EHRMAN BATES (referred to as "EB")
MARCH 8, 2005
Interviewer: Micheal Minthorn (referred to as "MM")
Transcribed by: Paula Helten (July 20, 2011)

MM: It's March 8, 2005. This interview began at approximately 1:25 in the afternoon. Would you please state your full name?
EB: Charles Ehrman Bates.
MM: Mr. Bates, when were you born?
EB: November 27, 1925.
MM: Where were you born?
EB: At the _____ north of Hot Lake.
MM: Where do you currently live?
EB: At 59915 Wright Road, one quarter of a mile from the home place.
MM: Uh, were you born, __ as you were saying you were born at home then?
EB: Yes.
[tape noise - change of tape?]
MM: What was your father's name?
EB: Thomas Ehrman Bates.
MM: What brought your father to Union County?
EB: Well, they found them _____ come to Oregon in 1886 from Minn. (throat clearing) Minnesota, and he was interested in farming.
MM: Um, did he do any work or occupation other than farming or ranching?
EB: He would work for the Wallowa County with the cattlemen and that, livestock.
MM: I see. Um, where did he live out his final days?
EB: His final days, was right on home place.
MM: Here in Union County.
EB: Here in Union County.
MM: Tell me your mother's full name.
EB: Laura Elmer Bates.
MM: Um, was she from Union County?
EB: She was born at Norton, Oregon. That would be east of Baker, about _____ approximately one mile.
MM: Do you know what brought her to Union County, or her family?
EB: Her dad was a railroad section foreman, and they moved there to Emery, Oregon, and he was section foreman from Emery to Elgin.
MM: Did she do any work or occupation other than farming or ranching?
EB: She taught one year after high school at, um, the logging camp would be south of La Grande. Uh, then she taught at Ladd Canyon where she met my father, and the years they were married in 1917.
MM: I see. Where did she live her final days out?
EB: She lived here at La Grande.
MM: Did she?
EB: Home place.
MM: Let's talk about that home place. Uh, tell me about this home place where you grew up.
EB: It was 240 acres. Dad farmed it, run cows, and a few pigs, and uh, that was it. He farmed his horses, and they had an eight horse team in latter days, and sorrels that the lightest one weighed nineteen hundred and seventy pounds, and the heaviest one was twenty-three hundred pounds. And them old kids, when you looked _____ something had to give.
MM: Um-hm. Is the original homestead still standing?

EB: Yes. The house was built in 1918.
MM: Do you live in that house, or is it just another house on the property? What, what's it used for?
EB: It's a rented. I own it now. I rent it to my wife's niece.
MM: You said you were born in this house?
EB: That's right.
MM: Were all of your parent's children born in the house?
EB: All, but the oldest one. He was born in Ladd Canyon.
MM: Tell me who, what were your brother's and sister's names, and are any of them still living?
EB: Palmer passed away about two months ago. Ember _____ lives in Condon. Earnest, the next brother, was killed in France. I was born in '25, and my sister, the youngest of the kids, was born in 1933. Anna.
MM: What was her name again?
EB: Anna.
MM: Let's talk about your marriage for a bit. What is your wife's name and date of birth?
EB: Lorraine Ruth Bates. Her punch is Bates, and she was born January 2, 1926 in Eagle River, Wisconsin.
MM: Now you said that she was, uh, she was from Union County?
EB: They come. They came to Union County in 1929.
MM: Where and when did you get married?
EB: We were married at her grandmother's house here in La Grande on February 14, 1949.
MM: Did you continue to live on the farm, or did you live elsewhere when you first got married?
EB: We went to the house where we're at right now. That was it.
MM: I see. Do you have children?
EB: No.
MM: Did she work another occupation besides farming or ranching?
EB: No.
MM: Let's go to chores. Tell me about your first memories of helping out on the farm.
EB: The first memories of helping out on the farm was, was feeding chickens, milking cows, and uh, cleaning out the barn for a dad when he'd come in at noon. And you had to be, the stalls had to be cleaned out, the hay had to be in the manger, and the grain in the boxes.
MM: Can you tell me, um, did your sister participate in these same chores? Did she have a set of her own?
EB: Well, she was in the house helping mother more than anything.
MM: So, she had a different set of chores?
EB: Yessir.
MM: Any examples what she might do?
EB: Well, washing dishes, and feeding the chick, help feed chickens, and stuff like that.
MM: You mentioned your parents. You mentioned to me your parents going to town only now and then to get things. Um, can you tell me maybe what some of those things were? Did you ever go along with them?
EB: Once in awhile us kids would go. But generally, uh, they would go to town to buy the staples, and some clothing, and uh, dad always had to have harness oil, or something like that. Grease for the machinery.
MM: Um, can you tell me what it was like to go to town when you were a child?
EB: Well,
MM: Was that a major trip?

EB: it was a trip. It was approximately seven miles to town, but in those days it was quite a, quite a ride because you only had one or two flat tires before when you got there (laughs).
MM: Um, how did you get, tell me more about being in town once you got here.
EB: Well, being in town, it was kind of nice cuz you were uh _____ all the stuff that you didn't see on the farm, and that was, uh, going into the bank, and to the places like that. So uh, you could see in the buildings that a lot of them are not standing in La Grande today.
MM: What are some of the buildings that are not standing today that you can tell us about?
EB: The Foley Hotel. The Sacajawea Hotel, and uh, oh, Tara's Horse on the corner there where the U.S., or the purp., the uh bank is now. And then there was the flower shop that burnt years back.
MM: How did your family obtain local information when you were living on the farm out there? It seems like it would be sort of secluded.
EB: Well, the folks got The Observer paper, and if in the mail it was a day late. Through the mail and I have a receipt at home that mother had. That it was four dollars and fifty cents for the year. So, I have to spend a lot of money back in them days (chuckles).
MM: How else would you get local information or news?
EB: Telephone, and the neighbors coming buy and stuff like that.
MM: Did your parents have telephone service?
EB: Yes.
MM: Tell me about that.
EB: Well, the telephone was one on the wall that you cranked, and it was two dollars a month. And uh, course the lines were out part of the time, and uh, if you needed to call somebody, why, other than on this party line, you had to call central and they plugged into that number that you give them.
MM: What is central?
EB: Central is the one that, that um, uh, they had ladies working there, and they plugged into the, into the big _____ and uh,
MM: In other words, you actually had to be connected?
EB: Yes.
MM: To another person's phone in order to be
EB: to be, to speak.
MM: How did you place a phone call?
EB: Well, you call central with the ladies in the central office, and they ask you what number. And you told them what you wanted, and they plugged that into that plug that they had, and that rang. And two, you could call central and ask them for the time, and uh, it needed to set your clock.
MM: How many people did you say were on this same telephone line?
EB: I think there was eight or ten on that, and each had a different sort of ring. Our ring at our place was five shorts, and the home place was two long, one short, and the Spencer's was two shorts. So uh place was, I don't remember what this is for, but (chuckles) quite a
MM: So, in other words the phone could ring often, but it might not be for you.
EB: That's right. It rang into our house for everybody on that line, and you didn't answer it unless it was your ring.
MM: Can you tell me then how would you place a long distance telephone call?
EB: You called the central lady, told them what's the number that you wanted, was it for Cove or Union, and she would plug into the Union line, and that was, the Union gal would plug into their place.
MM: Could you call farther?

