

MARY JO LEMON

April 19, 2005

Interviewed by Micheal L. Minthorn

Transcribed by Micheal L. Minthorn (12/13/2007)

Transcription revised by Paula Helten (03/20/2012)

[Tape # 1 - Side A]

I: This is now the interview with Mary Jo Peck Lemon. It is March 19, 2005. [Date given elsewhere is April 19, 2005.] We are in La Grande, Oregon. Could you tell us your full name and birth date? This is for a sound check.

MJL: Oh,--

I: Including your maiden name.

MJL: My name is Mary Jo Lemon and uh, I was born February the 12th, 1944.

I: What was your maiden name?

MJL: Peck.

[audio clicks - no delay]

I: Okay. Tell us, um-- tell us where-- where were you born here in La Grande?

MJL: I was born at uh, St. Joseph Hospital in La Grande, uh, 1944. Uh, the war-- I wasn't really a war baby, but the war was going on in '44.

I: Now the St. Joseph's Hospital is now the CHD building--

MJL: Right, right.

I: here in La Grande?

MJL: And third floor was maternity.

I: Now, you told me what it cost to be born and how that bill got paid. How about telling us about that?

MJL: Well, um, I think if I'm-- if I'm not wrong that the doctor and hospital bill were all included, and it was \$50. And you-- if you didn't pay it, you didn't go home. And in those days, um, they kept you for 10 days. They kept the mother and the baby for 10 days. And mom said it was at least three days before she was allowed to even get up and walk. And, um, a month or so previous my father and a man by the name of Mosier-- he was a state policeman and my dad was a railroader. Uh, Dad on the way home with this train saw a convict, and he knew he was a convict because of the clothes he was wearing. Uh, asleep or hiding-- I'm not sure which-- in a ditch. And so when he got to La Grande he called up Allen Mosier and so they went out and they got him. And so Dad, uh, was given the reward and it was a \$50-- uh, the reward was \$50, and so that's what paid for me.

I: Were they worried about paying to get you out--

MJL: Well, I think at--

I: before that, do you think?

MJL: at the time, um, you know, money was tight then. And um, my parents, uh, lived on an acreage and uh, mother worked. She was a secretary at the college, and they had at the time three children. And I think they're-- yeah, three-- three children. I had a brother and a sister older. And I just-- I'm sure money was tight then, you know? Uh, this was an added expense.

I: So tell me where you first lived when you were born?

MJL: Well, we lived down-- down on-- its Lake Street. Kind of north Lake and uh, the highway is now mostly in-- in the area that was our, uh, barn and uh, corral that we raised our horses. We had a cow or two, and we raised-- Dad raised rabbits. And we had chickens and dogs and uh, had a farmhouse. I remember that um, there was an old fashioned pump at the kitchen sink, pumped water. Uh, and I can remember uh, we didn't have a bathroom. So, we had an outdoor outhouse, and we took baths in a, uh, metal uh-- oh I-- just a barrel I guess. And then I can remember Dad putting in a bathroom, and we're have-- we had running water in a bathtub and toilet, and I remember thinking how great that was.

I: That took place when you were--

MJL: Yeah,--

I: when you were young?

MJL: when I was living there. And I lived there 'til I was six years old, and then my parents got a house on uh, Oak Street.

I: Before we talk about that house, you were telling me-- now I-- I think this happened in the original house. You were telling me about a time you were alone home and the wood stove.

MJL: Oh.

I: What's that story?

MJL: Yeah, well I was, I think at the time four, and uh, it was in winter. A lot of snow and my sister was six and my brother was eight. And so Dad took them to school and took Mother up to the college. Dad-- he didn't want her driving in the snow, so he took her to work. And instead of making me change clothes, I guess, they left me home alone and with instructions I was not to put any wood on the fire and um, to-- to leave the stove alone. And I don't know whether they told me that because I'd been getting-- bothering the stove. I don't know, but I know I was always cold. I was never warm. And that was the heat in the kitchen and where our woodstove in the living room. So after Dad left, I uh-- everybody left, I can remember just getting very cold. So I put a big piece of wood out of the wood box into the kitchen stove which is a woodstove, and it didn't fit. But I left it there, and my dad didn't come home. And then the longer he didn't come home I thought, well I better-- I'm gonna get in trouble. So I put that piece of wood back in the wood box.

I: Now during this time, you uh--

MJL: _____!

