

Wayne Drummond - Narrator  
April 23, 2003  
John Turner – Interviewer

WD: What you want me to do, is to identify myself and?

I. What was your name and birth?

WD: My name was Coulston Wayne Drummond and May the 24, born 1928 and ah, was born in a town called... actually the closest town was Rice (R I C E) 7, miles from a valley called Pleasant Valley, where I was born in a home where my grandma and other ladies took care... they didn't even have a doctor and.... lived in that little valley called Pleasant Valley for at least seven years in different places. Was forced to move four times in that short time because times were not good. It was the Depression and my father could not pay the rent. Then things changed. The Depression was still on. We moved from that little valley down to the Columbia River, about 10 miles away to another farm and then, all the time having no electricity, no water in the house, no indoor facilities for a restroom. We moved again to the town of Kettle Falls, Washington forty miles from the Canadian border.

And at that point I was introduced to electricity...did not have indoor toilets. Did have water piped into the house for the first time in my life and then my father worked for the Great Northern Railroad and he went from a town called Marcus, Washington to Nelson, British Columbia on the Kootenai Lake, a north-south railroad that ran from Spokane ..actually to Nelson, British Columbia and returned. He was unable to get very much work but the war was approaching, World War II. He was called up by the Union Pacific Railroad at La Grande, Oregon and told that if he wanted to come down he could go to work firing, for the Union Pacific Railroad, with a pretty good chance of steady employment. At that point in time, my father and mother decided to move to La Grande, Oregon .

JT: How old were you at that time and what grade were you in ?

WD: OK, I got this ...1942... Started High School till 1946...

JT: Well, didn't you move to La Grande for a short period of time and then leave ?

WD: Yes. Yes, sir.

JT: You were in the 7th grade when you came to La Grande the first time ?

WD: I forgot to mention that I was, when we first came down... I was in the seventh grade. Went to Central School in La Grande, grade school and after doing...The whole family was quite happy that we were down in this great big city as opposed to where we had lived in our past. And we had all of the facilities such as electricity, water, indoor toilets. Pretty happy, generally speaking. But my father got laid off from the MC (UP?)

Railroad and we went back to Kettle Falls and we stayed up there and I continued in the 7th and 8th grade, partially in the 8th grade and then we returned to La Grande again and went to high school at La Grande .

JT: When you returned to La Grande , that's when you lived down on Main Street?

WD: No ... when I returned to La Grande uhh... we..we... of all things we went to... uhh... that place right across from the old Mormon Church that's now an office building there on 4th Street and lived there a short time, then went down to 804 Main when my father purchased this old home and we lived there then until I and my sisters were out of high school.

JT: Well, then when you started to school in La Grande, did you find a big difference from where you lived before?

WD: Yes, John, I'm glad you brought that up. Because in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade when I first attended school here, the reason I got the nickname Cowboy, I stood up in front of the class and sang Home on the Range and the city kids here in La Grande made great fun of Wayne and from that time on I was called Cowboy. Because of my rendition of Home on the Range. However, I enjoyed school irregardless of the nickname and of course, eventually did go to four years of high school at La Grande.

JT: When... what were the first jobs you had around La Grande, when you got into high school?

WD: Well, the first jobs. My first actual job was at Hamilton Motor Company, a Chrysler dealer who allowed me to allow to work at his service station part time, and I washed cars and I greased cars and I learned quite a bit about automobiles by working part time at this automotive center. Time goes along, I continued to work there on a part time basis but took on other jobs, but I'm still in high school and I can only have so many hours to work and ..uhh... later, later I also worked at other service stations -- Gene Fuller's Union Oil across from Mike Lynch's. But primarily I, along with some of my high school friends I... uhh... in the summertime I iced cars for Pacific Fruit Express when and before there was not much use of refrigerated cars to ship vegetables, fruits, and so forth, and the way they maintained the proper temperature... they used the Pacific Fruit Express cars which me and my friends drug large cakes of ice... I believe they weighed at least 200 pounds (laughter)..

JT: Well,,They were 300 pound cakes and 400 pound cakes..

WD: (Laughter) I knew they were big.

JT: Can you tell about what time we'd get called to work at night ?

WD: The unpleasant part of this particular job, although quite good pay, and quite manual in the fact that the ice was heavy and we had to pull 'em down long platforms,

and bring 'em across on short platforms on the top of the Pacific Fruit Express Car and down into a hold where the ice was stored to allow the cars to be refrigerated. And...and we were often called at such hours as 2 o'clock in the morning ..could be at 5 o'clock in the morning ....could be at 8 PM in the afternoon, but when the trains came in that is when they needed attention. Therefore our ice crew would immediately, or to the best we could, go down to the Pacific Fruit Express icing station, get our big hooks and start pullin' ice to fill up these cars. We did get pretty good pay for that time.

JT: Well, the important thing was that we spotted the ice at where the trains would stop at intervals uhh...we had a chain that the ice traveled on and we had to have rock salt there as part of it.

WD: This is true (laughter) I forgot that.

JT: And fill up these bunkers at the end of these cars, the refrigeration cars.

WD: Yes. Forgot that...very good.

JT: It uh... Like you say...it was awfully good money for the first .....

WD: For, for...At that time...People in La Grande and surrounding areas had went through a time when pay was rather low, primarily just work on a farm putting up hay like a lot of us young boys did at the end of the summer. But this job paid better pay.. we worked inconvenient hours but we felt good because whenever we got our paycheck, it showed that we made better than normal wages.

JT: We had just completed the junion, uh, sophmore year in high school so we were fairly young .

WD: God, to say the least. All the men that worked there, John Turner, Wayne Drummond, John Beeson, Frank Thatcher reasonably good sized fellows because you had to be reasonably strong to be, to do the job.

JT: Well, because of the war, we were doing men's work.

WD: Yeah...that's correct. The men had all went to war. I always remember strange, ah coincidence....everyone was interested in the war effort and... uhh... us young high school boys were the only men in town unless you were 50 or older. And... uhh... us boys thought we were taking the place of these brave men who'd went to war. Actually, of course, we were pretty young, but as I've stated we were big enough and strong enough to do this type of work and of course, it helped our pocket book. Allowed us to have things we hadn't had in the past and we just simply...uhh...were fortunate to work there, even though we were at inconvenient hours. Our families didn't like it because we were gettin' up in the middle of the night ...the middle of morning.....and we were always worried about whether we was gonna' be able to do our school work . Didn't seem to affect us too much. (laughter)

JT: Well, in school was there any particular classes that you had that helped you later on in your life's work ?

WD: Yes. A funny thing happened, I... uhh... I was convinced by some young ladies that I should take typing . The men (the boys that I was associated with) generally speaking thought that that was.. uhh.. strictly beneath men to learn how to type ... you didn't need it. And... uhh... kind of a girlish attempt shall we say at... uhh... to be able to write on a typewriter. However I was convinced and learned to type with classes that were full of women and I found that to be fun. Because there's always girls around me and they were always coming up and telling me 'You should do this, Wayne , you should do that' And I was getting extra attention, which I didn't deserve. But anyway, I learned how to type. This later on in life was extremely important to Wayne. I will explain here that in call up in the Korean conflict this ability to type and also later on to run a teletypewriter keyboard similar to a typewriter allowed me to go to work on the railroad as a telegraph operator , radio code teletypewriter operator. Certainly typewriter and this in turn, while in the United States Army, they found out that in checking my records, I was in the infantry. I had done quite well at Fort Riley Kansas because I liked guns, was interested in guns and they pulled me out of a regular group of men after 18 weeks of infantry basic ....we all knew we were going to go to Korea when we graduated and on the day of graduation they called all of my friends up -- some of them from La Grande--- who went to the army on a troop train with me to Boise who are now going to graduate and I was glad I was with an outfit. But when time come, they told the men that rather than going to Korea they were going to go to Germany! I was thrilled. When they called the names off, my name wasn't there. I went to see the captain of this particular company and I reported to him as Pvt. Drummond. "Why wasn't I called? He said, "You, Wayne, are so good with the M1Garand, 45 automatic and various other weapons that we have here, not to mention that you won the thousand yards shoot. I guess the group from Fort Hood, Texas and other large encampments and when you won the thousand yard shoot I put you down to be a weapons expert to train other young men coming through this basic training. I was shook. I had a nice trophy cup but at that time I would be glad to turn the trophy cup back to the army, and go with the men who were going to Ft. Benning Georgia and then to Germany but that was not to be the case.

