

PHYLLIS & ALBERT HOPKINS

Union County residents for 40 years

AN ORAL HISTORY



Interview in May, 2002
at their home in Summerville OR

Interviewer: Eugene Smith

UNION COUNTY, OREGON HISTORY PROJECT

2004

(revised from 2002)

UNION COUNTY, OREGON HISTORY PROJECT
An Affiliate of the Oregon Historical Society

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In collaboration with Eastern Oregon University
Cove Improvement Club History Committee
Elgin Museum & Historical Society
Union Museum Society

Purposes

To record & publish oral histories of long-time Union County residents
&

To create a community encyclopedia

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Preface

Much of the history of a place is stored in the memories of people who have lived there. Their stories may be told to family members, but, unless someone makes a special effort to record these stories, they become lost to future generations.

Each of the historical societies in Union County, Oregon has begun to make that effort. Tape recordings exist in several locations, some of them transcribed in written form, others not. A more ambitious and thorough effort seemed necessary so that more of the oral history of Union County could be captured and preserved.

The Union County, Oregon History Project, begun in 2002, is making that more ambitious effort. One of its principal purposes is to collect as many oral histories of older Union County residents as possible and to make them available in both taped and written form. This edited transcript is part of the series of oral histories to be produced by that project.

About the Interviews and This Edited Version

The interview with Phyllis and Albert Hopkins took place at their home near Summerville, located in the Grande Ronde Valley. Phyllis at age 90 and Albert, 94, had various physical complaints, including Albert's hearing impairment, but were alert mentally and eager to recall earlier experiences in Union, Baker, and Malheur Counties.

The interviewer was Eugene Smith, director of the Union County, Oregon History Project. He completed a one-hour interview on May 29, 2002.

Heather Pilling's full transcription (available for research purposes) presents the literal contents of both interviews. The edited version presented here differs from the literal transcription in the following characteristics;

- reorganization of content
- deletion of some extraneous comments
- omission of false sentence starts and other normal speech fillers that detract from readability
- normalization of pronunciation and grammar in conformity with standards of written English.

PH designates Phyllis Hopkins' words, *AH* Albert Hopkins', and *I* the interviewer's.

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Investing in Union County Property

- I: When did you acquire property in Union County?
- PH: We were married in the 1930s.
- AH: We've been married seventy years.
- I: So you've had this property for almost seventy years. That's very good. At the time you bought it, were you thinking of farming it sometime?
- AH: Investment. Investment. Property was cheap and we bought for investment.
- PH: The first eighty acres of this property was for sale. It was very cheap in those days. So we come out here and we've worked for it and bought it in about 1935. [speaking to AH] Didn't we pay about \$1,000 for the first eighty acres?
- AH: Paid \$1,000 for eighty acres here. [speaking to interviewer] Can you imagine that?



Albert (right) & his brother, George
Photo courtesy of Phyllis & Albert Hopkins

AH: After we bought more adjoining acreage, we had enough acreage here to give each one of our boys forty acres: Gerald, who is a school superintendent, and Doran, who is retired Air Force colonel. They have both built nice homes on the property, so we have our boys here some of the time.

AH: I started at Eastern Oregon Normal School the first summer it was open-- 1930.

PH: After we taught school in other places, we married a few years later and came to Imbler, where he was superintendent of the school.

Attending the New Eastern Oregon Normal School

- I: I wish you could tell me from what you can remember how the normal school looked and how it felt to be a student there in the summertime.



Phyllis at high school
graduation in 1930
Photo courtesy of Phyllis & Albert Hopkins

PH: It was just one building--all the steps in front. The first time I came to La Grande, I had to find a boarding place.

I: No dormitories?

PH: No dormitories or anything. There was a family who lived almost at the foot of the stairs there on 8th Street. So I started boarding there. I started to school with \$75, but that didn't last very long when I'd paid the tuition and a few things like that.

I: What classes were you taking?

PH: Dr. Zabel's English literature class, science with Elmo Stevenson, and one other class.

