

Roy Leonard

5/5/03, T1, S1

JT: So, Roy, can you tell me when and where you were born?

RL: I was born in Delbeed, Alberta, Canada on the 26th day of May, 1914. And I lived there until I was six and then we moved back down to Washington. Blain, Washington is where we moved to. And went through school there...through high school in Blain, Washington. Moved down here in '32. I graduated from the class of '33 in La Grande here.

JT: When you moved down here that was your senior year?

RL: Yes.

JT: And when...when you moved here how did you find it different from where you lived up there coming just for your senior year?

RL: Pretty rough. [laugh] Pretty rough. Kind of a loner, but I played baseball and when I got to playin' baseball, why, I was right amongst the rest of 'em. That just made me one of the bunch.

JT: When you had a sport.

RL: Yeah.

JT: You came from a family of thirteen, seven sisters and six brothers.

RL: Right. Five brothers.

JT: Five brothers.

RL: Yeah.

JT: And that...that's quite a...quite a family.

RL: I shouldn't ought to tell you this, I've told everybody, my dad still had time enough for __. [laughs]

JT: You told me that you came down to Renny Clark's farm and that was because she was relate...Mrs. Clark was related to you.

RL: Yeah.

JT: And this was during Depression times and tell us a little bit what prompted you to move to Union county.

RL: All them kids...of course some of was gone and left, you know, out there. But things was pretty tough up there and they wanted us to come down here and run the dairy, milk their cows and stuff. So that's what we did, we came down here and milked cows for a year and Renny Clark got an idea of his own and so we split wages and then we moved out to Jordan...oh, what the hell was it?

JT: It's alright.

RL: They had a dairy out there on Clark...or...guy ran railroad by the name of Jordan was runnin' it and he couldn't...too much work for them so we bought them out and started a dairy out there. And he was bottlin' milk and deliverin' milk in bottles in town. And we did that for a long time and...

JT: When you were at Clark's you took the milk to the Blue Mountain Creamery, is that correct?

RL: Yes. That's right.

JT: Now going to high school, and I imagine you had to work on the farm, did that interfere with your activities at school?

RL: A little bit. But the activities...I mean school come first...rather, the dairy come first.

JT: I can appreciate that. You had to earn a living.

RL: It worked out. There's enough of us that we could...one guy could go do what he wanted to do, play a ballgame someplace else, and the rest of 'em would pick up the slack.

JT: And during that time you had some time off because somebody else would help and you could have entertainment in town and attend school functions and things like that?

RL: Oh yeah.

JT: So it wasn't all work. It was hard work when you were working, but you did have a little bit of time.

RL: Yeah. The milkin' part of it was steady. You had to do that at a certain time each day and night.

JT: Then you graduated from high school in 1933...

RL: Yes.

JT: ...and when did you move out to the other farm?

RL: We moved out there...let's see...it must've been in the late '30s.

JT: Uh-huh. And then you say you bottled the milk at that time and then did you do home deliveries?

RL: Yes.

JT: And you sold milk for how much a quart?

RL: Twelve cents a quart. When the war started they froze the price of everything. And we sold it for...delivered it for twelve cents. If get it at the store it's ten cents. And when I delivered the milk to houses sometimes they take the bottle and turn it into the store for the dime so I didn't make much on that deal. But we straightened that out pretty fast.

JT: You had to have a little understanding what the customer that they returned the bottles that you left the milk in. I know the first time I met you was probably about 1943, I think, just before you married Lee Wilcox. And did you meet her by going into the Wilcox store delivering milk?

RL: Delivered milk in there, yeah. We...how long we lived out there... We moved on this place in '41. We moved out...they took us away from that Clark...not Clark's, but...

O: Nellie's.

RL: Nellie's place.

JT: Place... This place is the one across the Island City Cemetery on the McAlister Road.

RL: We moved out to Hot Lake for a year. I built a milk house out there, but there was a lot of disease out there in that layout. I got in trouble with Bangs disease in the cows and stuff. So rented this place in '41.

JT: Did you have milking machines in those days?

RL: I didn't when I first moved out there, but I sure did after I got...

JT: About how many cows were you milking at the time?

RL: We were milkin' thirty-some at the time we moved out there. When we got here and set up we was milkin' fifty cows. And we had milkin' machines then.

JT: That was quite a lot of...

RL: Quite a change, yeah. That's quite a lot of milk to handle, too. Wash the bottles and ___.

JT: And that's seven days a week.

RL: Yes. I thought...yes. And 385 year...days of the year. [laughs]

JT: It... When you went along what was...how long did you continue operating the dairy? You said you then went into raising sheep?

RL: I sold it...went into Valley Dairy and I sold...when they was startin', why, then I sold them my bottles and customers and stuff that I had there. And then in '55 I sold the cows and quit the dairy business altogether. And the last five years that I was milkin' cows I wouldn't _____ overnight for five years and that's too darn long.

JT: Makes a dull person. You just kind of... What time did you start in the morning?

RL: Four o'clock.

JT: Four o'clock. Then you had to milk that night. What time did you usually quit in the evening?

RL: We always milked at four o'clock in the morning and four o'clock at night. We harvestin' their hay and whatever, but when four o'clock come we was milkin'.

JT: But at night when you were able to quit and go to bed what...about what time was that?

RL: When Fred was workin' with me we was workin' about eighteen hours a day.

JT: Fred, that was your brother?

RL: That was my brother, yeah. That's what we figured it was, about eighteen hours we was on the go.

JT: And at those times you didn't make any big money. Some of these things that people have today like boats and trailers and four-wheel drives it took you somethin' like forty or fifty years to accumulate, isn't that correct?

RL: Yeah. Had to... Took quite a while to even think about that kind of stuff. I don't know. We've... I don't remember when I took over the dairy for the family. I was...took over...my dad didn't like it, he wanted to cut wood and stuff and my mother worked with us, we washed bottles and milk ___ all the kids' ___.

JT: You were saying your dad cut wood and sold it for what, twelve dollars a cord?

RL: Eleven and twelve dollars a cord, delivered, put in their shed.

JT: And it was a long time before he got a chainsaw.

RL: Right, right. Lots of times I went up and pulled the end of a cross-cut saw to help him fall some of them trees.

JT: How many acres on Mt. Emily did you say that he bought for six hundred dollars?

RL: Forty.

JT: Forty acres.

RL: Yeah. And the... I don't know how many cords of wood he sold out there, but he sold a lot of wood. And then he made a deal with, oh, was it Stang's mill and sold the place we bought for six hundred dollars he sold it for ten thousand dollars. The only way he'd sell it was if he could cut wood on their property any time he wanted to. And so that made a deal then he sold it.

JT: But you told me he never cut another stick of wood. He just ___ and he couldn't do it.

RL: ___ he quit right there. He did everything else ___, but he never cut anymore wood.

JT: That's an interesting thing.

RL: He wore out three of them wade drag saws before he got the chainsaw. So he was a pretty busy man. He spent long days up there in that cuttin' that wood. Finally got smart enough so that he'd go up there in the morning and he'd load his pickup with wood so when he got tired in the afternoon all he had to was get in the pickup and drive home. [laugh]

JT: That was usin' his head.

RL: Yeah, right. But we used to haul a cord of wood out here and stack it in this field out here and then I had a buzz saw and we'd saw it up into sixteen inch lengths. And then he'd stack it again and then people'd buy it and so he'd have to load it in his pickup and haul it up to their place and unload it in their woodshed or wherever for eleven and twelve dollars a cord.

JT: That wood warms you up more than once.

RL: [laughs] We had some it stacked along the fence out here the people goin' huntin' ...campin' and huntin' would stop and steal some off the top off that rickety old fence out here so they'd have dry wood to take out into the woods.

JT: You said then you sold the cows and you went into the sheep business.

RL: Yeah.

JT: What was some of the problems that you learned about the sheep business?

RL: Gettin' up all hours of the night when lambin' time come 'cause they lambed when they wanted to and if you wasn't there to shortly to pen 'em off, well, they nursed a while and they couldn't keep track of their own darn lambs. We had to take 'em and put 'em in a pen if we knew when they...could figure out when they was gonna lamb, why, we'd put 'em in a separate...and if they was out with a bunch sometimes you had a heck of a time puttin' the right lamb on the right ewe.

JT: How come you picked sheep?

RL: Lack of experience. [laughs]

JT: You told me then when you sheared the sheep and went to sell the wool that you had such a small amount to sell that nobody was interested in buying it.

RL: Right.

JT: And you and some other fellas formed a co-op together so that you had enough wool to...to offer the buyers. Is that correct?

RL: Morten Swartz and I started it. Old Chuck Gavin was the county agent on the livestock end of things at that time and he helped us on this. We went around to all the sheep growers we knew in the county and told 'em the story and just a very few that wouldn't sell to us first because they had a deal with some outfit in Portland. And when they found out what we was doin' and ___ workin' that way they quit them and they all come to... And, oh, I don't know, four or five, six years we went from Union county sheep growers to Wallowa county and then Baker county...tri-city outfit.