So then, one day while training men to use the M1Garand 30-06 rifle and submachine guns, Browning automatic rifles and enjoying showing many men who came from all parts of the United States, (some experienced with guns and many who had never even seen gun) and it was interesting to me... but one day, the captain, another captain from the headquarters company called me to the office and he said , "uhh, Private Drummond, we just found out in our records here that you were an experienced teletypewriter, telegrapher, typewriter, so forth and worked in that position for the Union Pacific Railroad," and I said , "Yes sir, that's true." He says , "Well, we have a terrible shortage of signal corp people. The Army needs people in communications and we are now going to send you to a signal corp school at Augusta, Georgia called Fort Gordon, where you will become an instructor and uh.. it'll be a good thing for you and a good thing for us .

I said 'Thank you, sir,' because, I knew I was going to be an individual infantry replacement in Korea rather than going with a group again.....

JT: Wayne, we are more interested in things that happened in Union County .

WD: Oh...OK...

JT: If it would be all right with you.

WD: OK ... Yeah.... Good.... Right

JT: So when you were in high school, what other courses that you studied that helped you ?

WD: Oh, good... I uh other courses in high school, I felt that although they weren't particularly instrumental, I enjoyed everything but mathematics and unfortunately I was never good at mathematics. Therefore I uhh.. in fact, in getting out of high school I went to college for two terms trying to learn business administration, because of my inability to be good in the use of mathematics I, uhh.,in fact quit college and went to work.

JT: During the time that you were going to high school and working in the service station uhh. there was a gentleman from Walla Walla that you were well acquainted with, Gordon Kelty.

WD: Yes

JT: And uh.. what things did Gordon Kelty ask you to do during the war?

WD: Oh, yes...Gordon Kelty was a new and used car dealer and also a wrecking yard at, uhh, Walla Walla, Milton-Freewater, area and he knew I was very interested in cars and was uh... pretty alert on good clean used cars which there was a definite shortage of around our northwest so he paid me to, if I found out that some old gentleman or some young gentleman or somebody was gonna sell a good clean car, go right to the person offer them a proper price; call me and we'll discuss the price and I'll get right over and purchase that car and you will get commission for it, Wayne. Well, this worked definitely to my advantage and uh...in doing that along with working at the service station where I seen many people, many customers come in with their various cars and when I found out of a car available, even there at that business and around town, I contacted Gordon Kelty and there was a good business deal for Wayne because it was extra money in the pocket Ha...ha ....

JT: In your pocket. Well great. During that time what was your first car that you had?

WD: My first car (and I had four of 'em) were 1936 Ford V8 flathead ..wonderful cars ... in my opinion. Very fast and uh... I uh... continue to be a champion of Ford products

for years but, the first car was a 1936 Ford 4-door black sedan and uh... as I said, I stayed interested in Ford V8's and uh... probably the fact that the 1936 Fords were fast, smooth uh... could outrun practically anything in the Grande Ronde Valley if you wanted to ...

JT: Well now, when you say outrun ...what was the game that was played often ...maybe endangering some of the people's lives and your own ?

WD: (laughter) Well, in high school there was a group of men who weren't criminals, they weren't crooks, they didn't steal anything and they weren't drunks but they loved to operate cars and they loved to play a game called Ditch 'em and... what we would do... not only did we run races with each other to see who had the best and the fastest car and the most ability, and this was played every third night of the week around the town of La Grande, we got a rather uh a bad reputation from people reporting cars driving fast within the city limits and playing some kind of a hilarious game and also the city police knew about us and more or less were definitely against playing Ditch'em because of the danger involved for people not to mention ourselves.

One of the most interesting things that happened to me and I was, I was adequate at playing the game... one of the most interesting things though, we used to go down by the city police station in La Grande and there was several city policemen mostly old - much older than we were - cannot recall their names at this minute, but we used to go by the police station and rev up our engines with dual pipes and no mufflers and whatever and the police would come running out, jump in their 1942 (the most modern car at that time because the war -they weren't making cars) and they would pursue us but they could never catch us . Well, this was kinda, to us, this was kinda' thrilling. Uhh, to be honest with you it was dangerous in its way. I had some of my friends who rode with me and we played this game ..even with the police as I stated, and we use to run to the first gravelled road and make a great big bunch of dust and gravel flyin' and goin' waaay beyond the normal speed. This all come to an end when one day I was down in front of our local Hand Ford Motor Company parked at that time in a '41 Ford sedan .

JT: That would have been Walker Motor Company ...

WD: I guess it would have. Yeah...You're right! Anyway, a large policeman ... I will never forget he was probably 6 foot 5 or 6, a huge man had a brand new Chevrolet coupe with the state police emblem on the side and he parked next to my car and he got out of his car and come over to me (still in the car ). I said "What do you want? And he said I want you to get out of your car and I couldn't imagine what would be the deal. I had not raced down Ford Motor Company. I hadn't done anything wrong for several days. Anyway he says "come on, I want you to follow me, Wayne". So I follows this giant state policeman. He takes me around to his car to the driver's side and I said "What do you want me to do here?" I thought I was going to be arrested He says "I'm gonna open this door." He opens the door. He says "I want you to look inside". So I looks inside this nice Chevrolet coupe and in the middle between the passenger and the driver and on the transmission hump was huge square oblong radio. He says,,"Do you know what that is Wayne?" I said "No. I don't ". "Well, you've got a kind of reputation around here and

you got some friends and I'm trying to get the word out to you boys before you really get into serious trouble. This is a two-way radio. From now on when you're playing some runaway ditch 'em game with one of our police cars - city or state or sheriff - we're gonna catch you 'cause this two-way radio allows us to communicate with another policeman or police cars and we will catch you and we will arrest you. The jig is up." I said "Well, uh, thank you sir". He says "This isn't the end of this story. I want you to go to your home and I want you to call all your friends that like to engage in this dangerous game called Ditch 'em and I want you to tell them that we now have, all of us, have two-way radios and the game is over." He said "I want you to call Frank Rohan, Walt Smutz, uhh, Vernon Carpenter. He named a whole bunch. And I said "I will", I was severely impressed by the man and the news that he was giving me. So that was the end of our exploiting the power of the Ford V8 down the dusty mountain roads. (Laughter)

JT: A little before that when the same policeman, Raymond Arnold on the city police force and he had a brand new 46 Mercury in the police department....

WD: Beautiful car.

JT: Can you say what happened that particular night I'm referring to?

WD: (Laughter) Well, on one, on (coughing) excuse me, on one of our games, we knew that the police had a brand new 1946 4-door Mercury and uhh, we knew that it would be tough competition, but as it turned out, we got into a situation where me and some of my friends were running that Ford, 36 Ford way too fast in town and we made a run across US 30 at that time and down into the underpass that's still here in La Grande, out towards Island City turned left went out by, out towards our Riverside Park and the policeman was doing very good. He was right behind us and I was gonna make a turn and one of my friends said "Wayne, can't ...you'll ... you'll turn it over.. you don't have good enough brakes with these mechanical brakes so I decided to go straight and when I got to the gravel road that goes toward Mt. Glen, it wasn't long until we were way ...we were willing to go much faster than the police were. However, I do believe it was the next day...we, was working at the service station and Arnold (the city policeman -- nice man, actually) come over to me and said "I want you, Wayne, to lift the hoods on that 36 Ford of yours. I want to see what you've got inside that engine." I said OK and I walked over to the Ford, put the hood up and he looked it all over and he said "You mean to tell me that this don't have Offenhauser carburetors, overhead cams", and a whole bunch of things that were just starting to be known about. I said, "No, it's just a standard 36 Ford." He says, "If I wasn't lookin' at it, I wouldn't believe it." And he give me a talking to about no more ditch 'em...this was prior to the state policeman tellin' me about two-way radios. (Laughter)

JT: If I asked you another question here, the reason you got into this situation was because you used to take, uhh., the Oregonian Mail Paper Box and used that as a muffler and you had a cut out and on that particular night going down the street and the chief of police was going one way and you let out on it and he turned around and no more did you get past him about Washington Street...here came Raymond Arnold going the wrong way

(laughter) and you let out again and went up Fourth Street (laughter) to K Avenue and turned left up there, went around the college dorm where the girls were and came off of 8th Street. And when you got to the bottom of N avenue, here's Raymond Arnold waiting (End of tape 1, side 1)

Tape 1, side 2

JT: at the Stop Sign. You turned right, went across Adams there by the underpass you were probably doing about 70 miles an hour.

WD: I was.

JT: Then you turned left and went across on Spruce Street there, across the railroad, down Spruce street to the Black Hawk Trail, The Black Trail to Orodell Bridge, came back and parked your car underneath the clothesline at your house ... then we went down town to see what all the excitement was.

WD: That's absolutely right. I came back into town, sneaky, was going very, very, slow with the lights OUT. And ,uhhh , I knew there was one place I could park that Ford that they would never see me even if they came to my house.. the Ford wouldn't be there and I run that black 36 Ford in toward my Father's garage and then turned right to go behind the large home which we lived in and run it underneath the clothesline where, if they had searchlights, spotlights or whatever they'd never see it and then we all got out and sneaked on foot. (laughter).

