Orval Trump

ES: Could we start by your giving me your full name?
OT: Yes. Orval…Orval Willard Trump.
ES: Trump.
OT: Trump. T-r-u-m-p.
OT: And was this a long line of Trumps?
OT: Yes. I'd say there's a considerable amount of Trumps in this area.
ES: And you said you're a son of one of the pioneers who was the pioneer in your family?
OT: His name was Jonah. Jonah.
ES: Jonah Trump?
OT: Yes.
ES: And he came by wagon from…?
OT: I tell just exactly where he lived to come out here, but they came out…I know they came part of the way on train and then traded off and went by horses and wagons the rest of the way.
ES: Now the train came through here in about 1880, didn't it?
OT: The train I believe he said…talking to other people at that time train stopped at the Union Station. The little Union station over at Union. And that's where they got…most of them got off the train.
ES: Do you think it might have been between 1880 and 1900 that he came?
OT: Oh, I know it was in the 1880s when he came.
ES: Okay. 1880s. Good. That was soon after the train was…went through.
OT: Yes.
ES: Yea. Do you know what brought them here?
OT: Just like everybody else, I guess.
ES: Farming?
OT: Farming, logging. They just…some people came out here and settled the good big…bill of goods to become pioneers. [laughs] I guess they believed 'em.
ES: Why do you mean a bill of goods?
OT: Told them how wonderful the place was.
ES: Oh yea, yea. A little bit exaggerated maybe. Did they have a promise of land?
OT: This was never completely understood between the pioneers themselves and the people that actually designated the land reserve. But they just ended up having, you might say, some of the lesser parts of the country in the land that was farming lots of timber in canyons.
ES: So if they got off at the Union Station did they stay around the Grande Ronde Valley for a while before going up to Wallowa?
OT: No. It was all this was…there was about three or four different families, big families, the Trumps and Carpers and Fleshmans and some of this was all together. And they all went in to the Wallowa country.
ES: Right away?
OT: Yes. That's where they ___.
ES: Oh, I see.

OT: So they didn't…this part of the country was already pretty well taken up. This nice valley in front. They ended up more or less at the tail end of the trip, I guess you would say.

ES: Was Wallowa…Was the Wallowa Valley hade been pretty much been unsettled at that time?

OT: The larger ranchers, cattle ranchers and things like that, they'd pretty well taken up most of the country. And they was still havin' some trouble with the Indians a little bit in that area. But they didn't bother the folks __.

ES: And were you born in Wallowa County?

OT: I was born in Promise, Oregon in Wallowa County.

ES: What year?

OT: 1922.

ES: I see. They'd been around for quite a while.

OT: Yes.

ES: Was Jonah your grandfather, then?

OT: Jonah was my grandfather. Fred was my father.

ES: How old was Fred then?

OT: I believe he was born the year that they came here. In 1900 anyway.

ES: So he was a pretty young man when he fathered you?

OT: Yes, he was.

ES: Where did he find a wife?

OT: That was part of the group that came over, large families. And one of them happened to be Sannar. And my mother was one of the Sannars. They had ten children.

ES: How do you spell that name?

OT: S-a-n-n-a-r. Lots of Sannars spell e-r when they spell it.

ES: Would that be a German name?

OT: I was thinking it was from northern England, but I'm not sure.

ES: I see. You said you were born in 192_...?

OT: 2.

ES: 2, uh huh. Five years before I was.

OT: Five years. [laughs]

ES: And by that time your father had a pretty well established ranch, did he?

OT: No. That's what they was expecting to be able to do when he came out here. And when he got into the Wallowa country…as you know what the Wallowa country's like…the only thing that was available for them then was north of the Wallowa and the Grande Ronde River junction. And they all ended up in what's called Grande Ronde River, the Troy country,…

ES: And Promise is part of that?

OT: And Promise is part of that, yes. Nothing but mountains and timber more or less. But somebody…lots of 'em…like if scout out than nobody goes out.

ES: Was it pretty low level resistance?

OT: Yes.

ES: What do you remember about your early years as far as the physical…physical circumstances were?

OT: My earlier years…lest I remember of course, I started school or before I started school. And I was actually born in a two room log cabin. And that's where I lived my first nine years of life.
ES: Were you the first child?
OT: No, I was the fifth child.
ES: Fifth?
OT: No, fourth. Fourth child.
ES: They got started young.
OT: Yea. Probably…I can see nothing else to do. [laugh] I think Mother was seventeen and Dad was eighteen when they got married.
ES: And they just popped out the babies one after the other.
OT: Right away. But lots of 'em went into logging area. There's a big lumber company down at ___. Wallowa Valley country.
ES: Is that what your father did?
OT: Started building railroads and logging. And Father started out logging and working teams and that type of thing. But he was lucky enough to get a job with the government delivering mail from Promise to Wallowa which was twenty-five miles. And it's all horse work, of course. So he had a pretty good job even up to the middle of the Depression. And that's when it got away from everybody and they all moved out of that country.
ES: Is that when your parents…
OT: That's when our parents moved…
ES: …moved to Elgin.
OT: …to Elgin. Right.
ES: Were you about ten or eleven then?
OT: I was about…yes, just eleven years old.
ES: And you all packed up in a wagon and came to Wallowa or did you have a car by then?
OT: No. Dad was lucky enough to get a U. S. government job. He was able to save a little money and raise a few cows. Go forth and sell 'em every fall, cows and pigs. So he was able to…and bought him a Ford Model-T pick-up 'cause he was always hauling freight. Before that he hauled it by wagon to Wallowa. And enough he could just go run that road __.
ES: So he piled all the kids in the back of the pick-up?
OT: Everybody ___.
ES: With a little bit of furniture?
OT: [laugh] And then took off.
ES: Do you remember how you felt about that?
OT: I don't know as you feel when you're nine, ten years old.
ES: Do what Dad says.
OT: You're going, you know. I know I really hated to change schools 'cause, see, we was in a little one-room schoolhouse and I was the only child in my grade. And then my brothers went on up and… So I kind of gained quite a bit, I thought, by being one of the younger ones because the time they're in the sixth grade here I am in the first grade and I get to listen to everything the teacher teaches. But I

found out it didn't work that way. When you got to the town school you're all on a different scale.

ES: By that time the Elgin schools had different grades?

OT: Oh yes.

ES: Was that…was that bewildering to you at first?

OT: Oh yes. Absolutely. Just, you know, get used to it, you know. You're pretty well lost. 'Cause you's always with your bigger brothers before.

ES: But did you enjoy going to school?

OT: Oh yes. I always liked school.

ES: And you did well?

OT: Pretty well. I loved sports and back in those days the smaller guy had a chance at sports. And I did fine in sports.

ES: What were some of your impressions about being in what had been in the top sixth grade in Elgin?

OT: It was _ till I was in sixth grade.

ES: What were your impressions of back at first?

OT: Lost. No idea, you know. You're settin' with twenty-five or thirty little kids in these little old desks along the way. You don't know what you're supposed to say, what you're supposed to do. You don't know what the teacher was, hardly.

ES: But that…you got over that fairly quickly, I suppose?

OT: Oh yes. Yes. Just three months. After Christmas vacation, why, it kind of…kids got more friendly and… Then the Depression was really getting tough and everybody…nobody had any clothes and start to think we all looked alike. And that helped a lot. There was always two or three rich man's kids, but they got teased more than anything else.

ES: Pretty worried unhappy, I suppose.

OT: No, no. In fact, after I got to about seventh grade I was real happy because I realized that you could compete with your __ in sports and this type of thing. And once that took over, why, you's always wantin' to beat the other guy.

ES: Now what sorts of sports were you playing?

OT: I played basketball from the time I was in the sixth grade all the way through…I think through probably college. Army decided they was gonna take me so I joined the Navy. [laughs] About that time too I was nineteen and just ready to go. And I pitched baseball five years. Tore my arm off pitches, but had lots of fun in baseball.

ES: It sounds as though you were maybe a little too energetic about it.

OT: I weighed 145 pounds. I didn't have much speed, but I could throw a crooked ball. [laughs]

ES: At that time did baseball and basketball teams travel to other schools to play?

OT: Yes.

ES: So you'd go where? Union, La Grande and other towns in the valley?

OT: All the way from Joseph to Enterprise, Elgin, all the way to Baker. Two or three times a year we'd get all the way over to John Day.

ES: That was a pretty…pretty big adventure I should think.

OT: Thirty-two to thirty-five games.

ES: Did they have a bus for you?

OT: In individual automobiles. To take these fellas to take five kids and theirselves.
ES: High school boys?
OT: Yes. All of us on the same team. Lots of times we'd have to stay over in the wintertime. We had snow in that country…in this country, actually, back then.
ES: Now I think under those conditions boys who tend to be rowdy sometimes might have gotten into some trouble.
OT: I don't think that ever happened.
ES: Oh, you don't, huh? [laughs]
OT: No.
ES: I don't believe you. [laughs] Was their some drinking?
OT: No, not…boy, back in high school they said no. You believed them or you didn't play on the…in ball clubs. That was all there was to it. You didn't have to be seen by the coach or the fella driving the truck or the bus or whatever he was driving. You was gone. So we was a little kid and a lot of good clean cut kids.
ES: No sexual activity?
OT: No. No women go with us. The girls…
ES: Nevertheless, there are temptations along the way.
OT: Oh yes, always temptations, but you very careful that you didn't end up being one of the ones that was…got involved in that stuff.
ES: What would have been the punishment?
OT: Kicked off the team. That's a long life when you's one of the star athletes and you study hall all day.
ES: Do you think on the whole that boys especially had a lot of self-restraint during that period?
OT: Yes. They were trained that way from the time they were little kids.
ES: By their parents?
OT: By their parents, absolutely. They had big families and had as many girls they did boys. Boy, you was trained at home.
ES: What did some of that training consist of? How would they do it?
OT: It was battle. [laughs]
ES: Corporal punishment, huh?
OT: Yes, absolutely.
ES: Was their fear, then, involved?
OT: Yes, some. Because a lot of times, you know, you want to go some place. In fact…want to go someplace and spend all night with your buddy. You'd have better been good for that two or three weeks or you wasn't gonna go anyplace and stay all night. That's the kind of training. And you really…you believed 'em. My parents were not the type to teach you with a glove or a belt. They knew how to use the words.
ES: Now on those trips you'd need money for food and a place to stay. Where'd that come from?
OT: The school's __.
ES: Their budget.
OT: Yes.
ES: Were you on winning teams most of the time?
OT: Most of 'em.

ES: And I suppose then, like it tends to be now, the people on the team, and this wasn't usually girls, then, was it?
OT: No.
ES: But the people on the team tended to be looked up to by many of the other kids in the school. Was that the way it was?
OT: Yes.
ES: So there was a sense of pride in being on a team. Did that spill over into any of your academic work? That feeling of pride?
OT: Yes. You gotta 2.5 grade average, 2.5, or you didn't play. Now you get a 1.1 you can still play. So I can't understand it, the idea of education nowadays.
ES: It's changed, yes. There are some kids, however, who are well disciplined and focused and they do extremely well.
OT: That's true.
ES: Then of course at the time that we went to school a lot of kids just left school at the end of eighth grade.
OT: Yes. They had no choice.
ES: So the group of people who were more interested in studying in high school would narrow it down. Now that doesn't happen.
OT: No.
ES: That's part of what accounts, I think, for different standards. You said you went into the Navy…or you enlisted in the Navy instead of being drafted in the Army.
OT: Right.
ES: That was about 1940 or so?
OT: 1942.
ES: '42. Right after…or shortly after Pearl Harbor.
OT: Yea. I went in '42, but I'd been drafted in '41.
ES: What was there about the Navy that you preferred.
OT: Like you say, as long as you got a ship you got a home. You got a meal and you got a bed to sleep in.
ES: Is that the way it was.
OT: Pretty well except when you got in a battle or two.
ES: I don't want to go into the whole story of your military experience, but what places did you get to?
OT: Not too far. I went to…I was lucky enough, like I say, I had fair grades in school and I was lucky enough to get selected by the Navy to go to diesel engineering school. Back then we'd had no diesel engines to speak of and we lost most of 'em over in Pearl Harbor to boot. And so they started building a brand new campus at Ames, Iowa at the college for nothing but diesel engineering students and I was selected to go to that. So I went to that till I graduated from that. There was, oh, three hundred of us in that. But we was supposed to go into some brand new ships that they were building which happened to be three great big old ships, you know. 'Cause we lost almost all of our ships back over there.
ES: Battleship, cruiser, type?
OT: Battleship. Battleships. And we graduated they say it'll be about a year before we get ready to go. They were far behind on building those ships. It was a lot longer than they thought. So they transferred all of us over amphibian force.

Here we are diesel engineers stuck in the amphibian force. We went down to Newport…that's where they sent us…and just loaded a bunch of us on ships and everything was __. Give us a little bit of training and start us overseas.

ES: The amphibious force would have used LSD wouldn't they?

OT: That's right.

ES: And they…I know they had diesel engines.

OT: That's what I was on.

ES: 'Cause I went on one of those between Tokyo and Seoul, Korea. And I remember vividly the diesel smoke all over the place.

OT: Yep. That's what I was on. We got a little bit of torpedo up North Atlantic goin' across.

ES: Do you mean you were there as part of the crew, the maintenance crew?

OT: Yes, we was takin' the ships over to the big flotilla and going up through Iceland and Greenland and over. They wasn't getting' ready to __ Africa.

ES: Yes, but…

OT: Never did get there, in other words.

ES: Was it your job to maintain the engines on the ship?

OT: Yes.

ES: Okay. Did they school teach you how to do that?

OT: Oh yes. I used that all my life.

ES: Now when you were discharged…what was that? About 1945 or '6?

OT: No. I got tore up a little bit on the LSD and I spent about ten months in a big hospital.

ES: Tore up? You mean hit by some kind of explosion, explosive?

OT: Right. Torpedo. German torpedo. Don't know for sure what went on or why, but they said there was 134 ships in our flotilla. And we were only seven days out of New York. So I went through a lot of rehab.

ES: I guess. Successful?

OT: Yes, pretty well.

ES: At the end of that then you were honorably discharged, I assume.

OT: Honorably discharged.