JT: You can always get a better price for buying 'em than you can just small.

RL: When we sell ___ didn't even have a carload and we was sellin' four and five carloads of wool pullin' together.

JT: What did they pay for wool?

RL: It was gettin' sixty cents a pound. And then when we started form the corporation we always got at least seventy then. That's how much we gained by havin' several carloads.

JT: How many sheep were you...

RL: I was runnin' about three hundred.

JT: About three hundred head of sheep.

RL: Yeah.

JT: Quite a lot to take care of.

RL: Yeah. Especially at lambin' time.

JT: Then did you sell some sheep to be butchered?

RL: Oh yeah. Lambs. We sold lambs.

JT: Lambs.

RL: That went along with... ___ put us in contact with several of those could go together and sell them.

JT: Who...the slaughterhouse locally buy it, or did you take it to...

RL: No.

JT: ...sale yard?

RL: A sale yard, yeah.

JT: But along there you said that you wanted to form a fire district. Can you tell me a little bit about that? How you formed the rural fire district?

RL: We got to talkin' about it and so it was five of us went together to start it, get signatures. I can't remember whether it was old Dickson Maloy or Tolet H___ started it. And we went out and got signatures and we had a...several meetings we formed a boundary line for this district. We couldn't get La Grande. Island City...the city of Island City wouldn't join us. ___ Couldn't infringe on the Forestry Service, but we didn't want a space between the Forest Service and no-man's land. It took us pretty near a year to get all the signatures and stuff needed on that. And then the five of us that was gettin' all the signatures they made a committee out of us.

JT: Who was the committee?

RL: There's ___ Erickson, Skinny Whardell, Shorty Boswell...let's see, how many that'd make? And myself, of course. There was five of us.

JT: This is four so we need one more.

RL: I don't know, I believe Ed Counsel wanted in on it. And we went up to Dickson's office and he helped us organize it, set 'er up. We had to have a chairman so he put five number in a hat and we drew out the numbers. I was slow, I didn't draw, I just took the last one and it happened to be number one so that made me chairman of the board. And I wasn't smart enough to get out of it, I've been there for thirty years! But we...we did a lot in that...with that fire district.

JT: How did you acquire equipment and set it up so that volunteers would take out...?

RL: Taxes.

JT: You got a tax?

RL: Yeah.

JT: Had to have a petition...

RL: Every year we had a vote on that tax and we did so good and they could see so much help even insurance company cut their fire insurance rates down so we got help all over.

JT: That was one of the main reasons that you wanted to form a district so that you...cost of your fire insurance 'd come down as well as having protection for your property.

RL: La Grande talked about runnin' it for what use they could get out of it, but the old fire district chief up there he said leave it and he said we had nothin' that'd be any good to them. So Island City said, well, we'll man it, the use of it. And so that's the way we started. And it very...wasn't very long till Island City went ahead ___ so it went back to...they joined the district and we...the whole district hired ___.

JT: Do recall what the fire...first fire truck cost?

RL: No. It was built in Portland. We...I don't...I know it was in '51 because that's the first truck was '51 and that's when the district was started.

JT: Was it a Mac?

RL: It was a Ford four-by-four. We was smart enough to have four-wheel drive for wintertime.

JT: That was a good idea.

RL: And several times the city of La Grande couldn't get up to the south end of Fourth Street and caught in the snow and they had to have us come and help 'em. So we had four-wheel drive we could go up there to the fires. So they kind of e't their words after a while.

JT: I worked for the City of La Grande during that time in the Recorder/Treasurer's office. I remember when that started.

RL: Yeah.

JT: The City of La Grande did have some contracts with certain businesses outside the La Grande district.

RL: They would...La Grande would go...if there was a house on fire just off of their district they'd go there and set there and watch that house burn to protect any other houses that was in the district. After the rural fire district got__ we made darn sure that that changed. If there was a fire there and you got to it you worked on it, put it out or tried to until the other guys got there. Sometimes some of La Grande houses was on fire and Island City beat the La Grande trucks to the fire. So we changed that all around, boy, we worked together, the two districts, after that.

JT: That's great. They should work together.

RL: And we formed a fire chiefs' association and Baker...all of us, all __ in that. I was chairman of that for a while, too, but I don't belong to it...

JT: Do you remember who your first fire chief was?

RL: I think it was Ed Draper.

JT: Oh.

RL: And then...

JT: Ed Draper worked for the flouring mill in Island City.

RL: Yeah.

JT: Parley Hutchison was the fire chief...

RL: He was the one that said that we didn't have anything that'd be of any value to the...

JT: City of La Grande.

RL: He sure et his words a lot of times. All the time that I was in there they wanted anything put it up to the vote of the people it was never, ever turned down. We've put a in there so much, it took so much taxes, they never, ever turned us down even when they got in this big stuff.

JT: That spoke well for the department.

RL: What it could do, yeah.

JT: And they have a nice department today.

RL: It is known as one of the best in the state of Oregon...was for a long time, anyway. And the one time Island City got ___ they wanted to change it from La Grande Rural to Island City Rural. I was one of the ones that stopped that. Said we're known all over the state of Oregon as one of the best and the cost of changin' it over isn't worth what little we gain by havin' La Grande stuck on the front of that. Everybody around here knows where it is.

JT: You said you were on that for thirty years.

RL: I was chairman for thirty years.

JT: Uh-huh. And then you got off of it. What... Tell us a little bit what happened when you got off of it.

RL: I took [laugh] chairman of the Island City Rural Fire...Cemetery District and I've been chairman of it ever since. But we formed a district, cemetery district, too after I joined that 'cause ___ much luck with the fire district. And we didn't start high enough. We just taxed what we needed and of course everything else goes up too, but there are...so we're havin' a little trouble now keepin' enough money in the fire district ___, but they're still keepin' it one of the better ones in the county.

JT: ___ had been chairman. He said that if you take over the cemetery district he'd run for the rural fire department.

RL: Right. He didn't make it, but I did. [laughs] I don't know the votin' for the fire district more than memories. If three guys'd go in and vote, why, you would get your job back.

JT: With all those sheep and things when was the first time that you were able to...you became a rock hound and...

RL: That was after...quite a bit after.

JT: I figured it was quite a bit after. And you trailered for a number of years.

RL: Yeah. And most of that was done after my first wife died and I married Lauree. That's when we got the trailers.

JT: That... That was about 19--, what?

RL: 51' or '2...no, '81 or '2. 'Cause we've been married twenty years.

JT: I had known Lee from Wilcox's grocery and her father down there. Where I first met you. But then life got a little bit easier so that you could take some time and what did...what did you like to do the most? Be a rock hound or huntin', fishin'?

RL: Fishin'. I like to fish and hunt. And that rock hound...became a rock hound because my oldest sister and her daughter were rock hounds and her husband got into it and then finally somebody uptown there that was a rock hound did all his

work in the basement and never kept the dust down. If you're run in rocks, workin' in rocks, you get a lot of dirt. And one the other guys in the...that rock club there used to be over a hundred people in it.

JT: They used to show things at the county fair.

RL: Oh yeah. And he...one of the guys got one of the...had to have a lung taken out on account of the dirt from workin' in...not enough ventilation and stuff. And so my brother-in-law he quit it and he made her quit it, he wouldn't let her run any stuff. And so I told her, well, set it up down here and she could use...come down here and use it anytime she wanted to. She thought that was wonderful so I took all of her equipment and set it up out there in the shop.

JT: Then you'd have a regular shop where you could cut...

RL: Cut the rocks.

JT: ...the rocks.

RL: And she never came down and used it. She brought stuff down for me to do for her [laugh], but she never came down and used that...any of that equipment out here.

JT: You still got your showcase and everything down in the basement where you have...display your gems that you've polished and cut?

RL: Yeah. I'm kind of crazy. When women come down here want to see the rocks I show 'em to 'em. I tell 'em I was gonna run a little contest here. "If you can pick out the best one, the prettiest one in there, you can have it." "How do we know which is prettiest?" "That's your problem, not mine." [laugh] Boy, you could just see the old wheels goin' around when they're pickin' them. And then I'd...when they pick one out, why, I look at and I say, "No, that ain't the prettiest one, but it's close enough." And that's the advertisement I'd get. They'd take it and talk to somebody else. I don't go to the shows anymore. I used to. I like to be able... I have two or three yard sales here and people pick it up and finger it all over and look at it and buy it. They'd go to a commercial rock show or place that sells that stuff and pay three times as much as what I wanted ___ wasn't a damn bit better than mine, but that's just...that's the way it goes. I never... I hate to have 'em come and finger it all over and stuff and then lay it down and walk off.

JT: People are funny that way. They never seem to want to pay something for it and then they'll go someplace and pay more.

RL: That's right, yeah.

JT: That's the way with life. Then you belonged to the trailer club?

RL: Yeah, Good Sam's Club. I belonged to Blue Mountain Gem Club, that was a rock outfit.