JT: Well, we went to Merton Taylor's car ...I believe he was parked...

WD: I gotcha...I gotcha....I believe you're right....I believe you're right. Anyway, the days of uhhh playin' that game, was so much fun at that time, we thought, and admittedly we shouldn't have been doing that ... I do believe that was the closest I ever come to breaking the law of any time in my whole life .

JT: Well, we're happy to say that nobody got hurt. (Laughter) It was very foolish, but nobody got hurt.

WD: No... no, and we weren't into drugs.

JT: When you graduated from high school then, like you say, you went two terms up at the college. You went to work at Mt. Emily Mill for a short time.

WD: Yes, I did. I worked out at the, I guess they called it the Stange Mill at that time although I'm not positive on the name ..I know that Stange was,.. uhhh... a big lumber executive in this area . And I...uhh....went to work there. First off bearing boards at a saw location and stacking the boards in a certain way that they were used primarily.... these boards I was working with were used to build wooden boxes. But we also cut other sizes of timber. I found out the job was very repetitious, not really hard work but



constantly moving lumber with your hands, your arms, your back, so forth and a little later I went to work in a different department called the glue room where, here again, men including myself were used to put lumber on a machine that spread glue to the sides of the board and it made large sheets of, of um, of boards that could be used in the construction of furniture and so forth.

And I thought that was very repetitious also and I worked the afternoon shift. I didn't like that because afternoon shifts cut down my social life considerably. I got off work at midnight ...everybody else had went home. Anyway, I...uhhh... I continued to work part time at various service stations... uhh...even when I was working at the mill part time. But, uh, one day I was told that there was a job available on the Union Pacific Railroad that I might be interested in and I decided I'd go down and see what the Union Pacific here in our town had to offer a young man like me and instead of hiring out as a fireman or a brakeman or working on the track gang or whatever, this job turned out to be a telegrapher job for \$125.00 a month. I would go to towns such as Haines, Oregon or North Powder, Oregon, Pendleton, Oregon, Huntington, Oregon and work as a telegraph clerk and worked in these various stations to learn how to be an agent for a little town such as Haines.....

JT: What did a telegrapher do?

WD: Telegrapher -- his duties -- Primarily as a communication man and a train order, he handled train orders for the train dispatcher and this was just prior to CTC (a Centralized Traffic Control System) and to be short about it we moved trains at that time by the dispatcher calling up the operator at X station, say at North Powder.....

JT: But, you used a key operated? Morse Code?

WD: Yeah, telegraph key...Morse Code telegraph key, yes sir.

JT: That's what I was wondering about .. regular duties, 'cause people will be reading this won't know what your duties are.

WD: Oh Yeah...The telegraph operator, of course, on duty whenever they give the call sign for the particular station such as North Powder was HD, that was the call letter for North Powder and on the telegraph key, it's sounder would come four quick dots then a pause, then a long dash and two dots and they would say HD, HD, HD. And then, I would answer HD and the dispatcher would say on the telegraph key "This is the La Grande Dispatcher. I want you to copy four." That meant for me to copy four orders... thin tissue paper with carbon addressed to Conductor and Engineer of a particular train that was coming down the track that had not arrived yet. My, uh...So I would then copy what he said and repeat each and every letter and number on the telegraph key. Then he would say "Wrap those orders up, put them on a stick...which was a bamboo stick with a Y at the top of it on a string and you hand that up to the engineer because this means, Wayne, he's going to meet a train at Haines.

JT: He put his arm through a cord, on this line..

WD: Yes and because the train was not stopping often times those trains would be making 30 to 50 miles an hour and the operator...the telegraph operator... would stand out close to the tracks, hand this, somebody would call this a hook where the engineer or fireman could reach down out of the cab, get the string and the orders and immediately read 'em. And find out that he was going to meet an east-bound freight, for example, at North Powder, or Haines and you will take siding. So, the engineer and conductor would prepare to slow down and to head into the siding at Haines and wait for the other train that was on the train order to come by. It was a way of moving and advancing trains, not to mention that the trains, each person involved on the train crew and in the dispatcher's office and in the telegraph office had a time table and numbered trains if they were due at North Powder at 11:20 AM for example

JT: These numbered trains had right of way.

WD: They had right...they had right by time table to operate on their schedule ...Inferior trains were moved against those trains by train orders allowing them to go further and further. Lets's play like a passenger train was late, so you might have 40 minutes and they could make, say Haines, and 40 minutes they'd be in the clear of this time table train. This allowed us to move trains east and west on the main track. And it was a very important job. The wind from the big steam engines going by you at 30 or 40 or 50 miles an hour... the wind blew your pant legs you just like they were a pike out there and it was kinda' scary . However, other people done it , I done it an that was the way it was done . And so I was getting \$125.00 a month to learn more of the station work itself .. everything from Railway Express shipping ...people at that time shipped many things on the railroad and at these little depots they could take their whatever they wanted to send by train, they'd bring 'em there and we'd handle that. We also sell tickets on passenger trains and in particular, the main division such as La Grande, such as Huntington, Oregon such as Baker, Oregon , such as Pendleton, Oregon, if you worked in one of those larger offices you sometimes were assigned just to sell tickets on passenger trains.

JT: Now this was strictly a seniority job ?

WD: Strictly seniority job.

JT: You had a seniority date as an operator?

WD: I sure did, John, and the thing was...it allowed me ... eventually, they qualified me as a regular telegraph operator passing all rules and regulations so forth, so forth and.. and as stated seniority date and then when a particular position become available, I, with my seniority, could bid on it according to the rules of who had the most seniority would get the job and we had uh... people don't realize it, but we had telegraph operators at such places as Hilgard, Oregon ...uh... certainly Kamela, Meacham, Gibbon. To move trains across this Blue Mountains ...very important job... they worked around the clock

24 hours a day. They worked shift work and of course, by that time I was getting more than \$125.00 a month because I had completed the learning process and became a regular operator.

Time went on for me I... uhhh... was able to work in the La Grande ticket office where I ran the teletypewriter, copied train orders and used the telegraph wire... uhhh... considerable amount of that and secured Pullman bedroom ... various types of accommodations on our passenger trains and the Streamliner trains. People here in La Grande, business men such as Dave Baum and other important figures at that time, used railroad transportation because here in the winter you could get on a train, for example, at 8 PM at night, go to Portland and they would switch your Pullman car up where you had a bedroom and at 9 o'clock they would come wake you up and say, "You're in Portland, sir, and you have to vacate the car." But it was luxury for these people who used train transportation. They didn't have to get off the train even for the arrival at 4 o'clock in the morning. They could stay right there in the bedroom until 9 o'clock. Good little things like that. Well, time continues to move on and then I was allowed...they thought for some reason that I had a possibility of learning train dispatching. I went over to the train dispatcher's office next to our Union Pacific depot and started to learn how to be a train dispatcher and move trains under the Centralized Traffic Control.

JT Now, can you give some detail as to how this was done? Because these are people don't know how this process works.

WD Well, I had a ...uhh..., just a second here, the dispatcher's office Centralized Traffic Control in La Grande, Oregon was the first centralized traffic control and...uhhh... this office allowed signals, red, green and yellow, along the railroad right of way where the train operator or engineer, he could run without the use of train orders to tell him where to go or the time table. He was governed by the display of signals and if there was green he could run his authorized speed at green. If it was yellow it was reduced speed and he reduced the speed of his train to 15 miles per hour and prepared to see the next signal... red...stop and another signal right below it that indicated he would take the siding for an oncoming train.

JT Now this was all displayed on the board in the office in La Grande?

WD Yes...it was

JT So that the operator...

WD The operator. Now the CTC, in movement of trains, had a huge electronic board with signals and switches for each and every siding and... allowed him to... play like you had a electronic, this is just for you John.... allowed him to have complete control of the section of the railroad that he was on...in other words, when a train left La Grande, he give the train a green signal to leave La Grande yards and to proceed towards Hilgard, Pendleton, Reith, whatever ..He immediately started his engines up, pulled out of the

yard, pulled off the main line and went, we'll say, in a westward direction and then the train dispatcher would display green signals ... if he was going to meet someone at Hilgard.... often times a train coming down a long steep grade would head into the siding at Hilgard and get out of the way of this train that was just allowed to leave La Grande, so that he would have a good run at the oncoming mountains that was Meacham and Kamela.

JT      Usually about how big a section of that track was each...uh, signal

WD      Oh...the distance between signals uhhh.. God, I'm going to say about a thousand yards.

JT      So how many ..

WD      They had many, many signals that had no switches. They just indicated still green or still...

JT      How many dispatchers were working at a time?

