

Gertie Hibbert

5/28/01, Gertie's home in La Grande, OR, tape 1, side 1

VC: Okay, Gertie, would you please give me your full name, the date you were born, and your age now?

GH: My full name is Gertie N. Hibbert and I was born on the 8th of February 1913 and I am 89 years old today.

VC: And what was your mother's maiden name?

GH: My mothers name was Annie Helen Lindsey.

VC: Were you born here?

GH: I was born eight miles up Indian Creek.

VC: Is that right? So you've been a Union County resident all your life?

GH: Yes.

VC: Which is marvelous, I think. So your family remained pretty much in the same location?

GH: My husband came from Arizona when he was ten years old. He lived in this place here until he passed away... Well, he passed away... we built this place here after his folks lived...his grandparents lived here when they came from Arizona. And then after they died his dad took over this place and run it until he couldn't do it anymore. Then Eugene and I took it over.

VC: So this place became a Hibbert place originally in about what year?

GH: Well, I don't know just when David and them came, but Will and them came in 1923. They were...his parents were here before that.

VC: So how many years do you think this has been a Hibbert ranch?

GH: Well, there's been five generations on it.

VC: Isn't that marvelous.

GH: And I was a Nebeker and I lived up here with my mother. Lottie has the place now. So we've just been here...and Mother and them moved out to Mt. Glen when Vern was a baby and I just about two years old when they moved out there on that farm. So I was up here with my Mother. My Dad died when I was just seven.

VC: So what is that, about a half mile away?

GH: Just around the corner, about a mile. About from here up and around to there'd be about a mile or mile and a half.

VC: So you haven't moved very far in your life, have you?

GH: No.

VC: No. I think that is absolutely marvelous. Did you have brothers and sisters?

GH: Yes, I had four sisters and three brothers. I was...we made five girls. We had eight children in the family. My dad died just a few months before Willie was born. So mother had seven children and was expecting another when Willie was born.

VC: Isn't Ida your sister?

GH: Yes.

VC: She and I used to go visiting teaching together.

GH: And then I have one older than Ida. She's passed away now. And then there's Ida and then me and then Vern and Verda, (48) and Willie. Alec was the oldest one.

Alec was before Hilden. But he's gone now and Vernon's gone. There's three gone, but the rest are still here.

VC: I think its marvelous. Well, you know, my husband is Bob Clemens's brother, married to Ann, you know.

GH: Yea, I know who he is and I know who you are. You were the Relief Society president at one time.

VC: Yes, I was. I've done a lot of things and one of the reasons I'm doing this is because I think its immensely important for Union County. What are some of your earliest recollections as a child?

GH: Well, I was a real outgoing girl. I was healthy and strong. My dad like horses and I like horses. I used to follow him around as long as I could get around and walk. I've come to the conclusion that my dad must have been a patient, kind man because you can tell when little children start following you around and the questions they could ask and he always answers them. 'Cause I liked...that's why when he went to harness the horse I would always say, "What's that strap for?" and he would tell me. That's when he hooked them up I'd always try to help. And I would go out to the field and follow him around all morning so I could drive the horses when he'd come in for dinner. So I really knew my dad maybe more than some of the ones that were older because I asked him questions. When he passed away I knew how to harness a horse although I couldn't, but I knew how and I knew how to hitch them up. And I know...cause Mother had the baby and I remember putting the harness on my arm and the two hangs like this and Vern would get on the other side of the horse and I'd come up and throw it like that and he'd grab that strap and then he'd pull them up and he'd catch one hang and I'd get the other and we'd put them up in the collar.

VC: How old were you then, honey, about?

GH: Well, I was seven when he died and this was spring, so I was only eight. But I knew how to do it and that year my oldest brother was twelve and he would do the farm work, but he had a job working with George Chadwick down to his dairy down to the glen. And Mama said, "Well, if you do that who's going to do the plowing?" And he said, "Well, if I open up on a piece I know Gertie can do it." So I plowed our ground when I was... I could sit on the seat and I had to put my foot out here to hold it on. And now I knew how to do that and I know it was done because my dad had told me and I've often wondered if he had any inkling or premonition of what he teaching...if he was teaching...what he knew might happen in the future.

VC: I don't know. But you stop and think of you out there, what were you eight or nine years old, plowing the field?

GH: (84) I used to drive them all the time. And I tried to beg my mother to not let me go to school to stay home and do that, but she wouldn't do it. I've seen her out on the plow. She had Wilie on her lap and she had a quilt and she'd sit on there and around like this to hold him on and she'd plow. And I would hurry home from school so I could take the horses. I would plow and I enjoyed that.

VC: What kind of horses were they? They were probably big old work horses.

GH: Well, they were work horses. They were Perchins, most of them.

VC: And you weren't afraid of them?

GH: Oh heck no. I wasn't afraid of anything at that time. I knew how to hitch them up and I could do it.

VC: Oh, I'm so proud of you! And what a help you were to your mother.

GH: Well, yes. Gradually it went for year to years. Even after I graduated from high school I stayed home. I graduated in 1931 and I got married in '36.

VC: That's when I was born.

GH: I helped Mother all that time. It come down that Mother and I finally ended up that we were the only two there. Wilie was there for a long time, but then he'd work at the mill. We'd go out and work and then we'd come in and that's when I learned I like squash. I really didn't like it, but we'd come in and fix a few potatoes and Mother'd cook some squash and we'd fry them. And that would be our dinner. I learned to like squash and I still do. You can fry squash and it cooks in a hurry.

VC: You know that is so odd because my mother came from Czechoslovakia to Canada and the same situation only I think it was pumpkins, I don't think it was squash. And when she'd get home from school her mother would have pumpkin baked. And they would sit and talk and eat squash and butter.

GH: Well, Mother liked horses too. She came from New Zealand and she had a little pony over in New Zealand called Pep. She rode that and she said that was the best horse she ever rode. And we would get through with the hay and whatever we had and we'd take a couple horses and we'd ride up on the hill and we'd go huckleberrying. Gosh, we picked huckleberries and huckleberries.

VC: Were they any more plentiful then than they are now?

GH: Well, there were places up on this side hill, but they've logged so much up there I think they've ruined a lot of the patches and that. And a lot of times I would be working and mother would get on a horse and she'd ride up over the ridge up there. And she went over the mount, just over the mountain, and she found a lovely patch. And Mother when ever she went she'd take two or three gallons and dish towels and she'd always come home if she found berries with them all full. One time she came home she had them...well, she'd take the dish towels to tie around the buckets so that the lids wouldn't come off. And she called me and told me she needed some help to get off the horse. I went out there and she had the buckets all full and she had a gallon tied in a towel and it was sitting on her lap. So I took them and I've often wondered how she got on the horse with those tied in just a flour sack.

VC: She must have been a pretty fast picker?

GH: Oh, she was. I finally got that I could pick a half gallon by the time she had picked a gallon. And she hadn't picked that one out. She said, "Gertie, I want you to go up with me tomorrow." So we went up and we filled ours and came back. So the next day we told Aunt Mildred from Union and asked her if she'd like to go and we called Gene, here, and asked him if he'd like to go. And we went up there and we picked the patch finally out. And we come to find out that we had picked twenty-seven gallons of huckleberries out of that one patch.

VC: [gasp] My gosh, I bet you made jam. Of course you didn't have freezers in those days, did you?

GH: No, Mother canned a lot and made a lot of jam. And I still see those pies. She'd make huckleberry pies with whipped cream on top of them. Real whipped cream, of course.

VC: That's absolutely wonderful.

GH: So I have, in a way, been farming ever since I was knee high to a grasshopper.

VC: Yea.

GH: So I figured that is probably one of my missions was to help Mother. And then when we came down here Gene still had a job so I practically ran the farm here. I figured I had that mission too to help him. But before we took over, while Dale was still here, Grandpa Hibbert... Well, of course I was raised up in those terrible '30s when there wasn't any work...any job that they...they had...couldn't even pay the...all they could pay to keep this was to pay the rent. (142) So when it started to open up a little bit he had a chance to work for the railroad, a job on the railroad. And so he'd come in...Karen was a baby then, he asked me if I would come out and help him run the farm so he could go to work. So I said yes, I'd do that if Grandma would tend the baby. The others was put them into school. So when I got them off to school I'd come out and leave the baby here at the house. That's the house, but only it was over here. Then I'd go catch the horses and worked the summer fallow and whatever.

VC: What did you...now did you have wood heat?

GH: Yes. I never had electricity until we moved out here. Never had a washer like we have now. We finally bought a washer...well, Gene and them...the reason they left Arizona they lost everything they had down there and they come up here. So Gene would not take anything...if he couldn't pay for it he wouldn't get it. But he was working at the light company at that time and they were selling washers so he got one and had them take it out of his...paid on time. That was about the only thing we paid on time.

VC: Now was that electrical or was that an engine?

GH: It was electric, but it had the rollers, you know, and that. So we would use that.

VC: And did you have a refrigerator?

