a little better chance to get, [uh], accepted by various community.” He did not take my advice.

RB: Did he get in further trouble that you know of?

CC: He did. I don’t know what it was, but he, and I did not try to follow it because I was all through with what the judge had asked me to do, so, anyway, he was in jail, charged with something—I don’t know what it was—I did na [laughs], I did not defend him. But he called me of the telephone from the jail, and he told me that he had a car he wanted to sell, and he offered to sell it to me. He had an old Oldsmobile, and he wanted a hundred and fifty dollars for it. I wanted the car. I didn’t have a car. I had no wheels, no transportation. When I came here I didn’t have any, and when this was all over, I still didn’t have any. So, he wanted, [uh], a hundred and fifty dollars, and I didn’t have it.

But, I had made friends with Mr. M. J. Goss, G-O-double-S, who was the proprietor and owner of an automobile dealership here. And, Mr. Goss had been kind to me a little while before when I needed a truck to move some sw... personal belongings from house to another, rented houses that I occupied with my wife. I talked to M. J., and he offered and did lend me a hundred and fifty dollars [laughs] to buy that car. Now, the odd thing about this was that before this

happened, when Mr. Goss had befriended me with a loan of a truck, I had made a, a promise to myself, that when I bought a car, I would do two things: I would buy it from Mr. Goss, and I would pay cash. So, the upshot of this deal with Johnny Lewis was that I broke my promise. I didn't pay cash, and I got the money from Goss; I borrowed the money.

I made another promise. \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_, I re, re—riterated or re-promised myself that henceforth I would deal only with Mr. Goss, and I would pay cash. Anyway, I acquired the car, and I had it for awhile, but from that day forward, I paid cash for every single vehicle I bought, and there were a lot of them. And, I've, I bought almost every one of them from Goss. One I bought from his ... One or two I bought from his son, [uh], who had a separate business at that time, and one I bought from another dealer during war, when we couldn't get cars from anybody else—I couldn't get a car from Mr. Goss, and I needed one, so I bought one from [interrupted].

RB: This was during the war years...

CC: Yes.

RB: It was hard to get vehicles

CC: Yes, yes, it was definitely. They just shut out making cars and started makin' tanks and guns, cannon, airplanes. There is a story about that.

RB: Where does... Where does that ... Was that effecting Union County ... the war effort?

CC: Well, it sure did. Before it was all over, they took a awful lot of people out of Union County, and I was one of them. By this time I still had the [uh], wife, original, and I had, [uh], two kids, little boys. And, then, they drafted a lot of us, and I was one of them. I didn't volunteer. I could have wiggled out of it, \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_, some of my fellow lawyers did. In fact, every one of 'em did except one, and, my friend Carl Helm [?], was another lawyer here, volunteered for the Navy. And, he served in a Corvette, which is a small battleship, and he prowled with his little battleship throughout the North Atlantic.

RB: Was he ... Did he survive the war?

CC: Yes he did.

RB: And you did.

CC: Yes.

RB: But you don't know of other lawyers who joined up or, or went along with the draft.

CC: Well, I do know, but I don't want to talk about too many of them. It's bad enough for me to go about bragging about me, [laughs], and I do; I do that anyway, [uh].

RB: O.k.

CC: I want to tell ya about Carl Helm. Carl was another lawyer. He was a very good friend of mine. I ... I deeply respected him. I fought him in court on both sides...he was on one side, and I was on the other in quite a few cases ... in later years. But, I, I couldn't forget that Carl commanded a little battleship, a Corvette, in the North Atlantic when that ocean was just crawling with subs, German subs.

RB: Um-hmm.

CC: It was almost death to go out in that sea, but he did!

RB: O.k. The other people who served from Union County?  
CC: Oh, a lot of them.  
RB: About how many people came here to the college ....  
CC: Oh, I don't know.  
RB: ...for training?  
CC: I don't know.  
RB: You don't know that.  
CC: I'd say several hundred, but \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ ... I became friends for one or two of them. They were nice, nice guys, and, [uh], [laughs]. I took one of 'em with me, and I, by this time, had acquired things that I have had in my life ever since—rifles, because I have done a lot of shooting...

RB: Um-hmm.  
CC: A lot of hunting. So this young man and I took one of my rifles and some of the ammunition that he got through his military service there at the college, and we went up the road here a ways to a place just the other side of where .... Well, it's quite close to that place where they had the, the [uh], the jail for the young guys \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_.

RB: \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ [simultaneously with CC speaking "Well"]  
RB: [uh] ... The present day ...  
CC: Yeah, It's there .  
RB: O.k., you were hunting out there ...  
CC: Huh?  
RB: You were hunting out ..  
CC: No.  
RB: ... in that area.  
CC: No, we just went out there to shoot.  
RB: To shoot?  
CC: Targets ...  
RB: O.k.  
CC: ...and not to hunt. And ... And he had some ammunition—it was, it fit the rifle that I had, but it was a, [uh], [uh], it was designed... it was called "tracer ammunition." When you fired it, the bullet took fire, and it...you'd see a, a trail of light from the bullet.

RB: Um-hmm.  
CC: You know about this?  
RB: Yeah.  
CC: O.k. We had some tracer ammunition. We got down to where we had one shot left, and we were gonna shoot it, and I, I shot it, myself, and there was a stump up on a... the other side of the river, quite a bit higher than the surface where we were... and higher than the river, and I shot at that stump, and this damned tracer set the stump on fire, and from then on, for a couple of hours, my friend and I were busy puttin' that fire out.

RB: Hmm.  
CC: We had to get up that steep slope and, eventually, stomp that fire out because we didn't have any tools; we just had bare feet with shoes on 'em.  
RB: So.

CC: It was stupid!

RB: So...

CC: You see?

RB: Let ... I'd like to get back to your legal practice. After this first case ... You said that made your reputation.

CC: Well, I ....

RB: What happened to your \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ [interrupted].

CC: Well, I'm ... I'm just guessing. I don't know that it did, but it's inevitable...When you take a tough case and win it, and you got twelve jurors....they're watching you do it; there is bound to be a residual i... information with the, [uh], twelve people...

RB: O.k.

CC: ... and anybody else that's in the courtroom.

RB: What is ...[interrupted]

CC: ... \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ a judge.

RB: What are some of the ... And this was R. J. Green? ... was the judge?

CC: Yes.

RB: O.k. What were some of the other cases you ran into following this?

CC: Oh... Well...uh, [laughs]. Well, R. J. practiced law for eighteen years, and, [uh], along the way we became very good friends, and evidently he had confidence in me, because when he had a real tough case he hired me or retained me...that's a better word...to assist, with two other lawyers, in his [uh], [uh], in his case having to do with very valuable timberland in Wallowa County. So, I made, a, a tape here before with Mr. Venn [?], and it's on that tape ...what I did then. And, [uh], briefly, I had attended a continuing education program put on by the Bar Association just before this incident I am about to describe.

RB: O.k.

CC: And I... And the subject was reformation of instruments—that merely means changing a deed, a contract or something—to make it fit what may have been or should have been the intention of the original signers, signatories. So, when I came back from that continuing educational program put on by the Bar Association—in Eugene, Oregon, by the way—I, [uh], was in my office, and the two other lawyers that were with me on the case, Alex Byler from ... Byler?...B-Y-L-E-R [pause]

RB: O.k.

CC: And, Robert Chrisman .... C-H-R-I-S-M-A-N. All three of us were in our office, and we had made a joint decision that the pleading that had been prepared—and I didn't recall who had prepared it; it was one of the other lawyers—thit wasn't adequate to present the case that we had to show to the trier [?] of fact. So, I redrafted...the...the complaint...for Judge Green...to submit his contention, and we went to trial on the document on the document that I had prepared. We tried it in Wallowa County, and the judge was Lyle Wolf [?]....L-Y-L-E...Wolfe...W-O-L-F...maybe there were two "F's," but one's enough.

RB: O.k. What was the ... What was the gist of the case?

CC: The gist of the case was that he didn't intend to include the timber on the land that he sold.

RB: Oh, o.k. He had excluded the timber rights?

CC:: He had tempted to, but the, [uh], the deed that he signed was not clear, indefinite, and he withstood to lose a hell of lot of valuable timber and money if it went with the land. See! Got it?!

RB: Um-hmm.

CC: Alright. We tried the case before Judge Wolf up there. We won. And then the other side appealed it. And we won there too. We won in both courts. And that was the end of it. Judge Green paid me; he paid another lawyer, Mr. Chrisman, and, [uh], later it was .... [laughs]...One of the reasons that people talked about—lawyers and judges—was their knowledge, gained over the years, about Judge Green. Now, there was nothing wrong about it, and nothing embarrassing; it was just that everybody knew that he, [uh], cherished every dollar that he had, because he worked for every single one of them. And, [uh], takin' money away from R. J. Green...was almost impossible! [laughs] You had [laughing] to be lucky, and he...they weren't lucky, and we were lucky [laughs]. Anyway, now, that's just one thing. Later R. J. died, and before he died he asked me to analyze his data, and I did, and that's the end of that.

RB: Were there any, [uh], issues related to Judge Green's estate? ... that were interesting.

CC: Well, there was one thing. R. J. had, [uh], you might say, a business practice of lending money to people that he knew, that lived here in the Grande Ronde Valley. He'd lend money on notes and mortgages and this and that. He had done this for a long time. And, when he died, there were—outstanding—a number of these loans. His wife's name was "Edna," and Judge Green made a mistake...It's the only mistake I know of that he made...in his life and practice. But, he assumed that his wife would be able to handle these accounts ... and collect them ... and so forth. She couldn't. It was beyond her. And, I couldn't either, but I...arranged ...for...some organization or some individual to take over these accounts and elect them ... collect them. And, he, and, [uh], that was done, and that worked out just fine.

RB: Was this a common practice during this time? You're talking about the 1940's...I think...here in Union County.

CC: Yeah

RB: Was loaning money—individuals loaning money—a common practice.

CC: Oh, yes.

RB: Were there banks here that also loaned money?

CC: Oh yes. They were in competition.

RB: They were in competition?

CC: No doubt about it. Yeah, [uh], ...[uh], R. J. Green had op..., operated a c... at least two bands of sh [tape side ends].

Charles Cater, narrator  
Ron Brand, interviewer  
August 3, 2005  
tape 1, side 2

RB: Tape 1, with Charlie Cater, on August 4, 2004.

RB: We're [rattling noise] talking about the bands of sheep that R. J. Green had.

CC: Well...Because R. J. had sheep, he was disqualified, in a way, and personally disqualified himself to try the case that came up that was \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ outstanding trial that we've ever had in, in Union County. This had to do with the fact that this was the center of a large sheep industry. There were a number of people and corporations and businesses that owned bands of sheep, and, [uh], they wintered them in the...s...what they called the sand, which was out by Butter Creek in western northeastern Oregon. One of the ...

RB: Is that in Union County?...are you taking about?

CC: No, it is not Union County.

RB: O.k.

CC: No. I don't know what county it is, but it's over there. So anyway, one of the owners of the several bands of sheep was a...a man named Tom Boylen [?]. Well, ... Tom had a bad accident. He was driving between here and Pendleton, which he had to do in managing his business, many times. So, [uh], in the dark, at night, he hit a horse in the road—probably killed the horse, but it damaged Tom Boylen—he got a brain injury out of it. The result of Tom Boylen was that he...his business broke up; he couldn't manage it...anymore. And, then, everybody that had contracts on sheep or his sheep—contracts to buy sheep, mortgages and so forth and so on—they all gathered around, and we had a trial in the Union County Courthouse. Because R. J. Green had ... had and/or had had...sheep interests, he couldn't sit to try that case.

RB: Do you remember the year of this?...this trial?

CC: The year? Well, let's see...[pause] No, I don't.

RB: Do you remember the decade ... or close to the ...?

CC: Well, sure...It was in the ... in the ten or twelve years after I got here.

RB: So, in the late '40's or early '50's.

CC: I suppose, somewhere in there.

RB: O.k. Now, go ahead with the trial and his recusal [?].

CC: Well, in order to sort out the various claims, we ended up in a complicated case in the Union County Courthouse. Now, this is perhaps the most astonishing piece of history that you're gonna' here. In this trial we had a judge from Bend...I have his name in the back of my pretty good...but we had nineteen lawyers in that courtroom, right here, trying to sort out this various problem, and there was a spin-off in another court, over in the federal district court in Pendleton, because the, [uh], Oregon representative of the Attorney General's office, a man named Dillard [?] conceived a brilliant idea, that when Tom Boylen sold sheep, they were covered by mortgage—it was a violation of federal law. He was wrong because whenever anybody in the sheep business mortgages his sheep, including lambs, the ... the sh... everybody knows, everybody they knew except Dillard, in Pendleton, everybody knows that the sheep man is going to sell those sheep when it is time. So, there is no restriction of the sale of mortgaged sheep, because they have to be sold. You can't keep over.... So, anyway, one of the lawyers was a



man named Henry Hess [?]74, and he asked me to join him in the case, and I did, and I spent some of my time in Pendleton auditing the proceeding in the federal district court, and some of the time I spent in the courthouse here, and some I spent in the library lookin' at the books and the law.

Well, then a strange thing happened. We were in that trial—the first time—for, [uh], six weeks. And then the lawyers and the judge got together and agreed to have a recess so that the lawyers could ask and receive a transcript of some of the testimony in order to be able to put together their contentions and arguments, and so forth. So, we laid off for awhile; I don't know how long, several weeks. In the meantime, the lawyers had asked the court reporter to prepare partial transcript of the testimony. When the recess was over, and we were all back there in the courtroom, we looked around, and there was no court recorder, absolutely no court reporter. So, there was a chattering and a discussion that sounded like, I suppose, like a bunch of chickens \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ 99 talking about things...what to do.

Well, the lawyers got together, and they appointed two people to see if they could find the court reporter, and they appointed me and a man from Baker by the name of Blain Hallock [?]. Blain Hallock was a lawyer of y... many years standing in Baker, and I was a new lawyer from La Grande. So we took out, he and I, and I thought I knew where the court reporter lived, and we went there and hammered on the door and couldn't raise him, and went around back of the house, hammered on the house again, and this time we finally heard a weak s... voice inside. So, we went inside, and we ... and we found the court reporter, and he was in bad, bad shape. Obviously he was an alcoholic, and he had got drunk, and he said that he had destroyed his notes, so there wasn't any notes that he could use to make a transcript. We went back to courtroom, reported to the judge and the lawyers, and then what to do?

RB: Do you remember the court reporter's name?

CC: Do you really want to hear this? Yes, I know. [pause] His name was Ralph Smith, and I couldn't bring h.. myself to criticize him too much. He was the victim of a terrible, terrible habit. And, he's not the only one that has fallen into that trap.

RB: O.k.

CC: And so, I am not inclined to be critical. In the end it didn't really hurt anybody, I think. So, we got together, and we hired another court reporter. Her name was Annetta [?] Johnson. Her brother, until very recently, was a professor at the college here.

RB: Do you remember his name?

CC: His last name was Johnson. Right now I can't think of his first name.

RB:1 O.k. What did he teach?

CC: I don't know that.

RB: O.k. Let's go ahead.

CC: But he was a good man. I've seen him many times, and I w... knew his sister very well...Lee Johnson. Alright, so we w...tried to carry on, but we couldn't.

And, it finally ended up that we settled the case, the whole thing, all of it, except the federal district case, which just fell flat when all the lawyers started congregating and telling the attorney general's representative that he just didn't understand the sheep business! [laughs]

So, the, [uh], Culp [?] and Son's Sheep Company, Barney Harren [?], and possible others, paid off their...the fee that was claimed by Henry Hess [?], and Henry divided that fee with me. I don't know how much it was, but I owed to a lady in Portland, that had staked me for an education by paying my...or offering to pay my tuition. I owed her \$1105.00 after six years in Willamette University...sounded like not an awful lot of money. But, I had the money when...when Henry paid me, and I paid her. And, by that time, I didn't owe anybody anything! So, that was the end of that...that case.

RB: What do you know about the further career of R. J. Green?

CC: Well, he continued to be circuit judge and, [uh], we continued to be friends, and, [uh], whenever ... but it was a little bit different than the first time he appointed me. He appointed me out of...to represent Johnny Lewis...out of ignorance about whether I could do the job or not. Later, he appointed me when somebody needed a...a practicing...a...an experienced lawyer in a tough case, and then he appointed me, and I do not remember the cases. All I remember is what I just said. Well, anyway...I told you about Mr. Eaton [?], and you read the letter from Willamette—do you want to go over that again?

RB: Oh,... Which one was this?

CC: He's the one that paid for the Eaton Hall at Willamette University.

RB: Oh, o.k. Let's go over that.

CC: But, [uh], you've got in your hand there, I think.

RB: Oh...I have the one related to Pierce Library.

CC: That's not it. Just hold on. I've got it right here [away from the microphone]. [pause] Here it is. Here's the whole story right here. [pause]208-213

RB: O.k. This concerns Able Eaton?

CC: Eaton Hall and Willamette University.

RB: And Mr. Eaton lived in Union County?

CC: El...[uh], Union.

RB: In Union. O.k.?

CC: Yeah. He had a wool processing plant there.

RB: O.k. And, it relates to, [uh], his ... after his death, at the age of 74, his wife was short of funds.

CC: Well, he beggared her [?] 221, in his disposition of his estate. Now, [uh], people do things like this \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_, sometimes through thoughtlessness, sometimes by accident, but that's the result here: she didn't have it, and the University made good.

RB: This is in August 30, 1979,...is the letter you have here.

CC: That's the date...on that letter. When I went to Willamette University there were only four buildings on the campus. There was one that was devoted to, [uh], m...[uh], music. One was Walter [?] Hall, and the other'un was a science building, and then there was Eaton Hall. Eaton Hall was the biggest building. It

had a whole lot of classrooms in it. Hardly any of the other buildings had any noticeable classrooms in them. But, Eaton provided the classrooms that were used when I went there.

RB: O.k. According to the letter, [uh], Mr. Eaton died in January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1917, and about a hundred thousand dollars from his estate went to the endowment for the University, and then it was during the depression that his wife fell on hard times.

CC: Yeah.

RB: O.k. Did you have any... Well, this would have been too late. So, your connection with this was that went to Willamette University.

CC: If there is a connection, that's it...because I...I had classes in those classrooms that Mr. Eaton provided.

RB: O.k....

CC: Yes.

RB: ...From here. Do you know if he was a native to Union County?

CC: I have no idea. The name Eaton tells me, and his business tells me, he was Scotch. Now, one might say, [uh], "Well, why did he engage in the wool business, when they're all these trees out there?" Because, he was Scotch! They...They didn't have a lot of trees in Scotland; they had sheep.

RB: O.k. So, he brought his...Did he come from Scotland.

CC: I don't have any idea.

RB: You don't know.

CC: No.

RB: O.k.

CC: But he seemed to be in, [uh], terribly in... seriously interested in education, ...

RB: O.k. In the [interrupted]

CC: ...which is not uncommon for a Scotch.

RB: Yeah. The endowment of a total of \$100,000 is a rather large endowment for that period of time.

CC: That's basically because dollars were different than they are now.

RB: O.k. Who else have you dealt with? You've had some dealings with some of the black members of the population here.

CC: Oh yeah. Lucky Trice was friend of mine. I may have done some ... a little work for him, but I don't remember it.

RB: But...

CC: My...My wife, [uh], took care of some of their...their tax returns...income tax returns.

RB: What did Lucky Trice do? What did he work at?

CC: Oh...I...I, [uh], ... For awhile I know he had a ...a...a hat shop. It used to be people wore hats, and they would have to have 'em...maintained...blocked. You know about blocking?...Not likely.

RB: Blocking hats? [sigh]...I've heard of it. I don't know it directly.

CC: Alright. That's one thing he did. Another thing he did was he played poker, and very well too. Ahh...I don't know what all else he did; I really don't.

RB: Let's explore the poker...[uh], did you play with him yourself?...and how much...

CC: No.

RB: ...much did you know [bells tinkling] about his...  
CC: No.  
RB: ...poker playing?  
CC: I never played poker with anybody. I, [uh], did some gambling when I was in the army—not poker—and I made piles of money, and I brought it all home, every dime! I sent it home. [laughs] She knows me; she knows me damn well!  
[laughs] Wait \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 315 I talk about how...how tight Judge Green was, the next word is Charlie Cater. [laughs]

RB: O.k. Let's get back to Mr. Trice.  
CC: Who.  
RB: His... his... What's his name, Trice?  
CC: Oh, Lucky Trice.  
RB: Lucky Trice.  
CC: Yeah.  
RB: What about his [interrupted] ...gambling?  
CC: Lafayette Trice.  
RB: Lafayette.  
CC: Yeah.  
RB: O.k. Was he a native from here, or where did he come from?  
CC: He came with a group of black people from down south...most of 'em, I believe...from, [sigh], ...oh shucks...Where did Clinton come from?  
RB: Arkansas.  
CC: That's it, Arkansas. That's where lucky came from.  
RB: How many other, [uh], people [interrupted]..  
CC: How many?...I don't know.  
RB: Was it numerous? ... like, [uh], ...  
CC: Well they...  
RB: ...you know, 30 or 40 people?... or?  
CC: Yeah, I'd say so...something like that.  
RB: O.k.  
CC: Just a guess.  
RB: Do you remember the year?  
CC: No. [pause] No. [Scraping/shuffling? sound 342] ... ahhhh \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_.  
RB: O.k. What ... Where did this kind of gambling that Lucy Trice was involved in...Where did this go on.  
CC: [laughs] In the back room of pool halls.  
RB: Were there a lot of pool halls here in La Grande?  
CC: Oh, there was several but not a lot. Was there? ... 351(S)he [?] doesn't know.  
Ahh...Let me tell you, [uh], about something that's perhaps a little more intreseting. Now, if you go down here and stand by the railroad track for awhile, trains will come by. Some of those trains will have a few old boxcars...they're sort of a dirty yellow. And on the side of these cars, there will be three letters...small letters, not big, and there are not many of these cars anymore, but there is a .... Those letters are P-F-E, which means Pacific Fruit Express, and that dates from a time before refrigeration, before Mr. Carrier [?] invented refrigeration. When they shipped the West Coast produce east in boxcars, where

the temperature was maintained with ice,...those letters mean Pacific Fruit Express. Now, where did the ice come from?...North Powder. The Union Pacific Railroad caused a number of ponds to be created at North Powder, water ponds, not very deep, but covering considerable area.

In the winter time it gets pretty damned cold down there, and the water freezes. And then the crews, hired by Union Pacific, cut the ice and transported it and put in these boxcars to cool the fruit. The man in charge of that operation was, [uh], Herman [?] White, and he comes into this story not so much because he was in charge of the ice production but because, one time, he took a trip to Portland, and he never came back! He disappeared. They never found him. They don't know what happened. His wife's name was Stellena [?], a good woman, a nice-looking woman, and she came up, up near my or to my office across from me several times, probably in connections with her husband's disappearance.

RB: This was about what time?...What year? ... Do you remember.

CC: Ahhh...I can't tell you. It was in the 50's and 60's.

RB: O.k.

CC: [uh], Well, that's the end of that story. The, [uh], Mr. [?] Carrier changed the whole business of maintaining cold temperatures. You know the word? ... "Carrier?" ... You don't?

RB: I...No I don't know the reference you're talking about.

CC: Carrier was the man that invented things like this here...He invented that. He is the man that made it possible for people to live in Texas, and I'm not exaggerating, because when I was in the military, I was in Texas, and I know how it is ... without air-conditioning...It's almost impossible to live there. Well, we could move on to a real story...This story has to do with a farmer out in the valley, who evidently felt in need—in those old days—this is a long time ago—of a set of double harness for his farming operation. In those days that's the way you kept...you got a horse to move alone...was with harness...leather harness. So, he needed a set of double harness. So, he stole a set of double harness.

RB: What's his name?

CC: You're never gonna' here that from me...Ever!

RB: O.k.

CC: Ever, ever, ever...These people are still here—some of them—the man is gone. He was my friend. His father was my friend. No way ever. So, the story develops: they caught this man that stole the harness. They charged him with grand theft [tape 1, side 2 ends]

Charles Cater, narrator

Ron Brand, interviewer

August 3, 2005

tape 2, side 1

RB: ...four. I'm talking with Charlie Cater, and this is tape 2, side 1.

