Pat Fitzgerald

6/10/02, tape 1, side 2

JT: So if you would state your name and your date of birth.
PF: James Patrick Fitzgerald. I was born December 23, 1918 in La Grande, Oregon.
JT: As you grew up here, where did you go to school?
PF: Well, I'll start out where I was born. I was born on the corner of Sixth and Penn in a house now occupied by the Potter's Shed, or whatever they call that place over there. Right across the street from Dale Mammon's office. I started school when I was five years old at the Sacred Heart Academy up on the hill when the old St. Joseph Hospital area is now. I attended there four years. I went one year at Central School. I guess all the town's ne'er-do-well's they bunched them in one big bunch and sent them all to Ackerman when it opened in 1929. So we had quite a bunch of kids from all over the area that went there. Now what else do you need?
JT: When you graduated from Ackerman you went on to high school?
PF: High school, here, yea. I graduated there in 1936.
JT: Is there any particular things that happened to you when you were going to school that you would like to share with us?
PF: Lots of things happened over the years. I suppose…the years up at the Ackerman school. The school was run by the college up there, J. H. Ackerman. I went there from the sixth grade to the eighth. That particular three years seemed to me like the highlight of my school up to that time because the fine people we were able to meet and be associated with for a long time, over our whole lives. Namely Elmo Stevenson and his wife who had just come up here from San Jose, California to teach here. Elmo was an outstanding educator, as far as I was concerned, of my whole life. And his wife too. I think I learned more and they guided my life more those years that I knew them so well. We kept in contact with them throughout our entire lives after Elmo left here and became president of Southern Oregon College in Al…what's the…down by Medford…Southern Oregon College. Anyway, he was there for quite a long time and we kept in contact with them at that time. They are both passed away now. They affected my whole life more than anybody that I ever came in contact with as far as education was concerned.
JT: Was there anything outstanding that happened when you went to high school?
PF: The night that the school burned up there. [laughter] I forget…that was the fall…I entered high school in 1932, so it was in the fall just before school started in 1932. One of our local fireman Bob Hare I guess he set the place on fire on purpose. But I can remember every kid in town up there was going into that burning school and hauling everything off the old basement floor, it was the first floor, we hauled the entire library out of there and put it on old Jay Blunt's front porch…all the books stacked them on his front porch and in his house and every place else. He lived right across from the fire. We were wading in water up to our hips getting all of that out of there. I guess that was the most exciting part there.
JT: Then they had you go around to the different churches while they rebuilt.

PF: Yea, I always remember that because we still lived on the corner of Sixth and Penn at that time and I stepped on a nail in my yard and it went clear through my foot and came out the top and that got infected. I started my school year…by the time I got going in school I was on crutches. Going from the old high school building area down to the Mormon church and down to about where the post office is now, the old Home and Holly used to be down there. We had classes there and we had classes at the city building. I think that was the three main places we had to go, but they were all over town. Those were exciting years as far as going to school and chasing all over town. It was a whole year before we got back into the school. I think most people realize they took the third floor off of the high school and lowered it to what was done to start building. We may do that.

JT: Let's try this again. In high school were there any particular subjects you liked better?

PF: Biology and chemistry. I rather liked civics, which was unusual for anybody to like in those days. We had a fellow…his name escapes me right now…he was a very interesting fellow. We had some pretty good arguments in our class. He made us participate and we got a lot out of it that way.

JT: I can see that. When you graduated from high school then what did you do then?

PF: I went to work for my brother. My father had passed away in 1935. That was right at the depth of the Depression and any hope of college was just completely out at that particular time. My mother was older so I lived with her in various apartments around town. She seemed to like to move every once in a while. So I really didn't have what they'd call a home after that time for quite a while. Ed had a furniture store on the corner of Adams and Fir where…I guess you call it the Rouse Building now…it was a car building. That building was built I think in 19…its on the front of the building there…1924. By…then again I can't say the name of the person who built the building. He started in that store working for Joe Car in 1928. Over a series of happenings over the years Ed ended up being the owner of it and I went right to work for him. Basically we…the Depression was really hard on everyone, you know, there was just not much chance even for that furniture store at the time. He worked hard at it and made quite a success out of it. I worked there till 1942 and he sold the store. He and I both joined the Navy. That was the end of the furniture store. I was in the Navy briefly, I wasn't in too long. I came out on a disability discharge. About that time the cadet program was starting up at the college. I happened to come back to town to look into the…Ed was gone…my brother…not in the country…so I took over looking into what was happening at that locked up business and so on for a little while. It happened that Bob Williamson and …the guy that manages the power company…Bud Olson…they came to me at the house there one day not too long after I got back. They said, "What are you going to do?" And I said I didn't really know, but I was thinking about going down and joining the marching marine in Portland. They said, "We have a better offer for you. They want you up at the college." They were just getting that program started for the cadets so I helped as I could getting people where they were supposed to be and the whole

the started under the people who were up there. Then I worked for Bob Glen for the next fourteen months in the cadet…what did they call it…

JT: ROTC?

PF: No, there was another name for it. It was just physical fitness and all that and record keeping. I'd known Bob forever when his family first came to the town in 1929. Getting back to the Ackerman business again, we had real fine athletic teacher for a bunch of kids at that school. Anyway, Bob and Elmer were real close friends of ours as kids. I got to work out the rest of the war up there.

JT: When were you and Helen married?

PF: December…no, September 3, 1939. I told her there were two wars started that day and mine was going to last a lot longer than hers. The other one we'd be done with that one before, you know. [laughter] We're still fighting each other.

JT: When did you buy Rohan's flower shop?

PF: 1945. I bought old Rohan's flower shop, which was located on Depot Street at the time and then they had the old green house up in old town. They had that and the rest is history. We are still chasing around planting flowers. I don't know how I got into this gardening and flower business, but I stand by my personal choice. Somewhere in the back of my mind long years ago somebody gave be a package of flower seeds. That was when we still lived there on Sixth Street. My dad and my mother had absolutely no idea of planting anything. They were too busy trying to make a living, or whatever. There was nobody in the family that ever had one idea about going around and growing anything. If they wanted something to put out in the yard or up the cemetery or someplace they went and bought it. I planted those seeds and didn't have a bit of luck with them, but I guess that's where it started. I've been doing this ever since. Landscaping and...I landscaped the new Grande Ronde Hospital…the first time. They tear it up every five minutes up there…landscaped that whole place. We had a contract with Standard Oil for quite a while doing what they called their super-station. One of them on Island City Strip is still there. We did a number of those around over the country for them. Quite a bit of commercial work and some houses. Didn't go too much into homes although we did a few of them. Mom and I we both got into these flowers and everything. You can see out here we're still working on it.

JT: What year did you move from G Avenue?

PF: Out here, fifty years ago. Fifty years ago this October.

JT: Then your flower shop caught on fire, what year was that?

PF: I can't tell you the exact year. Mom could. What happened there…that garden something had a baker there. And Filo Shaker had a photo album at the flower shop. I was looking in your book there and I see the picture of the Golden Rule Store, that's where it was located. Rosa Lewis had a store next to us, which is the __ place, which had been a creamery at one time or another. It was a dairy I think. I place where they had ice cream and milk and butter and all the stuff you could buy there. Anyway, those all wiped out by the fire. As I recall, somebody called me from the Annex and said, "Pat"…they called me out here, I had moved out here then…they called me at home on a Sunday morning and said, "You better get in town because your flower shop is on fire." So we got up…the day

after Valentine's Day…we got in there and the flower shop wasn't where the fire started.

JT: The fire started in the bakery.

PF: Yea. The bakery is what set the place off. The way that building was built there was just one big unfinished basement with rock walls and kind ___ to hold the building up. The fire just traveled right under the places. They didn't think they were going to save the town that day. If the wind had been blowing on the day of the fire they way it was on Valentine's Day there wouldn't be anything up Adams Avenue. They thought up where Gladsdale's ___, they thought that was all going to burn.

JT: It burned pretty good.

PF: They did get it stopped. Then we moved over to the Moon building where the old Steven VanEngles store was. Rose Lewis and I were talking about what we were going to do. I said, "Let's see if we can't find something." I called the Moons and had that building rented before the fire was out. We were there for… I don't remember how long, but a few years. The people who bought the building from the Moons every time I'd turn around they'd raise my rent. They got me real mad one day and I stormed out the front door. I was going to go up to Paul Graham's drugstore and have a cup of coffee to try and cool off. I looked down the street and looked over there and saw the old building where we are now…that's where Roy Farm had his store, a supply store…it was empty. Goss had moved them out, but he was renting a small car dealership. And it was built. The family was mad at him. I just turned…instead of turning right down the street I turned left and went across to the Goss's garage and said, "What the hell are you doing with that building over there?" He gives me a sad story about the whole family was mad at him and this and that. We had a conversation over the hood of a car for about twenty-five or thirty minutes. I told him what I was going to do with the building if he would give it to me to get a hold of. He said okay. So, in forty-five minutes I had a new place to put that where we are now.

JT: So that's how it came to be Pat's Alley?

PF: Yea, that's how it came to be Pat's Alley. It's been a good place for us. ___

JT: It's a central location. In the changes around La Grande, what do you think of the way things have gone, Pat?

PF: I think being here as long as I have, the way I have seen things. I can remember one time telling the bank manager, Art Swarker, when he was here, a young smart aleck kid, I said I thought the whole damn place was going to hell. And not as many words. He laughed and said, "It was here before you got here and it might be here after you leave." I said, "That might be." There's been a lot of changes. Some for the better and some, I don't think, not for the better. My wife and I, the whole family, in a family business the way it is, we discuss it quite often about how to stay in business. That's a good question these days with all the competition and the way things have changed. When I look at the way the different businesses operate in La Grande. For instance, going back to the furniture store days, when my brother had that store every thing was on an exclusive basis. You had certain lines that we ordered exclusively. Nobody else had them. That was the law of the land and then that Fair Trade Act was thrown

out so now everybody has everything. When I look at these box stores, as you call them, I don' t particularly care to be in them, but they've got everything on God's green earth to sell to you at a price. It's getting extremely hard for the small businessman to hold on. I don't know, when I look at the different people who were in, say the grocery business, or take any business in town that were in business twenty-five, thirty, forty, fifty years ago, most of them are working for the big boys anymore. That's the only choice they have if they want to stay around here or go someplace and work for the big house.

JT: Every neighborhood had a little grocery store…

PF: Oh, yea. My goodness, yes. Nobody wanted to walk more than five minutes to get to the grocery store. I had to laugh at my brother-in-law, Helen's sister, he said, "Caroline can't do business in a town where Safeway is farther than fifteen minutes away." I don't know what she is going to do know because it is further than fifteen minutes from where she lives. [laughter] Things have changed a lot and who's to say whether…

JT: And the railroad moved. Did that make a lot of difference?

PF: Yes, that was an awful jolt. The railroad was just something special to everybody because the railroad engineer, to most of the kids around La Grande, that was the highest, most valued job in the world if you could just be a railroad engineer. When that all left and everything was gone that used to be over in those yards it was very difficult. Maybe Arch Barker was right. Something else came in and took its place. It didn't take its place, but it filled in. Now you have all kinds of different things. Maybe not as grand as the railroad seemed to be. People look at you and shake there head when you say we used to have six passenger trains going each way a day here. That's hard to believe. At one time there were six trains in either direction. Now you can't even keep one running.

JT: When the round house went…you know the picture that shows everybody on the turn table, there must have been two hundred and fifty people worked in the yards and shops.

PF: Everybody…the railroad and the mill people that was the backbone of all their businesses in town. There wasn't a lot else here. When August Stang came to town with his family…families…put that mill over there and the old Boeman Hicks was over there where the fairgrounds is. Those were two big employers around here. Most everybody…I've still got lots of friends, people in my class when they graduated, they never thought about where they were going to work. They went right to work at the mill. That was kind of politically correct in those days. If your dad was an engineer you were on the ground floor to be an engineer. It was pretty hard to break into that if you didn't…part of that culture. You might start out going a menial job before you could get ahead, but mostly if you question any kid that was any engineer in later years, "That was because my dad was an engineer."

JT: Or a conductor. In those days they had a number of brakemen on every train. They've cut it down now so all you have is an engineer and a conductor.

PF: The winters over the hill here I don't blame anybody for not wanting to be a brakeman on top to walk the length of those trains in those snow storms in the dead of winter. It was worth your life to get out of the caboose and get on top.

JT: They don't do that anymore.

PF: I was just that kind of a thing. If you were part of that railroad family that's the way it was. Their kids all had a job. There's been such a difference in the way everything's done. With farming and ranching…my father's whole work here in the valley when he came here he built the La Grande iron works, which was down there…he owned the land where the underpass went through. It kind of cut him off because the highway at that time went right by his front door down Cove Avenue. When they put that underpass in and cut that all out it isolated him down there. Didn't help him a bit for customers. His main job was catering to the mill and railroad. In later years he didn't, but in the early times he had a siding there were his business was where they brought the engines in…the old railroad from Union to Hot Lake…

JT: Cove?

PF: Yea, out to Cove and then to Union to Union Junction. He repaired those engines. They were a smaller outfit.

JT: What other kind of works did they do at the iron works?

PF: He had a foundry and they made all the brake shoes for the trains. He made bearings. Its hard for anybody to believe this nowadays, but if you were out harvesting in the field, what ever you were doing, he didn't build a Roy Farnum or some parts house and get a part. You came to Dave Fitzgerald and he made the part for you. He had a very extensive pattern, inventory list, where he could make any kind of bearing. He made them out of old babbit and brass, all kinds of metal. He had a place where he did all that kind of work. They made the bearing that's what kept these things down there breaking down. That's where you went to get them fixed. He worked mostly in Union and Wallowa counties.

JT: When did your dad come to the Grande Ronde?

PF: He was born in Port Huron, Michigan, but he was a Canadian. He had dual citizenship. He family came, I think it was 1856, in that time frame somewhere, they came to Ottawa, Canada from Ireland and Scotland. They landed at Ottawa and then they moved to Toronto. This is hard to believe, he was born in 1863. He was fifty-seven years old when I was born. I must have been the biggest shock anybody ever had. [laughter] He came here the first time…[end tape]

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PF: He was the only one that ever came here and stayed permanently. He came down here…he met my mother in Lewiston, Idaho and they got married over there. He had a machine shop and foundry and blacksmith shop in Dayton, Washington. He was there…my sister Mary was the youngest child and she was born in Dayton, Washington in 1902. So he was there then and I don't know exactly…Park, my closest brother, he was four years older than Mary was, but he was born in La Grande. So in that time frame he had moved over here. His first business…I got a picture of it down in the shed there…it was right where the OTEC office is on Elm Street. He owned half of that half block. He built the first business there. The street weren't paved. I don't know what else. I've got a picture of the

business. Whatever this thing that he was building was some kind of a, I assume, some kind of a thing that drove pipes around for wells. They got that out in front of the building. If you want to look at that after a while we'll get that out and see it. It might be an interesting picture for you.

JT: Yes, I'd like to see it.

PF: He was there and I don't know exactly when he moved out on Cove Avenue. Earl Vanwathen, he was quite a writer, he worked for my dad in the wintertime and on the family farm in the summertime. Earl called me, long years ago, he said, "Pat, when did your dad build that building out there where the business was." I told him I didn't know. All I knew is that the building burnt down twice. Once in 1923 and once in 1925. I said I assumed maybe 1921 or something like that. He said, "No, it was longer ago than that." I said, "Well, I don' t know that. What do you know?" He said, "I do know the day you were born was in the wintertime of 1918. Your dad came through the big building there, big business, he came through handing out cigars for his new son. That was 1918, wasn't it." "Yea." "That building was out there then." I said, "Okay, I'll agree with you." He located out there until he passed away in 1935, January 1935. He was in there from whatever time they started, 1904 or '06 or whatever until he passed away in 1935.

JT: Now did he help build some railroad bridges through…

PF: Yea, the old bridge that used to cross…the highway…the old way you used to get out of town. You went down to the corner of Adams and Second, cross the Second Street viaduct, go down to Y Avenue and turn left. Then crawl around the railroad tracks and cross the bridge…

JT: Out there by Walt Sweet's.

PF: Yea, he built that bridge. Then the road went there. Then he built one or two of those iron…I know one for sure, maybe both of them…the iron bridges that cross from Perry. There were two crossings there. He built a lot of bridges around different places. These early bridges around here. All those iron things around the valley he was responsible for a lot of those.

JT: Where did the highway go after it crossed the river?

PF: Which river? Where?

JT: The highway. The main highway leaving La Grande.

PF: It went over the Second Street viaduct and went down to Y Avenue and turned left. Then you followed right along the river and cross the bridge…it went up Fox Hill, the road did, but it made a sharp left right there and crawled out of the canyon and up there to…there was a bridge after you went through Perry…you crossed that bridge at Perry then went down past where that Garity lady, I can't say her name now…she and Chet still lived there at that house after the bridge was gone. You followed around the other side of the river so it went by Hamilton Canyon. You crossed the river there.

JT: Up there by Mountain Springs.

PF: You made a right hand turn and went down there. Then you went down to where Ira Lloyd's dad owned…they had a little cabin for summertime there…you crossed the bridge and went across the river again. Then you started up by Five Point then you went on up by the skunk patch and on up Camilla. That road that

used to go up…when you went up to Hilgard there was a road that went through there.

JT: On Pelican Creek.

PF: You went up Pelican Creek and turned right and went on the railroad track and went up a ways, not very far, crawl up that canyon. That's where they old Harding family, Cora Harding,…

JT: I remember the name.

PF: Cora Harding.

JT: She worked for the Eastern Oregon Electric, didn't she?

PF: No, she worked for [woman interrupted, tape stopped] The Hardings had a stagecoach stop right at the bottom…Have you ever gone through there?

JT: One time, but a long time ago.

PF: You go up and right here was Harding's stagecoach stop. You made a sharp left and went up on top. Did you ever remember Harley Smith that had the poultry feed…

JT: I knew the name.

PF: Past your time. Right there on Jefferson where Goss has that new building put in there. That was the old Standard ___ building. He had a feed and …

JT: Later Eddy…

PF: Yea.

JT: …and Fred's…

PF: Yea. You went up on that flat and that's where Harding was raised. There was a cabin there. After my dad died Harding was kind of my dad. We'd go up there to that place and Harding raised turkeys. Frank George raised chickens and had a chicken factory over here on Fruitdale Road up this way from where Jim Low lives, just this side. The house is still there. It still looks like a hatchery, but somebody made it over into a house. Frank stayed up there and took care of the turkeys. Took them out and they'd run all over the damn flat over there and eat grasshoppers and everything else. Then they'd bring them in there at night. They had a big pen and put them in there so the cows wouldn't get them. Harding would take me up and we'd go up every weekend. Frank was up there bachelor all by himself. He was a widower. Bacheloring he had to cook for himself all week so I got named the kitchen bitch. I was a cook, a pretty good cook. Anyway, I was the kitchen bitch. So we'd relieve him for the weekend. Had some good times up there. Harley used to talk about when he was a kid…this goes way back before the turn…in the late eighteen hundreds. They put the Indians on the reservation. There was a little front stoop on the front of that cabin. He said, "I'd sit there and see those poor Indians. Just the most bedraggled looking people you ever saw. I was still afraid of them even though they were all on foot, most of them, and dragging them over there. I thought about how sad it was that that could happen." That's getting kind of a ways back, isn't it?

JT: Do you remember the Indians coming over the hill to collect camas?

PF: Yea, out at Smoots's. John took Julie out to see the camas growing. I knew a lot of those Indians. Do you remember the Conner family over there? Gilbert and Leah?

JT: I've heard the name.

