

Claude Anson

1/31/03, T1, S1

ES: Please give me your full name.  
CA: Claude W. Anson.  
ES: What does the W stand for?  
CA: Wilfred.  
ES: Wilfred. This was a family name, I suppose?  
CA: Yes.  
ES: Your father's name was?  
CA: Orlin.  
ES: And his father's name?  
CA: Joseph.  
ES: I see. And where did the Claude come from?  
CA: Where did what?  
ES: The Claude name come in? Was it a previous family member's name?  
CA: No. No.  
ES: I see. Alright. And you were born in Union County were you?  
CA: Yes.  
ES: Where?  
CA: Just east of Island City. About a mile east of Island City.  
ES: In a home or a house?  
CA: In the house.  
ES: I see. Your mother...your parents' house?  
CA: Yes.  
ES: I see. And what date?  
CA: February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1911.  
ES: Very good. Now I'm understand that you've been in the farming business for a long time, if you call it a business...  
CA: Yes.  
ES: ...if you consider it a business?  
CA: Yes, it was a business.  
ES: Okay. Yes, indeed. But you learned that from your father.  
CA: Right.  
ES: Yes. Tell me some of your early memories of learning what was involved in farming.  
CA: Actually, I started farming right at the change in farming from horses to tractors. I was just right...I finished...they were just finishing up on horses just as I started farmin'. I farmed...as long as my father was runnin' the farm we used horses till just the last couple of years and then he bought a tractor.  
ES: Did you start farming when you were about twenty?  
CA: I started farmin'... I helped on the farm all my life and then I got into farmin' on my own about, oh, well, actually I think get into farming with my brother and my father. And I did that when I was about nineteen.

ES: Do you remember at all what your father was saying to you and your brother about what he hoped you would do with the farm?

CA: No, he never...he never said what he hoped I'd do for the farm and he'd want to be sure I kept the farm.

ES: How did he say that to you?

CA: In regular words I wouldn't know. He give me the impression that he would like to have me stay on the farm 'cause he stayed on the farm. He didn't want to see the farm get out of the family name.

ES: I thought he might have said something about what the farm meant to him and why he hoped you would continue it.

CA: Offhand I don't remember going into that.

ES: At any rate, you got the impression he wished and very much hoped you would.

CA: Yeah, he hoped I would. I have quit the farm but one year. I worked in Larison Freeze garage here in town which after I worked a year for wages I thought to heck with that \_\_ [laugh]. You have to go to work at a certain time and do everything just the way somebody else wanted it done. And so I went back to bein' in the farm with my brother and dad. And he'd...they'd picked up another four hundred acres by that time. There was plenty for me to do.

ES: What was the total number of acres?

CA: There was 240 and 320 and 400. And that kind of kept us busy because my dad...by that time...of course we were farmin' entirely by tractors by that time. When I first started...when I first worked on the farm we used horses entirely. I was never happy with horses.

ES: What was the main crop?

CA: Oh, wheat mostly. Some alfalfa hay, but mostly wheat.

ES: When did you plant the wheat, usually?

CA: Fall wheat.

ES: Fall?

CA: Yeah.

ES: And then were the...was the rainfall or the moisture at that time enough so that it usually would come up well by spring?

CA: Yeah. We had better moisture then than we do now. We had a lot more winter than we do now.

ES: And of course you didn't have any kind of irrigation.

CA: No, not at that time.

ES: No.

O: I found here...[tape paused]

ES: Tell me what you remember about plowing with a horse and doing the planting.

CA: Actually, the plowin' with the team we had eight horses, two four and four, two fours, and I didn't like it 'cause it was slow. But anyhow, and then...

ES: What did the plow look like?

CA: We used a two-bottom gang plow that you could ride on, it had a seat you could ride, or Dad had a plank on it he could stand up there and behind the horses. Or they could tie up the line and it was real cold he'd get off the plow and the horses...after you used a team very long, why, the furrow horses knew they were supposed to be in the furrows so they...you didn't have to ride, you just...they'd

get in the furrow and take the plow around the field. Then if it was too cold to set still, why, they could get off and walk and keep warm at least.

ES: About how many hours at a time would you plow?

CA: Oh, you went...usually had the horses out in the field by seven and worked till five-thirty. Five-thirty we could bring in and that'd give us time to bring the horses in and water 'em and feed 'em and curry 'em.

ES: Did you take a break and rest for lunch?

CA: Yeah, an hour, twelve to one. 'Cause with horses you always had to give the horse a chance to eat, too.

ES: Yeah.

CA: I kind of got away from that after I got the tractor. Why, we'd go in an eat and then I'd get back out on the tractor. But the horses we had to give them a break.

ES: Do you remember what kind of horses they were?

CA: Mostly Persian... Dad had a Persian stallion and we raised mostly Persian horses.

ES: You bred them yourself?

CA: Yeah.

ES: Huh.

CA: But he was always buyin' and tradin'. I never got into that, but Dad was quite a horseman. He liked to \_\_\_ with horses.

ES: Did you have something to do with caring for the horses, too?

CA: Oh yeah, you had to clean out the barn and feed 'em and curry 'em and harness 'em and stuff, unharness 'em and stuff like that.

ES: Did they get sicknesses very often?

CA: No. We never had much trouble that way.

ES: How long would a good...a good plow horse last? How many years?

CA: Oh, I would say twelve, just about. Usually about two to a three year old before you broke 'em and you'd use 'em ten, twelve years.

ES: What did... What did you do to break them?

CA: We had to break 'em to work. The way we started...usually you start 'em if we were plowin' or had a four-horse team, why, you usually put the one in and tie 'em up against another horse and put him in the back and he'd have to go along with everybody else. But if we wanted to break 'em to pull a wagon which we had to move...that's the only way we had to move is a wagon with teams...why then you'd have to put 'em on with another horse and usually we had a plowed field we'd take the...we'd have 'em headed right near the plowed field and then they'd take 'em out in the plowed field and they'd want to try and run, why, they soon got tired then they slowed down. Only had to do that a couple of times. Most horses were willin' to go ahead and walk.

ES: Did you have any accidents with horses that you can remember?

CA: No, not really. I got kicked in the stomach once.

ES: I'd call that one.

CA: I'd guess you'd call that an accident. I was out gettin' ready for school, I was goin' to high school at that time, and I walked up behind a waterin' trough with the work horses and evidently the horse thought it was another horse 'cause they weren't tryin' to kick or anything like that. But anyway, it wiped me right square in the stomach, knocked me down. I had my school clothes on. It made me sick

in my stomach for a while, but I went on in, put my other clothes on and went to school anyhow and I was alright. It sure emptied my stomach. [laughs]

ES: I should think that the plows that you mentioned would have had fairly sharp cutting surfaces.

CA: Yeah, they had what we call plow shear. You put the...you take 'em off and take 'em over to the blacksmith shop 'cause there was blacksmith shops everywhere at that time. And they...you put 'em in the forge and heat 'em up and then they'd pound 'em out and smooth 'em out and then they'd make 'em sharp again.

ES: How often did you need to do that?

CA: It depends entirely on how wet the ground was. If the ground was wet, why, you could go several days. But if the ground was dry, why, two or three days and you needed to have a change shear.

ES: I suppose that hitting rocks often would affect that sharpness of the plow.

CA: Yeah.

ES: Was it rocky around here?

CA: Not... We'd only had a few little rocky spots so that wasn't in any of our land that was...wasn't a huge problem. But \_\_\_ on the home place there is some rocks, but just river rock and they \_\_\_ like a mountain rock.

ES: Yes. Exactly when in the year would you do the plowing?

CA: Oh, usually we'd try to get the plowing done in the fall so the ground...

ES: In October?

CA: Oh yeah. Yeah, if it was moisture enough and usually it was. At that time, why, we could get the plowin' done in October.

ES: And how could you tell when you had enough moisture?

CA: That's what you... I usually take a shovel out \_\_\_ and dig it down as deep as I would want to plow.

ES: Would that be a foot?

CA: No, usually about eight inches. Of course that... If you want to plow deep, why, you'd plow a foot, but most of the time you plow about eight.

ES: So if you dug down eight or nine inches what would the soil look like to tell you that it was...that it had enough moisture?