EB: Oh, yes. You could call Portland or any place, but then it had, it took time to uh, get the calls through.
MM: Do you know how, what, in other words like there could be a lot of connections to make to
EB: Well, it would take time, yeah.
MM: Yeah, I see.
EB: Yeah.
MM: Uh, another gadget, tell me, uh, your memory of getting television service.
EB: Well, we never had any television at the home place. We got television at our house in 1956, I think it was, and that was something. It was a little old seventeen inch set, black and white, and we thought we had some.
MM: How many stations were there?
EB: Uh, four. _____ times _____ ten. And we still don't attach later, we don't have the one like in town with all the stations.
MM: I see. Did your family have a car?
EB: Yes.
MM: Tell me about it.
EB: Dad's first car was a 1923 Buick with the side curtains open in the summertime. And, and then after that, why uh, he got a 1929 Studebaker. And the last car dad had before he passed away was a 1979 Studebaker, and that was quite a, quite a machine.
MM: How so?
EB: (Slight chuckle) Well, it was all enclosed and had a heater in it for the winter time (laughs).
MM: You mean that was a convenience?
EB: That was a convenience.
MM: I see. What was, well uh, you mean as compared to the other cars
EB: Yes.
MM: that you had?
EB: Yeah.
MM: They didn't have heat?
EB: They didn't have heaters, no. If you went some place, you took a blanket and wrapped up in it. That was it.
MM: When, and how, did you get licensed to drive?
EB: I got my driver's license in 1944, and I went into the uh, the Army in 1945, and uh had, that was it. And when I come home, my license was still good, and I wanted to renew them every so often.
MM: Were licenses required?
EB: Yeah.
MM: At that time?
EB: Yes.
MM: How about leisure activities out there on the farm? What kind of recreation or, or activities
EB: Well,
MM: would you be involved in?
EB: Well, you know we had a saddle horse to ride. If we went down to the neighbors or went to school, or, and then uh, in the evenings we had parties at different homes. Once a month we would go to some of the neighbors, all the neighbors would gather for a potluck supper, and, and that was the main, main thing that, out there.
MM: Um, for meeting other, other youngsters?
EB: Yeah we, we'd meet other kids, the neighbor kids.
MM: What other kinds of things did you do for fun or

EB: Well, in winter time we had the sled and we went sleigh riding. We took a saddle horse and pulled them down (chuckle) hookie-bobbin with the horse, and that was it.
MM: Did you have any nearby neighbor for a friend?
EB: Uh, the McMullins were just across the fence there from the home place, about approximately hundred yards from the house, apart.
MM: Did it make it possible to interact?
EB: Oh yeah, yeah.
MM: Did you have any, uh, special toys, or hobbies, or crafts of any sort while you were growing up?
EB: When I was a kid I started collecting stamps, and that was my hobby, and still is my hobby.
MM: You do still do that?
EB: Yes.
MM: Anything else you still do?
EB: Well, woodworking. I have a shop of saws, and stuff like that now, so, but uh, _____ when I was a kid, you didn't have that. You had a saw which you used elbow grease with it, not (chuckles).
MM: I see. Where did you go to school? Where did you go to grade school?
EB: Willowdale School was District 61, was two miles from home, and we always rode a horse. And if then the weather was, the weather was good, like in the fall or summertime, why, we'd run across the field.
MM: Is that school building still there?
EB: That's still, that building is still there. It's in bad shape, but it's still standing.
MM: Did you finish school at Willowdale?
EB: I finished the eighth grade at Willowdale.
MM: Are there any reunions that are ever held for that school?
EB: No.
MM: How did you, you mentioned horse. Is that the main way that you got to this school?
EB: Yes, the main way.
MM: How far was that from your house to that school?
EB: About two miles.
MM: Two miles. Uh, tell me about the facilities in this school _____.
EB: Well uh,
MM: electricity, water?
EB: No electricity. And it had a wood, a big wood stove in the corner. And uh, they had to pump outside to get a bucket of water, and everybody, if you wanted a drink you went to the bucket, and it got dry you went and got another bucketful (chuckles).
MM: How about toilet facilities?
EB: Toilet facilities. They had the two toilets, one in one corner of the, the lot, and the other, one for boys, one for girls.
MM: They were outhouses?
EB: Yes, outhouses.
MM: Who provided the firewood?
EB: The district generally bought it from somebody. It buy six or eight cord, and that's what they heated the, for the winter.
MM: In relation to this business about the facilities, the limited facilities that you had there, did that mean that you had any school chores to do as well to keep that thing going to help them out?
EB: Well, we had to pack wood, and uh, maybe put some wood in the stove once in awhile. The bigger kids did.
MM: Were there any other chores besides that?

EB: Well, someone would help teacher sweep, and stuff like that.
MM: So, no janitor?
EB: No janitor. The teacher supposedly was the janitor.
MM: Where did the teacher live?
EB: She lived in the, my early recollection she lived with different people in the district that had extra bedrooms. And then the latter one, Mrs. Kale, she, she lived here in town. She drove back and forth in her car.
MM: What was a typical school day like?
EB: Well, we had to be there at eight o'clock. We had to recess at ten, and then we eat our lunch at noon. School started about one o'clock, and then recess probably at two-thirty, and school was out at three-thirty (throat clearing).
MM: How did the teacher work with that, you said it was only one teacher?
EB: One teacher.
MM: How did she, how did the teacher work with students in the different grades?
EB: Well, she'd have, she'd take one grade, and uh, check them out. The next grade, or so, and uh, then the eighth grade, why it took them a bit longer, and they was, had to know a little bit more than (chuckles) _____ start with.
MM: What things would students do together?
EB: Well, we'd go out play baseball and stuff like this. And then in the fall, and for Thanksgiving, we generally would have a, uh play, service, um, like um, speaking pieces and stuff. And then we'd have class _____ to raise money for Christmas candy. And then we'd have a Christmas program, and that was about it.
MM: I see. Uh, were there things that students always did together?
EB: Generally, yes. Uh, like playing out in the baseball and stuff, and boys and the girls both were uh (chuckles) all, always playing ball.
MM: Where did you go to high school?
EB: I went to high school in Union, Oregon. And uh, the Union district run a school bus out, and we rode the bus into Union. And then they'd pick us up about seven-thirty in the morning, and the bus would go to Ladd Canyon, and back around to the Tempe district, and then into Union. By the time they get there about eight-thirty.
MM: Did you ever have to walk home?
EB: No. My dad said that if you missed the bus, you would walk home, but we always caught the bus.
MM: On time.
EB: On time.
MM: Did you graduate from Union?
EB: Yes, in 1944.
MM: What activities did you participate in while you were in school?
EB: In band, glee club, and (throat clearing), played inner, inner-class basketball. And that was about it.
MM: Did you receive any awards for any of these activities?
EB: I (throat clearing) I received an award from band for four years of band.
MM: Um, what instruments did you play?
EB: Baritone horn.
MM: Who taught you to play that instrument?
EB: M-Mrs. Cubby. She was the wife of the band director. And uh, between Don Cubby and his wife, they could play any instrument that came along, whether it was uh, a wind, wind instrument, or the, or the brass, or any of them. One or the other could play it.
MM: Do you still play those instruments?
EB: I haven't for a long time. I have my horn, my horn yet, but then I, I got
MM: Did you participate in any sports?

