

Richard Taylor

11/7/02, T1, S1

RT: ...Missouri this mornin', but I gotta find out for sure on that.
JT: Okay, now, Richard, what...when was you born?
RT: You got it workin'?'
JT: Yes. Uh-huh.
RT: Okay. I was... This is Richard G. Taylor. I was born July the 1st 1926 in La Grande, Oregon.
JT: Were you born at the hospital or were you born at home?
RT: I was born at the old Grande Ronde Hospital. The one that set out there at you left town on the old highway.
JT: On old Highway 30.
RT: Yes.
JT: When... When you were born where were your family living?
RT: They were living out on a farm on the Island City-Cove highway.
JT: The one that I remember when...
RT: No, this is one just a half a mile east of that.
JT: Oh.
RT: On the other side of the highway there. And old house used to be there. We lived there just for...oh, I must've been about three when we moved to where I was raised most of the time there.
JT: How many was in your family?
RT: Just my brother and I. My brother's two years younger than me.
JT: That's Merton?
RT: Yeah.
JT: And then why did your family come to the valley? Do you know?
RT: My grandfather years ago someone told him what a wonderful farming country this was so he took a train and come out here from, well, at that time it was from Kansas, but he was originally from Illinois. But they...he come out to look at this valley out here and thought it was really good and bought that farm down the highway from where I was raised where Mabel Hamann lives now, Everett's widow.
JT: Where Albert Hamann used to live.
RT: Yeah.
JT: It was... Albert Hamann was your uncle.
RT: I don't...not sure whatever he bought at that time or what he brought my grandmother other to look at it, too, but I'm kind of under the opinion that he just bought it then when he was out here.
JT: What are the...
RT: I'm not sure. And there was an old house down by the river at that time and the next year, why, they built a house up by the road.
JT: That old house by the river that was what we used to call the Green House?
RT: No. No, it was... I never did see it. It was torn down.
JT: Was it one of those houses that came from Nibley?

RT: I don't think so.

JT: Oh.

RT: Now this house we refer to as the old Green House, where my parents lived when I was born, that was one up from Nibley.

JT: What are the first thing that you remember when you were growing up?

RT: I'm not sure of them. I can remember just a couple things about when we lived down in that old Green House. Not very much, though, it seems like.

JT: You and Corky first started to school where...what school did you start to?

RT: We went to Riverside School. It was down on what they called Red Pepper Road now on down beyond Mabel Hamann's place. Was the next road, turn to the right, if you're goin' towards Cove, and down that just after you cross the river and on the right-hand side. The building now sits over at Cove back of Merton Hill's place right on the west edge of Cove.

JT: How many grades were in the...?

RT: We had eight grades.

JT: And you were how far ahead of Corky?

RT: Two years.

JT: Two years.

RT: And when I ___ of seventh grade, there, why, it had to close up because it only left...that was after Courtright family moved over by Hot Lake and there's another girl that's getting' out of the eighth grade at our school and so there's only left my brother and I for the next year so they closed it up. Then about the time that it was closed for a few years and about the time Everett Hamann was ready to enter the first grade some other kids had moved into the district. They opened it back up for a few years, but only for several more years.

JT: When they closed it up where did you go to school?

RT: We come to La Grande.

JT: And Corky...

RT: And at that time Dad had to bring us to La Grande because we didn't have the school busses like they have now.

JT: Now the school district paid you a little bit for...

RT: Yeah, they paid Dad a little bit for...

JT: ...for comin' in. And at that time Corky was in the sixth grade and you were...

RT: Eighth.

JT: ...in the eighth grade.

RT: I was really kind of glad I come to La Grande to the eighth grade because I was kind of shy and bashful and that really helped havin' that one year of junior high before I entered high school.

JT: What kind of chores did you have around the place?

RT: I had cows to milk. Cows to feed hay to.

JT: When did you start raising rabbits?

RT: Oh, I'm not sure how we got started in that. Our cousin give us one rabbit, ___ Hamann. It seemed like we bought a few others. Then the first thing we knew, why, we...gettin' more and more rabbits.

JT: You were selling them.

RT: Yeah. I would love sellin' 'em now like they do where they just send 'em to some butcher someplace, you know. That time, why, we had to dress 'em. Merton done most of the dressing of 'em. I'd clean the rabbit cages and so forth.

JT: Then you put the hides on stretchers and then you sold the hides.

