

Fredarica Johnson

7/9/02, T1, S1

FJ: ...so Fredarica Taal Johnson.
JT: And you were born when?
FJ: October the fourth 1910.
JT: And you've always lived around La Grande?
FJ: I would say so, John. And that's only gone three months.
JT: When you first started to school you started to school up...
FJ: At the ranch at private school. They had a teacher come in.
JT: And there were how many students?
FJ: There was Marjorie Tonget and Lester and Winnie and myself and Edith.
JT: Edith?
FJ: My sister.
JT: Your sister.
FJ: And they had to have four people...four party line on...had to have to many children in the school. So that's why they had this girl come in and stage a convent. __ kids at our house.
JT: And that's up on what they call the Starkey Road. The turn off from Hilgard.
FJ: That's 244 about.
JT: And you went how many years?
FJ: Then we went to school at Hilgard. The folks bought a little house there in Hilgard and we lived there.
JT: And what grade were you in when that...?
FJ: About second grade. Then we moved out to Uncle Garet's.
JT: It what year?
FJ: No, we moved...Grandma and Grandpa Taal there where the swimming...where the city servings are now here now. You know they used to have their house there.
JT: Which used to be the swimming pool Crystal Plunge.
FJ: Mm-hmm.
JT: And what grade were you in when you moved to town.
FJ: I was in the third grade there and then we went from there to Uncle Garet's. We went to Fruitdale school. And Hoffman was the teacher ____.
JT: Yes.
FJ: It was the teacher.
JT: At Garet's ranch was up Owsley Canyon?
FJ: Up there, but Charlotte's got it now. It was the last place you could see in the canyon then tore that house down and moved it up here in the Old Town someplace and put it back up.
JT: And what grade were you in when you moved from the Fruitdale school? Where did you go then?
FJ: Fruitdale. We come to Greenwood.
JT: To Greenwood.
FJ: And I graduated out of eighth grade graduatin' in school.

JT: And at time then you went up to high school at La Grande High School.
FJ: Mm-hmm. And I graduated, but I can't remember what year it was. Must've been around...I don't know. I was eighteen. I was born in '10. That's when I graduated up here at this high school.
JT: Did...that must...I'd have to look that up.
FJ: ___ 1910.
JT: Was there anything really significant that happened to you when you went to school that...fond memories? Or things that...?
FJ: The funniest thing that I could ever remember, John, that happened. ___. You know who...?
JT: Yes.
FJ: And Johnny Group and a boy by the name of Dale Charleston. Now this Dale Charleston mother and her grandma...no, excuse me...aunt and uncle lived right over here on the corner of Second and Jefferson. And they raised this kid. It come Round-Up time and it was no fair in being in school. And when noon come there's the train goin' out of here goin' to Pendleton and them boys was going to the Round-Up. And Mrs. Rhodes decided they weren't going. ___ took a hold of that old lady and shook her, pushed her out of the way and then kids, all three, went to the Round-Up. And I'll never...I'll never forget that. Every time I used to go to the store up there Les and I would laugh about it.
JT: They went on the...hitched a ride on the train?
FJ: They had their tickets.
JT: Oh, they had a ticket?
FJ: Yeah, they went to the Round-Up. Not gotten in it.
JT: It uh...did you have any particular friends while you were going to school?
FJ: At the grade schools we didn't talk because was too out of far ___ Uncle Garet's ___ we get new people. And then Marjorie, her folks lived here in town.
JT: Marjorie Carmen?
FJ: Yeah.
JT: Yes.
FJ: And her and Rossie was such good friends and I would go sometimes with her to Rossie's.
JT: Uh-huh. Yeah.
FJ: And then there's...
JT: Which is our house.
FJ: Yeah. And then there's another girl that was an awfully good friend of Marjorie and Rossie's. Her name was Gwenlyn Buchanan.
JT: Uh-huh.
FJ: Did you know...remember her?
JT: I've heard the name.
FJ: Like you go up Corner Inn there's nothin', you go up to this hospital there off of Fourth Street.
JT: Uh-huh.
FJ: She lived the third house on that side there on the end. Her name was Gwenlyn Buchanan.

JT: Yeah. It uh...then when you graduated from high school and got your diploma what were you going to do with your life?

FJ: I was workin' waitin' tables, doing everything.

JT: Now where? Where were you working?

FJ: ___ I've been rackin' my brains. Now let's see, what's there's now? Do you know where Graham's Drugstore was?

JT: Yes.

FJ: At first that little place on that side ___ by fault. I worked there. And they had an ice cream counter there and I worked in that. Then I was stayin' with my aunt in Elg', she lived out over here where Alice Barker used to be. The corner of Second.

JT: ___

FJ: And out to there where the recycle plant is gone, the one there where you take your cans and stuff.

JT: Right.

FJ: Right next to the railroad track then there was a big apple plant and it made cider and vinegar there. And I worked there.

JT: That was out where the old flour mill was.

FJ: Yeah. It's up the street on the corner.

JT: On Willow Street right across the railroad.

FJ: Yeah, right there on that corner was that vinegar factory and I worked there. Then by that time the Mt. Emily Lumber Company come in to Starkey and Lester and when he got acquainted with my husband.

JT: That was your brothers.

FJ: Yeah.

JT: Got acquainted with your husband.

FJ: And of course they kept comin' and they'd come down ___ and stay all night at the ___. They'd come on into town and come down to aunt in Elgin. We'd all go to the show. People and the dances. And that's where I met my husband. Then I left and went up to Pendleton and I was there three months and we got married and moved back to Mt. Emily.

JT: Up at Mt. Emily camp?

FJ: Mm-hmm.

JT: Uh-huh.

FJ: And that was in '34. September of '34 when I went to work there.