I: At that time were you thinking of teaching?

PH: Yes. When I got out of high school, there weren't too many options for girls. It was either nursing or teaching. I didn't think it was going to be teaching, so I went into a hospital in Baker City OR and told them I wanted to sign up to go into nursing probation. She looked at me and she said, "Go home and grow up." I couldn't be a nurse, so I said, "OK, go to La Grande." After about three weeks, I was going to quit.

I: Why did you think that?

PH: The tests they gave. Before I took my first test, I thought, "I didn't know this stuff. I'm not smart enough."

I: Was it a lot harder than high school had been?

PH: Yes. I thought, "I'm not smart enough to be here." I had no use for going back there. I was so discouraged I went home and told Dad I was going to quit. But I couldn't do it. He said, "Go back and try it. Give it another try." So I went back and it was all right.

I: Can you remember in any detail about the teaching methods or about other students at that time?

AH: Let me help answer that, Phyllis.

PH: OK, go ahead.

AH: The teachers at that time came out of Pendleton High School. President Inlow had been superintendent at Pendleton, and he brought a number of teachers over with him. So most of the faculty were secondary teachers, but they were good. He picked some good people. That was Inlow himself. I served as a janitor to him for part of the time I was there in order to stay in school. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, things were rough. No money was available.

I: Tell me about Inlow himself--the sort of man he was.

AH: He was pretty well accepted by the public. He had been superintendent of schools at Imbler before Pendleton, and he was a select person from eastern Oregon. His personality was good. People liked him, and he got along with people, though there were hard feelings among some of the superintendents; several of them wanted the job.

I: Did teachers mostly lecture at that time or was there much discussion?

PH: Not much. Mostly it was lecture.

AH: The rooms were full when the college opened. Students were waiting for it to open up. When it opened up, they crowded in; the rooms were full. One of the better liked professors--although he was a poor professor--was Bob Quinn, the athletic coach. He was accepted because of his ability to take just a handful of boys and put out winning teams. I participated in athletics--catcher on the baseball team. We played all the teams from here to the coast.

I: If you finished up the summer, that didn't get you a teaching certificate, so when did you next go back to college to work on a degree?

PH: I went back in the fall.

I: Did you go straight through, then, until you had your certificate?

PH: No. I lacked one course out of two years. Once that I got that one and then got my certificate, I started to teach.

I: Did the program at that time include any student teaching?

PH: Yes, it did.

I: Where did you do that?

PH: In a fourth grade in the lab school.

I: How well prepared did you feel then to go out and teach on your own?

Beginnings of Teaching Careers

PH: I didn't really think too much about. My first school was out of Baker; I had only three students there in a little one-room school--two in third grade and one in second--so it was no big challenge. I had a lot of fun with them; we did everything.

PH: Have you heard of Elmo Stevenson?

I: Yes.

AH: He was one of the professors of science, who was pursuing his doctorate at that time. I think when he came here he only had a bachelor's degree. He was one of the better known and well-accepted professors. He later became president at Southern Oregon College. Everyone thought a lot of him.

I: [speaking to AH] While Phyllis was working on her two-year certificate, what were you doing?



Stewart School, near Baker City OR,
where Phyllis first taught
Photo courtesy of Phyllis & Albert Hopkins

PH: That one year while I was in school you were teaching in Nyssa [Idaho].

AH: Yes, teaching in Nyssa.

I: How did you get your teaching certificate sooner than she did?

AH: I had been at the University of Oklahoma for a year and a summer, so I transferred some of that credit, but very little of it fitted into teaching. It was straight academics.

I: Where did you start teaching?

AH: I started teaching at Oregon Trail School. That's in Malheur County, Oregon. It was a two-teacher school.

I: And then you came back to Eastern Oregon for more study, did you?

AH: Yes.



Albert standing at entrance to Oregon Trail School
Photo courtesy of Phyllis & Albert Hopkins

I: Was that to get your bachelor's degree?