WD      Okay. One dispatcher was assigned from La Grande, Oregon to Pendleton - Reith, Oregon. It was called The Mountain and uhh...this was uhh...probably, the reason they installed CTC ... here at this location rather than back in the flat country such as Omaha, Nebraska, Cheyenne, Wyoming before you come up the big hill. For example...here we had a sharp, very steep mountain railroad that required the use of extra power commonly called helpers and we had to... a freight train leaving La Grande might have two steam engines on the front end and another steam engine cut in halfway back in the cars, boxcars and various and then another one cut in just ahead of the caboose. Just to get it up to Kamela. So.....so..so..because you had instantaneous ability to head a train into, for example, into Hilgard, cut off the helper, add a helper and pick up an extra helper at Hilgard to make the mountain, you had flexibility we had never known. Even with all the operators. Here you had something like ...play like you had an electric train set for little boys to operate...here we had a.. a ..train that was not a toy , that governed all movements on the track between La Grande and Reith .. not to mention....

JT      Visually...

WD      Visually...yes you're visually looking at lights showing the path of the train as it went along the main line of the railroad or in the sidings and even if you were a section man and you wanted to put on your little flat car on the railroad track, he had to call you, the train dispatcher, to get permission to set his little flat car on there and he had 22 minutes to make Hilgard in such and such..

JT      Or a motor car.

WD I should have said motor car. Therefore when his time was up the operator of this motor car had to take that car off the track cause he had ran out of time and he...say he didn't make the station he wanted to go to, he had to take that car off the track anyway.

JT And they had set offs...

WD Yes, they did. and..and..the dispatcher would put up blocks between one little place and another little place and say this track is occupied by a motor car...do not allow your train, Wayne, to run into these people who out there actually working on the track. He had a tremendous amount of responsibility. I worked with... I don't know how many section foreman and men that worked on the section, not to mention the railroad communication crews that were constantly....

JT Signal maintainers ?

WD They were called signal maintainers...that's correct...

JT And then you also had the rock fences that showed...

WD Good point, John. Even... even as well maintained as the railroad system tracks, ties, so forth, even as good as they were, if for some reason in the solid metal bars such as a tamping bar, or a pipe, a plain piece of pipe, went from one side of the rail to the other side, that would show an occupancy, that something was suddenly on the track between Motanic and Hilgard. It could be.... it could be a slide such as mentioned....a slide coulda' come down from the wet hillsides, crossed the track and blocked the track. The rock and the mud would immediately indicate that there was a broken rail, a slide, or someone that shouldn't be, tampering with those two rails, showing me that there's something there. And at that point, I could stop my train, get them on the telephone (we didn't have radio communication), but they had to stop at a signal where there was a phone and they'd get on the phone and say, "Why are we stopped here, Wayne?" I said, "Because up there at the west end of Hilgard, between there and Motanic there's something on the track and it's not a train. I cannot know what it is but I cannot let you go until I find out if there's been some tragedy, even so much as a logging truck crossing the tracks. Metal touching metal on the two rails indicating that something was occupying the tracks.

JT These were all safety measures??

WD Absolutely...yes...and...and so the dispatcher along with keeping his trains moving. He had the problem of first class trains, such as passenger trains, troop trains, of various things used on the railroad including the nice streamliners and and so forth. It was up to the dispatcher to put these slow moving freight trains in sidings allowing the passenger trains to have a green light operation where they could go at the maximum speed they were allowed, to be on time at the next station or from La Grande to Portland, for that matter.

JT At what position were you as a dispatcher when you were drafted into the army?

WD Uhh..I was only... I was not really a train dispatcher... I was learning,

JT: Still learning.

WD Still learning and I became...I started working by myself in ...the year was 53. I'd been out of the army since 1952...one year and they were installed ..uhhh... CTC, the first time it was ever used on any railroad in the whole United States, 1942 at La Grande, Oregon and it operated first from La Grande to Huntington and then shortly thereafter they had it installed from La Grande to Reith, Oregon or Pendleton, we'll just say, and.. uhh... we were the first people on the whole Union Pacific system to have this great, well...this great way of moving trains and ...

JT Now, your job was protected during the time you were in the service ?

WD Yes...

JT ...and you came out and then when you started in the dispatcher's office. You worked in the dispatcher's office for how many years until..

WD Approximately, approximately I worked as a regular trick dispatcher, that's what they called trick dispatchers, worked a regular shift and they ran around the clock. Most often I worked midnight until 8 o'clock in the morning . I always worked, well primarily I worked the west end....La Grande to Pendleton and Reith and eventually to Hinkle..

JT They were 8 hour shifts?

WD They were 8 hour shifts and you...when you came in there, you were gonna' be there for 8 hours unless you had a heart attack or something of that nature.

JT Quite a stressful job ???

WD Ooh uhhh...Interesting that you bring that up, John, We were told while working on the railroad, ...uhhh... there was a big comment about mental stress jobs in the United States of America and the average life expectancy of a train dispatcher was 54 years old. Air traffic controllers, another mental..very much mental strain....age 58 was a normal life expectancy and out of this bunch of dispatchers...14 of them...there's only 3 of us left here in this locality alive, because time marches on ...but the point is most of these men died at a very young age. Some of these men, John Turner knows, they were... Jim Gerry, Cliff Gerry ...Ross Wilson's father, Ray.

JT Felix Cavallo..

WD Felix Cavallo and me and Eldon are the only ones alive. I just talked to Felix the other day.... he said "Wayne, we're the only ones left .." His comment,I can't give you his comment, I won't do that, ...'cause this is on. Uhhh, anyway... the job was a

fascinating job. I never, ever, even though I went on to other things, which I'll explain here later, I never had any other job that was even close to the excitement, to the mental strain, to the satisfaction, that you ran trains for 8 hours and it was a good day, good night, good afternoon ...no problems....the trains were moving.

JT      What happened to make you quit a job like this ?

WD      Well, what happened ...to Wayne, I liked the job real well. I did have to work six nights a week and during that young time of my life, it was uh not not too much fun, to never have a Saturday night or a weekend off ... because my day off was Thursday . I hated that restriction.

The money was far above what you could normally get working in the normal places in this area. It was far superior, and that was mainly why I stayed with it. I also required my family to have to be quiet around the place. I slept in my basement , but the little kids couldn't play, scream and yell like other little kids could 'cause their Daddy was sleeping'. Anyway... to go on with it... after continuing this job and enjoying it and all the things I've stated....uhhh... they informed me one day that Centralized Traffic Control, the job I was doing had now advanced to as far east as Nampa, Idaho. Not very far...but , but it was soon and I said to the people, I am talking about the people, my bosses, "How long will it be before you have it all the way to Omaha?.. and down to Salt Lake?" And they said "sooner than you expect."

And I was told that it would be Hinkle to Portland right away and, uh, I would have to end up living in Omaha, Nebraska 'cause all Centralized Traffic Control would be handled at the headquarters in Omaha ...you'd still be doing the same job, but you'd be sitting in Omaha. You'd be assigned to a section of track and uh, you'd live out the rest of your life there.

JT      What year did this finally happen ?

WD      Well, this uhhh... I got that down somewhere here. Ah, well, anyway, let's just say that it was 1967. And I don't have it right here in front of me for some reason. Anyway, in 1967 the railroad had primarily stopped using steam engines and went to all diesel. We had Centralized Traffic Control. It was a much more modern place than in the past, maybe not as interesting in some ways but, in 1967 they told me that you had to prepare to go to Omaha. I come home and discussed this with my wife...for months we talked about it...are you willing to go to Omaha and work as a train dispatcher, still have a good job or what is your feelings, Wayne? And Betty...Betty told me that she would go immediately, go along with me, but, I told her how much I enjoyed the experience of living here in this great Grande Ronde Valley. I hunted, something I dearly loved, I fished, I dearly loved that. I liked everything about this country and I...I...for me to go back to a flat country like Omaha where there was no deer hunting, no elk hunting, no many...they did have Chinese Pheasants , but uhh, that was different and uhhh, my wife, fortunately, said 'Wayne, I am working here at the US bank and you don't have to....  
End of Tape 1, side 2.

Tape 2, Side 1

JT     You decided there were too many people and, uh, you didn't want to live someplace else....What did you do when you quit the railroad ?

WD     Well, I was like a fish out of water, John. I, uhh, I looked at various things around our area and, uh, finally in desperation, I went down to a place here in town that sold industrial machinery. And I knew these people in the past through my association with them in this little town and uhhh, I was told by a man named Layton Graham he would hire me for an industrial machinery salesman. And he would furnish me a car and I would, uh, sell industrial machinery to sawmills and other, other manufacturing places between Walla Walla and Baker, Enterprise, Pendleton, Hermiston. And all I had to do was just get in the car and go sell machinery.