RT: Yeah.

JT: Do you remember how much you got for the hides when you sold them?

RT: No, I don't. I don't remember that at all.

JT: That was your spending money.

RT: Dad got a lot of orders for us from around town, people he knew.

JT: And quite a few rabbits were sold during the war when the meat rationing was on.

RT: Yes.

JT: It...

RT: We got those stretchers for rabbit hides one time we was down in Portland. We rode down with my uncle Albert Hamann and we was down in a place down there on Front Street in Portland sold that kind of stuff for rabbit. We bought the stretchers down there.

JT: What kind of hobbies did you have at the...on the farm?

RT: My brother and I we done quite a bit of building model airplanes. A friend of ours up on the highway a ways, Bill Bailey, he worked quite a bit with buildin' model airplanes and he was down at our place different time we was buildin' model airplanes. We had a...kind of a spare room upstairs that we had really set up for buildin' model airplanes. [tape interruption] ...radio and music supply. There found George ___ Junior, he sold model airplane supplies in there. We were pretty good customers of him.

JT: Living out in the country like that you...unless some of the kids came to your house and you went to somebody else's house you didn't have anybody to play with, is that right?

RT: No. We used to in the wintertime, why, different ones they'd always have a surprise birthday party for someone, have cake and ice cream and stuff for 'em. And I know my aunt and uncle their birthdays was in the wintertime and Ralph ___ and all birthdays in the wintertime. And Dad and Mother's birthdays was in wintertime. So many different times that way.

JT: And you used to go to the Grange.

RT: Yeah, we were members of Blue Mountain Grange, my parents...grandparents were members of the Blue Mountain Grange. And we had a lot of activities over there.

JT: What was...

RT: They used to have dances there when we was kids. I know Dad always would call the circle two-step and so forth.

JT: What was the function of the Grange so people will know?

RT: It was a farmers' organization that was started to...oh, they had lobbyists and so forth to get things through the legislature and so forth. And it was a social gathering, too.

JT: And one farmer helped another farmer.

RT: Yeah.

JT: It... Then you were quite active in the Methodist Church?

RT: Yeah, later we were, United Methodist Church.

JT: Remember the Courtrights and Pat Conrad from Cove and Leon Peroe and you and Corky and... In school the fact that you lived out in the country and once you were able to drive and drive the both of you to school how did you do in the school activities as far as...were you in any sports or...?

RT: No, I never done much in sports.

JT: Did you help in any organizations?

RT: I was active in the FFA. Took agriculture all four years. And I was president of the FFA...La Grande chapter of the FFA my senior year in high school.

JT: Then what did you want to be after you got out of high school?

RT: I always wanted to be a farmer, there's no doubt.

JT: No doubt about that.

RT: I did go to the college for a couple years.

JT: That was...

RT: Two and a third year. Went two years right after I got out of high school and then I didn't go for a year and then I went to Winter term.

JT: That was Eastern Oregon College?

RT: Yeah, Eastern Oregon College. Now let's go back to Riverside School.

JT: Okay.

RT: When I was a kid...I should've brought that up earlier, but... We used to play Kick the Can and Cops and Robbers, Annie Over and we had a woodshed sits about, oh, twelve foot behind the school and that made an ideal thing to play Ann Over. We gotten a lot of that. We played baseball, too. We were runnin' around the baseball field the wrong way and some sheepherder one time told us we's goin' the wrong way and boy we had to change and learn how to go the other way and that was quite a problem to learn how to go the other way. And we never did have a regulation bat. We just had a hunk of thick wood. We enjoyed it. I...we enjoyed Riverside School. We usually got to school, brother and I, by...we'd ride with the teacher that drove out from La Grande. We'd meet her at the end of our lane and ride to school with her. That building would be cold in the wintertime. She had to build the fire and get the thing heated up.

JT: And how did they heat it?

RT: There was a big wood stove in the middle of the room. In the wintertime, why, we moved our desks all up around that. We had portable...we had newer desks, oh quite a number of years ago.

JT: About how many kids were going to school at that time at that...?

RT: Oh, we'd have usually from seven to thirteen of us in that.

JT: And that was in different grades.

RT: Yes.

JT: The teacher'd work with one grade for a while and then...

RT: Yeah. We'd have our lesson with one...with the teacher and then she'd go off to work with another group.

JT: Did you feel like you got a good education?