JT: And what did your husband do for Mt. Emily camp?

FJ: He was a truck mechanic...no, he was...I don't know how I'm supposed to say his job. There was a survey crew for all these roads and he was head chain man, they called him.

JT: Yeah. Usually a chain and rod where they're marking.

FJ: And mark trees.

JT: Uh-huh.

FJ: Then he was in the winter months, very hard times, had to shut down and they put him on a loader loadin' logs out of decks right there at the river camp where we lived back then. And they jerked him off the end of that train and he lost his leg.

JT: So he had an accident.

FJ: And then he was down here for six months in the hospital. And when, about a year later he was able to go to work. He was a...he went a mechanic in Starkey. And him and I run that river camp truck barn.

JT: Yeah. Now when he was injured he was told he would have a job for the rest of his life.

FJ: Yeah, which he did not have.

JT: When they sold the mill, August Stang sold the mill, that ended that.

FJ: Yeah, terminated.

JT: And he spent a lot of time going back and forth to Portland because of his leg being cut off so short.

FJ: We averaged about once a month, sometimes about...sometimes go a couple of month. But it was so short, John, that...and then he had to wear these special lamb's wool socks. And it was so short it was just almost too short to put them on it without, you know, having some ____. And it festered so. And we had to keep goin' down there and had to keep doin' __ get inside that socket.

JT: It must have been hard during those times because it was right after the Depression and... Now with Bruce Morehead up at camp was he a lot of help to the residents that lived there?

FJ: ____ he was...they was very, very nice to me because I worked at the cookhouse. But at the time that Oscar lost his leg it was the saddest mess I ever had. I'd only been out of Grande Ronde Hospital myself three days with a major surgery. And when they come there to get me at the river camp headquarters, that's where I lived at headquarters. Right across the track there was a little house where the Baptist church with a cookhouse and everything still in it, you know.

JT: Uh-huh.

FJ: We lived in that little house right there. And they came and told me that Oscar got hurt. And I went...Donald came and...

JT: Donald your brother.

FJ: And we just bought a brand new Ford from Perkins. I'll tell you things looked pretty beat ____.

JT: And Mr. Perkins was very good to you after that accident.

FJ: Yeah, yes.

JT: And told you not to worry about the payments.

FJ: Yes. And anyhow, they'd come over there and got me and I'll tell you, John, when I crawled in that caboose they had to take him from there to Beaver Creek bridge. You know where that is?

JT: Uh-huh. Yes.

FJ: To load him in there.

JT: On the Grande Ronde River.

FJ: And put him in that ambulance. I was so numb that I didn't...I couldn't even get in that ____ caboose. They just picked me up and put me in there. And then Oscar said, "When we get to the hospital, honey," he said, "Get the best doctors you can get." And he was bleedin' terribly.

JT: I imagine.

FJ: And it was Dr. Richardson and Dr. Branner that'd done all the work for six months. Then when we had to come here I was up ____ workin' and he was

workin'. And it was kind of ___ to have a slap in the face, you know. 'Cause we owned that little house up there, that was ours. Well, that was one thing that we swore had ___. Now I shouldn't tell this, John, this is you and I personally. Don't mention this.

JT: Well, we'll [tape interruption]

FJ: We paid six thousand five hundred dollars for this house and these two lots and then two lots back there.

JT: On Walnut Street.

FJ: Alder Street.

JT: What is...Alder?

FJ: I'm Walnut and that's Alder. And then...this is the dirtiest ___. I never seen such a dirty place in my life, but I thought that's the way it goes. Wesley and I even went and helped Oscar once and clean that one at the river camps so we could live there. I was in the hospital and they'd done that. So anyhow we's...the man that was helpin' Oscar move they went back to get another load and I got in and washed down this kitchen and cleaned the bathroom so we could, you know, use them. And sittin' here eatin' our supper and the phone rang. And it was Della Olderman, her pa's still up here, called and wanted to know if I'd come to work. And I said, "Gosh, we're not even settled." She said, "We need help badly." And Dr. Richardson was there and he said come on, that they needed help. So I went to work there and worked for five years. And Oscar went to work for Lynch.

JT: Lynch Motor Company.

FJ: Yeah. But, John, with his condition and bein' around the public it was no good. You know, if he had that trouble with his leg and everything and the public bothered him havin' to look down his neck, you know what that means.

JT: Yeah. I can appreciate that.

FJ: So anyhow he got a job then at Cream Supply. That was there at Island City. And he worked there and George Royce...old George, not the young one...took work in there and he hired Oscar out under Dick Blues. And he went to work for Royce's. Then things got kinda bad out there, you know, the market.

JT: Right.

FJ: So then they dissolved and he got on at the Terry plant.

JT: Terry Trailer.

FJ: And he worked there for about six years 'til he retired. When he was sixty-five they retired. And that's the way it goes. And right after my mother died...no, I worked at the hospital and I didn't like that. That kind of...I can't stand it. People diein', you know, and all this stuff. It just...

JT: I can understand that.

FJ: So anyhow I went to work over here at the Greenwell Motel and managin' that motel for them people and helpin' out over there. And I ___ there.

JT: And you worked in there for how many years?

FJ: Until I was sixty-five. So anyhow...

JT: And in your experiences of La Grande it was terrible that you had the accident, but you find that people tried to help on another at that time. Nobody had very much and so trying to be friendly and help on another seemed to be the way of life.