They already had an established route and I decided I would take this job. It was kinda' interesting, John, but ...uhh, it paid much less money and uh, I didn't really like sales as much as much I thought I might. Anyway, I continued to work there, irregardless 'cause it was a job and my wife was working so we were allowed to stay here in La Grande and I even thought about selling cars at Hand Ford Motor and uh, tried that for a short two or three weeks.

This was unfortunate for me in a way ... maybe I'd have found out because I was so interested in Ford cars, that I might have made a career out of that, but one day a man that I knew that come into Industrial Machinery says "Wayne, I have a position for you here in this valley that pays good money, if you're interested. He worked for Borden Chemical. And...

JT     Not to interrupt you, I was wondering if you might tell about your experience of buying Boulder Park. Because that was when you first, uh, quit the railroad and ..

WD     Two stories. Well, also I failed to mention that in 1964 on the railroad as a train dispatcher we had seven miles La Grande to Hilgard washed out by a terrible flood and during that time we could not run a train between La Grande and Hilgard or east and west. And I had worked trains, caterpillars, umm, huge amounts of men and I had to give them permission to operate where they could in that washed-out area...a tremendous experience. The only known flood while I've been alive that actually washed out those railroad tracks another fascinating part of being a train dispatcher.

But anyway to go on with it.... I uh, quit... resigned from the railroad and again was looking for things to do to supplement my wife working, so I had I an opportunity through a local businessman to (who knew that I loved to hunt and fish, and was pretty well experienced along those lines). I had an opportunity to go look at a trailhead on Main Eagle Creek in our Eagle Cap Wilderness, where there were facilities to stay overnight, cabins, little apartments, fifty-four head of horses, corrals, horses, hay, the whole thing...but the main idea was, that this lodge called Boulder Park Lodge... that Betty could work there, I could work there. I could work as a guide in a horse wrangler



and take men, paid, paid uh, customers, to go up Main Eagle Creek up to the top, practically of the Eagle Cap Wilderness and down in the upper Minam River where some of the greatest elk hunting still left in America . The transportation was horse transportation. Definitely different than me and the railroad transportation--cars, horses and trucks.

I went back about 50 years and transported people on their horse or our horses with pack horses to bring in their equipment to set up camps in the high country, all the way on Main Eagle and the upper Minam River and over Bench Canyon Pass, a pass that was 8,100 feet high, so you come to winter early in that country. Anyway, I...I convinced Betty that she could do this, 'cause she was such a good cook. Turned out that Betty fed many, many loggers, hunters, fishermen at the lodge, where we had good equipment to do the cooking with and make beds and do that type of work while I done outside work. Primarily gone most of the time in the mountains, setting up and taking down camps, bringing in the archery hunters game; showing the people where the elk and deer were in that country. And it was all very interesting to me, although I found out, it was, for some reason as much as I liked to hunt for personal reasons, I didn't get too much of a thrill out of showing these people, although they're paid customers. I felt like they should be able to get their game on their own.

Well, that doesn't work in a place like that...you've gotta show them where the game is and sometimes with requests to shoot their game. And these people had more money, John, than I could count. And they were from California and other places and, uh, although I ..I...also was in a sense I was waiting on them hand and foot. They couldn't ride the 25 miles into our main elk camp without being extremely stove up... some of them unable to do it. Uhhh...all kinds of physical problems, uh, complaining about that we were in a wilderness area and would we ever get out of here, something happening... all kinds of things of that nature. To be brief about it, I finally decided that at the end of the season and I went by Thanksgiving .. That, hey, you'd better take a look at this. Not to mention that for the money I had invested, for Betty being pulled away from her job at the bank, the total economics of the situation was not good enough to stay.

JT Then the weather probably was the dryest year that you could have picked in many years.

WD (Laughter) Yeah...

JT And they delayed the hunting season that you depended....

WD John, you're right. Many things happened. It was a bad fire year, as John mentioned. Our seasons were delayed; we lost customers, not because of us, but because of the State of Oregon and the United States Government closing down certain areas. And therefore, we weren't making any money and uh, it was, well, it was extremely disappointing on that part of it. In the end of this, in the end of this operation as much as I liked the outdoors, great cooperation from my dear Betty, and my little children were very good...Mark and Kathy and they helped me do chores. They cut wood, they got the

cabins' wood supply, they done all kinds of work...they rode horses, of course. It seemed like every other day we had a rodeo where a pack horse would jump and start dumping his shovels and tools on the ground, not because there was anything wrong... because some dog barked, a customer's dog barked and the pack train decided to give it up.

We also done work for the US Forest Service on their trails...this was handiwork uhhh, keeping the trails clear of, uh, trees and so forth. Then they wanted to restrict us on using chain saws... that made that considerably different job.

JT It was a wilderness area..

WD It was wilderness area ..there were new laws coming, too. And John, the overall picture there, and particularly I realized it was a young man's game. To be frank with you, John, you needed to be 30 years old, strong, very adept, loving horses... something I found out although I liked horses I didn't have that love of horses that some men and women do.

JT Well, the only reason I brought it up,

WD It's alright.

JT: Circumstances happened way beyond your control in many times to make it just hard just to continue your business.

WD It was hard to do and in the spring of the next year I was offered (and I was happy I was offered) to get all the money I had put into it, out and they formed a corporation. And I was taken out of the corporation and my interest was returned to me...I was very fortunate on this and another couple plus Bob Goss, people that you know were in it and in the final end, the government purchased, we were on government land, but we owned the property. And in the final end, John, now Boulder Park is simply a trailhead. There is no lodge, there is no cabins.

JT They burned it all.

WD That's right and it's now called a trailhead to Main Eagle Creek.

JT Well, it's one of your experiences that I thought would be well to tell about, because you know, you had experiences that so many people don't, have no way of knowing about. Now would you want to go back to when you started to work for Borden Chemical?

WD Well, I uhh, on this Boulder Park high mountain pass, under no circumstances would Wayne have been allowed to find out if, in fact, as much as I loved the outdoors, hunting and fishing, what I needed to find out for myself and often thought about it, was to actually give it a try, to find out if the that was the kind of life I wanted to spend the

rest of my working days doing and career, and I found out as much as I loved it all, it really, it was for younger people, not to mention the bad things that happened....such as forest closed down, and so forth, so forth. But, but, the main thing was I didn't really see where that type of life...to be a big game guide, was good enough. I found out something I needed to know and so I left.

But anyway, uhhh, to go on with it, I come back of course, here to La Grande and I had this situation where I was offered a job at Borden Chemical and uh, I was not a pipe fitter, I was not an electrician, I was not skilled at any type of manufacturing. I went out to see uh, the people in charge of Borden Chemical and they had people down from Bellevue, Washington where they interviewed me and after they found out my name and so forth, so forth. "What makes you think you want to have this job?" I told the man in charge, that I so love this valley and I so wanted to stay here and a job would be, that would allow me to have normal wages and would allow me to stay here, was what I was really interested in. No, I'm not a welder, I'm not a pipe fitter, I'm not an electrician, but I'm very willing to learn.

And finally the man said to me "You know, Wayne, because you worked 17 years or whatever it was for the Union Pacific straight until they told you, you were going to move to Omaha, I find a man like you, where you didn't jump from job to job to job, that you're the kind of people that I want to work here at Borden Chemical. You can learn and you can become just as good an employee here as you were on the railroad and it's a good job, Wayne. If you like it sign here." And that's what happened to me.

And it turned out, that at Borden Chemical I was allowed to work inside from the horrendous winters of our Grande Ronde Valley. That John, here, knows about, (laughter) but I did in fact work inside. I, I actually manufactured resin to be used in conjunction with the particle board plant next door. We supplied the resin, they supplied the chips, and particle board, of course, in our knowledge of woodwork and lumber and so forth, very important in construction of furniture, houses, whatever.

JT How was this resin mixed? How...

WD This resin...it was mixed with several components. We were able to manufacture formaldehyde, the pure formaldehyde, that is used for many, many things in industry, actually. And we used it, plus agricultural urea that come in huge railroad hopper cars. It is usually used for fertilizer on soil. The mixture of formaldehyde, the mixture of this particular urea is called, plus methanol, caustic... all these rather dangerous chemicals... phenol, extremely dangerous. This come to our plant in railroad tank cars. Anyway, while manufacturing the resins in huge reactors, you know twice the size of this house, we manufactured and then shipped that resin, underground, to the particle board plant at La Grande. Not to mention truckloads of it all over our Northwest. And then we made a resin, John, for plywood plants: Elgin, Emmett, uh, Western Oregon, Missoula, various places. Here we used a combination ...formaldehyde, methanol, caustic, and phenol.. these were all dangerous chemicals, but they were enclosed, primarily ...other than when you loaded or unloaded the truck...extremely dangerous. For example, if you had a 12

inch square 12 x 12 x 12 by 12 fall on your chest, not protected with rubber protective clothing, you would die within three minutes.