I: you put that in there the stove was open?

MJL: The stove uh, yeah. Well, it was uh, a plate that you lifted up off and stuffed the wood down in.

I: Okay.

MJL: And um-- and it didn't fit, and so I just left it there. I just couldn't get it to fit. Then after a while I got to feeling bad, so I took it out and put it in the wood box and caught the house and the kitchen on fire. And I can remember, um, going into the divano and praying. Um, and I can remember running and pumping water and throwing water on it, and then I called my grandmother. And I'd been getting in trouble because I was calling her all the time. And I was told I was not to bother her 'cause I'd just call her anytime I wanted. I'd just go to the phone and the operator would say, "Number please," and I'd call her. [chuckles]. So I called her and told her the house was on fire. And she called the neighbor, a man by the name of Beeten, and he was a railroader. And he came over, and he could hear me screaming. And he came over, and the fire was pretty much out. But he said, uh-- and he was there. He waited with me 'til Dad got home. But I had my pajamas on over my clothes, so I must have been really, really worried 'cause I was changing clothes, too. And so I was-- anyway-- but the kitchen floor uh, partially burned and the ceiling. So I had a pretty good fire goin', scared me to death.

I: What was the aftermath of that?

MJL: The aftermath was I didn't get in trouble. My dad felt-- because he realized that they should not have left a four-year-old child alone with-- with the last words saying, "Don't put any wood on the fire," 'cause that's, you know-- I did it. Oh, I don't know if I was not an easy child to raise, but uh, you know, when you-- you just don't wanna leave a child by themselves. So-- but what had happened was my-- my dad had been involved in a car accident, and that's why he was so long getting back. Uh, he was just gonna' take everybody to school and be right back, and it didn't happen that way.

I: Huh, because that-- before we move on uh, tell me who were your parents? Who was your father?

MJL: My father was Elmer Milton Peck, and he was a railroader. Uh, my mother was uh, Betty Martin Peck-- uh, Elizabeth and Betty for short. My dad's uh, family were raised pretty much here, and my mother's family, um, are all pioneers from this area. Uh, and then my mother was actually born in

Fairfield. Her mother married and they set up farming in Fairfield, Idaho, and my mother came back when she was fourteen.

I: What did your mother do?

MJL: Well, mom was uh-- um, secretary for the President of the college. And she started out--

I: You're talking about Eastern Oregon College?

MJL: at Eastern Oregon. And she started out in 1932 as um, a work-study. She was, uh, attending high school. She graduated when she just was barely seventeen. And uh, she had-- she was a straight-A student, and she wanted, uh-- she liked secretarial science. And so they-- she came and worked over in the college, uh, for several years before she ever went there permanently or as a-- uh, as a real job. And when she graduated high school she went to work at the college and ended up secretary for Inlow. I believe he was the first President. But she was secretary for all the Presidents except Gilbert and Creighton, and um, she retired in I believe it was '85, somewhere in there, '84, '85. So, she just pretty-- she was up there, you know, just part of the institution.

I: Now who was the last President she worked for?

MJL: The last President she worked for was, uh, Rodney Briggs.

I: And uh, so she was uh-- that-- did she hold this same job the entire time then she worked there?

MJL: No, sometimes she was, uh-- she was always secretary to the President. Uh, but sometimes she would be uh, also working in the Business Office which was across the hall and helped them out. And um, but mainly that's what she did. She-- she uh-- she was the President's secretary, and uh, her office was in Inlow. Uh-- and um-- and another thing about my mom is she never complained. She never one time ever heard her complain about her bosses. She spoke nothing but great respect for them.

I: She was a very loyal--

MJL: Very.

I: very loyal.

MJL: Very loyal and she loved the college and served on the Foundation before and after she retired. Alumni Board before she retired-- actually traveled with the Alumni Board. She um-- she did graduate from college actually with a degree in business. She uh-- she was the secretary for the Foundation for several years.

I: Alright, we've got more to talk about her later. I've got a couple more notes.

MJL: Okay.

I: Um, now you moved uh, to 1506 Oak Street?

MJL: Yes.

I: And about--

MJL: When I was six years old.

I: and you lived there how long?

MJL: 'Til I married when I was twenty-two.

I: Um, where did you go to school?