CA: You looked at the darkness of it then you could take it and squeeze it. Of course if it was lots of moisture it'd be muddy or make a big ball. If it was just not too bad, why, then it'd squeeze up, but it wouldn't get muddy or make a ball. If it showed dust, why, it was usually too dry.

ES: And would you have test several places in your fields before you could be sure it was time to plow?

CA: Oh, not usually. On our field they were all pretty even, but there was some alkali strips that was different, but you'd go ahead and plow that anyhow. Sometimes it would be a lot drier than the rest and other times it was a lot wetter.

ES: Yes. How could you tell that it was an alkali strip?

CA: It's a light colored soil and the ground isn't near as fertile and it doesn't...didn't leave the stubble and anything. You could tell it was there.

ES: There has been here an extension service and the agricultural experimental station in Union to help farmers test their soil and know various other conditions about farming. Did you...your father or did you use any of those services?

CA: No, not really. I... We got some, you know, literature like different types of cattle and different types of grain that they'd tried, different varieties of grain. Yes, I read those and things like that. But as for goin' over there... Well, when I first started out I did go over to some of their meetings. I'd go over to the field and see what...what they were doin'. 'Cause they were comin' out...we's startin' to get noxious weeds and they were workin' with them tryin' to figure out a way to, of course, to stop 'em. That was before sprayin', before we had any kind of spray. I was quite interested in that and I went over and watched...checked some of the things that were doin'. Of course they were sayin' morning glory you should put it in alfalfa. Of course that wasn't the thing to do, but that was the only thing they knew at that time 'cause, boy, you didn't work the soil up or do anything, why, they still run and got bigger all the time. There wasn't any way to kill 'em. Now after they developed the sprays we get a chance to slow 'em down.

ES: What other kinds of noxious weeds were in your land?

CA: Oh, they had Canadian thistles about the worst one we had of noxious weeds. And that's a lot of sprayin'.

ES: Before there were sprays was there anything you could do at all to get rid of it?

CA: The Canadian thistle I had pretty good luck in the...what we call summer fallow. During the summer of the year we don't raise any crop on that land. I'd...I had deep \_\_ plow that I could go down about fourteen inches and I cut the...those Canadian thistles all real deep and then I'd work it all summer long, every once in a while I'd go out and work it, and kept that dry. Where you cut it off that deep and you kept it dry, why, it would slim the noxious weeds down pretty good. Didn't do it on Canad...the Canadian thistle done real good, but morning glory it didn't do so good.

ES: Had your father ever talked about being the problem of noxious weeds?

CA: No, he never... Didn't have hardly any weeds at that time.

ES: Why do you think the weeds came into this valley?

CA: People brought the stuff in. Our worst weed right now is one that Migotty brought over from other side of the mountain, it started out there at the middle of the valley. He planted a bunch of wheat and it had the weed seed in it. Now it's all over the valley.

ES: Did this come from not knowing that there was weed seed in the wheat?

CA: Yeah. When cleaned at some place it hadn't been cleaned good enough to get the seed out.

ES: And at that time was there no government certification program for the wheat content?

CA: No, there wasn't. You could move the wheat around or their hay around and there wasn't any problems. Wallowa County after they got in the...a lot of Canadian thistle brought in by the hunters that \_\_ out in the mountains and then they had Canadian thistle all over the places. They got smart and they wouldn't let anybody bring any outside hay in. But we...I don't think we have a hay quarantine here in Union County, not that I know of.

ES: When did you start spraying the weeds?

CA: Oh, I was one of the first ones. Gosh, I don't know.

ES: In your early days of farming?

CA: Yeah, I had...it was...let's see. I had...it was right after the war.

ES: The Second World War?

CA: Yeah.

ES: Yeah.

CA: Right about then.

ES: Late '40s.

CA: Yeah, late '40s.

ES: Mm-hmm. Do you remember what...what the spray was?

CA: Toobardee.

ES: That's no longer being used, is it?

CA: That's all there was at that time, I think.

ES: Yeah.

CA: We didn't have Round-Up or...but we did have Toobardee and that was a selective spray, that is you could spray it over your wheat and you'd get any broadleaf weed. I remember I got... I bought a spray outfit and rigged it up on a John Deere tractor I had. Two...I had three...\_\_ platform put three fifty-gallon drums on. And I'd pump \_\_ and put it on the pump and then put a little boom across the front and that's the way I did my sprayin' right at first 'cause they didn't have any sprays...anything that was made I made up at that time, like we have nowadays.

ES: Am I right in thinking that if it was windy you wouldn't be spraying?

CA: Yeah, if it was very bad. You can see it from your sprayer, that spray a-flyin' around and you know you're not doin' much good.

ES: Did you wear a mask or any kind of protection?

CA: No.

ES: Were you aware it might in...might hurt you?

CA: I don't know whether we even knew it at that time. After they did tell us about it we'd been usin' it...been doin' it for so many years that we never paid any attention anyhow. Other than...well, sure. Like Toobardee, stuff we knew what we'd been using. Of course there's a lot of spray that is a real danger. Nowadays you got a lot of it \_\_\_\_. In fact, there's some of it I wouldn't even fool with at all, but you...you need a mask, boy. But a lot of that stuff, why, I never worried about it.

ES: When was the best time of the year to apply the weed spray?

CA: Normally just as soon as the weeds get started. The younger they are...

ES: In the spring, early spring?

CA: Early...yeah, at the beginning of spring, usually April, May. But you have to wait for the wheat to get big enough too, so sometimes it's along towards June before you can get in there to spray.

ES: Were you satisfied generally with the results?

CA: A lot of the weeds, yes, but after you've used a spray several years then there's some of 'em develop a...won't...the spray doesn't do any harm to it and so we have to change sprays. And so there's times when you don't have very good luck sprayin' you've used that one spray too long or somethin'.

ES: Did that mean then that if you didn't get all the weeds some of the weeds were getting into the wheat when you harvested it?

CA: Yeah.

ES: And what...would you have to take it somewhere to have it cleaned?

CA: If it was a... If you... We didn't really have too much trouble after we sprayed it. We wouldn't...it wouldn't get it...still wouldn't be enough weeds to get through that we'd have to have it cleaned. But before we use a spray and there was a lot of green weeds in it we'd have...sometimes you'd have to take it and get it cleaned before the mill'd take it. 'Cause they...it would heat up in their bin and they wouldn't take it.

ES: Who would do the cleaning?

CA: Oh, there was two or three places, Alicel...they've torn that cleaner out out there just this last year or two. Alicel'd clean some and the Hamanns there in Island City used to clean stuff. Then his son Willy Hamann out there put in a cleaner on the ranch.

ES: I've seen his grass seed cleaner, does that work...does the grass seed cleaner work the same way as the wheat cleaner?

CA: Well...

ES: A lot of sieves that...sieves going...

CA: There's a screen...yeah, a screen.

ES: Yeah.

CA: Of course a grain cleaner wasn't...doesn't have to be near as accurate as the grass seed cleaner, but it's the same theory. You kind of shove it with the big stuff out and stuff that you don't want.

ES: For the wheat would you...would it have to go through more than one screen?

CA: No, not when you're just cleanin' it...

ES: Just...just once.

CA: ...for the mill. Sometimes you'd have to clean it twice if you're gonna use it for seed, but for storage, why, it isn't necessary.

ES: Then I suppose there was someone there to test every once in a while to make sure that the weed count was low enough.

CA: Oh yeah, you...if you put it in...you put quite a bit of green stuff in when you harvest it, why...if it's a bin and your own bin, why, you put a metal rod down in there and the rod gets real hot when you put it back up, why, you figure you're in trouble. Then you have to take it out. I have had to take it out and put it in all the neighbors' trucks I could find around here. Just takin' it out, puttin' it in the trucks, leave a day or two and puttin' it back in. The movin' it, why, then it'd be alright.

ES: What did the... What did having the rod get hot have to the weed content...weed seeds?

CA: The weeds in there...that moisture in the weed and then it's compressed and no air gets to it and then it heats up and, you know, and eventually it'd burn up \_\_ it was combust...combustion.

ES: When you finished cleaning you wheat, when you needed to do that, where did you store it then?

CA: You put it... You go ahead and put it in your bin \_\_ you'd have to take it back out.

ES: I mean when it was screened well enough so that the weed seed content was low it was then ready to market, wasn't it?

CA: Yeah.

ES: Okay. Where did you store it until you could send it to market?