PF: She's some hotshot with the reservation now. Ray, he's a chief, he's about that big around. Melissa, my niece, and I were over at the Round-Up and there was a race down there by this tent, tee-pee, all dressed in pure white beautiful outfit and everything, but he was about that big around. I looked at him and said, "Ray, what the hell have you been eating?!" "I am getting kind of big." He went to Eastern Oregon and he graduated and Lynn graduated up here. Ray taught school in North Powder and he taught Melissa in Joseph, she's my niece, he taught her and Bob, her brother. Leah was down at the Warm Springs Reservation in charge of that for a long time.

JT: They had an Indian program early in the eastern…

PF: I got such a kick out of her. She was supposed to get those Indian kids to school in Wasco. They called her in there and said, "Leah, what are we going to do? The kids just come and go." She said, "What do you expect? If you can get them to come here for an hour or a half hour and they get up and walk out, just be glad you had them that length of time. They'll come back." Well, the churches got to hollering at her about the Indians would promise to come to church. So the said, "What time do you have church?" "Eleven o'clock, like everyone does." She said, "Not like Indians. They'll come to church out there on the mountain at dawn. If you meet them out there they'll be there. You just better give up because you're not going to make anymore…" Gilbert was a Presbyterian. He was on a session over there and they'd come over here so I kept in contact. He was the grandson or great-grandson of …not Joseph…Olecott.

JT: They have their own timetable. People don't understand that.

PF: I've rode these mountains with a lot of them for a long time over the years. I was reading some of the stuff that I wrote down here sometime ago about some of the trips we took with those people. It was something else. It was really a privilege to know them. Such great people. When you get on my wife's side of the family they have a lot of connects with... Fred Nodine, you've probably heard of him…

JT: Yes.

PF: Fred owned that land where Hawkins has that land now.

JT: Out there by Davis property. Pete and R. D.

PF: Granddad Hall, Helen's grandfather, bought all that land. All that…you end up being your own grandmother kind of stuff. Anyway, that side of the family. Fred Nodine accumulated quite a bit, but he couldn't keep anything. He lost every damn thing. He wasn't a very good businessman. He wound up with…over here on the ridge where Joseph put all those poles up to mark where you're not supposed to come, this is our land.

JT: I didn't know about that.

PF: When the whites started coming into the Wallowa valley and started making French he still didn't want to have problems with them and they were trying to get along with them. They got a little much so he went up and they make rock cans and they stuck poles in them. They were all along that ridge across Cricket Flat out there. I don't know where it all went, but I knew where those were. That was supposed to be…Fred was looking for pasture for his horses, he had a bunch of horses. He went out there someplace, I suppose across from Cricket Flat and taking the old route over Smith Mountain to get over in that country. He got over

there and it got looking pretty hot because he started meeting bands of Indians. They didn't bother him, but they weren't very friendly. So he turned around and got the hell out of there. That's when Granddad Hall bought the land from Fred Nodine. That piece of ground. The Indians didn't do any trouble to the people down here, that I know of, except for that so-called Battle on the Grande Ronde. I've heard enough different lies about that I don't know what to believe.

JT: I don't think anybody does.

PF: The Indians they came a long time. In the '20s, late or mid twenties. I was big enough to be out and around. They Indians would be over there, but they were mostly Umatillas and Cayuse and those tribes from over there.

JT: From across the mountain.

PF: Those cakes they made out of camas root. Did you ever try any of those?

JT: Yes. I've been to the Indian program at Eastern.

PF: They're pretty good, aren't they?

JT: They're pretty good, yea.

PF: Mix in those berries and have all kinds of stuff. There's places up there on Cricket Flat where camas can grow. They said they used to get a lot of it out there, but the place is all dried up now except for a few potholes around. I don't know if there is any camas left up there or not, but it used to just be a-blazing with camas.

JT: They said that they collected out of the Smoot property even into World War II.

PF: Oh yea.

JT: I've seen pictures that Mae Sterns took out at Cove where they came over to get the fruit over at Cove.

PF: We're only the second people that ever owned this place. Part of it is no direct relationship except shirttail relations. My __ dad, Merl Davis, and Walter Pierce's son…

JT: I remember there was two boys, weren't there?

PF: No, you are ahead a generation. Lloyd and Catherine Pierce, Catherine Riddle, got married in this house. Lloyd and Mertin were best buddies, went to World War I, served clear through World War I, and when they got back he married Catherine right there in that room just to the right of where that television sets. He was the best man. Then Lloyd's sister married Helen's mother's brother. Bill Douglas, ___, he married Mildred.

JT: I remember her and him both.

PF: His room was right upstairs. This girl that just came in here a minute ago, she's here for the summer with us. That's our son Brian's daughter. That room up there, that was Bill's room. I scared the hell out of Shae, "If Bill gets to stomping around and raising hell up there in that attic just get him to break it off so you got to get some sleep. You know, Bill's around here. I see him all the time." We carry on…talking about these trees here and all this stuff. He was a naturalist you would not believe.

JT: Nice man as I recall. I met him up at lapover.

PF: Right here, this was a woodshed. The chimney came down right here and the wood range set over here. Mildred wanted the wood range out of the house. She had a beautiful one. I bought this place from Catherine lock, stock and barrel, but

Mildred wanted that man stove. I didn't want to give it to her, but… So, she didn't come and get it and didn't come and get it and this thing, this chimney sitting on jack. I had all this torn up and was building on to all this back end. I did most of the work in this place except I had a carpenter out here two weeks. Anyway, I'm looking at that damn pile of bricks and I wanted it out of the way. I hooked a chain on it…there was no door here, it was open…I hooked that chain on that damn jack and pulled it and all the bricks came down piling all over the top of that stove. The worst mess you ever saw and here comes Mildred. She was building a shed…they were building that big house up there, log house, out at Lostine… She walked in there and looked at that and said, "What happened?" And I said, "What the hell does it look like happened? I got tired of those damn bricks being up there and I've got to have this space. Remember, I've been telling you that for a month!" Then, "Well, how are we going to get it out of there?" I said, "I don't know how you are going to get it out of there, but I'm not getting it out of there, period." She had some dumb kid…they had a truck that was that high off the ground on the bed…I don' t know how we finally got the bricks out of there and finally got the stove. Ten people couldn't lift that stove up on that truck. We finally got it on there.

O: Pat, you were pretty close to Carl Helm, weren't you?

PF: Yea.

O: Did he live next door to you?

PF: I can't remember…this would have been…you see, my sister, Mary, graduated from Oregon State College in what they called a two year degree in secretarial or whatever at that time…she went down to Oregon State. She got her certificate to be a legal secretary. She and Helen Dixom…she was Carl's legal secretary for years and years. I can't remember exactly where Carl lived.

O: Am I thinking of the right person? The policeman got shot?

PF: It wasn't Helms. [talking all at once] Spud Helmer.

O: You're dad was still alive then, wasn't he?

PF: Yea. It still hurts. I got a picture, I don't know if its out in the shed or…oh, no, its in your book. A picture of the Mobil station that Andy Lee had on the corner

JT: Yes.

PF: As luck would have it, if you want to call it luck, Dad and I had gone over to Union for some reason or another. [pause] Spud and Captian No and been looking for these people and they pulled up where the Texaco station is right across the street, its still there. Dad and I just happened to be…we'd come back from Union…and we stopped right there across the street from that Texaco station facing west on Adams. There was all this crowd of people around. We got out of the car and went over to Andy's service station and Spud was on a [pause] stretcher. __ He was supposed to come to dinner at the house that day, our house. And he said, "Dave, I guess I won't make it to dinner today." They took him to the hospital. I think he would have lived nowadays because they have more to do for people…

JT: If he had antibiotics he might have lived.

PF: Eighty-two days I think it was, eighty-five, something like that.

JT: Marie Sims was in having Tommy Sims when they brought Spud in. She talked to him. He didn't want them to cut off his boots, he had a brand new pair of boots. He was really mad at him.

PF: He was my mentor. He was a semi-pro baseball player. Helen's uncle, as it turned out he wasn't there at the Lynn, he was a semi-pro here in La Grande. They all played up where the high school was. That brick building that used to be mechanical drawing and still stands there. There was a grandstand right there and kind of faced that way toward the mountain. Everybody used to go to the baseball games. Spud was a second baseman, I think. I had his mitt for years. He gave me a watch and a baseball. I don't know what the hell happened to any of that. When we left we packed everything up. After the war we had a big barrel and we stuck a bunch of stuff in there that we didn't want anything done with it and put it in the basement of the furniture store so when we got back it'd be there. That and a lot of other stuff disappeared. So I lost my mitt and my ball and my watch.

O: Did you remember the Gregory Stables out here?

PF: Yea. Price, what was his name?

JT: Joe Bob Price.

PF: Yea, they brought him out here from the flatlands someplace. Kansas or Missouri or wherever. He was probably one of the top horsemen in the country when Doctor Gregory __. You know Doctor Gregory and Doctor Hahn and Bill Allen were in the drugstore in Wallowa. The three of them came out here and took over Hot Lake and Doctor Pranner and Doctor Ross. Connley, Vina Connley, he married…she was married to Ross. They ran that for two years.

JT: I remember Filo Stakes going down and taking pictures to find horses that Doctor ___.

PF: Yea, Joe Bob-[end of tape]

Pat Fitzgerald

8/5/02, tape 1, side 1

ES: This is the transcript of the interview that John Turner did with you. And I went through it, as you see, highlighting things I wanted to ask you about to get more details. So, depending on how much you have to say, I imagine it'll be quite a bit, we'll get through part of this today and then I'll come back as many times as you'll allow me to.

PF: Just as many times as you want.

ES: Okay.

PF: That's my pet peeve.

ES: Wonderful.

PF: …history…

ES: Alright. I'm going to take these in the order that they come up in the interview. You said you started school when you were five years old at the Sacred Heart Academy where the old St. John's Hospital now is.

PF: St. Joseph.

ES: I know it was a different building from the one that's there now. Could you describe Sacred Heart school looked like, or Academy?

PF: Where the present…where the ex-St. Joseph Hospital where the county buildings are now there was a building right behind that which would be on the next street back. I think it would be 'K' or 'L', 'L' I think. Anyway, the street right behind the St. Joseph Hospital building there was the old Catholic church, which was a white building. Just a typical, early day, simple church. And then in the same block that was sitting on, why, the Sacred Heart Academy was located on that block…that square block.

ES: Was the Catholic church called Sacred Heart?

PF: No, it's Our Lady of the Valley. But I went there for four years.

ES: Why did you go there?

PF: At that time…this take a long tale to tell this. I don't know it's relevant. But at that time my mother had joined the Catholic Church. She had always been a member and was raised in the Christian Church, but all of our relatives, my father's relatives, came here, his sister, and she prevailed on Mom to join the Catholic Church. The rest of us hadn't been and I was rather young at the time of course. So they had us taken to the Catholic Church. And I went to school there and my two brothers and a sister went there. They graduated from high school from the Sacred Heart Academy. Which I think the …probably the total graduating class of any one year probably was about more than seven or eight or nine, ten people.

ES: But they did have all twelve grades?

PF: Yes. So…this is a little bit hazy to me. I don't know exactly what happened. But anyway, Mom and the rest of the family…not my father, he was no connection with the Catholic Church. We were old time Presbyterians from Scotland, Ireland. [laugh] So anyway, at that point in time I was taken out of the school and went to fifth grade. The first four years at the Catholic school and then the fifth grade I went to Central where La Grande Middle School now is. I went there one year. And then at that time I…Ackerman School in the college opened up here. That's 1929.

ES: Now before we get on that could we come back to Sacred Heart?

PF: Oh yea.

ES: What sort of a building was it?

PF: It was a two-story with a kind of a loft up above. Not actually a third floor, but that's where the convent was at that time and the sisters and they stayed up there. And then there were two floors and there was a kind of a daylight basement off that way.

ES: Would this of been maybe fifty by a hundred feet?

PF: More than that, I would think.

ES: Really?

PF: Yes. I'm thinking I could be wrong on that. I was thinking that…I would hate to give dimensions because that's…

ES: Approximately how many classrooms?

PF: There was eight grades. I don't know when the high- college…pardon me, the high school. I don't recall there was still a high school there when I was there. There may have been, but I think this was…I would think…__ say the latter part of the 1918, '19 along in there and then a few years maybe into the early 1920s there was still a high school there. But then after that I don't recall. It was just the eight grades or so that was there.

ES: Was all the teaching done by nuns?

PF: Yes. That is…the only thing remember is…there was a…there wasn't anybody except the nuns and priests.

ES: Mm-hmm. There.

PF: It was a…it was kind of…as of my recollection not long ago it was quite a pleasant place. I enjoyed it there. And I thought the world of the sisters.

ES: Would you say that discipline was strict?

PF: Yes. They were the old-time nuns. I'm gonna put this way. They had a ruler and they knew how to use it. The discipline was quite strict. But all and all I have nothing but the best of feelings toward the church…or towards the school. And they were my dearest friends for my whole life. And we used to know where…of course most of 'em are all gone now.

ES: Were you aware that your parents were paying tuition?

PF: Oh yes!

ES: Do you have any idea what it was?

PF: No. No, I don't.

ES: Did you wear a uniform?

PF: No. We had…they boys, of course…back in those days you had probably one pair of boots for winter and one pair of tennis shoes for summer and either short or long pants, Levi type things. And the girls were plainly dressed. There was certainly no competition for who's gonna look the sharpest when they got to school. The girls sat on one side and the boys sat on the other 'n' in the room. And the worst thing a boy could do is get to have to go over and sit with the girls if they acted up. [laughs]

ES: That was the punishment, aye? [laughs]

PF: Of course the girls never did so they never got to sit with the boys. But I have most fond memories of the education I got there that short period of time.

ES: And you learned to read well?

PF: Oh yes. The old Palmer method was the writing.

ES: Yes.

PF: And I think every kid always hated those exercises you had to do. But I always remember that my brother, Ed, well, all three of the older children that graduated from up there, they were excellent penmen. They just had absolute beautiful handwriting. So that was one thing that was certain you got. I did very well in math and the basic. And of course we always laughed at everybody that went up there to that school. You have your choice of either…if you were a girl you learned to play the harp or the violin or the piano and you learned to paint. My

sister was a very accomplished china painter. And my fondest memory of that building was it always smelled like paint. Where the painting studio was, why, it…there's a fond memory to this day that that wonderful smell that oil paint going on there. And then they had a small room for the music. My brother learned to play the harp…or the violin. My sister learned to play the harp. And Ed, my brother Ed, was not musically… He went through the exercises tryin' to learn to play the piano, but he was a better hunter than he was a piano player. [laughs]

ES: And you played?

PF: I played at the piano, but I was like my brother Ed. I didn't have a musical note in my body when it came to learning to play. I love music, but not to the extent of being…participating in it.

ES: Now all this musical instruction was in the school itself?

PF: Yes.

ES: Given by the nuns?

PF: Yes.

ES: Were there individual lessons?

PF: Yes.

ES: During school hours?

PF: No, you went…that was extra.

ES: Did you have to pay extra?

PF: I don't recall. I think you probably did. I know my sister Mary painted tons, it seemed to me like, of china and I'm sure you had to pay for all that. I'm quite certain that that was…

ES: And were there recitals?

PF: Yes.

ES: In the spring, I suppose?

PF: Yea, different times. I remember I had to play for a piano recital at one time. I was ill prepared and I don't think it went over very well. [laughs]

ES: Something like "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star"?

PF: Yea. [laughs] Very simple. One note followed another.

ES: But you gave up music when you left the Catholic school?

PF: Yes.

ES: Now you went through fifth grade?

PF: No, I went fourth grade. I went first four grades. I went school…

ES: I thought you went into sixth grade at Ackerman?

PF: No, no, fifth. When Ackerman opened, why, I had had…I'd been at fifth grade at Central and then sixth grade at Ackerman.

ES: If your mother was so enthusiastic about the Catholic church and you felt good about the school why did you leave then?

PF: That's rather personal.

ES: Okay. We won't talk about that. When do you think the Sacred Heart Academy was torn down?

PF: It burned down. The…I'm gonna guess now that it…oh, probably say, and I'm just guessing, but I'm gonna say like possibly…let's see '20….in the late '20s possibly early, very close to the '30. All I recall…I understood that…or

somebody said downtown or at the house or fairly close to the school…somebody said the school was on fire and I went up and watched it and there was snow on the ground. The fire department…I don't know if they even wanted to put it. It was so far flung, you know, and such an old, old building. And so if they wanted to put it out and had the equipment there they possibly could have. But it was fully engulfed by the time I got up there and there was nothing…

ES: Do you have any idea what caused the fire?

PF: No.

ES: And would the school have been built maybe in the 1880s?

PF: I have no idea.

ES: You said it was an old, old building. Maybe fifty years old?

PF: I'm sure it was fifty years old when I was there or older than that.

ES: So that sounds like the 1870s.

PF: It could've been. Yea.

ES: Do you have a picture of it?

PF: No.

ES: Do you know where there is one?

PF: Yes. There's someplace…does John have a picture of it in…

ES: I haven't asked him.

PF: I've got his book in here.

ES: I don't think its there.

PF: Oh.

ES: He had lots of other prints, though.

PF: I've seen…I've seen pictures of it.

ES: I'd like to get one.

PF: I don't know whether anybody from the fire department back that long ago would have… you just ask somebody…I'd ask the church. Hank __ is that the priest? Hank…

ES: Uh-huh.

PF: I think they would have pictures of it there. I think you'd find all that.

ES: Alright. At that time, 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan was active around here. And the Ku Klux Klan as a whole didn't think too much of Catholics.

PF: I'll tell ya. I've wondered about that a lot. Now here's an anecdote. We lived that the corner of Sixth and Penn Avenue there. [pause] I guess I should say this, but…

ES: We can remove anything you don't want on the record.

PF: Here's the thing. I don't know but what the Ku Klux Klan in La Grande was just another thing like some club to belong to. I don't recall if there was ever anything between the Klan members, many of whom I knew…everybody knew who they were.

ES: They were respectable men, weren't they?

PF: Yes. And so this one night I was out on the parking of our…I was a small child. I was playing on the parking just right by our house there. And it was dark. I was the only one there. And on the whole… do I say this or not? Let's say they appeared. I'm not even gonna say who they…where they were, but they were within a half a block of my house…from the church. They came out with their

robes and their torches and the marched up Pennsylvania Avenue and went up on the face of Table Mountain and burned a cross. And that was not unusual back then. They did that like high school kids but the "L" on the side of the hill. And they did this more than once. Now those men that were in that one of 'em was the person that delivered me into this world. Several of them…there was a gentleman that was in a __ of my house. But I didn't have any idea, really, I had no idea that there was…what it was. Hardly understood what was going on.

ES: You were only four of five years old?

PF: Yea. So I wasn't afraid. I was outside. I was still…burning…carryin' flaming torches down Pennsylvania Street, or up Pennsylvania. That's about as far as I was concerned. I never had a seconds worry about it. The funny part about it was some of the men that were in that Klan their best friends were Catholic. They all belonged to the country club and so and so forth, together. To me it was an immaterial thing. I had no idea that the necessary that the Klan was against black people or Catholics or whatever. It was nonimpressive as far as I was concerned.

ES: Did you have any reaction at all to the cross? You'd certainly seen a lot of crosses around the Catholic church?

PF: Yea. I didn't…it didn't mean a thing to me one way or the other. Because I could see those same guys on the street the next day and…

ES: As you've thought about it as an adult what…why do you think they were doing what they were doing?

PF: Bunch of damn fools.

ES: But you said they were all friends, respectable men?

PF: I know. Yea, but old men can be damned fools, too.

ES: Do you think they just needed to frisk about? Have fun?