Therefore, we were all told, including Wayne, that when you are working, unloading a truck and you have got to be “heads up”. You can’t make mistakes. You must know which line is going down, you must know if the valves or closed or unclosed, so forth, so forth. Funny part about this, John, my last eight years, I was allowed to work outside as an outside man, loading and unloading trucks, BUT I got to work from 7 o’clock till 3. A daylight job! The first one I ever had, really. When you come down to it, even a more funny thing, the year that I retired, 1990, we had had miserable winters, one right after another, drifted snow, 20 below zero, everybody that lives in this valley knew this happened, not to mention 50 mile an hour winds. And guess what? I told Betty when I wanted to retire and she said “You should do it, Wayne. Just think you won’t have to be out there in those winter storms”. I said “I’m gonna’ do it Betty.”

The man that took my place worked the next 8 years. We haven’t had a bad winter since I quit in 1990. (Laughter) And they all told me, people that you know by the way, said “Isn’t it funny, Wayne, you said you didn’t want to work another winter out here and we’ve had nothin’ but mild winters” and I know John knows that. Anyway, a very pleasant life here.

JT Now there are some things that we kinda’ left out along the way.

WD Okay.

JT When you were going to high school you liked to hunt and and fish....And what was one of the first guns that you had?

WD Yeah, interesting, interesting that you bring that up, John. Uh, I come down here from the Kettle Falls area, Rice, Pleasant Valley, where we were on the Columbia River and we had short-ranged shooting. ‘Course I was at that time unable, unable, John, to uh, to buy expensive nice hunting rifles. In fact, people at that time, primarily either had a 1903 Springfield 30-06, from World War 1 or, more often, a 30-30 lever action Winchester. Some gun of that nature, but most important was, when I come down to La Grande, I found out that the ranges were extremely long range as opposed to where I lived where we had trees, swamps, creeks, heavy timber and the range oftentimes would only be 30 to 80 or 90 yards. And the 32 Special, 30-30 lever action Winchester were far the most popular up in that country. They did not need any rifle that shot 200 yards.

Well, I come to this area of hunting and I found out that most of my friends had 30-06 or other long ranged rifles. 2-70’s, various good rifles and I found out that my 32 Special was still a good gun, but it was primarily a hundred yard gun and it was botherin’ me that everybody else was shooting, and on occasion, killing something 200 yards, such as elk, such as a deer. Well, John, I uhhh, finally got information from Grant Chandler, a gunsmith renown in this valley and he said, “Wayne, your old 32 Special is a good gun and I’d like you to know that I still believe them as a good gun, but,” he says, “Frankly

this country is a lot of open country. I suggest that you buy a 300 Holland & Holland Magnum Rifle and you'll never again have to purchase a long-range anything."

Well, I so admired Grant Chandler, and some others, that I purchased this gun and for the first time in my life I was up, equal or better than most of my hunting companions as far as long-range rifles and uh, God, as you know, John I've got horns, cougars, bears, elk hides, elk horns...even sold a set of deer horns, this house, for one thousand dollars, because it was a non typical buck and I couldn't believe some one would give me a thousand dollars when I had been selling horns from my garage for 35 cents a pound. And the man proved to me that he meant it. I called my boy at Baker, Oregon to find out if I should take it - - they were beautiful horns-- and Mark said "My gosh, Dad, take the money." Of course, our background you can imagine, I sold those horns for a thousand dollars. I still got them right here, a thousand dollar check, cancelled check in here. Uhh, Yes, I love to hunt.

JT How about your association with Walter Smutz ?

WD Ooh, huh. Huh, well, one of the finest things that happened to Wayne...while going to high school in La Grande, there was this country boy named Walter Smutz who lived on the foothill road. He loved the outdoors. He had land both mountain and flat ground to hunt pheasants, deer and elk up on the mountain. It's extremely interesting...he found out that I loved to hunt also and we became great friends and his love of hunting, shooting, not to mention both of us being active in our La Grande Pistol Club, La Grande Rifle Club, uh participating in shooting sports. Walt and I, I can only say we killed so many deer and elk over a great period of time and it was such fun and we looked so much forward to deer and elk huntin' that uuh, there's no words to explain it. Walter once told me before he passed away, unfortunately, that we (John Turner, Wayne Drummond) lived in the best of the last, where the United States is concerned. (laughter).

JT You mentioned the La Grande Pistol Club, you belonged and Walter belonged, Vernon Carpenter,

WD Yes, yeah...there was other guys...yeah.

JT Can you tell a little bit about when we competed once a week and where we shot.

WD Well, yes, John. On the rifles, we fortunately here in La Grande, had a rifle range, not too far out of town, 7 or 8 miles, 9 miles, and uh, it was a good range and we all participated out there. That we were interested in shooting in competition for turkey shoots, for hams uhh, for just good comradeship to...to...some of the guys going to National Meets, clear back in the Midwest, not me, John, but uuh, pistol club, here again, with uh, with a place, fortunately we were able to have a basement in downtown La Grande located in, I think it was the First National Bank.

JT Eagles.

WD Eagles. Pardon me, you're right John. The Eagles allowed us to use their facilities in a basement where we could, in competition and fun, shoot our pistols from 22 up to larger calibers if we so desired, and uuh, it was great comradeship. Everybody liked in this group of people, and there was quite a few of us. They loved to become and were proficient with shooting the pistol of various calibers and just a, I think we all certainly able to take care. Someone ask us if we knew how to shoot a pistol. We sure as hell did and not only to mention, not only, some of us had. ..uhh, concealed pistol permits from practically 1946 on, many of your friends and my friends.

And, we were adequate with these pistols and with the rifles and it was just fun. But some embarrassing things happened. I... uhhh, my friends, John Turner, Vernon Carpenter, Merton Taylor, various ones of us who did a lot of things, including pistol hunting, deer hunting, and so forth, one of the things that happened in one of our local restaurants. My friend Walter Smutz had a large single action Colt in his overcoat. It was loose in a pocket in the coat. At that time, four of us came into a little local restaurant. For some reason, when Walter took off his coat, the pistol clattered to the floor, scooted across the floor and stopped.

People looked down on the floor, looked at the pistol, looked back at Walter and Vernon Carpenter was trying to shove himself underneath a table so he wouldn't be seen. He was too embarrassed. And Walter casually got up, walked over, picked up the pistol, shoved it back in his coat and we went on to do our ordering for food.

Vernon never did get over this. Uhhh.. another time, Walter Smutz, companion and friend that he was, one day we were riding horses. Having a wonderful time, we weren't hunting. We were just up in the mountains helping his uncle get cows. But we were dirty, dusty, had horrible lookin' old cowboy hats on, dust falling off our coats, dust on our levis. We walked into the Green Parrot Grill.

JT That was in the Foley Hotel Building?

WD Foley Hotel Building...(laughter) You're right John. Anyway, at that time, here in our town we had the Air Force Cadets were attending college at our local college.

JT That was during the War.

WD During the War it was.

JT World War 2

WD World War 2, sir. And... uhhh... funny thing about it was, in the case of Walter and Wayne, we simply wanted anything to drink and iced tea would have been fine. We went in to sit on the little stools at this Green Parrot Grill and sitting down on the stool, left and right of us was these Air Force...

End of Side one, Tape Two

Side Two, tape two.

WD They set down on the stools. Walter had a single action Colt in a holster. I didn't have one in a holster, but he did. And,uhh, it was easy to see. And a big cartridge belt. Anyway, Frank Rohan, for unknown reasons, come walking into the Green Parrot Grill and he come up to our backsides exposed and he slapped both of us very hard on the back with his hands and the dust flew, the dirt fell off us. He said, "Goddam it, cowboys, how're you doing? It's about time we started doing somethin' in this town to make it interesting." The cadets got up and left the Green Parrot Grill and was heard to say by one, by Walter, that "let's get outta here...these goddam drunken cowboys are gonna' hurt somebody." And they left. (Laughter) Had Rohan not slapped us on the back, they probably in spite of the fact that we were dirty and filthy in Cowboy hats, but that done it. They had lots of....

JT Another time with a little incident happened with Frank Rohan up at Morgan Lake. Can you give us a little story of what happened that day?

WD Oh, John, I'm sorry. I don't recall that... uhh I know that Frank and I and John and everybody went to Morgan Lake. I got pictures of all of us in a Model T Ford.

JT That was later. The one that I'm talking about.

WD Go ahead, please.

JT The time that Frank Rohan was camped up there and somebody accidentally...or... a bullet skipped off the lake and shot a mustard jar or....

WD Well, now (Laughter) Yes, John, now that you bring that up. Yes, Frank was camped at Morgan Lake. It was one of our rather favorite close-by places to duck hunt, goose hunt and fish. And somehow or another, and I honestly, don't recall, John, maybe you can help me, uhhh, they got to shooting 22 rifles across Morgan Lake to other people in the cottonwood trees. They weren't shooting at the people but they were skipping bullets off the lake....