CA: I had...actually and originally the only place you could store it was at the mill at Island City or Alicel or \_\_. But then I built a crib bin a good many years ago and I put it in the crib bin \_\_. I can put in about...right close to ten thousand bushel and that'd take care of the most of it.

ES: Did it make any difference as far as marketing is concerned whether you stored your own wheat separately or whether you mixed it in with some other farmer's wheat?

CA: It hasn't been making any difference, but \_\_ when they take a test of your wheat when you bring it in. You get paid for the test the kind of wheat you brought in if it's community stored. But now they're...a lot of...there's different kinds of wheat and it's getting' to where they don't want co-mingled, that is different kinds they don't want co-mingled so it makes it a lot better if you got your own storage.

ES: Did you always grow the same kind of wheat?

CA: Yeah.

ES: What was it?

CA: That would mean fall wheat, but of course there was different... It started...well, Forty-fold was the old standby...

ES: Forty-fold?

CA: Yeah, Forty-fold wheat was the first...it was the...oh, ever since I was a...Dad...what Dad raised when I was a kid was Forty-fold. They called it Forty-fold and that was the first wheat. They could forty bushels and acre.

ES: I see.

CA: But it was a...wasn't a real good wheat 'cause if we happened to have a \_\_ and then you had a bad windstorm before you could harvest it it would shatter so bad. So then they come out with a Club wheat...

ES: Cub, did you say?

CA: Club.

ES: Club.

CA: Yeah, makes a round \_\_ oh, it's a shorter head, but it's a fatter head. And it would...it wouldn't a-shatter. It was pretty hard to harvest and the straw was so stiff.

ES: That mean that it had more or less moisture content?

CA: It was...make much difference on the moisture content, but it was just a real stiff strawed wheat. That was just bred into it so it wouldn't fall over \_\_ so bad. But it had advantages and disadvantages. Oh, they got busy a few years back, about ten years ago, and started breeding off some more different kind of wheat. It's still a soft white wheat, but it yields so much better than it used to. What used to be, like I said, forty bushel to the acre and then we got this new...new type that the government or the Oregon Department of Agriculture developed...[end tape]



- CA: ...same moisture and same ground. You jump from forty bushels to the acre to a hundred bushels to the acre. But it may be the same way of workin' the ground \_\_\_. But it...but it's salt white now and we've lost all our \_\_\_ places to sell \_\_\_ over in that part of the country they like the soft white. But of course they're mad at us and they won't buy it. And the soft white's tryin' to...havin' a little trouble of findin' a market. But hard red, why, a lot of...a lot of the countries want hard red, but they haven't developed a hard red we can raise in this weather, this kind of climate here. It takes a hot, dry climate. We just don't have that much...we had a hot enough, seems like, but it doesn't seem to work very good. But it's worth quite a bit more and people keep tryin' it, but it end up gettin' their field to make up the difference, it's bottom line.
- ES: Over the years you were raising wheat what were you hearing from the buyers of wheat about the kind of wheat they wanted and why they wanted it?
- CA: \_\_\_ never heard so much about that, but I did hear some...a lot about the type of wheat we were sendin'...sendin' 'em. You're talkin' to the...the people who go down and load...see 'em loadin' the ships, why, they put so much good wheat in there and then they put a bunch of thrash in there. Then the...you know, just to fill up a... They hung a lot of waste up off on that market and that's what made everybody mad at us, what they done with sod I never did. I would never have to be there when they was loadin' the ships. But it was...it was a crime they sent all that old dust and, oh, hulls and things like that. It just wasn't the top... If it was cleaned good, why, it's really top quality wheat, but they put in a bunch of... Even that, you know, it would be already be cleaned off, but then they'd put in a certain amount because they had a percentage that they had to stay under so they'd run it clear up to that percentage just to get rid of the stuff. It was a bad deal.
- ES: So that had nothing to do with the farmers, but the farmers got the blame, is that right?
- CA: Yeah, that's right. We didn't clean it good enough.
- ES: Did you make your case?
- CA: I think there's...they made a big difference 'cause the countries won't...won't take it now unless it's a lot better condition. Whether they got different rules or regulations.
- ES: Did you ordinarily know over the years you were raising wheat where your wheat was being shipped? Who was buying it?
- CA: Yes, at times. Like when I sold...whenever I sold wheat in Island City Kittle's the mill, the Kittle's ran...Mark Kittle run the mill there at Island City. He'd go over to Japan every year and make contact. And I know quite a bit of our wheat went to Japan at that time. 'Cause he was real active in gettin' around and findin' a foreign market. Now there's a wheat over...there's a...if we got a good hard red wheat you ought to be good...
- O: I probably don't...[tape paused]
- CA: I had hard red wheat, why, I think it'd be over here to Pendleton. He used a special somethin', I don't know just what it is, but he'll...he wants to buy...he'll

buy all the hard red wheat we raise around here, but we can't raise very much of it. \_\_

ES: Would I be correct in thinking that you...except for that year you worked in the garage in La Grande you had maybe seventy years of farming experience?

CA: Yes, I guess I have. Yeah, probably more than that. I've farmed...I've...even after the grandson took over I've been farmin'. In fact, I was still runnin' the tractor when I got six last fall, had to go to the hospital. I had never stopped.

ES: Why did you keep with it so long?

CA: I just couldn't...I could see people out runnin' up and down the road and walkin' around just to get exercise. I thought that's crazy, I might just as well go out and do some good. And I thoroughly enjoyed farming and so I just stayed with it.

ES: Could you tell me some of the aspects of farming that you enjoyed? Or maybe everything?

CA: Oh yeah. Even though it was tough, you know, we'd have a feeling of accomplishing something when you got it done and done a good job with it. So I really enjoyed it whether it was tough or whether it was just...wasn't too hard.

ES: I imagine there were a lot of price variations in the wheat over all those years.

CA: Oh yeah.

ES: Some years when it was quite high?

CA: I made more money...clear money during the war years than I ever did before or after. But the early '90s was pretty good. There was quite a margin.

ES: Were there some years when you just about went broke?

CA: Oh, there's some years I...there was two years I had freezes took everything. But two years out of the seventy or eighty years I was in farmin' I guess that isn't too bad.

ES: How did your farm happen to be designated a Century Farm?

CA: Oh, my mother applied for it and then the governor...see there was the two of 'em. She was one of the first two that was called Century Farm. I don't know if through the Historical Society of somethin' they come up with this idea of havin' historical farms in Oregon. And they picked...Mother turned in the dates and everything so it was the first...one of the first two that were turned in.

ES: What do you think interested her...interested her about that?

CA: I don't know. She seemed to be real interested in it and I was farmin' with it that time. It...

ES: Did she think there would be some benefit in having it called a Century Farm?

CA: I think that she thought it would be, yeah. But the governor invited her down to Salem and she got the trip down to Salem, too. That probably suited her, too.

ES: I suppose you got some kind of a certificate from the governor's office?

CA: Yeah.

ES: Yeah. Do you still have that?

CA: Yeah, I give it to my...see, when I...I give my land to my daughter in Montana, but we get it out of my estate. I give her all the things like that. But they're developin' a new program right now that givin' us all new...new signs to go on the place...the original owners and also the person that was farmin' it right then. That'll be showin' up on a lot of the farms instead of the old Century Farm. It'll be considered a Century Farm, but it'll have both names.