PF: If you came in at that time…well, look at that…most of that, at least in La Grande, Oregon or the general area around here, they were one fly in a big pan of milk. There were lots of other flies like the Neighbors of Woodcraft and the Rebeccas and this and that. And some of 'em I think __ every damn thing that was… seriously, they __.

ES: For social reasons maybe?

PF: Yea. I think it was just somethin' to do.

ES: Not necessarily because they had any strong beliefs about…

PF: I can't recall of any activity that ever…I don't know what to say the older Catholics at that particular time felt. But to me it was just a nonentity. I, you know, I wasn't impressed by it one way or the other. And I never really never knew anybody that was.

ES: You say they were a bunch of damn fools and yet they had responsible positions in the city?

PF: Yea.

ES: Do you think that they didn't know what the Ku Klux Klan was about?

PF: Sure they knew. I'm sure…I don't know. I'm not that…was never that…it didn't impress me one way or the other. Now when I look back at what was talked about the Klan in recent years and everything, why, I'm more aware than I ever had been because I never gave it the time of day. I mean, I never thought about it. Because what black people we had here, for instance…I never knew any Catholic

that was ever persecuted by the Klan here. The black people that were here…this was a pretty, I thought…like when I was in high school…was a pretty liberal town. The kids would live down there in the area where the blacks lived. I was to their houses and they were to mine different times. And one thing here in La Grande we had one very prominent young man was a very fine athletic person. And when the kids would go on a football trip, which was there…this was later on in the '30s and things…say they played in Prineville the black kid couldn't stay in the motel. So what our teams did…I don't remember where they went…but someplace where the black kid could stay with…there were places, spots, around where were anti-black or anti-whatever. And I never grew up feeling…having a feeling of anything about the black were any better or any worse or any different than us because we all ran around together. And there's…oh, I think there was just one girl that was in our class when we graduated from high school that was black. She's still a dear friend and has been forever. And then a lot of her people down there that have nothing but fond memories of them. I just…to me I have now way of, you know, say anti-black, anti-Catholic, anti-whatever.

ES: As far as your awareness most other people, white people, in La Grande they didn't have prejudice…

PF: I'm sure they did and I'm sure they still do.

ES: But they didn't express it overtly?

PF: Yes. I'm sure they did sometime. Yes, there was anti-black here and anti-Chinese and anti-Catholic and anti-anything. But I don't know that…in a way I don't think things are changed all that much. When you…if you have to get admission out of people about this or that, why, that'd burn out things if they, you know…

ES: I suppose La Grande, the people in La Grande at that time were rather similar to many other communities that were predominantly white.

PF: Yea. But I don't, you know…my experience with the black people that have been here…of course we don't have a lot of people coming in from outside. It's been pretty much…in a sense kind of a closed black community, but I'm sure that they would say thing that have happened to them. But I'm happy to say it wasn't from me or anybody that I knew. So, that's just another side of living is to…I don't feel like I've ever…you know, I've just never…I grew up, thank goodness, without…here's the thing. My background is Scots-Irish. The Irish stereotype is a drunken bricklayer or a drunken potato grower or whatever it might be, the groge and all that and they still do it in television. That's as much prejudiced as sounding like "Amos and Andy". And I have no time for it.

ES: Good. I want to get back to the Chinese later on because that comes in a couple of later year. Let's move now to the Ackerman School experience. You said you got to know Elmo Stevens and his wife very well. And you thought that they, and I guess others there at Ackerman School, guided your life in important ways. So could you be a little more specific about what some of the…a couple of the experiences you had at Ackerman that you thought might be characteristic of that school and your reaction to it?

PF: It so happens at the time that I was in Central School…this would have been the summer of 1928…I had a very serious eye problem. And a Dr. Rahlston was a

prominent ophthalmologist here. And he had gone to Vienna, which at that time seemed to be all the ophthalmologists had to go to Vienna to study for a couple of years, which he did. And he came back and my mother and dad both had been very bothered by, upset by, my eye condition. And they'd taken me different places, to Portland and everyplace they heard any…I had one eye had apparently…I was very young. I had flu and pneumonia followed by whooping cough and lived through it, but as a result this eye crossed, it pulled in. So I was cross-eyed Catholic kid with red hair. Now if you don't think that was a burden to carry. So when Dr. Rahlston came back to La Grande then he…my folks got together with him and he said, "I can straighten his eye, but I can't do anything about the sight." So I had surgery in the summer of 1928 and it was…that's a routine operation now, but at that time it was quite a thing. I don't know that it'd ever been done out in this area of the world. But he got a good straightening…straightened out, but anyway, I've been blind in this eye ever since. Well, it was before that. But anyway, this gets back to what Ackerman has to do with this. I thank God every day that Caroline Stevenson, that's Elmo's wife, she was the dearest, sweetest thing I ever saw and she just took over because I had problem reading, getting my eyes adjusted. And so we spent lots of time together on her…at her house or at school or different places.

ES: Was she also a teacher?

PF: Yes. She taught sixth grade. That's where I went.

ES: I see.

PF: So I had…I just grew to love her like no other woman because she just was just so kind and good to me. And Elmo was just a jewel. He just…he just one of a kind and it was a great privilege to be with them, you know. I was there for the sixth, seventh and eighth grade. Then they were lifelong friends and after they moved to Medford I went down to see them time to time. Elmo had right across from administration building at Southern Oregon there he had some acreage out there. And he always had his horses and he had a few cattle. He could sit and look out his administration office and see a little field out there. So they were dear friends forever. So I can't help but think that that steadied me at a very bad time in my life and took me through a period of time when it was pretty rough.

ES: What about the teaching there? It was a different style form the Catholic school, wasn't it?

PF: Yes. This is aside, but when I got to the fifth grade at Central after being in a questered situation literally for those first four years I thought I was sitting with barbarians. I had never seen children act like that.

ES: Unruly?

PF: To me. Maybe it wasn't to the teacher. But I, literally, I went there and I was so glad to get out of that situation 'cause we had a more structured schooling there at Ackerman at that particular time. Everything was better organized and there was no…none of the horseplay and noise and…you know, I just wasn't used to that sort of a situation.

ES: You were in the first group of kids who went to Ackerman when it opened in 1929.

PF: Yea. And we had…oh, I can't remember the name of the…it's hard for me to even think of it. I can't hardly remember the teachers of seventh, eighth grade.

ES: Do you remember Kay Hauks, the principal?

PF: Yes.

ES: What do you remember about her?

PF: She was…I didn't really ever know her very well. She had an office just up from the hall a ways. Office at the end of the hall in Inlow Hall, as they call it now. And there was the sixth grade on one side and I think they…here's the way that worked. They had…let's see, they had three grades…it must've been fourth, fifth and sixth. Then as we got to the seventh they put another grade on the other end. Then they got third, fourth, fifth, sixth till finally had all eight grades. It had just the three grades that first year. Ms. Hauks was, you know, a nice lady, but I, you know, just didn't really have hardly any contact with her. I can't remember exactly. I don't know whether Eva Wares was there right at the '29 or not. But…and Ms. Darby. I think she…some of 'em I think they were in there right away after '29. They were great people. And I thought that…see, we had five children, Mom and I, and all of our kids went to Ackerman, every one of 'em. So we were sold on it. We thought they got a very fine education there. I thought a lot better than say the public…[end tape]

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PF: I'm, of course, kind of prejudiced toward Ackerman and not having a lot of experience with the other schools. So I'm probably not a good source to say how they operated.

ES: I'm only asking about your impression.

PF: My impression was that Ackerman was far superior to the other schools. Now, I'm…that's…maybe that's a wrong opinion.

ES: No, I'm just wondering if you can bring to mind anything specific about the teaching methods or the character of the teachers or maybe the participation of student teachers that might of made it better.

PF: I could talk all day about…I have a new book in there about rodeos from Pendleton to Calgary that just came out. And I ran across another old, old friend who was a student teacher of mine at Ackerman. And he was a clown at the Round-Up and he's a Hall of Fame Round-Uper. Mont Carden and George Mones. They were the clowns over there for years. And he married Virginia…I can't remember what her name was before…before…[interruption]…Darcy, that's what... But anyway, most people were a number of the student teachers that we had were, you know, they were just young kids when I look at it now. But that was the first time I'd ever been exposed to a student teacher and I had nothing but good memories of those people. If they did a…I think a conscientious good job to learn to be teachers themselves. And, you know, it was just fine with them there. The teachers throughout the years, the different ones that we had at that time, I thought were very competent and very thorough and, again, those people

became lifelong friends. And till death took 'em away, why, that was the way it was.

ES: I think you mentioned specifically a man who taught physical education that was an important influence in your life.

PF: Oh, Bob Quinn.

ES: Bob Quinn?

PF: Yea. He's probably one of the main influences in my life for a lot of reasons. He and Helen, his wife Helen, lived up right across from the old courthouse building on 'L' Avenue. And they had their…when they had their first child, why, Helen used to put the…Bob, young Bob, in this little tailor-tot come down by our house and stop there on their way to town. And so I mean that friendship more than just teachers. And Bob was a big influence on my life fore…you know, as long as he was here. A he became very fond of our children and we were the recipient of odd gifts of rabbits and ducks. We lived up several blocks above where Bob did there right on 'Z' Avenue. And here Bob would come up so…I mean he got things for the kids at Easter time.

ES: What was there about the way he taught P. E. or taught about playing games that might've been influential?

PF: He just…it's hard for me to describe him because…

ES: Would the word "sportsmanship" come to mind?

PF: Yes. But there was so much…he was such a showman guy. I mean, he wasn't somebody that you…that was up on a perch someplace. He was right in the middle of everything just in personal lives and there. And I had the privilege, after I got out of the Navy, I came out on a disability discharge, and I worked for fourteen months with him up at the college as a first I was first-aid instructor and then I went to work with the P. E. part of it and kind of kept his books and things that he had doin' and keep the classes running. Came into the gymnasium and all that. Keep everything kind of a __ you might say, or whatever. And so our experience together was more than just a teacher someplace. Then we both belonged to the Elks Club and Bob liked to go down and play pinochle on Wednesday nights at the…or Thursday night, whenever it was…at the club. Thursday morning…no, it was Wednesday night, so Thursday morning my phone would right about six o'clock in the morning says, "Could you take my class this morning, I'm gonna be a little late?" That meant he played pinochle. [laughs] So anyway, why, it was that type…it was more than just a teacher out there someplace coachin' basketball or football. It was a very personal relationship.

ES: Let's move over to La Grande High School. You went there starting in ninth grade, right?

PF: Eighth grade. No, no, ninth grade, yea, ninth grade.

ES: And that was in the building that was torn down a few years ago?

PF: Yes.

ES: Yes. You mentioned about the fire there. Several people have brought that up. It seems to stick out in their memory. You're the first person who has mentioned that a local fireman, I think you said his name was Bob Hare,…

PF: No, not Bob Hare. You mean the first one that set the blaze?

ES: What you said was, "One of our local fireman, Bob Hare, I guess he set the place on fire on purpose."
PF: Yea, he did. That and a lot of other places.
ES: Is this scandal, or is this something we can talk about frankly.
PF: You can go to the…
ES: Was he a fireman? Do you mean arsonist rather than a member of the fire department?
PF: He was a member of the fire department and an arsonist.
ES: [laugh] He really liked fire!
PF: Now his name, I'll say it in a minute, I don't know where Bob Hare came up. If I said that I didn't mean that.
ES: Okay.
PF: I'll say…
ES: We don't necessarily need to know his name.
PF: What happened…Depression times, '32. And so not unlike this guy settin' forest fires to make some money, this guy was pickin' up…he wasn't a regular fireman, he was a volunteer. He got in the habit of setting places on fire. Now there's a lot of vacant buildings all over this town, unoccupied places. He never set a house on fire with somebody in it, okay, like that. But all of a sudden this rash of fires started out and you never knew where they were gonna be, but they'd be someplace and all of a sudden they're on fire. And not just one, many. And I don't know whether they…that was just __ or whatever you call at that time, I don't recall that, but at some point in time he was arrested for this fire __. And his excuse was, "Well, I needed the money." As far as I recall.
ES: Why did he get money out of setting the fires?
PF: He got paid to help. Whatever volunteer fireman got.
ES: Oh, I see. I just needed steadier work as a fireman, huh?
PF: Yea. He…later on, after he got out of prison…he was sent away for I don't know how long, but that would be in the police records someplace…but he was sent down we'll say a year. I don't know what it was. He was a harmless guy, kind of a Casper milk toast type. And after he got out of jail down where the…oh, that Victor Christian church. That used to be a Ford garage and he worked there as a cleanup man for years and years for __. Never caused anymore trouble. Just there and doin'… That was just another way to… You know, when you think about that time, that's not to say it was the right thing to do, but I mean people would do anything for a dollar a dollar-and-a-half. And so I think that was, you know, the motivation for it. I don't think he was getting' any kick out of the fires just that buck-and-a-half or whatever they got per trip.
ES: When he confessed to the high school fire did he also confess to setting other fires?
PF: I don't know that much about it except that he did…
ES: But you suspect that he was responsible for several?
PF: Yea.
ES: And somebody told me, I think, that it was set maybe backstage?
PF: I don't recall that.
ES: You don't? Okay.

PF: I don't even know how I found out that the place was on fire, but all I know every kid in the country was out down there. And they'd never allow at this particular time there. But we were going into that…it was the ground level, but we always called it the basement, but it was the ground level on that school building. And I can remember very clearly in my there that the water was a foot deep inside that building there on the floor and we were packin' books out of the school library. Every kid that…carry out armloads of books and made many, many trips. And we stacked 'em all over Mr. Blunt's house porch and stuff over there across the street. So, I mean, everybody was tryin' to help. But there was a third floor at that time and then when they repaired the building they cut that third floor off in order to do this to the first floor and whatever they wanta call that basement or the ground level floor as you went in on the bottom of the building. And that took…when I was a sophomore then…freshman in high school we went all over town just to…the Mormon church buildings and the downtown buildings and the old…oh, there's a half a dozen buildings that they got into. And I remember very well because someplace in the process, not at the school, but someplace just before school started I stepped on a nail in my yard.

ES: Yea, you told me about that.

PF: So I'm getting' back and forth to there…

ES: I'd like to get into a little more about the courses you took in high school. You especially spoke about a teacher who's name was Ken.

PF: Ken Taylor.

ES: Taylor. And you said that he taught civics.

PF: Yea, civics.

ES: And that…you said "we got some pretty good set-to's and arguments in our class. He made us participate and we got a lot out of it that way." Can you remember anything more specifically? The kinds of subjects you discussed?

PF: I guess it was my first immersion in knowing a little bit about what went on in our town and our county. And uh…

ES: At the governmental level, you mean?

PF: Yea. And we begin to learn those sort of things. And then I don't recall whether two years required or…I don't remember how…whether I went there longer than that or not, but I think just probably two years. But he was very thorough in acquainting us in… Oregon history was a big part of our schooling at that time, which I don't think they even teach now. At least I know where Washington, D. C. is and I can pretty well pinpoint where the states are and I don't think that the kids right now can, a good portion of 'em.

ES: Did he teach civics in combination with history?

PF: Yes.

ES: I see. And what sorts of things might you have argued about?

PF: I think probably on…they were set up so that we had groups that would be pro and con and kind of debating…

ES: Like a staged…

PF: Yea, sort of. It was not formal. You'd have a group of kids not unlike where they have a kids court here now. This would be, "Okay, you five kids. You're gonna

be for this. And you five'll be against it. Now prepare your work and we'll argue about it." And I liked that.

ES: Could you talk about such a thing as Prohibition?

PF: I don't think so.

ES: Slavery?

PF: No.

ES: What kind of subjects?

PF: It would be…the subjects you'd probably get into more than anything would just be the local things. You see, we weren't very worldly in that day, time frame. And Pendleton was a long ways off and Baker was a long ways off and Portland was…ninety percent had never even been there. So it was, basically, local subjects and maybe a state subject if he'd kind of decide to expand your knowledge down to Salem. I knew where Salem was. I'd never…I'd heard of it.

ES: Would you have talked about candidates for local office?

PF: I presume. Yea. Just, you know, I don't recall. I'm sure they weren't exceedingly heavy subjects.

ES: Why did the fact that you had set-tos and arguments when you were a sophomore in high school stick with you all this time?

PF: I guess maybe that's the Irish in me. I kind of took to that in the early times. I developed quite an interest in basically what was goin' on around here and to a greater scale the state level. But I think the first time I ever…when I begin to use what I had learned, which was not a lot, but I was very aware of what was happening to the country the first time. I saw the __ marchers come through here and camp right there where the Ford garage was. My father-in-law was a World War I vet and he participated in the arrangements for the people going through to Washington, D. C. And I was fully aware of what happened to them after they got there.

ES: With Hoover?

PF: Not Hoovers…well, yea. But…do you know what happened at that time?

ES: I've read about it and I don't have all the details in my mind.

PF: You know that they were fired upon.

ES: Yes.

PF: Do you know who the general was?

ES: Somebody well known.

PF: McCarther. And Roosevelt, to me, and by the way I'm not a Democrat, but at that particular time I registered Republican I wasn't able to vote back then. But Roosevelt, to me, came on as a shining beacon for hope. And I had members of my family that were in the banking business later on. They couldn't curse Roosevelt loud enough and they rubbed at me all the time. And I said, "You damn fools haven't learned anything. Maybe you'd rather go back to the broken banks and the whole damn time and loose all your money." But I'm for 'im and so is my wife. We voted for him every time we could. And I think there's something about fate I think that puts the right man at the right time in that place. I don't know I'd vote for him again, you know, under circumstances. But anyway, I think that edu…just what I got out at school made, you know, a lifelong impression on me. It's been with me always. I'm…like…Will Rogers. They

took all the politicians in the United States, put 'em in a great big sack, ship 'em all up, throw 'em out one at a time. What would come out? Know what the answer is? The son of a bitch. That's Will Rogers. [laughs]

ES: Couple of bastards, too, probably. [laughs] You said you also enjoyed biology and chemistry.

PF: That came directly from Elmo Stevenson. That was his…he was a teacher…

ES: Science teacher.

PF: Science teacher. Elmo's room was right above our class, sixth grade. And we spent at least half our time up there with him in our spare time. And he had a bird that we loved. This bird, a stellar jay, set on his finger. I've got picture of him there someplace. And so that bird was quite an attraction. He'd be on the desk and things. We thought that was great. Elmo was, I think, he had to be one of the finest men…finest of everything I can think of, of anybody I ever met in my whole life. And field trips he loved. With only two kids he'd take a field trip. And we'd…there used to be kind of a slough over here across the river where the Wal-Mart sets now. We were always out there diggin' in these ponds and sloughs for all kinds of stuff and take 'em back to the… He…we had the privilege of having a college teacher…college level teacher…running our biology. That stuck with me forever. And a lot of where I am right now I do, lookin' at that bird, it all comes back to me through impressions.

ES: Sounds to me as though as a science teacher he concentrated on developing students' curiosity.

PF: Yea.

ES: Rather than just learning fact.

PF: Yea.

ES: And did your high school teachers do it too?

PF: Yea. Ken Norguard…I say the name now, Ken Norguard…there was two of 'em, Ken Norguard and Ken Taylor.

ES: Ken Taylor taught history and civics and …

PF: …and Norguard…

ES: …Norguard taught science.

PF: Yea. And those were…I gotta get the little book I made up for my grandkids that what I want to be, what do I like best. It was biology and forestry, which at the time what I wanted to be. But most of my life, until I got older and everything, as long as I could, I was out on the horses or out in the mountains every summer most of the summer.

ES: I sense then that maybe biology and chemistry at La Grande High School had quite a bit of lab work.

PF: Yea.

ES: As well as field trips?

PF: Yea.

