

Fitzgerald Edited, take 2

### **Born at Hot Lake**

ES: For the record would you give me your complete name?

HF: I go by Helen Davis Fitzgerald and I was born at Hot Lake in 1920, which was an official post office and place of register.

ES: Why were you born at Hot Lake?

HF: Hot Lake was a very well known hospital and sanitarium. My folks lived in Union then, they hadn't moved to the ranch yet. Although a lot of babies were born at home at that time, Mother just thought the best care was there. My brothers and one of my sisters was born at Hot Lake as well. My other sister didn't quite come in time, she was born the year Hot Lake burned.

### **Relatives – Millers, et al**

ES: Can you tell me a little about your extended family since the Millers have been in Union County for some time and seem to be connected to a lot of people?

HF: Oh boy! The brothers Conrad and Simon Miller were early settlers in this valley. They married sisters, one of whom was Julia Danum (nee Galloway). My grandmother was the daughter of Julia Danum Simon. She is the first one that I remember very well. Her youngest brother, Ed Miller was the father of a lot of Millers. There are still Millers over there from that side of the family. The Davis's and the Millers are connected because Melissa, who had married Conrad, had one daughter and she married my Granddad Davis's brother. You can see this is going to get all mixed up, but you can visualize it on the family tree.

The Bensons were tied in because they were also a very early family. Sam Benson married my Granddad Hall's sister Louine. Grandad's sister, Virginia Benson, married my Granddad Davis's brother, Charles. So in those early, early families there are lots of connections. *[Eugene: I am not sure that I have this correctly or not; it doesn't make sense to me as it is written here.]*

HF: I guess the first legal suit in the Grand Ronde valley was Conrad Miller trying to prove his claim at Telocaset. When you go back that far, there's just a handful of people; all of them came in on the Oregon Trail except my Granddad Hall who came from the gold fields in California where his father had gone.

## **Grandmother's Stories**

ES: As you were growing up were you hearing a lot of stories about their earlier lives?

HF: My grandmother was great at telling stories, she enjoyed that a lot. My parents didn't get down to their story telling until they were old and decided to do their book.

ES: What was the nature of some of the stories you heard? Was it about daily life or was it about traveling?

HF: My grandmother came from a pioneer family. She told me when she was a child how they all had jobs to do. At night her father always read to them as they were knitting socks, or making candles, necessary things for their life. That always impressed me. She told stories about raising sheep in those early days, how the bears came to get their sheep; how old Joe Brown planned to corral the sheep and fix himself a place to sleep, or to wait up on top for the bear to come.

She told how her Uncle Conrad had come as a young man to this country from Switzerland. He went clear back to Switzerland, got her father who was sixteen at the time and brought him to this country. She told the story like a mother would, about how the brother's mother stood at the gate waving as long as she could. We would cry a little because it was such a sad story, to think that the mother never saw her two boys again. It made you proud of the strength these people had, to do what they had to do.

## **House in Union**

ES: When you were a young child where exactly were you living?

HF: I lived in Union just a block off Main Street.

ES: What do you remember about the inside of the house you lived in?

HF: It was a small house. I remember there was an old refrigerator that the iceman filled every week. There was also a cooler built into the side of a hallway that had screen doors on the inside where Mother kept the milk.

ES: That house had been built maybe 1870, 1880 thereabouts?

HF: I really don't know. It was a small house, and it's still standing. My dad remodeled it a lot in later years. I only know the dates like when this house was built. I think the book tells most of those facts. He's got pictures of all the houses. Our house wasn't picturesque at all.

## **First Years in School**

ES: Did you go to the North Union School?

HF: I went to school my first year at the old North School, the last year the building was ever used. It was first grade and my teacher was Elizabeth Vogle. She was a very wonderful person. After graduating from high school, we went on to the college (EOU). Elizabeth Vogle drove back and forth with us taking graduate work at the college. She taught all those years and was still getting her education. She was a great lady.

ES: Would you describe a little bit about how school was conducted in those early grades.