JT: And sometimes you'd take your trailer and go down to...where is it?

RL: Utah...[end tape]

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RL: ...we got a circle out there, that's where we parked our trailers and then hunted rocks from there. We had a lot of fun. A lot of us did that.

JT: I lot of good comradeship and meals and just good friends.
RL: Yeah. Lots of wild stories told. [laugh] Yeah. I'm too old for that anymore. I mean not too old, but I'm not sure enough of foot to be wanderin' around in them rocks stuff lookin' for rocks.
JT: And fall and get hurt.
RL: That's right.
JT: Wouldn't want to do that. How long did you raise sheep?
RL: Let's see...it was after '55 when we sold the dairy. I didn't have sheep when you and I were married, did I?
O: No. You had worked for Willy Hamann for the last years.
RL: Oh yeah. Not too long. That sheep business got too much for us. We quit the sheep and I run the cream route for ten years and I worked for Willy Hamann for ten years.
JT: What did you do for Willy?
RL: Everything he wanted. [laughs]
JT: Was that after he moved out the Beasing place?
RL: Oh yeah. Yeah. He had his house built out there and everything. And him and I and one extra man run that whole place out there for ten years when he...
JT: Was Bob Gulzo was he with Willy at that time?
RL: They lived right across the lane from each other.
JT: But they didn't do things together?
RL: They did together, but not much. They did their harvesting and stuff, but they worked together. And then his son-in-law come and married Becky...second daughter's... He was a college guy. He wanted to go to college. He was gonna 'come a veterinary. And he was workin' out there and he got through college in Oregon and he had to wait two years before he could get into veterinary college at Washington. And he was workin' out there helpin' us. He was a good enough guy, but we got into an argument. His wife said I _____. But anyway, I told him, "If you're smart, why, you'll get in with in this Willy here. He's gonna..." He said, "Well," he said, "I don't think there's enough here for two family." And I said, "Yeah," I said...I told him about Bob Gulzo, if Bob Gulzo comes in this place...to this county in a Model-A Ford coupe and a wife and a pair of work gloves, that's all he had. He went to work for John Turner and he worked up until he owned damn near a million dollars. All his stuff _____ when I was talkin' to Willy's son-in-law. I said, "if he'd put all his stuff together right now he'd be worth a million bucks." And so Pete forgot all about bein' a veterinary. I told him anybody's crazy that wanted to be a veterinary. You have to get up in the middle of the night in a snowstorm to go out and take care of cow.
JT: Did you know Willy's dad?
RL: Yeah.
JT: Was he still operating the little mill that he had there in Island City?
RL: I don't think he was then, no. He'd... I'd bought seed grain and stuff from him and cow feed from him when I was in the dairy.
JT: Willy learned a lot of things from his dad about cleaning grain and cleaning grass seed. So he has many things that he can do to earn a living, not just raise wheat or cattle or something like that.

RL: I want to tell you somethin' hard to believe. Willy never bought anything that he couldn't pay cash for. If he couldn't pay cash he never borrowed a dime to buy any equipment with. He had the money there. So he made a lot of money on interest, savin' interest and stuff.

JT: I think he learned a lot of that from his dad.

RL: Yeah, he did.

JT: His dad was a good operator.

RL: Willy's retired now. His son-in-law's runnin' the layout. But he's still got it all the cleanin' of seed grain and wheat and stuff he run.

JT: And you call that retired? [laughs]

RL: Yeah, he's got a...a gal out there, Pete hired her. But Willy, he's... Willy...she works with Willy doing the cleaning and stuff.

JT: I've seen her work out there and she works.

RL: Yes. She's a real worker.

JT: She's a real worker.

RL: He said that girl worked for him for ten years. He said, "I got the most work done, had the most fun farmin' in them ten years than he did in the whole darn wash workin' out there." We always...

JT: That's great.

RL: And then when his son-in-law come in he fit right in with...the three of us. Only time we had to have help was in harvest...grass harvest and stuff. No, he just...

JT: He expanded quite a little bit with the mint harvesting there now and the mint oil. Takes several more people for a length of time. Willy does a lot of work for other farmers.

RL: Mint...in the mint.

JT: Uh-huh.

RL: And he cleans all the grass seed, wheat and barley ___. They bring their barley in between the ___ or wheat. And of course he sells his wheat for seed wheat and stuff and gets an extra dollar or two a bushel foot.

JT: What did you think when people started buyin' most their milk at the grocery store and it really wasn't too profitable to...for home deliveries anymore, was it?

RL: No, no. And then state came in and we'd have to have all stainless steel and we couldn't just have...

JT: Regulations.

RL: ...couldn't afford it. We couldn't afford it. That's why the Valley Dairy got started.

JT: It's kind of like Frank Young when he used to make cider he said that you had to have separate room to store your apples and all these things and there hasn't been any good cider since because they can't follow all those rules and regulations.

RL: Yeah. One of the craziest things that I had when I was in it several milk...the house deliveries there was a family there and one of their kids was havin' trouble with milk and the doctor told her that if she could get milk from one cow, just one cow, same milk everyday that's the only way that kid could make it. I milked that one cow then we'd have to cool it and bottle it separate and we did that for three years. Of course we had to change cows once in a while because... The kid

made it. He made...got out of...got over all that... That's quite a chore to separate that one all the time.

JT: I can see that.

RL: I thought the gal was gonna kiss me one time. I was deliverin' milk uptown there on Second Street...I don't remember her address or don't remember her name or anything. I went there one morning there was a quarantine sign on the door. That took me a little bit of brain-figurin' to do and I went over to...back to Wilcox Grocery and called her up. I told her, "You need that milk. You put a sign in the door how many quarts you want then a pan on the porch to put it in and you can stand there and watch me when I bring it and I'll open the bottles and pour it into your pan and take the bottles. Don't you come out there and get it while I'm there." That I did all through that quarantine. Never took any money or nothin' but it was all on the books.

JT: That's a wonderful thing.

RL: I don't know how come I was smart enough to think of that, but it just come to me. I got on the phone and talkin' to them, boy, they was tickled to death. If they wanted three quarts they put a sign on their door and that's what I give 'em. And then when the quarantine was over and stuff I got a pretty nice check, too.

JT: You hardly ever hear of anything being quarantined anymore.

RL: That's the first and only one that I've ever...that I'd run into while I was deliverin' milk, though. I don't remember what it was for, either.

JT: I can remember the long sign.

RL: Sign on the door, "Quarantine" and I knew what that meant.

JT: During the war did that make things harder while you were runnin' the dairy?

RL: Yeah, some...some damned ___gas rationin'_. I couldn't get gas. They told me I had to cut my deliveries in half. Hell, I didn't have no place to keep it over a day and stuff. So I did half the route each day. ___milk__ that. It just...just stupid. They told me that 'cause I...had trouble gettin' gas 'cause I was runnin' on empty half the time. Hell, that wasn't...that truck wasn't empty when I delivered the milk I had all them empty bottles back in there that I couldn't put nothin' else in the truck. And you just couldn't...people that don't know what they're doin' and...

JT: Millie Grimmet was a hard taskmaster.

RL: Yes, she was.

JT: She was head of the ration board at the time.

RL: I never had any trouble with her, but one guy, he was a mailman, delivered mail up Perry and up that country. He had to have a tire for his car. She said, "We ain't got no tires." They got quite in an argument. And she said...he said, "You're double lucky that you ain't a man." "Why?" He said, "I'd pull you across this counter and just beat the hell out of you. You won't use your head for nothin'!" He stormed out of the joint and the next morning he had permits for two tires. [laughs] He made a believer out of her right then and there. I got along good with the rationin' stuff. They told me that I had to cut down my mileage, but we went to every other day. And I delivered milk everyday. And then moved from Hot Lake into here and he said, "That's takin' it off the wrong end." What the hell do to make to him what end if I had to cut my mileage down?

We had a lot of fun, though. But it don't pay to get mad. I never will forget that guy tellin' her that she was lucky she wasn't a man. He was big enough he could've done it, too.

JT: You've seen a lot of changes in the valley. What do you think about how things are going?

RL: When I first moved here, in this house, a gravel road and maybe they'd be, oh, four or five cars a week go by here. Now...it was a gravel road. In the wintertime the road used to drift with snow between the cemetery and Island City. And there was three weeks at one time that I couldn't get to Island City from here without goin' down here and goin' toward town and then cuttin' across and comin' back to Island City. Until one time when that...during that time they had a funeral, bury somebody over... Old S. B. Morgan was road master. He come out here with a grader to open that road so they could have a... He got stuck out there and we had a hell of a time gettin' him out and he went back to town and put chains on all four tires...or all wheels, anyway, and came out and buck that road out so they could have the funeral. Hell, that guy there he didn't need the funeral. That's doin' him good or anything. He was off and gone. But I delivered milk to Morgan at his house up here. And I told him, I said, "I don't know about this here. You went out there and opened that road up to bury a guy out there, but you wouldn't open it up so I could deliver your milk!" [laugh] He never forgot that. He got a kick out of that, too. I could shoot a .22 squirrels out here any direction I wanted to. Now you can't even shoot a gun any kind in this out here.