FJ: That had happened early in the morning, this accident, and by the evening that Grande Ronde Hospital was plum full. I don't think...there was only man, John, that didn't come to see Oscar Johnson. And that was the engineer on that train because it was his fault jerkin' him off the end of that car. The reason they done that there's another man on there and that Morehead didn't want him on there so he laid him off and put Oscar on. And you know how that is. And they jerked him off the end of the car when he was fixin' the cars. So anyhow, this guy didn't show up, but then he had to have blood of course. And Dr. Branner he was such a nice man and he come to the room where I was and he said, well, he called me Fredarica and he said, "Fredarica, we're gonna have to have ___." And he said...I'll never forget this, John...he said, "There's a little negro lady out there offerin' to give him blood." And I said, "Fine and dandy." And that little woman come twice and give him blood.

JT: That's nice.

FJ: She was the nicest little woman that you...

JT: Do you remember her name?

FJ: I thought her name was Coleman. And then later when I was workin' at the hospital I always thought of this woman, but you know you hate to ask. But she was a patient up there and she was just as sweet as she could be.

JT: Sometimes this race situation isn't as bad as some people make out. They're nice people.

FJ: I had awfully good Indian friends and they called him Greek, the Swedes and these negro people. I have lots good friends.

JT: It uh...when you were growing up did you know much about the Chinese that were here?

FJ: The only thing I knew about 'em is when I told you they had that camp down there below the Condet place. You remember, I told you?

JT: Yeah.

FJ: Where them little gravel piles are along there. The only thing I can remember they're awfully nice to my parents. And my mama sold 'em eggs and butter and then they bought cream. And they was always sending us kids stuff, cookies and stuff.

JT: That's nice.

FJ: They was nice people.

JT: Did you know a Lane Montgomery up in Old Town? She would have been about your age.

FJ: I've heard of a Montgomery, but I didn't know any of 'em.

JT: I interviewed her recently up at Enterprise and she's just about your age. She graduated in 1929. And she told me about how they had taken care of the Chinaman that used to sell vegetables around with the cart.

FJ: I was here. They lived up there where the Safeway store is now.

JT: Yeah.

FJ: On the corner of...

JT: By the old La Grande hotel.

FJ: Yes. On the corner of Fourth Street clear to the railroad track. On this side of the street was nothin' but Chinese people.

JT: And then those Chinese houses that were back there on Jefferson and Fourth back of where Hanford Sales and later Tamarack Ford would be.

FJ: Yeah, that was it. And it was...you know how kids are, John. Curiosity kills the cat, you know. Us kids when we'd come from school, even when I was in high school, comin' from high school instead __ business comin' down Second Street, you know, and goin' home, we had to go down and walk down by the Chiny houses and then go over the viadock.

JT: Did you ever go into China Mary's and have...?

FJ: Yeah, we'd eat there many a time. I even got a little bowl from China Mary's. Right there.

JT: Oh!

FJ: Gene Barber stole that off of China Mary's table and we'd all been down on Saturday night and when we got home up to camp, up to ___...

JT: It says 1920.

FJ: When we got up to __ old Gene reached in his coat pocket and...he always called me the Dutchman and he handed me this little cup. But we always...that where we...we always ganged up at Carl Baum's __.

JT: Carl Baum had a little beer tavern there on Depot and Jefferson.

FJ: Yeah, right on the corner.

JT: And he had the best hamburgers.

FJ: Right there back of the Eagles right by the corner.

JT: Uh-huh. Right there.

FJ: I'll tell you that man could put out a sandwich.

JT: He sure did. I remember well. Is there anything that you remember about when the Chinese had there problem and the Chinaman was shot on the post office steps?

FJ: No, honey, I don't...I didn't know nothin' about that.

JT: You didn't know anything about that.

FJ: No.

JT: It uh...it's kind of history as things go.

FJ: I imagine that my parents __ know, but us kids we didn't know nothin' like that.

—

JT: Was it your uncle Garet Taal, was he the one that built the swimming pool? Or who?

FJ: He did.

JT: He did.

FJ: And he had this Marjorie Condet, she was going with a guy by the name of...I can't say it, John, I can't remember.

JT: The painter that she married?

FJ: No. It was electrician. He'd done electric work, stuff like that. What in the heck was his name? Anyhow, him and Marjorie was engaged to be married and he got electrocuted.

JT: Oh.

FJ: And then they went ahead and they got the pool open, but it didn't last very long. Too many...in them days too many government rules.

JT: Right. Marjorie later married a fellow by the name of Ebert.

FJ: Mm-hmm. Carl Ebert.
JT: Carl Ebert who was a painter. But I didn't know this part about...
FJ: I can't remember what the boy's name was. Aunt Maria and Uncle Bill was livin' up there on Second Street and he was with the city manager Bill Cognet. He was just a manager.
JT: I remember when Bill was a commissioner.
FJ: Yeah. Some of the Goss's. But other than that I don't remember nothin' only about the Chinese only us kids would walk by there.
JT: It...what happened during the War when World War II came along? Did that make any...?
FJ: He was still...he was workin' at camp then.
JT: Up at the camp.
FJ: And the drafted Oscar and I don't think they got...they didn't draft Wesley and Winnie. And of course they didn't draft Lester because he was with Western Equipment. And they didn't draft Donald 'cause he was on the railroad.
JT: On the railroad. How long was Oscar in the service?
FJ: He wasn't in. They turned him down. They just, you know...
JT: Uh-huh.
FJ: But anyway, John, what do they call it when they call you in?
JT: They...
FJ: I guess __.
JT: Yeah...
FJ: They called him in, but when they'd seen he's crippled they rejected him.
JT: That's what I was wondering because the accident had already happened.
FJ: Yeah. They didn't take him.
JT: Wesley went down...your brother Wesley went down for a physical and...
FJ: And they __
JT: Then Bill Talbot went down for a physical and it was alright until they noticed that he didn't have any thumb on his left hand and it was cut off clear that he didn't have anything to hang anything on so they disqualified him.
FJ: And they found out that Wesley was workin' up there on the train and everything and they didn't take him either.
JT: Yeah.
FJ: John, what about this guy that got killed over here on Smoot's road the other night, who was that?
JT: That was Wally Hansel. The barber. He had a barbershop down on Depot.
FJ: Oh.
JT: Yeah, that was too bad.
FJ: You mean there by the Foley building?
JT: No, there by...
FJ: Oh, Longbranch.
JT: Right. Longbranch and then Red Cross Drugstore now and you and I always knew it as the Glass Drug. Those things happen and they happen so quickly, as you well know.