MJL: Uh, I went to school at um, the old Central which is now where the middle school is. And it-- and they tore that school down. So-- but in that-- on that same lot where the middle school is now there was uh, a building, a grade school and then next to it was the junior high, La Grande Junior High. It-- and at one time that was a high school before it burned down. But I attended, uh, Central School uh, to third grade, up and to and including third grade. And then I went to Central School where it is now. It was brand new.

I: Where is Central School now?

MJL: And it's right below the hospital.

I: Is that-- I have a note here that says Sunset and K.

MJL: Yeah.

I: Is that where it is?

MJL: Yeah, I attended fourth through sixth there.

I: Um, I have a note about a school flooding in--

MJL: Well, the first--

I: the first year, was it?

MJL: The first year the school was built, um, they had some floods and high water. And it was in the fall, so I was late starting. And um, it flooded the gym. In fact the high school flooded too actually, and the flood went through the gymnasium and into the auditorium. But so we got to start late that year, and uh, then that spring there was high water too. It was like it was real swampy, and they hadn't built any underground drains. So they started puttin' in the underground drains and stopped that. But I can remember here was this brand new school, and I was so excited. And then I couldn't go for a while because of-- of that flooding.

I: So these underground drains are no doubt the water tiles that--

MJL: Probably.

I: your husband talked about in his interview that he used to sometimes play in?

MJL: Yeah.

I: That were underground?

MJL: Well, and I think--

I: And he used to play in them?

MJL: Yeah, I think they've done that with, uh, the whole field, but the fields out there were like walkin' in a marsh. And I think they all had a drain-- have drains in 'em now. There's a track on one, uh, field. Um, so I think that they've drained 'em all. Uh, but it-- when _____, that was a lower area.

I: And so this flooding was actually kind of a routine event at--?

MJL: Well, and I think there was water that went in the groundwater. And uh, so.

I: Anything stand out in particular about your-- your time at Central School?

MJL: Um, I worked in the kitchen in fifth and sixth grade and helped out as kind of a KP job, and I liked that.

I: Did ya get paid for that?

MJL: Uh, I got a free lunch for it. Um, I can't really-- I can't really think of anything outstanding, um-- um, at all. I was, you know as active as most kids are.

I: Where did you go to school next?

MJL: I went to the uh, middle school, La Grande Middle School, and it--

I: Was it a junior high?

MJL: It was a junior high uh, but it's a vacant lot right now. It's where the parking lot is next to the middle school. There was a big three-story building there, and I went there. And um, I went there seventh, eighth, and ninth grade.

I: Anything in particular stand out about those three years?

MJL: Uh, no I had fun. They used to do a thing called Hobby Night on Wednesday night, and I-- I loved it. And it's unfair they don't do it now. But uh, they-- the teachers uh-- some of the teachers taught dancing, some taught photography, some taught tie flying-- the fly tying. I guess that's what you call it. [chuckles].

I: What did-- what did you take?

MJL: Some took sewing, some cooking and sewing. But when the teachers had a hobby and they wanted to share kids could sign up for it. And it was just fun to do. Oh, I took dancing. I took sewing. I took cooking, but there were a lot of boys that took cooking. I didn't take photography or anything like that, but it was just really fun. And it was every Wednesday night from uh-- uh, seven to nine, and I remember enjoying that a lot.

I: It's my understanding that um; perhaps another sort of important event was that you met Terry during--

MJL: I met Terry--

I: your time there?

MJL: at a birthday party. And um, I went to this party of a friend of mine and Terry was there, and I thought he was cute. And um, so we kind of started dating, and I was in the eighth grade. He was in the seventh. And um, so if we went anywhere like a movie, his mother would take us and my mother would bring us home, and my mother would take us and his mother would bring us home. And by the time we got to, uh, ninth grade they let us walk once in a while to the movies. Otherwise, we were pretty much chaperoned back and forth. And um, so-- and then when I went into high school we broke up for a year. And uh, we both dated other people. And then when he came into high school he was a year behind me. So, when he came into high school we started dating again, and then we did it until we felt-- we got married.

I: Did you drive before him then?

MJL: Uh-huh.

I: Did you drive dates?

MJL: Uh, well the year I started driving he was still in junior high, so we weren't dating then. So when he finally started driving then-- then I didn't have to drive. But no, we--

I: Didn't work out that way?

MJL: Didn't work out that way, but we had a good time. And uh-- and he played in a dance band for a lot of the-- uh, a lot too. And so we had a lot of weekends that we didn't go anywhere because he was playing.