HF: After the old North School was closed, I went to the old South School; it is gone now as well. My parents had gone there. It was a very old school built way back in the 1800's. It had three stories. Mr. Conner was the principal, and he stood outside and rang his little bell when it was time to come in. All the kids lined up by grades and marched in at the same time. I can still hear the feet going up those stairs.

ES: I noticed that the Union High School still has one entrance for boys and one for girls. Was that common in all the schools you went to? I don't think I've seen another school building that has that feature.

HF: It didn't apply to us, it applied to my parents. When they went there the school was brand new. The boys marched in one door and the girls in the other. By the time I got there we didn't do that anymore. I guess they were thinking that they needed to be careful, that they did not get the children mixed up. What a foolish idea! People still notice that and comment about it.

ES: Do you remember Union elementary and secondary schools involved strict discipline, hard study and generally intense application all the time?

HF: Well, we certainly had a lot of respect for the teachers, but we also had great fun. I remember some teachers who were outstanding. Dorothy Busick, who just died, was my third grade school teacher and I can still remember doing so many things in her class. She made it fun. I didn't know what school was supposed to be I'm sure, but we did learn a lot.

### **Art Class**

HF: I remember we had art projects that I especially enjoyed. I think I got my lifelong interest in art really from my first grade teacher. She had certain famous artists' prints of their work. Each child got a little print to study. I can still remember some of the exact paintings she showed us. She would take us to the Women's Club to perform; we had to stand up and show the mothers what we had learned. I've been interested in art my whole life and I know that's where it came from.

ES: What was she trying to have you learn about the paintings? Biographical information?

HF: She wanted to tell us about the famous artists like Milay. I remember that Milay was one of my favorites. She showed us a big picture of the Horse Fair by Rosebaughn. I don't remember the details, but I did get a lot of ideas that have stayed with me a long time.

ES: I suppose these paintings were displayed in the schoolroom for a while so you could look at them anytime.

HF: Yes, they were a nice size. I remember that we didn't have the kind of supplies they have now. We used to weave designs out of cut paper. In the first grade we had little colored sticks, maybe bigger than a toothpick, which were something to work with. I don't remember anything about color crayons.

We had nice rocky play ground to run on and skin our knees. When we were at South School, our entertainment consisted of a jump rope, a ball and a bat. Every room had an old wood stove with a top that lifted up. The janitors must have brought the four-foot wood up from the huge pile stacked high behind the school. We weren't supposed to play on that woodpile or around it. It was huge. That is how they heated the schools.

ES: Who was in charge of keeping the stove going?

HF: I suppose the teachers had to do it. It would be started for them when they got there; it seems like the lid would come up and the wood would go in whenever it was necessary.

ES: Did that keep the rooms generally warm and comfortable?

HF: I never remember being cold. I loved school.

## **High School**

ES: In order to prepare for college what courses were you required to take in high school?

HF: I don't know that they talked too much about college in the high school. You had to take four years of English. I took two years of science, and all the math I could get -- three years of math because I liked it. I took things like typing. You could choose either music or drama. Mostly it was pretty much set out for you. I didn't ever take Home Ec. I thought I knew it all being the oldest kid in the family but of course I didn't. We had history and geography which were required I think. I really enjoyed school. It was great experience.

## **College**

ES: In high school did you have your mind set on college?

HF: Yes, because my parents got their education cut short at two years of college when the First World War came along. My grandmother had been to college at University of

Oregon for one year. Can you even imagine how early that was?! I think there was only one or two buildings at that time. She lived in some professor's home while she was there. I always thought that that's what I was going to do. But, I only made it a year and then I got married. It was the Depression times. I should have gone on, but that's as far as I got in college. My brother was two years behind me and he went until World War II put an end to his education. My sisters did a little better since they were younger and the times were better.

### **The Hall Ranch**

ES: During that period you must have been aware of the Hall Ranch?

HF: Oh yes! My granddad took my brother and I when we were little kids there in an old Model-T. The Model-T didn't even have a top on it.

ES: Tell me as much as you can remember about that place.