FJ: Like I told the girl __ this morning I told ‘em, I said, I just hope and pray that that man that was up there at Perry that they dumped under that railroad trestle, I hope that man comes to enough that he can tell ‘em who done that.

JT: Yes.

FJ: Wouldn’t that be wonderful?

JT: It’s really a strange thing with all these things happening around here. It uh...

FJ: Just like the other night I was home all day the Fourth ‘cause Arlin was in Montana. He got home that day, though. And that evening I kept a hearing all this...[tape interruption]

JT: Now when you were a girl what were some of the shops that you liked to shop downtown that...?

FJ: __ Woolsworth. Yeah, Woolsworth was right in there close to Penny’s __. That was the best store we ever had! You could get most anything you wanted there. And we didn’t shop much with six kids, you know.

JT: I’m sure.

FJ: But I’ve always shopped at Penny’s. I like Penny’s myself. A lot of people don’t like to shop there, but I like ‘em. I’m always satisfied.

JT: It’s always good quality.

FJ: Yeah, its good.

JT: Yeah, for your money.

FJ: But now if I go shoppin’, well, if I’m at Bi-Mart I buy surplus there, you know, like odds and ends of stuff you need. I hardly ever go to Wal-Mart, but that’s clear out on the road. And like I tell Arlin by the time you go there and you find a place to park then you walk in there and you walk ten miles and go back I’m ready to come home.

JT: My wife find it a little hard to...I usually let her out the door.

FJ: Yeah, well...

JT: She doesn’t like to walk either.

FJ: When I... If I go out there and I park and I look for sure where I’m parked and then when you come...you’ve been all over...all over to find your stuff it’s a mess. And I can’t see that there’s a reasonable and I think some of their stuff is junky.

JT: Yeah. Cheap.

FJ: Yeah. It’s this cheap stuff. And like I...Donna, now that’s Arlin’s sister, Donna Hudson, she shops there a lot and she still “Aunt Fidda why don’t you go to Wal-Mart?” So finally one day I just up and told her, I said, “You know, Donna, we don’t buy a lot of stuff and when I do I want good stuff.”

JT: Do you have to buy much medicine or anything like that?

FJ: Um, medicine, four.

JT: Where do you usually buy your medicine?

FJ: Safeway, that’s cheap place.

JT: At Safeway, uh-huh.

FJ: I just went there the day before yesterday got sixty-eight dollars for three little bottles. I got one bottle about pretty near ninety dollars.

JT:

FJ: Quite a bit.

JT: It uh...Safeway's quite a lot...bit farther now that it moved the other end of town.
FJ: I don't like it, but it get so I'm gettin' used to it. But Arlin always comes and takes me so it ain't bad.
JT: Arlin's your nephew and that...he's good to you.
FJ: He's the only son I've ever had.
JT: Good.
FJ: He's a good little kid.
JT: He's a good ___.
FJ: He used to come and stay with us when he was little.
JT: You and Lester used to take rides together and...
FJ: Arlin and I was talkin' about that, John, the other day. Sunday we went for a nice ride Tony and Fitzblue Spring through ___ had a nice dinner and come home. And I said to him comin' home, I said, "You know Arlin, Aunt Freda misses Oscar." That was my husband. But I said, "I miss your dad worse." And I do, John. That sounds odd, but I do.
JT: He was your...
FJ: But Lester was here just like Arlin two or three times a day. Maybe it's four o'clock in the mornin' we're in the pick-up a-goin' someplace fishin' or something.
JT: He was your older brother.
FJ: And he didn't have much home life, of course you knew that.
JT: It was nice that you could go places together.
FJ: Yeah. And Arlin one time he...when he first started a-comin' here after his dad died he started to comin' quite a bit because I think he knew that Lester was comin', you know, as much 'cause he was doin' every day. And I would say, "Arlin, you don't need to do that, honey." "Yes," he says, "I do, and Fridy." He said, "I'll never forget what you and uncle done for us kids."
JT: That's important. It's nice that he realizes that.
FJ: That's what he'll say. And if we go out to eat then he tries to do her part, you know how you are. And he'll, "No, I'm payin'. I'm makin' twice as much as you're makin'." He's a good boy.
JT: This has turned out to be a nice neighborhood other than kids sometimes, isn't it?
FJ: It's nice, but boy we're all mad. ___ apartments right over there you know who they let move in?
JT: No.
FJ: What are all them people you see? Are them Mexicans or Cambodians?
JT: I haven't paid any attention. I'm not...I'm sorry...
FJ: When I started to call I'd start...I was mad and I started to call the Chamber of Commerce. And I thought, no, I'm not going to do that. I don't want to get involved. There was two of them women and they had six little girls going around here ___ on our doors yesterday wantin' help to buy their books. Now that's against the law, ain't it? [end tape]

JT: Going back to when you were a child did you ever go to the circus when it come to town?

FJ: Every time it come.

JT: On the railroad.

FJ: I don't know how it come, I mean, but we'd come. Pop would get the team and they called it...it wasn't a buggy it was a two-seated thing. Like...it was like a buggy, but it was two seats.

JT: But it was hauled by horses?

FJ: Mm-hmm. And he'd get the horses out Grandma and Grandpa lived over here at the viadock and we'd be there and put the horses there in the barn. They had a barn with cow and everything there. And we'd go to this circus.