AH: I took my two-year diploma from Southern Oregon College at Ashland, but they didn't have student-teaching facilities available, so Inlow made the arrangement for me to go to Western Oregon College at Monmouth during the summer. I did my student teaching there.

Teaching Together at Imbler School

I: Now tell me about coming to Imbler.

AH: When I received my degree, we went to Imbler.

I: Did you come to Imbler as a teacher or as the superintendent?

AH: I came as a teacher, and about a year and a half later, I was promoted to the school superintendent.

I: Was there only one school in Imbler then?

AH: Only one for both elementary and secondary.



Albert with some of the male students at Oregon Trail School
Photo courtesy of Phyllis & Albert Hopkins

I: Where was the building?

PH: That old one is still there--the red brick building.

I: Was that fairly new when you got there?

PH: I don't think so. Not too new, no.

AH: I don't think so.

I: Can you give me any details about what it was like to teach in that building?

AH: In that building? No problems.

PH: The high school was upstairs, the grade school downstairs.

I: About how many students all together?

AH: I don't remember.

PH: I taught seventh and eighth grade there; I probably had sixteen or seventeen students.

I: In the school as a whole, would there have been a hundred students maybe?

PH: I think so.

I: For both of you, what was good about teaching in that kind of a school?

AH: Probably the closeness to students and parents. We had no problems of any kind other than that times were hard; money was scarce.

PH: Also, I think in that time there was a lot more freedom when you'd teach.

I: You could make up your own curriculum, you mean?

PH: Of course, you had to pick from some things from the state, but testing and doing everything else was all up to you. You did your own tests and you checked them out and saw how students were doing.



Phyllis & Albert at the time of their wedding in 1932
Photo courtesy of Phyllis & Albert Hopkins



Imbler Elementary & High School
(buildings still in use in 2003)
Photo courtesy of John Turner & Richard Hermens

State-wide Eighth Grade Examinations

- I: At that time weren't there state exams, though, in the eighth grade?
- AH: Eighth grade examinations: I have the distinction of never having a student flunk, and I'm awfully proud of that. I carried that on for several years while other rural schools were losing students. They just couldn't pass the examination.
- I: Many students did leave school at the end of eighth grade at that time, didn't they?
- PH: A lot of them did.
- AH: I was allowing students to stay after four o'clock if they wanted to study for the exams. I didn't keep them; if they wanted to come from 4:00 to about 4:45, I worked with them for about a month before the examinations.
- I: Did you have copies of old exams to use?
- AH: Yes, I had those.
- PH: One thing about those exams: they're such a sameness. So if they had any ideas of past exams, why, there's such a sameness about them.
- I: Where were the state exams scored?
- AH: We sent them to the state school superintendent.
- PH: It's been a long time ago since that was abolished.

Students' Discipline

- I: Do you mean to tell me there weren't discipline problems?
- AH: We had no discipline problems.
- I: Why was that, do you think?
- AH: I didn't have any discipline problems in high school when I taught in high school.
- I: Why were the kids more willing to behave properly?
- AH: I think I kept them busy.
- PH: But I think too that the generation was different.
- AH: Yes. Kids, I think, were quieter in those days.



Phyllis's & Albert's sons, Doran (left) & Gerald, born during the time their parents taught in Imbler
Photo courtesy of Phyllis & Albert Hopkins

Teaching and a Superintendency in Union

PH: They're different today than the students that came at that time.

I: I'm just trying to find out what you think was different about them then.

PH: I think it's a lot of it parental control and parental guidance; the parents said, "You will do this or that."

AH: They'd get the little paddling, too, in those days. That helped a little bit. In about eight years there at Oregon Trail, I didn't paddle too many kids. I don't suppose it was over two or three kids that I ever paddled in school. I'd always get the big ones. I'd get those first two. That had an effect.

I: What did you use for paddling them?

AH: A wooden paddle, flat, carved--on the buttocks.

I: How many times? Did that depend on the crime?

AH: Half a dozen times, I guess. It depended on the crime.

I: You're fairly tall, so I imagine you intimidated them a little bit, didn't you?