RT: Yes. We had a very good education.

JT: And when you got into town where there was a lot more people you felt that you were up with what...the studies?

RT: I remember one time in high school, why, Arcime Carter and I got the highest grade in one...one time and we both went to Riverside School.

JT: That speaks well of the little country school.

RT: Yeah.

JT: It... But it was hard to come in to activities. When you had things that the Riverside School did the parents meet there or...

RT: Yeah, the parents would come and then...this Laun and Katie Aires...this Katie Aires was kind of a relative of ours...she...her and Laun would always come to our school program.

JT: You and Corky were taking violin lessons when you were growing up.

RT: Yeah.

JT: Tell me a little more about your violin lessons.

RT: I took violin lessons. I wished I'd learned to play the guitar, though.

JT: How many years did the violin lessons go on?

RT: Oh, I really can't recall for sure. Probably three or four. That was called the National Institute of Music and Art. They had a guy that come by and signed different ones up for music lessons and we met up...oh, on that building on the corner of Depot and Adams about where the Top Shop used to be.

JT: When you were growin' up as a kid you had a little accident with a knife and your eye. What happened there?

RT: Yeah, the first knife I got, why, I was down in the pasture and I was cuttin' off a top of a tough weed and I was pullin' the knife towards me, which is a mistake no one should ever do. I was really particular with our kids when they were growin' up, these knives, watching 'em. Anyway, I got the knife in my eye, injured it. Fortunately, we had a real good eye doctor here in La Grande, Dr. Frank Rolfton, at the time. I had about two different operations on the eye out there at the Hot Lake Sanatorium. There used to be different doctors go out there and operate. When I was a kid, why, I remember that you...__ Highway 30 and head back in towards the building at Hot Lake there'd be cars parked to the left there all along that road there. One car right after the other in there.

JT: Hot Lake was called the Mayo Clinic of the West in those days.

RT: Yes, it was. It was real good.

JT: Do you remember when it burned?

RT: Yes, I do.

JT: Do you have any particular memories? Did you see it across the valley or did you have to go over there?

RT: It seems like we drove over with my uncle later that day and looked at it.

JT: [tape interruption] ...war come along, how did the war effect you?

RT: Yeah, that's another thing. That was a difference when World War II come. That was a nice Sunday day. I know my brother and I we'd been playin' outside and so forth. Dad come home and told us that he'd been up town and he told us that Pearl Harbor's been attacked. [tape interruption] The war really changed things. My parents had bought a new '42 Dodge car just September '41 when new cars first come out, '42 model. That was a __ good move 'cause they had a decent car...a good car for all of during World War II. 'Cause December that year, why, they froze the cars where you couldn't get 'em unless you really had a real good

priority to get one. They were scarce to me, anyway. What I really missed during World War II was Hershey Chocolate Almond Bars and I still like 'em to this day. But all those were sent overseas for the soldiers. Seen some odd ball names for candy bars around during World War II. And another thing during World War II when I was junior in high school, why, I talked my dad into gettin' us a car so we could drive to school instead of him havin' to take us. So my dad and I went up town to look at used cars there one day, February '43, and there was about three used cars in La Grande for sale. And one we decided was the best was a '39 Studebaker and it was on the showroom floor M. J. Goss Motor Company 'cause they didn't have any other cars to sell then. So they had it on the showroom floor. So Dad bought it for \$845.

JT: [tape interruption] I rode in that car a few times.

RT: Yeah. Black, nice lookin' car. It belonged to Lester...came from...used to have ___ grocery store. He'd really taken care of it.

JT: With your model airplane building you and Corky used to have little engines and you got gas stamps for those little engines.

RT: We had our farm gas. Talkin' about the model airplanes when one time, why, my uncle got...Charlie Hamann that was a bachelor and lived uptown here, up in La Grande...He decided it'd be nice during World War II to have those airplanes hangin' from the ceiling of the Blue Mountain Grange Hall. We had about eighteen of 'em up there hangin' on the ceiling...hang 'em from fishing cord down a little ways from the ceiling...in the shape of a V for victory. That made quite a display at the grange hall.

JT: What was your classification for the draft?

RT: I was 4F because of this eye injury and also when I was a kid I'd some trouble with kidney trouble. That showed up durin' my physical...[tape interruption]...my physical in Portland for the service in December of '44. That was when I was goin' to college. But I was 4F.