HF: We just loved it! But my earliest story is about my grandmother. In the early days, she would take her whole family up there, live in a tent and cook for the men when they were cutting hay.

ES: She was married to George Francis Hall?

HF: Yes. He was the kind of granddad every kid should have. He was strict and he expected a lot, but there was always a horse to ride. The highway didn't go through where it does now. It was just a little old windy road through the ranch, the road was condemned and taken later.

### **Milking Cows in the Summer at Sunnybrook**

There was a great big meadow where Granddad had his dairy cattle in the summer. It was a very crude sort of set up. There was kind of a log shed, long and narrow, where they would bring the cows in to milk. They actually had some kind of a mechanical milking device, but they stripped them out by hand afterwards. The milk was separated and taken across this little road and down behind the old log house to a spring house, a natural spring, and put in the cold spring water until it could be picked up and taken to the creamery.

ES: Would this have been a creamery in Union or La Grande?

HF: Union. I think they picked it up in those days. That was just for the summer time. The dairy was at Sunnybrook the rest of the year. Granddad took us a lot to that ranch. The best part of all was when you had to bring the cattle down from the Hall Ranch to Sunnybrook. You rode horses and drove the cows down and then you would take them back in the spring. That was the big joy of my brother's and my young life.

ES: I was up the Hall Ranch the other day and there's a building and an outhouse in the meadow that looks as though it might be a hundred years old. Do you remember it?

HF: Yes, of course I do. People still live there in that log house.

ES: Were they caretakers of the ranch?

HF: Yes, they were people that ran it for Granddad. I don't remember who anymore. The log house is practically a shambles now, isn't it?

ES: It's falling down. Did your grandfather build it or have it built?

HF: I don't know about that part. If you go back to the time when my mother was a child, she was born in 1896 and there were five children in the family. My grandmother had to take the children up there for long periods of time in the summer. I don't know when the log house would have been built, or the old log barn that's already gone.

ES: Did the Hall Ranch seem like an exciting place to be then?

HF: Oh yes! We loved it.

ES: Did you tramp around most of it or stay in the meadow?

HF: No, Granddad would have different areas that he'd go check on and we would go with him because we weren't very old. I wasn't too old but I can still remember when they started to log up there. I wasn't allowed to run there, I had to stay out of the way. That was some of the very first logging.

ES: Had most of it been fenced to keep the cattle contained?

HF: Oh yes, it was all fenced, probably a lot of rail fences.

ES: The animals would just come and drink out of the creeks?

HF: Yes, a creek ran through it. The land ran clear over to the creek where it's all divided up now. There weren't any fences along the road. I have a picture of the old house a-way back then. I can remember the fences being split rail, because there were some of them that we could jump with our horses.

He dug all the ditches. The road going out there was so narrow in those days when the early logging was done. Here was Granddad in this old Model-T. When you came to a corner, you would honk the horn because you couldn't see around it. If you met a logging truck you might have to back up a long ways to get around it.

## **Other Family Ranches**

ES: Did your family have several ranches?

HF: Sunnybrook Ranch is up on Little Creek.

ES: Were there two or three other ranches in the family?

HF: Yes. My grandmother said they were land poor, but when I was a kid they still had a mile or so on this side of Union. She had inherited the land from her father that was divided up. Some of the Millers still live on parts of that land. My mother's cousin Rodney does, and her cousin Odin who is no longer living, his son has a nice place where he's raised his family. The land runs between Union and Foothill Road near Hot Lake. There was a lot of land out there.

ES: Did you get around to those places, enough to see what was going on?

## **Working on the ranch - haystacking**

HF: We did whatever worked out with my granddad's plans. For instance, we'd be there at Sunnybrook when they cultivated, seeded, and when they put the hay up. They had big silos they filled full of fodder, corn or something. We were supposed to stay out of those, of course.

I can remember him stacking the hay. He would have a horse you would ride or lead out and he would pull the cable that lifted the hayfork up. It was all so manual.

ES: Would you describe a little more the haystackers? I've seen pictures of them, but I've never heard anyone describe how they worked.