ES: Then college?

OT: I got married while I was in the Navy.

ES: Wow. Where did you meet her?

OT: I met her back at Iowa State College.

ES: At Ames.

OT: At Ames. But she was from…it was down at Hudson, South Dakota which is the corner just below Sioux City.

ES: Was she working there or a student?

OT: She was working there. Her uncle owned about…had a contract with the government and all the cabs. The campus was two miles from town. And she was working part-time taking phone calls and such in the hotel. That's where I met her.

ES: And the attraction was strong enough she waited around until you were discharged, is that it?

OT: No.

ES: No. [laughs]
OT: Here I am going to diesel school and she…nothing to do with a leave. If I leave, why, you know. Anyway, we only knew each other about seven weeks and got married.
ES: Before you left then?
OT: Yes.
ES: Oh, I see.
OT: I left…
ES: So she had to sit around somewhere while you were on the…
OT: Just a week later I left.
ES: I know that happened often. You weren't the only one who decided to do that. So you had gotten married and then when you were discharged you came back to…?
OT: Came back here, yes.
ES: To here?
OT: Yes.
ES: Oh, I see. What caused you to do that?
OT: Caterpillar at that time was just getting started with diesels. And of course I had special training on diesels. And also the railroad had diesel engines, the same diesel engines on the train out here that we had in the LSD. Same ones.
ES: Really?
OT: So I kinda had a choice. My wife helped me with that. You gonna stay home.
ES: I've forgotten when the transition between steam and diesel actually got started.
OT: The only one that was really running during the war was what they called the Portland Rose through this country. They just main line diesel. And there was two or three big freight outfits that had the diesel.
ES: That was be in the '40s, the early '40s you mean?
OT: Yes. To get on those, why, you rode the train. In other words you got on the train in Portland you'd go all the way to Omaha, Nebraska. Sleep one night goin' and so forth. Come back and then you'd spend three days at home and then be gone two or three days again. That's no way to be married young people raising a family. So I went to work with Caterpillar tractor company as one of the diesel people on the ___. Anyway he was the dealer. The only dealer they had in the whole country about three states here. They only had two dealers back then. Diesel was just coming out.
ES: This was for farm machinery?
OT: This was for farm machinery and logging, contracting. A lot of contractors were… And so right after war broke __ so you stayed right here. Worked here almost all my life until I got into management and that was pretty nice deal for me. We had a pretty good territory and finally I got tired of stayin' in the same old place and moved. They moved up to Yakima and I stayed there for two years and decided I didn't like Washington. So I moved back down to Pendleton and I stayed over there twenty-eight years and worked for Caterpillar and John Deere. I was a manager over there.
ES: In the earlier times when you associated with Caterpillar was the office in Pendleton?

OT: They had…when I went to work for them the main office was in Boise, Idaho. I went to work at one of the __ stations here. Be at management __ we had a pretty good sized crew. I say a sized crew…when went to work there was seven of us in the service department.

ES: Where exactly was it? The office? The headquarters?

OT: The one that was here?

ES: Yea.

OT: Let's see. You know where Goss' place is?

ES: Yes.

OT: Right around the corner on Jefferson there's a square…a flat square building, big one. And at that time it was all windows around. And that's where our main office was. Took in about half a block. Everything had to be hauled in and unloaded to open the railroad all day.

ES: Did you have the equipment there, the farm machines?

OT: Yes. And if we had…we just had two little lots behind and if we got too many than we had a lot out to one side or someplace where they could store the machinery.

ES: What were the main kinds of farm machinery that people wanted at that time?

OT: It was a lot like it is now because…like Caterpillar, for instance, you had the old gas engine and a lot of 'em had been out before the arms of war. And of course the farmers made pretty good money during the war. So then they started updating. Things like a D2 diesel or __. Then the loggers came in. They wanted the bigger stuff, the 6's, 7's, and 8's. Big dozers, contractors. ___

ES: I suppose the equipment got more expensive each year with new models.

OT: Absolutely. Absolutely. It was just like it is today. Still it hasn't changed one bit. Wages always hang in time.

ES: What would have been the life of some of those machines if they were in active service? Two to five years? Ten years?

OT: They had depression time set on 'em at ten years, but most of 'em would run twenty.

ES: What happened to the old machines? They were just abandoned someplace?

OT: A lot of 'em was abandoned. Put in a lot of outfits for these big used sales lots. And there's always that other guy, Chip Hole logger, or something to pick those up and he had lots of used parts. So they had no problems getting parts.

ES: Have you seen that big collection of old farm machinery in Baker on the way to the Interpretive Center?

OT: Yes.

ES: Do you know anything about that?

OT: I don't know anything at all about that. I do know that one of those fellows had that for many, many, many years.

ES: It looks as though he means it to be a museum.

OT: He meant it that to be that to start with. I think the old fellow died last year or the year before. I'm not sure about that now.

ES: So you think it's just being left to rust?

OT: Yes, more or less.

ES: That's too bad.

OT: In fact, I'd like to have sent farmers up there that had problems that we couldn't get any parts for and they'd go up and see if he had any.
ES: So they're scavenging?
OT: No, no. He'd got a little place over there. You don't want to start to scavenging. He might get a shotgun!
ES: I don't mean taking it, but their taking parts off some of those old machines.
OT: Yes. You can't buy it through the factory, but making it still runable if you find the part. There's a lots of those. There's one out of Salem and there's one up at Lynn, Washington.
ES: What was most enjoyable about working for a company like Caterpillar? [pause] Good wages?
OT: Actually, the wages were comparative to everybody else. And that's the way they've always done it whether it was Caterpillar, International, GMC, or Cadillac. They make darn sure of it that you're within a few dollars a day of what the other guy's getting or one guy's gonna have all the business. So wages really didn't…unless you were the foreman or somebody like that…didn't even enter into it too much. They just had…they paid fare and ate right and they had good living conditions. And they'd somebody they had good patient plans and that kind of thing. Just a good place to work. And it's changed a lot now.
ES: At the time then I guess you had the impression it was a well run company?
OT: Absolutely.
ES: And of course it was a worthwhile product.
OT: You didn't have to worry about looking for a job.
ES: No, no. And I imagine, then, that…you said they had a good retirement plan?
OT: After many years of fighting, you know, and most all the dealers…it got to the place to where the dealers were not unionized. The fellows gettin' the same kind of wages as the unionized guys were out along constructions jobs and they wouldn't payin' the dues. So it got the place where the unions and the contractors and people like that was having a lot of fights and stuff like that to try to…union trying to get the money out of 'em.
ES: By the time that was…had started happening were you in management?
OT: Oh yes.
ES: How did the fighting about union affect you?
OT: The only thing you did you had to be just a little bit smarter than the guy that was talkin' to you. [laughs] Treat your people right, give them good training. And I had darn good training service. After four year you usually declared a diesel…[end tape]

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OT: I stayed there till, like I say, about two years. I think I left there in '68. Came down here and I said I'm never gonna take another bossin' job in my life. No more! [laughs] After twenty-five years I __. Heck, I decided, well, go out and do a little selling. I think I can sell something. __ that type of job. And after about not even a year they had trouble with one of the parts managers and boss

came to me and he said, "Orval would you mind going in there and running that parts department? This is John Deere. Running the parts department until I can find a parts manager?" I said, "Yea, fall's here's comin'. I won't be able to sell anything 'til spring anyway." I took that in less than…stayed there ten years.

ES: And where was that office?

OT: That's in Pendleton.

ES: Pendleton, yeah.

OT: And after that I figured that's enough.

ES: During these years when you were employed by Caterpillar and John Deere what were your political preferences?

OT: I didn't have any. I never ___ . I vote for the person that will do the job.

ES: Tell me who you voted for for president over those years?

OT: __ you can just name the presidents and …

ES: The ones who were elected, huh?

OT: You bet!

ES: Did you admire Harry Truman?

OT: Yes, I sure did.

ES: Almost everybody did. At least later. At the time, you remember, there was a lot of controversy about him.

OT: Well, yea.

ES: And everybody said, "Well, he's not qualified to be president! What is this little runt doing?"

OT: I wasn't qualified to be a manager either.

ES: [laughs] A puff in the wind, that's the way it works out. And then had you had any contact with Eisenhower during the war, or…?

OT: No, of course he was strictly Army and I was strictly Navy.

ES: Right.

OT: I think Eisenhower was alright. He was pretty wishy-washy, but I probably shouldn't say that.

ES: Some of the information coming out now suggests that he was less so than he appeared to be.

OT: Right.

ES: He had a different way of managing things. Did you vote for Nixon?

OT: No.

ES: There's one case where you must of seen something about him that you didn't like.

OT: Just his looks and the way he handled himself. Really that's all because I didn't know the man. I could say __ first person.

ES: As you reflect on political activities in this country why do you think you didn't develop an interest in it?

OT: Number one the type of job I had and the way I worked all time and raising family. I just couldn't see where you had really time to do a decent job to vote. You didn't raise a family, take care of your job or go into politics. ___.

ES: I don't mean going into politics, but just knowing enough about politics to have some well thought out opinions.

OT: Oh, I think I did that pretty well 'cause I've spent a lot of time on the road and in hotels and stuff. I did quite a bit of that, but I wouldn't…no politicing in me.
ES: I wasn't thinking that you wanted to be in politics. Were you a regular newspaper reader?
OT: Pretty well.
ES: Editorial section?
OT: Very seldom ever.
ES: Oh. That's where you get most of your political opinions.
OT: Right.
ES: Your family. One or more children, I guess?
OT: I had four.
ES: Four.
OT: Three boys and a girl.
ES: What's happened to them?
OT: My daughter is here, her family.
ES: In La Grande?
OT: Still in La Grande. I have two boys in Corvallis and one boy up in Bellingham, Washington. And they just took off on their own ways. Of course it wasn't any of my business. They're grown people.
ES: Did they go into any kind of engineering activity?
OT: They didn't, but I have a grandson that is.
ES: Civil, mechanical, what?
OT: Yea, he's working for Caterpillar actually. He's a shop foreman down there for Caterpillar.
ES: That must please you.
OT: That did.
ES: Do you see him very much?
OT: No, not too much. He went to Blue Mountain College up here and took diesel engine engineering and going to go to work for the trucking outfit and Caterpillar paid him too much money. [laughs]
ES: Do you think you might have influenced his decision to go into diesel engineering?
OT: Yep.
ES: Did you talk to him a lot?
OT: Yep.
ES: And obviously he listened.
OT: Some.
ES: Yes.
OT: He wouldn't listen to his dad. [laughs]
ES: That's often the way. I wanted to be a doctor for a long time chiefly because my grandfather was a doctor. I didn't do that, however. Do you get back to Wallowa County now at all?
OT: Not very much. I haven't for the last year, year and a half, because I've been…I got done having a heck of a spinal operation. He was up being a fake and it didn't work so I'm worse off now and __ to my head this much as you can see. So I've got lots of pain in this part of the face and my skull and down between the

shoulders. So I had to quit work and that type of thing. And then I stepped where I shouldn't have stepped and fell and hit my head against the washing machine and crushed my skull here about a year and a half ago and that's the reason I'm in here.

ES: Was your spinal problem related, do you think, to your wartime injuries?

OT: I say yes, but I couldn't prove it. I'm still…VA still takes care of me most of time. They've been great to me.

ES: What was the nature of the spinal symptoms? Was it pain in the…up and down the back a lot?

OT: Oh yea and a concussion. I lost…tore up the inside of my stomach an awful lot and tore a lot of my internal organs loose and they went in there and screwed them back together, like they said, but they used some kind of wire or something. They got me fixed up pretty good. And I don't digest my food like most people do. I have to eat more often and digest it.

ES: Had you had these difficulties while you were working, too?

OT: No. You mean now?

ES: The spinal problem, for instance, had that been occurring while you were working?

OT: Oh yea. It just keep coming on. Yea, it keep coming on.

ES: That makes it even more likely, I guess, that it was related to the war injury.

OT: Right.

ES: At the time, though, you thought it was mainly your leg?

OT: No. See, I have my…this leg thing came on after all this other stuff.

ES: You said when the torpedo hit the ship your leg was injured and you were in the hospital for eleven months.

OT: No, my back and internal organs.

ES: And at that time…

OT: At that time __ my leg.

ES: I see. So this really has been a life-long problem.

OT: Yes. It just grew along with ya, you know. And it got the place where you wouldn't have been able to be a full-fledged working mechanical type engineer. But I was fine where I was because I was a boss, a manager, so I could do it.

ES: So when you get VA care where do you have to go?

OT: Walla Walla.

ES: You know Walla Walla pretty well now.

OT: Pretty well. Yea, they have a bus goes over every two weeks and if I need to go over there for some reason I just holler for the busman.

ES: A bus that the VA provides?

OT: Mm-hmm.

ES: I didn't know about that. That service. How's the care over there? You said the spinal operation was not a success.

OT: No, that was in Portland in the ___ ever once. I'm not very happy with those people.

ES: What made you decide to come here?

OT: I was raised in Elgin.

ES: I mean to this retirement residence.