JT: [tape interruption]...broke your arm about that time, didn't ya?

RT: I broke my arm playin' basketball in P. E. when I's a freshman in high school. And some of the other kids in that P. E. class said, "Oh, that's not broken," but I knew it was 'cause my arm was floppin' around like everything. And so I got a hold of the principal, J. W. King, and he took me down to Dr. James Haun's office. It was broken, they had to set it and put a cast on it. Then we called my mother and she come up and got me.

JT: Your uncle Charlie owned the...a piece of property out there pretty close to your place, didn't he?

RT: Yeah. Charlie... My uncle Charlie Hamann had a hundred and twenty acres, oh, up west of our place a ways. My dad always rented it, farmed it, for years there.

JT: Your uncle Charlie was really interested in historical things. Is that where you got...

RT: No. Charlie was... My uncle Charlie Hamann was president of the Union County Historical Society for quite a number of years. Worked real hard on it.

JT: And that's where you got interested in it?

RT: Yeah, I was kind of interested more in history later. A lot of things I'd wished I asked my parents years ago now.

JT: That happens to all of us, Richard.
RT: Yeah.
JT: When you started farming out there you were on the Johns place?
RT: Well, yeah. The year before my dad died, 1944, him and some neighbors, Beezing brothers, they'd bought this Johns place which was sit over south of our place a ways, one mile. Anyway, they bought it. So then later my brother and I we bought out Beezing brothers' share of that.
JT: [tape interruption]...were farming what kind of things did you grow?
RT: Oh, we grew wheat, barley, peas, even grew some ___ time. Then after I got my irrigation well in 1974, why, we grew potatoes on a percentage basis. We had a real good operator, a Japanese fellow from Middleton, Idaho that come in here and grew 'em and done a real good job with 'em.
JT: What... What was the cost of that first irrigation system when you put it in?
RT: It was expensive even in those days.
JT: Do you have any idea what it...total amount was compared what'd be today?
RT: No, I really don't. I know that well and a bunch of pipe and all so forth we bought that one year come to \$48,000.
JT: That's probably the worst thing that happened the prices of everything went up and you weren't getting that much for the product. Is that...
RT: No, that's what happened to farming. It used to be real good then it got so that the cost of your operation just went up and up and your price of the stuff you were sellin' wasn't responding to that that much.
JT: So instead of gaining you kind of went behind.
RT: Yeah.
JT: Then you went on...you went to work for Boise Cascade for a while, didn't you?
RT: I worked for Boise Cascade in the winters there...I'd worked a couple years straight for 'em there in the '50s, '55, '56, '57, that area.
JT: What were you doing out there?
RT: I worked in the...what they called the yard department. That was kind of interesting. I enjoyed that.
JT: What was the duties? What...
RT: I done all kinds of things even includin' paintin' the red stripes around the water barrels. And we also...at that time they had a picket fence around the railroad...I mean around the... Valset's Lumber Company is who I worked for there before it become Boise Cascade. And a picket fence around it and we even done some repair on that. I done a lot of work on those carrier bunks that they used to straddle___.
JT: You stack any lumber?
RT: Yeah. I sorted lumber, fixed lumber for the dryers.
JT: What year did you get out of the farming and moved to town?
RT: At the last there I rented it out for a few years. We moved to town in 1988. About '82 that I really quit farmin' myself. Rented it out for a few years.
JT: You then worked for equipment sales?
RT: I worked for Beaver Creek Equipment which had a...off there on Island City Strip where Frontier Motors is now. We sold all kinds of machinery, a lot of the track layer tractors ___ on and so forth on the front.