EB: Just the basketball, and the, and the inner, inner-class stuff at noon was all.
MM: Do they hold class reunions?
EB: Yes. We have, we have a class reunion about every five years with the class of '43 and the class of '44. And this Memorial Day weekend coming up, we'll have a get-together, and then on the, this Sunday, the following Saturday they have a breakfast for everybody that has gone to Union High School. And that's at the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show Clubhouse. And, ham and eggs, hotcakes, and uh, oh let's see, what the ham and eggs, and fruit if you want it, coffee, or juice. So,
MM: I take it you plan to go.
EB: That's right. I have
MM: Do you usually go where you live?
EB: I have a ____, yes.
MM: I see. Did you attend college?
EB: Well, there was one term here at Eastern Oregon.
MM: Why did you leave college?
EB: Uncle Sam invited me to go to work again.
MM: Uh, tell me what buildings were on this campus when you were here?
EB: The uh, the Ackerman building, the gym there, um, the um, the Administration building.
MM: Inlow.
EB: Inlow. And then there was the uh, girl's dorm on the other, out from I don't know what they call it now, but that was the only three, actual three buildings here.
MM: I see. Uh, what activities did you participate in here?
EB: I played basketball that term, and the band, and the uh, the glee club.
MM: Did you come back to school later?
EB: No, no.
MM: Let's talk about the farm. Again, what crops did your family raise out there?
EB: Dad raised wheat, barley, oats, and he had, he had a bunch of cows, uh pigs, and uh, that was about, and hay. We had to have hay for the livestock, so. And then that was when I got big enough that was quite a job because I drove the dairy _____ and everything like that.
MM: Are you still producing the same? Is the farm producing the same crops today as then, or how has it changed?
EB: Well, I've rented the farm out, and it's under a hay ground right now, _____ right now for the renter. So uh, I suppose another year or two they'll plow that up and put it into _____ here, grain of some sort.
MM: What types of cattle did your family raise?
EB: Dad had short horn, beef cattle, and we milked some of them. And he'd run them up on Minam behind Cove in the summertime.
MM: Do you? Do your? Does your farm still do cattle now?
EB: No, no.
MM: Was this cattle more for family use?
EB: Well,
MM: then for, for income?
EB: it was income and family use, yes.
MM: You've talked about some of your farm chores earlier when you were a child. How about specific to the farm? What sort of things did you do to help out as you were
EB: Well, we'd milk cows, and help put up hay. And in the fall when dad (clearing throat) dad would uh, bind the grain at that time, well, we had to chop the grain because you chopped in the field. And then the thrasher, uh, come through the country, and _____. They thrashed the grain and sacked it. And then after the, the thrasher was gone my dad would go to the neighbor to help him out. And when they all got through, well then

we'd haul the sacks in, and, and then take them, bring them into, uh, Island City in the wagon, horse team and wagon, and uh make a trip or two a day, and that was it.

MM: We're gonna talk about that. Let's talk about that threshing operation. Uh, so, your farm didn't have a thresher?

EB: No. Uh, the uh, Royal _____ from Union had a thrashing machine that would come through the country and thrash the grain. And he charged so much, charged so much a bushel that, uh, went through the machine.

MM: Tell us about, there will be people who don't know the idea of threshing the grain.

EB: Thrashing. Well, it's, you put the bundles in that [hanging]. Well, you got the bundles. They had to fix them in the wagon out in the field, and then the wagon come up, and a fellow on the wagon pitched them into the machine. And the machine thrashed it to _____, and uh, the scrawl was load up (throat clearing) by a fan in the back side of it, and then the grain come out so you could sack it. And in later years, why they had a wagon high enough that you could take it in bulk. But in the early days, it was all sacked, and hauled that way.

MM: How'd, how did the thresher get paid, the, the person on the machine?

EB: He got paid by the bushel. That grain for sale _____. He had a measure, it was a measure that _____ bushel or a half a bushel, and that they, they paid him by.

MM: So, you got paid by the bushel?

EB: Yes.

MM: How, how did you arrange to have this done?

EB: Well, generally the, all the neighbors would, were ready to thrash, why uh, Wheeler would come through with his machine, and he'd thrash at one, one neighbor. And then when he got through there, he'd go talk to the, through the neighborhood, and uh, each of the neighbors would help him, and he'd take his wagon and team, and uh, that way. And there was no money involved in help, so

MM: So, this was a cooperative effort,

EB: Yeah, yeah.

MM: this was not,

EB: It was just a neighbor_____.

MM: It was just something that was done?

EB: That's right. Neighbors, (throat clearing) neighbors helped neighbors.

MM: Were there any other operations that required this sort of cooperative effort in order to get the crop raised or put up?

EB: Well, not that I remember.

MM: How about the cattle? Were any of the cattle sold? How was that done?

EB: Well, cattle I'd remember, um uh, one, once or twice chasing or driving cattle to Island City stockyards. And they loaded them onto a, uh, stock, um, cars on the railroad, and they went to Portland that way. But you had the car loaded or something when the, uh, railroad turns the car when the landowner, or the owner can go to Portland. That's where he could watch his cattle sold.

MM: How were they paid?

EB: Well, um, when they paid them, why, they just wrote a check down there, and dad come home with the money.

MM: Would the same car that took them down there bring them back?

EB: No, no, no. They'd, they'd get him a ticket on the passenger train to come home (throat clearing).

MM: Do you remember when your family got their first power machine for the farm?

EB: The first thrasher was bought in 19, twen, 41, and it was steel wheeled, massive Harris.