I: Did you ever accompany him on any of those--

MJL: I used to go and sit--

I: weekends?

MJL: by him. And people-- I think people thought I was gonna get up and sing, but once in a while I'd draw. And uh, I think in a-- in a two year stand he-- he didn't have but maybe a couple weekends off. They played every-- every weekend. Uh, the money that he saved, and he saved every single cent that he earned, we bought our first house with.

I: That's quite a-- probably was quite a sum of money then.

MJL: Well, our first house was \$10,000. And we-- the money he saved, we made a down payment, and we had it paid off like in three years.

I: Wow.

MJL: Was a hundred dollars a month but we'd make triple payments.

I: And he was still working with the band, uh--

MJL: Uh, not when we--

I: at that time?

MJL: bought our house, no. He was working at Globe Furniture. Well, actually-- yeah he was working at Globe. But, uh, we-- while he was in college we rented, but I had a job. See, I-- I started teaching uh, before he got out of college.

I: Right. When did you graduate? Uh, no-- well, we're behind here. Uh, then you moved on to La Grande High School?

MJL: Went to La Grande High School and graduated in 1962. And while I was at high school I belonged to um, the Girl's Chorus, the Mixed Chorus, the Mixed Ensemble, uh, Pep Club, Dance Team, uh, you know the fun things that were fun to do. And um, I studied but not as hard as I could have. Um, you know, high school is just not the same. Made a lot of good friends and I go to all the reunions and participate in all the things that-- we really had a-- a-- a class that was just really close. We're kind of close with everybody.

I: Are you still close today with these classmates?

MJL: Yes.

I: Do you still socialize with a lot of your--

MJL: Not--

I: classmates?

MJL: not socialize, but we at the reunions we sit down. And, oh there's a few that we-- I do see that go to lunch once in a while with in town. But um, my high school years were so much fun, and I graduated in 1962 and went on to college.

I: Uh, where did you first go to college?

MJL: I went Eastern a couple years and then I went to uh, Portland State.

I: Was there a particular reason you transferred?

MJL: Uh, uh, nursing. And um, the classes that I had to take at Portland State were classes that they somehow fouled me up at Eastern. So I was taking night classes, and it was just ridiculous because I had to take them twenty-two hours.

I: Was your original major nursing then? _____?

MJL: Um, well it was kind of a general thing. I'd thought that I would want to be a nurse 'cause I had worked at the hospital. Um-- but um, we didn't really have a good pre-nursing program. We-- I didn't have an advisor that

really knew what they were doing. You know if you get somebody in there as an advisor and they don't know, then it can foul you up a whole year. And that's kinda what happened. So I just tried to make up some of the classes at Portland State, and it was very difficult 'cause I had-- could do night classes and then work during the day. So I ended up coming back to Eastern.

I: Before you came back I had another note that said University of Oregon.

MJL: Well,--

I: Was that--?

MJL: it was a-- it was--

I: Was that a combined--

MJL: combined.

I: program at that time?

MJL: Yeah.

I: Okay.

MJL: So then I uh, came back to Eastern and uh, I had all these science classes that I'd taken and that _____ was full so I went into education. And I always liked workin' with kids anyway, so I graduated in-- with a Bachelor of Science in Education in March of '66.

I: I have March of '67.

MJL: In March of '67, you're right.

I: Okay.

MJL: I was married in December of '66. Terry and I were married at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in 1966.

I: He was telling me that you're a cradle Episcopalian.

MJL: Yeah.

I: And um, through some diplomatic uh, arrangement it-- it-- it-- it worked out that he became a member of your church and all of that.

MJL: [chuckles]. Yeah.

I: Uh-huh.

MJL: Well, he-- he-- he loves the church. He really does. And uh, I knew I wasn't gonna leave, and uh-- and he didn't have to go with me because um, you know his dad didn't go with his mom to church. That-- and that was Christian Church, but he wanted to. And especially when we had children we thought it necessary that the family go together to be a family affair rather than just mom and the kids go.

I: So you two got married uh, while you were still in school?

MJL: I had one term left, and he had several years left. And so we had a Christmas wedding, um, December the 18th, um, beautiful wedding and um--

I: At St. Peter's?