ES: What sort of a lab…biology or chemistry…?

PF: It was on the second floor of the old high school building. And it had the typical look of a lab with…

ES: Bunsen burners and…

PF: The whole ball…

ES: …spigots…

PF: One of our favorite tricks in the wintertime was to get carbide. Take carbide and roll it up and put it in a snowball and stick it in our cuff of our pants. And then as soon as we got in class we'd get that thing goin' a-stinkin' real good and roll it up under somebody's desk. [laughs]

ES: A stink bomb kind of thing?

PF: Yea. [laughs] Anyways, we had a lot of fun. We learned a lot, too. But those…basically that's where I was headed.

ES: By that time had your reading problem corrected itself?

PF: Yea, with Carol Stevenson. She…at that time they kept one eye bandaged over…it didn't make any difference. I couldn't see out of it anyway. But kept it bandaged up and I was aware of it and I don't know what the protocol was as how you were supposed to treat the eye over a period of time. But she read a lot to me and saw to it that I didn't fall behind, you know, and get into this. Very kind, gracious lady.

ES: Your next connection with the college was after you'd been discharged from the Navy and you came back and you were helping Bob Quinn with you said the first-aid and the P. E.

PF: Yea, at that time, when the program that was…the cadet program was first put in…I came…I got back in town and I don't know how they got wind of it, but a couple of fellows that worked with the Red Cross was Spud Olson and Bob Williamson. They came to the house and I don't remember how they put forth the, you know, the idea of going to this job. Because my idea was to go down and join the Merchant Marines in Portland. And I'd only been home a little bit. And so they said, "What would you think about this?" So then they put forth this idea, this cadet…I hadn't even heard of the cadet program…was going to be there. "It was just being organized and would you go up and talk to Dr. Macy, who was the president of the college at that time. He'd be very interested in talkin' to you about this position'll be open." So I went with them and we went down to the office and met him. And the beginning idea was to help organize…___ was in charge of it. He was a professor at this college. Organizing the…where the cadets were gonna be and where the class would be and all that. So I helped him for, I don't know, maybe the first month, whatever. And we went around and set up the logistics of how the thing would…it was a strange to everybody, but how we gonna do this? So I helped to that extent where I could with that part of it. And then as soon as the class was started, why, I was an American Red Cross first-aid instructor and then I used that in the Navy, too. But anyhow, I had classes there for, oh, I think about the first six or eight months and then whoever decided, "We want you to go over and work with Quinn." Because he was just getting the…

ES: When you say you had classes you mean you were teaching first-aid?

PF: Yes. And then went over there with Bob and they were just getting that set…going. It was quite a…everything was…you know, it wasn't…it was a lot like school and then it wasn't because your devel…dealing with guys that'd come in from overseas to learn to be pilots and, you know, they'd been in every kind of

a scrape there was and some of 'em were doing that because they thought anything'd be better than where they've been.

ES: Now I did not know that. You mean that everyone who came here to Eastern Oregon College and took these classes was aiming to be a pilot?

PF: Yes. That was the idea. Of course I don't know that they knew what they washout rate was gonna be. But that was the stance when we went there. So what they were doing at the college was just getting a basic classes to prepare them to…they had a flight school out here at the airport. And they learned just the basics of flying in the time that they were here out there. And of course they had a long ways to go to get, you know, ever made pilot. But when they left here they had basically kind of a ground level idea about flying. And you had every kind…not everybody, of course, could get in the cadet program, but by and large we had some pretty rough characters. I mean they were all great kids, they were just kids, but some of 'em were transferred in from other outfits that had been overseas. Some of 'em had seen more war than anybody'd ever wantta see. And then on the other hand you had the younger ones that were just comin' in maybe out of college, coming here for just that beginning boot camp, I'd call it. They were here, I think, from ninety…ninety days. I think some of 'em were here six months. Some of 'em, just depending on how well they were prepared to go do what they were gonna do, they might be here just a short period of time and the other's maybe a little more. Comb a few bugs out of their hair getting' ready to fight again. That's what it was, just kind of a basic course. So very heavy accent on physical fitness because they had to get 'em in shape. Some of 'em were, especially enlisted men, weren't worth a __. They'd never been to P. E. class. [laughs] They'd been getting' other kinds of exercise, but not that. So Bob run a real good…real good physical program for 'em. I was kind of his right hand gopher.

ES: Okay. I guess that program ended in the mid-'40s, wasn't it?

PF: Yea. I think it started to close down… It was there eighteen months. Duration of the program. And it was…before we'd generally had __ or anything like that. Wanting to go full blast under that.

ES: About '43, maybe?

PF: About in there, yea, yea it would be. The fall of '43.

ES: Aside from being able to work with Bob Quinn, what benefits do you thing you had from that eighteen months of experience?

PF: I'll put it this way. By the time that…my experience up to that time…by the time I'd been discharged out of the service…I don't know how to say this really. The feeling at the time…[end tape]

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PF: But it had…there hadn't been a lot…a whole lot when the way the war started out. It was just everything was lost almost down to…you had no idea what was gonna happen in Russia whether it was gonna stop them there, the Nazis. Whether England was gonna give up. Almost did. At the time I went in the

Navy, why, the war was right at our doorstep and people didn't even know it. The Atlantic coast was on fire and they still had the lights on in New York city so they could…so the subs could see where to shoot.

ES: It wasn't exactly on fire. I was __ at the time.

PF: Yea, you know, but I mean…but a lot of it was, see. I say New York, but that coast…I bet you didn't know that we lost right out from Hampton Roads eleven war ships.

ES: I knew that, yea.

PF: Okay, that's what I mean on fire. The ocean was on fire a lot.

ES: Yea.

PF: We were so damn close to that. We were at Norfolk, Virginia right there Hampton Roads and Newport Rouge. And our barracks we weren't lit up. But this one night, shortly after we got there got all the window blown out the side of our…blew on one side on the seaside.

ES: This is while you were in the Navy?

PF: Yea. Blew all that out. So I was aware that there was a war.

ES: Sure.

PF: And so you became very aware of what then that build up. When I went to the…got into this situation there at the college those…at least half of those boys were…had been…said they'd been out fighting. The other half were probably just kids from whatever. College kids, whatever they were. But anyway, you became very aware that somethin' horrible was gonna happen. And there wasn't any assurance in the world that we were gonna live. And that scared the livin' heck out of me and a lot of other people, of course. But I mean, so…

ES: I asked you what you thought…what benefit you thought you had from working with the cadets' program here.

PF: I think the biggest thing that came out of it… And I've got one friend that's still alive that came back to La Grande here. He was from Texas. And his names' Kelly. He's a barber here. He went through this program here and later on was a bombadeer. And we had a kid name Jederberg who's son is a veterans person up in the old St. Joseph's Hospital. The veterans person for the county. Warren Jederberg he was with that program. I think he was a gunner of some kind. So a lot of 'em didn't make pilot, but they made gunner. So I mean…I guess what I got out of that is the fact that if I wasn't before, 'cause up till the time that the war broke out I had just gotten married in 1939. The day that Germany went into Poland. And my wisecrack for the day after I married my wife, I said, "That war is gonna be over damn quite sooner than ours is!" So anyway, I was a carefree kid up to that point in time, you know. War was pretty good. Damn good place Depression and all. Still, we thought…we weren't really aware of the Depression like our parents were, but we had to suffer with 'em. But when I got into this thing here and saw this there and knew…having been in the Navy and lost several good friends up to that point in time. Then I got here and the one thing I came out of it all "I wonder how many of you guys are gonna come back." They weren't aware of it. If they were they didn't act like it. And you know, just off on another lark. Learn to be a flyboy. So I think that's the main thing, of course, with the…then the experience of working in the college and being part of that picture

and everything, why, I felt we were, you know, doin' the best we could even if it was teachin' a first-aid course. You're tryin' to…gettin' killed. If they did get shot they'd… It was pretty rigorous first-aid course. It wasn't put a band-aid on your pinky, you know. So those were, you know, I think its when I grew up, put it that way. [laugh]

ES: That's what I suspected. Now it's almost a quarter after eleven, do you want to stop?

PF: It don't make any difference to me.

ES: Okay, let's go on for another half an hour then?

PF: Okay.

ES: So its 1945 and you bought the Rohan…that's r-o-h-a-n?

PF: Mm-hmm.

ES: …Flower Shop

PF: And greenhouse.

ES: And the greenhouse which was in Old Town. So can you tell me more about Rohan? I suppose this a man you knew.

PF: No. Mrs. Rohan…I don't wanta get into relatives.

ES: No, let's not do that.

PF: It'd take you a hundred years.

ES: Okay.

PF: Mrs. Rohan was a widow lady. They, as I understand it, started a flor-that greenhouse and flower shop, oh, in the '20s sometime. I don't know exactly when.

ES: As you were a kid.

PF: Yea. That was the other thing, was this growing thing. You can see this from my garden. It's always been…that's been my number one thing. I've always been growing something. Possibly. So as the thing was winding down…we'd gotten our notice from the college that the program would be over and I went there… And this was in the…it was in 1945. So I don't know whatever put me up to…as far as know there was no…flower shop really hadn't entered my mind in a lot of ways. 'Cause I had to be thinkin' about somethin' I was gonna do and I was determined that I wasn't goin' back to doing what I had been doin' before was workin' in a furniture store for my brother. And so I'd…I…we took the proposition to Edna 'cause her son was taken off Wake Island and had been a prisoner of war in Japan all during the entire war and she'd never heard a word from him.

ES: Edna Rohan?

PF: Yes. Don Rohan was taken' off the Wake…he was in that __ outfit building airports or whatever it was there on Wake. And so she'd never heard a word from him. I mean was taken off the island all that time. And so she'd kind of given up that she'd ever hear from him again. So when we put the proposition to her, "would you consider selling the greenhouse?" That's what I was kind of interested in more than anything else. She said, "I'll sell you the whole thing." So we bought it. And so that…that's history now because here 1945 to present we're still in the business.

ES: Yea. Had this been a thriving business?

PF: Yes. Now it was awful tough at first because, you know, there wasn't anything available. War took everything and we were still on the rationing and all that. So anyway, we…I got together with, oh, several people, my brother and others who had advice. I had a brother-in-law, my sister's husband, was in the bank. He was with First Interstate. He was kind of wheel in that outfit over down in Portland area. And we went over pretty, you know, just a lot of investigating of what it would take. We found out that a lot of things we thought weren't so and on and on. Learned the hard way. And it was a struggle at first. And so…

ES: Tell me more about the greenhouse.

PF: It sat on two-and-a-half acres up there at the corner of Cedar and "A" Street in Old Town. And it was just one quite large single house and a potting shed and furnace and all that.

ES: Quite large, you mean…thirty by fifty?

PF: It was…it was about, yea. It was a block long.

ES: Well made?

PF: Yes, it was a metal…an old-fashioned greenhouse. No plastic or anything like that they have now.

ES: Windows at the top that you could open and close?

PF: Yea, just a typical glass greenhouse.

ES: Now the way winters were at that time could you grow things there all year long?

PF: Yea. That was the reason that house was put up there because its almost free of wind right there under that hill. The wind'd be roarin' over the top and you'd be down there perfect quiet. It was well located. However, the thing we did look at…of course the greenhouse what I was interested in, but that I didn't know and nobody else did that was gonna be the end of greenhouses as we knew them in those days because of several things. One was the cost of coal for heating it. Kept going up and up and up and made it very difficult. And the other thing was jet aircraft. And when Columbia and Peru and the Netherlands and even the Middle East wasn't very far away. All the flowers that had been grown in these little towns, in little greenhouses in every town, all of a sudden they were pour into big distribution houses. So that kind of ended that.

ES: Of course greenhouses exist now, but mainly I think to propagate house plants more than cut flowers.

PF: Right.

ES: Was the florist business, or the business that you took over, primarily orientated to selling cut flowers?

PF: Yea, very limited amounts because…we laugh about it now. At that time a greenhouse produced snapdragons, carnations, chrysanthemums. Your carnation crop, if you did it just right, came on right after Christmas. It was good till the weather got hot in the spring and then beaded up. Snapdragons were a pretty good winter crop…winter and spring crop. And chrysanthemums were strictly a fall crop and they came on the fall. So those, basically, if you came into a flower shop the roses were shipped in and if you wanted flowers in the fall basically it was all chrysanthemums.

ES: All different colors?

PF: Yea. Then carnations were for comparatively short period of time, say from February through…till it hot in beginning of May.

ES: Did you…just red and white carnations or did you have the green ones too?

PF: Just basic colors of red and white and deep pink and light pink. We didn't know what all these hybrid.

ES: No green for Irish?

PF: You dyed those. Anyway, it was pretty restrictive. And then your pot plants that we grew, why, was there and you shipped in your lilies and poinsettias and things. There used to be a joke in the flower biz that Paul Peter's specials…Paul Peters was a very cute little Dutchman that Clackamas Greenhouses down at Clackamas which is still going. Now Paul, his specials on Easter lilies and poinsettias was you had to have a pair of spikes on your boots to climb 'em because they grew so damn tall. And so they used to…like around the bottom of an Easter lily they used to plant ferns and things in with 'em. And that's your progress now…that's another story, but how lilies happen to develop strictly by accident.

ES: Before the coal became prohibitive in cost and before the jet did you employ someone to take care of the plants in the greenhouse?

PF: Yea. I had…I always had helpers. And then I kept the full-time person…oh, two or three different people that worked for me there. A little bunk place in the greenhouse…in the potting shed. Would be there at night. So, you know, in the very cold weather, why, they'd be there in case of anything happen to the heat or the electricity. We always kept wood on hand to stoke the furnace. We had a coal stoker, but we kept a lot of wood there. The power used to go down quite a bit so we'd feed wood into it and feed it at night. And it was some very, very cold periods it seems like.

ES: What was the best temperature to try to aim for?

PF: We ran what we called a cold house and that was probably fifty-two at night and then, of course, it gradually kicked on and brought the heat up in the morning. You know, kind of followed daylight and dark, you know. But it was not a profitable venture. It just…

ES: When you first had the business what were you yourself doing?

PF: Looking back on it I guess tryin' a little hard.

ES: You must have been.

PF: I'm not sure what I was doin'! [laughs]

ES: Trying to figure it out.

PF: But I didn't know one end of a greenhouse from the other when I took over. And basically just kept the thing running and… __ went down to Oregon State College and picked up a few overnight __ [laugh] classes a day as well as the state extension service had a lot of stuff at that time. And I'd run down there and pick up, you know, I'll be good in a week or two and come back and try to apply that.

ES: I suppose you could do a lot of reading, too.

PF: Yea.

ES: Did you deal with the customers directly, or did you have someone [coughing]…?

PF: The flower shop… I didn't have a lot to do with the flower shop. I'd take flowers down. And there was one period of time later on, much later, I was in the flower shop more. But I sold that greenhouse property finally to United Builders

they called it at that time. They came in they put a cul-de-sac right at the end of Cedar Street up there. The place where they greenhouse was has a semi-circle of houses in there now. When I got rid of that then I went…I had been building up nursery stock and had a piece of ground right behind the greenhouse that I had some stuff up there. And by that time there, why,…this was in 1950…we had bought this place and then as soon as we got this kind of squared away…

ES: This place meaning where we are right now?

PF: Yea. I had nursery stock out in this field. Then I had nursery stock across the back back here. And I'd gotten a nursery there. I'd taken a lot of landscaping courses and things of that sort and got into landscaping.

ES: It sounds as though you weren't going broke while you had Rohan's.

PF: No, no. Let's put it this way. I wasn't goin' broke, it was time I could use more money. But no we…except for the struggle starting out in a business you didn't know a damn thing about, why…

ES: Did you retain the name Rohan?

PF: Just for the first couple a years.

ES: Then what did you call it?

PF: Fitzgerald's.

ES: Fitzgerald's. And the Rohan flower shop was…I mean the Rohan business was in a building that burned, is that right?

PF: No. The first one was on Depot Street where the Kneads Bakery is. It was there. We were there, I don't know… I don't think more than a year and a half, two years maybe. But an old friend of mine that owned half the town, as far as rental were concerned, he owned that building…

ES: Carl Helm.

PF: No. Carmen Seaquist. He owned that building where all that Sommer Hotel and all that. Anything of his down there the one that burned. But Herman…I moved over where Sydney's, right behind Red Cross Drug. I had that space there. I was there…I don't know…the Foley Hotel was still there at that time. Herman owned that…no, Charlie Carther owned that building where Sydney's was.

ES: Charlie who?

PF: Carther.

ES: Carther, c-a-r-t-h-e-r?

PF: Yea. He was a … had restaurants here for long years. And he had a restaurant for the…called the Black Cat Café. It's right where the U. S. National Bank is now. And he had one over on Fir Street. And he had down there next to where Rohan's was. It's right on the alley where that Marie something-or-other…

ES: Josephine's.

PF: Yea. He had that place. There was a restaurant there for a long time. And he had that place where…on…where Sydney's. And I don't know whether all at once, but that's some of the places he was. But he came to me and kept raisin' the rent. And Herman was mad at me 'cause I moved out of his building went over there. So Herman came…Herman Sigrest came in the store just one day, "I've got a place for you. And I want you to take it." That's down there right across from J. C. Penny where the First Interstate or Wells Fargo is now. It was a part of that area. And there was Bill's Golden Rule Store. I forget what the name of the…it's

on the part of the building up there at the top. Used to be the old building that burned. One of the very early buildings of the town. And anyway, it was empty. That and the place…the store right next to it. It'd been empty for a while. There'd been a grocery store or something in there that kind of ruined the floor and everything. Old Herman thought I was just kid, I guess, 'cause she said, "Now I want you to take that. You get that building fixed up." And he said, "Just tell 'em to send the bills to me." I says, "Herman, I don't want a…I don't want a place that big." He said, "Then you rent out part of it." So Philo Staker was in the old Foley building, which was gonna be torn down. He had a photo album and he wanted to move. So we went down there and he took one half of it and I took the other half and I had the flower shop. So we got the place kind of rehabilitated inside.

ES: Philo Staker. Is that p-h-i-l-o?
PF: Yea.
ES: s-t-a-k-e-r?
PF: Mm-hmm.
ES: And his business was called The Photo Album.
PF: Photo Album, yea.
ES: Was he a studio photographer?
PF: Yea.
ES: I see.
PF: He…I've got pictures of his…fine animal pictures. Let's see, no, I took them inside. I thought that I did have the pictures. That's one of his portraits here of my dog. But he loved animals and he just took absolutely marvelous pictures.
ES: Was he a photographer for many years?
PF: Yes. He passed…he quit finally. His health kind of gave way and then he finally passed away.
ES: But was here maybe forty, fifty years?
PF: No, probably…I'm just gonna make a shot at it…probably thirty years.
ES: Mm-hmm. Okay. Was he the only photographer in town?
PF: No, there was a couple others.
ES: Okay. End of that, back to your flower shop now.
PF: What do you want to know.
ES: This is…you're talking about a building existed where the present Wells Fargo Bank is?
PF: Yea.
ES: I remember seeing a photograph that John Turner gave me…
PF: I've got the picture…
ES: It said Cherry's Florist.
PF: That's on the corner.
ES: Oh.
PF: That was not that building. The building…hard to describe. The building was right directly across the street from J. C. Penny store now where it…right straight across the street. And it'd been…you're familiar with the old Golden Rule, that stores? That's where…
ES: Umm, tell me more about that. I'm not sure that I know much.