JT: Now there's people all around you.

RL: Too many people, it isn't safe.

JT: What did you think when they built the Mormon Church right next to you?

RL: I thought that was a pretty good deal because they wanted to build it and they wanted to buy five acres to build it and they wanted to know if I'd sell 'em five acres. Yeah, I'd sell 'em five acres, but you'll have to buy the whole hundred and twenty because I will not subdivide. So we made a deal. I don't know whether to put this on that thing or not. The formed a partnership, big shot Mormons, and we signed the contract. I wanted... I tried to give it to the State of Oregon, the college, tried to give it to Eastern Oregon and they couldn't handle it. One of the lawyers here wanted it to go to Whitman, Walla Walla, and Oregon State wanted...I give them a chance. They come out and went all over it, showed 'em the boundary line, the sewer district, the water district, the whole darn thing. And they said, "Well, you have to have it appraised, state appraiser." And so we did and the State appraised it with water and sewer available \$560,000. And so I told 'em I wanted \$28,000 a year for twenty years. You multiply that out real quick it comes to \$560,000. They signed a contract, these two Mormons, Russell Elmer and Russell Lester. And they paid...hired some lawyers, Russell Lester did. They paid seventeen-and-a-half years. Russell Lester said it was paid for. He amortized it out and it was paid for. When the accountants up here wanted to figure out a deal like that they said, "You can't do it that way. You can't sell it like that." And I said, "The hell I can't. It's mine. It's the first time in my life I had it all paid for, I don't owe a dime on it. If they want to buy it and I want to sell it." And the accountant said, "Well," he said, "You've gotta have some

interest.” I said, “Hell, I didn’t ask any interest. I told you I wanted \$28,000 a year for twenty years.” He said there’s gotta be some interest for the buyer, so not for me, but for the buyers. And so they said, “Well, I don’t know whether we can do it.” They said, “We’ll have to set it up and then back into to get the interest.” After they paid seventy-and-a-half Russell Lester sued me, said it’s paid for. Amortized that out, uh-huh, how the hell can you amortize \$28,000 for twenty years? But the way the __ amendments said you couldn’t...some of this you’ll have to cut out of this.

JT: Yeah. Well, we’ll cut out what you want.

RL: He said they could do it. Russell Elmer paid half of Lester’s last payment and a whole another one the \$28,000. And by god they sued it ___ and told them that they could amortize that out and I had nothin’ to do with it anymore. They sued me and I had to pay their interest, old Russell Lester’s interest, the lawyers, the price of all suein’ me. That was...

JT: He was quite ridiculous.

RL: That’s why I can’t say oh, my _____. But we’ve been able to live right down... We don’t got too much to worry about.

JT: Good. How did you and Lauree get involved in Neighbor to Neighbor?

RL: I don’t know. That was a...I’m gonna say...I usually say that’s the second mistake I made. [laugh] First mistake was when they turned me up and I was born and they slapped me on the butt and I cried. [laugh] That was my first mistake. And I think the second one was when we got involved in this Neighbor to Neighbor setup.

JT: You helped a lot of people, though.

RL: Oh yeah. Still do. But I was...knew better than to get too involved in this wood stuff. I went out there one day and we’d had the work crew out here, the county work crew out here. And they always...workin’ with wood they always had good gloves. And I went out there and it’d rained all night and got there and there was a brand new pair of gloves just __ part of one day layin’ on a block of wood out there in the rain. And so I picked them up, started to leave and there was another pair down on the ground and I bent over and picked that up. And when I straightened up I didn’t stop, I just went right over on my butt, banged my head. It’s a damn good thing I didn’t break somethin’ that I couldn’t...

JT: Yes.

RL: So I quit the wood business. I go out there and straighten ‘em out or help ‘em a little bit. I don’t pile wood or pick up wood and stack it.

JT: But you allow them to use your barn lot out here to store wood and deliver to people that need it.

RL: Yeah. We got a wood splitter out there. Wal-Mart sold a wood splitter to somebody in Cove and they hooked it on their trailer for ‘em and they started home and it come loose and went down through the __ and up into a guy’s grain feed. Kink of bunged it up a little bit. Had to go get it and haul it back. So they had old Floyd Knapp built it back up, put it together again. And so he did and he come and told me about it and he said they’ll sell it to us if... He said, “I’ll tell ya, I’ll buy half of it. You and I buy it and you can rent it anytime you want to. We can let the Neighbor to Neighbor have it.” So that’s why we got a wood cutter

out there. It ain't mine, I told him that wood...Neighbor to Neighbor wood splitter. And, boy, that's been a lot of darn wood, that makes it easy.

JT: Makes it a lot easier.

RL: I even...well, when the county work crew comes out here he knows that I'm supposed to be out there. And I'd go out there and he'll mud run the lever...push the levers. "Don't your arm get tired?" And I said, "yeah, but I got another arm I can use for a while." [laughs] So finally he told me, he said, "You're not supposed to be out here with the wood." Well, of course, if I was workin' than some kid couldn't handle this stick of wood, why, I'd grab it and help him, you know. So that's why I've quit the wood business. I... There's a lot of people get a lot of wood out of that out there.

JT: How many cord do you figure a year that they...?

RL: How many cord a wood do we put out this last winter?

L: Eighty-one last year, I think it was.

RL: Eighty-one cord.

JT: That's a lot of wood.

RL: Yeah.

L: First couple a years it was four or five.

JT: And how many years have you been involved with the project?

RL: Ever since the county got smart and wouldn't give it up, I guess. The county used to do it. __ people that would...they quit.

L: It's been six years.

RL: I got so I can walk if there's a pair of gloves layin' there on the ground I just step around 'em. [laughs]

JT: Yeah. Don't want to have any other problems.

RL: After I fell down out there that day that time it was less than a week and I spent six hours in the emergency room __. I don't know what happened. I've got too many operations anyway. The part of my intestine got involved in a hernia in there someplace. Quite a time up there.

JT: You should be retired on that little project. What does your wife think about you givin' all these young ladies kisses, candy kisses?

RL: Oh boy, that don't go over very big, but, you know, she buys 'em for me.

JT: Oh. Well.

RL: In the summertime I don't give kisses, I give these Worthers.

JT: Oh.

RL: And they're kind of expensive.

JT: Yeah.

RL: People... Some people like them better than the kisses.

JT: You... You make these girls pretty happy. I notice they all smile.

RL: Oh. Oh yeah. Go to the restaurant and give the gal...if I get good special service and I...

JT: What fraternal organizations have you belonged to all these years, Roy?

RL: Elks is the main one.

JT: How many years have you belonged to the Elks?

RL: Over fifty years. More than I can remember now. I'm still payin' my dues, but I don't go very often anymore. I like... We used to like to go to their Wednesday

night dinners ____ she got allergies and there's only certain things we can...she can eat.

JT: I see.

RL: So kind of barred that. You know, and one of the guys that I used to go...take all time he can't go anymore and so I just kind of gave up on it.

JT: And Dick Tartar used to be one of 'em that you went with.

RL: Yeah. There's one guy...old guy out there...he was on a cane and he couldn't hardly walk. I told his wife, "If you take him to Elks I'll bring him home." They thought that was second heaven and she'd bring him down there and wave at me and I'd take him home and walk him to the door 'cause he was on crutches or stuff. What's his name?

L: Henry Stoffer.

RL: Stoffer.

JT: Oh, yeah. I remember Henry.

RL: And then I picked up Carl Stow a lot. Of course, he never was that bad off. And there's a Raymond...somebody by the name of Raymond.

L: Gray.

JT: Raymond Gray that had the electrical shop?

RL: No, this is... He lived right there two houses down from Carl.

L: It was Gray.

RL: So I'd... They came up and bring the two of 'em and then take this other guy home. So I kind of busy.

JT: Is there anything that you wished you had done instead of had a dairy?

RL: If I really wished I wished I'd had more sense and kept more of my money when I was a cattle grower. I told you the first mistake I made was when I cried. [laugh] Oh, I don't know. I've been pretty damn lucky, pretty happy. But the best thing I ever did was I married Lauree. God damn I didn't know there was so many different places in the world I could go.

JT: Well great.

RL: We went to Hawaii two or three times. Went to the Virgin Islands. We went on a trip to Alaska __ Vancouver Beach they took a tour boat...what do they call it?

L: Ferry.

RL: Ferry to Alaska. Went around through Alaska and spent quite a bit of time there.

JT: That's great.

L: Australia and New Zealand.

RL: Australia and New Zealand. Then we spent...when we got the trailer took Jim and Gail Whitmire..._____and Fred and Iris and then Lauree and I and I took my older sister with. We went up to Canada for six weeks. We spent quite a bit of time up there in that country. Enjoyed that, too.