CC: August 3<sup>rd</sup>.  
RB: August 3<sup>rd</sup>, sorry. O.k., go ahead. You were talking...  
CC: Alright. I was telling you about this farmer that stole a...  
RB: Harness [simultaneously]  
CC: ...because he needed a set of harness. Well, they brought him up here, and they tried him, and they found him guilty, and the judge sentenced him to some time in the federal...in the Oregon State Penitentiary. And, the clerks and so forth, and the judge, made up commitment papers, and then the judge delivered the papers to the sheriff, with instructions to take this convicted felon down to Salem and turn him in at the, [uh], penitentiary. So, the sheriff, whose name.... Would you like to know his name?  
RB: Um-hmm.  
CC: His name was Jesse Breshears.  
RB: O.k.  
CC: B-R-E-S-H-E-A-R-S. Jesse Breshears, J-E-S-S-E. So, [uh], the sheriff had a problem, and he talked to this convicted felon, and he said, "I don't have time to take you down to the state pen." Now, listen to this—this is i...very important— So he says to this man, this convict, he says, "I'm going to give you these convictions...commission papers, and I want you should go down and turn yourself in." And then he said, "Will you do that?" Now, these people had known each other for years; they were old acquaintances here in the valley. So the, [uh], sheriff was s...saying, in effect, "I'm gonna' just rely on you to take these commitment papers and go down there and turn yourself in. Will you do that?" And the man says, "Well sure I'll do that, Jesse; of course I will." So, he delivers \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ 036; the sheriff give the man the commitment papers, and the man leaves. And, he goes down to Salem, and he goes to the penitentiary, and he goes to the wardens office, and he has these commitment papers. And, he says that he'd come there to turn himself in to serve the time that's mentioned in these papers. Well, for some reason, the warden said, "Well, I just can't take you in right now; I don't have room," or something. "Can you wait a few days?" The fella says, "Yeah, sure, I can do that."

So, this man went downtown, rented a room in a hotel, and when the warden was ready, he went back up there and turned himself in, and served his sentence...in full! And then, they turned him loose, and he came back up here, and he went to the county clerk's office, and he put in a claim for his hotel bill while he was waiting.

Now, I knew about this; Jesse was a real friend of mine. I checked—or tried to check—through the records, and I found where he had put in his claim, but I did not find where they'd paid him, and that's the end of the story! [laughs]

Now, we have other stories. There was a man that lived in Union—he's gone now. He died two or three years ago. I knew him very well. We used to shoot trap together, there at Cove and Union, and, [uh], the startling thing about this man was his history and his education. His name was George Kincaid, K-I-N-C-

A-I-D, and the startling thing about him was that he had ...some how or other he was a ...[uh], an employee or an appointee of the Oregon State Fire Chief's Office—I don't think I've got the word right—but he had learned, somehow or other, things about fire suppression. The odd thing was that his education ended when he finished the fourth grade, and when I knew him, and just before that, he had taught [pause]...in one of our state universities with no educational background except fourth grade, but he was teaching in one of our universities! Now, if that isn't a good enough story, I'll change it! [laughs] No, that's the end of it, but he did teach in one of the universities. He taught fire suppression. He was, [uh], a... a hired hand or an appointee of the State Fire Marshall.

RB: Do you remember about what time this was?...what decade?

CC: No. I never did know.

RB: O.k. 'Cause that's still... is very important in this county.

CC: Well, I can't tell you. When I knew Mr. Kincaid it was several years ago, because I knew him when I was shooting there, and when he was shooting there, and his wife was there, every time, with him.

RB: O.k. I'd like to go back to the black experience here in the county, and what your contact has been with black citizens here, starting with these men that came up from Arkansas.

CC: Well, you're not gonna' get much out of me on that. [uh], I will say this: that with very minor exceptions, the black people here were damned good citizens. They were friendly with all the rest of us, no matter what our color was. One of them, a man named Field Roberson, bought my mother's house after she died.

RB: This was in La Grande?

CC: Yes.

RB: Do you remember the street?

CC: I sure do. Do you know where the underpass is?...when you leave here to go to Elgin?

RB: Yes.

CC: Well, just this side of that there's a service station—or a repair shop—on the...the west side of the intersection...there...the northwest section. Her house was just this side of that commercial establishment; its there yet today.

RB: O.k.

CC: And the house is there. Across the intersection, there lived a black man by the name of Field, F-I-E-L-D, Roberson, R-O-B-E-R-S-O-N, Field Roberson. After my mother died, I sold her house to Field Roberson with no down payment, and, eventually, it was fully paid off.

RB: O.k. That's s...similar to selling on contract. S'that like selling on contract?

CC: Why sure!

RB: O.k.

CC: Yeah.

RB: Do you know anything more about Field Roberson?

CC: He was a good man, [interrupted] a hard-workin' man.

RB: You had other legal dealings with the black community.

CC: [laughs] [sigh] Yeah, I...I kinda run acrossed one. I didn't do this, and it happened before I got here, but a white woman from this...across the tracks a

ways, I think—I'm not sure where she lived—but she complained against a black man and charged him rape. Now, this was all over and one with when I got here; they told me about it. They wanted to tell me about it, and they sure as hell did!

RB: Who wan....Who told you about it?

CC: The people in the courthouse.

RB: O.k.

CC: You bet! That's it.

RB: What happened in the case from what you learned?

CC: Well, she charged this black man with that. So, the district attorney decided that he would convene a grand jury and find out from witnesses the basis to see if there was a reason to ch...charge this black man with rape. So, they convened the grand jury, and they had one witness. The one witness was the woman...the white woman that complained about rape... so they asked her to tell what happened, and she did. And this is about what she said, " \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_,"<sup>164</sup> she said, "this man came to my house about eight o'clock in the evenin', and he raped me, and then he left. And then he came back about eleven o'clock at night, and he raped me again, and then he left. Then he came back about eleven o'clock...or twelve o'clock, and he was gettin' ready to rape me again, and the kids started crying, and he got mad and left." They didn't charge the man! That was the end of it.

RB: That was the end of the \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_.

CC: That was enough. That was just exactly enough! [laughs]

RB: Were there other cases, [uh], where you defended, [uh], ... You weren't involved in that case, but were there other cases you were involved defending black people here.

CC: Yeah. I can tell you one. I can only think of one right now. There was a white guy by the name of Thad Rosenberg [?], [pause]...and, [uh], he lived, I think, on the other side of the tracks. When you say that, you've built a picture of people.

RB: Where was the other side of the tracks? What's the physical location?

CC: That's where most of the black people lived. Isn't that true?

RB: Which part of La Grande was....?

CC: Oh, that's, [uh], east.

RB: The east side.

CC: On the other side of the track.

RB: O.k.

CC: Well, anyway, Thad Rosenberg got a house over there, and one evening he thought that somebody was about to commit a .... crime on his property. There was a ...a black man involved. He...He thought this black man was rippin' off his car, or something, so he got a gun, and he fired a shot, and it hit a black man, and the bullet went into the black man's chest and lodged near his heart but didn't kill him. Later, he came to me, and I brought an action for damages against Thad Rosenberg for this black man.

RB: Do you remember the person you were working with?...What his name....Not Thad Rosenberg but the man who was shot?

CC: Yeah. His name was Ivory, I-V-O-R-Y. I can't think of his first name. But, anyway, we tried the case, and we won the case! And, we got a ...verdict that



didn't amount to much dollar-wise, but at least it was a...oh, ...a triumph for the black man and me—in a small way. You gotta remember, this was not a big case—it's a little case. I don't think Thad ever held that against me. My helper here is continually astonished, and this just one more astonishing thing, that no matter what I did, and I rubbed people the wrong way—I through them out of my office on one or two occasions; I beat a man up because he did what I didn't like—and I never! encountered any ill will afterwards. Now, we don't why, but she knows that's the way it is. Well...

RB: O.k. Were there criminal charges in this case?

CC: Which case?

RB: [uh].

CC: About the black man.

RB: Yeah, the one who was against the man who did the shooting. [interrupted]

CC: No, no. There might have been; there should have been.

RB: But there weren't.

CC: No.

RB: Do you know why ... there wasn't criminal charges [interrupted]

CC: [laughs] Well...No I do not know why. It's possible because I preempted the thing with an action for damages. Could be. Don't know.

RB: O.k. What else do you know about criminal activity in La Grande?

CC: [laughs] [laughs] I know the, [uh], ... the Elk's Club used to maintain a kind of a ...kind of a little gambling establishment with...machines and things. And, one of the professional gamblers around here—that maintained—that used various machines to make a living, resented the fact that the Elk's Club was infringing on his turf, his business. So, he came to me. He wanted me to shut down the Elk's Club. Well, I was not a member of the Elk's Club, and I never have been, and that's another story, but....And you don't...You never heard this one...so I made contact with certain, [uh], friends, my friends, and I caused that gambling in the Elk's Club to be shut down. The man paid me for doin' that. Ain't much of a story.

RB: O.k. What legal grounds? Were they using slot machines? What were the machines you talked [interrupted] about?

CC: Oh, I think so. I think that's probably what they were doing. \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 288 slot machines are wonderful gadgets—provided you own them. And, I owned one once?

RB: What did you do with it?

CC: I made money—hand over fist. And, I brought it all home. I was in the military at the time. But I want to tell you what the sheriff said to me one time. In fact, he said it to several times. You gotta remember, or at least contemplate, that the sheriff and I were very good friends.

RB: What's the sheriff's name?

CC: Jesse...

RB: Breshears.

CC: ...Breshears.

RB: O.k.

CC: Great man. When I would go up to the courthouse, I would always stop by in his office and say hello, and sometimes he'd say to me, "Charlie, do you think you'll ever amount to anything?"

RB: What was your response?

CC: None. I didn't need to—not at all. [laughs] I think he wasn't disappointed. I don't think I disappointed him.

RB: What else happened with the man who manufactured the slot machines.

CC: He wasn't a maker; he just bought 'em, rented 'em. He became a successful operator over in Hermiston, I believe.

RB: Of slot machines...still?

CC: Oh, ... probably several different kinds of, [uh], [rattling jingle], ways to take people's money. If you, [uh], want my views on gambling, I am definitely opposed to any kinda gambling.

RB: What other kinds? There's slot machines and, [uh], back room gambling that you've talked about. What other kinds do you know about in Union County?

CC: Just operating a law office is enough gamble for me. [laughs] [female voice also laughs] You know when you come here without anything, no..., nobody, with about six bits in your pocket and a wife, in a strange place...thoughts do run through your mind, [laughs], but I wasn't smart enough to think; I just poked along and went ahead, and here I am.

RB: So you never got involved, yourself, with the gambling like you did in the military.

CC: Oh \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_. Oh, no. No. No way...unless operating as I did, running a law business is gambling, and it is to a certain extent. When you hear....you have...and you will again...hear talk about tort reform...

RB: Um-hmm.

CC: Do you know what that is?

RB: They're talking about it now, tort reform.

CC: I can tell you what it is. It is very simple. It is slamming the door in the face of anybody...that has been damaged by anybody else, a corporation, a government, a government agency. They want to fix it, and they blame it on the lawyers. That's my idea of bullshit! Why? Because a lawyer never, never goes to court just alone; he goes with a client. He goes, if he is seeking damages, with somebody that has been injured...or at least he claims he has been injured. And, tort reform is just simply a way to prevent people from having their day in court. Now, there only one way the that ordinary person can get justice in a court where he has been harmed—he has to hire a lawyer. And, how does he pay the lawyer? [pause] Most people don't have money enough to pay a lawyer—believe me; I know, and you know. Lawyers are expensive, some more expensive than others. But there is no way the average person who has been injured or damaged can afford to go to court by paying a lawyer his fee. The way it has to be done is on a contingent fee basis. The lawyer says, "If we win, you get x-dollars, and I get part of it." And that's how the lawyer gets paid.

RB: O.k. Do you know of other people in the county who have been involved, in a noteworthy way, with gambling.

CC: Oh, no. No. [chuckles] No, I don't know. I know, [uh], ... I do not know.

RB: Are there other legal cases you know about?  
CC: No. I have never heard of any legal cases arising out of gambling in Union County, none whatsoever. Now, sooner or later, any effort in that direction just runs out of steam...is terminated by events...and, [uh], we have had a couple of people here that made a living...in that sort of a dusky, dark area, and I know the names of some of them. Who's our friend that is the...was the most, [uh], noticeable? [faint sound like quick horn beeps]444 No. [Female voice: No] No. Never heard of him, or I have heard of him, but I have put nothing together on him. I don't know a thing. It was Robert...no, not Virgil...No, Virgil was a straight arrow, still is. It's Robert.  
RB: What's the story about Robert.  
CC: Oh, he had a few little gadgets that people put money into, and ...  
RB: You're talking about slot machines and similar mechanisms...  
CC: Oh, I think so. I really...Yeah, ... Fallow. Fallow.  
RB: Do you know how to spell his last name?  
CC: F-A-L-L-O-W.  
RB: O.k. What was his history?  
CC: What was what?  
RB: What was history...with his business?  
CC: [laughs] He's just an ordinary guy that tried to make a living. That was the way he did it, and I think he made a pretty good living. But, ...he was lucky. And, one day, he had a physical examination, and they found that he had a serious situation, and they operated on him, and I think they cured him. That right? [aside] Yeah. [faint female voice in background] Yeah, he was a, [uh], ... I don't think he had a... a bad reputation in the community...no, I wouldn't say that. No-siree, th...You know...You know where the Oregon Trail runs right out here?  
RB: Um-hmm.  
CC: Up Gekeler Lane? Yeah. Comes to a [end of tape 2, side 1]

Charles Cater, narrator  
Ron Brand, interviewer  
August 3, 2005  
tape 2, side 2

RB: [uh], Conversation with Charlie Cater on 08/03/2004. This is tape 2, side 2.  
RB: We were talking about a house going out of town, [uh], that was part of the Oregon Trail.  
CC: Yeah. Somebody built a house right square on that old trail. You can see it runnin' up the side of the mountain above where they built the house...The house plugged it. You can't go up the trail.  
RB: Do you know about when the house was built?

CC: No. I have no idea. No...But I do know that the way people got west, when they were...had wagons and oxen or horses or mules, they went up the side of this mountain, over the top, down across the Grande Ronde River and then through the forest, trees. It was a rough deal. The ones that weren't using wagons didn't go that way. They went north right through Elgin or near there.

RB: Up Tollgate Highway.

CC: Huh!

RB: Your talking about Tollgate Highway.

CC: No. It wasn't a highway then.

RB: But Tollgate.

CC: It wasn't even Tollgate. It was just a pass through the forests....north of where you live.

RB: O.k. I wanta close the tape. We've been going for close to an hour and a half, so we'll close the tape and pick up again. Thank you. [tape interruption]

RB: O.k. This is August 17. This is Ron Brand. I'm talking with Charlie Cater for our third session.

RB: Charlie, we're looking at a book on the Klan in La Grande. I'm interested in the history of what you know about Klan people, the effect on the community [interrupted]

CC: Well, what I know is what I read in this book, mostly. And, [uh], [uh], th....my acquaintance with two lawyers, Cochran [?] and Eberhard [?], who were active in the Klan.

RB: What were their first names?

CC: Well, there was George T. Cochran and cog... Colon Eberhard, C-O-L-O-N. Their [uh], b...both gone long ago. But, you gotta remember that this was all past history when I came to La Grande. I got here in 1939, in the fall, and this thing had petered out in the early or mid 20's.

RB: O.k. Yeah. That's all included in the history of that book.

CC: That's true.

RB: You knew that...the...Eberhard and Cochran were both lawyers?

CC: Oh, of course. They had their offices right close to mine.

RB: What kind of lawyers were they?

CC: Well, ...They were old-fashioned and in every way you can think of, they weren't the greatest lawyers in the world, and, [uh], they, [uh], barely were able to acquire some standing in the community, and m...mainly that was done through Cochran's skill and knowledge of water rights. Now, water rights is a word that you don't hear much any more, but water rights were very important to the early residents of the entire west...because of a law or a tradition, [uh], having to do with water rights. And, I'll see if I can think of the words. [pause] The rights depended on a word or two that I haven't had....don't have it right handy...but it refers to the first appropriators, the first person or organization that appropriated the use of water in the west gained a permanent right.

RB: Perpetual. ... Perpetual.

CC: Well yes, I think I, I think that's a good word. [uh], We don't know words like that out in the west, but [laughs] evidently you [laughs], you do. Yeah, I agree;

I'm just teasing you. [laughs]. Anyway, they [uh], that...that law is ... or rule was rigidly followed, and it took or it caused an awful lot of trouble because people would kill each other for water; no question about it...for a long time.

RB: In your [uh], legal practice, did you have to deal with those issues?

CC: No. It was all over. They had settled the water rights in this northeast part of the country before I got here. Cochran was an expert in that area.

RB: Was his standing as a lawyer hurt or helped by his history as a klansman?

CC: I didn't catch that question.

RB: Was he hurt or helped by his history as a klansman?

CC: Oh, it helped him. He was also....he and Eberhard, from time to time, were the head honchos in the ... the Masonic Order here ... it..., which is still, as far as I know, there is still a bunch of Masons running around, and some of 'em are my friends or sh...ought to be. [laughs]. I do not approve of secret societies. I ag...I just...I have very strong feelings about such matters. [uh], [uh], Those things are totally undec...undemocratic, un-American and disgusting.

RB: Was there a lot of crossover between the Masons and the Klan.

CC: Yes, I'm sure there was.

RB: How about o...other organizations?

CC: I don't know about that, but to...your main crossovers were Cochran and Eberhard....because they were both, from time to time, the head man in the, [uh], Masonic Lodge and, at the same time, were very active in this Klu Klux Klan thing.

RB: O.k. Do you think some of the other members of the Klan came from the Masons or other groups.

CC: Yeah, I, I think so. I haven't studied this recently, and I have the book in my hands...that has the minutes of their meetings in it. I don't remember.

RB: I remember, in the book, there is some concern in the ...in the minutes for different people who were associating with wrong kind of people...

CC: Oh yes.

RB: ...like if they hired a Catholic as a cook...things like that. [uh], What a...what a...what of the problems between ... the Catholics and whatever other groups that the Klan had targeted that you knew of?

CC: The Klan had a very narrow view of acceptability—Catholics were unacceptable; Jews were unacceptable; blacks were unacceptable. The, [uh], strange thing about it was that although they were prejudiced against, [uh], blacks, there is hardly any mention of that in this book that I recall, nor any problem with the Klan and the black community. I don't recall any. The, [uh], secret, if there is a secret about the blacks here, is they were hard-working, decent. They, [uh], associated, [uh], principally with their own kind, and they got along just beautifully mostly...most of the time, almost all of the time, with the white community...except, [uh], those people that are a little distorted in their views like the Klu Kluxers.

RB: Were there other groups that hay....that had some of the same anti-black feeling? [uh].

CC: Not here.

RB: Not here.

CC: No way.

RB: O.k. How 'bout the Mormons in ... in

CC: The [laughs], ... Well, you're touching on a sensitive subject now. The... Yes, the Mormons carried out [phone ringing], for a long time, a prejudice against blacks. And, the way they did that, or the reason they did it, was because Joseph Smith claimed, as part of his, [uh], knowledge and background of the Mormon establishment, ... He claimed that he was able to read the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, and from reading those hieroglyphics, he, [uh], came to the conclusion that the blacks were beyond the pale. Now, beyond the pale means something, and I have an idea you know what that means. It comes from Ireland. Are you Irish?

RB: Nope.

CC: You oughtta be!

RB: [laughs] Can't do anything about it.

CC: [laughs] No, it's too late. No, ... Beyond the pale had to do with they'd segregated people in Ireland. Pale is spelled, P-A-L-E. Now, I've started to make a comparison... Well, the Irish Catholics were beyond the pale in the Klan lexicon.

RB: Was there a Catholic Church in the town when you came here?

CC: Yes.

RB: What was the effect on them, or ...

CC: I don't know... if, maybe Sarah [?] does, but I don't know. [uh], ... Sometime after I arrived here and had friends and acquaintances, on , [uh], ... a couple of... two or three occasions... my wife and I [glass? clinking] accepted invitations to visit and party, [uh], in a small way with, [uh], [uh], ... I, I'm trying to... I wish Sarah was here, [uh]... [uh]... There was a dentist here, and he was a... a... They were... I think they were Catholics; I'm sure they were, but his wife was. She, [uh], was a Basque, or I think she was a Basque... at least, [uh], ... yeah, I'm, I'm pretty sure of that. Those people, [uh], settled down in ... Malheur County... the Basques. If you drive down the roads over there, you will see a little corral for animals, like sheep or cattle or whatever, and the fence is made of brush... s... piled up. That's the m... mark of the Basque.

RB: Was there any of that with the sheep people around here?

CC: Yes—just a minute.

[FEMALE VOICE] That was for me.

CC: Huh. \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ [tape interruption] 190 Name was Hill.

[FEMALE VOICE] Gerald Hill.

CC: His wife's name, believe it or [laughs] not, was Santa.

[FEMALE VOICE] Well, it still is.

CC: And still is [laughs].

RB: So she is still living?

CC: She... I... She i... She is. I don't know about the doctor. The last time I took...

[FEMALE VOICE] Yes, she is.

CC: He's still living, but he is... his memory has deteriorated according to his wife. She told me over the phone when I was talkin' to her one day. These are interesting people, those Basques.

RB: O.k. Back. What...What effect did you see when you came here on the...the different groups—the Catholics, Masons, Elks—there's a lot of different groups in La Grande.

CC: Well, [uh], [uh], I, [uh], Nothing! I didn't notice it. I wasn't the type of a person to notice those things. I came from the back woods of western Oregon and by way of, [uh], Tillamook and Portland and Saskatchewan in Canada and places like that. And, I had gone to a country school, or schools, all of my, [uh], ...life up to that time. I didn't know much about anything. But, [uh], ...ahhh....And, I didn't joint anything except two things, and that was the National Rifle Association and a local rifle club, and that's all I ever jointed except the human race. [laughs]. And, I used to brag about being a member of the human race. I'm not so sure that I ....

RB: Brag anymore? [female laughter] [laughs].

CC: That's about it, yes. Now, coming back to the way things were when I got here, all of that is, [uh], feelings...one against others, like the Klan created...were gone when I got here. I saw no...no signs of it. And, [uh], my family, my mother, my father, and all my aunts and uncles and grandfather, except one...One grandfather, [uh], my father's father, was a Methodist preacher. But other than that, there was no feelings one way or another about religion in all of my relatives. None. So, I come here as a kind of a tabula rasa.

[FEMALE VOICE] Um hmm, [laughs].

CC: You know the word [laughs]. You know what it means. So, I was open to any decent approach or friendly approach. And, one of the approaches that came to me, and it still exists,...When I went to visit with Dr. Hill and Santa, usually there would be, also, another guest...a Catholic priest, Father ...

[FEMALE VOICE] Hank? Father Hank?

CC: Father ...[pause]. Father Hank.

RB: That is Hank Albrecht.

CC: Yes, that's the one. His real name is Henry or Heinrich Albrecht. That's German.

RB: Um-hmm.

CC: And, he's, [uh], he's been here a long time, and, [uh], it was a ...pleasure ...for me, and probably my wife too, to get acquainted with Father Hank. Neither of us are Catholics; it doesn't mean a thing. Sarah is a Catholic. I am nothing. But, [uh], now I must tell you about Father Hank and ...Mrs. Goss and Bill Goss. [uh], A number of years ago, when Father Hank was a young priest here, he got acquainted with one of the members of his congregation, Mrs. Goss, Bill's wife. Bill is the manager of Goss Motors now, or I think he is; it's either him or his son. And, [uh], ...But anyhow, his wife was a member of the church, and she was very friendly with Father Hank. As a result of which, she, [uh], extended a continuing invitation to him to have supper with them on Saturday evening, and she did until she died.

RB: What was her name?

[FEMALE VOICE] Donna.

CC: Donna Goss. That's Bill Goss's former wife. She's dead now. That....[pause] [rising car or motor? sound] ...That creates or results in, what I think of, as a very

interesting and a very good story. Not much to it. But, Mrs. Goss couldn't do it anymore; she was gone. Her husband, Bill Goss, not a Catholic at all, anymore than my dog is, he carried on.

RB: And continued the friendship with Father Hank.

CC: And fed him every Saturday night...Bill Goss. That is the spirit of this community in my view [tearfully]...That is better than anything the Klu Klux Klan ever devised or followed.

RB: But, in the book, and I think, from what I know of the Klan, they promoted the flag, the constitution and the Bible. In some ways they were like a populous group, or they pretended to be.

CC: Well, they had a whole bunch of prejudices. Here is the first line of this study that was created by ....

RB: Um-hmm.

CC: 350...a number of people here. "In our investigation we have found...we have heard the La Grande Chapter of Klu Klux Klan referred as sort of like a social club, which was popular around the 1920's. This was not the case. The minutes reveal an organization with strong anti-immigrant and particular anti-Catholic position..." and so forth and so on. "Through boycotts they seek to bring about the dismissal of Catholics in local enterprises." They kept a Catholic, [uh], lawyer from his desired, [uh], kind of a judgeship.

RB: Or which man who wanted to be judge?

CC: I'm going to tell you that, as soon as I find it here. \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ I think he was a lawyer when I got here.

RB: Is it R. J. Kitchen [?]?.

CC: Yeah.

RB: O.k.

CC: And he was acceptable to the Klan. And, not everybody was. If you were Irish and Catholic, you were out in the cold. I'm gonna find that ...[tape interruption] Well, two of the students in the school...

RB: Um-hmm.

CC: ...wrote an essay, and the...and it ...and it was about the Klu Klux Klan.

RB: Do you know what year that was?

CC: I [laughs] have no idea, but the date here is ...[pause] [tape interruption]

RB: You're talking about students duri...while the Klan was still in existence, wrote a paper about them.