HF: Well, I don't know how well I can describe it. The exciting thing for us was the big heavy workhorse that you led or rode. There's something that goes way up this way. And then they could swing this fork after they pulled the hay up, they'd swing it over however high it needed to be and put it on top. [*Help, Eugene.*]

ES: Was there a rope that would've let it down on a pulley arrangement?

HF: It was a pulley thing. Then you'd take the horse back and the rake would go down.

ES: I have read that those forks were pretty large and pretty dangerous, probably at least put your eye out.

HF: They were! Oh, you could be impaled on it! There might be a picture of haying in the book. That was a great memory from the Sunnybrook farm.

ES: Were you a little afraid of them?

HF: I wasn't allowed to get very close. You know how girls were supposed to be a little bit more protected.

### **Ranch Animals**

HF: My brother would get to do the horse part and I'd have to watch that from afar. It's like when they were branding the cattle. You could stand and watch and hold your distance which we did a lot of time. When it was time to castrate the calves I couldn't stay. Granddad did not think that was suitable.

ES: Not appropriate for little girls to watch?

HF: No. No.

ES: What do you remember about sounds around those places? Did you hear animal sounds all the time?

HF: No, they were so spread out. Every night the dairy cattle sort of knew when it was time to come into the barn. He had both dairy and beef cattle. Sometimes you might hear a dog nipping at their heels a little if they didn't get in fast enough.

ES: Did you hear crickets a lot?

HF: I don't remember that.

ES: Chickens?

HF: They didn't have chickens. There were pigs and they could be pretty noisy. They had a big hog house that you would walk in the front, and there were the separate pens for the animals. You would have an old sow and a bunch of little pigs, maybe there'd be space for another. They would each have a door to go outside. You would go down in between the pens to feed and water. Boy, that was one place you watched yourself! Because there is nothing meaner than a sow that has little pigs. We got our warnings, that is for sure. Those sounds were kind of indescribable. I remember the creek, which was always so pleasant, and riding up the hills behind the ranch.

ES: What smells stand out in your memory?

HF: You stayed away from the pig pens. They were quite a distance away from the house and the other barns. I don't remember the barnyard being fancy. I can't remember anything that was bothersome. It wasn't like the feed yards that I've seen in later years, just concentrated feed and lots of cattle in an area. There wasn't anything like that. It was just really pleasant to be there.

### **Spring on the Ranch**



ES: Could you describe spring at one of these ranches?

HF: In spring the thing I remember most of all is the little calves, that was the best part of spring. If everything went right they would be born in March or April. If it were earlier, say in January, the cows and calves were going to have a hard time. One of the farmer's jobs was to be watchful so if assistance was needed, the farmer would take care of the problem.

### **Needing a Vet**

ES: Did you ever call the vet?

HF: They talked about pulling calves and I remember more about my dad's generation than granddad's. My brother grew up to be a rancher. By then you were checking the cattle in your pickup to see if they were all right or if there was anything they needed. I can only remember the veterinarian if an animal was injured. Granddad had his own barn in Union. There would be a house on a block and they would have a barn out behind where he always kept his milk cow. If he had an injured horse they would bring it down there where he could take care of it. The veterinarian I remember was Dr. Paddock when I was a kid. It was pretty scary sometimes what horses would do to themselves. Mostly cuts. You know a horse was usually destroyed if it broke a leg.

### **Snake and Mosquitoes**

ES: Were there snakes?

HF: I suppose there were some, but I didn't ever see them. I don't remember any problems about snakes when I was a kid at all

ES: How about mosquitoes, were they a bother in the summertime?

HF: You know, I don't remember that they were.

ES: Anything about this environment that was unpleasant?

### **Isolation/Radio/Depression Days**

HF: No, maybe the cold in the winter. We always walked to school; there was no such thing as a school bus. I only remember two families that had a car to bring their children to school.

I think during the hard times, and they really were hard, we didn't know the difference because my parents were wonderful and we had so much fun. We had so much love and so much family. I had another Granddad that had the ranch up on the Powder River. Occasionally I would get to go up there. Our life was just good, rich and full.