PF: The Golden Rule stores…and I'm not an authority on __...
ES: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
PF: Yea. That was the way it was built. And then it…the Golden Rule turned into…I don't know what the background.
ES: Was it a chain?
PF: I don't know for sure. I'm sure that it was. Maybe not in the way we think big chains now, but there was more than one of 'em, put it that way.
ES: Maybe a variety store?
PF: It was something else before…about all I know is the Golden Rule was there first. Let's see…Wes Dav…I want to say the name of that building. Anyway, I don't know who first built that building. When it was…whatever the name of it was, you've probably seen that picture. And whether Golden Rule came in and occupied that… Then there was a series of different things over time, but generally it was…ended up for the last most of my lifetime that I can remember was a grocery…big grocery outfit. And that's what's gone under or folded up or quit, whatever you want to say. That's when Herman wanted me to get down and get that building fixed up. He pulled a whizzer on me. I got to do all the contracting and work to get the damn building fixed up so I could move into it. And he just set back and grinned at me. [laughs] He had me whizzered!
ES: You did send him the bills.
PF: Oh yea. He was lifelong friend. Him and Smokey. You know, I could roll on forever talkin' about all these people 'cause you just bring back dear, dear memories.
ES: Sure, sure.
PF: I had a lot of mentors, I'll tell ya, in my lifetime. See, my father passed away when I was in…in 1935. And literally I had so many fathers you can't believe it. People that took over and started my raisin'. Did everything in the world for me. And it goes right down that main street. I mean, start with the Moon boys and old, old friends clear back to no where. And the…person that…people that the Moon boys married were…get's into, you know…you don't realize how tight this relationship is with everybody. And so my upbringing was pretty well guided.
ES: When you moved into the remodeled store was it a larger space than you'd had before?
PF: Yea.
ES: Did that mean your business improved?
PF: Yes it did. That's what I was tryin' to do. I had to get out of that little hole-in-the-wall. That first flower shop didn't have a work space any bigger than this whole thing out here. And a little thing out in the alley to get out of the building. So we had to get out of that. Edna just hung on. A widow lady doin' what she could do.
ES: Yea.
PF: She was tired, worn out. And she worked for us quite a while after we bought the place. So I had her expertise and so on. And then we moved down there on Adams further down there at the…across from Penny. Why, we'd added on the thing when I got into… I had the towns on the canary birds and I had a fish tank. Harley Richardson had always had a fish tank in his art and gift store and they'd

quit, I think Harley died and Jane was…I don't know where she was. She was his wife. But anyway, people were always askin' for fish so I accommodated. I got a fish tank from Portland and put one in and I had birds.

ES: Were you selling fish then, too?

PF: Yea. And I had canaries.

ES: Selling canaries?

PF: Yea. And cockatiels and [laugh] had a zoo.

ES: By that time did you have elaborate displays in the store?

PF: Oh not…rudimentary. I'll put it this way, not compared to the way my daughter runs that shop now, anyway. We looked like…you know, we laughed when we talked about it. But it was as good as anything else in those days, you know.

ES: Did you sell ferns that people liked to put in their living rooms?

PF: Yea, oh yea. We…see, the transition after the war from what it had been before the war was just basically you might say some…the people that opened the greenhouse, that was Edna Rohan's husband, he was a railroad engineer. And he…I don't know anything about the background of how they got into that business, but that's what's located on old historic ground up there in the Old Town. And you'd have to be a history buff to know all that what had been there before in that area. And so we started out…the first thing we figured out when Herman was talkin' to me about it he said…I can still see him sitttin' on my work bench in the back room advising me…he said, "You've gotta get a bigger better place." But he didn't have anything empty and then I moved on him on across over there and then he's mad at…[end tape]

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PF: I hadn't been over there where Sydney's is there, in that space, for too long before Herman got this other building emptied and that's how I got put to work restoring the building. So anyway, why, it was just a gradual progression to better places till that fire hit and of course it just "poof" everything was gone. We had a little…not enough insurance. We had enough insurance to…we had a place rented from the Moon boys, that's getting back to these old close friends, they… Steven Van England's store occupied that space across right behind Dolvin's…not Dolvin's, but the people that have the hot tub business…

ES: Claudson's?

PF: Claudson's. That building its just directly east of it...or south of that. Whatever. And Rhodes Lewis, he was a music professor at the college, his building got wiped out when ours burnt.

ES: Why did he have a building? Sidelines…

PF: Yea, he was sellin' pianos and music stuff, instruments and things. So I got a hold of Rhodes before the day was out and we rented that building. He took part of it and I took part of it. And we burned out on Sunday. On Monday I had…before the day was over Sunday I called Portland and told one of the wholesalers down there "ship me a flower shop, your basic flower shop." I said, "I've got a place. It'll be a while before I get open, but I want everything it takes

to run a flower shop." So then…we literally didn't miss a day. We had our phone changed. We did our flower work right here on table…and that was wintertime in February…and we had that back there. Had our flowers back there and we were back in business within…we didn't miss a lick.

ES: And were you still the only florist business in town?

PF: There was one other.

ES: Was that Cherry's?

PF: Yea.

ES: When did Cherry's come in?

PF: Mr. Cherry started that business. He had a laundry before that over on Jefferson Street. I don't know how come maybe he got the idea of getting' in the flower business. That was 1912 when he started his flower… And then he had greenhouses up on the far end of Adams Avenue. He had quite a range of greenhouses there right where that Farmhouse restaurant is. And Auggie Sperling had bought that from Cherry's. Auggie and I were good friends and he helped me a lot through…flowers and just really cooperating to get, you know, keepin' me goin'. Then when…later times when he died, why, we … very suddenly at the greenhouse just dropped dead. And the kids came over to the greenhouse…our flower shop and "did you know Dad'd died?" And so it was that kind of a relationship. I took him up to the hospital and the nurse who was on the floor saw me comin' with the kids and she just shook her head no. So anyway, he was gone. And so anyhow, it's been quite a turkey shoot.

ES: In a town this small was it a good thing to have two florist businesses?

PF: Oh yea.

ES: Sometimes they say that if you have several businesses of the same sort somehow it stimulated the business rather than detracts from it.

PF: I've thought a lot about that. Cherry's was the biggest florist in town for years. Edna was just…she was…you know, pickin' up the stuff that for whatever reason. So she was not big at all. And Cherry's was always…like before the war I always bought my flowers from Cherry's. You know, it was not a lot of, but that's where I went. 'Cause they were over on Adams right across the street from where Sydney's was where we were. And Mrs. Cherry…A. B. had died and Mrs. Cherry stayed in that there for a while. Then she sold to Auggie when he came up here from Portland. And they by far had most birds at the theatre there. The…I'd say that they probably had, I'm just guessing, but I'm gonna say they probably had at least two-thirds of the business. But it wasn't a big…it wasn't that big. I mean, the Depression there there wasn't a lot of demand for flowers. And of course, after the war, as I said before, everything changed. How you got your flowers and what you had to sell. Instead of those three basics that I talked about you had much wider choice and from lots further away. But we don't think anything about it to get chrysanthemums from Israel now. Carnations from South America. Roses…the overseas roses are not…they're way overpriced, way too expensive, they're not as good as we raise here in the United States. So anyway, it… just everything is so different. It's just about like climbin' out of a Model-T Ford into a big SUV. It really is. [tape stopped]

8/13/02, tape 1, side 1

ES: John Stewart had been the chef or chief cook on the railroad.
PF: Yes, on the train.
ES: He decided to come to La Grande.
PF: I don't know exactly when he… I don't know exactly when he came, but one of my fond memories was that…I carried newspapers that *The Oregonian*. We went down to the *Oregonian*…to their express office and got our papers.
ES: When you were a boy?
PF: Yea. When I was just a young kid. And John was the first stop on my route which always included somethin' to eat. He saw to it that…became a very good friend. And his wife, after John passed away, which was…oh, I can't tell you when, but it was a long time in the past to me. My mother and I, after my dad passed away, we lived up on Sixth Street there. Mrs. Stewart helped Mother, my mother, get along 'cause her health wasn't too good. And she became, you know, just a goodness old long relationship anyway. And she was a just a dear friend, too. So we had a lot of good friends with the…there… the black people. I think I told you the other day I wasn't aware…I probably did things wrong sometimes, I don't know…but I was not aware of feelings of…you know, they were just people. I'm sure…I know there was a lot of people in La Grande that didn't feel that way about it. But certainly…I hope I was not guilty of any of the things I found out later.
ES: I think you would have known from them if they felt negative toward you. What can you remember about the inside of John Stewart's café and the kind of food he served?
PF: As I remember it would be on the corner where the auto parts store is now. It would be, let's see, Jefferson and…let's see, Jefferson…I can't say what that little street is there that faces…runs right along by the…oh, where ODS office is. That little piece of a street. I can't say what the name of it is right now.
ES: Next to the Foley Annex?
PF: Yea. And his, as I remembered, his little place was just on that corner. Those buildings were all new in those days. But I believe that's where it was 'cause it was just across from the depot and down a…up toward Portland a little bit. Anyway, why, that's where he had his little place. And I think it was, considering the times and Depression times and everything, I don't think it was…you know, that anybody got rich doing what they were doing, but it was certainly a good place.
ES: Did it have counter and stools?
PF: I don't remember. I remember tables and chairs. I don't know whether…I don't think there was a counter. I think it was just a kind of an open room. I don't remember… I remember the kitchen, though, was back there.
ES: That was out of sight of the customers?
PF: Pardon.
ES: That was out of sight of the customers?

PF: No. No, you…it was…it was…put it this way, it had a minimal amount of…a lot like it is today. You didn't have fancy booths and all that sorta. Just tables and chairs mostly. And I don't really recall except…I have the feeling it probably was just part of all one big room and then I'm sure there was some way to have food as it was prepared you weren't lookin' at a cook stove while you were there. It was just part of a…I'd say kind of a primitive restaurant in those days.

ES: John did all the cooking, do you think?

PF: As far as I know. Mrs. Stewart helped him.

ES: Did she wait tables?

PF: I'm sure she did. I don't think there were that many people. I don't…my, my…I don't know that I ever went there as a family group to go there to eat. My [inaudible under laughing] newspaper to get some.

ES: On the run, huh?

PF: But, uh…

ES: Did they serve breakfast, lunch and dinner?

PF: I can't tell you that. I know they had lunch and dinner. I know that. I'm not sure about breakfast.

ES: Were there usually a lot of customers in there?

PF: It seemed to me that they had a good trade.

ES: Mostly men?

PF: I wouldn't…no, I didn't get that.

ES: No? Okay.

PF: We had that…the area of town, in those days. There was Chinatown down just below. And the Chinese there right across from the post office…where the city building is now. City…that used to be the old post office. And there was down just this side of…oh, right adjoining where Max Park is now, there was a little Chinese place set back in there. Just a wood frame building. Then around the corner…it was going down Fourth Street past the old Safeway building down there and the block behind it where that tire place is now, Commercial Tire I think it is. That was all Chinese. They had…the Chinese they had troubles here. They'd get on what they called tong wars. I don't know what a tong was. It was some kind of club or some'm. Mrs. Laughlin, was her name, and he lived right across the street on Fourth Street. The parking lot that adjoins the Chamber of Commerce and that right in there. There was an apartment house there and that was the old Ford garage where that…__ Perkins' Ford garage. And my mother and I lived in this apartment next to Mrs. Laughin's. I think there was three apartments, two on the first floor and then Mrs. Laughlin was upstairs. And she was standing on the…as I…as far as I know and maybe somebody can correct on the details of this particular thing…but she was standing out on the steps of what was then the post office and those Chinese were in some kind of a scrap going on. I don't know what it was. But somebody fired a shot and it hit Mrs. Laughlin in the foot or the leg. And that caused quite a bit of ferror in La Grande.

ES: I'm sure it did!

PF: The Chinese got somewhat of a bad reputation. I don't know the details of that, but at one point in time…this was probably in the, oh, say it was in the first fifteen years of the 1900s. I understand it, they rounded all the Chinese up, took

'em on the train and told 'em just get them outta here. In spite of that the ones that weren't were run out of here, the ones that stayed, why, they did…you know, they were not picked on one way or the other. But whoever this group of people that were involved in shooting they…I guess…now I may be wrong in some of these details except I do know and I know some of the people that took part in the getting the Chinese out of town. Which that's the only time that I ever knew of a…you might say a racial incident around here that was of any seriousness. But anyhow.

ES: Is it your understanding that the reason the Chinese came here in the first place was to work on the railroad?

PF: Yes, but there was a lot of Chinese miners.

ES: Oh yes, that's right.

PF: Lots of Chinese miners. And they did all sorts of things. Now right where the present…the new Safeway is when I was a child that was…the whole area where the Safeway sits now was a great big garden. And the Chinese, all I knew, they were very little people. They weren't very big. And we had gambling halls all down on Jefferson and, in fact, on Adams down there and those Chinese loved to gamble. And those poor dales that go down there and they'd work all day long on their hands and knees…I never saw anything except the most primitive Chinese tools…mostly on their hands and knees and scrapin' with rudimentary…in other words, there was no equipment. It was all hand work. But they farmed that whole bit place, about four of 'em. And they did a good job. They had this funny old fellow called Friday. And he had a little hack or something with a big, old, funny horse and they had this big black dog that always followed him, walked behind that wagon, and they'd go all around town. And the reason he got this name Friday, as I understood it, why, his sales pitch was that "You better by now, I won't be back till Fliday." [laughs] That's about all…but he trailed up. He came to our… He covered a lot of area. He'd come by and people'd buy his vegetables. They were a very fine vegetable, too. But he was quite a town picture.

ES: Were some of these Chinese vegetables like boc choy?

PF: Oh no. I don't know. I was so darned young at the time. All I was fascinated by that Chinaman and that wagon and that horse. His old horse looked like he was somethin' out of cartoon. [laughs] And that big black dog. He had a great big…I don't…I suppose you'd call it a Labrador retriever type thing. The biggest dog…as a young kid I thought that was the biggest dog I ever saw. But he was always just three or four steps behind that wagon. Just followed him every place he went. They lived in almost like cardboard shacks on that ground. I don't recall ever being a regular house. I don't know what the poor gals did to stay alive, but they sure gambled a lot.

ES: They were here year round?

PF: Oh yea. Yea.

ES: 'Cause the gardening would only occur for about six months, wouldn't it?

PF: Yea. I don't know…I hadn't ever thought about what they might of done when it wasn't gardening. But there where the old Safeway building is…that piece of street, that piece of Fourth that run down there there was… On that first block off

of Adams on the left-hand side there was a big two-story building and that was some kind of a Chinese club or something…gathering place. And most the kids we were about a half-way afraid of the place. But kids'd…a neighbor of mine while we lived up in town, why, he had a bicycle and I didn't have one. Anyway, we'd get…used to get firecrackers. And we'd get up enough nerve to go down there to the corner of Fourth and Adams and that building was just…the doors on the left-hand side of the street. We would get up enough nerve to go in there and I think they knew what we wanted before we ever got there, but someway or another you made yourself ___. But we'd get firecrackers. And we'd almost run to get out of there and get back to safety on main street. [laugh]

ES: Did anything ever happen to you as a result of mixing with the Chinese?

PF: Uh-uh. No. I'm sure they were all nice people except there was some opium. Because when they dug up that land where the…see, the old La Grande Hotel was there. You might've seen a picture of that or not.

ES: Yes.

PF: When they dug that up…I think even after the hotel'd been built there…when they dug that up to put the Safeway store in there was some…I think there were some shacky-type buildings just beyond that bigger building, which was a pretty fair building. Then across the street where Fourth would go on down and run into the railroad tracks there were some shacks down there, just really Chinesey lookin' shacks. But anyway, when they dug that up they found opium jars all down in the…you know, like in…

ES: Sort of a cellar?

PF: I don't know. They were just down there. I can't remember who it was got a bunch of those. They bought 'em from I don't know who. Who had the rights to sell the stuff or whatever they did. But somebody here in town did know. But they had quite a…back in *The Observer* there was some write-ups about the opium things that they found, those artifacts in that ground down there. Then there was…then if you went down Fourth till they came to Jefferson then turned right and went back toward…up toward where John Hitchen…there were some shacks along there that had Chinese people in 'em. I don't know of any…any real…I never had a __ with the Chinese and the blacks ever had anything to do with one another. They may have, but I…I had that feeling that they didn't. I don't think that…

ES: Most of the Chinese didn't speak much English, did they?

PF: Not a lot.

ES: That'd be one reason.

PF: Yea. You know they dug holes around like they were at Pendleton. That underground place that the Chinese had down there right under the main street now. I think there was one up in Baker. But there was never anything like that here. But anyway, it was pretty…it was kind of a mix. You know, there was some Indians here that worked for…in later years worked for the Mt. Emily Lumber Company.

ES: I wanted to have you talk next, a lot, about the Indians.

PF: There was one…because my church…Presbyterian Church…I was on the session at the time. And Gilbert Conner was still alive. And his daughter, Leah, and his

son Ray. Leah is…I think about…she's younger than I am. But they came over here to church then there. And there's another brother that came to these some of things. So we got kinda acquainted there. And then there was a couple of families of the Indians around here that they…oh, I'm sure they had reservation rights, but they didn't live…they lived around here. And they were well respected people and there was…oh, from time to time there would be groups of Indians that…I suppose you could…just like anybody else wanted to go someplace else so they came over here. They used to trade with some of the merchants around here and everything. And they were…it's kind of hard to talk about 'em because everybody thinks they're always drunk and they're not. A lot of them were, but there was an awful lot of…very…now that Conner family and the George family and Minfarms and, a horrible name, but Cowpoo. Willie Cowpoo he was a pretty good athlete up here at the school. He played basketball. We used to get such a kick out of when we'd go to the basketball games and the Indians would come in and they were dressed, you know, just like…I don't know if you are familiar with how Indians dressed back then. They all had these big wide hats with…they never pushed the crown down. And they had braids sticking out and everything. They'd always…seemed like they got there just before the game started. They filed in they had a place where they sat. Right in with the rest of the crowd, but they all sat in a straight line. All walked down…they had literally had a place saved for 'em. March in there. Sit in there and watch the game and wouldn't change the expressions all the way through the game. Didn't clap, didn't cheer, just sit there. Watch the game and as soon as the game was over they'd all get up and file out.

ES: Were these college games?

PF: Yea.

ES: Did they come because one of their own was playing?

PF: Yea, Willie, Willie Cowpoo. And then…oh, Ray Conner. He was…he went to school here. He taught my niece at the North Powder school after he got out. Leah she…I don't think she ever taught around here. She got…I don't know where she taught first, but she…later on she was on the Warm Springs Reservation as a…I guess a superintendent or whatever she was. But she had a responsible job there. And she…was trying…the basic…her…took it that her job always was to get the kids to go to school. And over there on the Warm Springs setup, why, they went to school at Wasco. And they…they'd go to school. It was her job to get 'em to school and whatever or try to get 'em to school. And they'd come and then whenever they felt like it they'd get up and leave. The people in charge of the education was not…weren't happy with it…these Indian kids the way they did things. And Leah told 'em in just so many words, "Now look, you're lucky if they come to school at all. They don't have any…they don't really understand anything about the system. We're tryin' to teach them about that." Now this is in fairly recent times. In my time. But anyway, she said, "If they come…if they get here at eight o'clock if they stay at two hours and get up and leave, you've had 'em for two hours. And maybe over time we can break 'em into this so that they might actually, down the road, will have kids completing school." That's where it started from. And another funny…another funny 'n' she

talked about. They had a different churches there. All the do-gooders are gonna convert the Indians. So they sent a ministerial delegation to wherever her offices were. They said, "We don't understand. We ask the Indians, "Will you come to church?" "Yes, we'll come to church." Sunday comes and they're never there." She said, "What time's your church?" She was raised a Presbyterian so she knew what…she was getting' a big kick out of this. She says, "Well, okay. What time to do you have church?" "Eleven o'clock." "Why don't you have it at dawn out on the mountain? That's when they go to church. You want to talk to them you have to go where they are. They're not gonna come here." Over time that broke down. But you see, those cultures were still in the process of tryin' to understand one another. It was quite interesting to…

ES: It sounds as though you had quite a number of conversations with Indians.