CC: Yes, yes.

RB: O.k.

CC: This.. This happened during that time, and the teachers saw through it and wouldn't read it to the class. So, this upset the, [uh], Klan, and they had sometin' to say about it, and here is what they said, "We, [uh], will someday give that teacher an education in Americanism and sing to her a little song. Quote: If you don't like the hand that's feeding you, go back to Ireland where you belong." [laughs]. I tell ya, these people got powerful ideas, and ignorance. As I observed to myself, an anybody that'll listen, these Klansmen were nothing more or less than retarded teenagers. They never grew up!

RB: And you knew some of these people afterwards.



CC: Why sure it did.  
RB: After you came here.  
CC: Why sure I did.  
RB: Not just to the two lawyers.  
CC: Of course I did... [uh] ... There was a man called Sing [?]. That's an interesting word isn't it.  
RB: How do you spell his name?  
CC: S-I-N-G.  
RB: O.k.  
CC: [uh], What was his name?  
[FEMALE VOICE] Millering.  
CC: It wa...It was Sing Millering.  
RB: O.k.  
CC: And he, [uh], either by, [uh], by his own volition or by, [uh], the urging of his employer, he was sort of active in this organization.  
RB: Who was his employer?  
CC: C. W. Bunting, who was a farm implement agency here.  
RB: O.k.  
CC: And, Bunting was all for the, [uh], narrow-minded, ignorant, despicable attitudes of ...of the people that became active members of the Klan. Not all of them did. The strange thing I judge from reading is that some of 'em slipped backwards a little now an [laughs] then.  
RB: So, what other effect on the ...on the community? It sounds like this kind of attitude—of anger and hatred toward others—was ...had support in the community.  
CC: Yes, it did. Ahh...Not everybody. I ...I would say...\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 448... although they made quite a bit of noise, actually they were in the minority, [uh]...That's my idea.  
RB: Minority here in La Grande. O.k.  
CC: Yes.  
RB: But they did get.... Did they get people in business and some of the leaders in the community.  
CC: Yes they did.  
RB: Did they get backing from them?  
CC: Yes. Yes, they did that. And, they got those people to go along with, [uh], ...their narrow...[uh], selfish, cruel attitudes.  
RB: Do you know any other businesses or community leaders who were supporting this?  
CC: When I got here, it was all over... [uh], except for one thing, possibly. As I mentioned earlier, a mill owner in Wallowa County thought it would be to his advantage to, [uh], acquire some of the good, strong, black loggers or workmen from down south, like in, ...What state is that?...Well, anyway, he brought a whole bunch of 'em up there, and they did what they were hired to do and did it well. I got acquainted with a number of them. They came to my office. We, my wife particularly, took care of some of their [end of tape 2, side 2]

Charles Cater, narrator  
Ron Brand, interviewer  
August 17, 2004  
tape 3, side 1

- RB: On August 17<sup>th</sup>. O.k. We were talking about the Klan, and you were talking about some black loggers who came up from the south...
- CC: Yeah.
- RB: ...to Wallowa County.
- CC: What was the ...s...state they came from? Same ...Clinton.
- RB: Arkansas. [FEMALE VOICE]
- CC: Most of them came from Arkansas, I believe.
- RB: O.k. You got acquainted with them after they had gone to work in Wallowa County, and then they were over here in Union County.
- CC: Well, they moved back and forth. [uh], They did...They worked in Wallowa County, and then sometimes, like anybody else, they would come over here for shopping or for services, maybe a doctor's appointment or, [uh], to come to see me or something, see. Yeah, they were...and then one of 'em was a ...several of 'em were ...became permanent residents of La Grande. One of them was Lafayette Trice, T-R-I-C-E—the one we call Lucky Trice.
- RB: O.k. You mentioned him before.
- CC: I did.
- RB: What do you remember about him?
- CC: [laughs] He loved to hunt and fish, and, [uh], he was, [uh], not inclined to harbor un...unpleasant thoughts about other people. He was a decent man. Now, he would tell the truth about some of the people who were in the Klan because he knew about that. And, he told me once that he had a ...acquired a list of the ....some sort of a document that had information about the Klan, and I don't know what it was. It may have been this little book here, and it may have been something else, but he told me this. [uh]....
- RB: What kind of work did you do with Mr. Trice? Did you represent him in ...
- CC: You know, I don't recall ever representing him, but, [uh], I don't think he needed a lawyer. What he needed was a deck of....a poker deck.
- RB: [laughs]
- CC: And, [uh], [laughs], \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ but he did. He was a gambler, or, [uh], part of the time, and a very good one. And...And, he got along just fine with the people he played with.
- RB: Who did he play with?
- CC: All kinds of people.
- RB: And this...this was mixed black and white.
- CC: Oh, ...mostly white I would say.
- RB: O.k. And this was about what time?
- CC: Oh [groaning]
- RB: In the '40's?
- CC: Yeah.
- RB: O.k.

CC: That'll do. I was gone in '44 to '46, though. I wasn't here.

RB: O.k. But, you knew other people in the black community as a lawyer?

CC: What was that question?

RB: You knew other people in the black community as a lawyer?

CC: Well...They came to my office for a ... tax problems. I don't remember any other legal services that they needed from me or my wife. [pause]

[FEMALE VOICE] Klansmen needed their...

CC: [laughs]

[FEMALE VOICE] ...robes made.

CC: Very simple, and short and simple. They wanted to wear these white gowns, you know, and the peaked caps—white.

RB: Um-hmm.

CC: [uh] They had ...had to have a tailor to make them. The only tailor in town was a Jew. [laughs]

[FEMALE VOICE] [laughs]

CC: I love that. [laughs]

RB: So, what did they do?

CC: Oh...I ... I think they squirmed and went ahead and did what they thought they could get away with. [laughs]

RB: O.k. One of the things I remember from the book is that they were trying to effect the moral outlook of people, and they were against gambling and prostitution. Did they...What effect did they have on...like your friend, [uh], Lucky?

CC: They were all gone by that time.

RB: Do you...Did you hear [interrupted]

CC: See, I came here in '39, and they were all...

RB: Yeah.

CC: ...it was all gone by that time.

RB: Do you know of any effect they had on the morals of the people in La Grande?...from what...the stories you heard?

CC: Well, ...They certainly didn't elevate the morals, because morals have to do with decency, conscience, [uh], fair treatment of others, and they certainly went the wrong road there! No question about it.

RB: Do you know what effect...other effects they may have had politically, either in the State ...

CC: Yes, I do, [uh], ..

RB: ....or locally?

CC: They tried their best to get a law passed, and they were successful in making it possible....or impossible for the Catholic Church to operate parochial schools for...grade school kids we'll say. They ...They, [uh], ...They gave their best, and they were successful. But, that's not the end of the story. It was later found by the Supreme Court to be unconstitutional. [laughs]

RB: Was that law out of effect by the time you came here?

CC: Yes.

RB: O.k.

CC: Yes, they, [uh],...I don't remember when it happened. I have not...I haven't read the decision, but I know from reading—wherever I read it—that the thing,

- \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_, ...in this here—it's in this here. With that, and this, this is the best, basically, written record and comment on the situation then and now.
- RB: The paper Charlie's talking about is a, [uh], a study on the relationship of Walter Pierce, who was...had been governor, with the Klan group in La Grande. He attended some meetings. It appears to be a political decision on his part.
- CC: Well,...He...He, [uh], ... I think he does what politicians usually do; they'll accept whatever help they can get. Sometimes they have to damage their own system of ...of a...of what's right and wrong to do it, but they will do it anyway, and it happens in every place where there's a, [uh], a vote or an election, and it ha...happened here. I think Walter gave them encouragement, and I think he was...supported their idea about the, [uh], school bill it mentions here....He supported the school bill, which was—it says here—a high priority for the Klan. It was their way of undercutting the Catholics—take away the school kids, and you cut off part of the thing makes them different from the other people.
- RB: Did you ever meet Walter Pierce.
- CC: Yes, I did—when I was a tiny child. I went to a picnic with my parents, somewhere in western Oregon, a long, long time ago, and he was there.
- RB: But you didn't meet him in La Grande or [interrupted]
- CC: No, no, ...no, ...no [sigh]. [tape interruption]
- RB: I asked Charlie about the chi....what he knows about a Chinatown in La Grande.
- CC: I don't know much about that, but I will tell you about a dark, dark chapter ...in the northwestern part of Oregon, and it has to do with a number of Chinese people. They were referred to in most as miners, and they were working the gravels in the Snake River. You don't know about this. You never heard this, did you?
- RB: No.
- CC: There was prejudice against the Chinese here, and there was prejudice in Wallowa County. There were a number of these Chinese down there working the gravels in the Snake River for gold, and some....rather cruel and narrow-minded and prejudiced people with rifles....got up on the ridges and rocks above where the Chinese were working and shot a lot of them in cold blood. It is part of the history of Wallowa County, and there are things...or were things in the records of Wallowa County that told something about this situation. The, [uh], authorities were, [uh], probably as equally prejudiced against the Chinese as the run-of-the-mill loggers and lumbermen and other people in Wallowa County. And, those people that killed the Chinese there, in their diggings, were never punished.
- RB: Were some of these Chinese also living in Union County?
- CC: That I don't know; I don't think so.
- RB: \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ [interrupted]
- CC: There were some here, because they had, [uh], ...in excavating, they've dug up things that they are able to identify as things that the Chinese group had here, right here, but they're gone, and they have been for a long, long time.
- RB: Do you know what kind of work they did here?...the Chinese...
- CC: I have no idea.
- RB: ...in Union County. [tape interruption]
- RB: The Millering [?] we were talking about is listed as a Carl Millering.

CC: Well, let's see what we can find here.

RB: You know him as Sing? ... Millering, S-I-N-G.

CC: Yeah, well, that was, [uh], the nickname of one of the Millerings, but, [uh], ...

RB: He was the one involved with the Klan, high up in the Klan.

CC: Well, [laughs], \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ 168 say high, but I think Sing had something to do with it because of his employer, Mr. Bunting, \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ think he wanted him to be active in it as well as he could. [tape interruption]

RB: What other groups do you think the Klan targeted and...particularly with your knowledge of the people, [uh], like Cochran, who you knew later on. What groups did they dislike? We have Catholics and blacks and Jews.

CC: How about foreigners, any kind of a ...outlander that came from someplace else.

RB: Were [interrupted]

CC: He wasn't welcome here. [laughs]

RB: What were those groups?...like you've mentioned Basques.

CC: They, [uh], the Basques, [uh], tended—I would guess—to mind their own business and not in any way, as far as I know, become involved with these kind of people. They wouldn't be willing to do that. They had enough problems without that. And, [uh], they have formed, [uh], a significant part of our society in Oregon, the Basques. There was one of them that was the...the head man in one of the big Oregon banks in Portland. Right now I c...don't recall his name, but he certainly was a Basque, and he certainly was a...a real banker, a real gung-ho type. [uh], Perhaps that is, [uh], something they bring with them.

RB: Do you know, [uh], Basques in Union County?...and what kind of work they did?

CC: Well, yes. [laughs] Where's my phone book. [tape interruption]

RB: O.k. You don't remember their names, but you do remember several Basques in the community.

CC: Oh, yes. [simultaneously] There were...They were...[interrupted]

RB: How did you know them?

CC: Well, they were part of the society, and, [uh], I don't recall any serious work that I did for them, but, [uh], I just don't know. [tape interruption] that the Klan would be opposed to ... the Basques.

RB: They weren't opposed to them?

CC: I think they would be, but that's guessing now; that's not a good thing.

RB: You don't know it directly?

CC: No.

RB: Or from comments from people you've ...

CC: I...

RB: ...you knew?

CC: No, \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ 215... It's an odd thing, but, [uh], the Basque people that came here melted right into the society, \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ 218, although, [laughs], I mentioned about the fences they made around their corrals, which were much different than the barbed wire people. [laughs].

RB: Could you describe those fences again?

CC: Well, they were just, [uh], ...They were interwoven branches of brush; brush that grew right there where they were working.

RB: They had some of these in Union County?

CC: I have never seen any in Union County. That doesn't mean they're not here.  
RB: Other ranchers were using barb wire at this time?  
CC: Oh, ever...Yes. The barbed wire changed the whole economy of the west, not only here but, [uh], everywhere, especially in what used to be, early on, the open range. With the advent of barbed wire there was no more open range, period.  
RB: Did you, legally, ever get involved with open and closed range, [uh], disputes?  
CC: No.  
RB: You didn't.  
CC: No..  
RB: You didn't?  
CC: Never. [tape interruption]  
RB: O.k. This is a Basque who settled in Union County?  
CC: Well, he had a ... he had a sheep operation up the river.  
RB: What was his name again?  
CC: Toney Vey, V-E-W...or V-E-Y.  
RB: O.k.  
CC: V-E-Y, Vey. And then there was, [uh], the January family, Basques, from across the hill. Their headquarters were over there in Umatilla County, and, [uh],....The Irish tended to gravitate toward sheep too, as well as the Scotch. And, by the way, [uh], ....the...the herders...[uh]...especially the Scotch and English herders...sheep herders...were some...of the most in...[tearful?]261..intelligent and well-informed people that you'd be inclined to meet anywhere. Now, the reason for that was they had to spend so much time alone that they spent it reading and thinking, and, [uh], being neighborly with people that came by. On time I was working in a case in Umatilla County, in Pendleton, and I had to come back at the end of the session, and it was dark; I had to come back in the night. And, [uh], I was coming down this grade over here—just out of La Grande, [uh], two or three miles, four miles—and I saw something, [uh], moving across the road in front of me.

So, that's time to put the brakes on, you know, and I did. And, [uh], I stopped, and it turned they were sheep, and they were...had got loose from the herder had them corralled or controlled. So I pulled off the road and looked around, and up of the road a ways, I saw a...a tent. And so I went over there, and the shepherd was there, and he was asleep, and I woke him up and told him that his sheep were wandering around in the [laughs] road. So, he...he got up and got his dogs and controlled the sheep, and then he invited me to have coffee with him. Now, coffee in a [laughs], [laughs], ...shepherd [laughs], [laughs], ...shepherd coffee is sumpin' else, I will tell you! Because the way they make it, some of 'em, not all of 'em, [laughs], ..They will put grounds in the, [uh], water and let it settle and stir it up and pour, [uh], water, [uh], coffee off and leave the grounds in the pot, and then put some more water on it...the grounds. [laughs] That's shepherd coffee, believe me! I don't say that all did that, but some of 'em did, and it's well known, and people will comment about shepherd coffee. [laughs] So, that was...I had an opportunity to see a...quite a few of those

herders during the trial we had about the Boylin [?] thing. And, [uh], ...They are interesting.

RB: This was the trial in Pendleton.

CC: No here.

RB: Here in La Grande.

CC: There was one there too, but that was a Federal District Court, had to do with a violation as, [uh], the government thought that Tom and some of the others had, [uh], broken the rules having to do with mortgaged property. You see, the thing is that the, [uh], Oregon prosecutor, a man named Dillard by the way; his name was D-I-L-L-A-R-D. He just didn't understand the sheep business, and, [uh], it didn't take a country boy like me very long to understand the sheep business, because they ...they come here in the, [uh], mountains, and they take their flocks up in the mountains, and ...and they feed 'em all summer, and they bring 'em back, and then they have to separate the lambs from the ewes. In the meantime, they have made contracts for the sale of, [uh], of their excess sheep, lambs mostly. And, not only that, they have, [uh], arranged, [uh], to pay off the liens, mortgage liens, because they mortgaged these sheep. So, it is a...inevitable that sheep are goin' to be sold; they have to be; you can't keep a whole bunch sheep [laughs] the rest of your life! [laughs].

So, they sell off the lambs and take the ewes and the bucks and go over to ...Butter Creek and sand, and they spend the winter there. And then the next spring they lamb-out again, and then they come back to the mountains. And now, they don't do that anymore. It's kinda too bad. it

RB: O.k. The question I asked Charlie is, [uh], what he knows about newspaper publishing in La Grande. He did know Bob Moody, quite well.

CC: Well, I don't know everything there is to know about it. I've already told you some that, [uh], I thought, and I still think, that the power company acquired the ownership of the newspaper and used it to present their c...c... contentions having to do with people's utility district, and they also slandered me and a few other people. And, [uh],...But, that's all gone; it's all past, and we've had some very good publishers since them, and one of them is mentioned in, [uh], ...one of 'em is Robert Moody.

RB: O.k.

CC: He was the publisher of th...for a number of years, of the Observer.

RB: Who was it that s... Who was the publisher, you said, slandered you? And, [interrupted],

CC: A man named Fred Waybret [?].

RB: ...how did he slander you? [simultaneously]

CC: He was the owner. I don't know who was, [uh], actually operating the paper. And, I don't remember the details, and \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 392 ...and the way he slandered me. But it was...it was a ... a statement that I had been guilty of some serious thing before I got here. Well, if I was guilty of anything, it was goin' to school, as that's all I did...until I got here. And, when I got, [uh], through school, I came here. But I wanta talk a little bit about, [uh], one of the editors...that, [uh], operated the news—the Observer—in the later years and, [uh], in the later part of

- my, [uh], pr... professional life as a lawyer...is that he was a Jewish boy, a Jew boy, from Ohio, I believe, where my wife came from. His name was Eisler, Gary Eisler.
- RB: Do you know how to spell his last name?
- CC: Yes I do! E-I-S-L-E-R.
- RB: O.k.
- CC: It is **the** way Eisler is spelled. [laughs] I knew another Eisler; he was doctor from Chicago, where you come from. One of the best surgeons I ever had to treat me, Dr. Eisler. Well anyway, Gary Eisler was the head man here on the paper, [rattling, clinking sound] and he was very active, and he did a good job, and finally he left and went down to Portland, and later he died. Too bad. [uh] When he came from Ohio, he had, [uh], some of he prejudices that people have from the east about firearms. Now, my life has been so s...closely associated with firearms, all my life, until I got old enough so I couldn't do it anymore. So, I took, [uh], Gary out with me to the rifle range, and I took along several firearms, and we sh...shot those things at targets and so forth. And, it turned out, to my, [uh], amazement, that Gary Eisler was a \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 450 natural at shooting, and he did very well in comparison to me, who had had years of experience. So, that was the end of that. He, [uh], he acquired his own weapons after that, and I think I went out with him, and we tried them out too. And, that was about the end of that, and then, two or threes years later, he left here and went to Portland and, and he finally died down there—within the last three years.
- RB: O.k. Do you know any of the other publishers or editors or what their...and what their effect on the community has been.
- CC: No, no, no I don't. [uh] There was one, [uh], editor by the name of Frank Shiro, S-H-I-R-O, that operated the thing, [uh], the newspaper, or helped run the newspaper during the squabble here about the people's utility district. We're having a ss...somewhat similar in Portland right now; I read about in the Paper.
- RB: Um-hmm.
- CC: And, if you read papers, you know too, [laughs], and you do read n...papers, don't you? So did Jack Kennedy.
- RB: You're talking about President Kennedy? [tape interruption]
- CC: \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 490
- RB: The question is about Charlie's history, [uh].. He's won some awards for his shooting, and he's been involved with the National Rifle [wind chimes?] Association, [uh], much of his life.
- CC: [uh] As I said [end tape 3, side 1]

Charles Cater, narrator  
Ron Brand, interviewer  
August 17, 2004  
tape 3, side 2



CC: ...contrary to the way that most [plastic rattling sound] profession sartors [?] do, they join as many different organizations as they can in order, they believe, to assist them in getting a start in a new community or, [uh], to build a practice, medical or legal, or whatever. But I didn't quite do that. I ... I joined a local rifle club and the National Rifle Association, and I'm still a life member of the National Rifle Association, and I am member of every single local shotgun club in the valley here. Well, anyway, [uh], .. a short time after I got here in '39, the Japanese made a terrible mistake at Pearl Harbor. And, the first thing you know, we're involved head-over-heals in a war. Well, [uh], it occurred the people that I associated with, young men and older men and people that thought that the defense of our country, [uh], required their assistance, and I thought the same thing, so we got together, and we practiced the things that we could practice at...which...in shooting, and the use and handling of firearms. One of them was a man named Mo...Morgan. He was the county engineer at the time.

RB: What's his first name.

CC: I don't know his first name. It \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_025 ...I don't know, but his last was Morgan, M-O-R-G-A-N. And, [uh], he had, [uh], military experience, and he used that to help us learn the things that he was ...thought that we should learn and that I thought we should learn. And it turned out rather well. As I continued to shoot everytime I could do it, and then finally Uncle Sam, in 1944, sent me a letter and said you, boy, are needed. Well, at that time, I had just got started here, and I thought of myself as a lawyer. During my experience at Willamette University I had studied French and German, in what I fondly thought of as preparation to study in Europe. How in the heaven's [laughs] name I was ever goin' to get to Europe, I hadn't the foggiest notion. I did never get to Europe, but I did study everything I could in preparation. But when they asked me the things that they asked me, when they were inducting me into the military, I did not tell 'em anything about the fact that I was a lawyer, that I had studied French and I had studied German. I didn't tell them a single thing about that. I did tell 'em one thing that I thought was important at that time. I told 'em that...that I was skillful with a rifle. And, [uh], they didn't forget that, and I kept r...reminding them. So they sent me down to Camp Fannon [?], Texas, and I became a part of the 66<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion, and, [uh], went through the training there.

And, at the end of the training, one of the things they did, and they always did it, I guess—they had a shooting match for the whole group of us, and we sh...fired, shot the rifles they had issued to us. And, I don't mind saying that the one they issued me was the lousiest piece of junk I ever saw in my life. Before I could make it work, I had to practically to work it over, and I knew how to do it. But, anyway, I won that shooting match, and they gave me a trophy, and its downstairs on the mantle by the fireplace, in all the junk that's piled up there, because they're workin' on my house, you know.

RB: What year was that?

CC: That was between '44 and '46.

RB: O.k.

[Here Charlie Cater speaks at length about his military career.] 053

[He speaks of Dr. Eisner, whom he met in the military.] 110

RB: Did you know other men who returned from WW II here in Union County? 120

CC: Yes, I do.

RB: What was your acquaintance with them.

CC: One of 'em was a friend of mine that I dealt with; he run a service station in Baker. He lives here in La Grande now.

RB: What was his name?

CC: I'll tell you; I'm not through: Dallas Dean, like Jimmy Dean, Dallas Dean. He lives here now. He's married to a young woman by the name of Charlene [?], and she was one of my clients years ago. But, an odd thing happened, and I've told you part of it. When they sent me to Austin, to the general hospital there, it interrupted what they, uh, had planned for people like me.

[Here Charlie Cater speaks at length about his military career.]

RB: Do you know...Do you remember his name, the one who died in the Hergen [?] Forest?

CC: Sergeant Clauson. [?]

RB: Do you know his first name.

CC: No. Sergeant Clauson. He got hit in the head with a cannonball from a German gun.

[Here Charlie Cater speaks at length about his military career.] 180

RB: This was in that other state—you meant Arkansas, I think?

CC: Yes.

RB: Were any of the other men from Union County ...

CC: No.

RB: ...there with you, or you were separated from them.

CC: No. I don't know where they were. But I...I didn't even see Mr. Clinton in Arkansas.

RB: O.k.

CC: [laughs]

RB: What did you...What contact did you have after you after you got back from the war, [uh], with other servicemen here in La Grande and in the County?

CC: Really, [uh], none, except Dallas Dean.

RB: Just Dallas Dean.

CC: Now, however, here about two or three years ago, they, [uh], ...and, [uh], ...They a...They invited the veterans to come in and get, [uh], shots for, [uh], ...a virus. What is it?

RB: A flu virus?

CC: Yeah.

RB: O.k.

CC: So I was... There was a whole, whole bunch of us down there in the new building, waiting and got shots, and that's [uh], that's it.

RB: Did you remember any of them?

CC: Well, they weren't with me, and I wasn't with them. The only one that I knew that ...except, [uh], the judge, Judge Brownton [?], was,[uh], in the military the same time was, but he carried a law book rather than a gun. I carried a gun, for whatever it's worth. Then there was another man; his name was [uh], [uh], oh, I can't think of it. [clink noise] Who was the district attorney after, [uh], [uh], after Mr. Helm? Well, anyway.

RB: Do you remember Judge Brownton's first name?

CC: Wesley.

RB: Wesley Brownton.

CC: Wesley Fredrick Brownton. He was a Methodist, and that's the way they do things. [laughs]

RB: Three names.

CC: No. Wesley is the word, you know.

RB: Yeah.

[FEMALE VOICE] Was it "Wasley?"

CC: There, [uh],... You know that's a kind of an interesting thing. I think we touched on this last time, but you didn't have the recorder. Sometime along the way after Judge Brownton retired, why, [uh], we had another judge, who was a lawyer here for awhile. His name was Wasley, W-A-S-L-E-Y. What was his first name?

[FEMALE VOICE] Warner.

CC: Warner Wasley. Now, this is one of the strangest things, to me, because he was an acceptable judge; nobody complained—maybe he complained, because he quit judging; he quit practicing law, and he's a farmer right over there, several miles over north.