JT Well, they were trying to raise the ducks off the lake,

WD The object was...

JT They didn't realize what was happening...

WD Nicely said, by John. There was a raft of ducks on the lake and we could not get them into shooting range of our shotguns, where they would get up off the water, come around, and allowing us maybe, to get a shot at the ducks. And I was told just the other day by Ellery Thielen, it is a wonder that we didn't shoot somebody. (Laughter)

JT Well, I had a shotgun...

WD I know. John had a good shotgun.

JT It wouldn't carry that far.

WD John had a good shotgun, I remember that. I think I had my 20 gauge single shot at that time.

JT I bought mine with the money we made at Pacific Fruit Express Company...ing cars.

WD Very good. Wasn't it a model 12 pump Winchester, excellent gun ?

JT I still have it.

WD Yeah...I got one that you helped me help purchase in this very town from a manager of La Grande City...another Model 12, which I still have. Wonderful 12 gauge shotgun.

WD Let's see, John, Uuh, I was thinking here, I wrote some notes of ... they're mostly not particularly interesting. I, uh, was fortunate enough to have 2 children. I had a boy Mark, and a girl named Kathy and, uh, I have 3 great grandchildren and unfortunately my boy died from a very bad accident on a log-loader in which he lived 3 or 4 years and finally in the end the injuries from that horrible wreck caused Mark to pass away. Let's see here. I think that's about it. I loved, I loved to live here.

JT You didn't say much about our friend Merton and Richard Taylor.

WD Oh...I liked 'em really well. What did Betty put down here? Merton and Richard Taylor. I don't know how to say anything better than Richard and Merton Taylor lived out here in our valley and at that time, when we were going to, ...we were going to school and they were going to school and they had, during the Great War, 1942 to 1946, they had ability to get gasoline for their cars and they always had nice cars and they took John, Wayne, Walter, Vernon and many of our friends every place there was 'cause they had gasoline we didn't. They had money and we didn't. (Laughter) But they were so kind, so kind and good to us that I, uh, I must say they were great friends and still are, still live in this valley. I'm sure, John, I'm leaving a lot out here. Uh...

JT We went to school with a great bunch of fellows and girls in the class of 1946 and ...

WD I felt we did.

JT We meet for lunch at least once a month and, uh, we're very fortunate to have such good friends. After all these years.



WD Yes. Uh, after all these years and, uh, out of that group, a great group of people, uhhh, naturally some of them have passed away at this time, but uhhh, we didn't have any crooks. We didn't have anybody in bad trouble over breaking the law, truly breaking the law. We were just a group of people who grew up during World War 2 and were fortunate that people were as good, and are as good as they are. Lived in a great time. We did not have, when John and I was going to high school, the closest thing to drugs that I knew about at all, was they brought out a country/western song called Cocaine Blues... that's the closest I ever got to cocaine. (Laughter). We didn't have that as a problem in our society. Yes, we had liquor, but somehow or another liquor didn't seem to play as great a role, generally speaking, as they now make it out to be in our society. And that's all I'm going to say about it. That's the way I feel about it. Uh...yeah. We're just lucky. Like those pictures show.

JT Well, you liked to live in La Grande.

WD Loved to live in La Grande. I don't know of any place, John, when I come into this valley from Pendleton, Oregon, Spokane, Washington or comin' out of Baker, this way on US 30 or I84, now, I don't know of a prettier place, the way the mountains ring the flat, large flat valley, it's just a beautiful place. I remember a comment my boy made, when he got out of... He was in the National Guard for 7 years and he come out of Fort Sill, Oklahoma, landed in an airplane at Pendleton, Oregon. Got off the plane, we were all glad to see Mark, he was glad to see us. I said "Well, what do you think, what do you think about maybe living in another part of the United States, now, Mark, that you've been around in the manner you have?" He says "I don't ever want to go further south (laughter) than Baker, further north than Pendleton and further east than Enterprise. That's it for me."

Well, that's kind of the way I have felt about living here. When I got out of the army, San Luis Obispo, I come north to San Francisco, I come up to Bend, Oregon. Every mile north I felt better and finally I come into this valley and here was going to be my home, and it still is.

JT When we were kids, we could go up Deal Canyon. It was probably owned, but people let us. We could walk across to Morgan Lake....

WD It was wonderful.

JT But today, everything is posted. We understand, in some ways, why they had to be that way, but it's sad that the younger generation will never know the freedom that we did.

WD John, that's well said. Uh, going up Deal Canyon, here right at our west end of our city of La Grande and going up this mountain road and walking, most of the time we were walking, not driving in cars, and finally coming to Morgan Lake in a nice long hike, where we could fish for trout, perch, whatever and we did it often. It wasn't just, uh, just

once a year. We had the freedom to go on land that is now privately owned with a lot of restrictions, not to mention the government has closed down many of the old trails and roads right out of our town. It closed down to people and it's true now you're much more restricted. My father once told me, "Some day Wayne, this place that you call a national forest, you'll be so restricted you won't even be able to walk in it." And I'm sorry to say that's fast approaching that. There's a fee for camping, there's a fee for everything you do that's outside of your town.

JT     We used to just get in a car, go up and put up our tent along the Grande Ronde River.

WD     Oh, God, Yes!

JT     Today, you can't stay there...only in certain places, Like you say there's a fee.

WD     There's a fee. And John, on the great Grande Ronde River I'm, glad you mentioned that. We had many older friends, John and I, that loved to fish and fly fish and they could roll right out of our town of La Grande, go any part of the Grande Ronde River and catch trout. And they could go a long ways up the Grande Ronde River and catch trout and at that time, if you, if you had a fishing license or was legal, we'll call it, you could catch 20 trout and bring 'em home for your day of fishing. Now, if you could find a fish and with our recent salmon rehabilitation, we have a situation...they don't stock the stream, they don't stock Catherine Creek, These are little creeks that John and I used to go fishing in. Now if you could, 5 fish is your limit. Even Wallowa Lake, you can only catch 5 trout. For your legal limit. It's changed.

JT     When you and I were kids, there were pheasants all over the valley.

WD     Oh, my God!

JT     And brush along the Grande Ronde River and now the Grande Ronde River's disappeared in many places. And there isn't the pheasants..

WD     And there's no cover. And there's no brush. And the game commission at one time used to raise wild birds, close to Hot Lake and now, several years ago they decided we didn't need a pheasant farm in this valley; there was no cover for pheasants, no use to try and promote them and, there is no pheasants. It's changed entirely. Yeah. There are, even at that, there are still some places that I can still pursue the elk and the deer. But it's not as easy as it used to be. Every place there's a little road I used to travel on, they have a sign saying 'No Vehicles beyond this sign'. And when you're old it's hard to walk, miles and then if you did kill an animal, how do you get it out? They've changed the complexion of hunting and fishing. I still love it, but they have changed it.

JT     Well, one of the funniest things happened at our last class reunion when Jim Bennett said he almost got run from an elk. Down on Washington between Fourth and

Depot Streets. And Betty come out by an elk, and here was a six point bull elk right there on the street in La Grande.

WD And fortunately, a bunch of the class were able later and at that time, to get a glimpse of this large bull elk ! Very unusual, John, to say the least. And John Turner who lives right next to me, finds, as I do, and uh, we happen to have a good part of land, where our houses are located and we have the deer on both John's property and Wayne's property, and this year the bucks were stripping off the bark of my Quaking Aspen and pussy willow bushes and I was somewhat disgusted...(laughter). So yes, yes, we still have lots of game in this country, in this town. We have mule deer and white tail and, as John mentioned earlier to me, "Wayne, we even have cougars that come down into our land". (Laughter) This is true, although I personally haven't seen a cougar here in town.

JT Well, there's something that we have now that neither one of us probably have ever hunted, have you? Turkeys ?

WD Turkeys. Interesting, John, that you bring turkeys up. I had a friend say just the other day...he's the same age as John and Wayne. He is over 70. He said, "I'm not gonna' shoot one of those ugly, scraggly, turkeys. I'm not gonna go hunt them, Wayne." I said "Well, according to all of our outdoor magazines, we should be hopped up, buy a special shotgun, camouflage clothes and go out there and shoot a turkey." He said "not me". But I guess, as John was mentioning, we have a good population of turkeys in this area outside of our town, down towards Elgin and out toward Ladd Canyon. But I, myself, have not partaken in that...I like to hunt blue and rough grouse. Maybe I'm too old to change my ways. (Laughter)

JT You have a camper and a little boat that you carry on your trailer.

WD Yep. Still do.

JT Where are some of the places you like to go fishing ?