JT: And you worked on commission?
RT: Yes, I worked on commission only.
JT: One of those things...
RT: That was different. You never knew each day whether you'd sell anything that day or not.
JT: Either feast or famine, huh?
RT: Yeah.
JT: Then when did you go to work for the railroad?
RT: I don't really work for the railroad, it's for a contract through that has a service of shuttling the railroaders around. I work on a regular shift down there at the depot now just only three days a week now that I work. I started that September of '87 goin' to work there. First I worked five days, now I only work three days a week. [tape interruption] ...interesting job, I've enjoyed it. And we have some railroaders from Nampa that stay over here. When they're in town, why, they stay out at the Howard Johnson hotel so we have to run them back and forth. When we see a call slip that one of them's called, why, we gotta run out and get them and bring them up to the depot.
JT: When you say their call, that's when they're called for a train?
RT: Yes.
JT: And then you go down there and they give you where you're supposed to go and who you're supposed to pick up? Is that...
RT: Goin' back here to the depot there we check their call slips, see when they're called and we gotta list of the different trains...potential trains that will be that day maybe. And so when they're called, why, we write down what time the train's called for and who the engineer is and who the conductor is. We do... I do carry a beeper too and they usually CMS...the outfit that calls the railroaders and they usually buzz me on that too to tell me.
JT: CMS, that's the name of the company?
RT: Yeah. I'm not sure where the CMS is...where it's... I think like it's in Salt Lake, but I'm not too sure about that.
JT: How far do you travel in a circumference?
RT: Now things are just on a regular shift down there at depot. We are...like...we tend mostly to westbound trains 'cause when they pull in, why...they pull on up when they change crew...pull on up so their rear-end doesn't block _____. Got an old road that goes right along the railroad tracks there. We take the outbound crew up to the head-end of their train and bring the inbound crew in.
JT: Where is that head-end located? Up close...
RT: Depends on how long the train is. But there is a road goes clear up that's right underneath the bridge as you're going out of La Grande.
JT: Which you used to call Orodell?
RT: Yeah. And also we're out to Perry some 'cause they do tie down trains sometimes out there. Also out the Union highway about just out of town where they tie down trains.
JT: As far out as Lone Tree?
RT: Yes.
JT: And Lone Tree's at the airport. That's railroad side?

RT: Yeah.
 JT: Your interest in historical pictures and stuff. Can you tell us a little bit about that?
 RT: I've bought different pictures of La Grande in early days. I've got one just here lately of the old Perkins Motor Company. I'm really interested in these pictures of La Grande around here...[tape interruption]
 JT: ...a lot out at Island City I know of.
 RT: I'm a charter member of the Island City Lions' Club. Been pretty active in that. Help with the Hog Wild Days. This coming year will be our twenty-fifth one.
 JT: And the Lions' Club. What's the purpose of the Lions' Club?
 RT: Oh, they do a lot of good different places. We do a lot for the sight and the hearing. [tape interruption]...about startin' one here I got a letter in the mail about and thought, well, I'll go up to the meeting, I don't know. Anyway, I ended up join' and I'm glad I did...[end tape]

11/7/02, T1, S2

RT: ...or they come at seven if they don't want to eat.
 JT: [tape interruption] The changes that's been made in the valley. What do you think is the biggest changes?
 RT: How La Grande's grown or how that between Island City and La Grande. That between Island City and La Grande used to be just small places and cow pasture and so forth. A lot of new houses going up here in town. All in all...
 JT: It's a pretty good place to live, don't you think?
 RT: Yeah. My wife keeps telling me we can live anyplace and I said, "No, we can't. No one can move out of La Grande."
 JT: [laugh] How many children did you have, Richard?
 RT: We got three children.
 JT: How many girls, how many...
 RT: I should say I married my wife, Phyllis Harman, in October the 8th, 1950. We have three children. Ricky Lee Taylor was born April the 23rd, 1950...no, 1953, I mean to say. And then Kimberly Anne Taylor, her name's Wilbur now, she's married, she was born April the 18th, 1955. And our youngest son, Mark Taylor, was born...Mark Harman Taylor, born January the 16th, 1961. Rick lives in Baker now and his wife. They have three boys. And Kimberly she's married to Phil Wilbur and they live in Milwaukie, Oregon and they have two boys. Our youngest son Mark married a Laura Taylor...Laura Miller Taylor. They have two...two boys. All in all we got seven grandsons, no granddaughters.
 JT: You could have a basketball team, couldn't ya?
 RT: Yeah.
 JT: Do you have any hobbies that you do other than historical things, Richard?
 RT: I always say I like woodworking, but I don't think I do so much of it anymore. I do kind of like workin' with wood, so...
 JT: And you always kind of enjoyed cars, especially Buicks.
 RT: Oh yes. I'm real interested in cars. Yeah.
 JT: Always Buicks.

RT: Yeah.

JT: I understand you're drivin' a Buick now.

RT: Yeah. I had fourteen different Buicks. [tape interruption]...I really enjoy those. [tape interruption]...down in Joseph last June there, that was real good one.

JT: [tape interruption]...cabin up at Wallowa Lake.