MJL: At St. Peter's. And um, then I graduated in March and uh, started subbing as soon as I got my license. And uh, I interviewed at-- at Elgin and La Grande and Union. And a man by the name of Comiskey, John Comiskey was the superintendent at Union. I went out there and I interviewed with the full board and the superintendent and principal. And they had a first grade opening which is what I wanted. And then I interviewed at Elgin with Glenn Kirkeby at the Tropadera for dinner. And then I interviewed with uh, Avery Millering who was assistant superintendent, and the first thing he asked me in the interview was when I intended to get-- have children.

I: Mr. Avering asked you that?

MJL: Mr. Avery Millering, yeah. He was Terry's music teacher.

I: Right.

MJL: Piano teacher. They wanted that-- the first thing they asked me was when I intended on getting pregnant, and now of course they can't ask that.

I: Right.

MJL: But of course I wasn't intending on getting pregnant for a while 'cause I still had-- Terry was still in school. But I-- I was offered a contract in Elgin and Cove, and I chose-- I mean uh, Elgin and Union, and I chose Union because I wanted first grade. And I taught out there 32 years.

I: Um, before we move into that and some other topics here, um, what-- what is-- was your certification level in education?

MJL: It was-- I had a basic certificate K through 8.

I: And did you do your student teaching in the Ackerman Lab School at that time?

MJL: I did a half a day in third grade, and there were seven student teachers in that half-day.

I: Now your husband talked about having these multiple student teachers in the classroom that happened to be--

MJL: Well that was at a time-- that was just at a time when he was in school that-- where they didn't put out the student teachers into the other schools. They did all their student teaching at Ackerman. Then they started moving them out into the other schools. And so, uh, the other schools picked some of them up so there weren't so many at Ackerman. But when I did my third grade student teaching there at Ack, there were seven in just the morning. So, I got-- I got to teach maybe three lessons a week. So I didn't feel I had a very good experience. So I asked for a full day of student teaching not in-- then we had to do two terms of student teaching. Uh, now, uh, you do one term if you are in the Quest program, you do one term. So I did a full day at Riveria with Joan Du Bosch in first grade. And uh, that just happened to be my great-grandmother's first grade classroom. And she was the-- the, uh, and she'd-- was of course had passed away by then. I never knew her. But my grandmother came out-- Heather Martin to teach a unit on pioneer days. And she said, "This was my mother's

classroom.” And her mother was also principal of Riveria and first grade teacher.

I: Did they both go to Eastern also?

MJL: My great-grandmother attended Eastern in 1929 at-- summer of 1929 and took some classes. And my grandmother Martin took some classes. Uh, neither one of those ladies graduated from Eastern, but uh, my great-grandma had been teaching for years. But she did take come classes. My mother graduated and I graduated and both my children and Terry graduate, so we have a history of--

I: A long history.

MJL: attending Eastern. Yeah.

I: Now when you talked about student teaching a moment ago, you said that when you did your student teaching for third grade, were you required to teach several grade levels-- student teach several grade levels for the experience before you got done?

MJL: They wanted you to, uh-huh.

I: How many did you do?

MJL: I did a third grade level, and then I did a first grade level. Did one term in third grade and a full day another term in-- in first grade, and uh, we had to write a lesson plan for every single concept that you taught. Every lesson had to have a lesson plan, and so-- and those lesson plans weren't just one page. They were pages, pages. And I remember that's part of that that probably-- but uh, I hated that because it was just copying right out of the book. You just scripted your lesson. And like I-- once I started teaching, you know you'd-- I'd write down how I was gonna teach and mainly the objective is what was important to me. But I pretty much knew what I was gonna do, but I can remember student's student teaching. They spent hours writing.

I: Did you feel that was busy work--

MJL: Yeah.

I: rather than--

MJL: I did.

I: concentrating on?

MJL: And years later as a teacher when I had student teachers I gave 'em my pattern for-- for a lesson plan, and it was a lot simpler and a lot easier to write. I did require that there be a lesson plan for everything they taught. I still think that's important, but it was one page. Yeah. You didn't have to script every single thing you say. So, uh-- and then mainly that was important to me that they have knowledge of the subject matter that they were teaching, and that they knew how to communicate with the kids.

I: Now you talked to me, uh, the last time about working uh, for the hospital during summers while you were in high school. Tell me about that.