JT: Uh-huh. Where was the circus at that time? Was it up on the hill or would they have it...?

FJ: John, I remember, but it's dim. You know where Cass's Tavern used to be?

JT: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

FJ: On 82 out there. Back behind the tavern out in the fields there there's an Indian fort. I can remember that so plain when I was a little kid at that.

JT: An Indian fort? I never heard that before.

FJ: It was a little Indian fort, you know, like you see those forts. Back...it was over in that field and seemed like that out in that part of the town's where the circus was.

JT: I know Homer Lethel had told me that the county fair would be out where Del Monte is off of Highway 82 out there by the railroad intersection on the other side of the underpass.

FJ: Yeah. There wasn't anything on this way because there was brush and the river and everything. And then another thing that I think is kind of interesting thing is Ella Rynearson ranch, you know where that is?

JT: Yes.

FJ: Dale Rynearson.

JT: Out on the Blackhawk Trail.

FJ: Yes. There's Bill Rynearson was married to my dad's sister, Ella. And then there was a John Rynearson that was a bachelor lived with them. And their place now, John, would be if you went down here to Safeway store, the old Safeway store, that Fourth Street. You go over down to Fourth Street, walk across the river, I'll say, we're gonna walk across the river and you go to Aunt Ella's house. They had a swinging bridge there.

JT: Across the river.

FJ: Across the river a swinging bridge so you could walk on that in the winter to come over town.

JT: Oh.

FJ: And that John was on that bridge and it got to swinging so and he went in the river and drowned there.

JT: Oh!

FJ: And Papa told us kids about that.

JT: I'll be darned!

FJ: Gosh, that's years ago.

JT: They used to have that bridge across the railroad tracks there by the freight house where it went up and over the railroad main lines so that...

FJ: Us kids used to go there and boy we got our butts beat for going there. We used to go down there just for fun and go in the railroad yard and then walk up over that trestle thing and go to __ there. And finally they stopped it. That isn't there anymore, is it?

JT: No. They took it all away. But they had that there in...during that time they had the roundhouse and the rip track and then...

FJ: __ brother-in-law worked...Uncle Wes Harrison worked on the roundhouse. He was the one that blew the whistles.

JT: They had where the ice cars there. The Pacific Fruit Express Company.

FJ: And my mother and sister, her name was Rochester. You probably knew Gene Rochester.

JT: Uh-huh.

FJ: His uncle Cecil Wilson...or it was Bill Wilson, you remember him?

JT: Yes, I remember Bill.

FJ: Then there's the brother Cecil Wilson. And Mama's sister, Aunt Freda, married Cecil Wilson and he did...now if I'm gettin' it right, John. They had a turntable that they turned the engines around over here.

JT: Yeah. They had eleven bays as I recall.

FJ: Anyhow...

JT: They turned on the turntable to put 'em in those bays when they were workin' on 'em.

FJ: Anyhow he got in...fell in there and ground up.

JT: Who?

FJ: In the turntable. Cecil Rynear...Cecil Wilson. Anyhow... But I's tryin' to think. It seemed me like in later years I think they had that carnival down here about in there where the old...

JT: On Jefferson.

FJ: Yeah. There by the old Safeway store. And that's where Aunt Nina, Mama's youngest sister, met her husband.

JT: Oh!

FJ: He was a guy from Chicago and was travelin' around, young guy, with this circus. And boy the Swiffles didn't like that!

JT: Oh?

FJ: No. 'Cause you know the Swiffles is better than the rest of us. And boy they just raised heck, but Aunt Nina married him anyhow and moved to Portland.

JT: I remember your mother's sister was married to Nate Swiffle.

FJ: You know how families are, John, they always act like they's a little bit better than the rest of us.

JT: Yeah, but...

FJ: They didn't __ come up to my folks every weekend for a big dinner. That's what Wesley and I was talking the other day here. He came and she was gettin' her hair done and we was talkin'. I said "Wesley, how in the name of God did you make it?" Six kids and we always had good clothes. Plenty to eat. But we had

our own butter, eggs and meat. And he'd come and get flour and sugar and stuff like that in town. You didn't need much.

JT: It was an interesting time. We went through a depression then growing up.

FJ: And when we lived at Hilgard we lived up close...did you know where the cemetery was at Hilgard?

JT: No, I don't.

FJ: Like, you know, when you go through Hilgard and you come to Five Pond...Five Point then Centrals live way up there?

JT: Right.

FJ: Just before you...just about the last house before you start up toward Cantrell's there's a road takes off to the right. It goes up on up that hill.

JT: On the hill.

FJ: And that's where the cemetery.

JT: That's where the cemetery.

FJ: And we lived right at the bottom of the hill from that cemetery in a little house. It's still there. The schoolhouse is right next door to it.

JT: What kind of work was your father doing when you...?

FJ: He was up at the ranch, runnin' the ranch.

JT: Uh-huh.

FJ: Milkin' the cows and...

JT: Uh-huh. He more or less ranches all...

FJ: Yeah. He worked a while when we was over there at the viadock. He worked at _____. He wasn't too well a man if I can remember. He was an awful little man. He wasn't as big as Arlin. Just a little bitty guy. But Grandma she...they had a...they had a cow there and she's Old Dais' and chickens and then they had a beautiful gardens over there at the viadock and flowers, lots of flowers.

JT: I think I have a picture of her standing in the yard.

FJ: Probably.

JT: I think that...

FJ: There's a big lilac bush...

JT: ...you gave me earlier that I rephotographed.

FJ: A great big lilac bush. It was a beautiful thing. They called it a furnishing lilac. And it was there for a long, long time before city took it out. And the dump used to be right where the city shops is now. That was city dump. Did you remember that?