RB: Still in Union County?

CC: Yep.

RB: O.k. Up by Summerville.

CC: Could be. I don't know just where it is.

RB: O.k.

CC: Somewhere out there. Now, this is ...this is a little strange, it seemed to me. In spite of the experience that I had with my own father, because he was a successful salesman, businessman, in Portland, and all of a sudden he quit it, and ever after all he wanted to do was be a farmer...to the extent that if he couldn't acquire his own land, he would work, and did, as a hired hand on farms in Saskatchewan, Canada, in Tillamook, Oregon, in, [uh], [uh], around Forest Grove in Yamhill County. He worked there for a man who had a rather odd name. His last name was Smith, but his first name was Plez [?]. He was Plez Smith; my father worked for him. He...among other things, I think a few sheep too, by the way. Anyway, so Warner Wasley preferred to be a farmer than a lawyer or a judge. He's not the only one; I mentioned my father, same thing. Don't understand it, never did. But, there was a doctor here....What was his name?...Clenege [?]

[FEMALE VOICE] Shelly Much?

CC: Nope.

[FEMALE VOICE] Laser?

CC: Nope. Had a, [uh], an English or a North...Norse name. That doesn't matter, doesn't matter. This doctor was a good doctor. People liked him; I liked him. He, [uh], ... I went to him once or twice for something or other. And,[uh], ...he wasn't happy doctoring. He didn't show it, but he proved it. What he wanted to do was build buildings, and he quit doctorin' and went to building buildings. That's what he did.

RB: About what time was this?

CC: That's about 15 years ago.

RB: So maybe 1990?

CC: Or maybe a little longer than that.

RB: O.k.

CC: I don't really know. He was a good man. We liked him. He was a good doctor, but he wanted to build things, and that's what he did. [laughs]

RB: Do you know any other interesting characters like this, who switched careers or, [uh], did one thing and then turned right around and did something else?

CC: Oh I can tell you one thing—what I learned from my father—if I learned it all, and I'm not sure I did, but the result was. When I came here, I never left. I never tried to do anything else.

RB: Other than the law. O.k. Let's get back to your hunting. Along with your expertise with a rifle, you hunted while you were here. Who did you hunt with?

CC: Oh, [uh], [laughs]. One of my hunting partners was a man named Howard Pederson [?]. He was of Danish extraction; so was my grandfather. And, [uh], in the first five years that I hunted with Howard, he killed eight elk, and not one of 'em had a antler on it. And then I got lucky. I hadn't fired a shot for five years—five years that I had hunted with him—and then we went to a place...east of Union, back in the roads and trails and things back in there, and we picked out a place. He picked out a place where he wanted to be, and I picked out a place where I would wait. The object is to wait for the animals; you may not know this, but that's one way to hunt elk and sometimes deer too. I was lucky. I had been there a little while, and,[uh], I remember it was cold, real cold, and I built a fire, and, [uh], I, [uh], was just waiting, and, [uh], I saw antlers comin' through the trees—huge, beautiful, forked antlers. And, he was coming to the opening right near me.

He stepped out into the opening, and I attracted his attention with a little sound, a little noise [makes short whistling noise], sumtin' like that, see. He stopped, and I put a bullet right through his lungs, and he ran a little ways, and that was the first antlered bull that I killed. Next year I was back there, and exactly the same place, and it's a complicated story, but at any rate, another bull came over from the other side, and I killed him too. I killed two bulls right there ,in the same place, two separate years. From then on, I had good luck. And, I've been thinking about it a little, and I couldn't sleep. Why was I ... How'd I do this? Well, it turned out that I had a kind of a ...an aptitude for .... anticipating the places where elk would pass through. We're not talkin' about deer now, just elk. The elk is the greater

trophy, is the more important trophy. He's big, lots of steak! [laughs] So, anyway, it all ended up, and I think I killed at least eight, [uh], good bulls, and...and every one of 'em was because I had accidentally or otherwise picked out a place where the elk was gonna' be.

RB: Who else did you hunt with?

CC: And, [uh], [uh], Clark Hiatt [?], who is retired now, but he used to work for Goss's, and he worked, at first, for years, as the parts man, and then a interesting thing happened. One day Mr. Goss came to Clark, and he said, "Clark, How would you like to try your hand at selling cars." And Clark says, "Why I [laughs] I have n...no idea," but he says, "If you want me to, I'll try," and he did. And, [laughs], ...he was a good salesman. And, [uh], [uh], he sold...he did very well, very, very well; he was a great salesman. And, he sold a number of cars to me.

RB: Did you ever hunt with, [uh], Lucky Trice ? [end tape 3, side 2]

Charles Cater, narrator  
Ron Brand, interviewer  
August 17, 2004  
tape 4, side 1

RB: Um...I had just asked him a question on what he thought...or whether he hunted with, [uh], ...

CC: Lucky.

RB: ...Lucky Trice.

CC: Yeah. I said no. But, [laughs], an odd thing happened. I had rented a pond across the valley from a farmer, and I had built some little duck blinds there, so I could be concealed from the birds as they tried to land in the water [rattling-jingling sound]. So, one morning I got up and got out and went over there to hunt the ducks in my pond, and when I got there, [laughs], Lucky had another fellower [?] 009 in my blinds. Now, I didn't chase him away. I welcomed him, and we went on and did what we had come [laughs] there to do. But, I was, [uh], ... I wasn't upset because he did that, not at all. I might have been if I had been a different person, but I wasn't a different person. But, [uh], no, he, [uh], I, [uh], ...I did share game with him, though. Several times I caught deer, shot deer, not elk but deer, in excess of what I thought we could use, and I, I gave him several deer. And, [uh], that was that. I also hunted with, [uh], Dr. Hall, doc Hall. He's a chiropractor. \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 022 He lived here, and he's...or I think he's still practicing, but, [uh], just barely. He's, [uh], 80-years old, and I hunted with him and his wife once or twice.

RB: Do you remember his first name and his wife's name?

CC: Yeah. His first name is Al, and I don't know his wife's name because I haven't kept track. [Aside] What is Al's wife's name?

[FEMALE VOICE] Which one?

CC: The one [laughs], [others laughing]. The present Mrs. Hall.

[FEMALE VOICE] The present one? I don't know.

CC: Anyway, [laughs], his present wife—this [laughs] is the third wife he’s had. They were all friends. All of us were friends, get along just wonderful. Always did. Gosh. [laughs] But, his present wife is the granddaughter of a woman by the name of Bushnell, and, [uh], her husband was a notable drunk. Everybody knew it, and they all made allowances for it, as well as you can. I don’t...can’t think of his first name...Alfred! Bushnell. He ran a...and she did later...a, [uh], wrecking yard for parts of vehicles, you know.

RB: How do you spell...

CC: Over there.

RB: How do you spell his name?

CC: B-[Uh]-S-H-N-E-double L.

RB: Bushnell.

CC: Bushnell.

[FEMALE VOICE] Was that Nettie’s husband?

CC: Huh!

[FEMALE VOICE] Was that Nettie Bushnell? Nettie?

CC: \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_ 044 The present...Al’s present wife?

[FEMALE VOICE] No. Nettie Bushnell?

CC: Yeah, Nettie. I worked for Nettie once in awhile or on a matter or two. I don’t remember what they were. She was an interesting woman. She’s gone. All of ‘em are gone.

RB: O.k. Did you ever gamble with Charlie Trice...or Lucky Trice?

CC: No.

RB: You didn’t?

CC: You see, I am not a gambler. And, as a matter of fact, I am opposed to gambling in every single form you can imagine. Now that doesn’t mean that I never did, because I did! And I learned enough from it to know that it is a terrible, terrible thing...for some people. And I am absolutely, una.... without any hesitation, I am apposed to gambling in ever form....because it harms people, and I don’t want ‘em hurt.

RB: Did you deal with people, as a lawyer, who had trouble related to gambling or ...[uh] .... or alcoholism.

CC: No, I don’t think so. No, I don’t think so. I had trouble, or at least my client’s had trouble, with other matters. One of the things that troubled them was marriage. [female laughter] That right? [laughs] [laughs] [female laughter] Though, I’ll tell you one little story. So, a woman comes to me one day, and she wanted a divorce. And, [uh], usually I ask ‘em why? That’s a reasonable thing, so that you can figure out what to put on the paper...as grounds...for divorce. So I asked her, and then she didn’t answer very clearly. She said, “Well, I might be able to overlook it sometimes, but I can’t overlook it this time.” I said, “Well, what’s he done that’s so awful?” “Well,” she said, “He’s been gittin’ in bed with another woman.” I said, “Well, that’s not terribly unusual.” “Well,” she said, “It’s, it’s, ...I object to it, and it..it’s a thing that I just can’t tolerate.” I said, “Why not?” She says, “The other woman is my mother.” [laughs] [Female laughter] [other laughter, probably RB:]

[FEMALE VOICE] Tell Ron the story about the lady came in with a son, who got the girl pregnant.

CC: Oh my god. Oh, no. [laughs] [female laughter] Now we get into the cute little organizations that people [female laughter] join, belong to, and take comfort in. [clink sound] So, I am quietly in my office, and a...a woman came in with a young man. You could just see that he was just maybe, maybe 18, 20, 21-years old; something like that. And, she was, [uh], obviously, [uh], about, [uh], grandmother's type. She...She was big woman and, [uh], powerful...in a way. So, she explained; she...the kid didn't have a word to say. [female laughter] She explained why she was there, and she said that this was her grandson, and he got a girl pregnant. I says, "Well, what's the problem? Why don't they just get married?" That's when she did it...that's when she did it to me. And she says, "I'll have you know, I'm a past noble grand." Now, you figure out what that means. It's one of those little associations, and she'd taken great pride in being a, [uh], head honcho in this little group. But, you tell me; she never did—nobody ever did tell me why **that** is the reason why the kid couldn't do the right thing by his girlfriend.

RB: Was she re...possibly referring to the Masons?

CC: I don't ...

RB: \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ Order of the Eastern Star? [simultaneously]

CC: think so.

RB: The women's \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ [interrupted].

CC: Yeah, that's Eastern Star of the...

RB: Yeah.

CC: I don't know what her org...I didn't ask. They didn't stay very long in my office. I disapproved. I don't hesitate to disapprove, and I didn't hesitate.

RB: Do your remember her name?

CC: No. I'm glad...I don't think I ever did know.

RB: Do you remember the name of the woman who's ...had objection to her husband's..

CC: No, I do not.

RB: You don't remember her name.

CC: I probably wouldn't tell if I knew. [laughs] [RB laughs] No.

RB: Did you a...ever ... I know La Grande has a history, and some of it's mentioned in the book of the Klan, where there were problems with prostitution in La Grande, but there was also a house of prostitution over on Jefferson Avenue, near Jefferson and Fourth. Do you remember any history or any legal ...

CC: The only thing I remember...

RB: ...dealings?

CC: ...is I already...I told this the last time you were here, that I drew a contract for one of the madam's. Her name was Joanne Douglas, and I'm not going to tell you what I put in it. I already that. She knows, and that's enough. [laughs]

RB: Did we get that on tape?

CC: No, you didn't.

RB: Can you give it to me on tape....

CC: [laughs]

RB: ...what you put in the contract?

CC: It was a standard clause. It's in every contract. I didn't add anything. I didn't discard it. But, the, it, [uh], ...every lease contains, what \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ amounts to an... a promise. It's a term of the lease. And they...The lessee that takes over somebody else's property is required to agree to return it in, [uh], the same situation it was when he received it. [telephone rings] Including any, [phone rings][uh], ...

[FEMALE VOICE] Cater residence.

CC: ...additions or erections.

RB: [laughs]

CC: You got it. That's what...That's what a... amused Sarah.

RB: O.k. She was....

CC: And, I stuck that in there. [laughs] I could have left it out.

RB: Did you actually put it in the contract?

CC: Oh, it was there. [interrupted]

RB: It was there?...in the contract?

CC: It's a standard ... [interrupted]

RB: It's a standard. O.k.

CC: ...clause, you see.

RB: O.k.

CC: So I \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 142 with the standard clause. That's my excuse, you see.

[laughs] [laughs]

RB: But, she was worried about her property, the use of her rooms. Is that...Was that the issue she came to you about?

CC: No. No, no. That's not it. I don't know. I don't know a...anything about it, except what I've told you.

[FEMALE VOICE] [Faintly] You guys, I need to interrupt for a min..[tape interruption]

RB: Go ahead.

CC: Now, this is a story that's much nicer than the one I just told you about—the grandmother and the...kid that had the pregnant girl. This has to do with another woman that came to me. She was an old woman, a grandmother, and she had, [uh], a grandson. And she dearly loved this grandson. This was about the time that we got started in the war ...that the Japs mistakenly started...at Pearl Harbor. And this old woman came to me, and she told me that she wanted to deed her home to her grandson. And I thought about it, and it didn't take me very long to come to a conclusion that this was not a very good thing for her to do. So, I suggested that we do that, but draw the deed reserving for her a life estate, which it's ...perfectly normal. It's a standard thing to be done in some conveyances. She didn't want to do that. She wanted to leave it, oh, [uh], [uh], out...outright to her beloved grandson. She came back. I talked to her some more, and I finally persuaded her to let me draw that will...oh no...that...that deed....reserving for her a life estate, so she'd always have her home. The boy went into the military, got married, got killed. Granddaughter, his wife, came back and tried to kick grandma out of her home, by he couldn't do it...because I had taken care of that with that reservation. End of story. You like that? [tape interruption]



RB: Go ahead.

CC: So, [uh],... There was a family, a man and his wife, named Sherwood, Cecil Sherwood, and they got into...into domestic problems and couldn't stand each other any longer, so it was divorce time. He came to me. I don't know where she went; she went to another lawyer. The case was never tried. It was settled by agreement between the people and the two lawyers. During the course of this thing, and before it was resolved, she came to my office, and she sat down in a chair, and she looked me square in the eye, and she said, "I don't like you." [laughs] Well, I understood that. I told her that I didn't practice to make friends on the other side, and she left. That's when I became embarrassed later. In the meantime she married my best friend, Henry Hess. [?]

RB: What was her name?

CC: I don't know—Mrs. Sherwood.

RB: That's... Yeah.

CC: That was before she was divorced. She married Henry Hess, and they came back to La Grande, and I had in the back of my mind what she had said in my office. Now this was...what she said was totally really unnecessary, because we settled that thing, and there was never a court fight and never any hard words, nothing, see. [pause] I ended up at a table downtown in La Grande with my friend Henry and his new wife, that had told me she didn't like me. If you think that wasn't embarrassing.

RB: Did you end up continuing to be friends with him?

CC: Yes.

RB: And socialize with her?

CC: No. Never saw her again. That was unnecessary but a perfectly normal thing for people to say. However, they don't usually say it. They [tape interruption] getting' killed too. Some \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ [tape interruption] 218

RB: This is August 24<sup>th</sup>. [uh], I'm resuming interviewing Charlie Cater. This is Ron Brand.

CC: I mentioned this subject to Sarah. She has a way to tap into the, [uh], information on the computers. You know what it is, but ...

RB: Um-hmm.

CC: ...I don't know. I never saw a computer. But, anyway, this has to do with the Promise Keepers. And I .... and she copied a bunch of stuff, and here she comes.

[FEMALE VOICE] Mornin' Ron.

CC: With some more stuff.

RB: Good morning. [clinking sound] [tape interruption]

RB: O.k. Charlie wants to talk about the Promise Keepers. Here in Union County?

CC: Well yeah, sure.

RB: O.k.

CC: They're everywhere.

RB: O.k.

CC: And, [uh], ...I had some friends that were living an ordinary average life, doing the things that people do all the time around here. They were drinking a little

whisky—not much—and shooting, [uh], trap and things like that, and going hunting, and all of a sudden, my friends that did that quit doing it, quit coming to, [uh], see me, quit coming to the bean feeds that I put on. And, in the course of their attempt to do what they were...thought they ought to do, one of them had a large, compondious [?] workshop on his land...over across the valley, and at the end of one of these sessions, these...u...Promise Keepers sessions, they had an accident, and the thing caught fire, and it burned up their whole...workroo...work place. And, [uh], my friend and his son sustained serious burns, which resulted in their going to the burn center in one of the Portland hospitals, and I have not seen my friend since.

RB: What year was this?

CC: What year was it? Oh, it's about two or three years ago.

RB: O.k., 2002 or so.

CC: Yeah. Now, ...It has completely changed the activities at this ...group...little group. I don't know who most of 'em are; I just know two of 'em...or know of two of 'em. And, one of 'em is a lawyer downtown, and the other one is my friend, [uh], Gene Sutton [?], and I regret loosing a friend under these circumstances. [uh] .... Here's one of the things that they promote. I'll read it: Throughout the centuries the Roman Catholic Church has been an enemy of all true believers—and so forth and so on, and so on. And they...This man that is commenting on, [uh], th... He's not friendly toward 'em; this man here, Reynolds. He wrote this thing here, see.

RB: He's local?

CC: No, he isn't. He is the editor of a magazine called, "Foundation." And, I don't know where it is or what it is or anything about it. But, this came in over the Internet, and Sarah got it for me because I was...for the last two or three years I've been quite curious about the Promise Keepers. Now what happened is that... [uh] ...and it tells us here... [pause] Here's how it got started. It got started with a football coach. Now, we don't have anything against football coaches, any of us, unless they do things wrong when they, [uh], [uh], secure the ...[uh], [uh] ...Oh wow...in their, [uh], [uh], attempt in ...attempt to in...[uh] ...attract athletes; if they do wrong, why people criticize them. Anyhow, here's what happened. He got this brilliant idea that he'd get people together and, [uh], he did, and here's the figures: In 1991 they had a group of 4200 men meeting in the University of Colorado event center. In 1992 they, [uh], a...attracted 22,000 men at, [uh], the Colorado University's Folsom [?] Stadium. In 1993 they had 50,000 men come to the Folsom Stadium.

RB: O.k. Do you know...[interrupted] ...Do you know anyone from here that went to one of those?

CC: What's the word?

RB: The Promise Keepers...anybody local.

CC: Well sure, I just told you a couple of them.

RB: Two people you know.

CC: Yeah. One of 'em is, [uh], is my friend Sutton, Gene...Eugene Sutton. Another one is a lawyer here. Sarah! What's the name of the lawyer that I've mentioned, downtown, that's ...

[FEMALE VOICE] Bruce Anderson?

CC: [uh] Bruce, Bruce Anderson, and he has a brother too, but I don't know whether they're both into this thing or not. Then, this thing goes on an on, see, and finally, in 1994, they got a bunch of men together totaling 278,000 people. And, [uh], ...[tape interruption]

RB: O.k. What do you know about the local organization of Promise Keepers?

CC: I don't know anything about it...e..[tape interruption] And, they hate Catholics.

RB: O.k. Do you know that locally?...that they're anti-Catholic.

CC: Well, [uh], ...Let's see what I can see here.

RB: Well, locally, I mean. Do you know any element locally where these people are anti-Catholic.

CC: No, I don't know. Really, I haven't actually made really any effort at all to know what they're doing or why they're doing it.

RB: O.k. But, your friend had his shop burn down....

CC: That's right.

RB: ...after he got involved in this?

CC: Well. He wa...He was ...The way this happened, I think, is he was holding a kind of a picnic or, [uh], a...a food thing. So he...he fed...he, [uh], ...He invites these people to come there. They come. And, he feeds them, and then the end of the, [uh], feed, why the fire gets away him and burns up his shop.

RB: So, it's just an accident?

CC: Last word?

RB: Just an accident.

CC: Oh yeah. They didn't do it intentionally. Oh, no. No way.

RB: How did this effect the social group you were in with these men? There were two men, you said.

CC: Well, there were just....Well, ...I don't know, because about that time I had to quit shooting, and that was the activity where we got together; it was trap shooting. You know what trap shooting is?

RB: Um-hmm. [tape interruption] Did you see any local similarity be...between the Klu Klux Klan back in the '20's and the aniti-Catholicism of [interrupted]

CC: Well, [uh], ...The... only one small thing, and that was when...[uh], one of the lawyers downtown tried to be elected to the position of circuit judge. He mentioned in his letter to me and to others that he was involved in this Promise Keepers thing.

RB: This is Bruce Anderson...[interrupted]

CC: Yes, [interrupted]

RB: ...correct?

CC: ...that's the one. [uh]...It's...It's really a mystery to me, because I don't have any contact with 'em, and, [uh], all I have is this things that came over the Internet. They profess to be highly motivated by the Christian life, whatever that is, and I think they are. But, usually, when we've discovered somebody that in midlife, and that's what this is, it suddenly become, [uh], considerably religious, if you could find, or, [uh], if you knew anything about their pasts, you might

come to the conclusion that their conscience was bothering 'em a little.  
\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ [tape interruption] ...is about me, when I was practicing law.

RB: O.k.

CC: I practiced for 40 years, right here, no place else, and [jingling] during all that time I associated with all the other lawyers in court, out of court, in meetings, and so forth. And, [uh], there was no, [uh], overt contention or accusation or even a hint about the fact I am about to mention. That fact is that throughout my practice I entertained the concept that my clients were always innocent or always in the right. Now, I never said anything about it. I didn't go around saying, "My boys are always right," see. But, the lawyers knew that that's the way I felt about it. I couldn't help it; that's the way I was. They never held it against me. Only one of em'...Only one ever mentioned it. His name was Willard K. Carey [?]. He was a lawyer. He's dead now; he died two years ago. And, [uh], one time [tape interruption] [recording ends before tape ends]

Charles Cater, narrator  
Ron Brand, interviewer  
August 17, 2004  
tape 4, side 2

[Recording begins at 183 into the tape on the tape counter]

RB: ...k. Carey...[interrupted]

CC: Yes.

RB: ... who knew a secret about Charlie's business.

CC: Well, [uh], ... He's the only one that mentioned this. I never mentioned it. I never said I have....am superior because my clients are innocent or superior. No word was ever passed except what I'm about to tell you. And one time, and the first time, and the next to the only time that anybody ever said anything to me about it was once Mr. Carey said quietly, and in his, [uh], courteous way—he was an extremely courteous man—and he said, "Charlie, this time I've got the good guy." Now, I don't remember who the people were. All I remember is what B...Bill Carey said. And, I didn't make any response to it. It was all over and one with, and it wasn't important at all. And then, later, one dark night, Mr. Carey was in...intercepted by the La Grande Police and charged with driving while under the influence. And, he asked me to defend him, and I did. And, we had a trial, and, [uh], the jury found him not guilty.

After the trial was over, he and I came up to this house, right here, and I got out the gin bottle and some other stuff and some ice, and I manufactured a couple of drinks—one for him, and one for me. And, so, h, er,...we were sitting here and sippin' on the drinks, and out of the clear blue [laughs] Carey said to me, "Charlie, you really do have the good guys. [laughs] That was the end of it.

RB: This... Carey is C-A-R-E-Y? Is that how you spell his name?  
CC: Yeah, I think so.  
RB: O.k.  
CC: Coming back to the Promise Keepers. [tape interruption]  
RB: [uh] ...I would want to ask you though, about the influence of the Promise Keepers and other religious people in the community. [uh]... Is there infighting that you've seen? [uh] ...You said you hadn't seen anti-Catholicism among the local Promise Keepers.  
CC: Well, it's ...[uh], These papers that I have, and your welcome to look at 'em. They claim that they....[uh].. Well, I'll read a little of it. [uh] ...  
RB: O.k. But I just...I'm interested in just the local aspect of it.  
CC: As far as know, there isn't any...anything here that sets this thing apart as local. I have not heard **any** conflict between the Promise Keepers and other, [uh], religion, except, in this article by Mr. Reynolds of the "Foundation Magazine." And, what he says—and I'll read it. "Throughout the centuries the Roman Catholic Church has been an enemy of all true believers, and the blood of hundreds of thousands of martyrs is upon its hands." Well, this is going a little too far, you know. But, anyhow, [uh], that, [uh],...  
RB: O.k. But there was...Back in your memories of what you saw with the Klu Klux Klan, that seems ...[interrupted]  
CC: There's a similarity.  
RB: .....there's a similarity.  
CC: There sure is.  
RB: And that claim was divisive, that somebody is bad...  
CC: Yep, the Klan was divisive and definitely, and we, we have gone through the ...the history, and we know that. I don't know how, [uh], divisive this Promise Keepers is. But, for some reason—I don't know what it is—but they don't cotton to the...having women in the group. No women, just men.  
RB: Have they done anything locally with women who are interested in a better place in the world.  
CC: No. I don't think so.  
RB: You don't think so.  
CC: No.  
RB: O.k.  
CC: [uh]...My...My former friend—I don't know what that means—anyway, my friend Gene [?] Sutton [?] has a wife that was, [uh], ..What is her job down at the court house?  
[FEMALE VOICE] I don't know, Charlie.  
CC: Well...She's in charge of the tax collections, I think. Not the....Not the ...fixing the amount, but keeping the records. And she...[interrupted]  
RB: Do you know her name?  
CC: Well I did; I don't know it right now. But, [uh], she's a good woman, and she's been there for a good many years. And, [uh], once you get a job in that courthouse, they'll never let you go. [laughs]  
RB: O.k. But, her husband is a Promise Keeper.  
CC: I think so.