ES: During your growing up years I assume there was a radio available. Were you aware of what was going on in other parts of the world? Did you ever want to be somewhere else than being in Union County?

HF: Yes, we had a radio. Probably the thing I remember most about what was going on in our own country -- we were on the main highway -- was seeing the people, looking miserable coming through from the Dust Bowl. My dad had a little service station in town right on the main street. You were very aware as kids, of the hardships of all those people.

ES: Were you able to talk to them?

HF: No, I didn't ever talk to anybody.

ES: You could just tell from looking at them?

HF: Yes, and from the things that the folks told us. We watched them too. They would be destitute, even the hitchhikers, people just trying to go someplace. That left a big impression on me. We did have our radio and the news. In my very young childhood what I thought about the world came from the things that Dad brought home from France and Italy in World War I. We heard lots about how impressed he had been with the things he'd seen.

### **Dad Loved Architecture**

My dad's big interest was architecture; he told us a lot about the buildings that he'd seen. If I ever longed to go see anything, that might have been where it would have come from.

ES: You don't recall having any poignant feeling about wishing you were somewhere else?

HF: No. I've been here my whole life. It's been fun to go visit other places, but I think it's a wonderful place to live.

### **The Union Hotel**

ES: Was the Union Hotel built shortly after you were born?

HF: Yes it was.

ES: Do you remember the first time you went in it?

HF: No, not the first time, but I do remember going there many times. When I was a little kid I didn't get hurt much, but I did visit a doctor's office in the basement a few times. I can't remember any other reasons to go to the Hotel until I was a teenager. They had a very

lovely dining room, much smaller than what they have now. We did go over for dinner once in a while on a very special occasion.

ES: Was it a formal kind of dinner with white tablecloths?

HF: Yes.

ES: Waiters with white gloves?

HF: No, not that formal! Yes, they had white tablecloths. It was a nice dining room. When we were in high school, I remember a parlor and the lady who ran it. The kids were welcome to go there and visit, but it had one measly little old pool table, not a standard size. It was a nice place where the kids could go just for a little fun.

I remember some of our teachers from high school rented rooms at the hotel and we would visit them sometimes. Then on the third floor there were some little apartments. I had an aunt and uncle that lived there when they were first married and I had a friend that lived there when we were in high school. So it was just kind of part of the community. I think my dad said that my great-uncle, Ed Miller, had some part in getting the hotel started.

### **Entertainment/Movies**

ES: What other sorts of entertainment did you find in Union?

HF: We made our own entertainment. Besides riding horses, swimming in the creek, roller-skating, and sledding in the winter, there was also a tennis court right behind the hotel. It was free, and in the '30s that was pretty special. Lots of people played tennis then and when the grown-ups weren't playing the kids got to play.

ES: Was there a movie house and Saturday matinees?

HF: Yes, there was.

### **Going to La Grande**

HF: I remember silent movies at first and that there was actually something that played music. It wasn't fancy enough to have an organ like the big city of La Grande. We got to go to the movies occasionally.

ES: Now you mentioned the big city of La Grande. Is that the way La Grande seemed from the Union perspective?

HF: Oh yes, coming to La Grande was quite an experience.

ES: What did kids say about their desire to go to La Grande?

HF: You mean as teenage kids? As a little kid I got to go only once in a while.

ES: If you were little kid, say about ten years old, could you go to La Grande? Did you want to get ice cream or candy or go to a movie?

HF: I don't remember going to La Grande when I was little for anything except to a doctor for my mother. It was nice to get ice cream. I can remember that Mom and Dad would go to a shoeshine parlor and get the shoes shined. It was pretty conservative whatever it was that we did. When we were teenagers if you went to La Grande to a movie or a ballgame, that was pretty good stuff.

ES: When you were in you teenage years did you hear that La Grande was a place where there was prostitution, taverns and all those sorts of things?

HF: Yes, yes, I did.

ES: What were the rumors?

HF: Oh, there were a lot of upstairs places where a lot went on. You knew it was a place to stay away from. You didn't talk about things that freely then. It was like "Did you hear about..." that sort of thing.