PF: Yes.

ES: Did they tell you stories from their past, their parents and their grandparents?

PF: No, not much. I don't think that…unless you knew…knew their parents, like we did through the church or something like that, there was very little connections. Like those Indians coming to see the basketball game. They…that was a connection.

ES: I thought specifically they might have known about their tribal members and some of the other tribes who came to the Grande Ronde Valley regularly over many years.

PF: I'm sure they did, but I don't…that was not a thing that you…the only real recollection that I have with the Indian people. Out on the Foothill Road clear down the road from the time ya turn off a Gekeler Lane and start down there and go off to Ladd Canyon. The Smoots family there and the Gekelers and those people they had gained access to that land over time, you know. Of course the Oregon Trail ran right through there. And all I can really remember about that part of it that the Indians would come down to Dee Smoots' place which is the closest area to where the Ladd Marsh type place there. And that was kind of damp in there and they used to come and gather camas. And they…hardly any Smoots' left that would know anything about that. I think is was mostly all the kids and grandkids all the rest of them are dead. But that used to be quite a thing to go down in there. And that's where Conners came there and…they had teepees and…there just that piece of ground right kind of just this side of Dee's and out in that field. It's still alive with camas, one of the very few places that is. But I can remember camas cakes were given to me. They use it a lot of different ways. They dug the roots for…and made gar out of it. And they mixed it kind of like pemmican. They mixed fat with it and then they put berry and stuff in it. And they cooked them someway over smoky fires, you know. And they always had bags of those with 'em, you know. They'd eat…pretty good food. And as I remember it was, you know, they tasted fine.

ES: Now I assume that these most recent Indians who are gathering camas didn't really need it as food. Maybe they were carrying on a tribal tradition.

PF: Yes, yes it was. Yes because you've heard of camas country up in Idaho?

ES: Yea.

PF: And Cricket Flat…its hard to imagine now, but that used to be alive with camas. And there were lots of places where there was a lot of it. That place over down there by the marsh was exceptionally good. And I don't know why. I never really thought about what it took to grow camas except…

ES: Probably it needs a lot of water.

PF: Yea, but anyhow.

ES: Like a hundred or more years ago camas was a major food source for the Indians, wasn't it?

PF: Oh yes. Yea. Yea, they…its like pemmican. You store it forever. Its like John Wayne in that movie with Katherine Hepburn when a Chinaman made him…whatever he called 'em…I'll say pill drops, but that wasn't the word for it that he used. He always had a big bag of 'em. Corn dollars! Corn something. This Chinaman made this stuff. Smash 'em up in his hand, I guess, whether they're cooked or not. But anyway, he always had a bag full of 'em. They had somethin' to eat as long as they had…corn dodgers! That's corn dodgers. That was in that movie. That reminded me of the camas because they always had that with 'em. And I'm sure that they used that to a great extent to get…you know, by hard times or food that they didn't have to fool around with on their route. The Carter family…he was in the education…

ES: Harvey.

PF: Harvey, yes.

ES: And Genevieve.

PF: Yea. He…Harvey and his father…now his father was…he was half-breed and Harvey was quarter. And Mr. Carter he lived…they lived out kind of on the north side out there. Back over in here someplace. And he…he was the…he'd been raised in Oklahoma. He was a Cherokee.

ES: Harvey's father?

PF: Yea. But…Cherokee were eastern, but that's where they were put. And I don't know the story of how he…what set-up his parentage was. But he was a great man. I just thought the world of him even after Helen and I…we were still goin' together and was livin' in just kind of a little old garage-type shack that was on the place where the Carter family lived. And anyway, why, I'd go down to see him and Helen she went with me a time or two. Anyway, he didn't have much in there. So I had a real nice rug at this furniture store I worked for. It was a trade-in. It was a pretty good rug. And we got to…I got to thinkin' about it and I thought "I'm gonna take that down to Mr. Carter." So he just had like tar paper nailed on the floor. And we had to move a bunch of them to get that rug. And it kind of fit the room pretty good, you know. He was quite pleased. But we went back on the Minam…oh, back into the…one time we rode all the way from…our horses were up here in Old Town and different places. We rode clear across the valley and went up to where Moss Springs is now and dropped into the Minam and started our trip from there. And then we wandered around…I don't know…we'd been gone couple a weeks, I guess, and my mother and Genevieve's mother and Genevieve… Harvey had this funny old car. It was a coupe. It was one of a kind of small car. It wasn't as big as anything hardly if it was even around those days was a small car. Anyway, they drove clear up to the end of the

Lostine River. Up there…we came up there at the top…and brought us fresh supplies…[end tape]

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PF: …there's a trail of __. I guess we probably…I don't know. I think we were out six weeks all together. And we rode all over everyplace.
ES: This was the summertime, right?
PF: Yea.
ES: Do you know why the older Mr. Carter had come to the Grande Ronde Valley?
PF: No, not really.
ES: Had he lived here a major part of his life?
PF: I can't fill you in on all the details. I really don't know because by the time I really became aware… The Carter family___ was quite a few people in the family. And they were…I don't know…they just…you didn't know a lot about the family. I knew Harvey real well and I knew his dad real well.
ES: Harvey was just a little older than you?
PF: Yes, he'd probably ten years older than me because he was about my brother…older brother…next brother. My closest brother was ten years older than I was. And I…Harvey was probably a little younger than Ed. In between me and my brother Ed.
ES: Would you describe him?
PF: Pardon?
ES: Would you describe him the way you remember him?
PF: Harvey?
ES: Harvey.
PF: He had very Indian look, high cheekbones. Just he was a hiker. Walked…when we had a cabin…we still have a cabin…Harvey was very active in Scouting wherever. And that's kind of where I met them, except my brother, the family knew him there. I kind of met him later when I fell into Scouting. And Harvey he was a fantastic swimmer. Swam the length of Wallowa Lake back when not many people did. And he would be at the Methodist church campground…they all go to the Methodist church there. And he would get up early in the morning and he'd hike clear to the top of…we always called it Meadow Mountain, I guess it's Bonneville. Meadow Mountains the big mountains that's always in the pictures. He'd hike up the back of that and hike around and we'd just be getting' started to get up and get breakfast and stuff at the cabin down where…we were down below about from the foot of that mountain probably a half mile, three-quarters of a mile. And here Harvey'd come and he'd sit and have breakfast with us. That went on a lot. Harvey taught me how to swim. I was not a good swimmer in the beginning. And he took me down to the lake this one time and he said, "Now we're gonna get your head under water." 'Cause he'd given up on tryin'…I just…I had a bad experience by gettin' ducked and thrown into a swimmin' pool that was in the basement of an Elks Club. You went through some window in the floor…street level and walked in on a plank to get down there and they're gonna teach swimming lessons. I get in this dark place and I

didn't like the looks of that thing. There was a lot of people down there. About that time somebody shoved me in the water. And I got out and I…it really branded me. I just…I had a terrible time. Anyway, Harvey finally went out…I don't know, I must have been eleven or twelve. He says, "We're goin' down to the lake and you're gonna learn to swim. I'm tired of foolin' with you." So we went down there in that ice-cold water and the lake was just as clear as you could see clear to the bottom of anyplace and it wasn't dark. And so he kept me down there the better part of the day and when he got me underwater he said, "One think, Fitzgerald, we got you underwater now how we gonna get you back up so I can…" [laugh] So…but he…I would never…I don't think I'd ever learn to swim if it hadn't been for him. And he did a lot of people that way. He was a marvelous fellow. But he was a hiker and wouldn't quit. And he just…he…we'd always have horses. Now Mr. Carter, the father, his dad, would get him a horse. He was old. He was, gosh…I don't know…to me he was [laugh] just awfully old. But he would never ride the horse. We'd always have a horse for him if he had to. Up there in those mountains someplace he'd get up and fix breakfast. He loved to cook that one there. It was all outdoor cooking. He was an expert cook. And he'd get breakfast there and before the rest of get the horses packed up and ready to go, if we were moving that day, he'd take out ahead. He always had two…two sticks, pretty good ones to…it looked kind of carved out a bit…Anyway, he'd walk with these two sticks. And my fondest memory of him he would…like we were at North Minam Meadows…no, we were at Steamboat Lake and we were going to go over to Long Lake which was up quite a steep ridge to get up to top and… Anyway, Mr. Carter would walk as far as he could then you would find him and he… I can still see him with us right there talkin' about this. He had these two sticks over his shoulder and he was sittin' on a rock and he had…always carried a little pocket testimony, it was John. And he'd be sittin' there readin' his little book of John.

ES: In the New Testament?

PF: Yea. So I had…I didn't have much of camera, but I took some pictures of him. Now here's the Indian. He did not want his picture taken. He didn't know…nobody knew that I snapped these pictures of him sittin' on this rock and wherever. And I think I got three or four, but they're just little things. When Mr. Carter finally passed away and Harvey was principal of Central School. And so I went up there this one day and…up to the school…I said, "Harvey, do you have any pictures of your father?" Harvey said, "Good gosh, no. He would not allow his picture to be taken. We have no family pictures of him." And I said, "How 'bout these four?" He said, "Where'd you get those?" I said, "One morning when we left Steamboat Lake and went up to the ridge I took a couple up there and a couple someplace else wherever." And he…Harvey didn't know what to think of it. They weren't great pictures, but…you know why they didn't want their picture taken? You know…it steals their soul.

ES: Yea.

PF: There's a combination of Christian belief and Indian beliefs and he didn't…boy, he was adamant about that. So anyway, why, then I…other Indian experience with people I knew. They used to come up the Umatilla River and come up that

Thomas Road that comes up to Ruckle. Do you know where that is out here? If you come up…you come to the reservation…

ES: From Pendleton?

PF: Yes. And that Thomas Road climbs up and it comes up to Ruckle Ridge and it's one of the very earliest roads in this area. And, uh,…

ES: Where is that relation to Cabbage Hill?

PF: If you go…are you familiar with the reservation at all?

ES: No.

PF: You know where the Gammlin place is? You know where the railroad tracks run through there?

ES: Yea.

PF: If you cross the railroad tracks and you take a right and you go right through the reservation. And then you go on up the Umatilla River and there's what they used to call Bingham Hot Springs, but it's been sold several times. Some big dude ranch just bought it, I understood there. It has real nice hot water there and a beautiful lodge. But anyway, you just continue on that. Then you…the Umatilla kind of winds around a little goes up toward Tollgate from there. Now the road that comes from Elgin over to Weston, that would be to the north of the Umatilla River. The Ruckle Ridge that's where the Umatilla starts down that Thomas Road and in there. That's the…the North Fork. Then it goes down and where it comes out of…oh, the area off to the right of the road that runs to Ukiah. South Fork meets down there in the bottom of that canyon. That's where the Thomas Road takes off and then came in here. At one time there was a railroad and I'm not sure which company it was, but it wasn't any of the people that are here now that laid the railroad. It was some railroad that was gonna come in…as far as I understood it, it was going to come in kinda through the Pondosa country from that direction. It went so far then came down to the valley and it went across. You used to be able through flying you could still see where the right of way paralleled out to the east of it. The right a way they never built. Beyond just surveying it and kind of staking it out and roughed up the ground enough you can still it in the wheat fields for a long time.

ES: Is this the north end of the Grande Ronde Valley you're talking about?

PF: Yea. I don't know where it came in, where the right of way came in, but it crossed over by from Cove in that general area and came across here and went down to…it was gonna go to Summerville. Then it would turn up Ruckle…where Ruckle Road is now…but comin' down off that Ruckle Ridge. And they were gonna tunnel through there. And that ridge…I've heard, I don't know…say that if they tunneled under the Ruckle Ridge and came out it'd be right on the headwaters of the Umatilla River.

ES: Sounds like a mighty tunnel.

PF: It was surprising it'd get that far. That's the big argument, that if that outfit had come from there and had a real railroad and put the tunnel under there then instead of bein' up over this it's all downhill clear to Pendleton. And it was…but they…for whatever reason they pulled out and didn't ever finish it.

ES: Terribly expensive.

PF: Yea. I don't know that it was terribly expensive compared to this one when you think of the two places that we've got here that are nightmares to anybody is this mountain here and Ladd Canyon. Anyway, that just…I started to take it off track there. But these Indians…seemed like every time I'd be over there in that country around Ruckle and…I've never been down that road down to…go down to the reservation. But the Indians used to come up in here. They'd be huckleberryin' and everything. It seemed like every time I ever got up there here they'd be about time they'd be comin' home and they'd have their…they all had pickup trucks of course, in those days, later days…but they would always have their teepee poles stuck down in the back end of the bed or however they had them tied on, they were longer than that. Then they had 'em up over the roof of the pick-up stickin' way out. And it'd have tassels hangin' on 'em and stuff that they didn't take off of 'em when they knocked down their…when they were the packin'. Maybe they headed back to the reservation. I met quite a few of 'em like…not Gilbert…Menthorne. They still live at…do you know where Corn Hollow over on the Umatilla River?

ES: No.

PF: If you take that other fork I'm talkin' about the Umatilla River goes over…I don't know where it peters out. Someplace up toward Tollgate, up in those mountains. But it comes down through the…Corn Hollow. Do you know where Adams, Oregon is on the highway from Pendleton to…

ES: Yes.

PF: Walla Walla.

ES: Yes.

PF: If you turn right at Adams you'll see a sign that says Corn Hollow. Go down there.

ES: Oh, yes. Now were you having these encounters with the Indians who had been huckleberrying when you were a young man?

PF: Mm-hmm.

ES: In your twenties, thirties?

PF: Most of my life became…I was married when I was twenty. I was twenty-one in December. I was married September. The war broke out in Europe the day I got married. And most of this adventures that I had, such as they were, with the Indians was prior to that time.

ES: I just wanted to try and orient it in the century.

PF: But it seemed like our paths our crossed an awful lot.

ES: How would the Indians dress at that time?

PF: It depended on what generation it was. The older Indians, like when Gilberts family when they came over to church here the ladies dressed with the shawls and the laced up…they're not…I don't remember the term…it's not moccasins. They're beaded and they came up about so.

ES: Like boots.

PF: Yea, kinda. And they dressed…that's not the Indian way, but the way they dressed after they ___. [laughs]

ES: Forcibly inducted in Western ways.

PF: But the men always…the older…the Indians that were older to me when I saw them they all looked alike because the hat always, a great big Stetson, pulled right straight down and they were always big. And they had maybe some old beadwork someplace on 'em. And then they always wore scarves. And sometimes there would be a beaded jacket, sometimes it would just be a coat, just a regular store bought whatever. Probably bought it at Hamley's. They didn't…I don't recall seein' many of them in…not cowboy boots. I don't really recall what they…it wasn't moccasins. But they had…I really think maybe somebody over there in the Pendleton area made 'em for 'em especial. 'Cause you could by 'em at the store, Hamley's. But anyway, they would…that's the way they… the way we'd see 'em. And there was kind of a…that was kind of a dividing line between the younger Indians and them and then the older Indians, the really older ones, and you didn't see much of them 'cause they just…they rarely ever left the reservation.

ES: Now was that about the time that you said the Indians were looked bedraggled?

PF: Oh. I think…just in their tale. I think I told you my father passed away in 1935. And during that time, say from January of '35 up until the war came, I had about…I don't know how many mentors. I mean people that just…I was a kid that needed a dad and didn't have one and I had a lot of dads, fortunately. Now Harley Smith, who would be related to the Smith, Connley, Grey, Miller set-up over at Cove, Harley was a…I think he'd be some kind of a cousin to Maxine Connley over…Maxine Stewart. He was also…I don't know when you say Smith there's so darn many of 'em. Anyway, my sister-in-law was a Smith and they were cousins of some kind. So, you know, gets all mixed up. Anyway, Harley had a place over here that a…you know where the Blue Mountain Crossing thing is up here at Spring Creek where you go to see the old trail?

ES: Yes.

PF: It's this side of that. You go through California Gulch which come up on this flat. And Harley was raised up there in that…I have no idea what…the cabin was, oh, I'd guess maybe twenty by thirty. Log cabin. It had a little stoop on it later on that somebody stuck out there of concrete or stones or something to sit on. But this was a long time ago in the last century, not nineteen hundred, but eighteen hundred. And Harley talked about when…his term was when they put the Indians on the reservation…and I don't know what Indians they were or where they came from…but he said he sat on that stoop, a little kid, and he said, "As a child, I was scared to death of those Indians." But they trailed 'em by there and he says in a single line right over the Oregon Trail and he says, "In later years and I thought what about…they didn't have anything. Very few of 'em were even mounted on horses."

ES: Where had they come from?

PF: I don't know.

ES: Gathered up from wherever they were. Would be probably say they were members of the Umatilla tribe?

PF: I doubt it. You see, this was a gathering place here. This…if you know the history of this valley.

ES: Yes.

PF: This was a neutral ground. And they came in from a lot of places.
ES: But they didn't stay very long, did they?
PF: No, no they didn't.
ES: I thought they went back home to wherever they had been.
PF: Yea, it could have been, you know… But you see, it's hard to say because of the intermingling of the Indians, intermarriage between tribes…for instance, Kamiakin over at Tri-Cities he was not a Yakima or any of the tribes up there, he came from north up there by…oh where that north freeway crosses… east and west freeway that crosses and goes…it goes up by George, Washington right in there.
ES: Spokane and Ellensburg?
PF: Yea. He came from that tribe and he was a politician. He built his own private…he was workin' for himself. That tribe up there is very poor and they hadn't much goin' for him. He marries…this uh, I can't say the chief's name, but Yakima. Anyway, he married into that…married the chief's daughter. Over time he became the head of Kamiakin. Became the head of the Yakima nation. And he was…he had a real dislike and hatred for the white people. And he tried to promote a war between the combined nations, Payuse and Walla Walla. And at one point in time he came here with the idea of driving the white people clear out of the whole area.
ES: Within the last part of the eighteenth century?
PF: I'd have to go get the book and look at that particular timeframe up. No, it would've been earlier because…but anyway, the way this story ends up…and don't…I wouldn't put this on tape. The Mormon church had armory…made guns at Salt Lake. They tried to get the Indian tribes stirred up and the meeting was right here in this valley. They tried to get the Indian tribes…the proposition they would supply the guns. Arm the Indians and fight the whole…chase 'em all…chase all the white people out.
ES: How do you know that?
PF: Do you know Elvin Jose?
ES: Mm-hmm.
PF: Okay, he writes about it. So the Nez Perce sent a big group here and they're all that stopped it. They were big enough that they said they have no argument with the white people. At that point in time they didn't. So that supposedly died right here in this valley…uprising. The Bannocks were for it and Shoshones and quite a group of 'em that were kinda wantin' to do this. But when the Nez Perce said no. And out of that…
ES: They were gonna drive the white settlers out of the whole of eastern Oregon?
PF: The Pacific Northwest. They couldn't get the backing. But Kamiakin was the chief honcho. We just came by Battleground State Park the other day, drove by there. And down that draw that goes down from where…have you been over by the __ State Park?
ES: No, I don't think so.
PF: It's outta Pendleton on the way to John Day. Anyway, down in there in the bottom of it there's logs…they had a lot of fighting among the Indians and that and I can't remember of the Indian chief. But whichever group that got in a fight

down there and called it Battleground State Park. They killed the chief down in there. And that stopped…that slowed somethin' up. Then there was a guy named…like Dayton and all up there whatever tribe was up in there. I can't say this name, it's like p-e-o-p-e-o moxmox. Or its pewpew or…those two words together…moxmox. And he was murdered by the people over there. There was a…had a lot of Indian uprising. A lot of 'em just wanted to chase all the white people out of here and there.