AH: Possibly so. I worked with the kids. They'd go off for recess, and I was out there with them all the time. I never left them alone. I didn't have any problems. And no problems in high school either.

PH: But I think parental influence was a lot of it in those days; you'd go to school and behave yourself. I never did paddle anyone.

I: Where did you go after you left Imbler?

PH: Union.

AH: Yes, that's right. We went to Union [about fifteen miles from Imbler].

I: Why did you accept a job in Union?

PH: Better pay.

I: Was it a larger district?

AH: It was a pretty good-sized school system at that time.

PH: Yes, and better money.

AH: We took it over during a school strike. It was a bad situation. It was nasty--the big school strike at Imbler and at Union.

I: The teachers were striking?

AH: No, the students were striking. They were just raising hell over there.

I: Why? What was the problem?

AH: There was a breakdown between the superintendent and the head coach. They got to squabbling, and it began to increase and increase until the kids began taking it up. They were throwing eggs and everything else at the superintendent's office, the school, and then his residence. The policemen were always on the other side of town

when that happened; they'd leave and go on the other side of town. It was a nasty situation.

I: Do you remember what the superintendent had done that angered the coach?

AH: I don't know that. They were really having a bad time.

I: How long had this strike gone on?

AH: I suppose almost a full year.

I: Were the students refusing to come to class?

AH: I guess so. That was part of it anyway.

I: What were you expected to do?

AH: Tackle them.

PH: Get them back in school.

I: Was the coach still there?

AH: He was fired. The superintendent was fired, too. In March they came through Imbler and asked me if I was interested in coming over. We'd had a pretty good reputation at Imbler; we had no problems over there at all. So they invited me over. I looked the situation over and told them yes, I'd take it if I could get released by the board at Imbler. The board released me, so I went over, and they had no more problems.

PH: He got rid of some of the trouble makers. What was it? Three boys?

AH: Yes. I was in touch with the state school superintendent, Rex Putnam. He and I were pretty good friends; I don't know why we clicked, but we were about the same age, and we got along fine. I went to Salem and talked to him. The war was on, and they were taking men at that time. I asked Putnam if I could release those boys to the army and then get their diplomas. He thought about it a while and finally



Union High School, where Albert was Principal and Superintendent of Schools

- said, "Well, I think that'd be the best method." The five or six boys that were causing the trouble were all eligible for the military draft. So I called them in and talked to them for quite a long time. I told them if they wanted to go into service, we'd give them their diplomas. They took me up on it. More than two of them were about ready to flunk, and one or two of them were almost kicked out of school, but I got them back in. So they were glad to have the opportunity.
- I: What effects do you remember of the approaching war on the students there? Were they aware or thinking about it?
- AH: Most of the boys wanted to go. They were ready to go.
- I: Do you recall any ways in which the war, as it went on in the early 1940s, affected students at the school? Did they talk about it, or did the teachers help them understand what the purposes of the war were?
- AH: Oh, yes. We tried to instill that into the program.
- I: How did they do that?
- AH: I think it was mostly by just talking to them and calling them in.
- I: There must have been newspaper stories about it. Would teachers bring copies of the newspaper in and have them read?
- AH: Oh, yes.
- I: Phyllis, did you start teaching in Union at the same time that he became superintendent?
- PH: Yes.
- I: What were you teaching then?
- PH: First grade--always the first grade if I could get first grade.
- I: Why did you prefer first grade? You said you had taught seventh at Imbler. You liked the younger kids better?
- PH: I liked first grade because they always loved their teacher. No, they're more fun to work with, and you actually can see everything that they're doing. When I had taught something, I knew exactly whether they had learned it; I knew whether I was succeeding or not. That's the only grade I really liked.
- I: Were the teaching conditions in any way better in Union?
- PH: They were good; it was a nice school there.
- I: How was the budget for materials?
- PH: Not a lot, but the districts didn't think about furnishing materials. Students had to furnish their own tablets, pencils, books, binder books, and everything then.
- I: Suppose parents couldn't afford to buy the books they needed. Did you have any way of helping them?
- PH: No, we never did.