GH: Yes, we finally got a 'fridgerator while we was...we lived in there on Cove Avenue for twenty years and then we've been out here since 1964.

VC: I tell you, you've been a worker. What do you remember about health care in your family when you were a child?

GH: Well, around this Mt. Glen Mother would...she would...anybody got sick, they called Mom. Us kids...and at that time when they had a baby stayed in bed for ten days. Mother would go out there and stay and help them and she'd call home and tell us what to do and we done it. So I thought we were pretty good to stay alone for ten days. Lot of times some of them would come to her place and stay and she'd be their help for the baby. And if anybody got sick they always called for Mom. She was just a regular...And then when the flu was on so bad everybody in the whole...there were about fifteen families around here, just about like it is now, and none of them had electricity wasn't out here. They did have a phone, one hanging on the wall, you know. They all got sick with my dad. That was the year, 1919 about I guess, because it was a year before he passed away and he passed away in 1920. He went around doing our chores and he went around to all the ones in the valley and done their chores. Then the next year he... Well, there was a girl...there was two...twice they were out, Parley Fiek and the Fieks had been over the mountain down towards Fiddler's Hill huckleberrying or something. Parley had

his little horse, but he must have wandered off and he got lost and he was over and didn't come back. And so everybody went out to hunt him. Of course Dad was one of those that went out. It was kind of stormy. That was what really got him, I guess. Right shortly after that there was...my uncle lived way back up La Grande up the mountain and they didn't have any children, but they had girls and boys work for them and take care of them. Well, they had a young girl that was working for them and she was tending the cows. Evidently, I don't understand, they must have a place they could run them, but they had to have these kind of watched and she was supposed to be doing that. So when the time to come bring the cows in she was gone. They didn't know...it was a stormy night...everybody went back up there and my dad...

VC: looking for her.

GH: Later on come to find out she and another girl had run off and they found her down in Washington.

VC: Oh, everybody looking for her and she wasn't even here.

GH: Of course, Dad got pneumonia and of course he never did get out of bed after that and he died.

VC: Well, I know this is the Summerville Cemetery, that's where Elton is, you know, and my mother and my dad, but so many died from that flu, whole families.

GH: I had an aunt that year that died. He missed the flu the year before, but he got this pneumonia.

VC: Did you have the flu?

GH: Oh, I don't remember. We had three cases of scarlet fever. We were quarantined to or three different times from school that we couldn't go to school. We had scarlet fever.

VC: I did too when I was a youngster. I can remember being delirious.

GH: Some of us had it harder than others.

VC: Well, I was just wondering if you did something different in taking care of yourself is why you got over it?

GH: Well, I tell you, I don't know. We never had any fancy foods, we never went hungry, but we didn't have the luxuries, that was for sure. Mother always canned had lots of canning. We had fruits and vegetables like that. She'd always go and get...buy a barrel of flour, maybe two barrels of flour, and I doubt anyone now would know what a barrel of flour is. And she'd put that to make our bread. She always made our bread. She had pigs. She'd generally butcher one pig. And we killed one milk...skim milk calf or something and that was all the meat we had. We had some chicken. We'd kill them once in a while. If we ever got sick Mother would kill a chicken and make us chicken soup.

VC: She's smart.

GH: And with out liniment or something we'd have chicken soup.

VC: They've proved now today that chicken soup helps colds.

GH: I tell you her patriarchal blessing said that she would have the power over sickness and disease. And everywhere she went she went in that room they got better. She just seemed like she knew what to do when she went in, or something.

VC: A wonderful gift. Was there any experiences in school that you wish to recall?

GH: Well, went to Mt. Glen school went to the grades down there in that little house now across from where Ivan and Lee Flowers live. And we walked down which is a mile. When the snow was deep we'd all climb on a little horse we had, we called her Topsy, there was five of us and we'd all get on the horse and we'd ride down to the school and then we'd get off and then we'd turn her loose and she'd go back home.

VC: Oh, is that right?

GH: And then we'd get to school.

VC: And how would you get home?

GH: Well, we'd walk home. When Alec was there, if the snow was quite deep, he'd walk first and then kind of make the trail. 'Cause this snow got pretty deep.

VC: Oh, I know, especially these crossroads. When the wind comes from the north and south and it makes it pretty deep.

GH: We used to have a lot of fun in school there. They'd have a Halloween party a lot of times and some of the men would all come in with sheets over them through the windows and scare us. There was one thing we...our school always had a good Christmas program. We had a good Christmas program, but we'd always go down to the church and have it down there. And we had people from the valley come over to be our Christmas program. I don't know why we'd always have the sack of candy, a pretty good sack of candy not like they are now.

VC: Where was the church, hun?

GH: Well, it was located right where Dave Waite...where Bishop Bedard now lives...Dave Waite lived right next to where Ivan lives. The church was there and we had the church there Mt. Glen ward. Bishop Whiting was the bishop and he was bishop for I think it was thirty-six years. We built a recreation hall there and we used to have real good dances. We had a lot of valley people and that come to our hall. Nothing outstanding happened in school other than we had...

VC: You had eight grades, didn't you?

GH: Eight grades. One year we had thirty people in that eight grades and we were allowed ten minutes to go up and talk with the teacher.

VC: So what would you say was the difference of when you went to school and how they think about it today, the schools today?

GH: People wouldn't even thinking about walking that far. They won't even go on the bus. Some of them have to have a car of their own.

VC: Well, and there is such a lack of respect today, isn't there?

GH: Oh, they don't respect the older people.

VC: And they don't appreciate learning. They think they are doing the parents a favor, everybody a favor, but they don't realize how important school is to them, do they? Now a days it seems like.

GH: No, they really don't. I don't think they appreciate what they have now compared to what we had.

VC: And sometimes you wonder if that's the best thing or not.

GH: Well, I've often thought that I feel sorry for these kids that are getting married now and they expect to have what their parents have now. If they have it they are very fortunate.

VC: Usually they get so far in debt that they can't take care of it. They got to learn that it comes slowly.

GH: But I had to work to go to high school. I stayed in with Dr. Ralston and tended there kids nights and got up early in the morning and got breakfast started and tended them at night. They were kind of (261) people and were gone a lot. Every other week she would give me fifty cents if I stayed in on Saturday and cleaned the house. Heavens, fifty cents was gold in those days!

VC: Sounds awful now! [laughter]

GH: Dr. Ralston came in and I was working and he was sitting there and jingling his money around in his pocket and I said, "If you've got so much money, why don't you give Gertie a dollar?" And he put down a silver dollar. And I had never seen anything so big in my life. That was really a treat.

VC: How much was a loaf of bread in those days? Could you buy it?

GH: You could buy a loaf of bread for ten cents and you could get a quart of milk for ten cents. And when I got...Alec had a car and he would let me drive it, but wouldn't some of the others. But I could go in there, he had a little service station where he got his gas, and you could get four gallons of gas for a dollar.

VC: My goodness.

GH: Even then it was hard to get that dollar.

VC: Well yes. You didn't make that much money, either. It balances out. What part did religion play in your life, especially in the early years?

GH: Well, that was our life. Mother was a convert in New Zealand. She knew it was true as soon as she heard it. When the elders came over there just her and the kids were over there, but she knew...the Lindseys always invited them in and were very hospitable...and so she invited them in to eat and when she asked them what they wanted to drink, tea or coffee, they said just some water. But before Grandma Lindsey came home they had finished supper and they were in by the fireplace talking and explaining the Word of Wisdom to them. And Mother said to Lee, or Walter, one of their brothers, she said, "Let's make a promise right now that we'll never touch that again." And on her dying grave she said... I don't know about Walter, I thought it was Will, but Walter...she said, I don't know about Walter, but I've never touched it since then. I think she was about nineteen before she came to Oregon, so just before that.

VC: And your father, where was he from?

GH: He was born in Salem, Utah and he came to La Grande...well, they were poor as church mice and they kind of farmed their kids out. My dad went to live with a man by the name of Romanuel. He worked with him and then went the beets started they decided they wanted to try some beets up here, I think it was, well, he came up and brought my dad with him. My dad was here when Mother and them came here from New Zealand. [cough] and that's how...

VC: How did the sugar beets go in this valley?

GH: Didn't go.

VC: Didn't go. Too cold?

GH: I don't know.

VC: So getting back to religion, what church do belong to?

GH: LDS Church. They had this was the first ward, one of the earliest wards they had, the little ward down here. Of course, Mother that's what she came...and she really believed it. She didn't waver one way of the other.

VC: Did she convert your dad?

GH: No, he was a member.

VC: Oh, isn't that wonderful! Really?

GH: Yes, they were all members down there in Payson and Salem, Utah. His dad finally moved up to Rigby. That's where they died, my grandparents. But Dad was here.

VC: Let's see. What are some of the basic philosophies that were part of your mother's life and teachings that you learned?

GH: She always...she would read Bible stories to us. We had kind of a home evening, we didn't call it home evening, but we'd all sit around the old potbelly stove and she'd read out of the Book of Mormon or the Bible. Then she'd tell us stories of what she had over in New Zealand. They'd go swimming-[end of tape]

5/28/01, Gertie's home in La Grande, OR, tape 1, side 2

GH: You got a hold of one of them you'd up...they were mean.