JT: Great. Actually, you were eligible for dual citizenship, weren't you? Weren't you born in Canada?

RL: Yeah. When I got to be twenty-one I went up here to register to vote and the guy up there said, "You're one of the few people in this country that's got a choice. You can either be a Canadian citizen or American citizen." I didn't know about all the things between Canada and us and so I decided I'd better be American. But that was funny. I never forgot that that I had a choice.

JT: 'Cause you were born up there.

RL: I was born up there. My folks was never...they never was Canadian citizens. They never joined...they just moved up there and farmed up there for quite a while. And the...I said I wasn't gonna tell any stories on that. I gotta tell you this one. We come down after...down here and stuff milkin' cows and I wanted the poles to build a fence around the haystacks. Old Mick Riley lived up there on the edge of Mt. Emily. He had some poles so we went up there to get some poles and him and my dad got to talkin' and braggin'. Pop told him that he had thirteen kids, old Riley got mad. "Wow," he said, "Where did you live?" "Well, we lived up in Canada." And old Riley said, "Well," he said, "That explains it. It was so darn cold up there." Dad said, "the cold had nothin' to do with. The 'siquots so bad." [laughs] That's the first time in my life I could laugh right straight at my dad without gettin' in... Old Riley he just darn near fell on the ground, he laughed.

JT: There's a question that I wanted to ask you that I read in a Baker's Dozen about your family. Was...after you graduated from high school you and a number of fellas went after a pinto horse that was running loose. I wonder if you'd tell us that story. I...

RL: We went that way...runnin' after that horse, but I never got no horse. We couldn't...

JT: You did catch some colts, though.

RL: No, we caught one colt to bring back.

JT: What... Who all went on that?

RL: Kenny Ferril, Abe Debois, Al Zervic, Wilber and Gene Blocklin and Dyle, Jimmy Dyle and Fred and I. We got up there and got into the snow and we had sleepin' bags, or equivalent anyway. And we got foolin' around too late and it was pretty dark...[end tape]

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JT: ...head of horse that you were after wasn't there a reward if...

RL: Yeah. If somebody...somebody in Pendleton wanted that horse and he'd pay a thousand dollars if they could capture...capture that horse and bring it into him on a halter.

JT: And you got up to this camp and you put out your sleeping bags, or equivalent to your sleeping bags...

RL: And I thought, oh, there's a damn rock in there under my sleepin' bag and I couldn't figure out why, but the rock kept gettin' smaller. And I had my damn sleepin' bag on a snow bank. [laugh] Snow in there I stayed cold all night. But the... We got along pretty good. One time we got kind of thrill. Of course I had a .22 Colt __ pistol I carried. All of us had guns. We was ridin' out there, we just come to a band of sheep up there, visited with sheepherder for a while and then gone a little ways and my horse started actin' funny. I was pretty well up in front of 'em. I couldn't figure out why she didn't want to go. And pretty soon she turned and started to run. And there's a god damn bear across the trail there and

she was runnin' right along side of it wasn't far from the road tryin' to get away from it. When I realized what was goin' on there, why, I took a shot at it. It's a damn good thing I missed it. That bear could've e't me before I got back on my horse and got out of there. [laughs] But we got up there and too much snow and stuff and not enough horse feed. So we hunted and tried and we never could...them...that isn't what...he would lead us astray. He knew his way through this whole country. He knew where he could take us and we couldn't catch him and everything. And finally we give up, started back home. We go to Ruckle Road guard station and its just gettin' dark slowly and we was gettin' kind of little short of horse feed and so we broke...broke into that place up there. There was enough...enough room we could all stay in there, but sleepin' on the floor anyplace we could. Harold got the measles. He was pretty damn sick and he got kind of screwy with his mind. He was hangin'...jumpin' from the rafters and hangin' on the rafters. He was damn lucky he got out of that, too. But the next morning Fred and I, one of the Blocklin boys and somebody else, I don't know which one it was, we rode up because we didn't have enough horse feed and stuff. They stayed another day then they was bringin' that colt...they was havin' trouble leadin' that colt. They damn near had to drag it. It took them biggest part of the day to ride out from Ruckle Road ranger station to home. But they...we had little experience and stuff. Them damn wild horses ain't dumb. That stallion knew just exactly where to go and where to take us. No way in the world we could close to even think about throwin' a rope at him. He'd lead us out where we could get in trouble and he knew how to stay out of it.

JT: According to the...the book you ended up with a little Philly?

RL: I didn't.

JT: You didn't?

RL: No. I bought a Philly from Brenda Clark.

JT: Oh. It was quite an experience. You didn't go horse huntin' after that, did you?

RL: No. Once was enough.

JT: Did you have any other experiences that...as a young man that...?

RL: You mean that I can talk about?

JT: Well, yeah. [laughs]

RL: Oh, not really. Them trips that Marie and I made after we was married.

JT: Did you notice during those early years when things were tough that people helped one another?

RL: Oh yeah.

JT: That your entertainment was your friends cause you didn't have any money?

RL: Yeah. There was a neighbor kid there, we played together a lot. He went over and played with us and come over there about ten o'clock and he wanted to know if he could stay for dinner. Of course Mom never turned anybody down for dinner, you know. "Sure, she can stay for dinner." We called up his folks and told him that he was gonna stay for dinner for us. And so when dinnertime come my mom called us all into dinner __ the table. She had a big pot of beans, cooked beans. "Oh," he said, "You have to eat beans all the time, too." [laughs] That was when times was tough, you know. And we e't beans a lot. Once in a while

we'd...well, more than once in a while...we'd have rice so that it'd get some fresh air. [laugh]

JT: You also...didn't you have beef now and then from the dairy cows?

RL: We sold them. Sold them.

JT: You sold them. Needed those to...

RL: We needed them to pay the cash bills out.

JT: I can appreciate that.

RL: I never could figure out why anybody would come to our place after eleven o'clock never left without eatin'. And when they was... Most of us was there together. They always had to serve two...two tables. The elder ones would get to eat and then us other guys set around and wait till they got done and then we'd get to eat. And if people came and she had feed for them they e't first with the bigger guys. The other big guys had to wait for us. But she never had...never was out of feed. Everybody got to eat all they wanted.

JT: That's good.

RL: And if they didn't come there was never any waste. How the heck Mom could cook for all those and not waste a lot. Of course we...we had leftovers alright.

JT: In the story there the story about that you cleaned out a chicken house the man paid you a dollar.

RL: Yeah.

JT: And can you tell me out that?

RL: Yeah.

JT: I thought it was quite interesting.

RL: He was this old bachelor and he had five chicken houses, five hundred chickens in the house. There was a outfit up there that came around every...two or three times a week and picked up the eggs. He made __ money. He had five hen...I cleaned one a week. Every third one I cleaned 'em __ they had us an old slip...__ clean it, put it on there, take it out, scatter it and feed 'em and out to the straw stack and get a load of straw to come back and put in there. And that'd take me...I had to do a pretty good job of cleanin' 'em. That man'd keep them clean. I wanted to go to... I wanted a pair of bibless overalls to wear to school. And I told him I wanted... He had to go to town that Saturday while I was cleanin' the chicken house and bought me a pair of bibless overalls. Boy, I thought I was king. I got...I had me a brand new pair of bibless overalls instead of hand-me-downs. He never took the slip of it, but he paid for 'em. He paid sixty-six cents for that pair of overalls for me so I didn't have to have an old bibless pair, I hated them damn bibless overalls...or bib overalls.

JT: I know where you're coming from. When you said a slip a slip was like a large scoop shovel only it was big enough to be pulled by...behind a horse or two horses and scoop things out.

RL: We had one, that's not what I was usin'. I was usin' was a shovel and pitchfork to put it in that. There was a sled that was, oh, about six or eight feet wide and ten, twelve feet long pulled by the team. I did, I cleaned chicken houses quite a bit.

JT: Learned about working.

RL: The worst one I ever had with them.

JT: You had a little experience picking fruit and berries.

RL: Oh yeah. We used to go over Wenatchee Valley and pick apples in the fall and lay off out of high school and go over there tryin' to make money. But that old guy one night he was sick and he called up and wanted to know if I could come over and go help him. I went over there and he had twelve, fourteen cows to milk and his neighbor was supposed to come and help. And this guy was really sick so he waited till after dark and so him and I went out and milked them damn cows. Then it was way after dark so I slept on the floor in front of the heater stove and then got up and milked the cows again in the morning. And that old guy was supposed to come, oh, he said it was too cold, he didn't want to fool around milkin' cows.

JT: When you had cows you couldn't make 'em wait.

RL: You didn't...

JT: They had to be milked.

RL: He had an old Model-T Ford coupe pickup. And I wanted that pickup damn bad and I pretty near worked enough for that guy that was gonna let me have it. And when he died some supposed-to-be relative of his come and got that pickup instead of lettin' me have it. And I never forgot that. I was cleanin' up...he had stuff all over his table and I was cleanin' that up and I thought that kind of looked kind of funny and picked up and looked at it and there was a check for eggs. My god he had two or three hundred dollars worth of checks that just layin' on the table that he didn't even know he had.