I: Did some students go without books or materials?

PH: No.

AH: Books were furnished weren't they, Phyllis?

PH: Not right at first. Later on.

AH: It was a long time ago.

PH: Yes.

I: It sounds as though managing the budget as superintendent wasn't very complicated. Is that right?

AH: I don't think it was too complicated.

I: You had teacher salaries and maintenance on the buildings. You didn't have bus expense, did you?

AH: No.

I: But you didn't have to buy textbooks or paper or copying machine material or anything like that, did you?

AH: No.

I: It sounds like a very simple budget.

AH: It was simple all right.

I: What did your job as superintendent consist of, primarily?

AH: Most of it was handling the high school. I was principal of the high school and the superintendent, and I had an excellent principal at the grade school.

I: Was the high school in the same building it is in now?

AH: Same building.

PH: It hasn't changed much.

I: Was there a lot of after-school responsibility that you had as superintendent?

AH: Yes. I was expected to participate in community activities a lot, and I didn't mind doing that.

PH: Sports. Sports. In sports.

AH: Sports. I was interested in sports.

PH: You organized all the games.

AH: I'd lettered in college, and I was interested in it, so I kept things going. My policy was to have something for every kid in high school to participate in if he wanted to, and we made that possible. We weren't stranded for money; we had the money to do the things that we needed to do. The board was very kind to me during that period of time.

I: Did you dress in a suit and a tie every day?

AH: Yes.

PH: He sure did.

AH: Always dressed well. I had the reputation of dressing well both at the college and the classes.

I: Was the town of Union a more flourishing business town then than it is now?

PH: I think so. That highway made such a difference. In earlier times, the road went right through Union. Its rerouting changed Union completely--changed all the businesses and everything else was out.

I: That was the main road between Baker and the Grande Ronde Valley, wasn't it?

PH: Yes.

I: What main businesses do you recall?

AH: The sawmill and the granaries, where they made flour. Of course, they don't have those anymore.

PH: When the mill was running, there was quite an employment factor.

I: Do you remember when that closed?

PH: I think when we left.

Leaving Union for Higher Education

I: Why did you decide to leave Union?

AH: It was about to kill me over there--too much work. They expected a lot. I needed another administrator, but they couldn't afford it.

PH: And he wanted to get his degree.

AH: I wanted my doctorate, so we took time off.

I: Why did you want an advanced degree? Did you have in mind that you would be working at a college or university?

AH: I'd begun to think about it.

PH: We went to Eugene [University of Oregon] to go to school in 1952 and then we went to Billings to '54 [where Albert was a professor and later dean of the College of Education, Montana State University and where Phyllis continued teaching].

Return to Grande Ronde Valley, Retirement, and Old Age

I: And then you decided to come back from Montana because you had the land and a house here?

PH: It was just a little old house.

AH: We liked the climate here. We liked the country. We enjoyed it very much.

PH: We lived here in the valley and this was always home anyway--not Montana, even though we were there for a long number of years. This was home in the valley.

I: Besides the climate, what do you like about the valley?

AH: At that time, I was a hunter and a fisherman--spent a lot of time out hunting and fishing.

PH: I think this is one of the prettiest places.

AH: Phyllis and I used to like to go out and camp--get away from everybody and everything.

PH: I've always thought this was a beautiful, beautiful valley.

I: Do you like it better in this part of the valley because there aren't as many people and not as much activity?

I: Are there any problems with living here?

PH: No, I don't think so.

I: Do you have a well?

AH: Yes, two wells there. One of them for this house and for the house where our son lives.

I: Do you have a septic system?

AH: Yes. Ours seems to work great.

I: And are there animals that come close by?

PH: Deer and wild turkeys.

AH: We've had bobcats around here and bear up there occasionally, after the fruit trees.

PH: We don't see them very much, but they're around.

AH: We had one bobcat that kept taking our chickens for a while until we finally took care of him. We used to go after huckleberries a lot when we were able to get around and all through the mountain.