VC: Oh yes. they were quite dangerous, weren't they?

GH: Yea. They said especially the boars. They'd take after you or anything. I guess she was very fortunate (2)

VC: No.

GH: But she only went to the third grade. She worked anytime anybody needed something. Mother always...until she finally never did. But I thought she done pretty good after she come here.

VC: Well good grief, she could read the Bible.

GH: Yes and she converted herself...taught herself to read and that.

VC: You know they say if you only have one book to learn to read from that the Bible has every word in it. That you would learn everything just from the Bible.

GH: All the other books...she was home working, or if somebody else needed she...well, she finally got discouraged. But they said she graduated into the third grade. [laughter] The key was the person that wanted to learn. She was smart enough to learn.

VC: How old were you when you got married, Gertie?

GH: I was about twenty-four.

VC: And married to the same man?

GH: Yea. We went together almost seven years before we got married. The first date was to his senior play. He invited me to go to the senior play with him. That...he graduated in '30, 1930. And graduated the year before I did.

VC: And so what year did you get married?

GH: '36.

VC: '36? And is he still with you?

GH: No, he passed away in 1977. He's been gone soon twenty-five years.

VC: My word. Its not fun being alone sometimes, is it?

GH: No.

VC: Do you have a hard time preparing yourself meals?

GH: Uh, well, I never did like to cook. When I'm alone I eat what there is or easy to fix. After he retired we'd be out there...Doug was always busy wherever he went. If he waited for a load of wood I went with him 'cause I liked to be with him.

VC: You drive?

GH: Oh yes. I drive and...

VC: Thank goodness.

GH: And the tractor...you see when he got tractors then I could live on that tractor. (27) So I was...I am not a fancy cooker. We always...a lot of times when we'd be out there working together he said, "Well, don't you think its about time to go in and fix something to eat?" And I said, "Well, why don't go in and fix us and I'll finish up out here." [laughter] He was good at that.

VC: Oh that's great. You balanced out very well.

GH: Well, when we'd go hunting or camping he'd...I didn't have to worry about anything to eat. He always fixed that and he cooked it. I would take care of the horses. Stake them out or saddle them up. That's what we just did.

VC: Did you hunt?

GH: Yes. Well, I learned to hunt when they came up here. Gene's dad like to hunt. So he would take his boys and then he would take us orphan kids you might say. Because I didn't have a dad and Wilie...there's Wilie and I ... and the Waite boys didn't have a dad. He'd try to scrounge around and give us all guns. And then he'd tell us how to shoot and then we'd go hunting.

VC: So have you killed deer?

GH: I've killed a lot of them.

VC: Have you killed elk?

GH: Yes, a lot of them and deer.

VC: Same here. I didn't get to shoot...kill an elk. Anyway, getting back to you, how many children did you have?

GH: Eight.

VC: Eight.

GH: I had just the opposite from Mother. I had five boys and three girls.

VC: And do any of them live around here?

GH: Yes. Dallas lives just through the field here and Ivan lives over in the glen. And Dixie's here with me now.

VC: She living with you?

GH: They got her fixed up the basement as a separate part.

VC: That's nice.

GH: Then I've got...one lives over in Pendleton. And we were all...that was around here and the one that is in Pendleton...we went...yesterday we went up on the mountain. And they cut burnt brush and big piles after logging. They had fires going and then we had a wienie roast and salads and had a good dinner. We had a lot of fun. And then we were just getting ready to come home...Richard was burning in a different place than we were so we went over to see what he was doing. And he had his fire going and pretty soon there was this big cloud, black cloud coming over and it thundered...oh it thundered hard. And I said, "Boy, we're going to get a shower." And boy it was just like I said, it just poured down. And they were out in the field kind of gathering up...rounding up the fires. Before poor Dixie could get to car she

was soaking wet. [laughter] They said it lightnined down where they were and they were just getting ready...

VC: Good thing it rained good in case the lightning hit.

GH: Boy, I would have had to bring the tractor up. I was hoping what after raining that he'd leave the tractor up there and we'd go up tonight and get it. He said every time he went around a corner (60). Had to come home and get clean.

VC: You know, I didn't talk about what were you raising here on the ranch when you were plowing and stuff.

GH: Right here?

VC: Uh, huh.

GH: Well, when we moved out here we didn't have...well, we had some chickens. Before we really took it over his dad and that were in town and we'd kind of go back and forth. We got a bunch of these (64) roosters and we put them...we had a chicken house out here...and we'd put them out there and then we'd come out there once in a while. And he was the troubleshooter on the telephone. He was going all around and always kind of come by every once in a few to see if everything was alright. It seemed to be. One day he come out this way and he'd seen his dad's car sitting there and the dog underneath it. So he got kind of wondering about it and so he got out and looked around and saw him out...just out at the chicken house there. He had been targeting his gun to go hunting...it was in September and it been raining. Before that we had gone up grouse hunting or something on Mt. Emily and it poured up there when we were up there. But his clothes were not wet. But the ground was...he had put on some overshoes over his suit and you could see where he'd walked.

VC: Well, did he shoot himself or did he have heart attack?

GH: A heart attack. You could see how his tracks were faltering. Wilie was sitting up on his porch and he'd been shooting his gun. But can't seen Dale. But he said something about his gun and he took it out back and then he looked up and he said he couldn't see him and he said, "I wonder where he went to." If he hadn't have drawn off he'd have seen him drop. They said he had one arm thrown out like he was trying to get in. They said he had a shell in it like he was coming back and was going to try it once more.

VC: Honey, when you were plowing the fields what were you planting?

GH: Well, we planted wheat.

VC: Wheat.

GH: Generally wheat. We had wheat and then we had alfalfa here that was already on here. We didn't have a baler then either. Finally we got a baler to bale. Guess when I was growing up up there at the farm Mother and I would rake that and then have to shock it. And then we'd have to pitch it all loose.

VC: Oh my, no combines or nothing?

GH: No. We'd haul that hay. And then we took and drove in kind of a lean-to and then...I generally got the job of forking from the (89) up into the barn. After we were here we finally got a baler that we could bale and after Gene died I got a swather. I tried talking him into getting a swather, but he said "Oh, we don't need it."

VC: You needed it.

GH: That was a blessing to get that. It saved time 'cause it was woved. You didn't have to rake it after that.

VC: Not only that, if it was going to rain or something you could go out and swath it a whole lot faster.

GH: We appreciated that.

VC: I bet. Well, honey, let me...how is the cemetery you are most familiar with organized and financed and maintained over many years?

GH: Well, when my dad died...where he is buried now it was not in...it was just grown up in weeds and that. And the city didn't have to take it over. And Mother bought a plot which would take...bury four of five people in that one plot.

VC: Where?

GH: Right on the corner here up in the cemetery...

VC: The one here on Mt. Glen?

GH: No, no. Hillcrest.

VC: Okay.

GH: Right up in there. Dad was buried there. And then...luckily I remembered to visit and finally the city finally took it over and they fixed it so it is like it is now. But when Dad was buried there you had to go up there and kind of clean the weeds.

VC: Kind of maintain it yourself.

GH: Yea.

VC: I know Elmer said there out at Summerville they would have a great big potluck and then they'd sell it. Then they raised money for the cemetery that way until it was taken over by taxes.

GH: No, we had...all I know that Mother bought that plot. Then they buried somebody on one corner of it. They would have dug it up, but Mother said no, it was only that corner.

VC: They didn't realize that she owned it, in other words.

GH: Something got mixed up. Ida and her husband are buried on that plot by Mother. And Wilie's got...he lost a little girl so she's buried there and then they've got plot there. So it would be Ida and Mark and Mother and Dad and Wilie and Jeannie and then Elaine.

VC: And where will you go?

GH: Well, we bought...when we knew that Gene's mother was bad, that she wasn't going to live very much longer, between Eugene's dad...he bought two lots...in this there was a lot running this way...and he bought two here so Gene bought what took five places, no, I guess it took six I guess, because Gene bought four. The rest of them. We buried his mother and then when he passed away we buried him there. And then when my daughter, after she was married, she had one child and then the next one she lost early. We had them bring it up here and we asked them about burying it there. And they said yes, but they generally take a little premature like that and bury it on top of someone. So that's what we done. We put it right on top of Gene's mother. Then we got back to Iowa and she had another one she lost.

VC: Oh, how sad!

GH: So they sent him out. So Dallas and I went up and we took right at the next one next to Grandma and we dug a little grave there and we buried it there. There's half

a lot back there, but there's three others over here. When Gene died we put Gene in and then there's one for me. There's one extra and Dixie says, "And that's mine!"

VC: I want to be there too, huh?

GH: And if I remember, that's one I'm going to have.

VC: Yea, I know.

GH: I do a lot of quilting. Mother always did a lot of quilting. I started quilting before I was married...when I was a teenager. I've done a lot here lately. In fact, since the middle of February I have pieced and quilted about eight or ten quilts.