RB: He was.  
CC: I think so.  
RB: O.k.  
CC: Yeah, [uh]...[tape interruption]  
CC: The Grande Ronde Valley is famous for wind, [uh], from time to time, and this story has to do with the wind the Grande Ronde Valley. From the...From the very beginning, the people that got here and s...put down any kind of roots at all, would grow food, grain crops, **wheat**; that has been the principle grain crop in this valley, and a lot of other places. And, when you're growing wheat, in order to us it, you have to grind it. You can't just eat the raw grain, [laughs] as you well know. So, wherever there is grain, there are gristmills, and the gristmills have a ...a way of grinding the grain, so that it ends up as flour and other ...other small particles of the original grain. The, [uh], gristmill operates with two, usually, i...in a simplified, [uh], form, two huge stones. The upper ... and the n...n...n...nether mill stone. You've heard the words?  
RB: Yeah.  
CC: And they turn, and the grain is put between them, and it grinds it. So, this was the custom here years ago, after people got going with the wheat and so forth, then somebody built a gristmill out near Elgin. And, the farmers took the grain...to the gristmill, and they ground it. And, [uh], but they had a little bad luck because—I mentioned the winds—and the wind started to blow, and it blew the wrong way, and it had an effect on the gristmill and the ground grain, and the wind cause the gristmill to reverse its operation, and it un-ground all of that grain! [laughs] [female laughs]  
RB: When did this story supposedly take place.  
CC: Elgin.  
RB: Elgin. Was this the Elgin Flour Mill?  
CC: I don't know.  
RB: It was a tall structure that burned about 1995.  
CC: I don't really know; it's just a story.  
RB: O.k.  
CC: Yeah, I don't think it has any rel...[uh]...any ...  
RB: Relevance to the real world? [laughs] [female laughs]  
CC: Alright. Say it that way. That's a good idea. [tape interruption]  
RB: \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_323  
CC: Or, I do suppose, that that isn't really what this history thing is about. I think it's about the community, and I have, more or less, limited what I've said to things that have, [uh], o...occurred in and about and through the community.  
RB: O.k. One...One personal thing I don't think you have mentioned on the tapes we've done, is your wife's name.  
CC: My wife's name is, or was, Donna.  
RB: Donna. O.k.  
CC: And, we were married about 50 years. She died last October here...right here.  
RB: O.k.  
CC: And, she, [uh], originated and was born and raised in Ohio. She came out here in 1948, and, [uh], she got a job working downtown for somebody—Jimmy

Trimbell [?] and his wife Elanore—and then, shortly thereafter, she started workin’ for me, and she worked for me until we both quit in 19...at the end of 19,[uh], 97.

[FEMALE VOICE] ’79, Charlie.

CC: ’79?

[FEMALE VOICE] Yes.

CC: I reversed it, didn’t I.

[FEMALE VOICE] Yeah. [laughs]

CC: ’79. [laughs] Alright. Now, there’s one other thing that is so personal, but it, [uh], does distinctly draw on the community, and, [uh], it is tied in with the communities to an extreme, [uh], situation. Now here’s the reason, and I’ll make [tape interruption] a short as I can. I came here fresh out of law school. I didn’t know anybody. I didn’t have a car to drive. I didn’t have anything. I had a wife; that was my first wife. Her name was Melba [?]. [uh]...Very shortly after I got here, a man came to my office, which cost me \$15.00 a month, and he ...his name was James Moore, and he was the, the, [uh], head man in the Grande Ronde Hospital. He was the manager of the hospital. And, he had, when he came into my office, a thick book with a lot of loose leaves in it, I guess you might call it, and the message was very short. The, [uh], this was near the end of the ...the great depression, and a lot of people during that time had to have various services and couldn’t pay for ‘em, and so the...we...their debts were in the book the man had in his hands. He had the account book of hundreds of people that owed the hospital. He asked me if I would consider trying to collect those accounts. Well, I didn’t have anything else to do, so I did that. Now, anybody knows—or should know—that a bill collector is not a popular person. So, any...sensible person would realize that undertaking to collect these past due accounts would not have made me very popular in the community, but they would be wrong. [pause] It didn’t change a thing. It never interfered with the people’s, [uh], opinion of me or where they went to have a ....to select a lawyer. Never!

There were other in...individual ... instances that I think of now and then. For instance, one farmer here was driving down the street in La Grande. He hit a woman in the crosswalk. She came to me, and I filed a...an action for damages for her. And, it went to trial, and I don’t remember just what happened, but we collected something for her from the farmer that hit her. Now, [uh], one would suppose that the farmer would not feel friendly toward me. Wrong! He is always [pause] been...[tearful]...He has always been my friend \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 416 in spite of that. Never had a thing with it. [uh] ...For, [uh], one time was trying to make beer at home. I needed some grain...to make malt...barley. He gave it to me, a huge sack of barley, so that I could make beer. Never was a word ever said about the fact that I had filed a suit against him and so forth and so on. Never. Not a word. This is only one slight instance. I has been repeated time after time, year after year. Never, never did I lose friendship, accommodation, [uh], all the good feelings that \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 435 exist or could exist between people. I never lost a thing.

RB: Back to the original question about collecting debts for Grande Ronde Hospital.

CC: Yeah.  
RB: Was that a serious problem at the end of the depression...[interrupted]  
CC: Yes, it was.  
RB: ...when you first came here?  
CC: Yes it was. These poor people couldn't pay.  
RB: What other areas were there debts, other than the hospital?...and the loca...  
CC: Oh, ....  
RB: ...the effect on the local economy?  
CC: Oh,...There, there were lots of 'em, because this was a widespread catastrophe all over the United States. And, people to had to, [uh], keep eating. And, one of my friends operated a grocery store down here a little ways, and, [uh], we knew some of the people that couldn't pay, and they run a bill there until, finally, things got better; they would pay it off, and everything went on.  
RB: So this was a community i...i...issue?  
CC: Oh, [uh], well, yes. It's the...It was the United States issue.  
RB: What other areas do you think?...food and medical care, [uh] ...  
CC: Well, I'll be glad to tell you. [laughs] From time to time \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 461 and a client, and so forth and so on. And, [uh], one of my clients was accused of steeling some corral poles. Now, in Chicago, I don't think you have much to do with corral poles, but corral poles are made with slender little young trees. [Uh]... They grow in forests around here, and they're valuable to people that have cattle, in order to make enclosures, corrals, so that they can be...the cattle can be controlled. [Uh]...My ...One of clients was charged with steeling some corral poles that a farmed [uh] thought were his. Well, whether they were or, or not, my client had a defense, and it was successful. He had contacted a foreman of a bridge crew that was building a bridge just this side of Elgin. That's where this all took place. And, [uh], he asked, [uh], "When you get through with all those poles that they're using for temporary scaffolding, what are you gonna do with 'em?" The fellow says, "Well, I'll just lay 'em here." So my client said, "Well, can I have 'em." And the man said...the foreman said, "Yes."

So, when they got the bridge built—and you go over it every day, just this side of Elgin [laughs]—my client went and picked up the poles. But, a farmer had cut some corral poles, or had them cut, out in the forest, and he thought that the poles that my client got were his poles. So were talking about poles, aren't we? [laughs]. Well, [uh], ...So he charged my client with pole thievery. [laughs] And, [uh], we had a trial; I defended him, and the farmer and his wife testified. And, [uh], I am sure that they were considerably offended by my approach to this case and the work in the trial court. And, [uh], ...The verdict was in favor of my client, and, [uh], from that day, for a long time, I would see this man, this farmer—I didn't see his wife, because she was old—but he'd be wandering around town doin' ...taking care of his business, and where we had originally, [uh], at least b...[uh]...could be courteous with each other, after this trial, we could not. He was definitely aggravated, and he bore a grudge against me. And, I don't blame him a damn bit! [extraneous sound] 624 Not that that...Not because I'm confession that I was unfair in the [jingling sound] way I tried a case. I don't



think I was, but he thought I was, and that's good enough. And, I'd see him downtown, and he wouldn't speak to me. He wouldn't look at me.

I always greeting him, but nothing good happened, until one day [pause] I was down in and automotive shop at, [uh], Goss Motors doing something...[uh]...about a vehicle, and I heard somebody call me from behind, "Hey! Charlie!" I turned around and looked, and it was this man, and he said to me, "Hey! Charlie! Wheeler and I are goin' over on the lower Grande Ronde and go hunting. Come along with us. I'll furnish the horses. You can have a horse, and that's horse country, you know, where we were going to ride. You had to be there; you had to have a horse and saddle. He said, "I'll furnish the whole thing, and I've got a truck, and we'll carry those horsed down there, and then we'll go hunting." So, I said, "Sure! That'd be fine." His brother-in-law, [uh], was, lived right across the street from me. [laughs]

RB: Do you remember the man's name? This is the farmer that you had a dispute with.

CC: You want the...the man's name? ...that invited me to go hunting with him?

RB: Um-hmm.

CC: It was Dick Hibberd.

RB: O.k.

CC: H-I-B-B-E-R-D....

RB: O.k. He's from...?

CC: Hibberd.

RB: ...Imbler?

CC: What?

RB: There's a Hibberd farm outside of Imbler.

CC: Well yes, that's where it is.

RB: O.k.

CC: [Uh]...To make a long story short, we went hunting. Clark Wheeler [?] \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_ 577, Hibberd's brother-in-law, and I didn't kill anything, but Dick did. And, he dressed it out on the spot and took the liver out and just tossed it—I'm sure this is what he did—under the front seat of his pickup. Now, the front seat of any pickup is dirty, underneath the seat. Every one of them! And that means a [laughs] liver collectin' a lot dirt! So, the evening came, and we were hoping to eat some supper, you know. And, Clark Wheeler took charge of that liver, and he cleaned it up, and he cleaned it up perfectly. That's only part of the story. My horse threw a shoe. Dick knew there was a ranch near where we were camped. He took my horse and found the man and the equipment, and he fixed my horse's shoe. And, that's the end of that story. But every after that...ever after that, he and I were friends. We hunted together; we fished together. And, [uh], how do you explain that? How do you explain that? [tape interruption]

RB: I asked Charlie about his hunting and people he's known in the area and, also, I'd like to know where you hunted in Union County?

CC: [laughs] Alright. My hunting partner for a number of years was Howard Peterson [?]. He, [uh], was a...inspector at the mill. He was a c...a lumber grader. Another one was a man, Clark Hiatt [?], who worked at Goss Motors.

- [Uh]...He started working there as a parts expert, part man, and that is an expert job. And then, one day, Mr. Goss came to him and said, "Clark, how would you like to try sellin' cars?" "Well," he said, "I'll try," and he did, and he was the top salesman.
- RB: Where did you hunt with him?...what parts of the county?
- CC: Wenaha. On the Weneha. I think that's right. Yes. There's a stream that flows east and west, north of La Grande, in a deep canyon. It flows into the Grande Ronde River at Tory...at Tr...Troy, T-R-O-Y.
- RB: O.k. The northern part of Union County.
- CC: Yes. And, [uh], other places. We hunted, [uh], oh, we went to Wyoming and hunted once, and Clark, [uh], I'm sure, was with us, and, [uh], and then another man, a railroader...can't think of his name right now...and, [uh], then, [uh], ...I hunted with, [uh], Fred Bell [?], who, [uh], operates a, a [uh], a place where people live in motor homes; it's a motor home park out here just east of downtown La Grande. And, there are others. I, [uh]...I had a vast group of friends. One of them was the man that I mentioned earlier, [uh],...Gene Sutton. He's a re...a retired Navy Seal—no, not Seal—C.B; that's different. And, [uh], one time I wanted to go hunting, and I didn't have any to... anybody to go with me. He volunteered to go with me, although he wasn't...he didn't have a license to do what I wanted to do. He with me anyway, just to keep me company. Worked out good. I didn't kill anything, but, [uh], a lot of times people that go hunting don't kill things. But, ...It'd be pretty hard to, [uh], through a rock downtown or anyplace in La Grande without hitting somebody that I hunted or fished with, because I spent a lotta time at it. I spent a lot more time at it than, [uh], you would think would be available to a busy lawyer, but I did it anyway.
- RB: It sounds like this was a pretty common activity for men?
- CC: Oh, yes!
- RB: Did women ever go on these hunting trips?
- CC: My wife did.
- RB: She did.
- CC: If you look right down here, when you go out that other door \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 718, and you see [end tape 4, side 2]

Charles Cater, narrator  
Ron Brand, interviewer  
August 24, 2004  
tape 5, side 1

- RB: ...Cater. I'm Ron Brand. This is August 24<sup>th</sup>. We were discussing Charlie's hunting, and the people and areas he hunted in. [rustling sound]
- CC: I, [uh], ...I used to fish for summer steelhead in the Descuttas River, and, [uh], I had a fishing partner or a person that was with me a lot of the time, and I met him [pause] on the river one day, a hot day in the summer. And, we needed water. He was coming off the upper river, and I was heading up the river. We met at a kind of a spring, where it...it fed a watering trough, [uh]. And, I got acquainted with

him there. His name was Greg Lipsiea. He lived in Portland. He doesn't now; he lives in Bend. [Uh] As the result of our meeting there, he, [uh], taught me some of the things you need to know to catch steelhead in the summer on a fly. [Uh]...He was a teenage, high school, young man at the time I met him. And, [uh], as a result of his instruction, and the skills he imparted to me, that day, in the evening, I caught my first steelhead on a fly. If there's ....any greater triumph in fishing and hunting, I don't know what it is, tha....[interrupted]

RB: Did you ever...[interrupted]

CC: ...than to catch your first steelhead on a fly. I caught many of them after that. But, he was a more...a better fisherman than I was. Question?

RB: Did you ever hunt with him, either on the Grande Ronde or Wallowa Rivers?

CC: With, [uh], Lipsiea?

RB: Yes.

CC: No.

RB: So he never came over here.

CC: Well, [uh], no. [Uh] ...I have ...I fished with him on a river that flows into the Willamette, in that watershed, down there...oh, I can't quite think of the town...but, [uh], anyway I fished there and, later, in other places and in Tillamook County and the various streams there. Later in his career, he attended a community college at Portland, and he studied the various attributes and necessary skills having to do with the, [uh], [uh], [uh], [laughs], [sigh] [tape interruption]

CC: ...fish hatcheries.

RB: O.k. This is Mr. Lipsiea...

CC: Yes.

RB: ...studied fish...

CC: L-I-B-S-I-E-A. French. That's a French name.

RB: O.k.

CC: [Uh]...

RB: Did he ever do any work over here at the hatcheries.

CC: No. He came over here, [uh], a few months ago, stopped in to see me on his way to Wallowa County, ...[uh], [uh], ...evidently in the hope that he could get a ...get work in one of the hatcheries in Wallowa County. He wasn't successful, and he went back home to Bend.

RB: O.k. Where...Where in Union County do you fish?

CC: [Uh] .... None. You mean Lipsiea?

RB: No. You.

CC: Oh.

RB: Where in Union County do you fish.

CC: Not...Not hardly at all. The, [uh], ...There is a run of steelhead in the Grande Ronde River; there's two runs, one in the spring, in February and March, and the other one in the lower river in the fall, in October, November. And, I can...co...consciously suggest it would be a good thing for you to do. Go down on the lower Grande Ronde with a fly rod and try for those wonderful fish.

RB: So, your hunting trips...Were those primarily deer for you, or did you hunt elk as well?

CC: Both.  
RB: Both.  
CC: Every year...for a long time.  
RB: O.k. The people you hunted with...Were they hunting for subsistence, where they would eat the meat from the animals?  
CC: Oh, they'll eat the meat. You bet. Every time. But...But that's not subsistence hunting, because that is a word that is a word that's used in Alaska...for subsistence fishing and hunting...not here. People hunt here...it's for sport mostly. But, up there, it's subsistence. And, they are permitted, for example, under the laws of Alaska, to use net of one kind or another, drift nets, [uh], other kinds o' nets, to catch Sockeye, mostly, and other salmonoids.  
RB: Do you know...Do you remember, [uh], what hunting and fishing were like when you first came here in '39, which was still the end of the depression?  
CC: Well, [uh], the first thing I noticed was somebody comin' back from a hunting trip with a whole bundle of ducks! He got out of his car, down here a little ways, and I saw him, and I saw them. Now, you might say, "Well, what's the connection," and, [uh], there is one. The reason I came to eastern Oregon was because of the good things here and of hunting and fishing and a wonderful ...climate. You like it too.  
RB: O.k. You were still on first marriage then, when you first came here?  
CC: Yes.  
RB: O.k.  
CC: And, we rented a room or rooms from a [laughs] woman with a rather odd name, Mrs. Bugg [?], whose son is a painter.  
RB: Do you remember her first name?  
CC: No.  
RB: How 'bout her son's name.  
CC: Don't know that.  
RB: Don't know that.  
CC: No. [pause] But I have a memory of one particular fishing trip we took down on the lower Grande Ronde for steelhead in the fall. I had, [uh], two sons and a daughter. My daughter is still with us. Both my sons have died. One of them had a wife. She was raised in Union, and she and he lived in Sparks, Nevada, when he died. He had a friend, who was a, [uh], retired at that...that's later, anyway, a retired policeman, and he married my ex-daughter-in-law, when my son died, after...after he died. [laughs]. Now, ...I induced him to come up here and go fishing with me, and first we tried the Gra...the, [uh], Deschutes, and it didn't work very well somehow or other. So, I suggested we come over and hit the lower Grande Ronde, and we did. Now, he was using a rod that I had made, and I don't mind mentioning that I am a fairly skillful fellow with tools and the, [uh], manufacture of ...of a fishing rods and, and ammunition for the rifles that I use.

This man, whose name was Jeff Peck, P-E-C-K, was using a rod that I had made for my s...youngest son. It was fine rod. I am proud of it. I have...b..bought the parts and put it together and put line and reel on it, and, and that's what he was

using. So, we went down to the lower Grande Ronde, and with that rod and that outfit, he hooked and landed his first and only steelhead on a fly. [laughs] He hasn't been back since. That's alright too. [tape interruption]

RB: I asked Charlie about his membership in the National Rifle Association.

CC: When I got here, I did not do what most young professional men do—they join everything they can think of to join. [small dog barks] I didn't. I joined the local rifle club and the NRA, and [small dog barks] later I became a live member of the National Rifle Association, and I am still a life member.

RB: Do you know any local people or, or associate with local people in the NRA?

CC: [dog barking] Last two words.

RB: In the...Do you [dog barks] associate with local people through the NRA?

CC: Oh, yeah, sure. [Uh]...We had a ...let's see, what was his name...Abby [?] [dog barks]. Abby! Come here! [tape interruption]

RB: Repeat the name. [dog barks]

CC: [Uh]. Abby! Come here! Abby! Abby! [tape interruption]

RB: O.k.

CC: The county engineer here, when I got here, and during those years, from '39 to '44, when I was here, a man named Morgan was the county engineer.

RB: Do you know his first name?

CC: No, I don't. But, he had, [uh], military experience before he took the job as county engineer. So, in that interval between '39 and '44, he was here, and he was doing his best to prepare some of us that he thought would end up in the, [uh], army, and he did a good job. And so, when I left here, I went with, [uh], the skills that he had taught me.

RB: What kind of skills are you talking about?

CC: Shooting a rifle and hitting something ...

RB: O.k.

CC: ...and hitting something...

RB: O.k.

CC: ...at long range. [laughs] [laughs] Now, the good story about this. Mr. Morgan, later, several years later, died, and we had no engineer and didn't hire an engineer. Union County didn't have an engineer. But one day, [pause] ...one day, [uh], I was in the courthouse, where I went lots of times, and I quietly wandered, I wasn't trying to be sneaky, but I went into an office upstairs—that's in the old courthouse—and here was a man named C. K. McCormack [?] sitting at a table. C. K. McCormack had started out as county clerk. He later became .... [uh]...a little advanced in the hierarchy; I don't remember what it was. But, he wasn't an engineer. But...He was sitting at the table, alone, with a large book in front of him, and I looked at the book, and I asked him what he was doing with the book. The book was a guide to engineering, and this man was studying to do the best he could as, [uh], and engineer—when he had no training for it, and where we had lost Morgan, the engineer. I was impressed...that a man would go to that much trouble to do his best...for...the community. [tearful?] That's wa...That's exactly what he was doing. [tearful] And, he kept right on \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 239 [doing it?]. Now, eventually, you know, he went to his reward, but he tried...[tearful] while he was here. [tape interruption]

CC: I've got a bundle of trophies. There's one there, and there's one over there, and there's a big box of 'em in one of the rooms back there, and...I had some fine weapons, rifles and shotguns and pistols. I never engaged in competition with pistols. My, [uh], [phone rings] [tape interruption]

?: \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_254 [electrical tool sound?]

CC: We got the dog quiet, and now I can't thing can't of anything. [tape interruption]

CC: There've been some loose talk by various people, and the last one that I can think of was Senator Smith, our United States Senator, one of them, from Oregon here, and he was making, what I considered, ungentlemanly comments about Mr. Kerry.

RB: O.k. [tape interruption]

RB: O.k. Charlie's talking about his experiences he had ...Battle of the Bulge, when he...in World War II.

CC: I didn't hear what you said.

RB: You're talking about World War II...

CC: Yeah.

RB: ...your time in...

CC: Go on. What was the question?

RB: Your experiences.

CC: I wasn't there.

RB: O.k.

CC: I never...Just before this happened, I developed a tumor in my right breast. And, as soon as they found out, the authorities, they shipped me down to Austin, Texas, and, [uh], there they had doctors and nurses and all kinds of support people, and, [uh], they operated on me, and it was awhile before I was for duty again. While I wasn't for duty, they shipped my friends [tearful] over to Europe, and I've only seen one of them since. And, I got a report from him, and only one \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_ 290..it was about one man, and he was killed in the Hergen [?] Forest. [sobs] Well, ...he's gone.

RB: Which friend is this that was killed there?

CC: Sergeant Claussen [?]. I think a lot of them were killed there. That was a deadly battle, and it was winter time, and it was cold, and some of them got frostbitten. And, one of my friends did, and he lives here now.

RB: What's his name?

CC: Dallas Dean.

RB: D-E-A-N?

CC: Yes. And, [uh], he's the only one that I know that came back – that I knew at that time and after the war. [tape interruption]

RB: O.k. Charlie has some story about Gekeler Lane and the Oregon Tail in here in La Grande.

CC: Gekeler Lane is the Oregon Trail.

RB: O.k.

CC: That's where they came up from the valley to come to the foot of the mountain over here. And, if you come up Gekeler Lane, driving and looking out in your windshield, if you look in the right place, you can see the, [uh], tracks, the wagon tracks that they made going up the mountain here. They went over the top of the

mountain, topped out, level out, and then went down the other side, crossed the Grande Ronde River and went up through the forests, which turned out to be, for many of them, one of the hardest parts of the trip. But, tha... Those tracks are plainly visible from Gekeler Lane right out here. If you ever know where to look, and they're not hard to see. But, [uh], the worst part about the whole thing is that somebody built a house right square of the lower end of the trail.

RB: When did they do this?

CC: I have no idea. But, I went up Gekeler and "C" Street and came to the foot of the mountain, and there was the household right there on the trail. I thought that was regrettable. Now, that is a wagon trail. People that didn't have wagon and did use horses or mules for transportation, riding horses, went out toward Elgin and up the mountain and the higher ground on the north side.

RB: What is now the Tollgate Highway?

CC: No. I don't think so. It may be. [pause] It could be. And, I... I don't know enough about it to say yes or no, but I do know Tollgate, and I've been there many times, and my daughter used to drive, [uh], chip trucks up that road, part of the time.

RB: Were you here when they actually did charge a toll ...

CC: No.

RB: ...to go over Tollgate?

CC: No, no, no. Nope. [tape interruption]

CC: And, [uh]...

RB: Hold on. This is an... a story about Orrin F. "Toad" Howell.

CC: H-O-W-E-L-L.

RB: Toad was a nickname....

CC: Yes.

RB: ...he got. O.k., go ahead.

CC: Alright. When I came here, Toad was, [uh], like a lot of people. He'd had firearms, and he hunted and so forth and so on, and I went with him several times, and I had a pistol at that time that I played with, and, [uh], he had a rifle of some kind. And, it turned out that I could shoot the pistol better than he could shoot his rifle. Now, this didn't create a great sense of pride in me, but it did, [uh], prompt a... to induce Toad to join the rifle club and shoot with us. And, the result of that was that he became a v... very good shot, and, [uh], but that's not the end of the story. He had a wife, and he had two kids, a girl and a boy. And, the boy was a little skinny rascal....and he didn't seem to grow very well [electrical tool sound in background] ...but his mother was a good cook. And, on one occasion Toad went on a little hunting expedition for ....squirrels or something, and he took the little boy with him. And, he took along a rather large lunch that mamma [laughs] had prepared. So, the little boy was taggin' along behind, and he was carrying the lunch. When it'd come time to eat the lunch, why they found a comfortable log and set down and prepared to eat the lunch. And then, lo and behold, it turned out that the little boy had eaten the whole damn thing. [laughs] Well, this was the beginning of something because, later, several years later, when I saw this little boy again, he was over six-foot tall. He weighed over 200 pounds, all muscle! [laughs] So, he grew up!