MJL: Well I uh, I wanted to work, and um, I had helped my aunt down at the Red Shutter Motel. And I didn't like working at-- in the hotel-- uh, in the motel. I just didn't care for it. I babysat an awful lot. Uh, after, all my years of junior high and high school I babysat, twenty-five cents an hour and thirty-five cents after midnight. And I-- I was always hoping that people wouldn't come home right at midnight. That they'd stay out for a couple hours so I could make more money. But uh, to have a full-time job in the summer, um, I went to the hospital and applied. And I started at forty-five cents an hour for six weeks. And then I-- I worked for eighty cents an hour.

I: How long did you--?

MJL: For about four years and then I got a dollar an hour. I thought I was really in the chips, a dollar an hour. And I would-- if I worked-- sometimes I would work uh, three to eleven shift and then come back and work the seven to three.

I: In the morning?

[End of Side A - audio clicks - no delay]

[Side B]

I: We're continuing with the interview with Mary Jo Peck Lemon. It's still April 19, 2005.

[audio clicks - no delay]

So you were talking about you would work the three to eleven or the swing shift and then you would come back in the morning for seven to three.

MJL: For seven to three. But mainly I just worked the seven to three, and I would have, oh, as many as five patients that I would actually give baths to and change their beds and get 'em ready for the day. And that was-- that was a huge amount of people to do by yourself, so I was busy. And then the afternoon, uh, you know, uh, was getting them down kinda for their afternoon nap depending on what the problem was. Um, I-- I didn't tell you this before, but I had one lady that she'd had a stroke. And she could talk but she had trouble getting the words out, but when she got 'em out you could understand her. But her daughters would come and-- and just-- it looked like they'd stuck a bowl over her head and cut her hair, you know. I used to feel sorry for her 'cause her hair had no curl in it at all. And she had real pretty nightgowns in the dresser, but they just put regular hospital gowns on her. And I just felt kinda sorry so one day on my day off I went down and bought a permanent and some rollers, and I went up and permed her hair. And it was an ordeal because she wasn't as cooperative as I thought she would be so I finally-- somebody helped me, but we got her hair done. And-- and we dried it and I combed it out. And then I put some lipstick on her, and she looked in the mirror and started kissing my hand. She was so excited [chuckles] and it was just really something to see.

I: It did a lot for her morale, her well-being.

MJL: Well, I never realized that she looked at herself, you know, and-- and thought anything about how she looked. But when she looked in the mirror she was so excited, and she knew she looked good. So I continued to do that until I quit working. Every-- about every, uh, four months I'd give her a permanent. And uh--

I: You kind of adopted this--

MJL: Yeah, I felt sorry for her.

I: stroke patient.

MJL: I really felt sorry for her.

I: Mm-hm. Now we've covered most of this. Uh, it said that you were married on, uh, December 18th, 1966. You dated Terry for 10 years, and--

MJL: Off and on for 10 years.

I: now there was uh-- um, a note here you wanted one of you through college.

MJL: We-- before we got married and I was one term from graduating, I wanted a Christmas wedding and he was fine with the wedding. So, uh, we were-- my parent's anniversary is August the 20th, and his parent's anniversary was August the 20th. My parents were married two years longer than his parents. So we were engaged on August the 20th. That was a special day for both of us, and we didn't want a long engagement when we'd dated for years. [chuckles]. So we decided on-- on a Christmas wedding. And he still had college left. So when I signed my contract at Union in March I signed for \$5,600 a year. That was what I was paid. And uh, I got insurance which included Terry on the insurance. So I really-- uh, \$5,600 was a lot of money then. And so uh-- and we paid-- we rented a house for \$100 a month that was furnished and had a piano in it. So he was happy. It was out about a half a block from the college. And we had a Toyota, and I could drive. I was in a carpool, and I could drive, uh, that Toyota for a whole month without getting gas. You know, on a tank of gas. And I drove one week of every five.

I: In the pool?

MJL: Uh-huh.

I: Mm-hm. Did you go anywhere after your wedding? Go on a honeymoon?

MJL: We went to Seattle. Went to-- down to see the Space Needle and see Seattle, and that's where we went. But we were back in time for Christmas, and all the gifts that had come from the church, we-- were back at the house. And we went out and got a tree, and uh, decorated it and put all the gifts under the tree. And a couple of our gifts were Christmas decorations that we still have today.

I: So you signed your contract with the school district in March of '67, and uh, you substitute taught during the spring and--?

MJL: That spring and then I went to work in September.

I: Did you sub in many places? Were you working every day?