OT: It was close to home, for one thing. We looked a lot of these and I was down to 117 pounds when I came here.
ES: How long ago was that?
OT: Less than two years.
ES: Is your wife here too?
OT: She passed away.
ES: I see. Before you came here?
OT: Just before I came here. I fell and got hurt and she passed away while I was still in a coma.
ES: Troubles come all at once.
OT: But this is a real nice place.
ES: What do you like about it?
OT: It's roomy. It's new. It's well cared for. There's some things weak and some things strong, but that happens because there's no two of us to __ anyway about anything. A lot of people tell you it's terrible, but it isn't. It's a great place to live. __ as big as this place is. I told a lot of 'em ____. [laughs] See what you get.
ES: Yea.
OT: But I like it fine. But I know I can't do anything else about it. I can when I get…I'm working on this one eye was so…I thought it was this eye that's giving me troubles and I seen double and triple and couldn't ride in cars and stuff like that. I went with several different outfits who specialized and they put different kinds of glasses on me and so forth working on the left eye. They finally found a dentist was fixin' teeth all up and he said well, now, that will help just a little bit 'cause you had so bad teeth, you know. Then when got through with that went heard about a dentist over at the dentist…eye doctor over in Walla Walla. And so there seen fifteen minutes he said they'd been a workin' on the wrong eye. Two years they'd been a-workin' on the wrong eye. I said, "What do you mean by that?" And he said, "Just because you had your skull crushed up here. There's where you trouble is, it's in this eye." This eye went to pooch, why then it took all the power away from this eye to try and keep alive over here." So they wrecked this eye. So now he's workin' on both eyes and I can actually read a newspaper for the first time in two years. I don't know how much longer I'm gonna go.
ES: How do you spend your days? What do you do?
OT: Seem like there's never a dull moment.
ES: That's good.
OT: I don't know…that's another thing you like about this place. They have this young girl that…
ES: Joy.
OT: Joyce. She'd the darndest kid you ever… She __ all the time. They don't pressure you to do anything. They don't care if you do one thing. Just get up and eat when they want you to eat and you can have the rest of it, you know. They clean your bathrooms and they clean everything. You don't have to do anything but take your own bath, really. And a lot of people say, "Oh, that would be terribly boring." She's always got Bingo or she's got horseshoes or she's got

stuff for the women to do like crochet, you know. This kind of stuff that keeps everybody busy. And you come out here during the afternoon and mornings and you won't see over four or five people out.

ES: So it feels like a healthy climate, then?

OT: Absolutely.

ES: Do you get away…?

OT: That's one man's opinion.

ES: Of course. I'm not asking for anybody else. [laughs] Do you get away on trips or downtown?

OT: Oh yes. They have a bus of their own here, you know. And they on Monday mornings they'll have a shopping trip. They'll take fourteen people out shopping. You can go shopping wherever you want. They'll say, "Do you want to go down to Red Cross Drugstore?" They'll take you down there a certain time and they'll leave you there for one hour. And they pick you up in that one hour. The next person might be wanting down at Wal-Mart. They'll do the same thing for that person. So you can go where you need to go, but you got to go on a certain day. I think it's like Mondays and Wednesdays and Fridays. And they have bus tours. They run you around over the county or up in the mountains and look around, especially the older people that's not from this country. That's great for them. They go around here and talk about it, you know, how great it was to see one old doe deer, you know. [laughs] But it's there if you want to use it.

ES: You're probably one of the younger ones here, aren't you?

OT: Yes. At least on this side. I don't know anything about…

ES: I've been here several times. I get the impression you may be one of the younger ones.

OT: But you'd never thought that eighteen months ago.

ES: You looked a lot different then.

OT:

ES: Mm-hmm.

OT: But you got to make your own.

ES: Yeah.

OT: You can't lay around here __ some doctor up on the hill ___.

ES: That's right.

OT: It doesn't work.

ES: That's right. You have to be a full participant.

OT: Mm-hmm. Of course I learned that in 1940.

ES: [laugh] Yeah. I'm sure there are many other things I could ask you and many I would like to continue, but I think that's enough for now.

OT: Whatever.

ES: I'm gonna turn this into a one-page summary so there are a lot things I'll leave out.

OT: Oh yeah.

ES: But giving about the same amount of space to each of the people we interview here. And then, especially for the people who've lived in Union County for a long time we do plan to come back and do a more intensive interview.

OT: Oh yeah. Like the Wallowa County when you start talking to most of these people actually lived here all their life. They haven't any idea where Promise is or Troy.
ES: You'd have to make a special trip to get there, don't you?
OT: Yeah. [laugh]
ES: Not on the highway, the main highway. There's a school up there that was recently…Flora school. Isn't Flora nearby?
OT: Yes.
ES: Yes.
OT: Just across the canyon from where…
ES: And that school was I think fairly recently…
OT: Completely remodeled.
ES: Done over, yeah.
OT: I want to get up there and see that. Go to Enterprise and head towards Troy.
ES: I hadn't done that either. I'd like to.
OT: Yeah. I saw a lot of Caterpillars out back there.
ES: I'll bet. [tape stopped]

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ES: That's a good place to start. Vernal Hug, he was a farmer, wasn't he?
OT: Right.
ES: But he also spent a lot of time writing history of Elgin and Union County.
OT: That's true.
ES: How did you get to know him?
OT: I guess to really say how I got to know him was through his family, possibly, and the church.
ES: Hold it just a minute. [tape interruption] Go ahead.
OT: It just happened to be that his farm was just across the river from Elgin. And my father worked for the farm just across the road with the Chandler farming. And so we got to be friends and he had a large family and we did too and he had one son that was just about a year older than I. So we become friends. And Vernal also had, along with his farm, he did several things besides writing history. He had a dairy ranch. And this is where I went to work was helping out as kids do around the barn and cleaning barns and going out in the pasture and getting the cows. Then a year goes by and he thought I did a pretty good job, I guess, the year before so he asked me to come back to work. And this year we spent almost all of our time in the dairy. And he had lots of work to do. He was just getting started in the land where he was trying to get ready for his dairy cattle and so forth was…just wasn't fit for raising much grain stuff like that so he decided was gonna run the water from the river and flood irrigate some land below and irrigate it for his cattle. And this is what we started out doing. Get a little teams and friznos, as we called them back in those days, which you just dumped…get a load and dump the dirt in a whole and go back and get another.
ES: You called this a frizno?

OT: Frizno.
ES: Do you know why you called it that?
OT: No. All I know is that's the way they built the roads and everything else back in those days is just a deal with a bucket on a slide deal and you just hold up the handles and get as much dirt as you would want and then you could flip it over forward and it would dump it out pretty close to where you would want it to be. And then they'd come by with their other units and spread it out. But we worked on that and then, of course, all at once we…he needed help in his barns. So he fixed up a old barn, fixed up real good for dairy which would pass all government inspections and everything. And he had about twenty-six to thirty cows. And there was only two of us…I think his son was about sixteen, seventeen. I was about a year earlier. And we start about four o'clock in the afternoon to getting his cattle in, which some of 'em were two or three miles up on the mountain. And we's gathered them up and bring 'em down and he'd have to wash 'em all down and get 'em ready. Then we'd start milking about five. We'd milk till about nine o'clock…
ES: Hand milking?
OT: Hand milking. Everything was hand milking. He would milk one group of cows and I milked the other. Because some of those little dairy cows, especially the…I called them spotted cows…was…
ES: Spotted?
OT: I called 'em spotted cows. They were Jersey cattle. Then they had the big ol' bland and white ones. And they give lots of milk, but they were real hard to milk because their teats was so big that I couldn't…my little old hands wouldn't cover 'em so I'd have to use both hands on one. [laughs]
ES: Where did you learn to milk, by the way, right there?
OT: No. I actually learned to milk there as a child. We…see, we was in Promise we was on a farm.
ES: Oh, in Promise.
OT: Dad had to work out, naturally, all the time to try to make a living because the farming that was there just wasn't there. And so we all had chores to do. It was four of us boys and I was the youngest. Course started out getting in wood, which you might… And just work your way up. But everybody had to work on the farm. So the time I was nine years old I could just milk about any cow.
ES: So Vernal Hug thought you were great, I suppose, coming in knowing how to milk?
OT: Yes, oh yes. And back in those days almost all the young people did because they would…came off of farms or they still living on the farms. Any little seventy-five cents and hour that you could get, you know, helped a little bit.
ES: Sure.
OT: So we would start milking at five o'clock in the evening by hand and then, of course, we had to take the milk to the milking parlor. And through that they would get it all cooled down and everything. It had big racks that had cold water than run down over the racks and milk run through them like a 'fridgerator does today and cool the milk off to a certain temperature. And then they separated it and then took the cream away from the milk. Because you couldn't sell over…I

think it was 3.8 percent cream. I'm not sure of the percentage. But by then we used to get in to go to eat about seven o'clock at night. And…

ES: You were doing this after school or are you talking about summertime?

OT: Summertime. Right now it's summertime.

ES: Yes.

OT: Let's see, at least…oh yeah. The whole family… he had six or seven children and I think a couple sets of twins, I'm not sure how many. Had lots of little kids around there…and set down at this big table to eat and it wasn't too many things to eat back in those days. You'd just eat what they presented you. By this time we'd get the milk already and they delivered the milk uptown to customers just like we do a newspaper today.

ES: Who did the bottling?

OT: And…the bottling was done right there. He had two…let's see, he had one daughter that was plenty old and then his wife would help. And when it'd come off the coolers, why, they would have to decide exactly where on that bottle the cream would be and where the milk would be to get the 3.8 percent in each bottle. That took considerable amount of time. And by about nine o'clock in the evening, why, milk was ready to be delivered to these people. In the morning they would deliver to stores. But I've driven many, many miles in old Model-A's…old Model-A cars with the back end taken out of 'em and put bottles in the back.

ES: Was there any way of keeping the bottles cool when you were delivering?

OT: We had 'em in…he had a cooler system at the house and they were cool. But we could deliver almost all that we could do in probably an hour and a half, two hours. So we would be at least ten-thirty, eleven o'clock at night from five o'clock in the morning every day seven days a week, except on Sunday and he didn't take care of the milk on Sunday. Then everybody went to church. Let's see, I stayed with them in the summertime because when you went to work at five in the morning and didn't get through 'til eleven at night you didn't have much time to go home. And we did part of the day Sunday off and then they just give the milk to whatever, the hogs or whatever's necessary to get rid of the milk and be ready for Monday morning. But you couldn't…no way…like you said, how did you keep the milk? You better get it done that day because it wasn't any good for the next day, you know. And that was my start on working for Vernal.

ES: Tell me a little more about him, what kind of a man he was.

OT: About the only thing I can say he was a great man, to start with. He had all kinds of things going for him. He had a…was one of the first people that I know of around this area that started raising and separating, cleaning and selling alfalfa seed. And then he had a place up on the mountains where this was all dry land and away from any other thing that would cause the seed not to be certified. A lot of times then when the fall came along as long this other work we were doing we were up on top of the hill threshing this. So it got to be a twenty-four hour day just about sometimes, but we enjoyed it, you know.

ES: When you said he was a great man what do you mean by that?

OT: Just things like that. He just always starting stuff up. Like he built his own building to clean his seed and things like that. And had his own shifting

mechanisms to clean the seed out. And then he started raising lawn seeds. One of the first ones I know of. Now there could be others because I really only __. __ if the cows didn't milk right up to snuff. He'd way every one of the cow's milk to make sure that they were staying equal to what they were feeding them.

ES: Okay, it sounds though you're describing him as a man who had ideas and he knew how to carry out the ideas. Was he a gruff man? Was he harsh in any way?

OT: Absolutely not. They were religious, religious family. That's one thing you did do on Sunday. You'd better be up and cleaned up and get clean clothes on 'cause you's gonna go to Sunday School. That was also my family. Now my mother instigated that. Course out in the Promise country very few people Sunday everybody went to church and Sunday School. So from the time you was two years old could remember that you was brought up in Sunday School and church. So that just passed on when we came to town. And he just more or less was one of those kind of fellows that just take over and help out with these big families where he had time and he didn't have much time. But he was a…I would say kind of a slow moving sort a fella.

ES: Large man?

OT: No. He was just an average size man. But you'd wonder sometimes, "Now what happened to Vernal?" You wouldn't see him for two or three days. He's probably back in the back corner of his bedroom writing on his books. But he had enough faith in his family and his kids that we did the job for him.

ES: Did he ever talk to you about his interest in history?

OT: Not too much.

ES: Did you know he was writing history?

OT: Yes.

ES: How did you know?

OT: He'd tell us once in a while. Or he'd have meeting with some of the old timers like my folks and they'd be around there two or three days a lot of times in tents and things like that talking history. And he's taking notes and this type of thing. And in the wintertime when he couldn't do anything in the fields, why, this is when he really did his writing.

ES: Did he show you any of his writing?

OT: I had two or three of his books.

ES: After they were published?

OT: Yes.

ES: But not while he was writing them?

OT: We could've, I suppose, but we knew that this was Vernal's corner, you know. And back in those days when somebody says…if it's a laying on the table and you don't want it touched all you gotta do is say, "Now leave it alone." That wasn't only true in Vernal's home, but it was true in almost all of our homes.

ES: I suppose you knew his wife?

OT: Oh goodness yes. Great lady. She'd just do anything for you. I've got some good stories of her. [laugh]

ES: Do you want to tell any?

OT: No. I might tell one…just one little short one. In this building of these fields we were doing to get 'em flood irrigated we was trying to…they was separating these

fields. After we got 'em level they took about five acres plots and we'd…so that the water would run down about every twenty feet down through these for maybe three or four hundred yards. And they'd do that for about two or three days and then let 'em rest for two weeks while the grass growing. And then we'd move the cattle over to the other one where we had had to have fences between all those. Vernal…I don't know where he tainted, but back in those days it was kind of hard to get barbwire and things like that, I'm sure. And so I and the oldest boy, Vernal Jr., has to build the fences. He'd lie them out and then we'd set the posts and stretch the wire.

ES: Now when you set the posts you weren't using concrete to set them in were you?

OT: No, no.

ES: What?

OT: You'd drive an old wooden post in the ground with a maul.

ES: Okay. It would just rot away eventually.

OT: Yeah, eventually. But they had preasote back in those days. And you set those old posts in the preasode for two or three months, you know. They'd cut up…cut a bunch of trees and make 'em what they want. By that time they'd last three or four times as long.

ES: Do you think any of those fences are still standing?