ES: Of course the white people who were here were in here in violation of the treaty.

PF: Yea, but they weren't…not here they weren't.

ES: The treaty that I read about, 1855 I think it was, said that all of western Oregon on the other Cascades would be the white settlement and all of the east would be for the Indians.

PF: Yea, well. But it just reminds me that there was plenty of trouble between the Indians. That always makes me kind of upset that the Indians talkin' 'bout what we did to them. Okay, sure, but that's the history of mankind up to that point in time. They were doin' to each other…I mean, there wasn't anybody meaner on God's earth than the Mandan Indians up in Montana. I think when the white man gave 'em smallpox I think that most of the Indians…I don't know whether there was ever even one survive of the Mandan tribe. And he…the white man got rid of him I don't think there was many unhappy Indians [laugh] about that. I don't think anybody'd want to meet 'em. But, you know, there's two sides to a coin.

ES: And when you said you heard a lot of lies about the Battle of the Grande Ronde do you think you know what the truth is?

PF: No, because the…I've heard…read so many accounts of it and…now for your edification, the battle took…big part of the battle took place right out here at this river. Right here, this very spot.

ES: How do you know that?

PF: Because that's where it was fought?

ES: What records or…for that?

PF: Okay, there's a monument over here that says Mt. Glen Farm. What they did when they Indians…now this part you know as a fact. How many people were killed and how wild it was and so on so forth it just depends on who's tellin' the story. Now right over at that corner that monument says this is where the battle was fought. To that extent I suppose maybe that somebody fought right on that corner, I'm not sure. I don't think they knew where Mt. Glen Road was at that time. Anyway, now the story as far as I think most people how the battle was fought. The Indians hoarded or located…where they came in from I don't know for sure. But the idea behind the battle as far as the white people were concerned was to split the Indians. And whether it was from up here this way or over here this way… The thing that they did…this is called the Place of the Cottonwoods right through here at that time. And the Indians sent the women and children right down there to this area. And somehow or another wherever they came from…and you can hear that they came from over at Walla Walla where the whites were strong…Ft. Walla Walla and so on. They came in here so if they came in this… [end tape]

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PF: …they separated from the main tribe and went right through ‘em. And if you read the popular version, of course we won the battle and after killing x numbers of people and they chased ‘em off this way and chased ‘em that way in totally different directions. And took all their supplies. Didn’t bother the women or children and things. Until the white man came in and split the…down the center rung on ‘em and banged ‘em off both directions and chased ‘em all over hell’s half acre. So who…who knows what really happens. I mean, if you’d ask the guys that supposedly chased some of ‘em up this direction they came back and probably said, “We’ve got most of ‘em, or all of ‘em, or ten of ‘em, or whatever.” Then they’d get some goin’ the other direction they some. When they got all done…like the coffee table, the large coffee table the first __ doesn’t have a chance. [laughs]

ES: Is it your understanding that the whites who were doing the fighting were Army or National Guard?

PF: I’d have to…no…I don’t know about a National Guard. There was a contingent I think sent from Ft. Walla Walla. I would go get the book and show you that.

ES: I’ve read about that, but I just wondered what your information was.

PF: Just what I’ve read. I’ve got about fifty books in there that tell different stories depending on who tells it. [laugh] If it’s a little pamphlet that was draw up about so thick and about that there and you get one guy’s version of what was going on at that particular time here. So if you read some of the writing on these people that did a lot of the writing these so-called early histories of Grande Ronde Valley or the whole area for that matter they barely could write. The spelling and the grammar and the whole thing. They…I shouldn’t say not spell. Maybe that’s the way they spelled in those days. But most of ‘em probably were lucky to have had a third or fourth or fifth grade education.

ES: But that doesn’t mean that they weren’t intelligent.

PF: No, no. I don’t mean that. I mean when you read a version, though, one guy’s account of the Battle of the Grande Ronde or when Bonneville came here the first time… Captain Bonneville he came in here and he described this entire area as being on fire. Now what’s that mean? Does that mean if I’m sitting here in this house and look out the window and see fire all around here and then make the statement the entire area was on fire. I just…I never quite understand what… because if you had a means of getting’ in an aircraft and flyin’ up there and lookin’ over the whole area you could say yea, this whole area was on fire. Maybe this part…the Indians set fire to it anyway. Kept it clean. But anyhow, why, his description…I think he was here for about two weeks clear back…what was it…

ES: Early part of the nineteenth... 1820 or so.

PF: Yea. And the description that he wrote were not extensive, but they certainly differ from one guy that was writing out of the Burnt River and comin’ down here and land in this valley and thought it was the most beautiful place he’d ever seen. Maybe they were ten, fifteen, twenty years apart or maybe a little longer than that.

But you don't see references to this place being on fire for the most part except in some of these…that account.

ES: Why do you think the Indians might have set fire? You said to keep it clean? Clean from what?

PF: Ponderosa forests don't burn real well if you got 'em open. They're like parch. For instance, down at the far end of the valley…they're gone now…but even in my lifetime starting over at like where Tamarack Springs is and that present road there and clear across the valley over to Mt. Harris and I don't know how far this way, but that was all ponderosa forest. There's still some trees down there on McKenzie lane where Clements built that house out there the ponderosa pine is still there and down by what they call Dry Creek School and that way there's some still there. But they…the earlier pioneers, the people who used to live out there, they said this was all forest which they promptly cut down and made into farms and houses and whatever. So when…in order to not get caught in fires that was gonna burn them up along with it the kept…like up here and all this area up in there used to be…even in my lifetime it does not look now like it did when I was a kid because it was almost all ponderosa forest out there.

ES: And what area are you talking about?

PF: Between here and the top of the mountain and up toward Ukiah and clear across the Blue Mountains here over into…that's the reason Mt. Emily Lumber Company came here.

ES: Much taller trees than we have now.

PF: Huge trees and just marvelous forest. They cut 'em all down. If you know anything about forestry at all you know what comes up right after that. Brush and the weed trees, the lodge pole pine. When the Tusset moss cleaned this all out of here a few years back it was all lodge pole pine for the most part. Between here and Meacham and right beyond Meacham there wasn't a tree left out there that was alive. They'd been cuttin' those damn lodge poles down every fifteen minutes ever since… The state spends most of the time keepin' that freeway clear and it you don't… We drove all over that area __. A couple of my buddies rode out and traveled all over that area just to see what was goin' on. Some places they're thinning it down ___. But if you've got lodge pole there I don't know what would be the natural progression of these trees and this land if you just got off of it and didn't…and said, "Okay, let it go." I don't know at what point in time they would die from fire or whatever might die…might cause it. But lodge pole is a weed tree. It has no…big scheme of things, but it did exist. You didn't see that much lodge pole. Now it's like hair on a dog's back. We drove through miles and miles and miles of that here just the other day and it just looks like fur. It just comes up every place.

ES: So do you think when the Indians were here and setting fires they were burning the underbrush?

PF: Yea, keep 'em open.

ES: So they were obviously aware of forest conservation tactics.

PF: Yes, to their own convenience because they…now here. When the Oregon Trail came to the valley and got to "B" Avenue it stopped dead in it's tracks 'cause here's mountains out here. That river, nobody went up and down that river. It

was full of brush and everything. So what do they do? Go to Fox Hill and went over the top and dropped down into the Five Points Creek country which is just up up near Hilgard. And they cut left on Pelican Creek and went up through there. There's a narrow canyon…then when got up on top of this part I'm talkin' about where Harvey Smith grew up. They would trail across there and drop into California Gulch and went out by where its called Blue Mountain Crossing now. And that's where…the roads weren't down in here. You couldn't get through it.

ES: What evidence is there for the roads going that route that you just said?

PF: The Fox…I don't know…not anybody that I ever knew. But when the road crossed the valley here and hugged the mountain around here. In later time…now the first…first getting out of the valley right there at the corner of Cedar and "A" Street where I had my greenhouse and the old courthouse used to sit there was a stagecoach barn or place there. I knew this lady that she was born there in that area. She was still alive after the war and she taught at the old high school which is just about where the high school is now. In fact, she called me up one day and they were cleaning out this old stagecoach barn and she gave me the buggy that she used to drive from her house to the school when she taught. I had my horses up there and she said, "Would you like to have that?" And I said, "I sure would." It was in good shape and I put it in a potting shed I had there and had the door locked. I came up there about two or three days later and somebody'd broke the lock off and stole my buggy. Anyway, Ella Russell, she lived there, oh…we bought that greenhouse in 1945 and she was…I think she was there for another maybe ten years. She passed away and the old courthouse is torn down and there're homes there now. But anyway, when you got on "B" Avenue you came up there and all of a sudden you ran into the side of the mountain here. And I've read this different times the account of getting up over that…up out of this…Table Mountain here, over here. The hospital kind of sits just to the south of Table Mountain base a little bit. They went up out of there and climbed up on top and they crossed over until they got to Rock Creek. And they dropped down Rock Creek and then they came down the Grande Ronde River to Five Points Creek. They went up Five Points Creek to the Five Point…to Pelican Creek. Turned on Pelican Creek and had to fight their way through it, you know, to get a space wide enough to put things in, you know, get stuff through. But I haven't been up there for a long time 'cause it's all fenced off now. But when I used to go up there with Harley a lot and he went up Pelican Creek and then all of a sudden here was a… There was a Harding family that had this little stagecoach barn and place right there on Pelican Creek. And there was no…it kind of petered out and there was no place else to go so they made a sharp left and they had to just chisel this road up to get up on that flat. They literally chiseled with whatever they had. Made a place big enough to drive up, you know, get up the side of that little canyon draw and get up on that flat. Then they could go on over to basically what the Spring Creek country people __ as far as that. And then that Blue Mountain Crossing, what they call it now, the tracks are still there. And they went on over. And oh…Narcissa Whitman. They put…in her diaries…there's a sign up there on that road, that summit road that runs over the top of Mt. Emily off of the freeway out there several miles in. They…Whitman family apparently when they

came to this place I'm talkin' about they run out of someplace to go they went on up Five Point Creek. And there's a mountain called Sugar Loaf up there. You can see it from the creek or you can look up… if you take the summit road across the top there you can see Sugar Loaf Mountain from either side. And Mrs. Whitman, in writing her diary about that area… I think she thought that she was…if she was ever goin' to hell she was already there when they got there. They were so tired and so upset. Then getting from Five Points Creek up to the top of that summit. Then they…there was just…it was a short diary. I've read her diary. It was a short thing she wrote, but she apparently was very unhappy with where they were. But they got up there on that where the summit road is now and they went over and they dropped right down on the Umatilla River. That would be the fork that isn't that comes out of Ruckle. It's the part that comes out of Camilla country down through there. Anyway, she…they got to there and then they dropped down in Ladd Canyon. And if you've ever been down in there you… I can't imagine anybody…I just… Even today I wouldn't want to go down there even to elk hunt. It's just…you know…some'm else. But anyway, that opening up of that area was… The roads went, you know, there's people fought their way anyway they could go and I'm sure there was more than one way that they got to the…over to Walla Walla country.

ES: Have you seen maps of some of these roads?

PF: Yea…I'm tryin' to think. [pause] I don't know where the book I have… I've got the books in there… [tape stopped]

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ES: Your father operated the La Grande Iron Works.

PF: Yea.

ES: I imagine that you have pretty vivid images of what that looked like outside and inside.

PF: Yea. The buildings are still there. Right over here.

ES: The original one is not.

PF: Oh no.

ES: The original one is where the OTEC building is now?

PF: Yea.

ES: Yes. What did the old one look like?

PF: I've got a picture of it out here in the…we can go out and show you in the shed.

ES: Is that the outside, though?

PF: Yes and no. You can kinda…the one is an outside picture and then I've got a picture of the inside.

ES: What kind of equipment did he have set up inside?

PF: Primitive. [laugh] It's very rudimentary. I don't think there was any concrete floor. It was just a building that was placed there to conduct whatever he was doin' at that particular time. That was…I don't ever remember that building as such because it was before I was born that he moved down to ___

ES: I misunderstood. I thought that you had been around when that old building was…

PF: No. No, just…the only thing I have I don't remember ever there because by time I came along, we was 1918, he had moved over on Cove Avenue and I don't really know how long he was there in that place on __. The streets weren't paved that long ago where the fire station in now. Not the new one, but the old one. I don't ever remember the streets not being paved there. So that occurred early on when he was over at that old building.

ES: Would you describe the inside of the new one then? The kinds of equipment that were there?

PF: Yes, it was a very well equipped shop. He did lots of different kind of work for different people. Anything…[other voice talking]…I don't know if you're pickin' all that up or not. But anyway, after he built the new building, new shop, this was, as far as I know, was…the buildings that they…that there now I know were there prior to 1918. The reason I know that one of the old historians of the valley, Earl Van Blocklin, he called me one day…this is since I've been out here in fairly recent times…he called and he wanted to know when those buildings were built. And I said, well, I thought sometime '21, 1921, '22 or something like that. The reason I was thinkin' along those lines the buildings burned two different times. So Van Blocklin said, "I used to work on a farm up out here just past Island City. I worked on a farm during the summertime and everything. Then I worked for your dad during the winter. And I said to him, "Why…" I said, "How do you know that?" He says, "You were born in December of 1918." I said, "Yea, that's right." I said, "What does that mean to you?" He said, "I was workin' for your dad…" I think there were about twenty-five or thirty people worked there, crew. And he said, "You're dad came around just before Christmas handing out cigars because you had been born and it was December 23, 1918." And he said, "So that building was there then." I said, "You know more about it at that point than I do." But at any rate, the various machinery. They had several lays to turn steel on. As I remember, two or three lays of one size and a couple of some other size. Then he had a wood turning shop and he had people that could turn out patterns for parts. It was…occupied the…it'd be the south…southwest side of the building.

ES: Each pattern was made of wood?

PF: Yes. See, in those days you didn't go to a part store and buy parts. If you had a particular piece of machinery out here say doing hay or doing…threshing grain or whatever. If something went haywire you didn't go to a parts shop and buy a part. You came to my dad's place and he made one…made the parts. So they had quite an extensive what they called a little casting area. And they made babbit, bronze and various kinds of materials to make these parts.

ES: Babbit is an alloy, right?

PF: Yea. But I can remember babbit and bronze and whatever else. I wasn't really into that all that much as a kid. But I used to stand there and watch 'em make these parts.

ES: Now the patterns for these parts. You must of gotten the patterns __ from the manufacturer?

PF: I don't know where those parts came from. All I know was that it was in the building. The first time it burned and it was in a big…all the parts…the patterns were in this big safe, a fireproof safe so they didn't loose those patterns. At any rate, he did a lot of work. He repaired equipment as big as railroad engines and these engines that used to bring the logs in that run these trains around here for the various lumber companies that transported their logs down to the mill here. For instance, the old camp up at is now Camp Elkanah. It was a Mt. Emily camp that belonged to the Stang family. And then the Bowman Hicks lumber was here where the present fairgrounds are. And then there were mills in Union, Elgin. And my dad…I think…I may be wrong in this, but I think he was the only person that made the parts in that time. So that good equipment inside the building…it was a large building. And concrete floor and everything was set up to where it was convenient to the type of work that the different areas of the building were doing. And they had…Dad at one time bought a huge machine that was a… I thought it was huge. It was a big thing and it ran off of a belts. They had a big central power system in the building and then everything ran off of belt and pulley all over the building. And there was all kinds of drills, big drill outfits that they used. And then they…his machine he bought sometime…oh, say after 1925. And it was a huge things with big pulleys and wheels that turned on it. And what the idea was that the person was gonna cut off pieces of steel rod. They'd shove it in this one part of it and pull it and it'd cut the rod off. Now they use entirely different material to do… you know…where rod…I suppose they could just cut 'em off now while they're there. But back then that was quite a machine and they got a lot of publicity on that fine machine that they could do all these things to cut angle iron and all that. So you do away with the torches and the saws and all that. And that occupied a good sized area on the east side of the building. And then they did have a couple of a forges there that…things that they could make…pieces that they could make on a forge and then however they mailed it out or whatever they did after it I… But…

ES: Where did he find the trained workers for this kind of…?

PF: Surprisingly enough, there were a lot of machinists around. Very fine machinists. And they probably worked for the railroad or they might of worked for some of the mills or something, but eventually most of those people were workin' there because they found out… After Dad got everything set up and everything was operating they found out at the mill it was a lot easier to come and have him do it than it was to have all that…you know, try to make one piece or two pieces. And so in the name of efficiency, why they…that became the place where almost everything that was done. Now at that time right where the underpass between when you go out…come into La Grande from Island City where the underpass is that was part of the land that Dad owned and before that highway went through there. And…

ES: Was he paying fairly high wages to his workers?

PF: Yes, for that time frame they were some of the better paid men. Some, of course, depending on the…the machinists were well paid and the people that did the pattern making there. They would take these patterns there and…I don't know even how they did it. But they would turn these pieces out if it was something

that they needed…had papers for they would just make 'em…you know, turn the lays and everything was… And some milling was done by…by the people at the metal lays. That's where your machinists came into it. They were pretty…very well versed in what they were doing and they could… It was amazing to watch some of the things they turned out. It was really quite a thing.

ES: Was this a formally formed company with him as the president?

PF: I don't… You mean who owned it?

ES: Yea.

PF: My dad.

ES: Yea. But was he…was it a company, a legal company?

PF: No. It wasn't incorporated. It was just La Grande Iron Works and that's it. Dad was the company and then later on, why, my sister's husband graduated in civil engineering I think around 1922 or along in there after he got back from World War I. He went… He was a very fine bookkeeper and very efficient person and just ideal for Dad because after my brother-in-law after he came into there, why, he kind of reorganized things and got everything business-like and running. I think Dad carried most of his business in his hip pocket…

ES: I see.

PF: …in the early days. [laughs] Then it became a…more of a company, but it was never…there was no stock holders. It was just Dad.

ES: You mentioned in the first interview that he built a number of the iron bridges around Union County.

PF: Yes.

ES: Tell me a little more about how that came to be and what these bridges looked like.

PF: The last build that Dad built…or not the last, but the last one that was still standin' around here. On the old road out of La Grande if you went…if you came…went out…just if you were drivin' down Adams Avenue you went to Second Street, turned right and went over the viaduct over the railroad tracks and made a sharp left right at the bottom of that where "Y"…Second Street went on north and this road that you turned on, that was the highway out of town. So Dad…it follows along the railroad tracks, on the north side of the railroad track, and then turned right there when it came to the…where Fox Hill comes down off the mountain. He built that…that bridge was an iron bridge and I…

ES: Does it look like a railroad bridge?

PF: Kinda.

ES: You think of the railroad bridges mostly as iron or steel. Was it that style?

PF: Yea. And you crossed the river right there…

ES: Was that because concrete hadn't been developed to the point where they could make bridges out of it?

PF: No, it was… You would call it a very primitive bridge based on present day. But you went out along whatever the name of that road that ran parallel to the railroad tracks on the north side. When you made your turn to cross the river… All bridges had to cross the ___ in those days. There was no___ there. And that bridge was made…just the old iron bridges of which there were a lots up and all over every place all over the valley at that time. And the first bridge…as far as I

know, now the first bridge that Dad ever was responsible was that bridge at what they call Oradell now…used to call Oradell. But you crossed right over and after right as you came off the bridge then the highway extended on up the river then. But originally you went over Fox…up Fox Hill and up over and drifted across and dropped back down to the…

ES: I'd like to know what the bridge looked like.

PF: Just an iron bridge. I can't… All it was was just barely wide enough and now a-days you wouldn't even think it was wide enough for one car, I don't suppose. But it was…it had a wooden deck. There was…I suppose there was some concrete on either end for footings to set it on. But at any rate…

ES: Did it have an arch?