VC: Oh my gosh. That's a lot of quilts.

GH: Yes it is. I enjoy it. Now Dixie, she keeps making a fancy one. I was trying to get rid of some of my scraps. I was doing pretty good at getting that then Viol one day she said they next door neighbor here has to go to the rest home and she has a lot of material she don't know what to do with. I told her I'd buy it and she said, "No, I'll just give it to you." But she said I've got (147). So she got me all that. So I worked that up.

VC: Is Vi your sister?

GH: Yea.

VC: Oh, I didn't stop to think about that. She was just over at Helen Butler's visiting her...visiting teaching.

GH: So then I was in at Salvation Army one day and they had a big grocery basket, cart, full of quilting material...quilt tops. And I got to looking through that and they said...she brought me a big grocery bag over there...she said, "All you can cram in there you can have for five dollars." I filled that clear full, but the funny thing was somebody, I don't know what they planned on doing, there was enough material there in sheeting that they had cut in two or different sizes. And I took that...I took it all...and I got the lining for three quilts out of that.

VC: Oh, isn't that wonderful.

GH: So after I got it all in there she said you go there and pick out whatever you want and what you don't want put in this other place. So I had that full when I took it up there she charged me a dollar.

VC: Oh how wonderful! You're supposed to quilt!

GH: Heavens! I have made quilts and made quilts. In fact, I just took one off last night.

VC: Oh, I saw that laying there.

GH: I almost put it down there in the basement, but... 'cause I've got them done and I've got the nice quilting frames that...stands that I made down there. But I didn't want bring them up here and I don't want to bother her all the time. So I fixed me up some here and I tie them on these quilts...these lines a hanging on that. And I just put them there and then I can quilt when I want to and it stays. And so I don't have to bother here and I don't have to run up and down the stairs because it's getting harder to do that.

VC: True, very true.

GH: I've got four other tops that I'd like to get finished before I can't, but I don't know whether I will get around to it or not. It was pretty hard on this one because I can't sit too long and I can't stand too long and...

VC: Just a little slower that you used to be.

GH: But I can quilt...in fact I can fill a pretty good sized quilt there in a couple days.

VC: Oh my goodness!

GH: Yea, it don't take me long.

VC: That's great.

GH: But I don't go around the block like I used to. I can go through and do zigzag through here and I've come to the conclusion they look just as nice that way and maybe better than if you took around each block. And you can do it in half the time.

[space in tape]

ES: You went to Mt. Glen school when you were in the first grade. How much of that can you remember? The first days you were there?

GH: Well the first days were kind of frightening, but I can sure remember the second year that I started the second year, 'cause we just started and Whitings that lived up across from that big red barn, they came over and said, "Send all the Nebeker home because their dad's not expected to live. So Alec and Helen and Ida and me and Vern, there was five of us there...of course the older ones they let out and run and I couldn't keep up. I was running and crying and telling them to wait. And I didn't do any better than that because I didn't wait for Vern and I (193). That was really frightening because when we got there was a lot of the family that had come. We just lived in a little old log cabin. Dad and Mother's bed was in the front room and we had two little rooms upstairs. Of course there wasn't room for us. I remember going out where there was a lot of the men standing and talking. They were saying how they felt about...what Mother was going to do because she had seven children and expecting an eighth. My uncle Vern, Vern Bean, he married my mother's sister, he said, "Well, I feel sorry fifty dollars. How about the rest of you?" So I guess several of them donated something to try and help. That was kind of...I don't know...we were sent down to Whitings and different places to stay until after the funeral.

ES: Were you about six years old then?

GH: I had just turned seven.

ES: So it was about 1918?

GH: He died in 1920. September.

ES: At that time was it still a Mormon school or was it part of the public school system?

GH: It was just a public school. We had a exams in every one of our classes from...they came from Salem or down there and they wrote out the questions and we had to answer them.

ES: That was in the eighth grade, wasn't it?

GH: Yea, that was in the eighth grade.

ES: You entered into the first grade, didn't you?

GH: Yea.

ES: What I'd like to get, if you can remember, is how the teacher looked. When you came in the room what you did and what the activities were doing the day?

GH: Well, I think was scared. I think Mother must have went with me the first day.

ES: Why were you scared?

GH: Well, I'd never been to school before. If you want to turn that off for a minute I can show you what...

ES: The first teacher that you had was Imagene...well, she was the teacher for all the kids, of course...Imagene Orton?

GH: Yea.

ES: Was she young?

GH: Well, I don't think she was married. There's a picture of the schoolhouse.

ES: Ah, yes. Do you know when this was taken?

GH: Well, it says...this teacher here is Ms. Betts.

ES: Ah yes. Ms. Betts looks as though she's about eighteen years old. Mrs. Betts.

GH: I think it was really nice she laid it out...

ES: Here is Gertie Nebeker in the fourth grade. Gertie Nebeker and Luther Feik.

GH: Feik.

ES: And do you think these pictures were taken by this teacher?

GH: I think so. I think she had to because she went through all the trouble of fixing them. I thought she got a real good picture of the schoolhouse.

ES: So these were...this was in the year 1923 and 1924. When you went in, after you got over being afraid of going into school, what were the first things you did in the morning?

GH: Before we came in they saluted the flag. They had a flagpole...

ES: Outside?

GH: Uh, huh.

ES: Even in the cold weather?

GH: They took it down when it started raining... the flag went down early in the morning. We stood on the walk and saluted the flag. And then when we got in we quite often we sat down and then got up stood in the aisle ways and we exercised up and down the...

ES: Cal esthetics?

GH: I guess. Up on our toes and reaching up and down and whatever. But there were so many grades there that some of the older children helped the younger ones with their spelling and their arithmetic and so on and so forth. I remember one year, probably along in this age I believe or close to it, some of the older ones would come and help us with our arithmetic and our spelling. But there were thirty children in the school right here and there were all eight grades. And the teacher would give us ten minutes. We'd go up with our class up and sit on a bench up by her then she'd ask us questions or talk to us.

ES: About arithmetic?

GH: Or whatever we'd got.

ES: Was she kind of giving you a test?

GH: I think so to see if we had studied or whatever.

ES: Were you nervous when you'd do that?

GH: Oh I was because I didn't like reading. It was hard for me to read. There was two of us, just two of us, in I think it was the third grade. She would hold me on her lap and she'd have Morris read the stories to me. That didn't me with reading. That year she passed me up to the fourth (252). From the time school was out until the next time I never looked in the book. She put me back in the third grade with my

brother. That bothered me, but I think it kind of woke me up 'cause I worked real hard because I was sure I would get better grades and I did. I've had to make myself read, but I think I can do it so I can do pretty good at it.

ES: You had some books in the school didn't you?

GH: Yes.

ES: Did you have to buy your own books?

GH: Well, maybe and maybe not. I know when Mother would sell her wheat. She would get on the horse and buggy and get the check and she'd make out her tithing and then she'd make out what she had to pay on the farm. And then what was left over would go to school. We had paper and pencils. I don't remember whether we had to buy books or not. I kind of think the books would be furnished. I don't remember.

ES: The furniture in the classroom. Did you have the kind of desks that are mounted together on a row?

GH: Yea and one behind the other. Some of the big boys sat behind me (267). I remember once that one of the girls got mad at them...no, she got mad at the teacher and she took up her ink bottle and threw it at her. We had a lot of (270)

ES: What did you do about lunch?

GH: Oh, took a sandwich or something from home.

ES: Did you eat it outside usually?

GH: Oh, I think we might, or at our desk.

ES: At your desk?

GH: Mm hmm.

ES: Somebody told me that the only source of water was in a trough over next to the barn, where Lee Flowers barn is now. Do you remember that?

GH: No there wasn't. There was a house right over across the street where...there was a house there and Frederick lived there and on the back porch he had a pump. The boys and (276) went over there and get the water. They'd bring it over and they had a big trough and they'd fill it up with that and then of course they'd (277) and lift it out. But that's where we got the water while I was there.

ES: And you had a boys's outhouse and a girls's outhouse?

GH: Uh, huh. They were wood sheds down along the fence between Lee's and the place down in the school yard. And there was a fence (281) and there was an outhouse the boys went to the woodshed and the girls went (282).

ES: Did that work out alright?

GH: Yea.

ES: Were you used to that at home anyway?

GH: Well, yes.

ES: It wasn't a novelty to anybody.

GH: No, I tell you the roads were muddy. My sister started going with a boy and, why, he had a car. And he come up from Mt. Glen where (286) lives now and he'd get stuck if he wasn't real careful. Then when it finally got graded a little...they graded it and then graveled it. That was a little better.

ES: And you went to school, I think, probably from nine o'clock in the morning to four o'clock in the afternoon, is that right?

GH: I think the younger kids got out a little earlier.