JT: I'll be darned.

RL: And I... Boy, I'll tell ya he took off to town when he found that he had all them checks that he hadn't cashed.

JT: I can appreciate that. What was the first car that you had, Roy?

RL: Model-T.

JT: Model-T?

RL: Yeah.

JT: And where were you when you got it?

RL: We was up in Washington.

JT: That's before you moved down?

RL: Yeah. And we had a...I called it a glasshouse, it was...it seemed to have glass windows in it. And we paid twenty-five dollars for that up there in Washington. Drove it down here and when we was milking cows out to Clark's all in ten-gallon cans of milk up to Blue Mountain Creamery. We built a platform on the back of that Model-T. That's what they hauled the milk to town with. And that's what us kids went to school in. Took the milk to the creamery up there...Tyler's...then went on to school. Then come back and stopped and got our cans and took 'em back home again.

JT: About how much were they paying for...was the milk or cream?

RL: Milk. That was whole milk.

JT: Whole milk.

RL: Yeah, that's what he bottled

JT: What were they payin' for it about that time?

RL: I wouldn't have any idea. But we could buy milk for about a dime a quart.

JT: So it wasn't a whole lot.

RL: No, it wasn't a whole lot. But you'd be surprised if you knew how many mortgages was paid on farms in this valley by eggs and milk. The eggs and milk would pay for the cost of farmin' and anything they made off the grains and stuff went to total profit.

JT: One cow could support a family and usually you could sell a few gallons aside.

RL: Yeah.

JT: On an average...I've forgotten...how much does a cow give...milk does a cow give?

RL: Oh, some of 'em two gallons, two-and-a-half. The Jerseys was the richer stuff they didn't do quite as much as the other one.

JT: What kind did you usually run on the farm?

RL: Jerseys, Gertneys, and Holstein. Jerseys and Gertneys for the cream in it and the Holsteins for the volume of milk. And we had to mix that together. That's what we did when we were bottlin' milk, too. If you bottled straight Jersey milk we'd have about that much milk and the rest of the bottle quarts cream. So you gotta mix that to keep it about that much cream on top of the milk bottle.

JT: When you delivered the milk to the house and it was real cold sometimes it'd freeze and raise up about three or four inches. [laugh]

RL: ___ inch to an inch-and-a-half anyway.

JT: Inch to an inch-and-a-half. I stretched it a little bit.

RL: Yeah. Mrs. Rasmussen...yeah...Sylvan Rasmussen. I delivered milk to them and it was cold. I put it on the porch and she went out to get the milk and the cap was up an inch. She called old John back, he was the milk inspector, ___ inspector of that...she called him about it. He said, "Well, that's natural. If it's froze that'll push the cream that's on top of the milk so that shoved it up. Put it in where it's warm and it'll settle back down." [laughs] And Mrs. Rassmen thought I was...I don't know what the hell she thought I was doin'. [laughs]

L: ___ the milk.

RL: Yeah.

JT: Did you have the...the...just the tall slim bottles or did you ever have any of those with the bubble in there?

RL: I had some of them, too, yeah.

JT: And you'd call that poor man's cream that come off there?

RL: Yeah. ___ doctors...oh, Brown. He wasn't a doctor, he was a dentist.

JT: Yeah.

RL: Yeah. He bought milk from us. He wanted the cream separate and Pop would say skim it off the top off of milk. And the second or third time I delivered that to him he told me, he said, "That's top milk, that ain't cream. I want somethin' that you've gotta scoop out of the jar." We had a hell of a time there. We had to get a separator so we could separate. He wanted that stuff when it got cold, why, you could turn it up and it wouldn't run out. You'd have to scoop it out with a spoon or a knife. But that cost money to do that, too.

JT: Then you didn't have a separator?

RL: Didn't for a long time.

JT: Not for a long time.

RL: We did it by mixin' Jerseys and Holsteins and stuff. They arrested me one time for havin' too much cream in the bottle. By god, they was gonna take me to Portland!

JT: There were regulations on how much...

RL: Cream in there. And we had a hell of a time. I told 'em I couldn't go to Portland. I had to stay there and milk them cows. And they said, "Well, you get too much milk..." ___ or whoever took the test checked and took the one that the cream line was the furthest down in the whole damn bunch. Just one quart had too much... People didn't care, they liked it. But we had to be damned awful careful.

JT: I can appreciate rules and regulations, hot water... When you did get that separator wasn't a bear to clean all those...

RL: Oh darn yeah! I didn't like that job. Nobody else did either. Somebody had to do it. Mom did it most of the time. You have to take that bowl apart and take each one apiece, supposed to put 'em back in the same place...rotation they was in.

JT: When you got the separator started you had to start turnin' that handle and it just got to hummin'.

RL: Yeah.

JT: And then turn the milk in there __. It was a lot of work.

RL: Yeah.

JT: It was nothin' easy.

RL: It was nothin' too darn, but it was just somethin' doin' all the time.

JT: Yeah.

RL: Like I said, that five years my wife or I neither one was home overnight and that's why I sold the dairy.

JT: Did you raise most your hay, or did you have to buy some?

RL: I had to buy some. When I got here I could do pretty good. I raised hay and bought grain because I got the kind of hay I wanted when I did that. Very seldom that I had enough I had to buy hay.

JT: Actually the hay in this part of the country is quite good.

RL: Yeah.

JT: It's better than that that comes from the valley. The valley usually buys our hay.

RL: Yeah. One thing about it here when you raise your own you didn't let it get too far in bloom. It makes more hay, but it hasn't got the feed value for a milk cow. And they waste too much stem then a beef cow would eat it, but the milk cows can't produce if they do. So if you raise your own hay and buy your grain they can't change the grain. There's lots of tricks to it. But the one thing that I was awful mean about was milkin' at four o'clock in the morning and four o'clock in the afternoon. If we were harvestin' hay or anything else, by god, everything quit when milkin' time come.

JT: I can appreciate that.

RL: And they did too, the cows did. We did better that way.

JT: Makes a long day.

RL: We finally got a radio in the barn out there. We'd play that radio and get KLBS on the radio. And the...somebody stranger comes in...it never bothered the cows

any, but if a stranger come in and it got too loud and stuff that made the cows nervous. We didn't get as much milk and had ___ job afterwards.

JT: When you had the radio did that make a difference in the amount of milk that the cows gave?

RL: It did. They never got excited about anything and other people'd come in and...

JT: I've heard that, but I didn't know.

RL: Yeah, it...it...

JT: ...being factual.

RL: It's kind of soothes them or somethin'. That and puttin' a pan of grain in front of 'em each time.

JT: Did you raise anything else from the...besides cows on the...

RL: Yeah. Garden, potatoes.

JT: Chicken.

RL: Chicken. My dad used to like to raise raspberries and strawberries, too, and he had a big garden still. With that many kids all everybody doin' somethin'.

JT: Do you ever have any hogs?

RL: Yes, we did. And I was sloppin' the hogs one time, we had a trough over the fence, and reached over and the bucket of milk and sour...sour milk and grain mixed up and...[tape interruption]...I leaned over too far and I dumped the bucket and I fell right into the damn trough. And that...I can understand why the hogs made so much noise when they e't, it didn't taste very good. [laughs] But I had to go to the house change all my clothes and everything. When they get done laughin', why... We did a lot of that sloppin' hogs and stuff. We raised 'em.

JT: Did you smoke your own hams or did...

RL: Yes. See, we had a big smokehouse. Dad liked to fish. We had a creek runnin' through the place and we get salmon out when they'd run up the creek. And we'd get them with pitchforks or anything we could and we had smoked salmon most of the time. Very ___ time when that smokehouse wasn't busy. We...if we had any oats, grain, we put it in the barn in a bin and lots of times Mom would say, "Roy, go down there to the oat bin and get us a ham." We put a ham in that oats to keep it. Bugs couldn't get to it and it never spoiled or nothin'. It was good smoked ham. But them are the real good old days.

JT: When you came to La Grande as a senior and the high school was burned what were some of the things that happened when you...?

RL: I remember a schoolteacher up there that was cross-eyed. Cross, I think, was her name, or what they called her. She was our homeroom teacher. We had a lot of fun with her. She'd be lookin' right at ya and see somebody doin' somethin' way over there. [laugh] But she was a good teacher, but we used to play tricks on her, too. Oh, I didn't have too much trouble. The only thing is I take advantage of every chance I got. Old Jay Lutz was the history teacher and he always gave us a test and they were always true or false. And I found out after a while if I'd answer every one of them that I new was true, true, and then the false ones...it was the other way around. I knew the false ones, I marked them, and everything else I marked as true and I was runnin' better than eighty, eighty-five average on the tests and he thought I was pretty smart, you know. The last final exam that we took over there, and we had it down in the city building ___ went down there and

upstairs in the...of course he'd teach several classes...when I went down there and set down in my desk, why, here was my numbers set down there and then somethin' clicked and I marked them ones wrong and I got a hundred. And after school was over I got a letter from old Jay Lutz complementing me on gettin' a hundred on that exam. [laughs] So we learned how to use all angles, you know. Hell, I didn't know who that kid was that was that was there before, but it was fresh markings on there. That was kind of a...I didn't fit in with the guys. It took a long time before...but when they started playin' baseball...sports kind of ___ amongst them all the time.