ES: It has a sign on it now, I suppose?  
CA: Pardon?  
ES: Your farm has a sign on it now that said Century Farm?  
CA: No, it isn't. Did have, but I don't know what happened to it. I never done anything about it.  
ES: Apparently it didn't mean as much to you as it did to your mother.  
CA: No, but she had it and it was up then. But since she died I don't know whether...I might have taken it...but anyhow, I'm sure I sent the certificate to my daughter in White Fish. When I gave her the ranch I figured she needed that, all the notes \_\_\_. And I think...I don't know just how it is now...but I think the grandson buildin' a big house out there. The original log house burnt down, most of the building, the barn, the cow barn and the log house and the buggy shed all burnt down. And then the original...the second house that my grandfather built then raised his family and, why, it was there until, oh, seven or eight years ago and then I had it rented to some people and the little kid was playin' with matches, I guess, and it burnt the house down. So I put in just a mobile home there for a while and my grandson took over and he made some arrangement with his mother and they built a big house out there. He's still in the house. He's got four kids now. I guess he needed a big house.  
ES: Do you think you might have pictures left over of the original buildings?  
CA: Oh yeah.  
ES: I'd like to see them.  
CA: I'll have to dig them out for you, but I've got 'em.  
ES: Okay. Good.  
CA: I got some pictures of the...of the log house. The fact is, Margaret's got a bunch of slides of the...that her husband took one time. She's got several of those and maybe some are in there, too.  
ES: What do you remember about living in the log cabin?  
CA: The log cabin my grandfather raised...let's see. My grandfather's brother built the log cabin. And then when grandfather moved out there, why, they lived in the log cabin for a while then he built the other house and raised him and his family there. His wife died when the fourth child was born and so he raised the family alone.  
ES: You didn't live in the log cabin ever then?  
CA: No.  
ES: But you saw it?  
CA: Oh yes. We used it for storage. We had a grain bin with a hand grain cleaner in the back to clean our seed grain and stuff like that.  
ES: Was it a well-built cabin?  
CA: Oh yeah.  
ES: And a fire place or a stove of some kind?  
CA: No, it was...it had all been changed after I got big enough to know. My dad had made shelves in there for...to put tools in...  
ES: Oh, I see.  
CA: ...and the lean-to where the old kitchen was, that'd been changed over to put the cleanin' part in.

ES: I see.

CA: And the rooms had been changed over to make storage bins for the seed wheat, kind of like that.

ES: But you were living close to it, right? It was near the house you were living in?

CA: Oh yeah. It was... It had a dug well with rocks all the way around it and a real good well and the pitcher pump. And so I had to... When I was a kid that was my job, always to pump that trough full of water for the horses when they come in from workin'. And then it was... Originally that was on a trail that people goin' out across the valley and they'd come by there and get \_\_ that old well. Then when I was a kid my grandfather had got well acquainted with some of the Indians from Umatilla Indian. Used to come over here to get camas \_\_. They used to come out there and camp where they had...right where they had real good water and stuff. And he got a real lot of pleasure... When I was a little kid, why, boy, I'd...I'd see the Indians there and, boy, I'd make myself scarce! I was scared to death of 'em!

ES: Do you know why?

CA: I'd read all about the Indians, you know. But no, they were good friends with my grandpa.

ES: Did he tell you stories about them?

CA: Not as much at least...well, not as much as he should've or if he did I didn't remember \_\_ of 'em. Oh, I missed an awful lot. He used to take me fishin' down the creek all the time and we'd sit there for hours and he'd tell me about the...some of the things he'd done in the War and things like that. Of course a kid I never paid much attention. I'm sorry I didn't.

ES: I've heard that said by many people. When you're young you just can't seem to think that those stories are important.

CA: No. They just don't mean much to ya.

ES: Yeah, that's right.

CA: It's your own life you're thinkin' of, you're not worried about somebody's that's already had their life. Don't worry about that.

ES: I suppose that when you were quite young you did go to a one-room school out there.

CA: No, I didn't go to a one-room school, I went to Island City school and it was a four-room school. Two...well, two grades to each school, but then they changed it over to a three-room school, seventh and eighth were in a room and the other two had three...three grades.

ES: Do you have any... Do you have any vivid memories about that school experience?

CA: Yeah. I think it was a good school. And I...later on I was on the school board and then when I told the kids that graduated from class I told 'em that they were goin' to go to La Grande the kids think they were a lot smarter, and they were, but I said you just remember you got as good or better education they got here in La Grande. And that's the way I felt about it, too. 'Cause we had a real good school. It wasn't one of those where you could go out and have a lot of athletics or anything like that, but we always got along alright.

ES: Were you able to walk from the farm to the school?

CA: Yeah. It's about a mile-and-a-half. Sometimes that was a pretty rough go, we had some bad winters. But it was nice 'cause I just walked straight acrossed the quarter-of-a-mile from the house till you got to a lined fence. And after you got over the fence and went to the next house, which was about half of a quarter, then there was a road from that house, a farm road from that house to the other house. Then we...we's at the edge of the golf course now, but it was a cherry orchard...or an orchard at that time, but we just cut...kids cut across the orchard and come out right there at the school.

ES: I... Were you walking to school with several other kids?

CA: Yeah.

ES: Yeah.

CA: Over just next-door next...just a quarter...a little over a quarter south there was five boys and one was just almost the same age as I was and two of 'em were older and two of 'em were younger. So the one that was my age and I usually walked together. And my brother and the older ones they walked together.

ES: And when you got out of school and you're going back home did you have to get home right away to do chores, or could you sort of fool around on the way home?

CA: You got home just as soon as you could. Fact is, when we got to high school, why, my dad didn't think I had any time bein' up there playin' basketball or football.

ES: [laugh] Work to be done.

CA: Yeah. \_\_\_ and be home and I had to...I had to, oh, the stove was a wood and wood had to be chopped and taken in. We always had the wood box and we'd...things like that. But when it come to the last couple years in high school, why, in the spring I went ahead and went out for track. I didn't have to spend the whole time up at school \_\_\_ 'cause I did most of my runnin' around at home. Then the first year I won the Eastern Oregon Mile my dad pretty much interested then. [laugh] So the next year I didn't have much trouble gettin' time to go and then I...that year I set the record for Eastern Oregon high schools for several years.

ES: This was La Grande High School?

CA: Yeah.

ES: Yeah, because Island City never did have a high school, did it?

CA: They did when my dad was young, they had a high school, just one-room high school. When I went to school there they had a \_\_\_ department, but they didn't use it anymore, but they had it there, that they had when they did have a high school. But they just had the grade school when I went there and everybody went...people went to high school they'd come on in to La Grande High School.

ES: The building that that was in and that building where you had our classes in Island City is now gone, isn't it?

CA: Yeah. Yeah, they put a new...

ES: Was that a wooden building?

CA: It was a wood building.

ES: Do you think it burned?

CA: No, they took it down. Yeah, they took it down.

ES: When might it have been built? In the late 1800s?

CA: I don't know, but my grandfather was quite a hand at gettin' that goin' up there, but I can't remember...remember just when it was built. The original building that was a brick building that's the one my grand...my father went to. A brick building was all they had for the school. But they put the other four rooms on after he was out of school. Of course he only went two or three months in the wintertime. But he did go to school.

ES: When you went to school, though, were you going from September through May or June?

CA: Yeah, May. Usually the third week in May, I think was the old days we always looked forward to.

ES: Yeah. Did your father say maybe that's too much school?

CA: No, he didn't. He thought it was a good idea to go to school. Of course Mother was quite a pusher to get me to school 'cause she was a school teacher when she was first...before she was married. She did real well and made sure I got most everything done.

ES: Had she taught around here?

CA: Oh, she taught out at the Hot Lake in one of those one-room schools. She only taught for two or three years then she got married.

ES: But she thought her children needed to go to school?

CA: Yeah.

ES: Yes.

CA: She figured the kids ought to be goin' to school. In the \_\_\_...I think we mentioned the kids next-door. I...Bill and I went to school...we started to school at the same time, went all the way through grade school and all the way through high school together, pretty much the same \_\_\_.

ES: These...all these kids came from farms, I suppose, or were there some merchants' kids there? Storekeeper kids?

CA: Most of the kids that went to Island City were just the farm kids there and there's a few city kids, I mean a few that lived in Island City.

ES: Town kids. Yeah.

CA: But most of 'em were farm kids. There wasn't anything like school busses or \_\_\_.

ES: No, no.

CA: Everybody figured on gettin' there. Down below us people by the name of Taylor they had three kids and they drove a horse and buggy to school. But that's really close enough to walk.

ES: Were any of the kids that were at that school, or any of the kids you knew at that time Black or Asian? All white kids?

CA: It was all white kids. Yeah, there wasn't... Even in high school as far as I can remember there's just one, big old kid. But it was all white kids. And as for any other...there was of course Germans and a lot of light colored people. There wasn't many Japanese or Chinese.

ES: Do you remember hearing any people talk about people of other races?

CA: Oh, it was quite common to ridicule the Negroes.

ES: How would they do that?

CA: Oh, different remarks they made. But they had one negro kid was a real good athlete and he got by pretty good. He was...he was a broad jumper. He was a

real good one so they kind of allowed him to be around. But, no, there was quite a bit of friction, that's when I was young, between the...anybody bein' a foreigner.