RT: Yeah. We have a cabin at Wallowa Lake there. I enjoy that. Our kids really enjoy it, too.

JT: And your wife worked up at Grande Ronde Hospital in the surgical department, didn't she?

RT: My wife worked up at Grande Ronde Hospital for over twenty-seven years. She retired March of '99. But she worked first on the ___ and then she worked in the recovery room and later in the OR. [tape interruption] She's a member of the Hospital Auxiliary now. Does volunteer work for 'em.

JT: [tape interruption] Can you think of anything you'd like to change if you'd...?

RT: No. I'm just glad I'm not farmin' anymore. I used to enjoy it, too.

JT: It's quite a gambling situation, isn't it?

RT: Yeah, quite a worry always, too. But the farm was definitely a good place to raise the kids. [tape interruption] ...wife and I got married in 1950, why, we moved to another place we had, this Johns place on over a mile south. That summer before we got married I had two different carpenters workin' on the house quite a while fixin' it up.

JT: [tape interruption]...remember growin' up as kids that I remember your dad even though he was older to be a father he played around with us kids quite a little bit, didn't he?

RT: Yeah.

JT: I knowed he treated me real well.

RT: Yeah. Oh, he liked to have kids around all the time.

JT: [tape interruption]...winter, was it, when it was so cold and didn't you have...was it the mumps you had?

RT: I had the mumps one year there I know. I forget just when it was.

JT: Then Corky came down with 'em after...

RT: Then Corky come done with 'em and...

JT: We were froze up out at your house.

RT: My grandmother they always have...in those years they always had a birthday deal for her. And I remember I'd just got over the mumps and was able to go in with that that year with my mother.

JT: But the car was froze up out in the garage for about four or five days.

RT: We had the car that day, I know, that we went to town.

JT: 'Cause I'd go out the end of the lane and try to catch a ride to La Grande after Corky came down with the mumps. [tape interruption]...ever interesting in fishing? I can't remember you fishing with Corky and I.

RT: Yeah, not too much. I wasn't much... We used to catch a lot of catfish, though, in the slough in back of our place. And we'd have different ones that would be out there at night fishin'. We'd use our gasoline lantern so we could see our bobber out there.

JT: And Corky was quite a hunter.

RT: Yes.

JT: We hunt for pheasants out there.

RT: I have hunted for pheasants, too. I enjoyed that. [tape interruption]...really disappeared. There isn't near the pheasants around anymore like there used to be.

JT: They took all the brush away from the...

RT: Yeah, I know. That's it. A lot of brush...

JT: When... When they put in the state ditch didn't that change a lot of things when they took a lot of the river out?

RT: Yeah, that did. That changed quite a bit.

JT: Your uncle Charlie's down there there used to be a big circle there. The water almost closed and then went around it.

RT: It was a big __ yeah, that field... When you look at a map of that field, why, it was really crooked down along that.

JT: When they changed the river about how many miles of river did they take out of the valley?

RT: I'm not really sure on that.

JT: But it... The state ditch made a lot of difference.

RT: Yeah. Going back to when I was a kid, this between Island City and Cove that was just a county road, gravel. And then the state was gonna take it over...state bought it...or was gonna take it over so they bought ten foot on each side to make it wider when they grade it up on this pavement. We thought, boy, that's great. When they pave that. That first year...that was in the '30s. Must've been around '37 that they paved just out of Island City towards Cove just about six miles. That made it right near where we lived. So my brother and I would could ride our bicycles up then and ride on the pavement. The next year they paved, oh, just several more miles. And then the next year or so, why, they paved it on into Cove. That between Cove and Union it was quite a few years before they paved that. [tape interruption] Yeah. You know how I talked my dad into buyin' me a bicycle years ago. Then he bought Merton one right after that. We really enjoyed riding our bicycles.

JT: That way you could probably ride all the way to Bill Bailey's.

RT: Yeah, we rode down there a lot. Most of the time I remember Allen Courtright and Merton and I ridin' from home up to Island City store, the...it was called Hyde's Grocery at that time. The wind was blowin' from the west really bad. It was hard pedalin' the bicycle up there at Island City. But anyway, we went in there and got the store and got some candy and so forth and then when we left there, why, that ride home headin' east with the wind to our back, why, that was real easy goin' home. That was the right way to have it, too, have it hard goin' and have it easy goin' home. We'd ride our bicycles over to Cove swimmin' pool, too. [tape interruption]...swimmin' pool, that was a great spot when we's growin' up too.