JT: You had to go all over town to go to school, didn't ya?

RL: Yeah. I went to East Asian, the Mormon church, next to 'em the Methodist church. I don't know where we had auto mechanics, I was in that, too. ___ a shop up there someplace. I got along pretty good in that auto mechanics. We set the valves into one of...ground the valves then ___ some of 'em set 'em on not movin' the motor ___ rollin' it over one way or other. Adjusted all the valves, set the ___. Of course it didn't run worth a damn. And the...oh, Mack somethin' I think was the math teacher. He said to me, he said, "Yours ran." And I said, "Yeah," I said, "Sometimes I had a heck of a time figurin' out just how far to turn it to get the valve where I wanted it." He said, "That's why yours runs so much better than everybody..." [laughs]

JT: Would make a difference. Did you work on your own car?

RL: No, they had a car up there. They had one up there to be used by everybody.

JT: This Model-T that you bought and drove down here, how long did you have that?

RL: Oh, I wished I had it now. Before Fred and them got through school...they didn't have to drive to school very often...we had an old touring car up there in Washington with the mizing glass windows. That's the one I started to drive. I drove that Model-T most the way down here, did most the driving ___ down. I had a box on the side, we had a Labrador dog...pet dog...and we had a box only set on the fender. And we stopped over there when we come down off of Horse Heaven on the flat down at the bottom and we stopped there to say our prayers 'cause we made it that far. We turned old dog out for some exercise, we always did that. Damn, he took off after a jackrabbit. And the last we seen him is way up in the damn hill way out of hearin' range, you know. We all...most of us weepin' a little bit we was gonna loose our dog. He stayed there and stayed there and by golly he turned around and tracked himself back. We seen him comin' we said which way he ran and pretty soon here he was comin' back. He never caught the rabbit, but I think he learned somethin'. [laughs] We was sure happy. And that old dog my nephew...we had cherry trees...my nephew when the cherries was ripe he'd go out there and eat some cherries. He'd pick one, he'd give one to the dog and one to himself and one to the dog. He put his hand on the dog's head and said, "Spit the seed out. Spit the seed out." [laugh] And that...Mom'd give him a sandwich and he'd go set down on the porch. That dog'd come up and he'd take a bite out of the sandwich, hold it out and that dog'd take a little bite of the sandwich. And they'd eat that sandwich clear down and the dog never took a big bite of any of them sandwiches, he always shared 'em. He was a good dog. Of

course that wasn't the healthiest thing in the world, but then nobody suffered for it anyway. [laughs] Don't even sound like it'd be good to eat...[end tape]

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RL: ...and the guy's son, he was three or four, five years older than I was, we went up there...of course he was drivin' his truck hoe and he backed down in the creek and we filled it with water and stuff and were slopin' too much that when we got ready to drive out the gas wouldn't feed it. So, what do you do? Well, he took the cap off the gas tank and he'd take a big breath and blow on that gas tank, put his hand over it and get another breath. He did that several times and then he passed out and he fell off...over that. I seen him fall down, I went around there and god damn it he was layin' there with his mouth in about that much water. His whole face was in that much water. And I grabbed him and dug him out of there and he's never forgot. Last time I seen him he said, "You pulled me out." I said, "If I'd known you as well as I do now I'd of probably shoved..."[laughs]" But that...saved that kid's life that did. If I hadn't 've just seen that and had sense enough to roll his damn face out of the water.

JT: What is that saying, Roy? The good Lord takes care of damn fools and kids.

RL: Right.

JT: Did you ever fish on Catherine Creek over there when the salmon were runnin'?

RL: No. No, never did. I seen 'em over there, but I never...

JT: On the Davis cattle ranch?

RL: Yeah. At the... Is that where the barn was where the people hide in the barn till cops wasn't around then they'd go out there just below that little dam he had in there?

JT: Right.

RL: Yeah.

JT: There's been a lot of changes in this valley, some good and some bad, but it's still a great place to live.

RL: I've...all the runnin' around I've ever did I've never found a place I'd rather live. ___ Hawaiian Islands or ___ Islands up in Alaska I just got no use...idea of wantin' to move up there.

JT: It's always nice to come home.

RL: Yeah.

JT: When you see Mt. Emily that...

RL: You got all kinds of weather, rather it'd be that way than be like it is someplace that's damn hot in the summertime and cold in the wintertime. We just... I got no desire to go. Last time I took...Lauree and I went to California I guess her great-granddaughter got married and we went down to that. I told her, "Take a good look while you're here 'cause I'm never comin' back here again." Got five and six lanes of highway, cars goin' ___ both directions. They got signs down there...then when we was down there it's sixty-five...and they get out in the country where they could drive they drive sixty-five. Before they get back into

town they'd be drivin' eighty! You know, all that traffic and goin' like a bunch of damned idiots. Boy, __ I'll never drive another car down there. No way.

JT: You bought a number of Fords.

RL: I've been a Ford man all my life ever since I had that first Model-T that I liked to drive. I learned the hard way that it don't stop when you say "whoa" either. [laugh] I never wrecked anything or hurt anything, but I sure learned a lesson quick.

JT: I went to work for Claude Hen in '55 and he'd always come in take to George.

RL: He got a kick out of old George. I bought a... I always bought from George. I'd go in there, "George," I said, "I need a cup of coffee." And he knew what I had in mind. We got in quite an argument one time, I was wantin' a new Ford pickup. He just wouldn't budge at all. I had a friend that was livin' in Spokane and I told him I was gonna buy a new pickup __. And so I told him just exactly what I wanted, I wanted a big six in there and interlockin' rear-end wheel, one wheel slipped with it, that's when I get the power. And George had one up there that he'd sell me, \$2700. And that one from Spokane said, "Cash, no trade-in?" And I said, "Yeah." \$2000. \$700 different. I said I can walk to Spokane for that much money. He wouldn't have nothin'... George just absolutely wouldn't. So we was walkin' out and Claude was there and he seen us goin' out and he said, "Wait a minute." He said, "Neither one of you look happy." I said, "No," I said, "I wanted to buy a pickup. I can buy it cheaper someplace else, but I don't want to have to get it that way." He said, "Come in and sit down." So I went into his office and set down. George he stayed in the door. We got to talkin' Claude says, "What's the matter?" Well, I said things...stuff all over and I can buy that truck that's exactly that... __ mind on it, what I told him what the... And I said, "George wants \$2800 and," I said, "I can't afford that." He said...it's a cash deal, I always borrowed money from the bank and paid cash for it 'cause I could pay it off when I wanted to that way. He says, "Let me make a phone call." So he called someplace in Boise and they talked and he repeated what I said I wanted to them. Pretty soon he looked up at me he said, "What color do you want?" I said, "I don't give a damn what color it is as long as it runs, that's what I'm after." "I can have a red one here the day after tomorrow for 2100 bucks." I said, "Order." And after that I never had any trouble with George __. I'd go there and tell George I needed a cup of coffee...we argued from four to nine, I wanted to talk about rentin' it and he said you can't afford to. If you rent it in two years time you can buy it, but it'll cost you more than if you owned it. He said, "It cost you a hund...fifteen hundred dollars a year to own it." So whenever I wanted to trade with him I just figured how much a year and by god I'd go in there and tell old George and then __ five hundred dollars more than I'd think I'd get each time by workin' with George. I'd tell him, "Damn it, you make me mad." __ I give you a better deal than you expected." And I said, "Yeah, but I didn't get to jew any." [laughs] So him and I got along fine.

JT: What do you think about the price of cars now? You'd buy one then for twenty-seven hundred dollars and now, what, thirty thousand dollars?

RL: Yeah, right.

JT: The prices have gone completely through the roof.

RL: Yeah. I can't believe these advertisements in the paper. There's some advertisement they do on them cars if I bought a new car I wouldn't drive it like they drive, the last thing I'd ever do with it. No interest, no payments for a year and all that crap. Somebody's payin' the bill. I don't know, when I was drivin' that cream route I put on ninety-seven in two years on that.

JT: I imagine, by gosh. That's a lot of drivin'.

RL: I __ sold one...ninety-two thousand I had on it and I traded it in. A guy out here in the valley...I can't think of his name now...called me up. He said, "What all d'you do to that truck?" I said, "Put gas and oil in it and grease the __ when I was supposed to." "Never had it overhauled?" [telephone ringing] I said, "No." I don't answer that. It's for her and I just...[tape interruption]

JT: You said he was a farmer out in the valley and...