ES: Do you mean by friction, fights?

CA: They'd talk against each other and I don't think it really \_\_\_ but they didn't...they'd just as soon not hired 'em or anything like that. We had a Chinatown here in town that was a real...where Safeway is now that street for those two blocks from Adams over that was all Chinatown.

ES: You mean where the old Safeway is?

CA: Yeah. That was a... That was all Chinatown.

ES: Yes. Yeah.

CA: And they'd have those\_\_\_ every once in a while. I know one time mother and I was goin' down the street, of course we come to town on a horse and buggy, and some Chinaman was runnin' down the street and some other Chinaman's a-shootin' at him. So she turned the horse around and we went back to Adams, didn't want to go down that one.

ES: Were you reading a newspaper during those days when you were growing up?

CA: Oh, not very much. We had newspapers. Dad was quite a avid reader on newspapers, but...

ES: Were you picking up your news of what was going on around the world just from hearing people talk?

CA: Oh, yeah, at home I suppose we talked about it. I don't remember bein' too much interested in newspapers, but after we got the radios, why then we got...I turned...radio news is on all the time. And there was a few programs that we'd listen to, Amos and Andy, some of those.

ES: Yes. Do you remember what your first radio looked like?

CA: Yeah. It was about...about that long.

ES: About two-and-a-half, three feet long. A box, a rectangular box.

CA: It was rectangular box. It comes up about that high.

ES: With a speaker up on the top?

CA: No, I think the speaker...it had a speaker...oh, we had a cabinet and the speaker was just down inside the cabinet where the batteries were. We had it hooked up that way.

ES: I see.

CA: And it had three dials across, that is three tubin' dials and two or three other little dials \_\_\_ stuff like that. Pretty complicated thing. You could sit there and after you got used to it you could wiggle the little dials and we could finally get in just right.

ES: You needed a large outside antenna, didn't you?

CA: Yeah, we had an outside antenna. Had a post stuck...a big pole stuck up out there.

ES: And did that allow you to get radio stations from all over the West?

CA: Yeah. I know when the first time I remember heard a Roy's radio we went down to the neighbor's down east of us one time and they had us come down, they'd got a radio and asked to come down. And they'd picked up Denver. It didn't seem possible they picked up Denver...[end tape]

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ES: Okay.

CA: That noise, he says, that must be the wind a blowin' over the Rockies. [laughs] It was... It was a lot different world when I was young that it is now. As far as I'm concerned, it's a better world then than it is now.

ES: And what would be some of the main reasons for saying it was better then?

CA: We didn't have the crime, the people that we was with you...you never drew up a bunch of paper to make an agreement with somebody, you shook hands and that was it and it was depended on. And you never...out at the house out there you never even had a key for it, never had to worry about somebody gettin' in there and raisin' the devil. It was time, you know, you'd be workin' around out on the...fixin' fences or somethin' along the road and I have people that stop and visit, you had a heck of a time gettin' anything done, you know. [laughs] There'd be so many people that'd come by and of course they saw you, why, it was neighbor, why, they'd stop and talk to you. If you needed any help, why, man, you just mentioned it to a neighbor and they were there to help you. And so many jobs, like hayin' and harvest, butcherin' and things like that, why, you needed help and just for temporary help, why, just the neighbors would get together and take care of each other.

ES: You mentioned butchering, so what other animals did you have on your farm?

CA: Oh, hogs and cattle besides the horses.

ES: Were they all kept primarily for food?

CA: Cattle no, we raised cattle to sell, we raised a cattle for ourself and we kept sheep to for our self. We raised the sheep to eat and we'd have...we'd usually have mutton and butcher a couple of hogs and a beef.

ES: I think we're talking about the period before the Second World War, aren't we? Or were you still raising these animals in later years?

CA: No, that was before...that wasn't...when I was still livin' on the home place. Of course, after I got married and got farmin' on my own, why, it was simplified things a lot 'cause I was doin' everything with just tractor and I hired...had...I could get all the help I wanted because everybody that was during the War especially, why, they could get work on a farm they didn't have to go...get caught in the draft. So I could pick my help and I had good help and it really made a difference. Like I say, I made...that's when I first started makin' money was during the War.

ES: Did you have a place on the farm for the help to live?

CA: No, I just had...they lived at their own place and then they show up to work, seven...be there at seven...seven till six.

ES: Six days a week?

CA: Six days, sometimes seven days.

ES: —

CA: Yeah.

ES: Especially during the planting and the harvesting, I imagine?



CA: Yeah. The harvesting we usually worked seven days a week as much as we could and as long as we could. But...

ES: The harvest usually goes about two or three weeks, doesn't it?

CA: Yeah, about three weeks.

ES: That's really...

CA: That fast, it's faster than that nowadays 'cause the combines are so big, they travel so much faster. We used to figure about a month, but we did our own work and we did custom work.

ES: You mean for other people?

CA: Yeah, I did the work for other people. 'Cause see, when I was startin' out farmin' there... a lot of farmers were still back where they had their horses and horse drawn equipment.

ES: And they couldn't afford to buy the tractors yet?

CA: Couldn't afford to buy the new stuff. I did... like I say, I got started just at the right time because Dad bought the first tractor and we used it, but then... I did custom work and got paid for doin' for the neighbors 'cause they didn't want to fool with the horses, they wanted me to get the work done right away and the money was... like I said, they were startin' to make pretty good money and they didn't mind spendin' it for custom work rather than do it themselves.

ES: How did you charge for the custom work? Did you just say this is the area that needs to be harvested, I'll charge you just so much, or...

CA: So much an acre.

ES: Yeah, I see.

CA: I'd say so much for plowin', so much an acre of plowin'. Of course that wasn't always the same 'cause you had harvestin' and... when the... if it was down and tangled up and you'd only get maybe half as much done so you'd try to make... you'd go... fact is, I learned to go look at the field, I didn't take their word for it.

ES: Yeah, I should think you would.

CA: I got caught with a fella \_\_ Island City. I told him if it was down it'd be so much and if it was up, why, it'd be so much. One field was real good, but he one field that was down somethin' terrible.

ES: When you say down you mean it was lying flat?

CA: Lying flat on the ground, you had to take everything up and run the whole thing.

ES: Was that because of wind or hail?

CA: Usually hail, but wind'll do it, but a real heavy rain'll do it, but hail does more damage. After that episode with him...

ES: He wouldn't pay?

CA: He didn't want to pay... He wanted to pay just what I'd told him it'd be worth if it was standin' and I spent quite a bit more time than necessary on it. So I told him, well, I'd just go ahead and figure so many acres an hour... I'd do it by the hour. Then he could see whether we was gettin' done on time right. He paid me what I had comin', but he sure didn't like it. It was a mess. But I... I did custom work for years.

ES: Did you ever have a written contract for that work?

CA: Uh-huh.

ES: It was always just by oral agreement?  
CA: Yeah, oral agreement.  
ES: Were you ever told "I'm not going to pay you"?  
CA: Oh, I never did lose any. Sometimes \_\_\_ but I can understand that 'cause lots of times you just didn't have the money. I had a real good luck in that kind of work.  
ES: Did they usually pay you in cash?  
CA: Yeah.  
ES: Hundred dollar bills?  
CA: Sometimes. Some...oh, there was quite a few paid by check, but I had...I got some cash payments. But it was... I made quite a bit of money on...other than just straight farmin' 'cause I did the custom work and then I bought a hay chopper and I chopped hay. I chopped hay during the winter. So anytime the wind wasn't blowin', the weather was halfway decent, we chopped hay. And the funny part of it was I had three hired men, but like I say it was during the war and they didn't want...they wanted their jobs even though they only worked maybe...some weeks maybe we wouldn't work for only a couple days. But they stayed right with me right through the season.  
ES: As you started buying tractors and other kinds of equipment I suppose you had to take out loans, did you?  
CA: Yeah.  
ES: Did you use a bank in La Grande?  
CA: Yeah.  
ES: Was it fairly easy to get a loan based on your reputation?  
CA: Yeah, no problems. I never had any problems getting loans.  
ES: What was your preferred payback time?  
CA: Oh, I always paid out in the fall we always set it up after harvest.  
ES: Less than a year then?  
CA: Yeah. Yeah. We wouldn't necessarily be paid out by then, but I mean we'd make a payment but we might run a couple or three years, but we'd always set it after harvest one year after the next.  
ES: Of course the prices of equipment have been going up over the years, but proportionately were you paying about the same for the first equipment you bought as the later equipment?  
CA: Oh no, it was a lot cheaper.  
ES: I know the price was higher, but...so the value of money kept changing...  
CA: Oh, I see what you mean.  
ES: ...so proportionately were you maybe spending the same amount earlier and later?  
CA: That'd be kind of a hard one, but...to say, but...  
ES: You didn't stop and figure that out.  
CA: Yeah, but the price of the machinery is so much higher than it used to be.  
ES: Yes. Yes.  
CA: But the dollar isn't worth very much anymore. So I don't know, but I know that when...when we dug up a hundred dollars...a hundred dollars was a hundred dollars hard to come by. Probably a hundred dollars then was just as hard to get as five hundred or more now.