RB: What was the son's name?  
CC: Jack.  
RB: Jack. [pause] Is he still living here?  
CC: I don't know. I have no idea. But, I do know what...what, [uh], Lynch did. Let's see, what was his first name? Anyhow, ....Toad worked as a mechanic for a man named Lynch. The full name of the company that he worked for was Gettings and Lynch. Gettings lived in Elgin. Lynch lived here in La Grande.  
RB: How do you spell Gettings?  
CC: That's spelled G-E-double-T, I-N-G-S.  
RB: O.k.  
CC: And, [uh], he is...was an old-timer, well respected, in Elgin. Everybody knew Gettings, and he was, [uh], ...I think he lived to about 100-years old. I took care of his estate, as I recall, when he died. [Uh]...But, what I really wanted to tell you was about Lynch. Now, Lynch had a shop [crinkling sound] on Jefferson Street here in La Grande, and that's where Toad worked for him for a long time. And then, Lynch or Gettings and Lynch, built a new shop. [end of tape 5, side 1]

Charles Cater, narrator  
Ron Brand, interviewer  
September 14, 2004  
tape 5, side 2

RB: ....Cater. The date is September 14, 2004. [Uh] ...We're gonna' start. The first question I have with Charlie is: You practiced law from when you came here in 1939 to 1979. I'd like to go back and say...[uh]...What was your background, and how did you first set up practicing law in La Grande.  
CC: [laughs] Now he wants to know about my background!  
RB: O.k.  
CC: I'll tell you. It was milking cows. Heva....Helping harvest kay...hay...on a little farm in western Oregon, and, [uh], finally leaving there by hitchhiking up and down the various road, mainly Highway 30...was runnin', then and now, from Portland to Astoria, and it ran through the country where I lived in my late teens. [Uh] ... We made a living there, if you could call it that, by milking a few cows and selling the cream to a ...a creamery in Portland...  
RB: O.k.  
CC: ...Raven's [?]. 020  
RB: W..w...Why did you head out this way hitchhiking?  
CC: How did I get here?  
RB: Yes.  
CC: I got a ride with a lawyer that practiced here. That isn't the answer to your question.  
RB: Oh, yes it is! Yes! That's what I want to know.  
CC: No. That's not the answer.



RB: Was that your first introduction to law, out here?

CC: Well, I didn't have any knowledge of law or legal practice in Union County when I came here, absolutely none.

RB: How did you get started?

CC: But, I had practiced law in one small way. My mother had several brothers and, [uh], a grandmoth...and, [uh], and my grandmother, and, [uh], my grandfather was gone; he had died. And, my grandmother wanted my mother to have the house that she owned in Portland. So, the first law work I ever did was to draw a deed conveying that residence property, in Portland, from my grandmother to my mother. Now, the reason my grandmother did that is pretty simple; she thought that the other sons and daughters...or, [uh], other sons, rather, [uh] had made it on their own, but my mother hadn't. She was married to a man whose obsession was to be a farmer, and he didn't make a...make a very profitable choice.

RB: O.k. How did you get started in law ...

CC: [laughs]

RB: ...once you came to La Grande?

CC: [laughs] You're insistent, aren't you?

RB: Yes.

CC: Alright. The first thing that I did that I can remember, I, [uh], rented an office that cost \$15.00 a month, and I was, [uh], ...I didn't...I wasn't started...in...in anything like the practice of law. I don't know what I did, but one day a man, James...named James Moore came to see me, and in his hands he had big, thick book. He introduced himself. He was the, [uh], the manager of the Grande Ronde Hospital, and this was near the end of the depression. And, this book contained the accounts that hadn't been paid for services rendered in the hospital. And, he needed,...[uh] he made it plain to me, somebody to collect those accounts, if th...if there...if it could be done, and he offered me as is the...the usual thing, the bill collector gets a percentage, and the rest of the money, if it's collected, goes to the original creditor.

So, he offered it to me, and I took it, and I had and I took it. And, I had an old typewriter, and Underwood, and I used that typewriter to try to collect, and I did collect, a great deal of that money that was overdue. Now, these people that owed that money were not deadbeats. They had r...run into hard times, and they couldn't pay for the service they got. As soon as the things improved a little, and as soon as they got a letter from me requesting payment, many, many of them did it. And, I got a share of it, and, th...that was how I got started.

RB: O.k. How did you study for the law then?

CC: [laughs] Well, I studied for the law in Willamette University. When I went there, about 1932, in my, [uh], late...or early teens, I had no idea what I was doing or why I was doing it. But, I did think, from the things that, [uh], [uh], influenced my life, that an education would be a good thing. I didn't know why...at all. Well, so, ...

RB: So, did you earn a degree from there.

CC: I'm not up to that yet. I need to tell ya this. One of my family friends, my grandmother's friend, my mother's friend, was a woman that worked for

the...[uh] ... the First National Bank in Portland. She was a Dutch, and her name was name was Marta Jensma, M-A-R-T-A, J-E-N-S-M-A, Jensma. Under the goodness [tearful] of her heart, she offered to lend me money for tuition to go to one of the universities or colleges.

RB: And this was before you came out here.

CC: Oh yes. I was, [uh], still living on that little farm, seven miles back in the logged-off area west of St. Helens, Oregon.

RB: O.k. Did you earn a degree in law at that time, or was that later on?

CC: I'm commin' to it. [laughs] So, [uh], my father had an old suitcase, and he gave it to me, and I got, [uh], ...I walked...I got down to the highway, and I hitchhiked to Portland, and I got through Portland—walking—and I got,[uh], ..out on the highway on the other side, and I hitchhiked my way to Salem. Well, things developed there, and I got acquainted with a man. He told about a woman [clink sound] might need a bit of student help, so I went over to the a...address that he gave me, and there was an old, old woman and her daughter living in a big house, and they took me in, and I stayed there....doing whatever work they needed done that I could do, for six years. [stapler sound?]

Now, we'er getting' to the degrees. So, [uh], along this trail of tears, I had a friend by the name of Kenneth Oliver [?], and he came from Yankton just like I did—that logged-off area west of St. Helens. And, he had suggested that I take a little German, and I did. And then we had a brilliant idea—he and I would go together would [scraping sound?] to Europe and study in one of the great universities, such as Heidleburg. But, in order to do this, it seemed to me, and he thought so too, that I needed all the French and German I could get at Willamette University in preparation to carry on studies in Europe [clinking/clattering sound]. Well, this was a wonderful plan, so I took all the French and German I could, and, [uh], then Hitler started doing' the things that he did, and we changed our mind and decided not to go.

RB: O.k. Let's get back to Union County, after you started here.

CC: Just a minute; we're gonna' get there. We have to do something first. So, [uh], at the end of my three years it was obvious that I needed to do something to equip me to earn a living. The only other thing they had, except the baccalaureate arrangement was a music school, a very small music school, and a college of law, and a building that housed the College of Law. So, I transferred to law there, and it was...disappointed my principal professor a...a great deal. He wanted me to stay and be a teaching scholar, what they called, [uh], well I don't remember the name, but any,[uh], assist in teaching the things that he taught, [uh]. His name was Alexander Aristides Bazakas, a wonderful [tearful ?]...

RB: O.k. Charlie! When you got to La Grande, you set up an office.

CC: Yeah, I did that.

RB: O.k. Was the office downtown?

CC: Why, of course.

RB: O.k.

CC: It was in the building that, [uh], now houses the First Bank. It was the First National Bank, and \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 159 both the lower floor and top floor were used.

The top floor was offices, lawyers offices. I rented one, \$15.00 a month, and, [uh], anyhow...[interrupted]

RB: O.k. When you...Did you have anybody working for you at the office, or were you...

CC: No, ...

RB: ...or were you just there by yourself?

CC: ...I was doin' i...I did it all myself. [dishes clinking?]

RB: How long did it take before you actually hired somebody to work for you?

CC: I couldn't tell you. I don't remember. But, I do know that the first employee I had was the wife of a friend of mine by the name of Stevenson, I believe. And, she was with me for awhile, and then the work increased, and eventually I, [uh],...the volume of work increased to where I needed a full-time help. So, I hired the woman that later became my wife. I was married before. When I came here I had a wife, and later we had two...three children. So, I hired my wife, Donna, and she was with me in the office until we both retired, in '79.

RB: O.k. did you practice, [uh], in the old courthouse at that time?

CC: Oh yes.

RB: What was that courthouse like?

CC: It was a...a...a kind of a nice-looking stone building as I recall. It had, [uh], two or three floors, one basement, one standard, [uh], level, and then the top floor where the courtroom was located, and the judge's office.

RB: O.k. What... [nail gun? sound] Were there any other offices there?

CC: In the courthouse?

RB: Any legal offices or....

CC: In the courthouse?

RB: Yeah, in the courthouse. What other offices were there?

CC: Well, there was the county clerk's office.

RB: O.k. The clerk...

CC: And the sheriff's office, and, [uh], for awhile there was the, [uh], county engineer's office.

RB: How 'bout the county commissioners?

CC: They came and went. They weren't there all the time. They...

RB: They ...They did have an office there sometime though?

CC: I don't know. I couldn't say.

RB: Was there a jail there?

CC: Oh yes.

RB: Where was the jail?...in the basement?

CC: No. It was on the first floor, in the back.

RB: Did, [uh],...O.k. Were there any city offices there, or was it mostly county?

CC: They were all county.

RB: It was all county.

CC: Yeah.

RB: O.k. How was the court set up? Was there a district and a circuit court?

CC: Yeah.

RB: At that time?

CC: Both.

RB: There were both.

CC: Well, there was certainly a circuit court, and, [uh], s...at some stage, [uh], there, [uh], developed a district court...to handle smaller cases.

RB: O.k. Was there a municipal court there?

CC: Yeah. There was a municipal court, but it wasn't in the courthouse; it was downtown.

RB: It was downtown.

CC: Yes.

RB: [Uh]...So, you started practicing in that building when you went to court.

CC: I started practicing from my office to the circuit court in the courthouse. I...it was a movement all the way. I picked up and walked to the courthouse, and I probably didn't have a c...car then. I didn't have, [uh], any transportation for awhile. As a matter of fact, the first tough case I had, and it was pretty tough too, I didn't have, [uh], any transportation to use in the job the, [uh], judge gave me, 'cause he appointed me to represent a person, a man, who was charged with negligent homicide. I think I may have told you this...

RB: Yes, I think you did.

CC: ...sooner. He, [uh], ...The young man that was going to this uni...the uni...the school here was walking down the road in a dark night, and a car hit and killed him. There were three people in the car, a young woman and two men. One of the men was a fellow by the name of Johnny Jennings Lewis. He was a hard-lucker. He had been cr... charged and convicted of five felonies before he got here. I didn't have any transportation, but I represented Lewis, and the judge ...found him not...not the judge, the circuit court jury found him innocent, or at least not guilty. That's the way it worked. It...They don't find for innocence; it's either guilty or not guilty, and this one was not guilty. Later, [uh], I got to thinkin' about what the judge did; that was R. J. Green; he was the circuit judge. He was the one that appointed me to represent Lewis. The system then...They didn't have, [uh], people on retainer or salary as public defenders. They would...The judge would just appoint somebody out of the lawyers that were available.

RB: Was this a matter of law?...or necessity?...that a person had to have a lawyer?

CC: It was absolute law and constitutional requirement.

RB: O.k. How did...[interrupted]

CC: \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ 278

RB: ...somebody like that get paid?

CC: Well, [uh], the judge would indicate to the people that handled the money, and he'd tell 'em what to do, and they would do it. What he told him, of course, in my case...I'm just guessing, 'cause I don't remember a thing about it...[uh]...but he most of told 'em that, [uh], they should draw a draft or check to reimburse me, [uh], for the service.

RB: So, you were paid by the court?

CC: By the county.

RB: Or by the county.

CC: Yeah.

RB: O.k. [pause] What kind of...[uh]...What kind of people did you end up representing generally? [Uh] ...

CC: I can answer that pretty easily. I rep...I, [uh], was, for forty years, a country lawyer. That's it! A country lawyer takes care of everything except two things: patents and maritime law. And, he can't do either of those, because ya haveta be in, [uh],...patents you have to be in Washington, D. C., where the patent office is located. To handle maritime law, you have to be close to the big waters, big rivers, where the stevedores are, where the ships are, where the ships come and go.

RB: So, you would handle a wide variety....

CC: Oh yes.

RB: ...of cases? Did you handle divorces?

CC: Oh, lots of 'em.

RB: How were those? Did those get kind of dicey sometimes?

CC: Well, I thought of a couple of 'em, and I made notes here. One of 'em had to do with this friend of mine, and his wife got, [uh], to friendly with some neighbors, and he decided to get a divorce, and he always hired me if he needed somebody. [laughs] So that was Marsh Dear, D-E-A-R. And, I don't hesitate to mention his name, because it won't embarrass him now. But, the interesting thing about it is that I got a divorce for the ....to split this marriage couple, and then she wouldn't leave.

RB: She wouldn't leave his home.

CC: She stayed right there, and he couldn't get her out, and I couldn't...that wasn't my job, and I [laughs] was glad it wasn't. Eventually she left, but for quite awhile she did not leave. I don't know what the reason was. The possibility, even probability, were that she didn't have any place to go.

RB: O.k. What other kinds of cases did you...did you c...did you cover? How about things like related to alcoholism, robberies, [uh], ...I don't know that there was drug addiction at that time.

CC: Oh. I didn't have anything to do with them. [Uh], I did represent a few people that was...were, [uh], propted by overindulgence into some kind of, [uh], little criminal activities, like car theft. I had a client that was charged with car theft, and it was...my defense was, and they accepted it, that the man was drunk, and he didn't actually know what he was doing.

RB: O.k. Did you win that case.

CC: Yes.

RB: You did!

CC: Oh yes.

RB: O.k. So, that was a defense for drunkenness?

CC: That was a defense for car theft.

RB: For car theft.

CC: And, the defense was drunkenness. The odd and intresting and amusing thing about it, was the district attorney was a ...let's see, what was...Well, I won't try to remember his name, but he....he was made leery about this defense in this case because the defense was simply the guy was too drunk to know what he was really doing.

Another case came up, and it involved this involves different people, and more people, two or three young men, and, [uh], they were...had been drinking, and that is why they did what they did. But, when we got to the courthouse and we're puttin' the evidence, it became evi...apparent to the district attorney that I was goin' to weasel out of this by this drunkenness defense, this under the influence of defense. So, he helped me prove, by his work in the courthouse, in the courtroom, he helped me disprove that. You see, he remembered what happened to him in that other case, and he didn't wanta be hooked on that under the influence thing again, so he helped me prove they weren't under the influence, and they were...[laughs] ...they were found not guilty too! [laughs]

RB: Why were they found not guilty?

CC: Oh, I don't remember.

RB: How long did that drunkenness defense...how long did that work?

CC: Just twice.

RB: Just twice.

CC: Well, just...the two times that I mentioned, and no others.

RB: Do you know of any other lawyers in Union County that used that same defense?

CC: No, I don't.

RB: O.k. Would you...When you quit your practice in '79, do you think you would have tried that defense?...and would it have worked?

CC: Oh no. Every case is different. Everything is different. [Uh] ... Oh, let's see. Now, after we...the in...interval that we've discussed, then the, [uh], some of the farmers out here, and other people too, decided it would be beneficial to the community if, [uh], they had a publ...people's utility district to own and operate the electrical system on which we depended for electricity. And, so, they created a People's Utility District, and that happened sometime, I believe, between '44 and '46, because I came back from the military in '46, and they hired me right away, or retained me, to represent the People's Utility District here, and I've talked to you about that before.

Anyway, [uh], that, [uh], really was a beneficial situation for me because they paid me in a reasonable way, and, [uh], I was able to...pay for my groceries. I never charged a damn thing!...in almost my whole life. Cash, always cash. If you wanna know the secret of my, whatever it is, my life, it's pay cash.

RB: O.k. How long did that people's utility district last? Do you remember that?

CC: Oh, yeah, just, [uh], just a, sure, few years, and then it was terminated.

RB: What happened to electric service after that?

CC: Well, it went back to Cal-Pac, [uh], California Pacific Utilities Company, which was the company that was operating the utility before the P. U. D. came into existence...during and after. And, then, some years passed, and California Pacific sold out to the present supplier, [uh], [uh], what is...you know the...

RB: Oregon Trail Electric.

CC: That's the one. Yeah. And, I had nothing further to do with it, except to practice country law, and I sure as heck did that!

RB: O.k. Were there...in...with the different lawyers practicing in Union County ...were there different specialties that lawyers took on?  
CC: Not really. These were all country lawyers.  
RB: So, they did most things, except maritime and patent law?  
CC: That's right. That's exactly it. [Uh] ...I, [uh], conceived the opinion, during my practice, and I was not at all, [uh], hesitant about [end of tape 5, side 2]

Charles Cater, narrator  
Ron Brand, interviewer  
, 2004

tape 6, side 1

RB: ...\_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_, 2004. This is the beginning of tape 6. We were talking about the different practice of different lawyers in Union County and La Grande. Go ahead Charlie.  
CC: [Uh],...The comment that I was starting to make was simply, in my opinion, and probably the opinions of most of the lawyers, were simply that one of the highest and best professions is that of a country lawyer. And, I think that I almost remember the name of the first country lawyer that became President of the United States. Who was it?  
RB: No idea?  
CC: Well, who was the second president?  
RB: Adams? Wasn't it Adams, or was it Madison?  
CC: Didn't hear it.  
RB: Madison?  
CC: Oh, no.  
RB: Adams?  
CC: Adams.  
RB: Yeah.  
CC: Adams. He was a country lawyer.  
RB: O.k. What do you mean by the term "country lawyer?"  
CC: The country lawyer sits in his office and looks wise, and when people come in with problems he solves them, if he can. And, he fights for the client.  
RB: How does he ....Does he do things other than going to court?  
....counseling?...talking to people?...  
CC: Well, you have to talk to people to find out what the facts are. [Uh] ...For example, I tried a, [uh], case that was a really difficult case. My client was a man who was married to a woman with, [uh], three children. He was the father of only one of them. She had been married twice before. I had got two divorces for her before she hitched up, [uh], [dishes rattling?], with her then, [uh], husband, and she, [uh], kinda went bonkers. I don't know what happened, but she just disappeared one day, took the kids with her, frightened her parents. Her parents lived in a motor home down here, parked down here someplace, and she so terrified them with stories how dangerous her husband was, how dangerous my client was, that ...in the fall, late in the fall, those people picked up and left that

motor home without any protection against cold weather, and you know what happens in the wintertime here—things freeze, and they freeze in your motor home unless you protect it.

Alright, they arrested my client, and, [uh], in the course of it, he told me this-n-that and the other thing, and he gave me a check. I...He asked what's this gonna cost or something or....we came to an agreement, and I said \$5,000.00, so he gave me \$5,000.00, and I went to work on the case. Now, in accor...in a...in, [uh], my conversations with him, I found this out: they had valuable property. It consisted of a place out here where people parked motor homes; it's a motor home park. It was rather extensive, and this was their principle asset. She...He told me that she called him on the phone and offered to let him off this criminal charge—he was supposed to have messed with a girl, see—she would let him off of this criminal charge if he would give her all of their property. He told me this, and it just by good fortune, and these things happen, I had a client, among all the other clients, that worked for the telephone company. And, [uh], I got to talking to him, and he told me that he had installed, [uh], two telephones with recording devices in the apartment that this woman occupied here in La Grande while waiting for the trial.

Well, I asked my client on the witness stand about this conversation, and then I called this telephone employee to testify to what he had done in her apartment, and the result was the jury was out an hour and fifteen minutes, which is just enough time, usually, to get a...a head honcho is appointed as a foreman.

RB: So...[interrupted]

CC: So that case was all over then.

RB: Did they accept that tape recording? ...or testimony from it as evidence?

CC: No. There wasn't anything on the tape. Th...The, [uh], crucial thing was that she was prepared to lock him into an offer that he...she had made. If he had accepted, why, [uh], she come out on top, see.

RB: O.k. He was...[interrupted]

CC: You understand that?

RB: Yes, yes. He was found innocent then...

CC: Oh, yeah...

RB: ...of the sexual charges.

CC: ...of course.

RB: How were, generally, charges of a sexual nature handled?...whether it's sexual abuse of a child or issues like rape, things like that?

CC: As far as I can remember, this is the only case of that kind I ever had.

RB: O.k.

CC: I believe so. But there was more to it than that. After the case was over, the criminal case, then the question came about what is to do...be done to this...about this married couple. The answer is, they divorce. So, there was a divorce. I represented my client, the man, and this woman got a lawyer from somewhere else, and we tried the case. Well, the, [uh], it was very simple. I advised my client, as I frequently did, [uh], to...in the division of property, just to do it and let it go and forget it, see. So, there was, [uh], property to be picked up and loaded



into a truck, and, [uh], my client was there when this was done—it was her property, and it was, was, ...it was fair that she should have her property. So, during the course of the time when they were loading up the household goods that she had coming to her, my client laid a wallet somewhere in the house that they occupied—with a good deal of money in it. He laid a wallet where anybody could pick it up, and one of the workman that was doing the trucking picked that wallet up and tried to get away with it. But, immediately it was realized...my client realized...that this had happened, and he, [uh], had a little talk with the fella, and he got his wallet back with the money. Then the question came up to my client—I don't remember whether I put the question or somebody else—but the question was whether he was going to make a claim of theft against this man who had picked up his wallet. Would you like to know what the answer was?

RB: Go ahead, quickly.

CC: Yes. The answer was my client says, “No. No way. I had enough trouble. I'm not [laughs] gonna to see somebody else have that kinda trouble.” And he said, “I won't make any claim against the man,” and he didn't!

RB: O.k. At this time most of the cases you've talked about concern adults. Was there much crime among youth?...teenagers, [uh], ...or what was going on with that at this time?

CC: I don't think so. I don't remember anything about it. The, [uh], ...The people that I represented were ....well...adults, except one, and I've told you this story, about the old gal who brought her grandson in and announced that he'd got a girl pregnant, and, [uh], that a left a question hangin' in the about what I should do or advise, and I didn't hesitate at all. I said, “Well, that's simple. Let 'em get married,” and you know what she did next.

RB: Nope. [stapling sound?]

CC: She was a big woman, buxom and forceful, and after I said let 'em get married, she said, “Oh! That's impossible. I'll have you know I'm a post, [uh], [uh], Nobel Grand. I'm a past Nobel Grand.” Now, you can figure out what past Nobel Grand is; I don't know, ....

RB: \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_.

CC: ...but it was some kind of an organization, which she thought covered her with a, [uh], invincible, untouchable situation, so that she couldn't let her grandson do the right thing. I was not impressed, and she didn't stay very long in my office, and I don't know how she happened to leave, but maybe I had something to do with it, but I was usually courteous,...

RB: O.k.

CC: ...polite.

RB: By the time you quit your practice, [uh], had the kind of cases that were coming to you changed? Were there more young people, [uh], ...What had happened ...

CC: No.

RB: ....during that time?

CC: No, no. I don't remember any young people except the one that I'm just told you about.

RB: O.k. [Uh] ...When you started, the first person you hired was a woman...in your office.

CC: Yes.  
RB: Was that common that lawyers, male lawyers....  
CC: Oh yes.  
RB: ...would hire women?  
CC: Oh yes. Almost all, [uh], people that were hired were women.  
RB: Did, at any time...did women start getting training in the law?...either paralegals or become lawyers here in Union County?  
CC: Not that I know of.  
RB: And th...that had not gone on by the time in 1979?  
CC: No, I don't think so.  
RB: So, if they worked in the law, it was in secretarial or office positions?  
CC: Yeah. Before my wife came here, my wife Donna, the one that died last October, she had lived in Ohio, and she had studied, [uh], secretarial science, and she became adept at the Gregg system of shorthand, as a result of which she, [uh], was hired as a court reporter in one of the counties in Ohio. And, she served as court reporter there until she picked up and left and came out here, and she never did court reporting again, but she served as, [uh], my secretary, and, [uh], [uh], there is...I don't think there's any possibility that I could have ever had anybody that was so expert and so helpful and so wise.  
RB: O.k. In the court system, what different positions were there in the system? ...like bailiff, [uh], court reporter, [uh],...What different offices were held by different people in the court system itself.  
CC: The ones you just mentioned—bailiff, court reporter, [uh], oh, maybe sheriff.  
RB: O.k. That was a county office?  
CC: Yes...It sure was.  
RB: O.k. Was there a district attorney at that time?  
CC: Yes.  
RB: And he was hired by the state...?  
CC: I...[interrupted]  
RB: ...or he was \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 198 [interrupted]  
CC: ...don't think so.  
RB: ...or he was...  
CC: I...  
RB: ...he was ...  
CC: ...don't think so. I think he was a county employee.  
RB: County employee.  
CC: I think so.  
RB: O.k. When did women ever take positions in the court system? [Uh] ...  
CC: Well, [uh], the present County Clerk, Nellie Bogue [?] Hibberd [?], has been County Clerk for years now, and she still is. She's down there right now; ...if you want to see her or talk to her.  
RB: Yes.  
CC: She's a ...She's a real nice person, and a real good friend to all of us.  
RB: Was her predecessor a male or a female?  
CC: He was a man. [Uh]...There were two of 'em. One of 'em was named Graham, and the other one...I can't think of his name right now, but h...he...he...I

observed him doing something very unusual. [Uh] ... He was the county judge. He started out as the county clerk, and then he became a county judge. His name was C. K. McCormack [?]. And, [uh], along the way, we lost the county engineer; he died. And, on day...I was in the courthouse, and I walked into the room that was dedicated to the county judge, and the county commissioners when they were in session, and here was ...Mr. McCormack setting a table with a large book right in front of him. And, I walked over, and I discovered that he was studying an engineering book. He was preparing himself, as well as he could, to fulfill the duties of county engineer, who was a former county clerk, county judge, no real, [uh], basic, [uh], education in this subject. And, here he was, trying to his job the best he could.