MM: How did that? So, you're talking about, uh, the first machine that you were up at _____ at?

EB: The first _____ was a massive Harris, spring-bottom, Cole, three-bobbin, plow. And it was steel wheeled, and in later years, why, they put rubber tires on it.
MM: Did they?
EB: Put rubber tires on it. And that kind of speeded things up, but my dad would not get on a tractor at that time. He had to use his horses, and finally he come to it. He, he'd see that they wouldn't have _____. And then he got a mowing team to mow the hay, and he finally come to it that he would, he would let the horses go and ride the tractor. But that was, golly, that was four or five years later.
MM: So, you were saying he rejected this new technology?
EB: Yeah, yeah. He just didn't go with it (chuckles).
MM: Does that mean that he still, uh, plowed by a horse?
EB: Yes. Well, he didn't plow by horse. He plowed with the tractor. But in, uh, the seeding, why he, why he bought a new seeder, and it had had ____ for his horses. And in later years, why uh, then he put the _____ (laughs) attach it (laughs).
MM: You were saying it cleaned up your operation a little bit when you got that tractor?
EB: Yeah.
MM: Tell me about that.
EB: Yeah, it speeded it up. Uh, uh, with the horses of course, it took us quite awhile to plow an acre. And with the three-bottom pulling the tractor, why, you could see that we were doing a little bit better, speeding things up. And uh, _____, and uh, harrowing, why we didn't have to set up so much for _____. So, that was the [hanging]. My dad was ____. He liked the horses (laughs).
MM: Let's talk a little bit about, um, religion. Did your family practice a particular religion?
EB: Not at home. We had an American Sunday School Union. That uh, through the years, back in those days, why, that was it.
MM: What, what does that mean, American Sunday School?
EB: Well, it was, it was a Christian organization that uh, _____. It was non-denominational, and uh, anybody could go that wanted to. And in that community, why, that was it. And then later years as times got _____, then people started to, to go to churches in town. And we went _____. My mother went to the Christian Church after my father died, and uh I went ____ straight off to the Baptist Church which I go to now, and continue to go.
MM: So, when you had this American
EB: Sunday school.
MM: Sunday school. Where were those services held?
EB: They were held in the home, or in the schoolhouse. And uh, mostly held within the homes cuz the school said they thought that was the _____, they, where people go, to go unless it was a school function.
MM: How were the home services held?
EB: Well, it was in the _____ home, and they'd have various classes for different ages. Why, one went to one bedroom, and the other two in the bedroom, and then they, uh, the parents, if they had the class, they stayed in the front room.
MM: How, how was the location of the homes decided? How did they first know?
EB: Well, mother would say, "That week come to our house, and then they would say _____ (chuckles) come to their house."
MM: Would they decide this week by week?
EB: Yeah, yeah.
MM: When, was there opportunity to socialize at these
EB: Oh yeah, yes.
MM: _____? What were some of the activities that you had?
EB: Well, we had, some of them would have a potluck dinner, and stuff like that, after the service. So, that was it.

MM: How long _____?
EB: Oh, an hour, something similar to what we have today.
MM: Would this have been a journey for you to go, depending on where it was held?
EB: Not too much. There's, I think the furthest one was probably about three quarters of a mile.
MM: From your house?
EB: Yeah.
MM: Hot Lake. What's your earliest memory of Hot Lake?
EB: My earliest memory of Hot Lake is, oh, probably when I was five, six years old, that was the Hot Lake voting precinct, and uh, folks would go down there to vote. And, I remember going into the building, and uh, the uh, dining room was all-white table cloths, and the glasses were there, and, and the lobby was all in the, in the, uh, chairs round, and the _____, they had the floral displays. And then in the part that worked in later years it was food tables and mud baths, and all of, that was the bathhouse at that time.
MM: What was the purpose of the resort _____?
EB: The what?
MM: What was the purpose? What, what did the resort do?
EB: Well, it was the Mayo Clinic of the west. When Dr. Phy come in there, it had _____ three stories, and the first, the operating table and the operating room _____. And there was an observatory, a little observatory in there that you could sit, and some of the _____ doctors, or somebody wanted to watch an operation, why that was it.
MM: Was it a hospital then?
EB: It was a hospital. And uh, well, and, course the mineral baths, that was quite a
MM: Do you know specifically if they had a, a particular, uh, type purpose at the hospital?
EB: Yes. Yes, Doc. Phy operated on people when, and uh team with, uh, six people. And, that's why they used _____, and then he had x-ray machines, and the whole works there.
MM: So, it was a general hospital?
EB: It was a general hospital.
MM: Mm-hmm. Who, who was the doctor?
EB: Doctor Phy.
MM: Tell me about him.
EB: Well, I don't remember him too well, but uh, he was quite a _____ there. He had livestock. He had _____, _____, dairy goods. He had, uh, horses. He had chickens, a chicken house up there, and pigs, and he had a, he had a big garden, and actually, he didn't have to go, to come to town for anything, anything to eat, see.
MM: Was he the owner of the hospital?
EB: Well, not technically. I think there was one or two of a few of those, of the older fellows, that would have had money in it. And uh,
MM: So, it was a corporation?
EB: Yeah, it was a corporation out there.
MM: And the purpose of all of this was to make the hospital
EB: Right.
MM: self-sustained?
EB: Self-sustained. And then the railroad, they had two trains a day each way that stopped and let off passengers and picked up passengers.
MM: Was uh, Hot Lake ever a stand-alone town of its own?
EB: Uh, I think so, yes. Uh, then it was looked at _____ provide at the time under one roof. And, I think that's pretty close to, course, it uses a lot of the area around there, that uh, for people.
MM: Uh, did the purpose of the resort change as it changed hands over the years?