ES: Yes. That's what I... I would think so. Sure.

CA: That's probably right. So it...like you say, it might be not too much off of \_\_

ES: Can you remember when you got the first piece of tractor equipment that had air-conditioning or some kind of cooling for the driver?

CA: Yeah. That isn't too long ago. No, I suffered through all the cold weather and the old cabs were...all through the war and that was...you couldn't get anything like that anyhow. You couldn't get a tractor. I didn't have an enclosed cabin tractor. And then, oh, after the war I got a tractor with a cab and had the heater and air-conditioning. That was after the war.

ES: Did that change the way you worked?

CA: Bet your life! [laughs] Made it a lot easier.

ES: Easier, yeah, but did it...did you work longer hours or were you more productive when you had that...

CA: More productive, but, oh, I made due. I had a John Deere and it...I just bought me a big tarp and put a metal frame around and above the steerin' wheel, just about this high on me, and I just wrapped the whole motor up with that tarp and I'd crank up that tractor and boy just as soon they got heat in the tractor, why, that just come right back on me and I could work right through. I'd just wear a cap and earfluffs and a big heavy coat up around my neck and, gee, I could get by pretty good.

ES: This was in below freezing weather?

CA: Oh yeah...well, not freezing, but right close to freezing. I did do some work in...farm work in freezing weather, but very little.

ES: You mentioned chopping hay in the wintertime. What were you other activities during winter?

CA: That was it. I sold the cattle by that time. I had been raising cattle, but I sold the cattle 'cause it was... That choppin' hay that was really hard work. It was about all you could possibly do.

ES: Could you describe how you chopped the hay?

CA: How'd...

ES: How do you do it?

CA: Oh, I bought a... Originally, I bought a small hammer mill that would do about a half a...half a stack or a little less of hay.

ES: What does that look like?

CA: It'd chop... It'd just make it all chopped up to where it was coarse.

ES: Was it a thing that had a big opening that you would put the hay down in and then there were teeth to cut it up?

CA: Put it all in and then knives that cut it down and around \_\_.

ES: It had to be hand fed?

CA: Yeah, just...you just fed...fed it. You put it in this feeder in the traveling feeder and then the fingers grab it and take it on into the knives.

ES: What was hard about that?

CA: What was what?

ES: What was hard? You said it was hard work.

CA: Haulin'...gettin' that hay out to the chopper, you had to do it with a pitchfork.

ES: I see, yeah.

CA: And that was four...there's four of us, one...I'd always usually done the feeding. And then...but if we had to put it in the barn or somethin' and go in and \_\_\_ or somethin', boy, that was awful hard on you and you had all that dust and debris and whatever.

ES: Did you put kerchiefs around your mouth and nose?

CA: No, I didn't, but I should've. 'Cause when I was havin' my lungs x-rayed several years ago the doctor said, "You sure got a bunch of dirt in there, but" he says, "you still got plenty of lung power."

ES: After it was chopped did you put it in bales or bags or how did you gather it together?

CA: If they didn't want it chopped into a building, why then I had to...you know, you've seen these snow fences that the county puts up where there's just a bunch of \_\_\_ put together with wire. I'd get a role of that, make a big circle and then we had a blower and it blowed snow...I'd blow the hay down and head it down into there and then as it'd come up two-thirds of the way up, why, I'd get up in there and pull it up and we could just take that hay right up as high as we wanted to go and then top it out and it kept real good.

ES: And then when you wanted to take it somewhere would you load it onto a wagon?

CA: Yeah.

ES: Where... Who would use it then?

CA: Feeders. That'd feed the cattle nicely.

ES: All over the valley?

CA: Yeah. Well, most of the people I chopped for were the ones that \_\_\_ themselves, that is I'd chop it and they'd feed it themselves. It wasn't...they weren't...well, some of 'em were choppin' and sellin' it, but most of 'em were havin' it chopped just so they could get better utilization. Quite often it was pretty poor quality of hay and chopped it up you get cattle a better chance of handlin' it.

ES: I was wondering if you had a little side business of delivering it to cattle growers on the other parts of the valley?

CA: No.

ES: No, you didn't do that.

CA: No, I didn't do that. I did do the choppin' and the funny part of it is I sold that chopper, I got to where I didn't want to do any more choppin'. I had...I'd had plenty of that time I didn't have time to do anything else. And besides that I had the ski shop. So I quit the workin' out in the country in the summer...wintertime and I went to work at the ski shop in the summer...wintertime.

ES: Now you bring up the subject of skiing and I know that's been important in your life. When did you start skiing? As a young boy?

CA: Thirty-four.

ES: In 1934?

CA: No, I was...

ES: Oh, you were thirty-four.

CA: I started to skiin' because my wife and I had two girls and one was five and the other'n was about eight and one of their girlfriends wanted to ski and her mother wanted to ski and my wife wanted to ski. So I'd sold the cattle so I didn't have

anything to do so I decided I'd...well, I'll take 'em up \_\_\_ risk bein' up there in the mountain all that time.

ES: Where did you first go skiing?

CA: At Tollgate and we went up there.

ES: What was it like up there in 1934? Did they have any kind of tows or did you just walk up the hill and slide down?

CA: No, we had two...two rope tows. One went clear to the top and one went...it started it down the row, but it was a... \_\_\_ it started at the bottom right from the highway from that first pitch where the hill goes up. And you could ride up there and learn to ski on that hill and then the steeper hill you take the other tow and you go up to the top.

ES: Describe your ski equipment that you first had. [laughs]

CA: The first pair of skis that I had was a pair of pine skis.

ES: Where do you think they were made?

CA: They were Northwood skis, they weren't made by the ski company. But the bottom you had to paint \_\_\_ on 'em to get 'em to slide worth a darn.

ES: How were they fastened to your feet, your shoes?

CA: I think it just had a strap over the toe. Then... Then we got smart and we put a inner tube...we cut a piece of inner tube, make a circle, we'd put that over the...your toe ahead of the strap over your toe and hook the rest of it...stretch it and put it on your heel. That'd keep your foot in. That worked pretty good. Of course it wasn't anywhere near what we got later on.

ES: No, but they were fun, weren't they?

CA: Oh yeah. We went up here what used to call the old \_\_\_ patch, that's just up the river and just before...just after you get up off...up off of that raise that comes up out of the river. Off to the right there used to be quite a clearing there where it didn't have...it wasn't real steep, but pretty good clearing. It's still there, but it's different. But since the highway has been put through there. But we'd go up there and ski there. And later on gotten interested enough we went up to Tollgate, skied up there.

ES: Describe to me, if you can remember, what kind of power those rope tows used.

CA: Some old motor, some car of some kind.

ES: Gasoline.

CA: Gasoline.

ES: Mm-hmm.

CA: Yeah, an old gasoline car of some type. And most of 'em were drive...were drive by the hind wheel and the rope wrapped around and the other...another wheel up here that they'd make it tight so they could...it would pull...turn the rope on that hind wheel.

ES: Was this hemp rope?

CA: Yeah, hemp rope.

ES: It wasn't any metal or...just plain what, one-inch diameter rope?

CA: It was...yeah, bigger than that. I'd say \_\_\_. It might not, maybe an inch was about \_\_\_. It was pretty good sized.

ES: So you'd have to have some fairly thick gloves and then just hang onto this rope all the way, right?