I: I imagine you have mushrooms close by here.

AH: Yes. Mushrooms are on the place--morels. I haven't been out and looked

for them for years. They probably should be here about now, Phyllis.

PH: I guess so.

AH: You have to get out and pick them, though, but neither one of us can walk too far anymore. That's kind of rough on us.

PH: I don't do too well mushroom hunting, though I used to.

AH: It's terrible to get old.

I: Is there any best thing about being old?

AH: I don't think there's any best.

I: You're both very alert mentally. I should think that there would be a lot of good things to remember.

AH: Balmy, just a little bit balmy. I suppose at ninety-four, though, it should be that way, shouldn't it?



Phyllis & Albert at their
golden wedding anniversary
Photo courtesy of Phyllis & Albert Hopkins

I: I think you're remarkably alert at age ninety-four. But a loss of hearing and other physical deterioration: is that the problem?

AH: That is a problem. We used to like to go places. We traveled a lot overseas. We've been in twenty-nine or thirty countries abroad, and we loved every bit of it. But we can't do it anymore, and it bothers us.

PH: You want to go and you can't go.

AH: All through the area where they're fighting now [i.e., Afghanistan], we've been all through that country a couple times.

I: Why would you want to go back?

AH: Oh, there are so many interesting things that we have never seen before that we want to get to see. People are different and oh, we loved to travel!

PH: Yes. We were very fortunate because there was a student that we'd had at college in Montana--a Korean girl. She said we should come to Korea and be with her family. We were very fortunate to go there and visit with the family. We really loved it.

AH: I was the foreign student advisor at the university. The government sent me to Thailand at one time for two years to upgrade the schools. They had selected four of us to make up a team, although we worked separately. That was interesting work. I enjoyed our overseas work.

Phyllis attracted a lot of attention because we were in an area where they'd

never seen a blond woman with blue eyes. She attracted a lot of attention--especially the men.

Phyllis's Book: *Dad Munn and Family; A Homesteader and Stage Driver of Baker County, Oregon*

I: [speaking to Phyllis] Tell me about why you started to write a book about your family [published in 1984].

PH: I think it was because of my father; he was so special to me.

AH: Yes, she had a wonderful father. I never knew her mother.

I: Has the book gone out to people other than members of the family?

PH: There were copies at the bookstores in La Grande and Baker City. I don't know how they sold; I assume they sold them.

I: Did you try to get copies in libraries?

PH: Yes, I gave quite a few to libraries.

I: How many copies did you have made?

PH: One thousand.

I: Do you still have some?

PH: Yes. They weren't that special or that good.

I: There's a lot of historical information there, so I think that they would be good for anyone who wants to know about Baker County and life on the farm. You included lots of detail.

[See excerpts in appendix.]

Appendix

Excerpts from
*Dad Munn and Family; A Homesteader and Stage Driver
of Baker County, Oregon*
by Phyllis Munn Hopkins
(Baker, Oregon: Baker Printing & Lithography 1984)

Phyllis taught at her first school for seventy-three dollars a month. She boarded for twenty-five dollars a month with a family that lived about two miles from the school. She also had to do the janitor work for the school. She had to clean, build the fires, and carry wood and water to the school. Since there was no water on the school grounds, every morning she had to fill a canteen full of water and carry it to school with her for the children to have drinking water and to wash their hands. Phyllis froze her feet walking to school that winter, and had to wear house shoes most of the year.

That fall Phyllis took Albert to Hereford for the weekend. Ralph and Elma were still living in the little house with one bedroom, but there was a cot in the living room where they made a bed for Albert. Now Elma had just finished a laundry and she had filled a galvanized tub with clothes to be ironed and pushed the tub under the cot. This was just a woven cot and Albert complained the next morning about having a ring around his backside from the tub.

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Albert, teasing as usual, said, "I'll bet you can't hit Phyllis with that truck." Loren let, go. Wham! Phyllis ducked just in time as the truck flew by her head and made a dent in the wall.