ES: Did the teacher usually assign any homework?
GH: Well, yes and no. The little ones didn't, but when it got up to the bigger ones we did.
ES: What would that homework be? More arithmetic problems or reading a chapter from a book?
GH: Well, [pause] spelling. Learn how to spell good. (296)
ES: Was there a lot of attention to penmanship?
GH: Yea, they did that quite a little bit.
ES: Did everyone, as far as you could tell, write well?
GH: Well, a little bit. I don't remember that. I remember making (300) up and down, up and down.
ES: That's called the Spencer method of teaching handwriting.
GH: But they didn't...when I started first grade they didn't have phonics. A little later when my younger sister started they had phonics. They learned quicker than I did. You didn't have to...even today I can spell a little (306)
ES: You were probably guessing too much of the time. That's why you didn't read too well. You spoke about the girl who got angry at the teacher and threw the ink well. Generally, how was discipline or order in the classroom?
GH: They had pretty good consider how many was in there. How the boys got to teasing the girls. They'd sit and annoy them by pulling there hair. The teachers were pretty strict in making them behave [end of tape]

6/13/01, Gertie's home in La Grande, OR, tape 2, side 1

GH: ...my third grade teacher before that her name was Beda Durds.
ES: Beda?
GH: Beda.
ES: b-e-d-a or b-a-d-a?
GH: I thought it was spelled b-a-d-a, Beda Driggs. But they lived right up just as you drive up the first hill at Mt. Glen out there.
ES: My impression is that most of the teachers were young and that they didn't stay very long in one school.
GH: Well, generally not. I think Imagene Orton stayed a couple years. Don Smith (5) Mrs. Dep they were doing that one year. Then (7) was my best friend. Ms. Bertha Stocks, she was an older woman. I can remember seeing her...she had white hair, but during the week she said that she'd be outside just standing over by the river looking out and seeing Maggie. (10?) Then we had Mr. Ferguson was my eighth grade teacher and he was a full grown adult. And Evan Baxter he was married. And a lot of time his wife was the substitute for him (13).
ES: Did school seem different when you had a male teacher from a female?
GH: No, it didn't seem to me. At first I think I was a little more shy with them at first, but (17).
ES: What sorts of games played around school?
GH: Well, we played baseball a lot by using the backside of the (19). And then it had a little down the hill (19). But then we played the...we'd line up on the sidewalk

over there and then we'd have a place where we had to try and get across and get something they had out there. I don't know what we'd call it. If you could get whatever they had out there and get back you were safe, but if you got caught why then you were got and had to do something. And they used...some of the boys got this pole vaulting a little bit, just a stick, but uh...we'd play Kick the Can and Hide and Seek. 'Cause we had those big trees...but we played baseball a lot.

ES: When it was time to come into school again did she ring a bell?

GH: She had a big old bell.

ES: Who do you think cleaned the room?

GH: Well, I think...was it Mrs. Allen, Lola Allen, I think she cleaned some...

ES: Was she a janitor then and not a teacher?

GH: She wasn't a teacher. I think...her...they had a lot of times boarded the school teacher...Allens did and then there was a Bezwick that lived up the lane a ways that they took care of the teacher once in a while. But Lola Allen and her husband kept the teacher rather than those that had their own home.

ES: Do you remember how the school room smelled?

GH: Well, there was a great big potbellied stove. It had a big thing around it.

ES: Sort of a guardian or protector.

GH: Yea. When we was playing out in the snow we had clothes that we'd hand them over. Got them kind of warm.

ES: You'd smell the drying clothes. Or the wet ones, I should say.

GH: But the...I...there's a place right here [paper shuffle] is where the vent came out of the school, or the fire.

ES: The ashes you mean?

GH: No, just...it was a place you could hear. Some of the parents would come to see the teacher and we'd get close to here to hear what she had to say.

ES: What was it for?

GH: Well, I think it was a furnace air or something (47).

ES: Sort of a flue for the stove?

GH: Yes, kind of.

ES: But there was a chimney up through the roof, wasn't there?

GH: Well, yea, but this came out and you could hear...if you listened right there you could hear when she talking to parents. And we had...first there was the main school then there was the front through here. That's where we hung our hats and coats and overshoes.

ES: I peeked in there. I saw that.

GH: We played games in that. We played tag or that in there. But we had some real good play groups. But we'd always go down to the church to put them on because we didn't have...

ES: I remember you saying that. The church is no longer there right.

GH: No.

ES: So you graduated from eighth grade there? You took all the state tests and passed all those?

GH: Mm hmm.

ES: Do you remember what they were? English, science, history, arithmetic...

GH: And spelling and agriculture.

ES: Somebody said physiology, is that what you remember?

GH: No, I don't. I know we had a piece of paper about half as this and it had questions on there and they'd give you one of those and you had to answer them. And you had get through in a certain length of time. You couldn't take all day or take it home.

ES: Would you do that in May?

GH: Just the first. I think Mt. Glen school got out in April...

ES: They did?

GH: I was out a month earlier than the (63) school down here and the mass chapel school.

ES: Do you know why?

GH: I don't know why. I know that the kids down at the (65) school they didn't think that was fair that we got out early. A month before the others. I remember one winter there was an awful lot of scarlet fever out this way. And we were quarantined two different times.

ES: Tell me more about being quarantined at that time. I remember begin quarantined as a child, but what was your experience?

GH: Well, we had to stay home. We couldn't go out to anything.

ES: Did you have to stay in you own bedroom?

GH: No.

ES: Just any place in the house?

GH: One time, I think it was Mrs. Betts that was teaching when we...it took about a month, three weeks to a month, that we were quarantined.

ES: And that was for what illness?

GH: Scarlet fever.

ES: Scarlet fever.

GH: It was so catching that we couldn't go out...

ES: Did somebody tack a sign on your door that said "quarantined"?

GH: No, I don't think so.

ES: No, okay.

GH: No, we just did what we did. I know that...(77) and it was on a Friday. And we all went to school. (78) And the teacher she...I guess she was scared...she went up the lane there to (80)...he must have been on the school board or something...and they come back and closed the school. I remember us coming back...I do remember she got scared because we came.

ES: Were allowed to do any schoolwork while you were quarantined at home?

GH: Not that I remember. We were just quarantined. But that one year we missed two months in fact.

ES: What did you do while you were quarantined?

GH: Oh, just around the house...

ES: Yea, but what?

GH: Oh, if we was sick we was in bed.

ES: You probably weren't that sick all the time.

GH: Well, no, but some of us were, were really sick. Mother used to take care of us.

ES: That brings up another subject. You said that you mother was kind of a visiting nurse. She seemed to know how to take care of people.

GH: She had that. She could walk in a room and it seemed like she knew what to do and they got better.

ES: She'd never been to any kind of a school or training program for that?

GH: No, she came from New Zealand and she and just went three years to school. She just passed the third grade. So she taught herself. She read pretty good.

ES: Was she using home remedies, various kinds of liniments and things that she could make?

GH: Mostly plasters and I don't even know if you remember some of them. We got pretty red and sometimes they burnt you.

ES: I know.

GH: She used that...a lot of...that that she rubbed on you or something. She'd always kill a chicken and make us chicken soup, noodle soup.

ES: At that time was there such a thing as Vicks ointment?

GH: Well, there probably was later. It seems like...

ES: That's one of the preparations you could buy at the store at that time. Would she have bought some things such as that?

GH: Well, yes, but at that time we didn't have money to buy anything hardly. A little later, during the hard times in the '30s, it was hard. We survived on what we raised and what we canned. Mother'd go out and buy at a rummage sale and make us a little clothes.

ES: I was growing up then, too. What would she give for a cough, your mother?

GH: Well, I just...(108) an awful lot on our throat. But I really don't know whether she had a kind of liniment or something that she'd give us.

ES: Did she try to give you anything when you had the scarlet fever or just tell you to wait it out?

GH: Well, I don't think there was much they could have done.

ES: Probably not.

GH: I know some of it was just (112) and others it wasn't so hard. But some of us got it pretty hard.

ES: You probably had measles, too?

GH: Yes. Measles and scarlet fever...

ES: Chicken pox?

GH: Chicken pox and whooping cough. I didn't get whooping cough. I don't remember getting...I don't think I got (117).

ES: Most kids did get all those communicable diseases, didn't they?

GH: Oh yea. After our kids...my kids (118) I think they got everything they were going to get. I told my husband, my gosh, we just had interest in the drug stores.

ES: Was your mother also a midwife?

GH: Well, they didn't call her that, but every time they had a baby she was over there with them. Some of them came to our place.

ES: But she actually assisted in the delivery?

GH: She helped the doctor.

ES: Oh, the doctor?

GH: They'd have the doctor come up.

ES: So she wasn't probably a midwife. They usually do it by themselves.

GH: I think she probably could, but not that I know of that she ever did.