PF: Yes. It just… I can see it in my own mind. It just…probably like maybe fifty bridges around the valley or any place else in those days. They all looked the…

ES: Was there a standard design that bridge builders like him were using?

PF: I think so. I believe probably were.

ES: He didn't invent the design?

PF: Oh no. No, it was… Now the bridge was riveted in place. It didn't get transported and dropped. They built the thing right there on the spot. And it had the arch and it had the crossing and the cross arms and all that. It looked just like a bridge., [laugh] the old bridges.

ES: Was it painted when it was finished?

PF: Yea, black. To match Ford. [laugh] Then later on Dad…when you would go up to lower Perry and the road…that was the highway in those days. And you went up through lower Perry and there was one or two bridges there. There was one bridge as…if you were going west from La Grande and got to lower Perry you crossed one bridge…it was a metal bridge that Dad put in there…and then it took you over on a…by the houses, some of the houses at Perry. Then it went over and turned to the right and crossed over the railroad tracks and then went on up to the Grande Ronde River again say about, oh, maybe a mile-and-a-half, two miles. I don't remember exactly what. There was another bridge there. Then you went…you went acrossed over on the…the west and south. The road went running to the west and on the right hand would be the river there. Anyway, there was a bridge then down there that crossed…crossed over there. Now Dad… I don't think Dad built that…had anything to do that bridge 'cause that crossed the railroad tracks and the river and so on.

ES: Would I be right in thinking that these bridges were built strictly for automobiles and not the stagecoaches?

PF: Yea, I think so.

ES: Stagecoaches used the dirt roads didn't cross the river very often I imagine.

PF: That's a little before my time, thank goodness.

ES: I know.

PF: I don't know. I never…I never knew of any… There was still a lot of stuff transported around the valley here and other places with horses and wagons. They didn't die out very easy because everybody had a lot…there was a lot of wagons and a lot of good horses. I think they used 'em till, you know, 'till they just finally got replaced by mechanical things. But there was… All over the

valley, why, there were various kinds of bridges most of which were not metal. They were just a couple of logs…trees…logging type equipment that lay across the river hammer some wood boards on it and that was the bridge.

ES: Who was paying for these bridges?

PF: I presume…I'm just a presumption on my part. I don't know whether it would be the county like that built this bridge that I said across there at Oradell. Whether those were county or state bridges or what they were. I know Dad…some of the bridges that he built he sweat 'em out because they had a bad habit of water comin' up and knockin' 'em out every once in a while.

ES: Flooding.

PF: Yea. And I don't know that he ever had to replace any, but…whatever…I remember that one…especially that one there at Oradell. He just barely got the thing in and then they had high water. I don't…obviously it didn't wash out. But that was one little memory I had that he was quite relieved when it didn't.

ES: Do you think most of those bridges were standing for perhaps a period of twenty-five years?

PF: More than that. This bridge up here…when the…see the…I don't know when they cut what they call Oradell Boulevard now, which is the road that leads out of town now. That bridge was still standing when the freeways came through.

ES: So up to the early '60s.

PF: Yea. And that thing was still used. Because the city dump was right there on the right-hand side of the bridge where you went across. It was right over here on the right-hand side. In fact, they had a high school class out there diggin' up artifacts for a project just a while back. But anyway, that bridge was there for a long time even after the freeways came through. I don't know…obviously some reason for it. Somebody had to go over there. There was a reason to get on the other side of the river from right there. Whether it had to do with the people with the irrigation ditches or not, but whatever that bridge was there from…till…I'm gonna say it probably wasn't taken out maybe till during, say, the 1950s.

ES: So perhaps a forty year life for most of them?

PF: I would think so. I'm just an assumption there because… I know that all the different ones that were around the valley here, why, they stood a lot longer and got used a lot longer than anybody thought they should have.

ES: Do you have a photograph of any of them?

PF: No.

ES: Do you know who might?

PF: I think there's… I believe there's someplace that somebody took some pictures from Gangloff Park up there down toward that stretch of the railroad. I believe there's one of those that you can see the bridge in.

ES: You said __ were before your time, but in your first interview ___ Hardings __. Where was that?

PF: If you…if you went to Hilgard and more or less followed where the railroad tracks where it came into like on Five Points Creek. Came up there and then it…Pelican Creek's what I'm tryin' to say. Where Pelican Creek which flows into the…just a little stream…flows into the Five Point. You turn left at the…there at the bottom of that hill where Pelican Creek comes down through.

And essentially what it is now, to orient you to where it is, if you drive to…I lost my memory…I can't say the…I can say it anytime except when I want to. If you climb the hill after you start…after you pass Hilgard it's over to the right of the freeway. As you climb that…make that long climb up to Spring Creek, Spring Creek. If you…where Spring Creek where the bridges and thing are that…overpass thing that gets you over the railroad tracks there at Spring Creek. Anyway, at that point Pelican Creek head…kinda goes down from there down to Five Points Creek. And if you were at Hilgard and wanted to go to where Harding's stagecoach stop was you'd get on Pelican Creek and go up a ways and then you want…later on when the railroad tracks came in…railroad came through…they put one of those little cement things for the cars to drive under. But prior to that that was the old stagecoach road.

ES: Did you ever see it, the stagecoach stop?

PF: Yes.

ES: What did it look like?

PF: It was just a… It was just a very small building painted red. And I don't recall what they may have done. I don't know whether they changed horses. It didn't appear to be that way. It was just this stop that was on the…just on the right-hand side of the road, this little narrow Oregon Trail road's all it was. And they went up there. And then you…immediately after you went by Hardings. You had to make a left and you went right up on a flat. But having said that, you got up on a flat alright, but getting from where the stagecoach was to the top…to get out on that flat was another…

ES: Do you think it would have been a place where the passengers in the stagecoach could go to the outhouse and maybe get a drink or something?

PF: Yea, I think so. It was that kind of thing.

ES: It wasn't an overnight stay.

PF: No, no. Not that I…I don't know. I sure say no real fast. Nothing that I knew anything about. But all I knew is that they had to make this left-hand turn just after you got past where the little old building was and you had to climb right out and it was picked out by hand.

ES: Do you think that these stagecoach stops around here typically had a person who was in charge and stayed there?

PF: Hardings.

ES: They made a business of it?

PF: Yes.

ES: They had a little house nearby maybe?

PF: I don't know about that. I've got a book in there someplace that tells about Christmas at their home. It goes into some detail about the Christmas at that place. I take it that there must have been a home someplace around there, but it wasn't that red building that was the stagecoach stop. And then after you got by there you went up on this flat. Now that's where Harley Smith was raised. He's one of the old Smith's from the valley Smiths out here that… Connley, Smith, Grey… Connley, Smith, Grey and Miller. Harley was a Smith. And he…there was a log cabin up there. I'd love to go that see that thing if its still there. There a log cabin up there and I used to go up with him. After my father passed away,

why, he was kind a like a second dad to me in a ways. And we used to go up there on weekends quite a lot during the summertime. And so that's the reason those memories are pretty keen 'cause by that Harding place. It wasn't t' fall down or anything. It still was red. It was nondescript. We went by it and unfortunately I never paid much attention to it.

ES: Let's talk for a bit about the Bowman Hicks mill on the Union County Fairgrounds. Were you ever inside it?

PF: Not...I was in the mill, yea. It was a…

ES: Did you work there?

PF: Oh no! No, the only thing we ever… We were a bunch of awnry little kids. Mostly we got run off the log pond 'cause we got there and run over logs. That was my connection with the [laugh] the mill.

ES: Did you know anybody that did work there?

PF: I don't know. I'm sure there's a lot of people that did. I really don't… Now Ashby's… The Ashby family owned or were in charge of, or whatever, that mill. And it was a pretty good sized mill. It had a tall wooden water tower. I'm sure there's pictures of it around town.

ES: Yea. I was just wondering about the inside.

PF: I don't know. It was still… [end tape]

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PF: I think that that mill…there's a picture of that…of ___ and… and Ashby's lived up in town on the corner of "O" Avenue and Third Street, I believe. And then when they closed the mill down here…I don't know that somebody took over after they left or not, but I don't think so. I think they still had this mill. And if I recall correctly I think the mill shut down during the Depression. But somewhere in that timeframe Ashby's moved up to Wallowa County and had a mill up there. And so I'm assuming that probably goes down just not because of a log shortage just because of the Depression.

ES: When it was in operation…did they have a steam whistle that blew at noon everyday?

PF: I don't know about that one. This one over here did.

ES: Are there any other characteristics of the Bowman Hicks mill that you remember?

PF: That water tower. One of the reasons I remember is because Helen's uncle, Tex Knight, bought that old water tower. And he took it apart and it had iron bands around it which he unscrewed. The tank itself was wood. And he bought it and took it over and stacked it up on a piece of ground he had. Was always gonna put it back up. Never did. So it ended up its days layin' on the ground in Union. But that…I…I was not really around that mill that much because I was…we were very good friends and well acquainted with the Stang family. I've been through that mill a lot of times, but I never was over at Bowman, never was.

ES: Do you think the Bowman Hicks mill had its own source of power?

PF: No, no I don't think so. It wasn't a... It wasn't a…

ES: Wouldn't they of had a steam boiler?

PF: No…I don't know. See, I'm not a… Now Stang out here…based on that assumption maybe that was powered the same way. I don't know. Stang had his own power. And that…they had that for a long time.

ES: A wood fired boiler?

PF: I suppose. I don't think they bought coal to put in it.

ES: I wouldn't think so.

PF: But Bowman Hicks was never a large…based on this operation over here that was a, you know, comparably small mill. And so my memories of that, like I say, most of my memory of the awnry little devils get out and run on those logs. That was big time sport.

ES: Yea, sure. I can imagine every boy would want to do that. [laughs] Especially it was forbidden.

PF: Yea.

ES: Yes. Switching over to a couple of men you mentioned in the first interview. I noticed that when you talked about Spud Helm you got kind of quavery in the voice. Is still someone that its difficult to talk about?

PF: Kinda. He was…he's just like family to us.

ES: You said he was a semi-pro baseball player.

PF: Yes.

ES: Where did he…did he get on a team somewhere else?

PF: No. They had a…I don't know what this team was that was here. It was made up of Helen's uncle, Tex Knight. He lived here in La Grande at that time. He was on the team. And Spud and…

ES: What's his real name?

PF: Amos. [laugh]…Spud…Amos, yea.

ES: How long had he been a policeman before he died?

PF: They hadn't formed the State Police very long before Spud was killed.

ES: He was a State Trooper then?

PF: Yes. I don't know a lot about the formation of the State Police. See, everything prior to that time, before the State Police were formed, was in the county.

ES: County sheriff.

PF: Sheriff and…it seems to me like there was some…I don't…city police. Now Hap Dunn was a local person born raised here but when they…he joined the State Police early on and he was headquartered…he became the district…the captain in charge of the district which was headquartered in Baker. And Spud was out of Baker at that particular time. And this was…Hap when he…he was a city police officer. He had a motorcycle. And this would be somewhere in the…what happens is the state…or city officer. That would be, I'd say, I'm gonna guess of it, mid-'20s. One of the funny pieces about this whole story is with Hap he was a city police officer on a motorcycle. My dad was a pretty obstinate man. He didn't like his mind changed by him or anybody else. And dad had a habit of leaving the shop down here on Cove Avenue and he did everything the same time everyday that his routine. He would get in his Model-T Ford and drive up to what was La Grande National Bank where Pioneer Bank is now. He'd make a U-turn and park in front of John Allen's cigar store which is where that coffee shop thing is on the corner.

ES: Highway 30?
PF: Yea, is that it.
ES: Make a U-turn on Adams Avenue.
PF: Yea, he'd park his car. John Adams…
ES: __
PF: Yea, that's part of the story.
ES: Oh, okay.
PF: John he had this cigar store there…John Allen. Dad came up, turned around, went to do his banking and he had cigars and stuff. Dad smoked cigars. And he parked there in front of there and then they'd all get together and tell…see who could tell the biggest lie, I guess. But anyway, unbeknownst to anybody, I guess, the city passed an ordinance couldn't have…couldn't be a U-turn on these corners. Hap comes…the police station was just over there where the fire station…present fire station is police stayed right there. So Hap comes over on his motorcycle and his uniform and puttees. And when Dad came out of there to get in car and go back to work, why, Hap said, "Dave, you can't park…do that anymore." "Do what?" He said, "You can't make U-turns there anymore." And that ticked Dad pretty good. So he proceeded to tell Hap where to get off. "I've been turnin' around there every damn day for…on and on and on. And no young whippersnapper is gonna tell me what I can do with my car." And he got in the car and drove off and left Hap standin' there. And it made the papers that time, I think. Hap was getting' in trouble. The Dunns were just another close, close family to us, you know. [laugh] The whole bunch of us all grew up together all those Dunn kids. The older ones were…there was…the younger ones were some of 'em my age and then the older ones. But anyhow…
ES: Tell me then more about Joe Bob Price.
PF: When Dr. Gregory came…he was a doctor in Wallowa County…and he moved out here and took over the Hot Lake Hotel…hospital and hotel out there.
ES: That was after ____?
PF: Yes.
ES: __[wind]
PF: That'd be right close to them. But when Dr. Gregory came out here right where the truck stop is now on Highway 30 right out here he had a horse barn, a real nice…an arena and everything. And Joe Bob...Dr. Gregory hired him to be in charge of it. Joe Bob Price…
ES: Were these to be show horses rather than work horses?
PF: Yea. These were riding horses. So job…I believe he came out here from Missouri or Kansas or someplace, but he was one of the top horse experts in the country.
ES: __
PF: Pardon?
ES: Training them?
PF: Yes, training 'em and he was a horse judge.
ES: I see.
PF: And he was just as good as they came. And he worked for Dr. Gregory for a lot of time. And then when Dr. Gregory…they had some kind of a set-to or blow-up

or something about Hot Lake and he left there and came to town and he built…built a building right there where…right across the street from Methodist church. And he had a clinic building there. And by that time, whether Dr. Gregory was gettin' older or whatever the reason, they got rid of the horses. And then Joe Bob…I don't recall what he did around here. He worked at the Elks Club at one time. I don't know whether he ever sold cars or something. It seemed like…I just don't recall the different things he might of done. But he still continued to go out and help people with their horses and…just people around here. And went out to judge horses and different, you know, horse shows or whatever it was. But he was a real Southern gentleman the way I remember him. Just as pleasantest, nicest man I ever knew. And so…but that was comparatively short lived. I mean, in the time…total timeframe I suppose the whole thing from the time that building went up out there for the arena and all the show area and the whole thing I don't suppose it probably occupied, oh, ten, twelve years. But that's the reason Joe Bob came to this country. But he was…he'd forgotten more about horses than I ever knew in the first place, you know.

ES: To elaborate on the Hot Lake affair, when Dr. Gregory took it over was it on the way down?

PF: No.

ES: I understand that Mark Fie's management wasn't too good.

PF: Yea. I don't think we ought to talk about that.

ES: Okay. I thought maybe that was the beginning of its decline.

PF: I think it was decline in the idea that it didn't have the reputation that it had when the Fies were there. And Mark's dad, W…I can't think of his first name now…they had a huge dairy herd and had chickens. When you make that overpass right after you go past Hot Lake and go over the overpass where that burretto is now, why, that was a great big two or three story building to raise chickens. So that was gone. And the dairy farm was gone. So it was declined to that there, but there was still a lot of medicine goin' on there. When Dr. Gregory decided to come out here from Wallowa County Jimmy Haun was a doctor and he came out with Dr. Gregory. As they came out I mean came out of Wallowa County. And Bill Allen ran the drugstore in Wallowa and he came out to basically you might say be the business manager of Hot Lake. And they had a nice restaurant there at the time. They had…the old tile floor I suppose is ruined now, but they had a beautiful tile floor in that main part of the building. And Bill…and then they had a pharmacy which Bill ran. And Howard Allen was his son and we went to school together. I was in high school and I don't recall whether Gregory made the move during that time frame I said 1932. Along in there. They had it built up to quite a good big operation. And Dr. Haun…or Dr. Branner and Dr. Ross. He was the husband of Vina Connley of the Connley farms out here. They were out there and I don't know whether any other doctors…I knew the four of 'em were there and there may have been some others. I'm not sure. But that ran for, you know, for quite some time.

ES: Was it the Depression that did it in?

PF: No, I don't think so. I don't know. I never did know. I don't know that Dr. Gregory ever owned that…the building and all that. This gets into old family

stuff that I…I kinda hesitate to say what happened. I never did know what happened out there at Hot Lake, but all of a sudden the doctors were involved there and they just all quite. That's when it started down. And I have a…say, whatever my knowledge is of…I can't verify any of this for as actually why it happened except that there was…and I don't know how in the hell…Mrs. Fie…and I don't know what she was. She wasn't W. T.'s wife. I don't know what her connection, but her name was Fie, married name of Fie. And somehow or another…whether it came from the original Fies…but as soon as she got a hold of it…that's when owners changed about every year or two years…and a Dr. Roth, he was not a medical doctor… Dr. Roth…r-o-t-h…he took over that and he started a nursing home there. And he was kind of a flighty guy and we always used to say kinda screwy. But he was a good operator as far as that nursing home was concerned. And all of a sudden he was out of there after a number of years. He ran that and everybody said he did a pretty good job for there. It was converted to a nursing home at that time. So that would be…oh, I can't peg down a name…or time for it. But I don't recall what happened to it during the war years. But Dr. Roth was…he was there I think probably up to 19…oh, say the late '40s to the early '50s. Let's put it that way. That's about as good as I can do on it. And all of a sudden he was gone. And it's been…has just been that…had been that for a long time. Everybody got a hold of it it got burned. She always ended up holdin' the place. And it's still doin' the same damn thing...she'd dead now. But Hot Lake has been just a Jonah for anybody that got connected with it. They tried all kinds of ideas to get money for it. Somebody asked me one time if I would like to put some money in Hot Lake and I said, "Yea, I sure as hell would. I've got a penny and I want to drive by Hot Lake and throw it in." Now that's as much as I…that's as much money as I'd put in Hot Lake. But everybody that got out there, including some very prominent people, stuck their money in that place and they all lost it. Down, down, down. And I had one of my most brilliant ideas. I said what they should have done when they set off the bomb at Los Alamos to find out if it worked or not they should have brought it out here instead and put it right in the bottom of Hot Lake and set that first atom bomb off. We'd have cleaned that mess up out there, we'd deepen the lake and it'd all be gone. And if that had been done… there'd been about a half a dozen people I know that lost their shirt in that place…wouldn't a lost their shirt. But Hot Lake is…they've had that…more fly-by-nighters, crooks or whatever you want to call 'em that got in there and got money for this and that and then took off.

ES: It has a kind of mysterious glamour, I think, for many people and they get the idea that it would be romantic and wonderful to somehow turn it into an attractive money-making place.

PF: I had the best idea. See, I cleaned the land up then they could get a hold of just the land they might of done that.

ES: I think there are a few little impractical aspects to that, but we'll overlook that. [laughs] That ends my list of subjects. Is there any other subject in your life experience here in Union County that we haven't talked about. I'm sure there are, but anything that you want to talk about?

PF: Oh, I don't know unless you've got somethin' you're curious about because I…it seemed like as many years we've all been here we know too damn much about people around here that…

ES: I mean talk about…

PF: But I mean different…different personalities that come here that… There was a lot of stuff, but different things that a-goin' on, but… I really don't have.

ES: Okay. Let's end it there.

PF: I can't talk about…I've known so damn many of these people and its just best to let sleeping dogs lie on a lot of these things. [tape stopped]