Early in December, Phyllis took Dad to Heilners in Baker and bought him a new blue suit for Christmas. He really looked nice in the suit and

he was very proud of it. He kept it for special occasions. He said he wanted to be buried in it. Phyllis inherited a bit of her mother's disposition as she liked to direct programs and to have children perform. She prepared a Christmas program with her three students. Since there were few parents and she needed an audience, she invited her family to come. Dad came with Bertha and her family. It was a varied program of songs, recitations and plays, and was about an hour and a half in length. Bertha said it was hard to believe that three small children could memorize so much.

In March Albert got Phyllis a job teaching school with him at Oregon Trail for the following school year, so that meant that the wedding could take place. Phyllis asked Albert about the time and date, and he was very agreeable. He said, "Just any time you say, and I will be there."

Phyllis's school was out the sixth of May so she thought that would be a good time to get married in the evening and then they would have the weekend together before Albert had to get back to his school.

Phyllis's wedding, like Esther's, was doomed to delay. Albert had a track meet that Friday and after the track meet he had to take all the boys home. By the time he drove to Baker in his old Model A Ford, it was pretty late at night. The wedding was to be at the home of C. H. "Red" May on Fourth Street in Baker and Phyllis had invited all her family including Mrs. Dearinger

and Elva. They all waited patiently for the groom. He arrived unprepared, no preacher, no license, nothing helped him to get everything in order. Five minutes to midnight the ceremony started and the "I do's" were said five minutes after twelve. Instead of being married on the 6th, as Phyllis had planned, it turned out they were married on May 7, 1932. Methodist minister Rev. Oscar G. Gibson performed the ceremony. Even though it was late at night, Red managed to get a long string of tin cans tied to the Model A. Phyllis and Albert stayed the rest of the night at the Baker Hotel, and the next morning went to La Grande.

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During the summer Albert and Phyllis ran out of money. Phyllis had a \$125 warrant that she had not been able to cash when her school was out. She thought that Dad could probably get it cashed for her so she sent it to him. Dad tried, but money was too tight. No one would cash the warrant. Phyllis and Albert didn't know how they were going to get back to Oregon Trail to start teaching. A groceryman in Monmouth had grown fond of Albert and Phyllis. He had a store in Salem, also. He told them to go to Salem and pick out some clothes and they could pay him later when they got some money. By a miracle, Albert found a five dollar bill in the lining of his coat. That was enough to buy gas to get home, so their worries were over.

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The first year that Phyllis and Albert were at Oregon Trail they put on a large Christmas program. After the program they had to clean up the school and they were very tired. Dad was without work and was living in the old Trimble house on Beaverdam, so Albert and Phyllis decided they would go and spend their vacation with him.

Dad was happy to have them. He filled a tick with straw and fixed them a bed upstairs. Albert was scared to death the house would catch on fire as the stove pipe went from the heating stove downstairs through the bedroom on the second floor and then on up through the roof. Dad had killed a pig and had fresh pork hanging outside in a shed. It was frozen and he would bring it in and slice off whatever they wanted to eat. This was a vacation Phyllis and Albert long cherished and remembered. They would eat, sleep and play the old phonograph. They stayed up late at night playing three handed pinochle. Before the week was over they had finished eating all of Dad's groceries and had to go and buy some more. Phyllis, Dad, and Albert got into the Model A coupe and headed for the Hereford store. The snow was very deep going from the Trimble place to the highway. This made about two miles of rough going, but the Model A was high enough to buck the snow. They all enjoyed the outing and restocked Dad's pantry. Phyllis and Albert hated to end the vacation and return to Oregon Trail.

In the spring, Phyllis and Albert were dissatisfied with boarding and asked the school board if they could build a small house on the school grounds with the understanding that the school district would buy the house when they left.

The school board agreed to this proposal and Phyllis and Albert built their first home in just a few days. The house which cost \$200 was twelve by twenty-four feet and had two rooms which consisted of a kitchen and a small bedroom. They were very happy to have a home of their own and to be independent.