MJL: Uh, pretty much, pretty much. I subbed in La Grande, and I subbed in uh, out at Union. And I subbed uh, a little in Elgin. Uh, well uh, you know just for that term, spring term.

I: How many grades did you teach during that time?

MJL: Um, oh I subbed in high school actually, and I subbed junior high.

I: Now I know that when I did substitute teaching, uh, you could be in for anything--

MJL: That's right.

I: in the old days, so what kinds of things did you find yourself doing that you were completely--

MJL: Well, I didn't--

I: unprepared for?

MJL: have to do high school PE. I was really worried about that. But I subbed in the middle school, little high school, um, grade school, um, but-- and I was busy. I pretty much substituted every day. Mainly grade school, I guess, in La Grande and-- and in Union.

I: Um, [sneezes] excuse me. Then you began teaching that fall, where at?

MJL: At the S. E. Miller, uh, building at Union. I taught first grade there for-- there were two first grades, two second, two thirds all the way through. And uh, so I started teaching.

I: How-- how long did you say you taught there?

MJL: I taught 32 years.

I: Retiring when?

MJL: In 1999.

I: At the end of that school year?

MJL: I taught two summers in-- of, uh, reading in-- at Greenwood in La Grande.

I: And um, you also did some tutoring in reading in La Grande?

MJL: Yeah, I tutored several children.

I: Now was there a, was there special certification for reading teachers then?

MJL: No, no.

I: Okay. Um--

MJL: In fact, I taught school with a gal who was probably one of the best teachers I've ever been uh, around who had a lifetime certificate.

I: Let's talk about her and some of those-- some of those--

MJL: Eryvl Schroeder--

I: older teaching--

MJL: was her name, and she was a wonderful teacher. She taught in some of the rural schools around uh, Paradise and Flora. She started a lunch program in a-- in a country school. She said she had-- in the winter she had to wear snowshoes to get to school, uh, but the parents would, um, furnish hot soup. She had 'em all signed up. She was the janitor. Of course in those days she-- you had to be. And uh-- but she didn't have teacher's quarters. She had to live with the students so she'd live a couple weeks with one family and then moved around. That was an experience.

I: Was she unmarried?

MJL: Yeah, she wasn't married.

I: Mm-hm. Did you work with her?

MJL: They weren't hiring married teachers then.

I: Right, I was aware. I was going to say I--

MJL: Yeah.

I: I knew that. Actually, um, there are teachers in my family. I was told that getting married was actually, um, a cause for termination--

MJL: Mm-hm.

I: in some of those. Did you work with any teachers who actually had not been college graduates that had been in the-- in the system for years?

MJL: No, no.

I: Mm-hm.

MJL: No.

I: Mm-hm.

MJL: Ervyl, um-- Ervyl actually went to college with my mother.

I: Who was that now?

MJL: Her name was Ervyl Schroeder-- Ervyl Pike Schroeder. And one day we were talking about my grandmother. I told her that my great-grandmother was a first grade teacher at Riveria. And she said, "Well, I went to Riveria in first grade." And I said, "Well, you probably had my great-grandmother." And she said, "Well honey, nobody as sweet as you could have a great-grandmother as mean as my first grade teacher." [chuckles].

I: [chuckles].

MJL: And so I said, “Well, who was your first grade teacher?” And she said, “Well, her name was Nellie Neill.” And I said, “But that was my great-grandmother.” [chuckles]. But in those days they were strict. They were very strict. Um, but she-- but she did say after she was-- she was so embarrassed, but she did say she learned a lot from her. She learned to _____ again.

I: Did you consider yourself a strict teacher?

MJL: Yes, I was. But that was the way I was taught and in college that was the thing to do. You were-- didn't let your kids-- 'cause you really-- when you were observed discipline was the most important thing. Things have changed now and actually they never talk about the pendulum. Uh, actually I think the-- the kids are almost too good to be out. Teachers are almost too lenient with the kids and their afraid now to-- to discipline, so.

I: Now you talked about, um-- well, I've got some notes later about some specific events in your career. But uh, when you left uh, full-time teaching in '99, I have a note now that talks about you became a-- a supervisor of student teachers. Tell us about that.

MJL: For the university--

I: Right.

MJL: yes, I did. And they asked me to, so I started, and I supervised until, uh-- uh, 2000-- the end of, uh, 2004.

I: And where did you work?

MJL: I worked, uh-- I had student teachers in Milton-Freewater, Pendleton, Helix, um, Cove, Union, North Powder, Baker, uh, John Day, Long Creek, Dayville.