EB: Yes.
MM: What do you know about that?
EB: Well, it started off when Doc Phy died, and his son took it over which probably turned downhill. And uh, then in 1944, then it burnt. Well, the old part burnt. Then, that's when, about that time when it really went down, down and quit. And, it's been taken up since then, got a hold of it, and tried to make a go. And uh, later years, why uh, Doctor Ross, he had it, and made the old people's home there. Rest home, I guess you'd call it. And uh, that was on the third story, but down in the kitchen and stuff, well, you could go out and have a dinner, or a banquet, and stuff like that.
MM: You mean it was a rental?
EB: Yeah. Yeah, they could run dinners and stuff, and they had, and they had the _____ there, and the whole works.
MM: Who did, do you know who you rented that from, or who it, who
EB: I don't know.
MM: might have opened it for clients?
EB: It's uh, people out in _____ that now, that are rebuilding it and stuff.
MM: You were saying that it was, uh, that several people had tried to do something with it between Doctor Phy and this time. And, that's when the rest home came into being. Do you know what then people have tried since it?
EB: Well there was one, uh, make a hotel out of it, and uh, rent it and stuff and he was _____. So,
MM: Did they ever try it, or
EB: No, I don't think they ever got to the point where they could. It's quite a lot of money to, to get it, and nobody has any money for it.
MM: You said that you witnessed the big fire at Hot Lake. Tell me about that.
EB: Well, that's in '34. That's when the original part burnt. And uh, uh, up to almost to the brick building that was burnt later. And uh, the uh, fire trucks from La Grande got out there just about _____ Tree, and the server riding the motor, it didn't make it, and the Baker, took that up to North Powder and it didn't make it (chuckles). So, the old Model T Ford, they had their boiler for awhile and they pumped that one, and it just
MM: You mean they had their own fire, fire truck
EB: Yeah.
MM: for Hot Lake?
EB: Yeah, that remodeled T Ford that is on display now at the Ford center, or museum is what they call that.
MM: That was the only one that was there?
EB: That was the only one that was there.
MM: Were you, uh, where were you when that fire happened?
EB: I was going to school. And uh, at recess and during, you could see the smoke going up. And that evening at the school, well, the word got around to take a look at it some. It was still smoking and stuff. But, then we decided that _____.
MM: Did you know, or did anyone know what caused that fire?
EB: I don't recall who did, whether it was electrical, or what it was.
MM: Um, you had also said that you, uh, had friends at Hot Lake. Uh, were these friends of yours that you went to school with, or _____?
EB: That lived out there, yes. There was a family of uh, hmm, can't think of their name right now, but there were four boys and girls. And they went to school out there, and lived in a little house. And their dad, he took care of the _____ part, and helped out, and stuff like that, some there and at the hospital.
MM: Those are the parents of your school friends
EB: Yeah.

MM: were employees?
EB: Yes.
MM: Both of them? Or just
EB: Well, I think that, that the, uh, mother, uh, she took the _____ and took care of their family.
MM: Were these friends of yours your age? [tape noise]
EB: Uh, yes.
MM: Where did they go to school?
EB: Well, I don't know. When they left, they _____, but they come from Wallow.
MM: Did you tell me that these kids went to the same school that you did?
EB: Yes.
MM: At Willowdale?
EB: Yes.
MM: So, they actually were classmates of yours?
EB: Yeah, yeah.
MM: How about, we talked about the mineral water at the Hot Lake.
EB: The mineral water. That was what
MM: What was the reason for that?
EB: Well, it was supposed to help out your, your uh, system. And they had mineral baths, and uh, like that. And they had mineral water that supposedly you could drink, and stuff was all back into those rooms.
MM: Individual rooms?
EB: Individual rooms. I wonder if that's still _____ after that. But uh, I understand now that we can go through that, but I don't _____
MM: What, what you are saying is that um, this mineral water that was part of the beneficial _____?
EB: Yeah.
MM: So, in its hospital days it was actually piped into each room?
EB: Yes.
MM: Like a drinking fountain, or what?
EB: Well, it was a process and reprocessed, and you get a glass of water, and uh, like that.
MM: Did you ever taste it?
EB: Yeah. It wasn't bad if you got past your nose (laughs).
MM: (chuckles)
EB: But the newsier signs around on the highway, east, east and west, uh, the uh, sign that 2,500,000 gallons of water per day out of that, that bottom spring. And there's still plenty that had, was its where it's bottled up there with the
MM: Today?
EB: Yes, today.
MM: Do you have, uh? Let's see, let's cover some more, um. We, you had mentioned the facility back there at Hot Lake, would that be where the hospital's at?
EB: Yes.
MM: at_____. And we talked about farming and gardening and dairying out there. What, what other facilities do you know existed out there for the convenience of those who came?
EB: Well, for most people there in the, uh, the electric, the dinners, um the _____. If you lived, come there for healing, why, you could buy the dinner after that in the dining, dining hall. It wasn't too much. But uh,
MM: You were telling me about a railroad stop there.
EB: Right.
MM: Tell me about it.

EB: Well, there was, there was a depot there, and the railroad each way, uh, approx., two different trains, and let people off or picked people up. To a if they were through with their sickness and something, why, then they got on the train and went home.
MM: Was this part of? Was this on the main train line
EB: Yes.
MM: from east to west?
EB: Yes. And there was a stop right there at Hot Lake and the _____ main building where you could put your _____ to, uh, put it in on the car siding, or siding there that where trains could meet, but that's an old farmhouse. I really don't.
MM: Did you tell me there was actually a ticket office or a machine?
EB: The ticket, ticket office was there, and then when they took the building out from the railroad, it was in the lobby of that uh, of uh, Hot Lake.
MM: They took it out
EB: Right.
MM: of course?
EB: Mm-hmm.
MM: Um, there was, did we _____ don't know if it ever was a stand-alone town? Um, do you have any involvement in the current effort to, uh
EB: Well,
MM: to promote the resort, or
EB: I'd like to see it. We go in, but then they're working on it, and uh, uh it's kind of a, I don't know, it's a lot of time to get the thing through. It's gonna be quite an expensive process.
MM: Have you any involvement in that?
EB: No, no.
MM: Let's go Grange Hall.
EB: Grange Hall?
MM: Grange Hall. What was the purpose of the Grange?
EB: The purpose of the Grange was a, um, a place for the agriculture and the Bockners, and people like that to, uh, discuss their problems, and um, most of them had, had dinners, and that was great (chuckles).
MM: More social than
EB: Yeah, some social, and then, course, they acquired the Union County, they had the Union County Fair there at my _____, at the Blue Mountain Grange, and therefore, and uh, _____ through.
MM: Uh, do you, what was the name of that Grange?
EB: Blue Mountain Grange.
MM: And you're a member of that Grange?
EB: I was for about fifty-seven years, and when it quit, I think my membership was broke then. So, I could have, the Grange has an insurance out that they had, but you had to be a member to get the Grange insurance which is quite a lot cheaper than the uh, regular line insurance companies.
MM: You were with their insurance are you talking about?
EB: Well, fire insurance, car insurance, and uh, liability insurance. Most things are covered that you want.
MM: Did you, would you get things like crop or farm insurance then?
EB: Yes. You could get crop insurance too.
MM: Did you use any of those?
EB: No. No, I never, I never insured a crop. My dad never insured a crop, and that was just two of them got money ahead (chuckles).
MM: Um, where, where is this Pleasant Valley