WD Oh, yes, fishing. Certainly that has been cut down considerably, once again as we've mentioned here, outdoors. But, but, I even...even still go up to Morgan Lake, a short ways out of town, two or three miles, put the boat in the water, with no electric motor, no outboard and row and, and fish. On occasion, Morgan Lake is just two miles from town. But I also, in the past, we had a great lake just outside of Baker, called Mason Dam or Phillips Reservoir, and for years John and I used to go over there and catch trout, and it was wonderful fishing. The fish were often 13 or 14 or bigger inches long. That was one of my favorite places, John. That has been ruined by, by people putting trash fish in it and the trash fish ruining the habitat for trout. And I do wish the game commission would correct that. However, I do take my little boat up to Grand Ronde Lake, Anthony Lakes. Again with no motors. Row, still fish or troll by using the oars.

JT You go to Pilcher and Wolf Creek...they're both in Union County.

WD Yes, and I do. One of my favorite places is Pilcher, here in our county. Thief Valley Dam, I have. Oh, I got out of... You won't believe the fish...they won't fit in that sink there. Wonderful times with a simple 12 foot boat, simple 3 horse-power engine and oars. Yes, and I, of course, went to Wallowa Lake, further away, but I still went there. I haven't done as good as my friend John, who has gone oftentimes to the Snake River to fish and I haven't done that. Many of my friends do that and maybe I should get on down there.

JT Well, it isn't the distance you go, it's just about getting out of town and the fun you have. In our own country.

WD Oh ,John, you're so right on that ... that subject. I was just noticing here, I had written this note here, back to our previous conversation CTC. Felix Cavallo, my chief dispatcher, came to this train dispatcher's office and worked the first CTC, which was from La Grande to Huntington and then, of course, up over the mountain. And uh, he was a student of Pendleton High School, I didn't know that. And him and Johnny Fehr started here on train orders and then into CTC, which is a picture there...

JT Then he went into the service and then came back after the war.

WD That's correct. This is correct. You knew that, Very good. Felix was very helpful for Wayne in train dispatching. And in fact, he and Ben Johnson and old Jim McLaughlin. There is a picture of him right here, I guess. But there is one of him. But...Phyllis McLaughlin, a classmate of ours, was another chief dispatcher. They're all extremely good people.

JT Felix's wife was an operator and you have a picture in Rails and Derails here with your Dad and her standing at the counter at...

WD The Bowman Hotel in Pendleton, Oregon.

JT: At the counter of the Bowman Hotel in Pendleton, Oregon...

WD In Pendleton, Oregon. Oh, it certainly was.

JT Which is part of the Union Pacific from Reith to Huntington

WD Her name was Katie Gunn. She later became Katie Cavallo. There's Johnny Ferris, that big tall guy. Anyway, uh....

JT What a great bunch of people to work with.

WD Well, I had ...another thing we failed to mention, John, the immense size and powerful steam engines that historically ran through La Grande and around La Grande. That when you stood on the depot, a huge building, that's still at La Grande, on a brick

sidewalk, large brick sidewalk, when one of those big steam engines come by, the building and the cement and the bricks, all felt it ! It was great, this is great!

JT Kind of like 'Poetry in Motion', when the drivers would start.....

WD And I'd like to mention, John, one time while learning to be a train dispatcher, I had to learn where the sidings were and how you approached them. Whether it was on a hill or on flat ground, and they called them, they called each individual train dispatcher had to take what they called a Road Trip to get familiar with what you were working with, not just what was on your CTC board, but the grade of the hill, how steep it was so forth, so forth. But the interesting part---one day an old engineer named Ed Ebel, worked right out of La Grande here, his home country was over in the Huntington area. We got on a fast #12 passenger train, it went out of La Grande at 4 PM every day going east towards Huntington and Boise, and he says "What are you doing up here in the cab, kid ?" He was in an 800 class large, beautiful passenger engine. I said, "I was supposed to take a road trip with you, here Ed." He says " Well, you're gonna' get one".

And before we got to Hot Lake, Oregon from La Grande on a huge speedometer, John, it was about this big, we were doin' 102 miles an hour. And he put his hand down on my shoulder and he says," How do you like that, kid?" Christ, I couldn't believe we were rollin' like that ! But I knew that we couldn't outrun John and Wayne and his friends. We get into our best cars of our parents to go 80 miles an hour to see if we could keep up with the streamliner or another passenger trains and before we even got out, half way across the valley they ran away and left us. Buicks, Oldsmobiles, Cadillacs, Fords, (laughter) they looked like that, man!

JT Did you have to take a Rule Car exam like the road men ?

WD Oh, yes. Our examination as a train dispatcher with the exception of the air brakes system, you gotta be fair here, all of the operating rules, we had to be, supposedly, we had to be better if anything than the engineer or conductor. Because each engineer and each conductor when we were train orders, we had to read legible, hand written train orders.... where to be, what time, so forth, so forth. And we had to know that that was right, John. And if this train order dispatcher put out an order that says "Run extra from La Grande to Telocaset, for example, and for some reason we forgot another train had authority to run to Crooks between Telocaset and La Grande, we'd have a head on collision. They were called "lap orders" And if you had a lap order, you pert' near always killed somebody, not to mention, the destruction of the trains and the fact that you lost your job immediately. (Laughter)

JT Now with the train men, they had to have job insurance. Is that the same thing with the dispatchers ?

WD No...they did, as John said, they had a wonderful, strong operating union, that protected their men. And insurance, as John just put it, we did not have that. In fact, well, if you made a mistake as a train dispatcher, just, it was over.....and that was part of

the stress, John. The train dispatcher went through; he knew if he made a mistake, that it was the end of his job. Not to mention...people getting hurt, you know, or killed. I had, god, occasions, where I had a, backing up a work train and I told the man on the head end of the work train that it was OK to back it to Telocaset on the siding. They were spreading gravel and it was OK to use the siding only and not get into the signal system where in fact it would change the position of the signal or light, and a man named Charles Daffer lost a leg, simply because, and he was a brakeman, but I give him authority to back up. Daffer wasn't ready and when the train started to move, he fell off the end gondola...took off a leg. Had lots of terrible incidents of railroad wrecks in the town of Pendleton, striking cars, trucks, uh. Oftentimes listening to the engineers say to me, "Wayne, this guy just drove right up on the tracks. We were blowin' the whistle...it's a straight-away, he, he just drove up on the track anyway."

JT Well, that's the only time that you can blow a whistle in Pendleton, when it's an emergency.

WD (Laughter) John's right (Can I get you a Coke or anything?) A lot of things in train dispatching. We had a coal car, a heavily loaded coal car at the town of Huron. It was there for the section foreman. He used the coal in the winter to heat his place of living. For unknown reasons on a given day, I was on as a train dispatcher, working daylight shift and I noticed suddenly there was an occupancy showing that there was something between Huron and a town called Duncan. I called the chief dispatcher...it was Felix. I said, "There's something wrong here, Felix. We got a train out here but it's not a train." He said, "Maybe it's one of those trackmen that laid a steel bar across it." I said, "Yeah, that's right." All of a sudden loudly on the phone, there was a section foreman. He says, "Wayne, is this Wayne? Is this Felix? Who is this?" I says, "Well, this is Wayne, CWD." He says, "CWD (that was our initials as train dispatchers, we had FHC for Cavalo for example). But anyway, he says "I've got a coal car...it's loose and it's going downhill towards Gibbon." Duncan. I says, 'Well, if there's nobody on it...is that right?' He says, 'You got any trains comin'?' I said, "No". As luck would have it, I didn't have anything coming out of Pendleton towards what we called Duncan. And I said, "It's just runnin' free..." And he said "Yeah, it'll derail, eventually ..it'll get high enough speed that it'll derail." I said, "Well, I don't know about that, but I'll take your word for it. But, what would be the chance of getting ahold of the section man at Gibbon and have him take the switch in hand-control and line it into a siding and into a Y and it could tip over and not hurt nobody." We got ahold of, a pure miracle, got ahold of the section foreman down there at Gibbon and he took the switch in hand control. I didn't have any trains. Had I have had a train and a man had taken a hand control, without permission all the signals go red everyplace. But he had permission from me and the goddam coal car, half loaded, it turned out,(I didn't know), it went in there, went into the siding and into the Y and tipped over. Never hurt a soul.

JT Well, did somebody release the brake or...

WD The only thing that the section foreman at Huron ...He said the brake was set, "I can't explain it, Wayne, all the rules were abided by, but that thing took off and there was

nobody around it. Maybe...I"...he took the responsibility. "Maybe I didn't have that brake set tight enough". I asked him if he had any blocks on it, you know, things that you would ask. He said "No, I didn't." Anyway, there was an occasion...

End of Tape

Additional fact from Wife, Betty: Wayne and Betty have been married 52 years.