OT: I would say that they probably are. But anyway, talking about her, we just got thing going real well, stretching the fence. We'd stretch it about a hundred feet at a time and nail it onto the post and then stretch another one. We'd put four strands of this wire on each section of post. We just got going real good 'til about…I think about eleven o'clock this one particular day. And I was…Junior was stretching the wire with the wire stretcher way down at the end and I was coming along to the post and putting the nails in the wire to hold 'em tight. Evidently they got some acid on some of these wires, something was wrong with the wire and they rasted…it was about half or in two. Some of these wire strands…I was standing there with my back…I always used my back to lookin' down to keep the fence straight you look backwards. I was doing that and all at once "whing" and I heard something go and then I felt it. And this…the ball of wire just rolled up around me and I still got the scar from the wires. And of course Verl he just cut the wire off and here I am with a big ball of wire on my back. Headed to the house, it wasn't too far to the house, screamin' and yellin' he was. And she came to the back door and he said…there's a little bit of blood, not much, you know, just the holes. And said, "What are we gonna do, Mom?" Junior said, "What are we gonna do?" And she said, "How come you didn't cut that wire off of Orval?" He says, "I did." [laugh] He did, he cut it off at the ends, but he didn't cut it off around me. It's three or four strands still around me. So she just run in the house and got an old tool of some kind, I don't know what, but it didn't take her long to get that wire off of me. Run me in the house and stripped me down and set me in the bathtub. And boy, by that time that tub was about three-fourths the way full I was wishin' I could get out. It hurt, my goodness it did hurt! She give me the good old treatment. Back in those days they used iodine or anything they could get. And what was it, three or four days, I was feeling pretty good and got to go back to work, you know. But that's the

kind of the lady she was. She'd just do anything to help. Pleasant, great lady. Taught classes in Sunday School.

ES: She did a lot of cooking, too, I suppose?

OT: Oh my goodness, yes! And those kind of places, you know, it was still a community. Church had their own places that they'd go on weekends or whatever. At least once a week they'd have a big outing of some kind in the summertime and the kids played ball and the folks'd eat all the food they could eat. And she was one of the main cooks between her and my mother. And had some great summers growin' up. We didn't know what they had bad times. You know, we didn't…

ES: You have to have something to compare with in order to know that you're not so well off.

OT: Absolutely.

ES: This barbwire accident occurred in the what, the late thirties? When you were about fifteen?

OT: Yeah, that would be about right.

ES: There were doctors then, why didn't she say "You want to go in to see a doctor?"

OT: You didn't see doctors.

ES: Doctors came out to help babies be born.

OT: The farmers were a lot better doctors than the doctors were, you know. 'Cause they was born and raised here with their families and they knew how to take care of these things.

ES: Was she…did she have any concern about your wounds becoming infected? Puncture wounds are likely to become infected.

OT: Yeah, especially with acid on 'em. But as far as know that was never even a consideration. She just cleaned it off every morning and then when get in at night, why, she cleaned 'em off. And back in those days they didn't have such thing as…like we do today, tape to hold it one there. They just wrap it around your body or whatever's necessary.

ES: These were rolls of gauze around your body?

OT: Just like that. Mostly though, they'd tear up an old shirt or underskirt or something from somebody and wrap it around you.

ES: And you never did get any infection from that?

OT: Not that I remember.

ES: You must've had a dozen wounds at least?

OT: Oh, at least that. I still got the scars, or most of 'em.

ES: That's a serious accident.

OT: Didn't know. What if it'd been a little higher it could've been in your eyes.

ES: You know now it was.

OT: [laugh] Yeah.

ES: When you mentioned the wire stretcher what did that look like? What kind of a gadget was it?

OT: It's the same thing as they use today. It has a single wire stretcher. It's just a tool with a handle on it and it has a hook on one end where you hook the wire on and then just like a jack over on the other end. And you just jack this wire and it should tie the wire on the other end. They had a clamp, usually, would hold the

wire. And he just pulled that 'til you'd holler "hold." You know, you'd holler down to him. You'd have to figure out your own self, "whing, whing, whing," how tight to get it. And I must've whinged it one time too many. Anyway…

ES: This jack thing must have had teeth on it as you tightened it to hold it?

OT: Just like a big bumper jack today only it was smaller. They still make 'em. But that's about the first…of course then a lot of times I worked for my dad across the street.

ES: How was he making a living? You said he helped with the farming of Mr. Hug.

OT: He didn't help Hug with the farming. See, Chandler ranch was right across the road.

ES: Oh, I see.

OT: It's like you're drivin' to Elgin now. The Hug ranch is on one side where the big bridge is and Chandler ranch is on the other side. And Dad run for Chandler ranch. Chandler had a…Alice Chowmer International and what have you…equipment dealership. And most of all his work was done here in La Grande. But my dad when he wasn't farming was helping set up machinery and delivering it and all that stuff. So he had a…didn't have a good paying job, but he had a good steady job.

ES: What were they raising on the Chandler ranch?

OT: Since he was in the farm equipment business also they was trading tractors. It was…everything else for anything from a sheep to a goat to cattle or what have you. So they was all coming through the farm. Get 'em fattened up the best they could and then they'd have a big sale and sell them off to someone else. And this is the type of work he did. But my older brothers and some other fellas would do the hay because he'd have fifty or sixty acres of hay to feed these cow and sheep in the wintertime. And they would usually do they hay. He'd get them all started and fill those big barns and big hay stacks and stuff. And the younger fellows did most all that. He was busy all the time running that ranch.

ES: So your father was really supervising a crew?

OT: Absolutely.

ES: Mm-hmm. Year round? Was there work in the wintertime too?

OT: Oh yes. 'Cause he always had a whole bunch of sheep traded in or cattle traded in or a bunch of horses or something. And then it took quite a few horses and cattle just to keep the ranch running.

ES: Sure.

OT: It was quite an experience. Even as young as I am I can sure remember most of it.

ES: Did you say your father had a farm also?

OT: My dad was a homesteader, see, in Wallowa County.

ES: I know that, but when he got to Elgin?

OT: No, he did not. He went to work for a pretty big flour mill in Elgin. How he found the job, where he got the job or anything.

ES: Flour mill in Elgin?

OT: But they had a flour mill in Elgin.

ES: What was it called, do you remember?

OT: It's the same one that's in Island City. Now it's PGG. But what was the name of that? Oh, I think it was Cook and that isn't right. Anyway, they made rose products.
ES: That was the brand name?
OT: Great big rose on the side of all the flour sacks and all that type of thing. But he worked the…when he started there the worked that. Then right away Chandler found out that he was a farmer. That took care of that right quick.
ES: Did you go inside the flour mill sometimes?
OT: Oh yes.
ES: Could you describe it?
OT: No. I really can't. Probably didn't pay that much attention to it. But it's just a big grinder and different types of seed was different fineness. Wheat and stuff was run through the big grinders.
ES: In the really olden days I know that in flour mills the grinders were large stones, circular stones, and they…there would be a couple of them and then they would get the wheat in between and grind into flour. Is that…?
OT: They could set them up so there a different distances between the stones to make different fineness of the grains. That's the type of thing.
ES: So this mill did have grinding stones?
OT: And I think it probably still does.
ES: Is it still there?
OT: The mill's still there.
ES: It is?
OT: Yeah, oh yeah. It's sitting…just as you go into Island City down here. As you go right into town at the red light and turn to the right. That big building right there it's the mill.
ES: I meant the one in Elgin. Is that still there?
OT: No, no. It was there until about two years ago and some kids got in there and one fellow was making real fine furniture and they burned it down.
ES: I remember that.
OT: That's the one he was working in was that one. He didn't work long, less than a year.
ES: You think the one in Island City is very similar inside to the way the one in Elgin was?
OT: Yes. It would be. The one in Island City was just about double in size. But back in those days they really had no way to transport the products back and forth to do anything. They could afford to build another building in a town… Run two mills rather than just to have on big mill. The one in Island City's pretty good sized.
ES: Do you think they're still using stones to grind?
OT: They're not…I'm sure that mill hasn't been working as a mill for some time. I could remember when it did when they had the big rose. I can remember making clothes with Rose…during the Depression some of my clothes had part of the roses still on 'em. [laughs]
ES: The sacks you mean?
OT: Yeah.
ES: At that time they would ship the product out by train, wouldn't they?

OT: Most of 'em yes. They had no other way to do it unless you put on a wagon and haul it. So it all went by train pretty well.

ES: Did you have other jobs while you were living in Elgin before you gradated from high school?

OT: Oh yes. Besides working for Vernal I got down a place where I was older and I wouldn't work for pennies, I had to have quarters.

ES: Penny's in…?

OT: No, I was just saying instead of working for pennies I had to have quarters. [laughs]

ES: Oh, I see what you mean.

OT: I thought I did, anyway. But I did move up and then I'd be helpin' Dad and the boys out in the fields. Something like that. Then I went to work for an old fella, H. F. Reed Lumber Company. Had a big sawmill there. And he sold slabs for wood. They cut the slabs up into about sixteen to eighteen inch pieces of the wood that wasn't just the bark side and so forth. And sell this to people for a little bit of nothing. Maybe a dollar and half for a whole bit truckload. Us kids would stack that up so it had to be dry. And we'd get a job from these people of stacking their wood for 'em in the summertimes. Sometimes, boy, if that mill's runnin' in really good shape, why, you could run four or five groups of kids around all over town and made pretty good money up there. You couldn't call it a job. Nobody called it a job. Then the big…the only other job we had, I guess, that really amounted to anything was down at the Opera House. That's where the movies and everything was. About once a month, seemed like to me, now it might not be true, but seemed to me like about once a month they'd be a group of people come in there puttin' on shows and things like that. And it took lots of work 'cause that big place was heated with wood back in those days. Boy, we'd get a job from the lumber company to stack the wood for that place. Just about keep two or three guys busy all summer long stackin' wood outside the building. And so it's…there was plenty of work for young people to do. They just didn't like to work for seventy-five cents and hour, you know. [laughs] Then I went to work at the school also. I played basketball and baseball and those type of things. And got to know the janitor of the place pretty well. And then they came out with this program where they'd pay you twenty-five cents an hour to help the janitor clean the floors and clean the gyms and that type of thing. Keep all the school dusted and this kind of thing. But you had to do it on off hours. And I did that for over two years, I guess. And they paid me twenty-five cents for a whole hour's work. I could clean…I got so I could clean that old gym with those big mops and things we had and the upstairs balconies I could clean 'em in half that time so I was makin' pretty good money. Then on Saturdays they'd pay us for four hours to come work outside and clean the lot, yards and that type of thing. And I did that for about…I kept myself in clothes and all that type of thing.

ES: Did you have your eye on a car, too?

OT: Yes, but you know how that goes awry. [laugh]

ES: Was it going to cost way beyond what you could possibly save?

OT: No. Just the fact that there'd be one car with twelve kids tryin' to ride in it all the time. Usually they'd be one or two families that would have enough money that

they could let their kids go buy an old car like an old Model-T Ford or something like that. We've had a lot of fun with those old cars.

ES: You said last time that when the teams would go to play in John Day or Enterprise or Baker you'd go in private cars.

OT: Right.

ES: Were these cars that boys had bought themselves, or were they parents' cars?

OT: No. This was a program even way back then probably… [end tape]

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OT: The school program, sumily, through the government, but they for the transportation for…and you'd ride five in a car. People like H. F. Weed Lumber Company and Shorter Ray Lumber and all those people that couldn't work in the wintertime because the snow was deep back in those days and uh…[tape interruption] Anyway, this…there was usually people, you know, that really wasn't working and had time to go, especially the husband of the husband and wife. 'Cause you couldn't travel very much in the wintertime because the roads weren't open. And the counties and states just didn't have the facility. So these fellas was more of less…they was supposed to be paid so much a mile to take us kids to the next town. They'd keep 'em over night or whatever was necessary. And we had one old fella his son and I run around together all our lives. And he was a logger. And he just loved basketball, baseball and that type of thing. So he'd just pick us guys out and stick us in the car and away we'd go.

ES: I see.

OT: And then he'd report this to the school district and they'd of course have to pay him so much a mile for the mileage. And it was kind of odd because he didn't that. He was already a businessman. But every time we would go someplace like here in Elgin to La Grande the roads would be plugged up by the time we would leave Elgin and head to La Grande to play basketball and go back the road would be plugged. A lot of times you would have to stay all night and you'd…no place to stay. And the other kids their folks ___ here in town and they knew the roads they'd always someplace…us kids would find a private home to stay in 'til the next day. He'd haul us around all over the country and nothing to eat. They had a place they called China Mary's upstairs. He just loved Chinese noodles. He'd always after basketball game come…we interlude. We had to go to China Mary's. Didn't cost anything, you know. He always paid for the meal. And this is the way those things actually did happen But a lot of 'em were kids that played and lots of 'em were people that didn't have any kids. Some of 'em were businessmen and just loved sports. And they got paid, what, a nickel a mile maybe. But that wasn't what it was about. It was about sports and keeping kids in school. It's too bad we don't have more of that today.

ES: While we're mentioning China Mary's I've heard many people talk about it, but nobody's described a meal that you would have there. Do you remember?

OT: I can tell you what China Mary's used to say about her…about some of her stuff, her soup. She had great chicken soup. And she also used the same type of soup

in her noodles. I know she'd train…we used to accuse her, "The only difference between your noodles and your soup is the fact that you just took the leftovers from the noodles and stuck 'em over in another pan and that was your soup." [laugh] So she got to advertising that. Somebody would say…kids would always tease her about her soup not having anything in it, 'cause it really didn't. It was just soup.

ES: Broth.

OT: Broth. So she'd say…she had some…a couple of old rooster feet and legs a hangin' up above the door to the kitchen. She said, "This is what's leftover from my soup." [laugh] "When I got through with my soup." She was quite an old lady.

ES: Did she speak English fairly well?

OT: Not too well. But she had a brother…a son that was well educated. But he didn't spend any time around there, of course. Nobody had much to do with him. But she was quite an old lady. We'd get the heck out of her and she'd come right back. You don't say too much about her soup 'cause your liable to get an old set of feet in your soup. [laughs]

ES: Describe the noodles.

OT: They was just like…if you ordered noodles today like you order in a tin can down at the store, just a long thin noodles, that's the kind of noodles she had only she made 'em by hand and instead of being round they were flat. And boy were they ever good! She had some way to make the dough, you know, and it was just all together different than the noodles you get today.

ES: When you say long you mean as long as a piece of spaghetti?

OT: Right. Be more or less like that.

ES: So there's a lot of slurping when you ate them?

OT: Yea, you'd go "slurp." [laughs]

ES: What else besides the soup and the noodles did she serve?

OT: Just about anything. She'd serve chicken … a full Sunday dinner if you wanted a Sunday dinner. She'd cook you a Sunday dinner with mashed potatoes and gravy and…

ES: Oh, so she served American food too, not just Chinese?

OT: Absolutely.

ES: Did she serve a fortune cookie for dessert?

OT: Yep.