ES: At that time, in the 1910-20 period, were most births at home?
GH: Yes. Most of them. A lot of them were out here.
ES: Yours weren't, though, were they?
GH: No. Well, I had two of them at home. The doctor came, Dr. (130). He was a good doctor. Some of the doctors (131). I had two girls and another one (132).
ES: Did she talk to you about what she actually did?
GH: No. She cooked and took care...
ES: No, I mean at a birthing.
GH: Well, she was right there if the doctor needed any help and he assisted in anything that he wanted.
ES: Do you think she would cut the umbilical cord?
GH: I don't think she did.
ES: Clean up the baby?
GH: Oh yes. She'd always clean up the baby.
ES: Got the blankets ready to wrap it in.
GH: Hot water and warm blankets.
ES: Do you remember...were there...there wasn't any anesthetic, was there, for mothers then?
GH: No.
ES: So do you remember a lot of screaming?
GH: I wasn't there. I don't know. I had an older sister and she had her children in our home up there. I was there, but I walked in the room and then I was out. (142)
ES: That's unusual. What would have happened in those times out here if a baby was born stillborn or dead or died shortly after birth? What would people do next?
GH: Well, I tell you what, one of the families up here they came from Texas. She was a real seamstress and he was a carpenter. And they had a little baby and I wish I could remember whether it was a boy or a girl. But she...while she was in there she sewed the cutest little outfit for it and he made a little coffin. And then we visited...some of us in the glen here went up on that hill out in the...the undertaker was out there I think too...way out in that corner and they dug a little grave and we sang a song or two and things like that. And years later I went out to see if I could find it because I knew just about where it should be, but there's no sign or nothing. But I wrote down to Texas...the name was Jones...and I believe they had one boy and I thought they might be able to come up and send it to the post office, but I never got an answer back. I imagine the parents was gone, but the boy was younger than I was and I thought that maybe there was a chance that would get that and he's still alive. So I never did really know just where it is. I imagine that...I know my sister had several...she had miscarriage a little boy...they lived close kind of to the hill and her husband dug a grave under a bush and buried it.
ES: Can you tell me anything about the Ackles Cemetery on Mt. Glen Road?
GH: I know...I went through there...a lot of the valley are there, their names are there.
ES: Mostly Mormons, right?
GH: No, I don't think so.
ES: Lee Flower referred to it as a Mormon cemetery.
GH: Well, I don't think so.
ES: Okay.

GH: I think... 'cause all the names that have... up there weren't members. They were probably out and about. The only names that I knew of that were Ray Allen and his wife was buried there. But that was years after, kind of late. There might have been... they had it up there... Hillcrest Cemetery... before they fixed the whole thing up they was probably called... it was just the weeds and that... they called that the LDS section...

ES: Oh, they did?

GH: My dad he was buried there and it was just weeds and everything around our plot. And he was buried there and I don't know... later on my brother they lost a child and she wouldn't bury it there, she got one where it was already fixed up. But now they got it fixed and it makes it nice.

ES: Now my understanding that across the street from Hillcrest was originally a place for only Catholics.

GH: I don't know, I just figured it was. We'd always go out the Catholic part... cemetery part.

ES: Were you aware at that time of cemeteries that were pretty much segregated by religion?

GH: Well, I knew that theirs was, but I didn't...

ES: But you spoke of the LDS part of Hillcrest?

GH: Yes, they had that. We didn't own it, but it was there that they called it there. And then they passed a law or something that they had to fix it all up.

ES: Why do you think people would have wanted that kind of separation?

GH: I really don't know. As far as I'm concerned, I don't care what religion you have. I want to make friends with all of them. So I don't know. I know that the LDS people that I knew... I had an aunt buried about same time my dad died and they down in there.

ES: Were you aware in the 1920s of the Ku Klux Klan in La Grande?

GH: No, I don't know... I heard about them, but I didn't know anything about them. I was only seven when my dad died.

ES: They did sometimes have parades. Sometimes they burned crosses. I thought maybe you have seen or heard about things like that.

GH: No, we hardly ever got to town. Once a week we'd go to town and drive our horse and buggy in there. There was this little store right about where the Sacagawea is now. (198) and we'd tie our horse in there and we'd take and put our bricks in on that stove and got our shopping done and then we'd take those bricks and put them somewhere we'd keep our feet warm when we'd come home.

ES: And what kind of things were you buying?

GH: Well, it wasn't... it was a few groceries.

ES: Like vegetables or fruits or canned things?

GH: Well, I don't think we had many cans. Mother canned a lot. We bought flour, but generally she harvested what little wheat we had. She'd buy two barrels of flour. I don't suppose that people know what a barrel of flour is.

ES: Someone like me would.

GH: They'd last us about all winter. She did good.

ES: You'd buy things at the store that you couldn't make for yourself?

GH: Yes, but...

ES: Soap?

GH: Soap. Well, we got to making to soap, we finally...

ES: I'm trying to find out what you needed to buy.

GH: Well, we had to buy canned soup and paper and maybe some stockings or something like that. We'd go to a rummage sale and they were generally on Saturday and we'd buy some of those. You could get a lot of nice clothes for little or nothing. And she was a good sewer and she'd make them over for us.

ES: And did you regard those trips as being fun?

GH: Yes, I didn't mind it at all. I went quite often Mother. We only had one seat and just one horse.

ES: She always drove?

GH: When the snow was in drifts. But not when I could drive. But I learned to drive when before Dad died.

ES: Yes, I remember you saying that. So you would then when you were a teenager drive the horse into La Grande?

GH: Oh yes. (217) We'd go ride the horses up on solid ground and we never had saddles. See what we could do on those horses.

ES: What else did you get to do while you were in town?

GH: Once in a while...I remember once that we went to a restaurant there on Depot Street, I think it was. And we had soup with those little tiny crackers. And that was choice...

ES: A treat, huh?

GH: It sure was. We didn't...once in a while we'd get a little candy. I had a grandfather that they never did tell me that he'd always had a bag of candy for us. And he'd always give it to the youngest one. I know Gene's dad done the same thing with our kids. He'd always give it to Dixie.

ES: I suppose when you were in town you watched the trains go through?

GH: We had a...we weren't here that long to see many trains go through. I remember though that the horses went up and down Adams Avenue. And there was a man that went along with a little cart and a scoop shovel and he cleaned up the street. And I thought what would happen when they have cars and the stuff would get on cars [chuckle]. The streets weren't paved. There were boards...board sidewalk. Two because I remember across from one street to the other.

ES: Were there gas streetlamps then or some other fuel or were they electric?

GH: Well, there wasn't many that you could tell. That I remember.

ES: No street lights at all?

GH: I don't think so.

ES: What other towns in the valley did you visit frequently when you were young?

GH: Well, after we got teenagers quite often we'd go over to Imber and Elgin and visit some of the kids over there our age. I had an uncle that lived out of Union up Catherine Creek (243). And I know we went over there, he invited us over for dinner one time. And he invited the Feiks, too, and they had a car. So they took them out there and some of the kids, but Alec and some us other kids went in the horse and buggy and drove to Union and then had to drive back.

ES: How long did it take to get from here to Union?

GH: I think quite a while. I don't remember.

ES: Three or four hours?

GH: Oh, no, probably an hour at least. We always trotted the horses. They trotted kind of through the valley. They were this side of Union. I think we could make it over there and back in a day and have dinner and that.

ES: Even with trips like this did you feel isolated out here?

GH: No. This is our home.

ES: Had plenty to do taking care of the place.

GH: Well, we had a few cows and then the horses and had some pigs and some chickens and took care of that stuff. But that's all we was used to. We had...

ES: And I'll bet you pretty much went to bed when it got dark and got up when it got light?

GH: Yes. On Christmas, though, we got up way early. [laughter]

ES: You spoke about some wild animals around here like wild pigs.

GH: Oh, that was in New Zealand when Mother would tell us of the wild pigs...

ES: Oh, I didn't realize you were telling her story then. But there were some wild animals in this valley, there still are. Did you see cougars, bears?

GH: No, I never saw bear when I was young. I had a lot of coyotes around here. Owls.

ES: Hawks.

GH: Hawks and pheasants and that. We went deer hunting, I'll probably say that again, but Gene's dad took... Wilie and I didn't have a dad and the Waite boys didn't have a dad and he'd take us deer hunting.

ES: Would that be up on Mt. Emily?

GH: Yes, the back of Mt. Emily we went up there a ways. I was talking to somebody the other day, I said, "Gee, I'd sure like to be able to walk those ridges again." Its so pretty up there. We used to...well, I guess one thing that we done as kids to entertain ourselves...we would take a lunch and we'd go up over those long ridges on top Mt. Emily to eat our lunch. And we would actually run up those ridges to see who could get to the top first. Of course then they had a big tower up there. We'd always climb the tower.

ES: Was that a tower for fire watching?

GH: Yea, just a...I know they had...but there used to be a man that lived up there and had to be up on that tower so many hours a day to spot any fires.

ES: How would he get a message if he saw one?

GH: I don't know.

ES: He didn't have a telephone, did he?

GH: Well, he might. They probably had some kind of system.

ES: Flag signals maybe?

GH: Or something. I really don't know, but I know they watched for the fires. We'd go up there and we got a lot of kick out of talking to him.

ES: Suppose he did spot a fire, would a lot of men get together and try to put it out.