EB: Pleasant Road, really.
MM: Pleasant Road, where is that?
EB: Here right now it's the, on the other end of the valley, on the, below Mt., uh, Emery.
MM: How did some of them join the Grange?
EB: Well, all you have to do is ask to be a member, and they'll take you in.
O: And pay your dues?
EB: Then you got to pay dues to it, yeah.
MM: Do you actually have to farm for a living?
EB: Not, not, not anymore. You used to. Yeah, you used to, but nowadays, uh, he could farm, or doctor, or educator, and uh, that was it. Now uh,
MM: But you could be a teacher or a physician
EB: Yeah, yeah.
MM: as well as a farmer to join the Grange?
EB: Doctor Maas., Doctor Maaske that was the president at the college there was a member of the Blue Mountain Grange. And Doctor Skeen was a member, and he was a professor there.
MM: I see. When did you, when did you say you first joined the Grange?
EB: Oh, when I was fourteen. That would have been about, uh, 1933.
O: 1934.
MM: Did you join at that time as an extension of your parents?
EB: No.
MM: Or did you join in your own right?
EB: In my own right. And my folks had _____ friends for years and years and years, and that was, course it was a form of _____, and that was it. So,
MM: What sort of activities did the Grange conduct?
EB: The Grange, they had their meetings. And then a lot of Saturday nights they had their dances, and stuff, old time dance. They always had somebody play the banjo or piano, or violin, and guitar. That was, that was the music at that time. So, everybody had fun (chuckles).
MM: Did, um, did you ever hold office with the Grange?
EB: Yes. I was the Master of the _____ of the Blue Mountain Grange for about right at eighteen years. That there _____
MM: What does the Master do?
EB: He conducts the meetings and stuff like that.
MM: Is that the same, would you say that's the same title as the president or chairman?
EB: Yes, chairman, yeah.
MM: _____
MM: And, and what sort of things did you do for the organization? Do you, did you work on any particular issues or problems
EB: Well,
MM: when you were Master?
EB: Yes, there was a complaint I remember was that the Union County Fair leaders had always thought that Granges around the county had _____ amount of fair booths, and uh, they'd go out, go out for blood. I remember that they really put on a show, and I know that
MM: When you say that, do you mean competitive?
EB: Competitive, yes! And the first fight is always classified it for the first or second fight. And in 19 forty, no 58, our Grange that I was the head of, of the committee for our one here at the county had a _____ list to go to the, that they could go to the state fair the next year. And in '59, we got the cup, at the cupola at the state fair, that same booth that we had.

MM: That happened while you were a Master?
EB: Yes, and it was a rough way, it was a grain inlay down, and that was, uh, eight foot high and twelve foot wide.
MM: What do you call that right now?
EB: It was an inlay, grain inlay, out of a covered wagon, and the oxen, and the people on the wagon, and that there'd been various, various problems so they could bring the color out.
MM: This was a display?
EB: Yes, and it was all real. It had the tails on the ____ around each [tape noise] part of the thing, and so then was the preferred thing. So, that was it.
MM: Any pictures exist of that exhibit?
EB: I think so, some place.
MM: Um, how about the railroad? [tape noise] Talk to me about the railroad now. What are your reasons for going to work for the railroad?
EB: Well, we had four with badges on the farm, and they had to have something to kind of pay the bills, so I went to work as a clerk at the railroad back there, in 1953.
MM: What was your job title?
EB: I was a clerk, porter man, and uh, crew dispatcher.
MM: And, who did you work for back then?
EB: Union Pacific Railroad.
MM: Are you retired from that
EB: Yes.
MM: now? Did you have to take, uh, an exam or compete for that job then?
EB: No. I was just hired out, and that was it.
MM: What were some of your job duties or tasks?
EB: Well, uh, calling crews, and uh, figuring out who could, could go on which train. And then, of course, uh, when I worked at the freight house, I was the gopher, handled freight, and all of that. They were just general, general duties, so, and hauling crews, and stuff.
MM: Did you actually haul crews?
EB: Yes. They hauled crews to Hinkle. Sometimes, they hauled a guy or crew to Hinkle or to Huntington. That was the distance that was furthest at that time. So uh, now, they uh, however, go east to Nampa. Huntington is just a wide spot in the road (chuckles).
MM: When you were talking about, um, putting together crews, and calling crews, are we talking about scheduling?
EB: Uh, well, not scheduling. The dispatcher would tell you when you had the train coming, and at that time when the first guy started, he had to have, uh, three brakemen, and a conductor, an engineer, and a fireman on the train, so, six guys. And sometimes, a _____ had uh, that were assigned men to a certain crew. And as times come by, there was _____. Then, they got rid of some of the guys. And uh, and you know, now they won't have a conductor and an engineer on the train. And they're on the unit, the head unit, and that's it.
MM: Were you, you say that you didn't schedule the train, or the cars that were going?
EB: No, but
MM: You would put together a crew that was required
EB: the crew.
MM: for that dispatch?
EB: Yeah, yeah.
MM: And, were they just on a list? What, what was that
EB: Well, the crew, uh, were assigned through conductors and uh, brakemen to a certain, to a certain, uh, caboose, you might say. And the engine crew, fire, enginemen and

firemen were assigned. And if one lay off, then you had to come over to the _____ board, what they called the _____ board, and that's, that for _____ with its _____.

MM: And this is what you did?

EB: Yes.

MM: This is, you were in charge of

EB: Yes.

MM: knowing who was available?

EB: Who was available, and how, and which way to go, and then you had to keep track of guys coming in so that they pulled out the next turn in the proper place. If they, if they didn't keep track, and then somebody said, "Well I had the run around, you got to pay me." So, uh

MM: What does that mean when you say they have the run around?

EB: Well, it's, [tape noise begins] if you don't keep your time of guys coming in, you got to go out in that

MM: In that order?

EB: In that order, yes. [tape noise ends] And they don't, and this guy comes in early and you missed him, then run the guy out first, the other guy out first, well, that guy's fit to be tied because that was his turn (chuckles). He doesn't go for it.

MM: So, he would get paid for that

EB: No,

MM: if you missed him?

EB: no. He's got a hundred miles.

MM: And, did that cause any problem for you when that would happen?

EB: Well, if you got too much of it, it would, yes, but um, I didn't get _____ because I didn't get _____ for that.

MM: Um, let's talk further about how that railroad operation here is different now than when you began.

EB: Well, uh, the railroad has cut, cut off so many men here at La Grande. They used to have the roundhouse here, where they worked on the engines and stuff. And the uh, rip track, what, what they called the repairing of cars, that went in bad order, by bearings or fields of track that broke, and all that is gone now. It's, it's either Hinkle or Nampa. So, you've got about approximately, oh, two hundred men that don't work anymore, at least that many. And then you _____ in the ones that had the seniority to stay, why, that's the ones who stayed.

MM: Do you know how many people it takes to run a train now compared to when, when you were there?

EB: Two.

MM: And that was how many when you were there?

EB: Six. When I, when I was hired, why, it was uh, there was uh, four, I think it was.

MM: When did you retire?

EB: In uh, May 25, 1986.