ES: Did you get a fortune every time?

OT: They never were good ones. [laughs]

ES: "Watch out. Danger ahead." That sort.

OT: Yea.

ES: Yes. Do you remember what the price…

OT: That's what I say. She was quite a… Oh, you'd get a big bowl of noodles for two bits.

ES: Two bits? Mm-hmm.

OT: Or you could get one for fifty cents.

ES: When you walked out of there were you ever hungry?

OT: If you was it was your own fault. [laughs]

ES: What kind of beverage? Hot tea?
OT: Yes. They served the same type of thing as they do in the Chinese today. And a lot the same type of thing.
ES: When you went in there was it usually crowded?
OT: I've never…the only time I've ever been in a place when it wasn't crowded was if she'd had a family night or something on Sunday or family all day or Saturday when the kids are out of school and not a bunch of 'em tearin' in there after a baseball, basketball or something. And my little kids…time my kids were two years old they knew how to eat noodles. And she was tryin' to teach 'em or some of her help was tryin' to teach 'em how to use the…
ES: Chop sticks?
OT: [laugh]
ES: Yea.
OT: They were the best little kids you ever seen. They'd go in there and they never made trouble throwin' stuff around, you know, like they do now days. Boy, it was…we just loved to go there with our kids because it taught our kids this is what you do. You know, you're in a restaurant now, a public place. Didn't take long to teach a kid.
ES: You mentioned going after a basketball game. Was China Mary's open until eleven or twelve o'clock at night?
OT: Oh yea. Especially on…all our basketball games back in those days were played on Friday and Saturday. We didn't have any of this Thursday stuff that they have nowadays. 'Cause, like you say, lot of times you're snowed in and one night is about all people could keep ya.
ES: After a game I imagine you were very hungry?
OT: Yes because they didn't allow you to eat very much before…
ES: Before yea.
OT: The only thing you get during the game was a little cube of sugar.
ES: Oh yea?
OT: They'd call time out and coach he'd send the water boy out there with a few cubes of sugar. Most people didn't eat it, but a lot of 'em did do it. Give you a little surge.
ES: Supposed to bolster your energy, huh?
OT: Give you a little surge, supposedly. And that's…that was the idea that they…what it did…it made you think you did. After all, that's half of life anyway, isn't it, believing?
ES: Mm-hmm. When the water boy brought, I suppose it was a bucket of water out, would you drink it out of a dipper or did you have cups?
OT: Had cups most of the time. I don't know what happened too much before me, but we had…they had little ol'…they weren't' plastic but they just…
ES: Paper cups.
OT: Just paper cups right in the bowl. Like Daisy or somethin' like that.
ES: Sure.
OT: But ___ he didn't want you to drink water. I didn't have one coach in four years that I played sports, especially sports, didn't want you to drink any water.
ES: Did you ask why?

OT: Some idiot thing is gonna cause you dehydrate worse than you already was, you know, I suppose.
ES: He was wrong about that.
OT: Yea.
ES: Did he think you'd get bloated or be less able to run?
OT: No. I tell you you had rigid training programs with the coaches back in those days.
ES: So tell me about that.
OT: It's kind of hard to say because you'd have a regular routine and before you ever went to practice at night…every team I played on except baseball…of course, you'd get out of school at three o'clock because that took up your…you're supposed to have one period of athletics or whatever they called 'em back in those days and if you was in sports and making your letter, why, that counted as a credit. And when you went out there, why, you couldn't spend that whole hour just runnin' up and down the floor shootin' basketballs. They'd have a regular routine like they do in the service. In the morning when we used to get up in the service, you know, at five o'clock you went out there and you did calisthenics for about an hour. Did the same thing in high school. I run many, many guys around that gym as hard as we could run and be holdin' onto his feet and he's a runnin' with his hands. You know, wheelbarrow.
ES: Were there strength building training?
OT: Just that type of thing.
ES: I mean with weights.
OT: No. We didn't have weights.
ES: No weights. So was it…
OT: We had rope pulls. We had rope pull and all that type of thing.
ES: You'd go up as high as you could up to the ceiling sometimes?
OT: Right. Yea, you had to get to the ceilings sometimes or you was in trouble. So you had extra time and goin' out there and practicing until you could do it.
ES: Did the calisthenics include push-ups?
OT: Yes, definitely. You could do…I don't know that we ever did over four or five hundred pushups.
ES: Four or five hundred.
OT: But if you'd get into a little bit of trouble that you shouldn't 've been in, why, you'd get a hundred and then wait fifteen minutes and get another hundred. It was a type of "Next time don't do it fella." If you got into those kind of deals.
ES: So with pushups not only to develop muscles, but to get punished?
OT: Absolutely. [laughs] Absolutely.
ES: How good were you at pushups?
OT: Very good. Very good.
ES: Did your farm work and milking and so on help with that?
OT: Absolutely.
ES: I should think so. Pretty good biceps, huh?
OT: When you went to school you was ready to go.
ES: Yea. I don't know what Elgin school facilities looked like at that time, but for instance the locker room, what did that look like?

OT: Probably a lot like it does today only everything was wood back in those days. When they'd build a school, why, they'd build 'em into… My lockers I remember…'cause you didn't have near the stuff to hang around, you know, that you do nowadays. 'Cause you had your…you just had two pairs of…for practice you had two pair of shorts and your warm-ups and your shirts. When you got those very wet and stinky you took 'em home and mama washed 'em. And the only one's that the school had was the ones that you used and when you got through with those for two nights then they'd go through and either some lady doing the laundry for the school or something like that. And they cleaned those. But you took care of your own clothes.

ES: So they issued you the uniform you played games in. You provided your own practice clothes.

OT: Practice, right.

ES: What did you wear under the shorts?

OT: Regular old…what do you call those things? Still use 'em. Just a strap that…

ES: A jock strap.

OT: A jock strap. Yea, I couldn't even think. Once in a while I have a lapse here.

ES: Did you supply that too.

OT: Yea, we had to take care of that stuff.

ES: What are the uniforms that you played in look like? Were they…now basketball players have…they usually wear something tight underneath and then the shorts come way down to their knees.

OT: I wish I'd a brought some of our uniforms. They were beautiful. They were wool. Back in those days uniforms were wool.

ES: Really, wool!

OT: And our colors were purple and white. And time they got through doing the legs, they were short legs, real short legs, the time they put the colors on those and on the shirts and stuff around the collars they were beautiful. Everybody. They'd tried out ___. [laughs]

ES: Now did they come one size fits all or did you…

OT: No, no.

ES: They had small, medium and large.

OT: You bet. No, no. They measured you up every year.

ES: Athletic type shirt with no sleeves?

OT: That's about what we had for regular play, yea. But our warm-ups of course was full length.

ES: Right.

OT: I wish I'd a brought my athletic book with me now. I didn't know you'd…

ES: I'm interested in all aspects of your life.

OT: But I have all that stuff. I still have…

ES: You mean you have the uniforms or the pictures?

OT: Just the pictures. The uniforms belonged to the school.

ES: That's right.

OT: And they did, if you didn't wear 'em too much and a freshman moved up and got your size, why, he might…'cause he's sittin' on the bench most of the time anyway he might of got a pair of used. The first __ you'd ever get was used.

‘Cause you had your number sewed right in those uniforms. I kept the same number forever.

ES: The name Elgin, was that…

OT: Elgin Husky.

ES: Elgin Husky.

OT: A picture of a dog. That’s why I say they were beautiful, you know.

ES: You were proud of ‘em.

OT: Yea.

ES: What did your baseball uniforms look like?

OT: Usually just the regular old pinstripe. That’s just about what it…

ES: Was it made of wool?

OT: No. I don’t believe they were all wool, but I can’t remember now because we was all outside when we played. But we had to have the long socks with the knee high.

ES: Now wool is pretty scratchy. I should think that that wouldn’t have been very pleasant to play in.

OT: It’s accord to what kind of wool you’re talking about. And if you get good virgin wool it didn’t scratch ya at all. ‘Cause I was terribly allergic to wool. And especially being raised on that farm where sometimes you’d have four or five hundred head of sheep and those old shearers come in there and you’d better be able to go wash yourself pretty quick ‘cause that wool’s flyin’ every place. And if you’d get a young lamb it wouldn’t bother me, but otherwise I could not work in the shearing crew. It just learned me up.

ES: Your uniforms didn’t bother you.

OT: No. Don’t know whether they’s treated with something or what.

ES: Yea.

OT: I guess I was too dumb to ever ask it. [laugh]

ES: From what you’ve said about the coaching of baseball and basketball the coach was fairly tough. He didn’t put up with any nonsense.

OT: No. After all you was getting a credit for it.

ES: Yea. What kind of direct instruction in the plays, the movements he wanted to make did he give? Did he demonstrate or try to explain or…?

OT: Sometimes demonstrate. Most all of ‘em have…of course they didn’t use ‘em when they practice…but almost everybody had a blackboard in the dressing room. And he’d draw out the play just like they do today only they got those little __. Same type of thing. That hasn’t changed.

ES: Did you notice yourself improving a lot as you played because of what the coach told you?

OT: No. You didn’t even think about. You know, really. He was the coach and let’s get the job done. As long as you’s winning, boy, we’ve got a great coach. If we was loosing then the town took care of him.

ES: What did you think the coach did to try to assure that you would be a winning team?

OT: I think probably the number one thing he tried to do was instill character in all the fellas. ‘Cause that was ninety percent of winning. You can’t go out there and hang your head down as many will, because you got ten points behind. You gotta

go out there and get with it. Get that character going and usually it's helped. He'd give you a little pep talk.

ES: Individually? Individually?

OT: Usually not about then.

ES: Talked to the whole team?

OT: Talked to you, yes. When you're playing and when you're on traveling, but the whole team. And then nobody ever knew who talked to who or when they talked during school. It was always a private thing with the coach. You could always tell who he'd talked to, usually.

ES: How many players did you have all together usually at a time? More than you needed for a team, I suppose?

OT: Yes. Of course the team was like it is now, in basketball it was five and we were allowed twelve in case a couple kids got hurt or something. But they couldn't dress up for the game. They got to practice and play and everything and so every so often the coach would let those substitutes dress up and the other kids didn't dress up. You were allowed twelve people.

ES: So the starters on the team played the whole game through?

OT: Usually.

ES: No subs?

OT: No. Not unless you get hurt or wore out or something, sprained an ankle or…

ES: But if somebody did get hurt then very quickly one of the other players would have to dress and go out there?

OT: No, he'd be dressed. They were all dressed.

ES: I thought you said they didn't dress?

OT: No, I said that they just didn't…by that I meant that they didn't have their shirts and everything off. A-settin' there with their warm-ups and everything on.

ES: Oh, in their warm-ups. Sure.

OT: And all they gotta do is just undress. They don't dress down for a while.

ES: Did you take a score keeper along?

OT: Usually one of the kids. A lot of times a real nice lookin' girl, you know. [laugh]

ES: I was the basketball score keeper one year when I was in school.

OT: That got to be quite a job, you know. But see when I played you still make a basket, why, you had to take it out at the end and wait __ got set around. The first year I took we went to the center. You'd make a basket and then you'd run up to the center and everybody'd jump ball again. Then it got so you took it off at the side. You made a basket you took it off over at the side. And then all at once, hey, we get to take it out of the basket when I was a senior. So they've made lots of changes. And the foul thing was...what was three fouls and you'd had it back when we played.

ES: You're out of the game?

OT: Yea. And then they changed that a lot because at the end of the game, you know, if you had a score of twenty-five to twenty that was a high score. And say if somebody towards the end of the game and it was pretty tight, like twenty-two to twenty-one or something, why, it was like everybody else would foul on purpose 'cause they took the ball out. You didn't shoot it, you took it out. And that's

when the foul shot came in. They said, "hey, these guys just letting the ballgame foul these people on purpose." So then they changed the law.

ES: Referees at that time. How were they treated by the players and by the spectators?

OT: They had the same boos as they got today. [laugh] Really, it was a game. And usually, unless it was a league game which was counting towards state, usually local people from…we'll say La Grande was playing Baker they'd have somebody from Imbler or Elgin be the referee. They couldn't be a hometown referee. But that's the only…

ES: Did you get to figure out which referees were good and which weren't so good?

OT: No. No. Wasn't up to us.

ES: Oh. You had your own opinions on that, didn't you?

OT: Yes, but you better not of used it out in public. [laughs]

ES: You guys would talk about it.

OT: You might be setting on the bench for sure.

ES: Yea, but you guys would talk about it. Who was a good ref and who wasn't.

OT: Yes. Absolutely.

ES: I suppose that's always what happens.

OT: Right. Today.

ES: Sure. Did they have cheerleaders then?

OT: Yes. You bet.

ES: They didn't travel along with you. If you played an away game there were just cheerleaders for the home team?

OT: The only time that they would travel would be at a tournament or something like that.

ES: Yea.

OT: You know, weekend tournaments or something. And again, that was "Daddy will you take us?" Nobody got paid for that type of thing, you know.

ES: Right.

OT: Sports today becomes I think sportless. I think we just went to all business and they forgot that there is a young life and you gotta grow up with it.

ES: Before we leave your high school years…I'm sure you would tell me that classes in high school were pretty much…probably pretty much the same as they've always been, but let's take…oh, when you were a sophomore or junior what…do you remember what subjects you were taking?

OT: We took subjects back then which they don't even think about taking today.

ES: Right. Tell me what some of those were.

OT: Just one of those to take then which amounted a lot and if you had a good teacher you'd learn a lot and that was economics. You don't even hear the word economic. History. You don't hear anything about the history of the United States or…

ES: It's called social studies now.

OT: Yea, see, and it don't have anything to do. What is a plateau? I bet I can ask twenty seniors out here what a plateau is and they don't know. I know what a plateau is. You know what a plateau is. And we got high ones and we got low ones, but these kids don't know that.

ES: I'm not so much interested in what kids know or don't know now, but I want to go back to when you were going through high school. I suppose that the subject that you were taking and the routing within the classroom.

OT: I think…of course through high school you'd take right off with something that really settled you down and that was usually an English class. [laughs] That would be number one.

ES: And why did it settle you down?