JT: No. I knew that they had it down by the river.

FJ: But it was out there first right where the viadock is. Us kids used to go over there and rough around over on that dump. It was right there where the community city buildings are at the foot at the viadock is where the city dump was when we lived there.

JT: Well I'll be!

FJ: And in the wintertime, or anytime, livin' so close to the track and when they'd bus them cars, you know, coal ___, heck, us kids went out there with a gunny sacks and picked up coals and we always had enough coal for winter.

JT: Keep warm.

FJ: Yeah. Lots of coal.

JT: It was a different time.
FJ: But do you know the worst...what gets me is, John, is this. Here I lived over there at the viadock. I walked up to the high school. Walked home and had my lunch. Walked back to school and come home. Now that kids today can't even walk up there once.
JT: I know.
FJ: Now can you ___ that? And the have to eat at the cafeteria.
JT: I didn't live too far from where you walked because I lived at the corner of First and Grandy there...or Palmer.
FJ: Bringing that up, that's what I wanted to ask you. Do you remember a guy lived over here on...now where did he tell me? Oak and Cedar. I think he said he lived on Oak and you lived on...?
JT: First.
FJ: First. Did you know a guy by the name of Clarence Campbell?
JT: Yes. Uh-huh. Yes. He was a carpenter.
FJ: And he had a son and his son's name is Clarence Campbell. He said they lived over there.
JT: He worked at Mt. Emily Mill as a carpenter. And when I first moved to La Grande they lived on Adams down there by Sears Meat Market. We lived next to Sears Meat Market and Clarence Campbell lived in the next house. And he had two daughters, too.
FJ: Come to find out that this Clarence Campbell's mother was Charlie Peck's sister.
JT: Oh!
FJ: Charlie Peck and that other Peck ___. I can't remember his name. He passed away here a while back.
JT: Elmer.
FJ: Yeah. This dude...[tape interruption]...there she went on.
JT: Now the biggest changes that you've seen in La Grande. What...
FJ: The biggest changes that I've seen in La Grande that disappoints me is when they moved Safeway store. [laughs]
JT: I can understand that.
FJ: Now that's my biggest change.
JT: That's where you bought your groceries.
FJ: And the next biggest change that I've always griped if that old Catholic hospital it was not good enough for a hospital why did they condemn it and build this great big new one up here on the side of the mountain?
JT: That isn't exactly what happened.
FJ: Isn't it?
JT: What happened they run out of sisters to run the Catholic hospital.
FJ: And then they say it wasn't, you know...
JT: I didn't ever hear that is was condemned because Bob Wylam was on the board at the time.
FJ: They just can't get sisters anymore.
JT: That's true, you know. It sure made a difference when they took the old Grande Ronde Hospital and put it up where the new one is. But they hardly let you stay a day in the hospital.

FJ: Hardly. ___ had me up there here a while back for my mammogram and he said, "Do you know where in the hell we're going?" And I said, "No." I said, "We'll go in the front door and we'll go from there." When we got in there I walked over there to the pink lady, you know, and asked her and she said, "It's right there." And I looked over there in the corner and here's a little table sittin' there and a woman sittin' there and that was the office.

JT: Yeah. They've changed that now again.

FJ: I guess they finally got moved back there someplace.

JT: Yeah.

FJ: And she told...that girl told me and I signed in. She told me just go down that hall and I said, "Is it where it was?" And she said, "Yes." [laugh]

JT: It was quite a big change for you when you moved from Mt. Emily camp into La Grande.

FJ: Yeah.

JT: It uh... 'cause you had water and all things that...

FJ: We had water.

JT: I mean water bills to pay. You didn't have to pay for water up at camp.

FJ: We didn't have to even pay for a fuel. They furnished it for us.

JT: That was good.

FJ: Yeah. They furnished a house, our house, and the fuel. See, the way the house come up was, John, we was living in that house at headquarters. And when Oscar lost his leg Mr. Stang and Mr. Kinkle gave us that house. So when Oscar got well enough to get out of the hospital it'd be a year before he could go to work. So Mt. Emily Lumber Company moved that little house with the train down to the ranch and sit it kind of in the gate there where you go up to Dean Stone's now, come here and then... And we lived there for a year. Then when he got able to go back to work they moved that back down there about where Wesley lives on this end of the camp. And they give Oscar and I another house that was closer to the cookhouse and stuff. Even when we moved to the river camp we was...traded that house for the one at the river camp. It's there now. And that's the one they beat us out of. But just like I told Oscar afterwards we was both mad, but I told Oscar I wouldn't have lived there. There ain't nothin' there.

JT: Nothing there now.

FJ: No, there ain't nothin' there. And with his condition what do we want to be there for?

JT: Yeah. Even your nephew Jimmy tried to keep that house up there above Abel's store and it kept being broke into and what have you. It seems like you can't keep anything. People try to ___.

FJ: Right here in the city of La Grande you pick that paper up at night it's gettin' terrible ain't it, people breakin' into their houses?

JT: Yeah.

FJ: But I missed it when we moved here because when we was there that...we was the only ones that was there and there was quiet.

JT: Uh-huh.

FJ: The only time we had noise is when the trucks is going. And when we moved down here...when I moved here that white house on the corner was there. Mr.

Belgium lived there. And this little house right there was there and the...and Morel Coat's house.

JT: Down here.

FJ: And this little bitty one sittin' back here was the only houses there was here ___.

JT: And then the greenhouses sit over here on Fourth and Walnut.

FJ: Yeah. The greenhouse was over there...

JT: I mean Adams and Walnut.

FJ: Yeah. Cherry's Greenhouse. That's what was there and there wasn't nothin' back here. I used to just walk right out here and go out there and walk right up to the hospital and go to work and then come back.