MM: Would La Grande, uh, I'm sorry, were there passenger trains that went through La Grande at that time?

EB: Uh, when I worked? Yes, yes. Uh, and they, they continued. Amtrak took over, and they were still, still running when I retired _____.

MM: Who, who were the passenger lines before Amtrak?

EB: Union Pacific.

MM: They ran

EB: Yeah, yeah,

MM: passengers through the town?

EB: yeah. They run passengers through it.

MM: Um was, uh, um, where did the, where did these trains come from?
EB: Well, Portland, as far as Portland, and they'd start out at, at, uh, Chicago. And they'd be going west at Chicago, and Portland going east.
MM: So, their, their destinations
EB: Yeah,
MM: were at opposite ends
EB: yeah, yeah.
MM: of the line?
EB: Mm-hmm.
MM: Um, was La Grande a connection for other train service in this area?
EB: Well, often they'd go to Burns is all.
MM: That was the only one?
EB: Yeah, yeah, the only.
MM: Uh, was it a regular circle?
EB: Up to Burns? Yes. They had to run one up there every day. And one, well, when I first started, they run one up
[recording stopped]
[recording begins]
MM: This is a continuation of the oral history interview with Charles Ehrman Bates, March 8, 2005. Let's go back to that Joseph line train again. Tell me how that worked.
EB: Well, they call one, like Monday. One would go up, and he'd stay, and then the next one, they, he'd come back that next day, well the other, the second one would go up, and they'd meet at Minam. Right there had a little ticket. Have you been, you've been up there at Minam?
MM: Yes.
EB: Yeah, they had a meet back there.
MM: And then what?
EB: And then one would come home to La Grande, and the other would want to.
MM: So, they would actually just do half of the trip?
EB: Yeah, yeah.
MM: I see. Um, why do you suppose that line didn't last?
EB: Well, I think that they just, well the timber, it was _____. Uh, the saw mills quit up there, and they just, no revenue, and that was it.
MM: Do you mean they couldn't take them on the train, or
EB: Well,
MM: haul lumber on the train?
EB: Yeah, they could haul it, but there was no one. They took the saw mills out. At Joseph there was two saw mills. At Joseph it shipped out. Uh, Boise, Boise Cascade, that all of their green lumber come out. That would be from, oh, five or six cars a day that they come out there.
MM: So, it was really more of a brake line than
EB: Yeah, yeah,
MM: _____,
EB: yeah.
MM: and the closing of the mill?
EB: Yeah, the closing of the mill, that's right. And now they go in there, uh, well this other one _____ (throat clearing) use it to Elgin. And then they go in maybe once a week to Enterprise, if they got something to go up there, a car or something, why, they will run up that much. And then of course now they have their packing train up there that they kind of
MM: Right.

EB: run.
MM: Um, is the Union Pacific Railroad, obviously, it must be a smaller operation now than when you began working?
EB: Oh, it's bigger.
MM: It's bigger?
EB: Yeah.
MM: How so?
EB: Well, they go clear into, uh, Chicago, and clear down into Texas they've bought now. And California, they bought the Southern Pacific, and uh, all of the, all of the railroads down into, uh, Texas, and uh, they've got everything but the BM now.
MM: Well, I'm sorry. I meant, I meant the La Grande operation of the, of the Union Pacific Railroad. Has that, has that changed in size?
EB: Well, it's fallen because they don't have so many men working and stuff, so. Now whether you could change, uh, out of cabooses, they don't have a switchboard to do that. And uh, that's it.
MM: Are they using less space here than they used to?
EB: Oh, yeah. Well, the depot now I don't think there's anything at the depot. And the crews come and go, and that's it. They don't call crews. All the crews are called out of Omaha by phone.
MM: Um, did, do you belong to a railroad workers union
EB: No.
MM: organization?
EB: I don't now. I did to the, uh, clerks. We had to belong to the clerks union, but since I've retired, why, I'm out of it.
MM: How many other clerks in the area were there besides you?
EB: Oh, there was probably fifteen when I first started.
MM: Here in La Grande?
EB: Yeah, yeah. And when I quit, there was, one, two, three, about seven.
MM: So, about half _____?
EB: Mm-hmm.
MM: Did you ever run for public office, or hold public office?
EB: No.
MM: Are you a registered voter?
EB: Yep.
MM: Do you want to tell me about the first time you voted?
EB: The first time I voted? I don't remember (chuckles).
MM: Okay.
EB: (laughs)
MM: That's alright.
EB: (laughs)
MM: You say you're a veteran?
EB: Yes.
MM: What service did you _____?
EB: In the Army, in the Army I was, um, took my training at Fort Lewis. And uh, then I went over to, to Japan, and linked up in Korea with the 34th engineers. And uh, I run the shovel, and we _____ a lot of rock the roads and for the _____ airport in Korea.
MM: So, what was your military occupation then?
EB: I was, uh, engineer, a corporal. I got up to corp., E-5.
MM: When did you serve?
EB: Huh?
MM: When did you serve?

EB: 1945, ‘46, and I got out in ‘47.
MM: Where did you, where did you do your basic entry training at?
EB: At Fort Lewis, Washington.
MM: Where did you, where were you discharged?
EB: At Camp Stone, California.
MM: And what was your ending rank?
EB: Uh, E-5, corporal.
MM: Do you belong to any veteran’s organizations?
EB: No.
MM: Do you, can you tell me about, uh work, did you have any, any knowledge or memory of the rationing programs that took place during World War II in this area?
EB: Well, yeah, the uh, sugar and, and stuff like that, shoes, _____, and the meat, gasoline. The gasoline affected a lot of people.
MM: Did you say shoes?
EB: And shoes, you could only have, I think, one pair a year or two pairs a year.
MM: So, shoes were rationed?
EB: Yeah, shoes were rationed. But uh, as far as something, uh, to affect our family, course, we raised most everything we eat. And a lot of people I think, suffered from it, but it was one of those things. So,
MM: Did you, do you, uh, recall anything that you did need to get ration cards for
EB: Well,
MM: in your family? Would that have been sugar for example?
EB: Sugar, gasoline, uh, for the farm. Uh, it did affect. Course, you had to have the, the gas to fix some stuff. And then, course, the farm. And then you had to have a different ticket for your automobile. And the tires, that was something.
MM: The tires were rationed?
EB: Yeah, tires were rationed. And you just, uh, for uh, equipment, that’s how some of the equipment had rubber tires, well, you just about had to give your life away to get one (chuckles).
MM: So, were, does that mean you were, would have been unable to replace your tractor tires
EB: Yeah,
MM: for example?
EB: yeah. If I _____, if the uh, committee says, “No, you don’t get no more tires,” well, you just park the tractor. So,
MM: Tell me about this committee.
EB: Well, it was, um
MM: What did they do?
EB: Well, they were on the board of rationing. I guess you’d call it the rationing committee, or. If you, uh, needed more gas you had to go before them, and ask them if you could have more gas, and if they see fit to give you a little more, they did.
MM: Was this county committee, or?
EB: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, it was similar to the AIC office that you have today, and uh, some of them that. And then of course, then after the, after the war they was, uh, uh, they set value to then raise so much grain, to kind of consume overstock and stuff. But then, that didn’t affect us any.
MM: That didn’t affect you?
EB: No, no, no.
MM: Have you ever, um, you ever been written up in the local news or been on T.V. for any particular reason?
EB: No.