OT: 'Cause you usually had tough teachers and that was the hardest thing there was to apprehend to make their students all realize that there isn't such a word as ain't. Back in those days, you know. Now there is a word that's ain't 'cause it's in the dictionary. But back then it wasn't so you better not spend too many hours around the classroom sayin' ain't and so forth. And just some little thing like that might be one of the things that they would let you know that right is right and wrong is wrong. And let's see…we'd have usually English first and then math would come next. No, economics and then math. That's four. What was the old…old, old English…had all the stories that you had to learn and…

ES: Literature.

OT: Literature. Okay.

ES: Probably had a literature anthology.

OT: Yea. I couldn't think of that. That's five. We had eight subjects we had to take.

ES: And the teacher'd be up in the front of room, I suppose, most of the time. And how would the teacher usually, say, proceed in math?

OT: At the board. We had those full blackboards in every room.

ES: Geometry for example?

OT: Same type of thing.

ES: Teacher would explain a theorem…

OT: And then you'd work it out at your desk and she'd come by and say "no, you screwed up."

ES: She wouldn't say that.

OT: She wouldn't say that. "No, that isn't correct," she'd say. They were…I would say I only had one teacher I can remember of that I didn't particularly like. I was a kid. I liked school. And usually our coaches were the math teacher. And when you got up to trigonometry, you know, and you was playing sports you'd better try and find something that was a little easier. 'Cause that was one I never could quite apprehend in school, in high school. That just did not make sense. Why are we talkin' about this type of thing, you know?

ES: Of course you had text books in all these classes.

OT: Oh absolutely.

ES: Were you expected to take the textbooks home to study or did you do all your studying in school?

OT: You had study hall. Usually you'd have study hall in the morning and one in the afternoon and that finished out your eight credit hours that you would get. You'd start school at eight o'clock, or eight-thirty in the morning. You'd get a half an hour off for lunch. You went home at four.

ES: Could you finish all of your assignments in school then?

OT: If you was really up on it. In other words if you knew you was gonna have a test in the next two or three days and you got two or three of your buddies and went to your house or their house and crammed like heck you had no trouble with that. But if you tried to do it at school you's in a little bit of trouble 'cause you'd run into a stone wall, like they say, and don't know where to go and the school got nobody to help you. Where as home you got two or three other kids that help figure that.

ES: How did you fit that in, though, after school with all your other work?

OT: Pretty tough. Pretty tough.

ES: You usually went to work in the…[end tape]

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OT: With us fellas in sports if you made the team and was on the teams, of course, that took up for one of the hours that was from three to four that the other kids had to do in the classrooms.

ES: Yea.

OT: So we were fine because you get out there and maybe forty-five minutes, maybe a half and hour and the coach would say go…if you need to do something with your studies now go do it because this is your hour to do it. Very seldom would you ever have to do that. 'Cause we used to give the coaches number one, you know.

ES: Fall must have been a little bit better for you because basketball's in winter and baseball's in spring. Did you have a little more free time in fall?

OT: We did because we didn't have football in the little schools.

ES: You were too small for playing football, weren't you?

OT: No. When I was a senior I weighed 145 pounds. That was pretty good sized. And anyway…

ES: Last time you said that was not much, I thought.

OT: No, it wasn't.

ES: Not for football, anyway.

OT: No. And just the one year when I was a senior, why, they decided they'd get a district they was gonna __ on to football again. I just got to play a couple of games and lost my appendix knocked 'em out in a football game and that was it. So I don't know much about the football game, but I do know that a lot of guys loved to try, you know. And that's what I call it. You've gotta love to try to play sports. If you don't you're not gonna make it.

ES: What are the main discouragements?

OT: Encouragement?

ES: Discouragement.

OT: I suppose a lot of it would be your coach, repetition. You know, this things that maybe he thinks the only thing that should happen and half your team thinks it should and of 'em thinks it shouldn't and this type of thing and it becomes a disgruntled operation. Where a good coach you don't have that. I would've liked to have coached.

ES: Really? Seriously or just…?
OT: Seriously.
ES: You would have had to go back to college and get other college training after you got out of the Arm…or the Navy, wouldn't you?
OT: Yes. I'd have to have, oh, four years. Of course by then I had a family.
ES: Do you think if you hadn't been married you have done that?
OT: I'd probably tried.
ES: What do think would have been the satisfaction for you of coaching?
OT: Kids.
ES: Kids.
OT: Yep. Yep, sure would've been. You can tell a team that's happy.
ES: And what you said with the emphasis on character, discipline it probably was a very important…well, still is…a very important influence on young people's lives.
OT: All their life.
ES: Yes.
OT: Influence all their life.
ES: Could we move now to the time when you came back to the Grande Ronde Valley after you were discharged from the Navy and all that hospital experience you'd had. You said, I think, that your first work was with the Union Pacific.
OT: It would have been. They wanted me to go to work for them and I went over and I did take three trips with them on the old Portland Rose back in those days. We had to go to…you went from…here's Portland, Dead Head they called it, then we went from there they…you just stayed right on the same train 'cause the passenger train all the way to Omaha, Nebraska.
ES: Now I want to ask you about that. If your responsibility would have been to fix the engine if it broke down somewhere?
OT: If it was just something like say a fuel injector or something that went out and it just wasn't up to power you supposed to be able to know that, in other words, and diagnosis it and you could repair it if it wasn't to the place to where it was affecting the rest of the engine. You usually had one spare engine. Most people didn't know that, but lots of times those engines was just like a ship. And ships, almost all ships have one spare engine they never use unless something happens to one of the other engines. But on the Union Pacific they were…since they was using them so much during the war every so often so many hours you just automatically checked everything all out, the fuel systems and all that. Made sure it was running.
ES: Did you do that every time it stopped on a run?
OT: No. You had a regular routine, just like your car if you change your oil every three thousand miles, why, that's a lot of the same type of thing you'd do.
ES: I'm not understanding why you, a diesel engineer or diesel mechanic, would've had to be on the run of the Portland Rose. What were you expected to do on that trip?
OT: Say that…it's just routine more or less. Say you get a bunch of dirty fuel or something like that or it just…the injector systems. That's the main thing were we had lots of problems with diesels to start with. They'd get plugged up and the

diesel would just run on two or three cylinders. The Portland Rose was an eight cylinder job. That's what I specialized in the Navy. And if something start missing right away you knew it. You had all kinds of gauges and everything. But you could repair that where if you got two engines doing that you'd be out of business. And you couldn't be out of business in the Portland Rose, you know. It had to run. And so you could…you could have one off or maybe the injector's out of tune, but you…and that's what you was there for. You might travel that thing for six months and never touch a wrench.

ES: That's what I wondered. You were there just as a safety precaution.

OT: Absolutely.

ES: So that if anything went wrong…if you were in the middle of North Dakota somewhere you'd get out and fix it, huh?

OT: You stayed in and fixed it. They were all made…see these…the reason those things are all covered on the outside the engines are all inside. And you have walk ramps and stuff like that you can get to almost any part of a diesel engine on the inside of one of these to fix the type of thing that they would expect you to fix.

ES: When you said…

OT: No complete repairs on those engines at all. They pull 'em off and put 'em in the roundhouse.

ES: When you said they always had a spare engine you mean the whole locomotive, or…?

OT: Mm-hmm. No. A lot of times…you're talkin' about the whole locomotive. Now most of these locomotive's got two to three engines on in the inside. So if one of those went out…if it had three engines the two would be fine. Then they would go into the next town or whatever and then they'd switch the broken motors out, the whole thing. Take this engine out and put in another one and he's ready to go the next trip.

ES: Okay.

OT: That's the way it was.

ES: Alright. I understand. Where exactly were you traveling when you'd go on the Portland Rose. Were you in…sitting in the locomotive or where? Back in the passenger car or where?

OT: You had your own…all these people that worked there, just like the cooks and people like that and the brakemen and everybody, you have your…

ES: Crew car?

OT: Yes. You have your own car. Real nice places. But I had family…that stopped.

ES: If you weren't really working most of the time when you were traveling on the Portland Rose what did you do?

OT: Played checkers. [laughs]

ES: So sleep a lot?

OT: To be honest with you, I did. Played all kind of cards.

ES: Did you sleep a lot too?

OT: Not too much. You stayed in shape. If you didn't, boy, you'd get one like I got now, you know.

ES: What were you doing to stay in shape?

OT: They had all kinds of stuff. They even had dumbbells in some of these newer. But nowadays they don't have to worry about that because they jump you off about every twelve hours and stick you on and away you go back the other way. But the Portland runs we only had three of those whole things. So one was at this end and one at that end and one in the middle, you know. And so you had to have facilities for everybody to… But nowadays I don't think most of these guys…just on what they call call. They have some fella that'll call it up and he could get all of it right here in La Grande and go ahead.

ES: Did you have any really memorable experiences while you were doing that kind of work?

OT: No. Like I say, I wasn't on it long enough. I only made three trips. The shake down crew they called it. And my Mrs. said, "Hey, you didn't marry me to run up and down railroad tracks." [laughs] So I said, "Okay."

ES: You weren't on long enough to get a retirement benefit from the railroad.

OT: Didn't do anything. Didn't get paid. Didn't even get paid.

ES: Didn't get paid?

OT: Uh-uh. That was what…that's the reason they called it a shake down.

ES: I see. So after you decided that wasn't for you you…that's when you found the Caterpillar company that they needed somebody?

OT: They found me more or less. I wasn't supposed to work for six months to a year after I got out of the service. After all I was on full sick leave and all that type of thing. And they would allow me to work four hours a day after I was out about five, six months. And the first job I got was with Montgomery Ward. Down there I had a great-uncle that worked at Montgomery Ward. Had a big store here then.

ES: The one in La Grande, yes.

OT: Yea. And he kept saying, "Come on down, Orval. We need somebody to help us inventory in the basement." They had regular hardware stores back in those days. And I finally said, "Okay, I'll come down, uncle, and help you a little bit." And the word was out that I was…guess you'd say back home. And so I finally walked in one morning to the basement where I've inventoried a bunch of bolts and "oh, forget that." [laugh] "Are you Orval Trump?" and I said, "Yes." And he said, "How would you like to go to work for Caterpillar Tractor Company?" Just "fftt" That's it. So I just walked across town, went over and walked into the other building went to work.

ES: What was the nature of the first work you did with them?

OT: The first work I did with them was a Navy man that was in charge of my health benefits at that time. Came in and told them exactly what they could do and what they couldn't do to keep me on the job. I couldn't work but four hours a day and I couldn't do this and couldn't lift over twenty pounds. And I couldn't do this and I couldn't do that. And they said, "We'll take care of that. Don't worry about it." So believe it or not the first job I had was steam cleaning parts. Here I am with [laugh] steam cleaning parts. But anyway I went all the way up through 'em that way. And finally did get hurt. They told me I would and I did. And after a couple years of that, I believe, maybe eighteen months, transferred me over in to the parts department in dealership here. And, golly, pretty quick I was feeling

really good. The more I moved around and worked the better I felt. And so the first thing you know I was a-working full time. The Navy said, "Hey, if you go to work full time you're not gonna get much of a pension, fella." You know, so they cut the heck out of my pension. And I said, "Okay." I'd like to say that vinegar I had ___. [laugh] So that's where I went from then on that. Then I stayed there about two or three years.

ES: What exactly did you do at the parts department? I think I can imagine, but tell me.

OT: In a parts department you do about everything. Number one, everybody thinks, well, you just stand there behind the counter and wait 'til some guy comes in and…

ES: Yeah.

OT: But it doesn't work that way because all at once you got a great big shipment in a railroad car or a big truck or something comes to the back door and that's gotta be put into inventory stock. So you spend two or three people doing nothing in a big deal like that, but just putting away stock. And the way you did that, of course, when it came in it had a part number on it and a location. So you could just take it out of a big crate and break it down and put it away. But we've had fellas that work there four or five years and never did do anything but that. And then when you'd sell that item…like you'd sell it over in to Burns country to a big logger. Then he'd big you a big order and then this fella would turn around package it all up and send it to Burns. And this is what they would do. But I didn't go for that kind of stuff. I had to have something better so they finally just out of a blue sky they wanted to know if I wanted to move up to parts. So then I was about six or eight months there doing nothing but inventory on cards. Checking that…

ES: Kept cards? Handwritten cards?

OT: Yea. You checked 'em in and checked it out.

ES: Did you keep those in alphabetical order?

OT: Oh, absolutely.

ES: Or was it by part number?

OT: It was part number. You had to know what the parts were and the location. Had to be on the ___. It was very simple. And then after you're there for a while you knew the system. Then they'd start lettin' you wait on customers. And the regular training you get…regular training. And take you about three years to really get through the training system. But they had a good one then. Now I don't know what they do. We would…just luckily… I was there, I guess, about two years. And we expanded early…at that time then they bought out the old dealer that was here and they also the John Deere dealership that was here and combined the two and changed the name. Then we started moving stores. We put a store in John Day and put a store in Enterprise. And then, of course, the people that was working that was experienced that wanted to we give them the chance to move into a better job at the other store. But that's the way that worked. Just like any business. And it is…in fact it is a big business. Abut one of the third big businesses in United States.

ES: When we talked about this last time you mentioned several different sizes of diesel engines.

OT: Right.

ES: I wasn't clear, though, exactly what the equipment that these engines were for. Combines, for example, threshing machines, tractors, bulldozers? Is that…all those kinds of things?

OT: Usually, as far as the diesels themselves is concerned back in the days when I worked on 'em, of course, the main part of these tractors started way back before World War I or World War II, in that area. They were mostly all gas engines. And they had a Case…it wasn't Caterpillar it was Case…it wasn't Case…it was two different names that people down in California…one in Chicago and one in California that was building these tractors just piece by piece in their garages, their back yard. And when World War I came along, why, they said, "I think… We think we can made a tractor that'll go in the mud." And that's the way the old Caterpillar came in. They got themselves together and formed one dealership and changed the name of it to Caterpillar. So the same old tractor with the tracks on it all these very, very, many, many types changed in design and power and so forth. But the diesel engine itself is the same type of thing expect back then it was gasoline. Then it came on and they just diverted it over to diesel. And same way your motor graters. See, what they have is a great, big, mammoth plant that makes nothing but engines. And they make everything from little old engines just a little bit bigger for a riding lawn mower diesel all the way up to the biggest machine that runs today. And they build 'em to fit into the other type of thing. In other words, if they're working on a big dam or something and need one of these big shovels that you see working all day it's got a Caterpillar engine in the middle of it that's doing all the driving and gearing and everything that… And that's what they're for. And many, many, many of your boats that you see out here are Caterpillar.