CA: That's what you did down on the low hill. On the upper hill, where it was real steep, you just...if your gloves were slick you couldn't hold on. So we had some...we made little pieces of iron it was about that long...

ES: About eight inches.

CA: ...we'd have a thing like...kind of like that and you'd bring it up underneath and pull it back and that'd lock the...

ES: I see. So you...you were carrying this piece of iron and then you just set it into this metal piece on the rope and then it held?

CA: Yeah. Only instead of settin' it in, you'd bring it up from underneath so...

ES: Oh, I see.

CA: ...in case you lost your...

ES: Right. 'Cause you wanted... You wanted to take it out and keep it when you went down the hill?

CA: Yeah.

ES: Yes. Huh.

CA: You just take it out and keep it.

ES: Do you think that the Tollgate was the only place that had that, or was that common at that time?

CA: That was common for rope tows. Of course we made...we made 'em. You couldn't...you didn't buy 'em, we just... Well, there was some of 'em made, too, but we always made...made everything for around here. Then \_\_\_ started the...and area...The Little Alps they called it down below Anthony Lakes a little ways. And he had a cable, metal cable, which people didn't like 'cause it burnt your gloves up pretty bad. But we had...we used a metal ones, but we put little pieces of hose \_\_\_ on two fingers we'd put a hose here and held it here and then...then when we \_\_\_ it held really well. So we could use that clamp even on the cable as you go up the hill.

ES: Do you think you might have one of those still around somewhere?

CA: I image someplace.

ES: I'd like to see it.

CA: I'll have to dig some of this stuff up.

ES: Because that's the first time I've heard of that. I know about rope tows, but I never heard of that and that...

CA: That's the way we did it. Like I say, we made 'em...you made 'em and sold 'em for the public.

ES: What did you call them?

CA: Hooks. Tow hooks.

ES: Tow hooks.

CA: And they worked real good. And if you had a belt...army...we had army belts and a D-ring in it and then the thing had...we had a rope on it \_\_\_ you'd have it through this D-ring. You'd make a couple of turns and then you let loose of that, why, you let the rope pull you up.

ES: That was dangerous, wasn't it?

CA: No. \_\_\_ If you turned that rope loose, why, the hook'd just go on up the tow a ways \_\_\_ fall off.

ES: I should think you could get out of control pretty easily.

CA: Oh, well...you could get out of control alright, but the kids'd get pretty darn good at it. Lots of times when the rope was a little too high and it looked like Sue, she was really young then, she'd get picked clear up, you know, pick her skis and everything right up, she'd hang onto the tow.

ES: Dangling.

CA: The tow would have to go over a pulley, you know, to hold it out of the snow. And she was short enough once a while it just have to pick her up, take her up and across and she got so that she'd ride those pulleys right over the top of the...right along.

ES: This...these tows at Tollgate were operated by a company or an individual for money, I suppose, didn't they charge?

CA: Originally, when it was put in it was just a ski club.

ES: Oh. And you'd be...you would be a member of the ski club.

CA: Yeah, you gotta be a member of ski club and I used to...we did all our own work. In the summertime the family would go up there and usually the men go up early in the day and work and repair the tows and clean the brush and stuff. Then at noon, after church, the women would bring a potluck dinner in up there and then meet on top and sit around and visit.

ES: Yes. What was the name of the club?

CA: Blue Mountain Ski Club.

ES: Do you think that was started in the early 1930s?

CA: Yeah.

ES: Were you... You were a member?

CA: Yeah.

ES: Yeah. Were you a president?

CA: Umm...no. No, I never was. I was several other...but not in the ski club. I was in the \_\_\_\_, but I never was of Blue Mountain Ski Club.

ES: Do you remember what the dues were?

CA: Yeah, it wasn't very much. I say... I think it was fifteen dollars a year for membership for the whole family.

ES: In 1934 that would've seemed like quite a bit.

CA: Yeah, but it was... Let's see...it wasn't '34, it was later than that. I was thirty-four when I started to skiin'. Yeah, that was far from that... But it's...see, we skied there, then we skied at the Little Alps.

ES: Was that at Anthony Lakes?

CA: It's below Anthony Lake.

ES: But near there?

CA: Near there, yeah. Jim Vaughn started that. And then...I was a ski patrol at Spout Springs and he wanted...he needed...he had to have ski patrol for the forest service to let him open, they had to have ski patrol on duty. And so I was a ski patrolman and then two or three decided, well, we'd go on up and help \_\_ and ski up there 'cause it was a lot more challenging hill. By that time we \_\_\_\_.

ES: When the... When there was enough snow were you able to ski every weekend?

CA: Oh yeah.

ES: Or oftener than that?

CA: I... After I...[end tape]

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CA: ...at Spout we used to ski Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

ES: Would you stay up there make a round trip each time?

CA: Oh, we'd just drive up and back. It's only fifty...around fifty miles. And there was usually three or four of us here we'd get together and go up and ski. Then when we went up to Anthony...I mean the Little Alps, why, she just skied weekend, so all I skied up there was on weekends. But then...then when they opened up Anthony Lakes again and then I went up there. Champ quit, but...there wasn't room for enough people from both places and Anthony had more money backin' and had a chairlift that hooked up quite a bit more \_\_\_. And then they...they started out skin' every day, but then it just wanted enough people to make it worthwhile skiin' for a day so then they skied for four days, four days a week.

ES: Could you tell me about one or two of your experiences on the ski patrol?

CA: One thing that kind of sticks in my mind probably, we was skiin' one day and I run across a gentleman that was down and I could see he was hurtin' so I stopped \_\_\_ and sent word to have 'em bring me down a toboggan. And the brought me down a toboggan and he had a bad leg. I splinted it up...but he was hurtin' pretty bad. And I thought, well, I didn't usually do it, but rather than make him wait around to get a ride back down, why, I \_\_\_ so I...I have a Volkswagen station wagon and laid out the blankets in the back of it and just slid him in, brought him down to the hospital. I got him down here and of course I'd visited with him \_\_\_. It was a veterinarian just out of Walla Walla and he...they examined...they took a picture of his leg and it was all really broke up pretty bad. We figured he'd be laid up for several days, but he decided he'd like to go to...go home. I said "okay, I'll just go ahead and take you." So I slid him back in...pick-up...took him back over to the hospital...Walla Walla. But what he hadn't told me, he was diabetic and when we...after we left La Grande he said, "I hope to get home a certain time." He said, "I'll need to have some oranges or somethin'." Why, that scared the devil out of me" 'cause boy, I didn't want to get caught with a diabetic \_\_\_. And we get out on the road and I didn't have a...didn't have a thing to feed him, a candy bar or anything. I usually kept a candy bar in my pocket just for those kind of things, but I didn't have that with me. So anyhow, I got him home into the hospital and he was still alive as far as from the diabetes. Then that summer I went back over there and so I stopped by his place where he took care of his animals and asked him how he got along. Well, he got along pretty good, but he said he off...out of work there for about a month. Boy, he was thankful to be up and around again.

ES: Was that one of the scariest experiences you had on the ski patrol?

CA: That was one of the things...no, it wasn't the scariest, but it was one of the things that I remember.

ES: Mm-hmm. Did you have some scary ones?

CA: Oh...you mean real serious?

ES: Anything that really pushed your skills to the limit.



CA: We had... I had some concussions that...that always is another worry, you know, if what's goin' on and...

ES: People crashing into a tree?

CA: Yeah, either a tree or they can even run together and we can get into that. That's always a worry because you really don't know how bad the person's hurt. The concussion's probably the...well, I had one that...that was scary, but really wasn't...wasn't scary, but I was scared at the time. It was a...it was a ski on the steeper part of the hill there at Anthony a girl had fallen down and somebody up above her fell down and the ski come off and they didn't have their safety strap on. And that ski come down and she was kind of layin' like that and that just popped her right in there. "boom" she just straightened right out and I thought \_\_\_ was, but she...she really was hurtin' and so I had...there happened to be a doctor from Pendleton skiin' right there too and I asked him if he'd help me a minute 'cause I wanted to put a back brace on that. So he helped me and we got the...got her in and got her down and I took her down on toboggan. Then it turned out that when they got her into town and got her x-rayed she hadn't got hurt bad, but the way she straightened out \_\_\_ I really thought I had somethin' I might not wish I had.

ES: Yeah. Being on the ski patrol was always voluntary, wasn't it?