GH: Oh yea. A couple times that somebody got lost up there. That's what my dad got sick of, hunting people that were supposed to be lost. Wasn't. We went horseback riding just around the bend back and forth...

ES: If you went hunting for deer up there would you go with horses?

GH: No, Gene's dad had a car...a pickup or something. And then some of the other boys at that time had a car. Well, they took horses up there because my husband,

before we'd been married, he rode a horse from here clear back and over the top and back further in case they got something in the canyon they could haul it out.

ES: That's what I was thinking. If you killed a deer you couldn't get it out without a horse or some kind of a vehicle, could you?

GH: Man power. [chuckle] Up back of Mt. Emily we were elk hunting, no, we were really deer hunting, but they walked through a canyon, my brother and some of them was going to drive the canyons and we were out here to see if they could drive something to us, and when they came out they said, "My gosh, there's an elk down there and we walked right by him and somebody had shot him, but he was laying there and he was still alive." So we thought we could go down and get him and they had to go clear to...I don't know where he went, Elgin or something...but the game warden come and asked permission to get him. They said yes and meet them at the top of the ridge where we were at such and such a time. Well, when they went down to get this one my husband just took a pistol and only took one rifle. And when they got down there that darned elk jumped up and ran down the ridge. And they chased him clear to the very bottom before they got him. And come to find out the next week there had been two of them. The one that didn't move was the one that my brother...[end of tape]

6/13/01, Gertie's home in La Grande, OR, tape 2, side 2

GH: (0) You take a big roast and put it in the oven and get it partially cooked. And then we would take off big liter jars and then we would have nice gravy to put in there. And then we would boil it, cold pack it, put some (4) in it. Then it sealed and we could come home from church or someplace and open a quart of that meat and gravy in there and we'd have a meal with sweet potatoes.

ES: Not even with a microwave. [laughter]

GH: Not even an electric stove either. I didn't have an electric stove until we moved out here in 1964. I cooked and canned and everything on a wood stove.

ES: Wood stove. Do you think that is a good way to do it? Would you regret doing it now?

GH: Probably not now.

ES: Too much work?

GH: And too long. You'd have to keep packing the wood in making the fire and that wasn't low. But when I...Eugene and I were married I could truthfully say that our kids were raised on deer meat. We never missed a year without getting their deer. And we generally get at least a half of elk. And the (16) kill a beef and have some beef and oh our kids wouldn't eat it.

ES: Didn't like the taste?

GH: No, just tasted the beef, I guess.

ES: Did you ever have to be concerned about these wild animals being diseased?

GH: I never thought about it, no. I never once thought about running into one (20). In fact, I was hoping that I would get to see something like that.

ES: What other wild animals did you kill and eat?

GH: Just a lot of rabbit. Mostly deer and elk.

ES: Any wild turkeys?

GH: Wasn't here?

ES: There weren't any?

GH: No. That's only been the last few years. Turkey has been...my grandson got turkey and his mother cooked it and invited me to come up and eat some. I was surprised that they don't look anything like the turkeys you buy. Long legs and...

ES: Kind of stringy?

GH: Yes.

ES: When you were...I guess it would be the men who were doing the butchering of the animals...

GH: I would butcher them up.

ES: Did you hang them up on ropes from trees?

GH: Mm hmm. Sometimes (30) we'd hog dress them if we were out.

ES: What does that mean?

GH: That means open them up and take the insides out and then...

ES: With the animal lying on its back on the ground?

GH: Yes.

ES: And what did you do with the innards?

GH: (34) But boy we would bring them home full. And then...I tried one down here...I wanted to take a picture of it too because it did it so good that I...give it...I tightened it up and start from the top and pulled out the hook. I don't know how...I think he has it in a (39) or something. It would kind of be nice and I wanted to...forgot all about it when I asked him.

ES: Actually, you would have to hang the animal up in a tree, wouldn't you? Tie a rope around the legs?

GH: We did kind of a single tree with the hind legs apart and put (43). So we, whatever, pulled them up in the tree. And then one elk I did alone coming back up there in Spring Creek. And I got this elk and didn't have any way of getting him out so I worked on him while he went to town and got a horse. He had to put a makeshift rack and bring the horse in to carry it out. And I...he had some pulleys and we put one on each side of the tree about this far apart. (51) because I couldn't pull it up any higher. It was too big. In fact, (52) went up on Mt. Emily for (53). Half the time we'd get one. He'd go back to work and then I'd have to do that.

ES: You got pretty good at it, I'll bet.

GH: Well, I could do it and I wasn't afraid.

ES: What did you do with the heart and the gizzard and the liver and those kind of inner organs? Did you throw those away?

GH: No. They usually had the liver and I like the gizzard on chickens. We wouldn't throw that away.

ES: I mean on the deer and the elk.

GH: The deer and the elk? Well, we always kept the liver and some of my family didn't like it, but I liked it myself. There was a lot of people around that tried to get it.

ES: In that case would you boil it up and eat it right away rather than trying to can it?

GH: No, we'd take and slice it and then we'd freeze it.

ES: Freeze it? How would you freeze it?

GH: We had...in town they had lockers that you rent and take stuff in there and freeze it. And we had taken...we generally took some chicken and fix our hamburger and put them in little packages and put them in there. When we wanted some meat we went in there and got it.

ES: Now this would have been in about the 1940s, wouldn't it?

GH: No.

ES: Or maybe later?

GH: I don't know just what time it was. It would have be 'cause we'd been married a long time since.

ES: When you were a girl I don't think you had freezing facilities.

GH: No, we all cooked it and canned.

ES: How 'bout fish? Was it possible to get fish around here to eat?

GH: Well, there was suckers. I've eaten a lot of suckers.

ES: Did you like them?

GH: I liked them, but the only thing I don't like about them is that (74) Especially if you could cut the top part off, it wasn't so bad.

ES: How long were these suckers?

GH: Oh, about like this.

ES: Easy to catch?

GH: No, I thought it was awful hard. Some of the boys had some forks that they could catch them.

ES: Stabbing them?

GH: Yes. But one year there was an awful lot of them here. People from town come out here and got them. (80). I think my husband told them if they wanted to catch a boat throw them out in the lake.

ES: Frogs?

GH: We'd play and catch them.

ES: Did you eat them?

GH: No. They said that you could eat their legs, but we never did. And we wouldn't catch them to kill them. We liked to play with them.

ES: Any crawfish?

GH: I don't think so.

ES: Now when you say there was a lot out here do mean that there were more sloughs and creeks than...

GH: No. The creek here used to run bigger than it does now. It was pretty swift. From that corner to up to the lane that goes out to Elgin, especially from this path down here. The young boys would get right in there and walk and catch them with their hands. I had a grandson that's out here...

ES: Now you talked in the previous interview about going huckleberrying, did you also gather mushrooms?

GH: No.

ES: Why? Didn't people thing they were decent to eat?

GH: Well, I don't know. We used to as kids...we used to gather some of these willow bushes they call them and we had dandelions to eat. And these were...I don't know if that's the right name, but they were weed like and grows up kind of like a

dandelion, but it had a dark and fuzzy leaf on it. We used to pick those and make greens out of it.

ES: Green salad or more cooked greens.

GH: Just cook them.

ES: Why do you think people wouldn't want mushrooms?

GH: Because they didn't know anything about them.

ES: It just never entered your mind to eat a mushroom?

GH: No, but later on (104). Mushrooms were... and I like them. We picked them, but they were hard to clean. It was kind of like growing mushrooms or something, they were hard to clean. But as far as going out, I don't know enough about them to pick them.

ES: So any mushrooms you picked would have been later in your life, not in your childhood?

GH: Yes.

ES: Now you said that you really enjoy quilting.

GH: Yes.

ES: Of course quilting goes way, way back. Did you...were you aware of quilting when you were a young child?

GH: Yes, I learned to quilt with my mother. She carded wool and put that in the quilts.

ES: For extra stuffing.

GH: Yea, it was always heavy. Heavy quilts. That's where I learned to quilt and she'd keep coats or pants or something that we could find in town when we were out and make quilts out of them.

ES: Do you think that one of the main reasons that women made quilts was to use up old fabric rather than throw it away?

GH: I think we didn't waste any fabric. We generally...we didn't have the heat in the houses and the house would get cold and you had to have heavy blankets on to keep warm.

ES: When did you become aware that quilting is an art, or can be an art?

GH: I don't know. Especially after I got married. I've got I don't know how many quilts I have quilted just since the middle of February this year.

ES: Say seventy years ago it was always women who made the quilts, wasn't it, never the men?

GH: Yes. We used to have Relief Society and Sister Zogg was the president of the Relief Society and she done a lot of quilting. And that's when we'd get together...I was still a teenager and I'd go with them and we'd have a quilt and everybody would get around it and quilt.

ES: That was what I was going to ask you, too. Many times maybe a quilt was a good opportunity to get together and talk, wasn't it?

GH: Yes.

ES: What did you talk about? All kinds of things?

GH: Everything.

ES: Who was going to have a baby and who was sick and who'd been off on a trip somewhere and those kind of things.