ES: So the work you were doin' at the Caterpillar place in La Grande only involved engines?

OT: No, no. We were a dealer for Caterpillar.

ES: So the machines…

OT: Everything.

ES: …the engine fitted in you were selling?

OT: Yes.

ES: And all…and therefore you stocked all the parts to this machine?

OT: All the parts from the radiator to the tailgate.

ES: I see. Okay.

OT: Everything they have. All their driving parts and everything.

ES: I am correct in thinking that you also did repairs?

OT: Absolutely.

ES: They wouldn't bring the machine in to town to repair it, would they?

OT: If possible. We had big trucks and anything we could load on… you see 'em driving up and down the road. A lot of those will be coming in because you can't repair a lot of that big stuff in the field. You gotta have it in once they got big cranes and stuff like that.

ES: But you yourself weren't actually doing the repairs, is that right?

OT: I was for some time until I got hurt there. Then transferred into parts department.

ES: I see.

OT: And then from the parts department after I'd been there for some little time, why, they started expanding, like I said, in other towns and that left an opening in their main store for parts managers and service managers. So they said, "Well, we're not that big. You can do both." You know, so they made a parts and service manager out of me. So then I went into management. We had our own training programs. I took care of our own training and everything. Teaching mechanics how to overhaul these engines and all that type of thing. So I spent a lot of time away from home. But I liked the job real well.

ES: In order to learn how to manage training programs did you have to go take training somewhere yourself?

OT: Absolutely. Peoria, Illinois.

ES: Was that similar to…similar in any way to the training you had at Iowa State?

OT: No. Well, it would be if you just completely disassembled…like I'm training onto my people. If there's a group large enough we would take an old engine and tear it all to pieces and then we'd say, "Okay guys. Let's make a run." You know. And that's the type of thing we had back then. It's still in use right now if you're…though with computers you don't have to worry about that too much. Just stick a little old electric cord in the hole and say "this is what your trouble is." [laughs] It's altogether different. And I could show you a picture of a Caterpillar back in the…before World War II and show you one that they're selling at the store right down here and you would never know that they were the same piece of machinery, but they are.

ES: You must have had a lot of conversations with the owners of these machines?

OT: Yes. I used to say, well, you know, this is a really a thankful job that I have here because any time that an owner calls me up its usually after hours and the stores are all locked up and he's got my home phone number and he's mad. He broke down. He's mad. He can't get any parts. The store's not opened. So eighty percent of the time if you're a manager, especially a service manager, with something like that. 'Cause when he's down, boy, he's got millions of dollars in his road job, you know. And usually I could treat 'em right. But I enjoyed it. His competition against mine, you know. But I enjoyed that type of thing. Most people didn't. They wouldn't have it. I fired a lot of guys in six months. They'd throw up their hands and say, "I just can't take that kind of crap. How do you do it?" I didn't have to do it. I knew how the guy worked. You gotta know your people and you gotta know your customers. That's the secret to the…

ES: You were usually able to provide the repair service that they need?

OT: Maybe not, but I could get him around to where within a few hours or a few days or something we would work it out. Maybe we'd have to give him used machine or something. Haul it to him and haul his in. You could work it out.

ES: When you say the job was thankful I guess you mean that you were usually able to figure out how to solve the problem and they were very grateful to you.

OT: Absolutely.

ES: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that would be satisfying.

OT: You bet. You bet.

ES: Especially when you knew that a lot of money was at stake usually.

OT: Yeah. You can see a million dollars a day go down the drain so "I gotta help this guy." [laughs]

ES: Last time when we talked I asked you about…or we discussed a little bit unions. And I had the impression that you don't think much of unions.

OT: I didn't in those days. And I always said a union had its place and they should have been used, but they weren't used right. They let the convicts and all those kind of people. Bunch of these Italians run up our guns and this type of thing and get in charge of all of 'em. So it got to the place to where if you didn't belong to the union than you took your pickup that had your signs on it or didn't even have 'em on it and drive out on a construction job that these guys were controlling with the union. They'd block you off of there and you couldn't even hardly get your pickup back off the job.

ES: Strong arm.

OT: Strong arm Pete's, boy, all the way. And I strong armed 'em the other way just as bad as they did.

ES: Did you get into any fights?

OT: No. No. You didn't have to. There's always a reason ___ us. And usually if…what it ends up most everything was the fact that this tractor for some reason had warranties on it that the union wasn't allowed to touch. The factories the only ones that can work on warranties. So if you just sit down and talk to these guys a little bit its always a tail end guy that you just hired three weeks ago that wants to make a name for himself that's givin' us all our trouble. It can always be worked out, you know. I spent thirty-seven years of that.

ES: But you had pretty direct observation that the unions were controlled by gangster types?

OT: Absolutely. I don't care if…

ES: Even in Union County?

OT: I don't care what they say any time. Well, Union County was so small the county wasn't…didn't even belong to union back in those days. It was just the big outfits that belonged to unions.

ES: But there weren't any attempts to bring unions into Union County?

OT: Oh, every day. There'd be union guys in my shop. I'd have run 'em out darn near once a week.

ES: What would they do and what would they say?

OT: They'd just try to convince 'em how much better the pay was and how much better the big…their pensions were and all this kind of stuff. And usually they did offer more money. And they'd offer you top pay in three years. Nationally Caterpillar had a four year training program, but the unions was paying top wages in three years. To get your man away from him and find out that he isn't qualified for a lot of things and then they can him. Keep him six months or so and he wasn't qualified. They didn't care about that. They just wanted to get him away from you. But nowadays its different than that. It's changed a lot.

ES: When the union organizers would come in to Union County would they try to talk to the workers during work hours?

OT: They would if they could. I usually had…I usually had people stoppin' that.

ES: How did you do that?

OT: Through a lot of confidentially. Confidential things to different people in different __.

ES: Did you know who the organizers were? Did they ever talk to you?

OT: Oh yeah. They'd try to run you off the job. Even when you're driving around in your automobile and the mechanics are all in pickups, why, they know who you are the minute you hit that place.

ES: Where your main dealings with the union organizers when you were a manager?

OT: Yes and no. Most unions are real sensible and now the unions are down to where they're into small places like the county or maybe the city's probably even got the unionizers and that type of thing. And they've got it pretty well balances out now to where the unions finally woke up to the fact that hey, we can't live with these guy that carries the rifles. We gotta learn how to get along with our customers. And so it's completely changed. It isn't like it used to be, thank God.

ES: Of course what I'm interested in here is trying to get as much understanding of how it used to be as I can.

OT: A lot of it was probably in my own head. In other words....but I could usually make my main people, my managers and so forth, pretty well see what I'm trying to do. Keep my mechanics, givin' of a decent wage. Usually if I'd get…find out that there's gonna have a big vote or something like you hear the schools and all this stuff a-going on. If I know it's gonna happen, why, soon or later I just tell 'em, "Now look. We're not going to join this thing and I'm not going to give you guys a big pay raise and then can all of you six months from now. If you want a nice living wage and you want a good retirement this is the place to be. But if I find out…" You wasn't allowed to see to can one of 'em if he'd been talking to a union man. That's against the law.

ES: Called union busting.

OT: So you just have a public meeting and tell 'em, "Hey, now, givin' you guys a decent wage." Tell 'em what they're getting, not what they're gonna get. And the union's telling 'em what they're gonna get. And then I can say something, "Remember Lawrence Fox who worked here for four years? Where's he workin' now? Runnin' a bulldozer down the county. I wouldn't hire him back. You do the same thing you'll get somebody else to help."

ES: And you were…you were usually successful in persuading them not to join the union?

OT: Never had one of my outfits join a union.

ES: When you were doing that kind of work were the retirement benefits that your workers were getting, or would get,…[end tape]

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OT: Sometimes they had…__ came in after World War II and so forth and things got to be a little better and organized. Why, they started…get to have hospitalization and things like that which…which would help the families. And this was pretty easy to sell because if you had a pretty good sized family and something happened in the family that several of them was laid up at the same time, boy,

they were in trouble. And there's just a lot of things that you can talk to people about without breaking the union, you know. A lot of things to breakin' the union. I've been in…I haven't been in actually open court about it, but I have been accused of a lot it, but never proven that I ever had any because I really didn't. I wasn't that kind of a manager.

ES: If somebody who didn't have health insurance had a serious injury, accident would the company help the family in some way or did you rely in charitable organizations in the community like Elks, maybe?

OT: No. I really can't answer that. I think every company and everybody, even the car dealers, would have their own ways to help out if they could. But employees donate a little money here or there.

ES: But they would do that regularly for somebody who was really in trouble?

OT: Usually yes. We kind of pride ourselves of having the type of people working for us that they cared about their other employees.

ES: They had loyalty.

OT: Right. Absolutely. That's well worth preaching.

ES: What was the…what were attitudes, at least that you were aware of, about social security deductions?

OT: I just took it as something that had happened and it looked like to be. And they explained it years and years ago. And when I was sixteen years old I took social security. Because they didn't tell you that it was a retirement. They didn't say it was gonna completely save the whole universe from goin' broke, you know. They said "here for so many dollars a month you can get this much when you retire, if you ever retire." And a lot of faults in it, but as long as you thought you's gonna get something. 'Cause you wasn't getting anything back in those days. Why, I think everybody probably felt pretty well aligned with it. It's just been the lead instigators that's givin' us the trouble. Many rich men…I shouldn't have said that, I guess. [laughs]

ES: Do you think the common attitude was "social security is a really good thing"?

OT: Yea.

ES: And they didn't resent the deductions?

OT: No. They didn't. They could see it every…we had it, deductions, every month on their pay checks and they knew exactly what…knew exactly if you go to quit tomorrow you don't get it. That's the thing you gotta preach. If you don't use it, lose it.

ES: What vacation allowances did people get in those times?

OT: It was just pretty well…we had one after you was there for one year you'd get one week's vacation. But then you had to work three years to get two weeks vacation. But that was an incentive if you get to start to work in the first place. 'Cause most of 'em 'd been out of work and they just needed anything that they could get. And that extra week made an awful lot of difference 'cause a lot of 'em go out and work in the hay field or some dog-gone thing and make a few extra bucks along with that week's vacation. And boy that made Christmas for me.

ES: So people really mostly didn't take vacations?

OT: For a long time we had it that if you wanted to work it we'd pay you for the vacation time. In other words if, say you worked this week and we needed you

work next week, but we will give you the vacation for it. That's just like double time and a half.

ES: And did a lot of people take you up on that?

OT: Not a lot. We preached the thing that, "Hey, you've been a workin' fifty hours…twelve months out of the year and you've got four weeks here that qualifies for something." We don't think that it's should be something that you feel that you just have to take. But we want you to take it because we think that in that length of time you certainly need it. Not only for the company you're working for and yourself, but for your family. And that's the way we sold that.

ES: Did most people take all their vacation time in one period consecutively?

OT: Usually not.

ES: Several different times?

OT: In this area they didn't 'cause always liked to go elk hunting. [laughs] That, in other words…one of my employee's saying is, "Hey, boss. Put me up on the board for November the 1st through the 12th then I'll take the other two days at Thanksgiving." We'd do it.

ES: What do you remember about people going on trips for their vacations?

OT: I remember that I was one of the ring leaders. My wife was from South Dakota and Iowa so that just put two to three weeks every year. Gotta go.

ES: Would you drive there?

OT: Yep. Almost always. Either that or I'd send the wife…when the kids were little I'd send the wife home on the train. We'd get a roomette, somethin' for the kids to enjoy. Take a couple of days and then she'd stay there maybe thirty days and I'd go back and pick 'em up and bring 'em home. ___ We used to go home every two years. Every two years. And that took lots of vacation. Take two days to go back there. I think we've been to all but about four states.

ES: Most people didn't have RVs or boats or any of those kinds of equipment.

OT: Still can't afford…I just still haven't figured this out. How they can afford to do that when you can get a real nice motel room for seventy-five bucks for your whole family? And you can eat out for twenty dollars a day. How can you afford a forty-five thousand dollar motor home?

ES: I've never understood it either. The attitude, I think, forty, forty, fifty years ago was that an expensive vacation wasn't really something you needed to think about.

OT: That's true. We didn't…we used to feel that, you know, we stuff a hundred dollars here in a can and a hundred dollars there in a can and four or five hundred dollars and we was good for two or three weeks on a nice vacation. And we didn't miss it. Nowadays you gotta have a fifty thousand dollar motor home to enjoy it.

ES: I know a lot of people do. You mentioned Christmas. How did your family, both when you were younger and when you had your own wife and children, usually celebrate Christmas?

OT: The old way. The old-fashioned way. Just like Grandpa and Grandma did.

ES: Tell me about it.

OT: We were quite a family. I had…I think I said before in the other one I had three brothers, myself and then two sisters. We always had a grandma, it seemed like,

around someplace pretty close. Pretty close knit family within the family. But then once when they grew up, like you're talking about, and started having their own families then that started doubling and tripling the pressure and Grandpa and Grandma, you know, for Christmas. And it did make a difference. Definitely made a difference. But we still had the same old Christmas trees. And still pulled the taffy and popcorn and all.

ES: Did you go out and cut the Christmas tree?

OT: Absolutely.

ES: Where?

OT: Wherever the government'd let me. [laughs]

ES: How did you decorate it?

OT: I had some of the…and I don't know what the kids did with 'em because since it's been like it is I've lost everything I had. I mean, they just sold everything or give it away or kept it for themselves. And I haven't been able to find out what went where. But I've got…had a whole slug of Christmas ornaments between World War I and World War II. I still had __ of…still used the old green Christmas tree. Finally did start putting lights on.

ES: Did you ever use candles on trees?

OT: No. Absolutely not.

ES: Were these ornaments that you made or the other members of the family made?

OT: Some of em…not any of 'em were. Some of 'em, I think, I got from overseas such as China, Hong Kong and places like that. And they looked just like the ones that we got today.