MM: Radio show?
EB: No.
MM: How about, um, let's take this one at a time. Let's uh, we're gonna talk about we know you know some old-timers, uh, from around the La Grande area. So, let's name one first of all that, that you knew personally.
EB: Old-timers? Well, let's see, there was Gilbert Courtright. He was a neighbor out there.
MM: And um, what, what did he do? What?
EB: Um, he was, um, Ralph Hutchinson, another farmer, said, "Gilbert was the most valuable man in the country." Says, "He's those that you can suggest something, and he says, he'll go ahead and do it." He says, "If it don't work, he says, you're only a year behind him." So, (laughs)
MM: I think in this case we're talking kind of about, uh, maybe perhaps, more common people in the county. You've mentioned knowing, uh, let me name one for you. Tell me what you know. You said that you knew Glen McKenzie.
EB: Glen McKenzie, I knew well. And, I knew his dad. And they farmed on, from the Summerville, Summerville area. And they had registered, Hereford, cattle. And uh, one _____ hay. Oh, that don't bother me.
MM: Okay.
EB: And uh,
MM: Did you know him personally?
EB: Yes, I know him personally. He married Jean, Jean Williams. And they met, course Jean died about five, six years ago. And uh, his, the farm that their, that he still lives on. Well, I think maybe he's up in a rest home now, I'm not sure. Brandi's, what somebody said, but uh, they're in most everything. They had a little timber and a place for the livestock, and stuff like that.
MM: Who else did you know? I think you told me, did you know Walter Pierce?
EB: Walter Pierce? Yes, I knew Walter Pierce, and his wife, Camille. And, they're the ones that the library is named after. And Walter, they called him, Crying Rover.
O: He was, he was the, uh, congressman.
EB: Well he was never, he was never in Oregon. They needed this congressman in Washington D.C., but when he spoke, the tears would just come back (laughs) when he'd speak to me. That's why we called him Crying Rover.
MM: Did that, was that a technique of his?
EB: I think so, yeah. But, he was a good old, a nice old guy. He had a library in his home out there, that uh,
MM: Where was his home?
EB: That would be, uh east, and a little north of _____ on the highway out, out about, oh. It's about a half mile beyond the ____ they are tying up there now. It would be on the north side of the highway, the highway.
MM: Did you say he had a, you were talking about his library?
EB: Yes.
MM: Personal library?
EB: Personal library. He had books out there which if somebody wanted a book, why, he would loan it to them, and uh, that was, that was it. And he was, he was one of the instigators of building Hot, uh, the brick part of Hot Lake.
MM: What do you mean by the brick part of Hot Lake?
EB: Well, the, the part that is standing today. And then he had a farm out, would be west of that for a ways which movement, movement and the game commissioners got there. _____, but uh, Walter would, a lot of people of course, lot of people said he was a democrat. Well, that's all right.
MM: You mean he wasn't a democrat?

EB: He was, yeah. He was, he was a democrat, but the republicans didn't care for him. So, (laughs) _____ I'd regret the same way in politics today. That uh, oh, that uh, democrat or republican, well the other guy don't take them seriously.
MM: Who else of the old-timers did you know personally in La Grande?
EB: Well, let's see, there was, um, hmm. You know, I don't recall if uh, Ed Miller from over at Union.
MM: Who was that now?
EB: He was a farmer in the area, and uh, uh, farmed out well into the north and west of Union, uh, and along Miller Road. And uh, then, uh, his wife, they lived in Union. They had the big home out this side, out the corner of _____, and a beautiful yard. And Mrs. Miller was out, they had two full-time gardens. And that house and yard was a showplace. And it had, course the schooling from the school board for a number of years. And they uh,
MM: Which school board?
EB: The Union school board. And the uh, uh, with the grade school there now it's S. E. Miller grade school, named after him. So, and uh, Ralph Hutchinson, he was an old-timer farmer now, out in, from, from Cove. The Connley boys, uh, they had probably four or five thousand acres out there that they farmed. And they were, they were west of Cove. And still that farm, that place goes under uh, the, uh, Connley Farms. And the uh, grand, let's see, one daughter, the granddaughter was the original owner, and her husband is running it now. So uh, but a lot of those old guys, I can see them, but I can't name them.
MM: That's okay.
EB: (laughs)
MM: That's perfectly okay.
EB: (chuckles)
MM: Uh, I was wondering if you could tell me, uh, if you thought there was something that you were particularly proud of having accomplished.
EB: Well, when I was farming, I didn't hire any labor because of the, uh, the thing of having to keep books for the state on the desk. And uh, it seemed like that from the work that was done, the money, if there was any there it was in my pocked instead of somebody else's. And we didn't irrigate. We dry land farmed. And uh, I think that I had just as much money in my pocket at the end of the year as the fellow that's irrigating and paying bills to the big electricity, and for the equipment that it takes to do. That's uh, is my theory on it, but then maybe somebody else makes a different theory on it.
MM: Is your operation still a dry land farm?
EB: Yes, it's still a dry land. There's irrigation on both sides of it, but uh, we don't. We have finally drilled a well, and um, buy the equipment, but doesn't have a lot of increase of production to pay the bill.
MM: Um, how big was the original property that you born on at the family homestead?
EB: Two hundred and forty acres.
MM: Is it still that same size today,
EB: Mm-hmm.
MM: or have you added to that?
EB: No. Well, the place we live on got added to it, two hundred acres.
MM: So, now it's four hundred
EB: Four hundred and forty all together.
MM: Total acres.
EB: And my brother that died, he had, when mother passed away, why, we settled it in three 80's. My brother has one 80, my sister has one 80, and I have one 80. And then the

farm I have, there's two hundred acres that I have because I have two hundred and eighty acres all together. But I've farmed all of it.

MM: Uh, did you, did you say this is, uh, your operation is leased out now?

EB: Yes, yes.

MM: Your brother's and sister's, too?

EB: Yeah.

MM: Is that leased out now?

EB: The whole thing's on a _____ now.

MM: Do you have plans to keep it that way, or do you

EB: Well, unless somebody comes along with a lot of money, why, (laughs).

MM: Well.

[recording stopped]