JT: It's when Royal Bourtgreen...

RT: Yes, when Royal Bourtgreen had it. He done a real good job of runnin' it.

JT: [tape interruption] Your aunt Lucille Hamann, wasn't she quite active in the Historical Society, too?

RT: Yeah, quite a bit. My mother was, too.

JT: Your mother was Laura.
RT: Yeah, Laura...
JT: ...Taylor.
RT: Yeah.
JT: She was a Hamann originally.
RT: Yes.
JT: And Willy Hamann is your cousin.
RT: Yeah.
JT: [tape interruption] What did your uncle Charlie do? I don't remember.
RT: Uncle Charlie he was gonna farm with Albert years ago. Then in the early '30s he got TB. So doctor recommended they go down to Arizona. So he went down to Arizona for a few years. Got over the TB[cough]... Got over the TB[cough]... Got over the TB real good. He never did do anything after that.
JT: I remember...
RT: Well, I mean...he had his farm, but rent out.
JT: When your grandmother and your uncle lived down there on 'N' Avenue...
RT: Yeah.
JT: That was about the 1200 block, wasn't it?
RT: The 1100 block.
JT: 1100 block.
RT: They come back... When my uncle come back from... When my Uncle Charlie come back from Arizona, why, he lived there with my grandmother to look after her...took care of her.
JT: What was Willy's dad's name?
RT: Wilfred's dad's name was Arthur.
JT: Arthur Hamann.
RT: Yeah. Arthur Quire Hamann. They lived in Island City. My Uncle Arthur he had a place where years ago where he sold feed ___ than he did later ___ and seed wheat...sell that. And Wilfred Hamann he had that business with quinn and seed wheat and so forth on his farm on the Island City-Cove highway now. That was quite a ___.
JT: [tape interruption]...bought that property where the Beezings were.
RT: Yeah.
JT: And when the Beezing brothers operated out there they operated with horses and wagons when they fed the hay.
RT: They had tractors later, but...
JT: Uh-huh. I remember in the wintertime they had rubber tires on the wagons and they had horses taken out hay and stuff in the fields feedin' their cattle.
RT: Yeah.
JT: Were the Beezings any relation of yours?
RT: No. When my dad farmed with Beezings for a number of years.
JT: [tape interruption]...to think that there was anything that we hadn't covered?
RT: Yes, that's what I'm wondering, too.
JT: [tape interruption]...bein' on the farm how did the rationing during World War II effect your family?

RT: It affected it, the rationing did. A lot of times we'd have a hired man and when he'd come there, why, his sugar stamp had already been taken out of his book. Mother... My mother always cooked for hired men quite a bit. Always needed the different things to cook for them.

JT: [tape interruption] Awful good cook as I remember.

RT: Yeah, she was known for her cooking. She was known for her lemon pies she made, too. And when she'd take them, you know, one time we's havin' an auction in the grange hall __ over there, why, my mom's cousin Raymond Hamann he bought both her lemon pies. He wanted to make a special point to bid on those. [tape interruption]...are havin' a time now. It's really rough on them. Blue Mountain Grange used to have a hundred and twenty members. Now they... It's a different name now, that grange is, but they're havin'... Most of these granges are really havin' a hard time hangin' on.

JT: Is that the one right over there by McAlister Road?

RT: Yeah. The corner of McAlister and Gekeler.

JT: [tape interruption]...building's still there...

RT: Yeah.

JT: ...but do they meet there very often?

RT: I understand there's still a grange there, but I don't know anything about it.

JT: I remember that... Didn't you help in putting at the country fair they always had a...

RT: Oh yes. Our grange booth at the country fair, Union Country Fair, used to really be outstanding. A lot of granges had outstanding booths there. And I was chairman of that for several different years. We'd always make a picture made out of the different grains, you know, spread out different kinds of seed, grain, grass seed. So...

JT: [tape interruption]...year I remember didn't you have Mt. Emily in different colored grains?

RT: Yeah.

JT: And...

RT: Yeah, we had Mt. Emily one time there once. We had a guy milkin' his cow one year. A picture of a combine there one time made out of the different grains. [tape interruption] Farm Bureau used to give us tough competition.

JT: Back in those early years one farmer helped the other farmer a lot, didn't they?