JT: They had Red Shutter Motel there behind...

FJ: Yeah, that was there.

JT: That was there. They haven't done anything with that lot.

FJ: No. And you know they got in here a while back and they cleaned that all off and they had a ___ in there cleanin' it up and I said, "Arlin, I wonder what they're gonna put there." There ain't much ___ to put anything comin' in off that curve. Wesley said to me one day, he said, "Why don't you walk over there to Burger King?" And I said, "'Cause I'm afraid to."

JT: Yeah.

FJ: If I go out here and this little cross there is no marks there for that crosswalk. So I walk...have to walk on down to the corner where that house is on the corner ___

JT: On Oak.

FJ: And there's a crossing there that's marked.

JT: Right.

FJ: John, what if I was going across that out there and the way cars come down off there at thirty-five and forty miles an hour and I tell what's gonna happen.

JT: I can appreciate.

FJ: Isn't that...

JT: Do you remember when Loose come around that corner and hit the house there where the Stardust Motel is now and knocked it off it's foundation?

FJ: Yeah. And that's what I told Wesley. I said, "Wesley," I said, "I'm afraid to walk over there and cross there." I said, "I have to walk on down to the corner and cross there by that house and cross over there and go in there." It's gettin' too far for me to walk anymore, John, on account of my legs and my balance. And I said, "I'm afraid to go over there and cross that street afraid I'll get hit." That Mrs. Houser she's that lady that works in the bakery up there, the bakery's mother.

JT: Oh, uh-huh.

FJ: You know that blond?

JT: Uh-huh, yes.

FJ: Mrs. Houser got hit out there.

JT: Oh boy!

FJ: Knocked her down, but it didn't hurt her. She used to walk 'cause Housers lived there in that house where Burger King is, you know, now. And she used to walk over to the...his restaurant near the farmhouse and she got hit.

JT: Isn't it strange that Hought's Twenty-Four Flavors is still there?

FJ: He's just too tight. He won't even want to sell it. He wants too much money. And you know why he can't rent it?

JT: No.

FJ: He thinks...now, John, this is gossip...he thinks he's such a businessman, but I can tell him something that I figured out one day myself. If I owned that he's got a two-stall garage there. He don't need that. He could go ahead and rent that little ice cream parlor there and have it a little sandwich shop or whatever. And he could have a restroom right there in that other garage. And that's what stops him because he can't have that little restaurant there and not a restroom.

JT: Oh!

FJ: And you go in there and then there's a door goes out of that into their kitchen. And there's a restroom there, but they can't use that.

JT: Can't use it that way.

FJ: That's the reason why he can't do nothin' with it and he wants too much money for the whole mess. But Helen's always wanted to sell it.

JT: I knew it set there empty for a lot of years.

FJ: But Charlotte, you know their daughter?

JT: I didn't know the daughter.

FJ: She married...she married McCoy. They've got them a beautiful home up at Wallowa Lake. ___ going up there this weekend.

JT: Oh.

FJ: We're going up to the Wally Thompsons. Do you know him? He was a brakeman on the railroad. He was Arlin's brakeman...conductor rather.

JT: I think I know who you're talking about.

FJ: His wife got killed ___ got killed over to Huntington. Janice somebody. She was a schoolteacher. Anyhow, when you drive into the lake like where the boat landing is up here. McCoys is got the second house over here on this side from the boat landing. They're right next door to ___. BMW, who was that?

JT: Rangitch.

FJ: Yeah. Up there right next door to their place. And that's...that place if for sale. It's like they moved out of it, John. Everything's there, Venetians, everything. Furniture and everything and you buy the whole thing. And that's where Wally and his wife got their house. It's up there at the lake close to where the Kepper place was. And that's what they got. Bedding, everything was in the thing. They got Mrs. Nephin's house. Vanese Nephin.

JT: I hadn't thought about her for years.

FJ: That's the house that Wally and Janice got. So we're supposed to go up there because they've been doin' a lot of remodeling. And then we're supposed to go see Gary and Charlotte. Boy that Charlotte looks bad! She's just so ___ I didn't know her. She's got ___.

JT: What did you think of the population change? Do you think La Grande has grown about the right size?

FJ: I think, when you stop and think about it, I think sometimes that we got more people and then they think we got.

JT: That could be.

FJ: Because every time you pick up the paper here's all these baby boomers so where are they going?

JT: That's true that the younger people can't find jobs here. You either have the mill, the railroad is moved a lot out. There's not a lot of railroad left. The college hires quite a few.

FJ: But you can't really count them 'cause they're not here long enough, are they?

JT: The people that work at the college.

FJ: Oh.

JT: They quite a lot of employment.

FJ: You can count them?

JT: Yeah. And ODS, you know, this insurance company that's where the old telephone company was I think that's going to be a real shot in the arm for La Grande to have that many jobs. They say they'll hire fifty more people. And that's nonpolluting and I think it'd be good for the community.

FJ: And another thing that I seen in the paper and I heard... Like we say, I've been here all my life and I never heard of anything only the Beaver Intake. But now it's the La Grande Reservoir, or something, watershed. __ La Grande pond.

JT: It was the watershed back fifty-some years ago when I worked for the city.

FJ: And now they're changed the name to La Grande...this La Grande som'n.

JT: They want to keep that water available in case they ever need it.

FJ: Did you see that in the paper the other night? They put La Grande and then they had parentheses The Watershed...Beaver Intake, it said, Beaver Intake.

JT: That's where the city got it's water all those years.

FJ: Did I tell you about walkin' up as I was goin' up there on campus when I was sixteen?

JT: No.

FJ: [laugh] There's a...people lived here in La Grande and his name was Ray Noyse and his mother lived here, too. The Noyse's.

JT: Arlo's mother?