.....

Phyllis and Albert continued to teach school at Oregon Trail until 1939 when they moved to

Imbler. During the 1937-38 school year Albert didn't teach, but instead drove to Caldwell, Idaho, daily to attend the College of Idaho where he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree.

.....

During the summers while they were teaching at Oregon Trail, Phyllis and Albert attended a number of summer sessions at Oregon State College. Albert also worked for the F. H. Hougue Company at McCall, Idaho, for a couple of summers. One summer Albert worked in the Safeway Store in Ontario, Oregon. They also liked to travel if they could get enough money.

Every fall during the time that Phyllis and Albert were teaching at Oregon Trail, Albert liked to go to the Dearinger Ranch on the Big Flat to hunt deer with Frank and Warren. This became an annual affair and this gave Phyllis a chance to see her folks as well. If there happened to be a dance at Hereford or Unity, this was an extra bonus for Phyllis.

On one hunting trip there was a big dance at Hereford and everyone on the Dearinger Ranch decided they would go to the dance. The dance had been in progress for some time and Albert decided to step outside of the hall. He hadn't been outside very long until a big fellow stepped up to him and

offered him a drink of whiskey. Albert said, "No, thank you. I don't drink." This was like waving a red flag. The fellow said, "When I offer anybody a drink, -they drink. By Gawd, you'll drink this whiskey or I will cram this bottle down your throat." This looked like trouble but Warren and Frank both saw what was going on and came to the rescue. They stepped/ between the two men and Warren said, "Albert is a guest at this dance and at our ranch. He is not a drinking

man. Now, back off " The fellow looked at the three men and obliged.

Education was always important to Phyllis. While teaching she continued to go to summer-sessions at some college. Eventually she earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Eastern Oregon State College in La Grande. Years later, she got her Master of Science degree from Eastern Montana College in Billings. She continued to go to school and later earned two years of education beyond, her Master's degree.

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Phyllis and Albert lived in Imbler from 1939 to 1946. Albert became Superintendent of the Imbler Schools. Phyllis also taught in the Imbler Schools, except for the years when the children were born. Doran was the New Year's Baby for Union County on January 1, 1941. Albert was at home in Imbler and did not know that he had a son until it was announced over the radio. Gerald Was born on December 6, 1943, the last of Dad's grandchildren. Both boys were born in St. Joseph's Hospital in La Grande and were baptized in the First Methodist Church in La Grande.

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After Gerald was born, Dad decided that he would come to Imbler for a visit. One day he showed up at the door very tired. Phyllis asked, "Dad, how did you get, here?"

"I walked from La Grande." "Why didn't you call? I would have come and picked you up." "I didn't want to bother you." He had walked twelve miles.

.....

While they were living in Imbler, Phyllis and

Albert bought eighty acres of timbered land six miles west of Imbler near Summerville. It had a two bedroom cabin on it. In 1946, Albert was contracted as Superintendent of the Union School District. That summer he planned to attend Oregon' State College. The house in Union that they had purchased was not yet ready so Phyllis decided to live in the cabin at Summerville. Dad came to spend the summer with Phyllis and the boys.

There was about an acre of land that had been logged and it had some very large stumps on it. Dad decided that he would clear that land during the summer. He needed a team of horses and some heavy log chains. Albert bought a team of horses, and Dad walked that team of horses from

the sale yard to the farm. It was about fifteen miles and Dad was now seventy-three years old. He worked with that team during the summer and cleared the land. It was remarkable that he could do such hard work.

There was a road through the middle of the place and Dad was trying to keep the gate closed. The creamery truck would often go through the place and they would always leave the gate open. Dad got tired of closing the gate after them. One day when they had left the gate open, Dad took his shovel and went out to wait until the truck came back. Dad, being his old fiesty self, said, "The next time you go through this gate, you close it or I will use this shovel on you." From that time on the gate was always closed.



Orin Lee Munn, Phyllis's father
1872-1947
Photo courtesy of Phyllis Hopkins

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