RT: Yeah, they did. They used to trade around on... Years ago, '30s, my dad, my uncle Albert they...there was a gas war down in Portland. You get gas five cents a gallon. So they took a bunch of 50-gallon barrels down and brought 'em back, a truckload of gas to do their farming with.

JT: That was quite a trip because that was the old road.

RT: Yes, I know. That was a long ways down there then.

JT: [tape interruption]...to believe, five cents a gallon.

RT: Yeah. The early days of farming, why, our gas prices we had to pay would stay the same all year, you know, about. Then the last year the farming, why, there'd be different raises and different prices, oh, six or seven times during the year it seems like.

JT: Everything went up but the price of the...what you got for your product. [tape interruption]...did you have to have a combine and...

RT: Yeah.

JT: What all kind of equipment did you have to have?

RT: Oh, we had a tractor, plow, disks, spring tooth, harrow, rod weeder, combine, had different trucks...

JT: How did you select what products you were gonna plant from one year to the other?

RT: I always kind of liked to stay with wheat quite a bit, but they have wheat rations that you only could plant so much wheat, too, a lot of the times. So we had to use peas or barley to fill in rest of the land, you know.

JT: Why did they...we used to call the hog pasture out at your house with all that brush...

RT: Used to have hogs always.

JT: Oh. How come they took the brush out and stuff? That was to put it in the...

RT: To make farm ground out of it.

JT: Was that a good deal?

RT: That was a real good ground where you pulled that brush out.

JT: Uh-huh. Later it seemed like the wind would blow from Union to Summerville with no breaks. Was that a bad deal when they took out a lot of that...?

RT: Yeah, you had to watch about that. We had strips...strips out south of our house at one time there that would control the wind.

JT: Did they come along with regs...regulations that you could only plow certain ways?

RT: No.

JT: Did you have that... They're doing that now, aren't they?

RT: Yeah. They do now.

JT: But when you were farming you didn't have those regulations?

RT: No. There where wife and I lived we had a good wind break on the south side of our house. That really helped around the house.

JT: How far were you from that cut where the railroad had been proposed to put from Union over to Summerville?

RT: We was only a little over a mile from that. That was on the back of Everett Hamann's place. We had places across our fields you can go where they had the grade all built up and so forth __ gonna have it. __

JT: But most of it is gone now.

RT: Yeah, most of it's gone now.

JT: I know Willy and I went out and took a picture of a cut out there on Mabel's here recently and he said they were going to level that all out.

RT: I imagine they are.

JT: [tape interruption] Would have to be for the irrigation system to work and...

RT: Yeah.

JT: When they changed the route of the river that change a lot for the water table, didn't it?

RT: Yeah. There used to be quite a bit of water come down that slough back there and I don't know what the __ it is now.

JT: [tape interruption]...a lot drier.
RT: Yeah. It's been drier here in later years.
JT: True.
RT: [tape interruption]...'65 we had flood out there...valley. I had over five hundred acres of wheat under water. But luckily it only stayed...most of it only stayed on the wheat for three days and then when it ___ in the wintertime it expanded a little bit. That was excellent crops though that year. But it was bad harvesting 'cause you couldn't go through the lower spots in the field. Had to patch around quite a bit.
JT: What's the best part of the valley to farm in? What...like out at Hot Lake don't they have a lot of alkali?
RT: Yeah. The valley varies quite a bit, type of ground.
JT: Where was the best part of the valley that you figure is prime land?
RT: I really wouldn't know what part to say.
JT: [tape interruption]...always seemed to blow at Hot Lake.
RT: Yeah.
JT: That's a windy place. You never run any cattle, did you?
RT: No.
JT: Mostly farming.
RT: My dad at one time he was gonna go in cattle business and he had about twenty head. He finally sold them, though.
JT: The Beezings used to run a lot of cattle.
RT: Yeah, the Beezings have had a lot of cattle.
JT: But they also had some summer range.
RT: They had land up here in the hills on Rock Creek.
JT: [tape interruption]...different things to get into in farming.
RT: Yeah.
JT: You have to be pretty well diversified in case something didn't work they had something else that maybe be a little bit better.
RT: Yeah. I also...some of those years I worked in the wintertime for Courtright Irrigation, too. There in '66 I worked out at the plywood plant at Elgin, too.
JT: Almost needed to have another job to make sure that everything worked.
RT: Yeah...[tape stopped]