RB: O.k. It didn't happen when you were practicing in '79, but do you remember when a woman first got a position, either as lawyer or in the court system, in the county?

CC: No. But, [uh], there were some. Beverly Penz [?] was one of them.

RB: Yeah. There is several women lawyers now. Do you remember when that first happened?

CC: [laughs]

RB: \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_ [interrupted] 257

CC: It happened after '79.

RB: After '79.

CC: Yes.

RB: O.k. [Uh] ...I've heard commented by Eric Valentine that 90% of the crime comes 70 families...here in Union County. Is ... Was that true at...when you practiced?...that certain families had a history of being involved with law?

CC: Well, I'd like to have somebody tell me who they were!

RB: O.k. This wasn't true then...back when...you were practicing?

CC: I don't think so.

RB: O.k. I think Val...[uh], Eric Valentine is referring to a lot of cases that have come up related to drug and alcohol use and involving young people.

CC: Well, it could be, [uh], ...[faint machine noise] [pause] One of the most interesting cases that I had, [uh], was tried in Baker County, and it had to do with a group of people over there who, [uh], were members of a...a small Christian congregation called, as I recall, The Church of God. They had what amounted to inadequate, [uh], an inadequate building. So they, [uh], among themselves decided to build themselves a better church. One of the members of this congregation was a...a very skilled builder with all kinds of equipment and, [uh], and the ability. So, he naturally volunteered to oversee and see that the job was done, and he did. He was good man. His name was Carl Peterson [?]. So, they went ahead, and they had this building under construction, and it was a...A-frame. And, [uh], they had the A-frame up, but they didn't have the ends of the building closed in, and that creates a dangerous situation. And, a wind came up, a wind that was described as a twisting wind, and it really raised heck with, [uh] other things around there, and it ...it caused this church, half-built A-frame, to come crashing down.

Now, [uh], ...Mr. Peterson, the builder, had created, had manufactured on the ground, right on the slab of this A-frame, he had manufactured, [uh], laminated beams to hold up this A-frame, which was a good-sized...[uh], building, or a part of a building. In the course of construction, the people that run this little church had taken out a policy of, [uh], construction insurance, and when it come crashing down, they paid off to the church as agreed. But, they thought and came to the conclusion that Mr. Peterson was at fault, and, [uh], his fault had caused them to have...be exposed to this, [uh], insurance situation. So, they brought an action for damages against Mr. Peterson. And, very shortly thereafter, Mr. Peterson showed up in my office, and he asked me to represent him, and I did.

RB: O.k. Was this very common...for lawyers here in Union County to go to other counties?

CC: It was ...

RB: [Uh]

CC: ...for me.

RB: Yeah. I know you went to Umatilla County...in Pendleton. You've mentioned cases...

CC: Yeah, I ....

RB: ...over there.

CC: ...Mila....Umatilla, Baker, [uh], Wallowa, [uh]; that's it. And, of course, I had, [uh], [uh], a lawyer help me a couple of times [laughs] in a case in federal district court in Portland.

RB: O.k. Was there competition between the lawyers here?...in Union County?

CC: [laughs] Believe me, there's always competition, but **not** in the way you're thinking. The competition takes place in the courtroom...fair and square. I wanta finish this story about the Baker church, because it's...to me, a most interesting thing. Alright, so they sued Mr. Peterson. He hired me. There was a trial, and, [uh], we lost. My friends in Baker, members of a shooting fraternity, trap club, and others that I knew there, lawyers and ...anybody, they said, "Charlie, how in the world could you lose that case," and they had a point. You see, here's an insurance company suing a decent man that was trying [tearful] to do what needed to be done for his little church, and, [uh], it would seem to anybody that the insurance company—just considering the prejudices that would arise in that situation—that they couldn't possibly win, but we lost that case.

RB: Did you take the case to appeal?

CC: I did that---because they brought a judge from out of Baker County to try that case, and he made a few mistakes, and I did appeal it, and it was reversed by the Supreme Court of Oregon. Now, then, under those circumstances in a law case, and that's what this was, there's a difference between law and equity. You savvy? Oh, good. This was a law case; that means they came back for trial, retrial...fine. This time I had information that I didn't have before, and I knew things that I had forgotten, and I tell you this is [pause] [jingling sound] fabulous. [Uh], they, [uh], the insurance company called an engineer, a skillful engineer from Portland, and he testified that you couldn't possibly build, [uh], laminated beams the way Peterson did right there on the concrete floor of this building; it wouldn't do. He said he couldn't have the strength, but they, [uh], there was

something he didn't know. I had a farmer friend across the valley. I had, [uh], done a little business for him or something, and on occasion I went over to his farm, and this all took place long before this trial in Baker County. And, here was my friend [pause] in his barn, a big barn, with a concrete floor, and he was making laminated beams. Those are done with pieces of board about, [uh], oh, three-quarters of an inch thick, and they're glued together...under pressure. It takes, [uh], equipment to provide the pressure. And, here is this friend, and I asked him questions. He and some other members of the church had gone up the mountain right behind his farm, and they had cut down the trees and hauled them down to his farm house, where his...he and his son .... had built a little sawmill, and they milled those trees into boards suitable to be made into beams, ...

RB: O.k.

CC: ...laminated beams.

RB: This was locally known technology then?

CC: What's the last word?

RB: Technology. They had the ability to make laminated beams here in this county, and you knew that.

CC: Well, let me say this. This man, th...this farmer, was a very, very unusual and a very capable man. [end of tape 6, side 1]

Charles Cater, narrator

Ron Brand, interviewer

, 2004

tape 6, side 2

CC: [paper rustling] What was Elmer's last name?

[FEMALE VOICE] Elmer. Howard Elmer?

CC: Yeah. This was Howard...no, not Howard.

[FEMALE VOICE] Russel?

CC: Russel. No, that's his s...grandson. It was ...It was Elmer alright. His last name was Elmer. So, he and his son, and probably other members of the First Christian Church congregation, loaded up those boards that they had sawed on their, [uh], mill, took 'em out to La Grande, had them surfaced sor...four sides—those are the words---surfaced four side, and dried in the kilns. Then, they loaded 'em up again, took back out to the...to Elmer's farm, and that's where I saw him making these beams out of the boards that they had made. And, they glued them together and held them together with clamps! Not ordinary clamps, but one's that Elmer had made himself from steel fence posts. I don't know anybody else that could have done it, but he did it! Then, they brought the beams, after they made, glued and processed...finished, out to La Grande, and they built a church with 'em. It's the First Christian Church here in La Grande.

Now then, when I was preparing for the second trial, I knew the things that I've told you. I knew that they had built this church using those beams. I hired, [uh], a photographer, professional photographer, and I had pictures made of the interior of that church. showing the beams, and, [uh], all the stories that went with it. So, we gathered together again in Baker to retry the case, and they had their engineer

there, and I had Mr. Elmer. [laughs] [female laughter] So, Mr. Elmer testified as to what he had done, and they...we showed the pictures of the church with the beams that they had made, and then the case was rou...about to deliver to the jury for determination. Mr. Elmer was still on the witness stand, and the j...lawyers had asked all the questions they wanted, and it was time for Mr. Elmer to get down off the witness, and he didn't; he just sat there. And, then he said, "Can I ...Can I tell you something else," and the, [uh], lawyer on the other side \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 49, "Oh, no, no," and the judge said, "Oh no." Charley Cater didn't say a damn word, [laughs] jus...[tearful] just waited, and then Mr. Elmer said, and that's all he said, "You all come to our church." [sobs]

[FEMALE VOICE] Oh.

CC: The jury retired and brought in a verdict in favor of my client, Mr. Peterson. As far as I'm concerned, that is one of the most interesting cases I ever had, and it was pure luck that I happened to be there when Mr. Elmer was building those...beams.

RB: Was it very often ...that you would be involved with cases that concerned outside forces, like an insurance company, [uh],...

CC: Yes. Yes. I guess so. I...

RB: What kind of cases?

CC: Well, [laughs], this next one is silly, but, [uh], I wanta the church thing first. Sometime later, maybe two or three months later, after the case in Baker was all over, I was in the Portland vicinity, and driving down one the, [uh], roads or streets, and I happened to see something that took my attention. There was a crew...crou...crew of men. There was some, what looked like smashed up building, and, [uh], people standing around. So, I pulled off and stopped, because it seemed to me that this thing that had crashed was a church. I got out of my rig, and I approached somebody there that seemed to be one of the people that were working on this project, and I asked him a, [uh], question about, [uh], was there anybody here that knew what happened here. He said, "Yes." He said the preacher of this church is right down there. Well, it didn't take me very [laughs] long to get down to the preacher. I talked to him, and I asked him a question. I says, "What happened here?" "Well," he said, [uh], "We were working an... or had a meeting in the church, and all of a sudden there...it started to make sounds, and the water started leakin' outa pipes up there, and we got out of that church in a hurry, and then it fell down—the whole thing." I said, "Now, this was made with laminated beams, wasn't it?" I could see 'em. He said, "Yes." I said, "Where did you get the beams?" He said, "We bought 'em at a factory at Clackamus." Now, this was significant to me because this engineer that had testified in the Baker case had sworn under oath that the only way, [uh],...the only people that could make these kinda beams, would be in a factory. So, here were the beams that were made in a factory, and there they were, crashing all around. That's the not the whole story.

RB: O.k. [simultaneously]

CC: \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 102. ...Portland area, gathered themselves together, bought some more beams from the factory, put the church up again, and it fell down the second

- time! Now, that did not come out in this other case; \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ 107 all over.  
Now, you had a question.
- RB: O.k. What other kinds of cases did you have that concerned, [uh], land, water rights, [uh], different cases. There's a whole history of different kinds of businesses, like orchards, grass seed, that have gone on in this county. [Uh], ...What kind of cases have you had in relationship to those?
- CC: I was standing around and criticizing mostly. I didn't have any cases ...t...to do with those things. But, I was aware of the actions taken by, [uh], the legislative bodies here and in Salem, and I wasn't very pleased about it...because the effort was to make ...to give one group of people advantage over everybody else.
- RB: Do you remember more specifics about different cases?
- CC: Well, I had another case in Baker County that sort of interested me.
- RB: O.k. I wanta stick to Union County.
- CC: This...This started in Union County. This [laughs] stretched over both counties. You have to hear the whole or it doesn't mean a thing. So, would you like to have it?
- RB: O.k. Start with the Union County part.
- CC: Well, I was sittin' in my office quietly meditating on the, [uh], mysteries of life, when a young man came to my door and came in the office. And, he came in and sat down, and I asked him what his problem was. He said he'd been charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor in Baker County, Baker. My heart fell a foot because I immediately thought it involved some female, and I really recoiled from the thought of it. But, he went on, and he said, "They charged me with having purchased a bottle of booze for a teenage boy." I said, "Well, did you." He said, "No, I didn't," and I said, "Well, you...they got you charged. They're gonna ...They're gonna try you and find out whether you're guilty or not." He said, "Do I need a lawyer? I said, "Yes, you need a lawyer." I said, "Do you have a lawyer?" He said, "No, I don't have a lawyer." And then I did a foolish thing...but I did it because...I did it because this young man im....impressed me as being almost helpless in the face of his situation.

Because I felt that way, I did something that I have never understood since, and I don't very many lawyers ever had that experience, I said, "Well, come along with me, and, [uh], we'll go see the judge, and we'll get you a lawyer," because all I had to do was tell Judge Wolf [?], the Baker judge, that here's a young man who needs a lawyer, and ask him to appoint one for him. I had no imagination that the judge would do what he did, but he did. So, I got down there with this fella, and the judge appointed me to represent him. Well, I don't wanta go through the whole case. It didn't last very long. Before it started the district attorney, who was a friend of mine, whispered into my ear and said, "This time we've got your boy dead to rights," see. Well, before the case was over, my client was found not guilty. The young, other person that had, [uh], charged, had a, [uh], alleged this wrongful purchase was in jail charged with perjury! Now, the judge, in my opinion, had no business doing that, but Judge Wolf was so outraged by something, he throw this young jail and turned my man loose.

RB: [Paper rustling] Were there any cases, at different times, [uh], where either judges or lawyers have run into legal problems and possibly lost their license to practice, [uh], things like that. We've had recent flaps between...in [interrupted]

CC: \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 192

RB: ...the district attorneys office.

CC: No, there wasn't anything like that. No. [Uh]...Until recently, until this last, [uh], ...[uh], ...election in which there was a...a couple of people fightin' each other, you know, you remember.

RB: Janie Burkhart [?] and Martin Burnbaum? [?]

CC: Yeah.

RB: ....the district attorney's ....

CC: \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 200 And there was the ...[interrupted]

RB: ...race?

CC: \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ There was a guy...gir...There was a girl too. Anyway, that's the first time I ever heard of anything like that. I was shocked! Shocked! [pause] And, I don't like the things that have been goin' on since; you know, people fightin' each other over nothing! ... and then killin' each other. [laughs] Boy! This is goin' too damn far!

RB: O.k. Do you know...Do you remember...of ...the development of different facets of the law. They now have a drug court, a youth ...a youth court, and a small claims court. Were ther...Do you remember how these were developed.

CC: No. Fortunately they had to wait until I got of the swim before they started that foolishness, ...if that's foolishness; I'm not sure.

RB: Well, they handle problems \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 218 ...the drug problem came much after your practice.

CC: We didn't have any. People had a problem now and then with booze, but it was usually from drivin' and drinkin'. I guess I told you about my friend Willard Carey, picked up one night. They claimed was driving all under the influence. He was a lawyer, one of the other lawyers, and he asked me to defend him, and I did. Didn't I tell you this?

RB: I think so, yeah. I think you got him off?

CC: I always did. [female laughter] Well it sounds that way, doesn't it! [laughs] [female laughter]

RB: The....You've mentioned two communities. There's a black community in La Grande, and there, there was at one time...there was a Chinese community in La Grande, [uh], and lately there is an Hispanic community, [uh], that does both migrant work and works in restaurants. There are a number of...of...

CC: Well, they have a restaurant down here, a couple of 'em ...[interrupted]

RB: Yeah.

CC: ...run by...

RB: Yeah. Have these...

CC: ...Latinos.

RB: Have these groups...How have these groups been involved with the law? Have they ever found work in the system, or are they mostly appearing in court cases?

CC: Oh, you don't see 'em in court. They get along pretty good. Most all colors get along here pretty good, except the white folks, and then they, [uh], carry on, [uh],



indecent accusations against each other, [laughs] and I don't like it! [laughs]  
Neither does Sarah [female laughter].

RB: O.k. You worked with some members of the black community...

CC: Oh yes.

RB: ...representing them. What kind of cases were they?

CC: Just the...tax preparation; income tax preparation, that's all.

RB: How do you think....[interrupted]

CC: They didn't get in much trouble then. They have, in other situations, but not when I was practicing. They ...[interrupted]

RB: Did....

CC: ...handled things pretty well.

RB: Did they kind of stay out of the limelight in La Grande?

CC: Well, if they did, I...I didn't notice it. [Uh], ...I don't wanta mention any names, and I certainly will not, but I had a young black woman come to me and tell me about the association she'd had with a man, and the man she was associatin' with wasn't black...and he wasn't Latino; he was a white guy. And, she told me all about it; I don't know why, because she didn't ask me to do anything, and I didn't need to do anything. She seemed to be satisfied with what she'd been doing, and I didn't criticize her. I never...I don't in the 40 years of practice I ever, or, [uh], had ever run acrossed anything like that.

RB: This was kept...This kind of interracial relationship was kept pretty quiet if it occurred?

CC: Well, I don't think there was any except that one, and, [uh], I ...I kept quiet. I'm pretty sure she didn't go blabbin' around, except to people like me, and I don't know why she told me. Well, anyway, it's, [uh], all over and done with. Everybody's happy,...I hope.

RB: Did you have any kind of contact with the Chinese community that was here [interrupted]

CC: \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ 289 ...

RB: ...for a number a ...

CC: None. [simultaneously]

RB: ...period of time?

CC: None whatsoever. But, I will this, that recently I have been thinking ...about that. And, what I've been thinking has ...arisen because of things I read, just in the last week, about how people are havin' problems with, [uh], education and th...e...educating their children. We ..don't ..have .. any .. problems..with..a...Asians...educatin' their kids. The...Japanese and the Chinese and the Koreans make damned sure that their kids do it and do it right, and it works, and, [uh], if I had advice to some of my white coexisters, I would say go talk to the Asian parents—that's where it is! They never fail. It works a hundred percent. I don't know how they do it, but it's time we found out!

RB: You mentioned before...once...lawyers studying to become lawyers while they practiced under a lawyer, while they worked for a lawyer?

CC: Yeah.

RB: How...How did that work? ...and how ... how common was it?

CC: Very common, but it was a long time ago. It was before the advent or the...creation of, [uh], specialized law schools.

RB: Do you remember about when that happened?

CC: No, I do not. But, I do know that, [uh], before I got to Willamette University, they had a specialized law school.

RB: O.k. So, in your time though, you have seen lawyers who studied as they were working for another lawyer?

CC: No. Never.

RB: You haven't seen that.

CC: None. All the lawyers I have seen, to know what they did before I got to 'em, was, [uh], in law school.

RB: O.k. Do you know when the practice of studying to be a paralegal started?

CC: No, I don't.

RB: Do you remember that happening?...where people...I know there are paralegals now in La Grande.

CC: Yeah. It happened a few years ago. It happened before, [uh], probably just before I gave it up and quit.

RB: O.k. We're ...Were women going through that training as paralegals then?...before you quit?

CC: If they were, they didn't tell me. I don't know.

RB: You don't know.

CC: I don't think so. [paper rustling] But, [uh], ...Sarah, here, wants me to tell you a story....

RB: O.k.

CC: ...about something that happened in La Grande.

RB: O.k.

CC: You ready?

RB: Go ahead.

CC: One day I was quietly doing my thing in my office, and a man came up the stairs and into the hall and went into the office across the hall from my office. The...His appearance was just an ordinary shepherder, it was...which was about like this and about like yours...and he went in there and, [uh], I didn't pay much attention. But, I heard a little o' what was goin' on, and he wanted to look at one of the law book over there. And, the l...lawyer across the hall was my friend, [uh], [uh], ...

[female voice] Henry. Henry Hess. [?]

CC: Yeah! Henry, [uh], Henry Hess [?], and he wasn't there in the office that...at that time. And, this fellow was lookin' at the books, and then he got sorta ready to leave, and he was kinda talkin' about taking one of the books with him, and I said, "Well, before you do that, I want to write Henry's name in the book." And so, the fella got up and left, and...as he left, he spoke to the secretary there, and he said, [uh], "When Henry comes in, tell him that Douglas was here," Justice Douglas. [laughs]

RB: Is that Justice William O. Douglas?

CC: That's the one.

RB: O.k.

- CC: [laughs]
- RB: Did you ever find out more about his visit?
- CC: Well, he didn't take a book with him, but he and Henry were close friends, and, [uh], ...not only that, but they saw eye-to-eye on social, economic and legal matters. That's the way they were. And, they had an influence on me—you can be sure.
- RB: What was the...the name of your lawyer friend?
- CC: Henry...
- RB: Henry...
- CC: Hess.
- RB: Henry Hess. O.k.
- CC: Yeah, H-E-double-S. He had brothers. One of 'em run a mill over in Union; another one was a lawyer in Portland. They're all gone now. [pause] Well, anyway, I have another story for you, and this is a Union County story connected with the, [uh], recent troubles involving Japan. [clicking noise] There was this group of young proto-flyers that came here and—after the Japanese made their big mistake—and they were trying to learn, and, and they were trying to teach 'em how to do this-n-that, and they had several little planes, and they could give them the rudiments of ...flying planes right here. So, one day there was farmer out here, and he a young man workin' for him in a hay field. Then, [uh], along came one of those prot-flyers with his little plane, and he buzzed this pair of grass harvesters, and it ag...aggravated the young man that was assisting with the work. Now, the name of young man is a...u...probably, [uh], ...to me a most interesting word. His name was Ed Omahondro [?] —must have been Irish some where [laughs] [female laughter] So, he said, "If that guy comes buzzin' us again, I'm gonna shoot him." Well, they had a shotgun in his pickup. The kid, Ed Omahondor, got the shotgun, and this...sure enough...little flyboy buzzed 'em again, and Omahondro shot at it and hit it! So, ...this came to the attention of people in the law enforcement area, and they decided that they would make a serious charge against Ed Omahondro. And, then, they got to thinkin' about it, and they looked at the plane, and they found the shot marks in the plane, and they knew from that, very well, that the plane had been flying beneath the ceiling required by various laws and rules, so there wasn't anybody charging Omahondro with anything.
- RB: Do you know, [uh],...Was there a Japanese presence here during World War II, because they...many of the Japanese were put into camps during that time.
- CC: No. They weren't here. They were down at [end of tape 6, side 2]

Charles Cater, narrator  
Ron Brand, interviewer  
September 21, 2004  
tape 7, side 1

- RB: ...with Charlie Cater on September 21<sup>st</sup> at his home. This is tape seven, and Charlie was gonna talk about Judge Wolf [?], [uh], so go ahead Charlie.

CC: Alright, [uh], so I'm in the office, quietly contemplating the foibles of the human race, and a man came in and, [uh], told me he had a problem; he wanted a divorce. He didn't tell me why he wanted a divorce, and it was three visits later before he ever told me, and he finally did. He wanted a divorce because his wife had got pregnant. Now this sounds ridiculous, but his next statement that he had been sterilized several years before, but his wife had got pregnant anyway, so he wanted a divorce that reason. I don't recall why, but Judge Wolf was ...appointed to try that case, in b...in Union County, not Baker County; he was here when this happened.

The, [uh], lady in question had a lawyer from La Grande,. Mr. Carl Helm, Carl Gilbert Helm [?]. And, we tried the case, and the, [uh], evidence that we had s...gathered together was overwhelming—that this woman had terrible wrong. So, the case to the point where all [musical tones] the evidence was in, and now it's time for the attorneys to make whatever, [uh], [uh], argument they wanted to make. I came fist, and I started to put together a small argument, because it didn't take much in this obvious case. Before I could get started, even, ...then, the, [uh], unusual thing about this case took place. Judge Wolf took my argument away from me. I didn't say another word, and he spent the rest of, [uh], quite a period of time, [uh], ...strongly criticizing the girl, the ...[uh] ...the man, me, [uh], no, criticizing Carl Helm, who merely represented a woman in the ordinary course of legal representation.

Now, the reason that the judge did this...He went overboard, and he s...sat there, and he berated Carl Helm for at least half an hour. The only reason he had for doing that was that Carl had represented this woman, who was caught in flagrant delicto [?], but there was more to it than that. The real reason...was...Judge Wolf propst...perhaps justifiably...He had, in his youth and early manhood, had such experiences that he had acquired an unreasoning respect for womanhood. Therefore, when this woman was caught doing a bad thing, and had a lawyer that represented her, all of the history of Judge Wolf, in his mind, about women and their place in society, and their, [uh], almost... [uh]...almost, [uh], religious purity...came out, and he spent an, [uh], at least a half an hour berating judge...berating Helm.