GH: There wasn't much to talk about, really nothing. Maybe shows to go to. I enjoy now... I just enjoy piecing and quilting them. In fact, I've got one on the ground that's sewn together.

ES: I suppose you use a sewing machine now?

GH: Yes.

ES: At that time it was just needle and thread, wasn't it?

GH: Well, my grandmother sat...she couldn't sit...Gene's grandmother...she was quite heavy and couldn't really walk. She would sit and people would give her little scraps and she'd put out these hex-

ES: Hexagons.

GH: And she would sew them and make quilts. She made a quilt for each one of her grandchildren. In fact, I...she gave one to my husband and she made one for his brother and she said "Gertie, you can help me quilt this piece for Gene she did and she said, you can keep that. I was ashamed of myself, I didn't get that finished for him until the Christmas before he died.

ES: Well, if you were doing it all by hand it would take maybe months, wouldn't it?

GH: Well, I could...she could...she gave me the top, but I didn't get around to the rest of it until the Christmas before. My daughter now she's getting good. (15) And she makes some lovely ones. She has learned how to put them on and quilt them. I generally help her with them. She's done a lot. She's done enough so that each one of my grandchildren that are leaving home are big enough to get them. She went back there that week, so she went back to Bueler's sister and go through both the houses and (156). And she had one for each one of her sister's children. And she had a couple...

ES: When you were young was it common to take some quilts to county fairs?

GH: I don't think so. When you made quilts it was for your family or someone...I know Gene's mother used to come up and help us quilt. She had some material and other things to put them together.

ES: The idea wasn't to display a quilt that you made?

GH: No.

ES: Just to use it?

GH: Yes, that's right.

ES: I wanted to ask you too about...well, I'll call it either illegal or criminal behavior in say the 1910s or '20s or '25 period. Were you aware of any types of crimes or illegal activities?

GH: (167) Halloween night the boys would get out their (168) out and in the mean time, I didn't see it, but they said that they took somebody's wagon and the guy had a (170). But they managed to get that wagon on top of that barn. Things like that...clothesline...tear down the clothes line.

ES: Those are more like dirty tricks than illegal acts. How about thievery and theft?

GH: Well, a lot of them...there generally was not too much...but I know when we first... the grist mill...the first time we really noticed some of that. We didn't have a house here. We had planted potatoes and a big garden and stuff out here. In fact, we had a bunch of chickens out here. We'd come by and take care of them. Chickens and all roosters. We noticed that they'd take some of the squash and they'd get into the corn. We had five rows of potatoes...almost where the lawn is

out there...but it was in front of the little house. And while we were gone they'd take potatoes. But we come out one morning and they'd taken the middle one. [laugh] They dug it up. The first we really noticed they'd been taken there was several vacant houses around. There was some kind of transient people moved in and had...

ES: Was that in the 1960s?

GH: Oh, that would be after I was married.

ES: When you were younger were there any unmarried girls who became pregnant?

GH: If they did I didn't think anything about it.

ES: You never heard?

GH: No.

ES: They would go away all of a sudden?

GH: Or something. I never heard of it particularly. Everybody knew everybody and we didn't have anything like that happen.

ES: You felt safe all the time you were growing up?

GH: We never locked our doors or our cars or anything. We never even thought about it. They didn't take anything. Not like they are today.

ES: If you weren't trustworthy you couldn't last very long around here.

GH: [laughter] Probably not, I don't know.

ES: Well, I think that might do the job. Are there any subjects that Vanessa or I didn't bring up...

GH: Did I tell you anything about substituting at the post office mail room?

ES: I think you mentioned in it, but didn't go into much detail.

GH: I substituted for Laverne Fulmer on Route 2 for quite a while and then he took this route, Route 1,...

ES: Who did you substitute for?

GH: Laverne Fulmer.

ES: Fulmer?

GH: Yes.

ES: That was La Grande post office?

GH: Yes, over here. And then I substituted for Harold Green. Then they put on a third route that took you down by...kind of May Park and Island City, but it wasn't a closed place route. I took that for about two years. But as soon as it went into a closed route I wasn't eligible for that.

ES: Why did you do that?

GH: Well, I thought it was fun. Most of my kids were in school and Laverne was here one day and I said, "How's the chance of subbing?" and he said "you might be able to." One day he called me and said, "Gertie, do you want to sub?" And so I went in there. I really enjoyed that. I learned...met a lot of people more than I had ever seen. Most of it was really nice. At Christmas time lots of them get candy or something in the mailbox. One time they had a great big steak, frozen steak. (217) All the time I was on the mail route. I only got stuck twice. Once I had to have shovel out and once I got pulled out. I never had...only two flat tires and half the day before somebody would stop and help me. And I thought I was sure...

ES: You were driving a car?

GH: I was driving a car.

ES: Your own car or a post office car?

GH: No, I bought my own car. I had a little Toyota and later I had kind of a Subaru with all-wheel drive.

ES: There's still some people doing that, I know, in Wallowa county. I think I talked to a man that does it out in Union.

GH: Probably. One of the ones I was substituting on Route 2 went clear out to Union. It was about eighty-some miles. Then they took off fourteen miles and of course all the Union district so I wouldn't have to go out there. Some days it wasn't the most pleasant. One day I had chains on day after day and still driving out here... Gene was working out the telephone company and they had this big warehouse and I'd park the car in there and then go out to the field and then go back in and didn't have to take the chains off.

ES: So that was mostly a good experience?

GH: Yes, it was a good experience. And I enjoyed...working. I always worked with...helped my mother. That was something I thought. I worked to help my mother when she needed it. Then when the '30s getting up...starting to be able to get work...Gene's dad was able to get on the railroad so he come asked me if I would help with the farm so he could work on the railroad. And I told him sure if his wife would tend my baby. And I done that and then, of course, when they passed away and we took over here Gene was working so I didn't have to work. So it was a blessing and kind of what I was made to do. I've always been strong and healthy. I love to do that. I'd rather do that than sit in the house.

ES: How do you occupy your time now?

GH: Well, a lot of times I quilt. People have given me material. And then I got some at the Salvation Army. One day I went in there and they had a whole basketful and it was garbage. It wasn't scraps, it was garbage. So I got a lot of that. That passes my time a lot. (251) oh, take a couple people with me and get to the service. Then the Relief Society said they wanted some of these leopard bandages. So I've made six of them. They are three inches wide and seven feet long and crocheted long.

ES: Seven feet?

GH: Yes.

ES: What do they use those for?

GH: For bandages. Then there is extraction...they put them in these kits that go to the service or something. My son is a doctor and he said, I was crocheting one one day, "What do you do with that?" I tried to explain it to him, but it was hard. And then one day he came home and he said, "I see what those bandages do." So he had seen one.

ES: Seven feet would be too long for a bandage.

GH: Well, that's what they are. But we can make them four feet, three inches wide and four feet long.

ES: And they are called leopard bandages?

GH: Yes.

ES: Do you know why?

GH: No, I don't. I have no idea. All I can figure out is that if a person had to have an arm or a leg bandaged they could use a long one. If they scratched it they could keep putting them on real tight.

ES: I see you have some handwritten papers there. What are they?

GH: Oh this was something I like to fix, my genealogy. I put one of them on and that's when I (268).

ES: Are there some things in there you haven't told us?

GH: Oh, I don't know. Its just different dates and that. I don't know. Ever since I was a young girl I must have had genealogy in my system. I made genealogy of the cows and the horses. In fact, right now my son's got a horse that's the eighth generation of the first horse I had. Different ones here. My horse and how many colts she had. No, I do quite a bit of genealogy work. I finally got a computer and that has been a wonderful thing. I could type before, but I hadn't typed for a long time. That computer has got what they call the PAF program and I can put names on there and then I can print them off and send them in to do the temple work. I've finally run out of names. My son, he's the genealogist. He's out there on a mission...he and his wife in Washington. He'll be down here Saturday night and finish his mission. He said, Mom, I was looking through one of these films and I found some more names on the Lindsey side. I'll tell you all about it when I come." So I'm kind of interested. He does an awful lot.

ES: So in order to this with your computer you have to be on the internet, don't you?

GH: No.

ES: No?

GH: No, I'm not on the internet. (289) he has the internet. I could probably get on it. I have loaned a lot of films from different localities. I have taken out the names of all those on my line. I'm waiting to hear from him to find out if they're relatives.

ES: Do you think you could learn to use the Internet?

GH: Oh, I think I could. I was surprised I could learn that program and that's about all I do on that computer.

ES: Do you use a word processing program?

GH: No, I don't have any other programs on there.

ES: Oh, I'm sure you have one on your computer.

GH: Probably.

ES: They usually come with a word processor.

GH: There probably is. It looks like my son is mowing the hay it looks like. I see he's driving the baler.

ES: If you have enough courage to use the computer I think it would be a very easy step for you to take to go to the Internet. You'd probably enjoy it.

GH: I probably would. My daughter has it down in the basement. She has it on hers. And then she enlarges pictures and different things.