ES: How did you handle gifts?

OT: We drew names usually.

ES: Each person get one thing?

OT: So much money. After all, Christmas is not a time to spend a lot of dough for presents. Give each other a nice gift and the rest of it to the Lord.

ES: What sorts of gifts would people usually give?

OT: After we got to be my age, for instance, it usually ended up being clothes or maybe a watch.

ES: As you were a teenager what would have been the gifts?

OT: Probably just anything that the folks could actually come up with, more or less. I think the gifts that I…I wasn't a teenager, but I was a…a gift I first remember ever receiving, and I still have it, is a little tiny __ dog and three little porcelain dogs, little puppies. I still got 'em. Just like they're brand new.

ES: Why did they mean to much to you?

OT: First real gift I ever…I've ever received.

ES: Who gave them to you?

OT: My folks. It was Santa Clause, of course. [laughs]

ES: And they didn't get broken all this time.

OT: You bet they didn't. I've got it in glass. And I got the first set of marbles. My teacher was havin' the second grade in school, a little old country school…

ES: The teacher gave them to you?

OT: And I was the only one in the first grade in the school. This particular winter was a terrible, terrible winter. You had to ride horses or skis or something to school. I

didn't miss one day. My older brothers carried me to school. [laughs] Still got the marbles she give me, a little bag of marbles. Still got 'em. Second grade of school.

ES: Have you played marbles a lot?

OT: Oh, used to. Not with those.

ES: Not with…

OT: No. Those didn't get played with.

ES: They're too special, huh?

OT: You bet.

ES: When you played marbles did you have steelies often?

OT: Oh golly! Especially up in high school, you know, you tried to figure out the biggest steely you could get. Well, this logger friend that I said more or less half way raised me during school year and just lived three or four blocks apart. And he'd open up his shop and we'd start looking for big ball bearings. You know, those old Cats and trucks. Man, I remember they barred 'em…barred us at school from playin' with the thing 'cause we'd go out there and they'd see this old mechanics just cut those big old bearings up and we'd take the balls out of there. [laughs] I had one time about almost 3/8 of an inch around. Took it over at school and you could hit the middle of that pile of bearings…marbles and "poom" and they were all gone, you know. The school came into it said, "Well, I think we better bar these steelies." [laughs] Played lots of marbles.

ES: When you were in your…let's say between eight or ten and sixteen or seventeen I imagined you listened to the radio every once in a while.

OT: Not too much.

ES: No time?

OT: Sports was a lot of it. But then the fact that you was lucky if you had one radio in the house. My dad was a hard worker.

ES: And he didn't buy a radio?

OT: And he bought a real, real good radio.

ES: Oh, he did?

OT: And he also set right in front of it. So if you wasn't listening something you better listen to Amos and Andy or Little __ Rudy. That's fine. As long as he was listen to it with ya. But if he wanted his programs you better go do your school work or got my programs. But he wasn't rough that way. That was his way of teaching you "go do your work."

ES: Do you listen…do you remember listening to music?

OT: Oh yes.

ES: What was the source? A live music or recorded music?

OT: Very, very little…the only live music we had back in that country was the old people that came west. There's always a bunch of 'em that's knows wagon train that could play almost any kind of an instrument. And…

ES: Banjos and harmonicas?

OT: Harmonicas, banjos…

ES: Guitars?

OT: Guitars. Some of the people that came out when my folks came out. Had one end up being my uncle. Had a seven piece western outfit. Brought the whole thing out here. Come here you can get rich farmin' and playin' western music.

ES: He played all seven pieces himself?

OT: His family did.

ES: Oh, I see.

OT: From his wife right on down to the child. Boy could they ever make music! They played music all over Wallowa County and made a good livin' at it. He didn't have to farm.

ES: What places would you go to listen to it?

OT: Us kids, of course, we'd just have to go to somebody's house. 'Cause usually on a Saturday night they'd go play…they'd have a big dinner on Saturday night…on Saturday afternoons and have music play. And then the evening, why, they'd go do everybody's chores, come back about eight or eight-thirty. Us kids would all be at that one farm. And the ladies a-cookin' up a big meal. When they get that done, why, they'd come play the music 'til about eleven o'clock and then start playin' cards. Play cards all night long. Just change your clothes and go to church the next day. [laughs]

ES: And sleep after that.

OT: Us kids just put us behind a bunch of chairs a-layin' down and a bunch of blankets against the wall and that's where we stayed all night.

ES: Can you remember any of the tunes they played, the names of them?

OT: Redwing was one. You probably…Redwing, yeah.

ES: I think I've heard it, yes.

OT: And Letter Edged in Black. Ever hear that?

ES: No.

OT: About a guy that's in jail for a long, long time and he came home and thought he was gonna…wrote a letter and said he was coming home or something. Got of jail and his folks were dead or his dad was dead when he got there and it's A Letter Edged in Black. I don't know how it went.

ES: A sad song.

OT: I don't know how it went, but that's the just of it. No, it was…I think there's a lot of 'em. I got a lot of 'em yet. I like western music.

ES: Who paid these musicians for their performances when they'd come to town?

OT: Usually a grange hall if they had a grange. Would have like that. Or like…just like Enterprise when they have Enterprise Days or somethin' all the people get together, the businesses donate five dollars a piece or something. Either that or a jug of booze or… [laugh]

ES: Did the people who came to listen have to pay admission?

OT: Usually not. It was a day for the town and they did do a lot of good shopping. That's when the people came to town, maybe the only time they ever came to town.

ES: Were some of the performers that you heard at the Elgin Opera House?

OT: I'm sure there are.

ES: Did you go to performances at the Elgin Opera House as well as stack the wood?

OT: Oh yeah. They'd give us a…they would give us…the Opera House would give us a dime a cord of wood. And then the mill they would pay us twenty-five, thirty cents a cord besides. So we made pretty good money. Usually we'd take it out in tickets. A ticket then was just ten cents. So gosh, we'd get enough tickets to go to every show in town in the Opera House all winter long, but our folks wouldn't let us. [laughs] But we could've, you know. 'Cause they would pay us off in tickets or they'd pay us off a dime at a time.

ES: Can you remember any of the shows you saw?

OT: No. I don't know that I can. I probably could if I didn't have this blister on my head.

ES: Were they usually music or were they plays?

OT: A lot of 'em were plays.

ES: Plays, uh-huh.

OT: A lot of 'em were…I don't say local plays, but they'd be plays like come in there from La Grande, maybe Pendleton or Walla Walla. I remember that. They'd just travel around. And that was mostly for their enjoyment seeing this little town.

ES: Did you ever meet any of the performers?

OT: Oh yeah. I remember being a bunch of dumb kids. We thought we had to annoy everybody, you know. Never did know anybody that was really, really good performer. In other words it was nobody from Hollywood.

ES: No stars.

OT: Nobody more. [laughs]

ES: What were the…what were the attitudes that people had about the Elgin Opera House and the entertainments that came there. Did they think that that was something really good, something special, unusual?

OT: Oh golly! You couldn't even get up and down main street the whole day, usually, before somebody was comin' there. Try to buy tickets or any old thing to get in to see 'em. Some things just didn't happen everyday.

ES: So it was really special?

OT: Oh, absolutely. That Opera House is special.

ES: Yeah. Have you been over there recently?

OT: Just…I went over and told 'em what to do with the deal on the…I'd say roof, but I mean for overhead. That stuff is all metal, you know, the…and it's all old dog grey. I remember when they painted that thing. It was a beautiful metal color and they painted dog-gone thing an old drab grey paint just like an old Army job. And they was tryin' to figure out what to do with some of that thing and I happened to have a little chunk of that metal. And I still have the thing. I took it over and I said, "Fellow, this is what it looks like under __" And I don't know whether they ever changed the ceiling back to the colors that it was or not.

ES: Now is this the ceiling of the main auditorium?

OT: It's got that plate and stuff.

ES: Isn't that pressed metal with designs in it.

OT: Mm-hmm.

ES: Yes.

OT: But they painted it, see, some dumb outfit. I don't know whether they ever got it back or not. It'd be quite a job, you know.

ES: I was in there this past week and I didn't look at that. How did people get word about the performances that were coming up?
OT: They'd have…as long as I can remember we had a weekly paper.
ES: *The Elgin Recorder*?
OT: Right. One of my best friend's dad owned that.
ES: I see. Who was that?
OT: Tucker. His name was Tucker. Turley Tucker.
ES: Turley Tucker. And did you…was that delivered to your house?
OT: No, they didn't deliver…that came through the mail even back then.
ES: Did you read it?
OT: I delivered *The Observer* when I was a little guy.
ES: In Elgin?
OT: Yeah. When I was a little guy. I did anything I could to make a nickel.
ES: I guess you did. Did you read *The Observer* and *The Recorder* regularly?
OT: I can never remember ever doin' it, never readin' it. I was pretty young back then.
ES: You must have been a teenager, though, when *The Recorder* was…
OT: Yeah, but you just don't read that old folks paper, you know. [laughs]
ES: Did you get magazines at your house like *The Saturday Evening Post* or *Country Gentleman?*
OT: No, no. No, no.
ES: No?
OT: No, we were all poo' people.
ES: Poor?
OT: You bet. That's the reason, I guess, I do it in here.
ES: Do you remember restaurants, or a restaurant in Elgin?
OT: Yes. I remember two restaurants, three restaurants, four restaurants. One restaurant that was there for many, many years… My mother was a nurse and a…
ES: A nurse?
OT: Mm-hmm.
ES: How did she…? You hadn't mentioned that. How did she become a nurse?
OT: We say a nurse. She was a licensed practical nurse.
ES: Oh yes. LPN.
OT: Yes. And they called 'em nurses back then.
ES: Sure. Well they were. They were nurses.
OT: Didn't have a full-time job, of course, sometimes and after us kids all got to school, high school, why, she thought she had to help. A little old lady five foot one. And she was a cook, why I tell you. She knew how to cook! Went to work at a restaurant. Vernal Hug's brother I believe. Vern Hug had the restaurant.
ES: What was it called?
OT: I believe Hug's Restaurant.
ES: Right on the main street?
OT: Yeah, right on the main street. And right beside it…it's the one they set…set on fire here a few years back and killed the old guy upstairs in the hotel. And that was…don't remember the name of it, but it was there a hundred years, about. And somebody set it on fire and burned it up and burned up an old guy upstairs.

And then right beside it, believe it or not, was a beer joint and it had a little restaurant and that belonged to Vern Hug. Then across the street about right next to where that clothing…the clothing store was, I think it's closed now, Kate's Clothing Store, was a upstairs was a __ hall. Downstairs was a big beer joint and a restaurant and had a pool hall behind. Central live spot in town. That's the main ones. ___ Three of 'em lined up right side to side.

ES: And did you eat there sometimes?

OT: Oh yes. When Mom went to work there a lot of times, why, they'd tell her "send your kids in here and let's give 'em something to eat." So she wouldn't have to go home and cook.

ES: Was this meat, potatoes, vegetable kind of dinner?

OT: Oh absolutely. You bet. The old western type dinners. They had all the business in town before it was over. And she finally quit 'cause she said, "I can't handle this." She's doing the cooking and there's three people helping her and they still couldn't… They's open from about four o'clock in the morning to eleven or twelve every night. And she just finally said, "Hey, I cant' do this." She was there several years. Back in those days you didn't talk about what your folks did or where they worked or anything, you know, what kids didn't think anything about.

ES: Why?

OT: I just didn't think about. Mom works down at the clay, you know. You'd have to brag off her cookin' or…[laugh]. We knew she could cook.

ES: How many children did you say there were in your family?

OT: There's four of us boys and two girls and then Grandma was with it quite a bit.

ES: You're mother's mother?

OT: Mother's mother.

ES: Mm-hmm. You said she as a Sannar?

OT: Sannar, right.

ES: Have you had family reunions?

OT: We used to have a Trump reunion all the time and it just got to where, like myself, and everybody they…I don't have one that everybody ended up in one of those machines we were talking about trailing around all over the country. Trailers and motor homes and all that kind of stuff. Used to go to Promise and have our reunion and then they scattered out so far, like over around Olympia and Seattle and Bellingham and every place, they just couldn't come over the weekend. And so then we started having our family reunion over at Hat Rock Park over out of Hermiston on the Columbia River. And it was just a two day deal and the first three or four years it turned out real good, two or three other people. And then all at once the next year it went "kapoof" and then about thirty-five or forty. So they wrote everybody a letter and said they's gonna discontinue. They're just too busy.

ES: Last week I was traveling around the north part of the county with Lyle and Elma Sanderson. Do you know who they are?

OT: Yep.

ES: And we stopped at the Summerville Cemetery and I saw where Lyle's going to be buried, I saw his name there. And I also saw yours.

OT: Yep.
ES: How'd you decide on…
OT: Like a __ in a middle of a __.
ES: How did you decide on Summerville?
OT: Family. My folks are…
ES: Are other members of the family there?
OT: My folks are buried there. I have a brother buried there. My wife is there.
ES: So it's really going home.
OT: Just a lot of us. Yep.
ES: It's a wonderful cemetery.
OT: Isn't it though!
ES: Yeah. One of the best I've seen.
OT: One of the oldest. And I just…the way I got that was I'd been trying for about ten years to get plot 'cause I wanted a plot for my folks, my family. They didn't have any room. No room, no room, no room. So finally I said, "Well, I'm gonna buy two acres." So while they're messing around here the old guy that owned the two acres that we wanted to buy died. And his grandson got the farm. Then the kid said "There's a pie piece right on the north end of that property I'll give ya, but you can't have the two acres." We said, "Why not." He said, "When he passed away it was ours." So that kid, "Don't you know we don't have handshakes anymore?" That's what he said. Wouldn't give us that so we took the pie. And I said, "__ near the center of that pie as I could get." [laughs] That's where I am. Right there.
ES: Lyle Sanderson says that he has left in his will a chunk of money to buy some land at the other side, the south side, of the Summerville Cemetery to expand it that direction.
OT: That'd have to be across the road.
ES: No. You know when you come in from the south and you come in one way and out the other?
OT: Right, right.
ES: It's just…[end tape]