RB: O.k.  
CC: That's the end of that story.  
RB: O.k. Charlie. I have a question. [Uh] ...What were the grounds...This was before no fault divorce?...and you had to prove someone was...had committed and offense...  
CC: [Uh]... She admitted it! She couldn't get out of it.  
RB: O.k. But, th...this was the grounds for divorce back then; it had to be contested in court?  
CC: Oh, there were any kind o' grounds; there was lots o' grounds. There was no...I don't know it was no fault or any fault or whatever, but I do know what happened, and that's...I've described.  
RB: O.k. You have a second case?  
CC: Yes, [uh], another time I was in the courtroom in Baker, just sitting and waiting 'til it was my turn to do whatever I came there to do, and there were, [uh],...The courtroom was full of people. I didn't know what they were there for, but I soon found out! ... because the judge was Judge Wolf again. And, he said, "Now, we're gonna take care of this. You folks are all, have, [uh], [uh], sign a complaint and want to dissolve your marriages." Yes. "Have you all read..." Now, he proceeded to handle this on a group basis. Not one individual, not one; all of the people that were there, he asked a question, "Now, you have all signed a, [uh], complaint in your divorce cases." "Yes." "Have you all read those?" "Yes." "A, [uh], ...Are those statements all true?" "Yes." "Well then, we'll grant you all divorces, and as soon as the papers of the decree is presented to me, I will sign the whole bunch." That's a fact; he did it!  
RB: This was the same Judge Wolf that went back and forth between La Grande ....  
CC: Well, ...  
RB: ...and Baker?  
CC: ...he didn't go back and forth anymore than any other judge did.  
RB: This was...  
CC: They all traded back and forth. They had to!  
RB: Were they sh...What was the reason?  
CC: Conflicts of things, conflicts. Let's see now...  
RB: Was there a shortage of judges....  
CC: No.  
RB: ...in, in eastern Oregon.  
CC: No. No, no. It's just the way things worked out. For instance, when we had the big sheep case, [uh], we got a judge from over at Bend, and the judge that was here couldn't sit because he had been in the sheep business, Judge Wolf, [uh], Dr. Wolf...Judge Green; he had been in the sheep business himself, so he disqualified himself, and we got this judge from Baker...no Bur...[uh]...Bend.  
RB: O.k.  
CC: No, now hold on a minute, stop that thing and s...see if I can think of sumpin' else here, [uh] .. [tape interruption]  
RB: [Uh] ... I had a question about the last case with Judge Wolf, the mass divorce...  
CC: Yeah.

RB: ...that he granted. Was that ever done by any other judge around this area that you know of?

CC: Not that I know of.

RB: Were divorces very common at that time?

CC: Oh yes.

RB: They were.

CC: Oh, sure.

RB: O.k. So, you handled quite a few divorce cases.

CC: I sure did.

RB: O.k. You also mentioned you handling, [uh], cases where the people were not married, but you got them divorced.

CC: Yeah.

RB: Could you tell me about those?

CC: Here it goes.

RB: O.k. Tell me about that one.

CC: So, this involves a man that was in b...in a business in Portland, and he a girlfriend. He retired from his business. He had a friend or friends here; I was one of 'em, and he came up here with his, [uh], ostensible wife. It wasn't his wife. They were simply living together, [uh], without benefit of clergy. But, he was an old-fashioned person, and he had strong feelings about sort of arrangement. He came to my office, and he told me that, [uh], that they weren't married, but that they were splitting up, and he wanted a divorce. He wanted a divorce to make the thing [tape interruption] right, especially for his girlfriend; he wanted to protect her reputation. So, [uh], I did it. I went ahead, and I got a divorce for that man from that woman, and they were not married.

RB: Do you remember who the judge was?

CC: No, I do not. [Uh] ...It might have...It probably was Green.

RB: Do you know if it was common for people to live together without marriage in this community?

CC: Oh, it wasn't common, but it did happen.

RB: O.k.

CC: Sure. Oh, let's see...Now, then, that's one. They weren't married, and I got a divorce for 'em. Then another situation arose, and a man—he was...happened to a railroader—and he'd married, or he thought he married this woman, and she was, [uh], low class person, I can assure you; I knew her well, for years. Well, ...So, in the course of this I got curious about something that he had told me, and I don't remember what it was, but it indicated he had been married before, and I asked him w...where he got a divorce from that first wife. He can't tell me. He didn't know, but he did tell me, [uh], the name and the telephone number of a son that lived in Idaho. So, I called up the son and told him who I was and, [uh], that I represented his father in this divorce matter and that I needed information about their...the prior marriage of this man to this...some other woman.

So, he, [uh], gave me her, [uh], telephone number; his mother's telephone number. So, I called it, and I s...told her that I represented this man and that I needed information about when and where she and this man had been divorced.

There was a long silence before she answered, and then she did. She said, “We, [uh],...were never divorced.” [background laugh] So, you see, when, [uh], he, [uh], hitched up with the one that I was dealing with, he wasn’t married. He was still married to another woman. So, [uh], w...Nevertheless, we went ahead and tried the case. And, [uh], in the course of it, I think I ran this past ya before, because it seemed to me that the lawyer on the other side [laughs] made a serious tactical mistake. And, my client, [uh], had testified that one of the reasons he wanted a divorce from this woman was simply because he had, [uh], walked down the alley behind the house they occupied, looked through the window, and saw her in bed with a shepherd. Now, how in the hell he knew it was shepherd [laughs] I never found out, and I didn't even ask! But, I, [uh], he testified that he'd seen this.

So, then, it became Mr. Burley’s [?], another lawyer, Sid Burley of La Grande, to ask his questions, and he made a bad mistake. He said, “Now, your husband has said that he walked up the alley and looked through the window of your house and saw you and...in bed with a shepherd.” And then the lawyer said, “What is...Tell us about that...or ...What happened,” and ...some dumb, wide-open question...and she answered; she was the one to answer. “Well,” she said, [uh], \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_ 199 “he couldn’t have seen us. The window was frosted over, and he'd o’ had to stood on a box.” She didn’t deny that she was in bed with a shepherd or anybody else. [laughs]

Well, the divorce w...was fairly ritual after that. [Uh] ...One, [uh], ...Evidently there was two lawyers that represented her, and I think one of ‘em was just as a courtesy to his partner to help out at the end, and it was Bill Carey. So, we took my rig and went over to their house, Bill Carey and me, and probably, [uh], [uh], the husband and wife, and tried to assist them in dividing and moving their belongings. During ever minute that we were engaged in this charitable enterprise, that woman cursed Bill and me, unrelenting, the who time, until finally it had got to my....got my goat, and I said, “Now, god dammit, you shut up or I’ll get the cops over here and shut you up!” So, that was the end of that case.

RB: O.k. I ....I’ve a question. [plastic/tapes? rattling] In your court cases like this, how did you ...[uh] ... how did you find evidence? Did you use investigators to get evidence.

CC: I did my own investigating.

RB: You did your own.

CC: All of it. I had a friend, or, [uh], he started out as an enemy because...but he became a friend, and, [uh], he offered to hire out to be, [uh], my investigator. He wanted to work for me. He wa...He was fascinated by the law business. He was a farmer.

RB: O.k. Was it fairly common for other people, other lawyers, to use investigators?...and when did that start? I know it occurs now.

CC: Well, ...I think that it wasn’t uncommon to have the assistance of an, [uh], investigator, but....it wasn’t very c...common either. Most people did it themselves. I did.

RB: Most of the lawyers.  
CC: Yeah.  
RB: Was it common for the lawyers to go to a...the house of divorced [laughs] people and help move their furniture?  
CC: Very unusual.  
RB: Very unusual.  
CC: Very unusual. We just did it because of the...complicated feelings and situations, and...and because Bill was a nice guy, and he really was.  
RB: O.k. The question you raised about conflicts of interests among the lawyers...or among the judges, like they were sheep men. How common was that?  
CC: Oh, that wasn't uncommon at all.  
RB: What are their...What are the main reasons why...where there were conflicts.  
CC: The main reasons that I can think of was a few [laughs] co...[laughs] couple of flocks of sheep, but that [laughs] that's all I can think of right now, and that's why they got Judge Hamilton [?] over here from Bend, because, [uh], Judge Green had been involved in the sheep business. But, of course, he had also been involved in gambling. He was a pretty good go...poker player. [laughs]  
RB: Did he have to recuse himself in gambling cases.  
CC: Oh, no. No way. Here? You got a good point there. No. There weren't any prosecutions here for gambling that I can think of.  
RB: How 'bout other prosecutions for, [uh], prostitution, [uh], anything related to those kinds of things or ...  
CC: No.  
RB: ...or contributing to the delinquency of a minor if...with alcohol. You mentioned a case like that.  
CC: Well, [uh], there was only case that I can remember, of con...contributing. It happened here in Union County, and I had nothing to do with the case. I just heard what I heard, and, [uh], [uh],...Another lawyer handled the thing, and, [uh], he'd talked to his client, this young man, and, [uh], and, [uh], discussed this charge, [uh], against him, and, [uh], the young man ac...confessed to his lawyer that he'd tried to do what they alleged, but he didn't make the grade. So, [uh], I can't remember how the outc...I, [uh], ..Oh, I know what it was. The lawyer realized that just ...as much as the young man confessed to, would cause his conviction if it came before a, [uh], impartial jury. So, I don't know what he did about it, but, [uh], the...I, [uh], really never had any ...any contact with it at all.  
RB: O.k. At this time you were...You practiced from '39 to '79.  
CC: Yeah.  
RB: At this time were the judges elected to their offices?  
CC: Yes.  
RB: They were? ... all of that time?  
CC: Yes.  
RB: [Uh] ...How 'bout the district attorneys?  
CC: Yes.  
RB: They were as well?  
CC: Yes.



RB: Do you know any stories about different district attorneys ...through your practice?

CC: No, but I know of one about a judge....before he was judge, Judge Brownton. There was another, [uh], woman who caused a considerable distress in the community, in a way, in a dumb way, and she came to me, and she said, [uh], that her husband had disappeared. I knew, [uh], or thought I knew what had happened, but I, as soon as I could, I had a little talk with my friend, the sheriff, told him that this man had supposed to have disappeared. Well, he found him, and he found out that the, [uh], the man was a honest old farmer, and he, [uh], found out enough about this woman to cause him to pick up and leave and hide out for awhile. So, he found out that, [uh], that's the way it was, so she came to me, and she wanted a divorce. And, [uh], this is, [uh], the sort of a situation where I asked Henry Hess to join me in representing her...to sort of divide the responsibility, if you want to call it by that word. [laughs].

So, we get in a court, and she's wearing big, dark glasses, and, [uh], we, [uh], Henry and I pretty-well knew her reputation, and so we asked the necessary questions, and, [uh], it soon developed that, [uh], she, [uh], obviously wasn't married to the man that she was facing off in this divorce case. And, furthermore, she had been divar..., [uh], divorced in this very same court from another man a short time before. So, [uh], she also claimed that she had a child by this farmer that had disappeared. By the way, right over here there's a big house. It's the biggest house in the neighborhood, and that's where this farmer finally lived; him and he...and his brother, both of 'em, as I recall.

Henry and I realized that this woman was lying and that she was guilty of every wrong thing you could think of. So, [uh], I don't remember how it came out, but we got shut of that. But, that wasn't the end of her depredations in the community.

RB: O.k.

CC: And, I don't know how it came about, but it was before Judge Brownton was Judge, and I was in his office. This woman was there. Another woman was there, and, [uh], the question was, was this other woman the mother of the one that had caused us so much embarrassment in court. This no-account woman, whose name was Oliver by the way, denied her own mother. In my presence, Judge—later to be Judge Brownton—presence, [uh], [uh], more, [uh], ...a worse woman in a...would be hard to find.

RB: Was this...[interrupted]

CC: I'm not through. Later, a man came to me, an old man, and old hand, he'd been here for a long, long time, and he talked to me. He wanted to tell me, and he wanted to ask me a question. He said that he'd b...been associating with this woman, Oliver, and he asked me if it was...safe for him to marry her, or something like that. I said, "No. By no means. Don't do it." This is the only time, that I know of, when somebody, [uh], is given information about a potential marriage partner and followed the advice. This old man followed my advice, and he didn't do it, and he was grateful from then on, believe me!

RB: Was this kind of behavior among women really frowned upon in this community...

CC: Oh yes.

RB: ...during the time?

CC: Oh, yeah. She, [uh], ...Marie Oliver was the only one, and that other one that I mentioned that was married to the railroader, those were the two that I can think of, and nobody else.

RB: What other ways would a woman like this be ostracized or dealt with in the community?

CC: Well, ...I don't think ostracized was the right word. Marie Oliver brought about the death of a man, two of 'em, but one before I got here, and he ...there was a fight over woman, like in Wallowa County in...the other day, and one man killed another one.

RB: This was over the Oliver woman?

CC: Yeah.

RB: Were you involved in the case?

CC: Huh?

RB: Were you involved in the trying of the case?

CC: No. It all happened, [uh], about the time I got here or just before. [pause] [Uh] ...Later, [uh], Marie Oliver killed somebody with a gun, and, [uh], one of my fellow attorneys here represented her successfully. And, I don't know enough about the case, and glad I don't.

RB: She was found not guilty...

CC: I think so.

RB: ...of that.

CC: That was Gary s...Gary, [uh],  
[FEMALE VOICE] Susak.

CC: ...Susak that represented her. He practices in Portland now. But, at that time, he lived...he was here, and he had a house right over here.

RB: Were there any other really dramatic cases like this you remember?...involving murder or...some kind of serious offense? [pause] Or, like, something like rob...bank robbery?

CC: What?

RB: Something like bank robbery.

CC: No, I don't remember any.

RB: O.k. 'Cause this was w, r, but, ...right after the depression when you came here? ...right at the end of the depression when you came to La Grande?

CC: Oh, yes. Yeah, it was right after the end of it. [uh] [end tape 7, side 1]

Charles Cater, narrator  
Ron Brand, interviewer  
September 21, 2004  
tape 7, side 2

RB: ...the old courthouse. You first...The court was in the old courthouse when you first came?

CC: Yes.  
RB: When did the new courthouse, in the Joseph Building, when did those, [uh],...  
CC: I don't know.  
RB: ...get started. While you...Were you practicing then.  
CC: Yes.  
RB: But you don't remember. Do you remember the changes...how that change was done...  
CC: No.  
RB: ...from moving to the old...from the old courthouse to the new one?  
CC: No. I...except that, [uh], I thought, I still think that they misplaced or lost or traded off a set of, [uh], federal reports of the Supreme Court of the United States. And, I used to go there because I didn't have a set of those reports. I used to go the library there to do research that I thought was necessary for me and my, [uh], clients. It disappeared. I don't know where it is. I tried to find it, and I couldn't.  
RB: I know when...in the new courthouse in the Joseph Building, they had a...a jail in there...at one time. Was that true about the old courthouse?  
CC: What was the question? ...something about jail?  
RB: The jail, yeah. Did they have a jail in the old courthouse?  
CC: Oh yes.  
RB: Where...What part of the building was it?  
CC: In the first floor.  
RB: First floor.  
CC: Yeah.  
RB: So they moved all of that over to the Joseph Building?  
CC: No, they didn't. They built a separate jail, and it's just east of the old courthouse,  
...  
RB: O.k.  
CC: ...right next to it, right there.  
RB: When was that building built?  
CC: A long time ago. [laughs]  
RB: Was that built, [uh], before the Joseph Building?  
CC: No. The Joseph Building was a ch...a...a building, [uh], a...a hospital ...by the Catholic sisters, and, [uh], it was occupied for years, and, [uh], their competition with the new Grande Ronde Hospital, I'm guessing, got to be too much for them, and the sisters shut down the hospital there in the Joseph Building, and, [uh], eventually sold it back and forth until people invested in it. I think, [uh], I knew one or two of 'em. And, then, they got the brilliant idea they could use part of that as part of the courthouse, and they do!...now.  
RB: Um-hmm. And, they had a jail in there for awhile?  
CC: Well, if they did, I didn't know it.  
RB: You don't remember that?  
CC: No. I don't remember any jail in the Joseph Building. I do remember a library because I .... I'm a book man.  
RB: O.k. The legal library there?  
CC: Yes. You bet.  
RB: Was it pretty common for the lawyers around here to use that legal library?

CC: Oh yes. Sure. Not everybody could afford the trouble and expense of certain reported cases, like the Supreme Court's reports.  
RB: Um-hmm. Supreme Courts of Oregon?...or the U. S. Supreme Court?  
CC: U. S.  
RB: U. S. Supreme Court.  
CC: And, of course, they all had Oregon reports...of the Supreme Court in Oregon.  
RB: O.k.  
CC: And, some of it lapsed over into the Court of Appeals. [pause]  
RB: So, do you remember when there's an agency in the other part of the Joseph Building, the Center for Human Development?...a social service agency?  
CC: Well, they had several offices there. I don't know anything about 'em.  
RB: You don't know any...about their transfer?  
CC: No. No, I don't.  
RB: O.k., we're going to take a break for a moment. [plastic/equipment sounds] [tape interruption]

RB: [plastic/equipment sounds] O.k. [Uh] ...\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_ Charlie, if you could describe the hunting you did. You were a marksman and a hunter, and you had a lot of hunting adventures with other people, like Ned Brown, also Red Smith, [uh],...

CC: Who?

RB: [Uh] ...Red Smith....of Red's Horse Ranch? You knew him.

CC: Oh.

[FEMALE VOICE] Higgins.

RB: Red Higgins.

CC: Huh?

RB: Higgins.

CC: Yeah, Higgins.

RB: O.k. Could you tell me what kind of hunting you did and what kind of trips you went on with other men from Union County?

CC: Alright. I'll tell you about that Higgins, [uh], trip. He had a, what is called a spike camp or a hunting camp, some fourteen miles up the Minam River from the ho...Horse Ranch, and, [uh], without going into all the details of, [uh], ...A lawyer friend of mine from Portland, Leland Hess [?] [wind chimes], [uh], went up to his hunting camp to hunt elk. And, [uh], [rattling sound], we had horses; we ro...that's how we got up there, and that's how we covered the territory after we got up there.

The first day we didn't see anything or locate any game. The next day, [uh], Leland and I rode down the river a little ways, and where it intersected was a place...a trail called Rock Creek Trail. So, we rode up the Rock Creek Trail a ways, and we hadn't gone very far before we [wind chimes] saw tracks in the dirt and snow or whatever. So, we discussed it a minute and decided that it might not be a bad idea to sit down and, [uh], wait for a ...the elk to come by. So, he picked out a place that suited him, and I did the same thing. We were maybe a hundred yards apart, such a matter. And, everything was goin' along just fine, and I

looked up on the side of the mountain there, and here come a five point bull, a nice game animal.

So, I just kept quiet and waited, and he came down and got right in front of me out here, and then I did what I c...was accustomed to do, and I put a bullet right through his lungs. He ran a little ways, and I could see him down there, and so I took another shot at him, and I, [uh], damaged him considerable with those two shots. So, then, Leland came over, and we got busy, and, [uh], gutted the animal, and...Then we rode back to camp, and, [uh], when we finally reported, [uh], to the, [uh], to Red and his helpers, I told 'em where the bull was, and, [uh], they got it and brought it out, and we go...put it in the ...plane, with our gear, and came back home, and that was the end of the huntin' trip. There's more to it than that, but...

RB: O.k. But you were hunting for meat or for a trophy?...or both?

CC: [laughs] What was I hunting for, baby?

[FEMALE VOICE] Both!

CC: [laughs] [female laughter] Well, I hunted for the..."both," she says.

RB: What'd it mean for...to hunt for trophies for you?

CC: [laughs] Well, [laughs], I don't understand the question. But, you tell me again, and I'll try.

RB: What did it mean to hunt for a trophy?...this was five point elk.

CC: Well...Five points is a good antlered bull. Six points is a majestic animal. Seven points is a great, great trophy. Rarely does anybody do harm to a elk any bigger than a five point. I've got a couple of them right out there. But, I have a friend, and I think his picture is down in my gun room, with a magnificent six or seven point bull. He is my favorite ...mechanic at Goss Motors. His name is Barber [?], and he killed that magnificent thing about three years ago.

RB: What other kinds of hunting did you do?

CC: Well, I told ya a little about the jackrabbits. We also hunted, [uh], deer.

RB: Where did you hunt jackrabbits.

CC: Well, over in U...Umatilla County, [uh], is one place. There's another place down here in a valley, the name of which...it's near Brogan [?]. You don't know Brogan?

[FEMALE VOICE] Jordan Valley?

CC: No, you said that before. [laughs]

[FEMALE VOICE] Did I?

CC: Yeah, you did. I don't remember, but it's near Grogan [?].

RB: It's southeast of here?

CC: South...I would say more a little southwest, but I'm no sure.

RB: O.k. Was it common for hunters from Union County to travel around for different kinds of game?

CC: Th....They didn't have far to go here. [laughs]

RB: O.k.

CC: But, they did, and th...we also travel for fishing, like over to, [uh], the Oregon coast, where I had a boat. I took the boat with me and lost it over there and went out in the ocean and caught salmon and brought 'em in, and I had always taken

with me my, [uh], canning equipment, so I canned the fish that I caught. In my family, the canners was me. My wife, Donna, would make pickles out of that, but I did all of the canning—meat, vegetables, tomatoes, fish; name it, and that's what I did. I learned how to do that when I was younger. My mother was a...I...All I had to do was watch she did, and then I knew hot to do it.

We've got a new problem, though. Same thing. That plum tree out there is loaded, and we gotta do sumpin about that.

[FEMALE VOICE] Yeah, we do.

RB: O.k. Alright. Did you hunt deer?

CC: Deer?

RB: Yeah.

CC: Oh, you bet.

RB: Where did you go deer hunting?

CC: Oh, out that-a-way, that-a-way and that-a-way.

RB: You're talking about west, north and east.

CC: All around the valley.

RB: All around the valley.

CC: Everywhere in every direction you can think of.

RB: Were there ever any cases of people hunting on private property that came before the court, or that you got involved in?

CC: Well, I'm sure there were, but I didn't have anything to do with it. It just turned out I didn't have anything to do with it.

RB: O.k. [Uh] ...What are the rivers in Union County that you fish at?...fish in?

CC: Well, [uh], the Grande Ronde, especially the lower Grande Ronde. I told you about this. I suggested you get down there and do it, and I don't think you've done it yet.

RB: The lower Grande Ronde from Minam to Rondowa?

CC: No, it's below Rondowa, a little above and below Troy.

RB: O.k.

CC: And then, also, all the way from August through October, we would fish the Deschutes...for summer steelhead.

RB: What would you fish for here in the...in the Grande Ronde.

CC: Summer steelhead.

RB: Summer steelhead?

CC: They're getting ready to come up the river and be ready to spawn in February.

RB: Would you can these fish?

CC: Well, I canned every fish that I caught that we didn't eat right away. I've still got some [wind chimes] downstairs, I think.

RB: Did you ever get into freezing fish.

CC: Yes. But, [uh], not much, mostly canned 'em, except the ones she catches, and that's...she go to...she gives me fish, and she got a couple of 'em down in the freezer right now...that she caught here ...two or three days ago.

RB: O.k. Do you remember when freezing fish became common among different fishermen?

CC: No, I don't know. I do know that one of my friends was in the business of selling freezing equipment and freezers, and also to...selling the foods to freeze and, [uh], preserve in the equipment that he sold.

RB: O.k. The five point elk that you shot...Did you have the head mounted?

CC: No. I never had any of them mounted. Most of them have been stolen. They s...took 'em right out from under my [laughs] nose here and carried 'em away. They got every single, top grade, [uh], mule deer antlered head that I had. I had a number of 'em. Stole the whole bunch.

RB: Stolen by animals?...or stolen by people?

CC: People.

RB: People. Was that a pretty common problem?

CC: I couldn't say. I do know that the, [uh], the antlers have value. [pause] But to whom, I don't really know that either. I ca...[uh] [interrupted]

RB: O.k. [tape interruption]

RB: You also hunted squirrels and marmots?

CC: Yes.

RB: O.k. Was that pretty common?

CC: Oh yes. Yeah...The marmot is sometimes called a rock chuck. He lives in the rocks, holes in them...crevices in the rocks. [pause] [FEMALE VOICE]

RB: Were there ever any, [uh], ...in any way were you ever related to hunting mountain lions?...

CC: No.

RB: ...or bears?

CC: No.

RB: ... in this area?

CC: No, [uh] ...

RB: Do you know people that were?

CC: Oh yes. I had friends that had packs of hounds; not many, some, and they hunted cougar and I suppose bears too, sometimes.

RB: How did that practice go?...and what was it related to? Was it related to the sheep in the valley?...and the need to cut back on predators?

CC: No.

RB: Or was it a sport?

CC: Sport. But, [uh], recently they have tightened up the restrictions on hunting, [uh], cougars, for example, and, [uh], a lot of...or some people, some people, think that this has caused an...a dangerous increase in the numbers of such animals. While they're not, [uh], ordinarily a...a kind of an animal that hunts down a man to kill him, sometimes they...scare people pretty good. They don't hurt much, but they scare 'em.

RB: You've never heard of any case where anybody's been injured.

CC: Oh, yeah, I guess, but I can't think of any particular situation right now.

RB: Was the...Both the cougar and bear hunting were for sport then?...originally?

CC: Yeah, it was. Mainly so they could exercise their hounds. They had....A few people around had packs of hounds that....The hound is trained to chase certain animals, and that's one of 'em, cougars, panthers.

RB: O.k. But, that was changed by a state law in Oregon?

CC: Yeah. They, [uh], ...They really changed it, and, [uh], I have not paid any attention, really, to what the law is now. [tape interruption] [end of tape 7, side 2]