CA: Yes.

ES: Why did you want to do it?

CA: Originally, we...I start...got into ski patrol at Tollgate because on Thursday there was three or four from here and several farmers from the other side come up and we'd ski on Thursday. One of the fellas got hurt pretty bad and there wasn't any ski patrol, no one to take care of him. So we found an old piece of metal and laid him on the metal and drug him down to his car and somebody drove him on down from the other side of the mountain. And we got to thinkin' \_\_\_ alive. Somebody ought to be trained enough to take care of somebody 'cause we felt...you know, we just didn't have the training. And they had the ski patrol on weekends, but they didn't have anybody on Thursday. So we got to...some of us here in town we got to...somebody from Walla Walla side to come over and give us the training that we needed. And then later on I went ahead and took an instructor's training so I could...so I could be a ski patrol instructor and did that. And you get to skiin' all over the Northwest and you get to meetin' the other ski...other ski patrolmen. Pretty soon you get pretty well wrapped up in it.

ES: I should think you might. What made you and your wife think that a ski shop in La Grande was something that you wanted to get involved with?

CA: That was one of those things we walked into and didn't figure on the... Willie Hamann and his dad had an old...that warehouse in Island City. They cleaned grain and fumigated peas. Willie had been in the army and he got back and he...he had \_\_\_ skiing in the army. And he...and...when he found out that we were goin'...goin' up skiin' at Spout he'd like to go so he started goin' with me and Bob Gulzow, another farmer out here...

ES: Bob who?

CA: Gulzow.

ES: Gulzow?

CA: Yeah.

ES: G-u-l-z-o-w?

CA: Yeah. And he...he skied and Dick Fuller skied at that time. So we'd go up every...every Thursday and ski up there. Most of 'em went ahead and joined the ski patrol. So we...we had our own ski patrol. But anyhow, I... \_\_\_ the reason I got into the ski business, why, there wasn't anybody here, there was... Bohnenkamp had a...Jim Bohnenkamp had a ski shop here in town, but that's the only one in town. He didn't seem to be too well liked. People got to bringin' their skies out to Willie Hamann there at the grain...elevator grainary of his and we had good workshop...he had a good shop there. And we started doin' work on our own skies and then pretty soon people wanted us to do this or do that. We started the...work...do a little work in the different skis.

ES: Would this have been waxing mainly?

CA: Waxin' and...they had metal edge skis at that time and the spring in the skis \_ those little screws.

ES: Right.

CA: They'd break a piece of metal edge out. We did a lot of metal edging and then there were a lot of older skis that had never been metal-edged, they were a wooden-edge skis. Wooden-edge skis on these packed slopes didn't work a darn 'cause there wasn't anything to hold 'em.

ES: Just slide.

CA: So we got to puttin' metal-edge skis on...metal edges on the skis for seven dollars a pair. It was quite a job. Hundred-and-some screws...little screws to put in. And we got there...out there at Island City and thought, well, we might just well have some new equipment 'cause people's always would ask if they could...if we had somethin' or this or that or the other thing. So we decided that we'd go ahead and put a bunch of stuff in. And Dot put a... \_\_\_ built a basement down in here and Dot put a shop in for clothes downstairs.

ES: In this house?

CA: Yeah. And they...she sold clothes out of the house for three or four years and then we decided to move to town, out there was a nuisance. That road wasn't...just a little kind of gravel road and it was always muddy and stuff out there. And she earned \_\_\_ she'd sell 'em Head skis, which was the top ski at that time. We had to move to town. We figured we ought to have a better place for our shop. So we moved to town where the bicycle shop is now on Fir...not Fir...Depot.

ES: Depot, yeah.

CA: And she put...she took half of that building and we took half \_\_\_ ski shop in there.

ES: She took half for a dress shop, you mean?

CA: She took half of it for a dress shop. She sold all the ski clothes and things like that \_\_\_ a lot of that stuff we was in competition in like \_\_\_ and things like that.

ES: But the other half was for repairs?

CA: Yeah. So it worked out pretty good and then she...

ES: Was that you and Willie?

CA: Yeah. And then Willie quit, he didn't want to...so he sold out to...to a Don Sans and a Don Hamann. And so they come in \_\_\_.

ES: They were farmers too?

CA: Yeah. They'd come in...Don Sans was...he had a fertilizer business out here in the valley \_\_\_ out here in the valley. But he'd sold that so he went in on the ski shop.

ES: You couldn't do repairs while the farm work was heavy, so was the shop closed then?

CA: Yeah, I closed.

ES: And opened, what, again in November or so?

CA: First of November.

ES: Mm-hmm. And kept it open...

CA: \_\_\_ I'd be all through and sometimes I'd have to have a...keep a man there workin', but I usually 'd be through the first of November.

ES: And could you close it again the end of April or March...or rather, the end of March?

CA: Yeah, I closed it whenever the ski area closed...that is Anthony closed, if it was the...one year they...they kept it open till middle of May. That was a bad deal only they just run it on weekends. Well, I figured that I'd stay open one day a week just in case, you know, they break down and repair they need. Why, I'd be there for one day a week anyhow. But most of the time, why, first of April I was back out at the ranch.

ES: From the start was it a successful business?

CA: Yeah.

ES: Did you get... Did you have hundreds of customers?

CA: I think I knew every man, woman, and child in Eastern Oregon. Some of 'em...sometime or other they'd been in. I just...well, I even had people that moved out of here, moved down to Portland, they'd come back here to get their stuff \_\_\_ take the word from the guys down there. They just trusted me that much. I was always kind of proud of that. 'Cause they'd have a lot more choices down there, but they didn't know what was right and what was wrong. They didn't want to depend on the guy...the salesman or not. They'd come back and get their stuff from me.

ES: When did you...

CA: It's been a real...real good life because in the wintertime I really enjoyed all the people. But spring and the weather gets good and you get kind of tired of bein' inside and that's the time I could go out and get out in the ranch and be away from people. \_\_\_ have to see anybody once a day or somethin'. So it was really nice. But then the fall I was kind of glad to get out of the bad weather and get back inside and visit with all those friends again.

ES: Did you also always...was it always profitable? The shop?

CA: One year, no. I just...one year we had...didn't have any snow and I kept it open, but Dot and I went down to Australia that year. There wasn't any business so we took off and took a trip. I kept it open, we didn't make any money 'cause we just didn't have the snow. They run on weekends, but it wasn't good skin'. But it was bad and there was lots of rocks so there was quite a bit of work to be done on the

- skis, you know. A fella that I had workin' for me they got enough to make their wages. That's about what they got.
- ES: Apparently you're pretty...pretty satisfied with the choices you made in your life. Is there anything about the Grande Ronde Valley that you would mention as particularly important to your life, aside from the fact that you needed the land for the farming and you enjoyed the skiing? Is there anything else about the valley that really stands out in your mind as important?
- CA: The way things are right now it's not as important as it was, but it used to be...it seemed to me like we had pretty good round of seasons. We had winter in winter and summer in summer. We had...usually you had good ice skatin' by Thanksgivin'. The creeks had... There was lots more water in the creeks and ponds in those days. It was good and it was fun to ice skate. And then the...in summertime we had pretty good weather. It was usually...I think it probably got as hot or hotter as it does now. I was... I know that Dot and I went to...up to Alberta, Canada once to visit her uncle and he had a ranch up there. We went through Kalispell, Montana. \_\_\_ I told Dot then, I said if we ever want to move out of the Grande Ronde Valley I'd like to move up here, it's very similar. The fact is now my daughter lives up there at White Fish. I figured if I ever moved that would be a place I'd like to go, but I never really wanted to move.
- ES: So it's the environment and the seasons, the distinctions between the seasons, that's important to you?
- CA: Yeah, and there's good huntin'. I never did much fishin', but...I'm always too busy, but I could always find time to get my huntin' \_\_\_.
- ES: Elk? Deer?
- CA: Elk and deer, yes. Used to have real good bird huntin', too. But we don't have the duck like we used to have. The pheasants aren't near as plentiful as they used to be. So I haven't hunted for birds for several...several years. But this is an all-around good place to live. I thought it was a good place to raise the two kids. I don't like some of the things that's goin' on nowadays. Different, but I'm gettin' old-fashioned, too.
- ES: [laughs] You're entitled to that. [tape stopped]