ES: That's as far as your curiosity went?

HF: Well, I didn't ever go take a look for myself. You came to La Grande for school events and things like that.

ES: Was there some sense in which La Grande was Sin City compared to Union?

### **Bootleggers**

HF: Yes, there weren't any prostitutes that we knew of in Union. But there were bootleggers. You would whisper around about that. I can remember two houses were clearly considered to be owned by bootleggers. One of them was just two doors up the street from our house. One funny story was somebody (you didn't lock your doors or anything in those days), burst into our house in the middle of the night and thought they were at the bootleggers. My daddy was the kind that didn't ever take a drink his whole life. So it was a big joke on Mertin Davis' house, his house mistaken for bootlegger's. They probably already had had a little and then they didn't know where they were. So, that was about as wild as it got.

ES: So I guess from your perspective at that time moral standards for most people were fairly high?

## **Saturday Night Dances**

HF: They were pretty good. Of course there was a lot of pretending, a lot of things went on that you pretended didn't happen. I guess the biggest entertainment aside from what I said earlier, was dancing. Every Saturday night there was a dance, kids and the adults all went to the same dance. It was great fun! If you could get to La Grande and go to a dance there, that was great. Occasionally we got to go to Baker. Wow! That was a big social thing for teenagers long ago.

## **Vaudeville**

ES: Did you attend any vaudeville in La Grande, or plays, touring plays or even operas?

HF: I don't remember going to anything like that.

ES: Where you aware that such things were happening?

HF: Yes, my mother was a good musician and so was her sister. The hard times just didn't allow you to go and do things that we would do now. However, by the time my sisters were ten and thirteen years, Mom took them to the opera in San Francisco. It was not that she didn't know about those things, it was during the Depression years and we just got along. I'm sure they did a lot more many years later.

## **Music In the Family Home**

ES: Tell me a little about music in Union, who were the teachers and did you have recitals?

HF: Yes, we had piano, and I went to La Grande for was piano lessons. When Mother was young they did operettas. I still have a program someplace where she sang the lead in "The Pirates of Penzance". Her family was very interested in music and they made their own music. There were all kinds of musical instruments laying around when I was a kid. Mother was really a vocalist and her sister was a pianist. There was a French horn, too. Daddy played the trombone and there was a guitar, mandolin and a ukulele. I'm not musical enough to even remember the names of some of the instruments.

In mother's family they all were musical and they played together at home. They also put on these plays in Union, some of them were probably high school productions. There was a city band. My mother made me go play with them. She made me! I had a saxophone, and we had to go upstairs in this old Oddfellows hall. I used to go up and practice with all the men who played and they were at least old enough to be my dad or granddad. She tried so hard to make me a musician, but I just didn't have it. I think all the kids in our family got music lessons.

## **Carnegie Library**

ES: What about the library in Union?

HF: That was another very favorite thing to do. I can hardly believe it's still a Carnegie library! Yes, I loved it and it was about two blocks from my house. I spent lots of time there.

ES: Do you remember anything about the librarians?

HF: Yes, I remember Mrs. Baird because she was the librarian all the time I was growing up; she was just a lovely lady.

ES: Was she the school of thought that you go to the library and you don't talk, you don't make noise?

HF: Well, I can't remember that we made any noise. The younger children had a table with lots of little chairs. You could go in and look for your books. I don't think we would have thought of disrupting anything. The kids' side was on one side and the adults were on the other side. I'm sure it wasn't too adequate.

I remember when we were in high school, my mom had more current books and reference books than they had in the library. We had several sets of encyclopedias and all kinds of other books because she was just great on books. So we didn't do much research at the library when I was older, but when I was younger, it was special spot.

ES: It wasn't open all the time, was it?

HF: It would seem like it was open now and then. We could go when we wanted to, but I couldn't say for sure about that. The librarian was a very nice lady who lived across the street from us, about two blocks down from the library. I don't remember if she had any help.

### **OSU Research extension in Union**

ES: Were you aware when you were growing up, of the OSU Agricultural Research Station?