RL: And if I hadn't had to overhaul it, why, he wanted it. I said, "No, I never overhauled it." I said, "I kept it serviced and took care of it all the time and never beat it up all dead this pickup where I'd set a five-gallon can down sometime, but they weren't beat up at all." So he bought it just under...about ninety-five thousand is what it had. And I talked to him two or three years after that and he said, "I drove that thing till it had a hundred and ninety-five thousand on it. I went into Ford to trade it in for a new one...on a new one and they wouldn't trade." I said, "They wouldn't __ trade it." So he went up to Enterprise and traded it up there and he got quite a bit of money for that damn little pickup. But he put that much on it and he wouldn't 've touched if I'd had it overhauled. If I'd had it overhauled he wouldn't 've touched it. And he's a big farmer out here in the valley now.

JT: It's interesting about how cars have changed stuff over the years, so expensive...

RL: I bought one Ford from...pickup from them up there. I like to take it out and drive it before I put it on the cream route so my wife and I took it...we went up Tollgate. I thought, hell, it was early enough in the day so we drove it on to Pendleton, come home that way. I wanted to get out, we got out over here, I was about ready to take it on a cream run the next day. There was a...seat didn't look right. They put that seat cushions all there and never put a bolt in it, it wasn't bolted to the frame at all. Nothin, just settin' in there! That's dangerous and I drove it all the way to Pendleton and back and sat there and there was no problem. When I gettin' in and out of it all the time deliverin' all the cream that thing just settin' in there. Got down to Ford and I said, "You can have this damn thing." "What do you mean?" I said, "I took it for a ride and," I said, "when I got out the seat was loose. There wasn't a bolt in it." Oh god, he just had a fit. That day there was some action around there. The next morning it was ready to go, but I wasn't...I took the old truck.

JT: The factory, you know, once in a while something comes messed up and it should be picked up in the pre-delivery, you know, of the cars.

RL: One guy worked on the line and I reckon he said...he was puttin' some bolts in something someplace when that went by him he put them bolts in that time he had in the space they were supposed to. He said, "Once in a while if I get behind," he said, "I just throw a handful of bolts in and let it go." [laughs]

JT: Some strange things happen.

RL: Oh, a guy's lucky. Hellfire...some of the things I did are damn lucky.

JT: It sounds like it's been a good life, Roy. Enjoyed yourself as you went along. Been married to two nice ladies.

RL: I've been lucky that way. I'll tell you one more thing that we did as kids. We lived in a mile...a little over a mile of the grange hall and they used to have dances all the time there. There's gravel road goin' by it. Finally we got smart...I don't know who in the hell thought of it to start with...but we'd go out there along the gravel road and get a handful of that __ gravel and broadcast it along the edge of the...by the fencepost. Pretty soon we'd hear a tingle on glass. We'd go up there and we got more home brew and whiskey...bottles of whiskey from the fence post. A guy'd set his whiskey bottle down by the post there so he'd know where it was at, you know. And we'd throw a...if we'd hear a tingle on glass we knew we had somethin'. [laughs] Some of the kids got pretty drunk, but I never drank it that much, but I traded it. But I got a kick out of that. I don't know how many bottles of whiskey we ever walked by before we got smart enough to throw tingle and...[laugh] Some people's unhappy. They all thought some of the them other guys, the big guys, did it. [laughs]

JT: There's a lot of stories about Prohibition.

RL: When I moved here and bought this place, oh, I ___ Fred Hill. He was over there the back of Wal-Mart. He lived over back of where Wal-Mart is, where that church is over there now. He's quite an old guy. He told me that Saturday afternoon late he used to like to go over to the corner of my place where that creek was, the brush right along that creek, and look under there. ___ lookin' and he always found... Moonshiners would try to give him five dollars or whatever for the bottle he hid out in that brush out there. And then, of course, he'd go get it...he'd put it out there Saturday afternoon he'd go get it Saturday evening when he's goin' out. He said, "I got more than my share." [laughs]

JT: When you first moved out here wasn't there quite a little bit of water that...or was that farther on that the drained from the early days?

RL: That must be when they changed the river it changed. Since I've been here when the river flooded and washed that house uptown and it hit the railroad bridge down here and knocked things all to pieces.

JT: ___'s house.

RL: Yeah.

JT: Yeah.

RL: There wasn't a drop of rain come there water run down here that did. This was dry just like it is now all the way from Island City this way.

JT: There used to be those ponds up there by where Quinlin's live.

RL: Yeah.

JT: In there, but that's all dry now.

RL: Yeah. I never seen any water extra runnin' down Quinlin's here in the bottom here through the golf course. But, boy, uptown...and I...when that cream station there in La Grande on Jefferson and the backend of that cream station was quite a hole in there and right next to the railroad tracks. I went uptown and I couldn't get through the underpass, it was full of water. I had to go back around the other way. I thought that the backend of that thing would be a-floatin' and you know

there wasn't a damn drop extra in that creek there? That was dry as a bone. John Lemmon run a little furniture. He had furniture and stuff ___ below him and under my building and under that other one, that was his storage. And they was pumpin' water...they had a pump a runnin' over there at Miller's on that side of Jefferson runnin' tryin' to keep it out of their stores there and that, but over there was dry. Old John was afraid to come over there.

JT: Yeah.

RL: He knew it was just gonna be full of water, but it stayed dry. Why, now, I don't know. They got a good damn up there someplace that kept that river there.

JT: That tin sewer used to go down the alley there between Adams and Jefferson and that helped fill a lot of basements.

RL: Yeah. Yeah, I set there and watched that damn pump run there right in front of Miller's there pumpin' water when that water was high over there.

JT: That was that flood of '64, '65.

RL: Yeah. That's the only time I ever seen a river humped up in the middle. That actually was...it was rounded, the top of the water was rounded there was so darn much water comin' down there. That's the one that took out the railroad bridge and stuff. They wanted... I'll never forget there was...drivin' from here to Cove on the Cove road Claude Anson had an old T-track Cat settin' out there in the field. I turned on top of Sandridge outfit their way and there was about that much of the top of the exhaust pipe stickin' out of the water. That whole Cat was under water except that much.

JT: About two inches.

RL: Two inches of...

JT: I'll be darned.

RL: Boy, it set there for quite a while. Boy, they had to take every bolt out of that damn thing and put it back together, clean it up. Put it back together...they earned it.

JT: True.

RL: A lot of people talk about...laugh about that. Claude left his tractor set out there when it should've been home in the shed.

JT: That happens a lot out in the valley, leave your equipment out there. That was interesting about you telling me you'd worked for Willy because I wasn't aware of that. Willy's been a friend mine for a lot of years.

RL: Everybody told me that "you'll never make it out there." I'm ten years younger than he is. He said, "You got too many ideas of your own." I worked out there for him. One time I went out there in wintertime, we's...I was workin' one or two feed the cattle. Snowed about four inches that night and all the hay on the trailer he that he had. Nobody was out to the shed yet when I got there so I figured we was gonna haul some hay to feed the cattle with on it so I took the scoop shovel and shoveled that snow off the trailer. When Willy got out there we didn't use that trailer. That's the only time that he ever...I did somethin' for him before I was told to. I seen the message right there, boy, I do what you tell me to. And I got along fine and I finally got so...I hate to say this about Willy...god damn it when he worked on a piece of equipment in the shop or out in the lot he just ____. When I got there he'd work on a piece of equipment I took...picked up

the god damn wrenches and took over the desk and wipes the grease and muck off and put 'em in the drawer. And the only thing he ever said about that was, "It took me a little while to learn what you was doin'." Pickin' up his tools and puttin' 'em away when he got done with 'em. We got along fine. That's the only damn time...he never said anything, but I knew when I did...when he'd seen that I'd shoveled that snow without bein' told to.

JT: He's a hard worker. I like Willy.

RL: Yeah, I always did, too. But another thing he never bought any equipment he didn't have money to pay for. He thought he bought that Beach place one time from old Claude Anson...Claude Wright and he borrowed the money...got money, he went and drew the money out so he could pay old Claude cash for it. And I don't know what come up, but anyway somebody talked Claude out of it, sellin' it, some of his kids or some damn thing, they wanted it. And so he told Willy. Willy had a hundred-and-some thousand dollars in cash there. Went up to the First National Bank...he banked there...he went up and told the guy...that was on Saturday...he called the guy, it was on Saturday, and he said, "I'll meet you up there right away." Took the money up there. He said, "If you want me to I can have more money ___ for you Monday or Tuesday." "What'd you mean?" He said, "Always somebody calls up and they have to come immediately." He said, "I can loan that to them at a pretty good interest and I won't charge you near what interest they pay me." And so Willy let him do it and he made fifty thousand dollars over that weekend. When that money he loaned...the guy at the bank's business had to have it and it did... I said, "Why didn't you leave him had it all the time?" He said, "I don't trust him that much." [laughs] I expect I better let you shut that off.

JT: Well...[tape stopped]