FJ: Evidently. And this Ray Noyse was the head of the telephone thing here. Telephone office, you know.

JT: Yeah.

FJ: So they was visiting up at Starkey some people that we knew and I happened to be up there at these people's house. And Ray and Lolita Noyse and this the other couple was going to Beaver Intake fishing and camping and they invited me to go along. So Mama and Papa let me go. And they had a team and wagon now and a tent. And they went down there to Condet's place and crossed that little bridge, you know, right by the Condet's place and went up that little road. Now that'll take you to the Young's place.

JT: Right.

FJ: We went up that road. It took us all day to get to the intake and we stayed there a couple of nights and they fished in that lake. I thought, "Good night!"

JT: That's where the city water came. It was so cold in the old days.

FJ: It was good water.

JT: It was good water before we got the wells.

FJ: John, now is that road open all the time, or do you have to walk?

JT: They lock the gate. They opened it for a few days and then they locked the gate and you've gotta walk up to the intake.

FJ: Quite a ways to walk.

JT: Yeah.

FJ: I'm not gonna walk up there to fish.

JT: No. They changed the way to go there.

FJ: Catch two fish.

JT: You used to go up by Rankins and around that way...

FJ: And then __

JT: ...and then up by J.D.L. Stanley's place.

FJ: Yeah. While we went we went past the Young's place and all that and you just come out on the ridge and be in there. But you could...it said in the paper the other night you could have two trout and rest all the brook trout you want.

JT: True.

FJ: I haven't been fishin' anymore. I haven't been fishin' since Lester been gone. We went every weekend sometimes twice a week.

JT: I know he used to fish a lot.

FJ: I like Grande Ronde Lake especially.

JT: That's a nice lake up there by Anthony Lake.

FJ: __ Every time...that was something you can remember, John. There's like...you go up there and park, then, it's like that 'cause Arlin took me there a little while back. And then you go on this side of lake and you go over there quite a ways and there's a great big rock kind of way over at the end of the lake where the stillery is. So I was sittin' on this big rock. Had my pole and my basket and all this stuff __. And Lester was fishin' out over here a little ways. And boy we was catchin' awful nice fish. Pretty quick I caught a fish...I remembered I caught this fish and I cast it back out. The next think I knew here was Lester standin' right there along beside of me and he said, "Are you alright?" And I said...I thought he'd lost his mind. And I said, "Yes, I'm alright. What's the matter?" He said, "You kneeled over backwards." John, he said I did. I was sittin' on that rock and I had on my little straw hat 'cause it was hot and I just went over backwards. And he said, "Are you alright?" And I said, "Yeah, what's the matter?" He said, "You keeled over." And I said, "I'm alright." But I never thought anything about it. And he said, "Do you want to go home?" And I said, "No." I said, "There ain't nothin' the matter with me." I said, "We're gonna stay here 'til we get our fish." 'Cause we was just about ready to get out of there. So when we got home and everything he said, "I think you better go see the doctor." So that night I went in to take my bath to get ready to go to bed and everything and I was washin' and combin' my hair. Here was this little knot on the back of my head [laugh] where I bumped it on that rock.

JT: On that rock.

FJ: So I went up to Dr. Fredrickson and I think he thought I was nuts and he come be electrocardiograph and went all of 'em in. He said he couldn't find a thing wrong. So what happened? It must have been just a little blood clot or somethin' pass through.

JT: Just for a moment.

FJ: But wouldn't that've been somethin', though? Him and I up there and not a soul in sight. He'd a had to come clear into North Powder and got any help.

JT: That's true.

FJ: When he asked me he said, "Are you alright?" I thought...I thought it was somethin' wrong with him. Is Patty gettin' pretty good since she had her kidney stone?

JT: Yes. Yes. She's been fine. That passed. Did you ever fish on the Grande Ronde River down what they called High Banks? They were this side of Riverside Park.

FJ: I never have fished down in...

JT: You never fished down on...

FJ: The farthest I ever fished was just back ___ to the Condet place.

JT: It...Wesley said when you were kids that they...you did a lot of fishing down there.

FJ: That was mostly behind the ranch and down at Charlie Condet's place then.

JT: It was a nice place to grow up up there.

FJ: And in those days we had lots a company. There never was a weekend that Mama didn't have a whole houseful. Big dinners and stuff like that.

JT: And that goes back to the time that people helped one another and...

FJ: Yeah, and like Arlin and I was talkin' a-comin' down from Ukia' the other day and he said, "And just think of all them big picnics that they used to have at the ranch." They'd go over there in the grove, you know, by the cottonwoods. It was beautiful. The kids could play in the river and the Bartamouses and all of us get together and have great big dinners. People would come up...come up from town. And now people don't do that.

JT: No, they don't. And hardly know their neighbors. Those were good times. Good times to remember.

FJ: They had a little reception for Jim and Arlene. Oscar'd already passed away because Lester and I went to it and it was in the Union Hall down here on Adams. They had a little reception there and there was a lot of us there, you know, what was left. And they mentioned then that it would be nice if we had kind of a little reunion all got together and had a picnic. Nobody seemed to be interested and one in the family said they didn't have time so that was dropped and they never have had anything.

JT: That's too bad.

FJ: It is, you know. They just don't do...

JT: For activities when you were in town did you ever go to the Zuber Hall to dances?

FJ: Lots of 'em. Went there pretty near every time, every time they had a dance.

JT: And that was almost every Saturday night?

FJ: Every Saturday night when I stayed at Aunt Mil's and I was goin' to school Uncle Garet lived there with her and she had a stepson, Charlie Wilson, lived with her. And Aunt Freda...Freda got to go to all the dances and then either Uncle Garet or Charlie brought me home to see I got home. ___ nice. Them good old guys...[end tape]