HF: Yes, of course!

ES: What was your impression of what they were doing there?

HF: I thought they were doing work to improve farming or cattle raising, research of that kind. That would be about all I would have known.

ES: Do you have any direct knowledge of what was happening?

HF: I don't know that I had any direct knowledge. I remember being taken down there a number of times.

ES: Were there tours for school kids?

HF: No, not that sort of thing. When I was in high school a couple of us used to go down and type. I don't even remember what we typed, but we helped their secretary down there in that funny, little old building.

### **Hall Ranch Sold to OSU**

ES: Were you aware in 1940 when the Hall ranch was purchased by the OSU Extension?

HF: It was after I was married.

ES: Was that the year you were in college?

HF: Right along in there, 1938 and '9.

ES: What was your understanding why your grandfather might want to sell it or need to sell it?

HF: I really didn't understand. I didn't like it very much, but I'm sure that he did need to sell it. He was an old man. He died in 1943. He'd had a stroke that made it hard for him to get around in the last few years of his life. It didn't really lay him in bed or anything. He was eighty-seven when he died and I suppose he just needed the money. There was enough for my grandmother to be taken care of. She lived a lot longer.

ES: It was a sad event for you that it was sold?

HF: Yes, it was.

ES: Did you feel you were losing something associated with your earlier childhood.

HF: Oh yes, definitely. You just think those things are always going to be there when you're really young. It seemed so big. You just grew up with it and so it was a part of your life. The Sunnybrook ranch was only three miles away and Catherine Creek was about eleven, I think.

### **Ice Caves**

ES: I wanted to ask you about some ice caves on the way up to the Hall ranch along Catherine Creek. Tell me what you know about them.

HF: Oh yes! As I remember, it was just really rugged getting down into them. Somebody had thrown a few big old timbers in so you could get down into the caves. By the time I was probably twelve, or thirteen, fourteen, some adults had blocked off some of the channels that went back down in off of the main cave. I also remember a bunch of little Girl Scouts that were camped across the river from the caves. We went up to check the caves out and we found a tunnel big enough to crawl in. I guess we had flashlights.

Several girls, three or four of us, crawled back in on our hands and knees. As we got in there, it was full of bats! You never heard so many squealing girls. There wasn't even room to turn around in. We had to just back up, pushing each other out.

ES: What is your understanding of their geological formation?

HF: I don't really have any idea about that.

ES: How much ice is there and how long does it stay there each year?

HF: I didn't think there was very much ice, it was probably back in the areas the adults had blocked off when I was a kid.

ES: You didn't actually see any ice?

HF: No, it was just chilly. I supposed I might have seen a little. It's not like going into the Oregon Caves. It was very primitive even getting in. It was a long time ago, probably seventy years since I've been in those ice caves.

ES: I suppose at least among kids they were a pretty compelling attraction?

HF: Oh yes! You had to go at least once. But after I went on to the bat cave I didn't have to go back anymore.

ES: Do you think that they are accessible now for visitors?

HF: I haven't heard anybody talk about them for years.

### **Loyalty to the Town**

ES: Anything else you remember about those growing up years in Union that seemed noteworthy?

HF: Union was really a good neighborhood. I grew up with my folks being very positive; you owed loyalty to your own town. You shouldn't shop out of town for anything you could buy at home because they knew how hard it was to provide those services there. I suppose they had been raised on that premise too. You knew everybody and we just took everything for granted. There was a lot of loyalty. Everybody would help you if you needed it. You didn't have to talk about it. It's just a good place.

ES: When you visit Union now or drive through, do you think the texture of life there has changed in several ways?

HF: Oh, I'm sure it has. So many people live there and work somewhere else. Transportation makes a lot of difference. I know that the basic goodness hasn't changed a lot. I spent a lot of time taking care of my parents in their later years, my mother's been gone ten years



and my dad twelve. They never had to leave their own home. There was always somebody to care about them. My friend Miskle, she lives there at 104 by herself and if it wasn't a loving, caring community, that might not happen. So it's a good place.