I: What-- what were-- what were the main responsibilities of a student teacher supervisor?

MJL: Well you um-- you made sure that they taught the lessons that they were supposed to. The amount of lessons that they-- they had work samples they had to do, and you had to make sure that those work samples were done

correctly. Uh, you made sure that they um-- uh, things went smoothly, and if they didn't, they-- and they needed help you were there to help 'em. After you saw them teaching and they had some problems, for instance in discipline, you were there to give 'em some suggestions and help 'em learn how to, you know.

I: So were the student teacher supervisors, were they responsible for grading or evaluating these students--

MJL: Yes.

I: whether they made it--

MJL: Yeah, yeah.

I: or not?

MJL: Right. We also had the-- the cooperating teacher, and they were-- they were also a mentor, and-- and uh, they also uh-- they had to supervise the work sample. They had to supervise the lessons. But I would sit down and-- and evaluate a lesson. And uh, then I would um-- and-- and write down everything they said. Try to. I-- I didn't always. And then I would put that on another sheet of paper that was a formal evaluation, and then I would sit down with them and go over their lesson and give 'em suggestions. And some things-- uh, most of the kids did fine. There were little things that I'd have to work with them and correct 'em and-- and uh, you know some-- and then there were some that really had struggled. They were struggling in the area of subject matter, discipline, um, how to ask a good question. You-- you know, there's-- there's always, if-- if you ask a yes and no ask-type question, the students are not thinking. You're doing that for them. And so we had to-- we had to work on that, um, their objectives-- their lesson objectives. And so there was a lot involved. And so I would spend around two and half hours with the student. And when I traveled like to John Day area, I usually spent the night in a motel, and I would have as many as two to three appointments in a day.

I: How often would you visit a student teacher in their term-- in their--

MJL: In a term,--

I: student teaching term?

MJL: three times.

I: And then you conducted the end of course evaluation--

MJL: Right.

I: for them?

MJL: Right and I graded them.

I: So, this was their final step for their--?

MJL: Yeah. And then I would grade 'em, and I would grade their work sample. And I enjoyed that 'cause I was back in the classroom, and uh-- and overall my student teachers were excellent. I-- I had a few that-- that really, really, really struggled and a few that-- that really were in the wrong profession.

I: Did you have to send anybody back to the end of the line?

MJL: Yeah. Yeah most, they knew it, you know? They knew. They were struggling, and when a teacher has to struggle can you imagine what it was like for the kids?

I: Yeah.

MJL: Yeah. So um-- but I had a supervisor in my student teaching that uh-- oh, she-- she never smiled. Uh, she was so strict and so businesslike, and I-- the very first thing I did was just go and meet my student teachers. And I-- you know I just told 'em, "I'm your friend. I'm here to help you. This is the-- probably the most important time in your-- your, uh college career right now is your student teaching." I said, "You're gonna be so busy, and things are gonna pile up, and I'm here to help you get through this and enjoy it." And so I tried to put 'em at ease, and yet, you know let 'em know that-- that there were certain expectations, and.

I: But without instilling a sense of fear?

MJL: Right.

I: Right.

MJL: Right.

I: Um, tell me about uh-- you said that uh, some of this that appears didn't take place before you really retired, but um, you told me that you cared for both your parents and your in-laws.

MJL: Well Terry's mother Margaret is one-- probably one of the sweetest, dearest people I've ever in my life met. Uh, was a nurse and she came down with Alzheimer's, and I was so sad. And so, we arranged to have somebody come in and help her shower. Uh, Terry's dad had Parkinson's, and it was very difficult for him. And I would go out and check on her-- Terry and I would. Well, I finally in June went out when I got out of school, and I just pretty much moved in and took care of her and realized that she couldn't-- that the two of 'em couldn't live alone anymore. But she-- John needed help with her, and so I-- we tried to find somebody to move in and couldn't, just could not find anybody. I was thinking maybe we could find somebody that, you know was widowed or something that still was young enough that could help. So we had to put her in a nursing home, and uh, that was the hardest thing I've ever had to do-- Terry and I and his sister. And so she was put in a nursing home, and she-- she died in '99-- in March of '99 before I retired. And then Terry's dad and my dad both came down with cancer about the same time. They were diagnosed anyway. My dad was diagnosed in July of 2000. Terry's dad was diagnosed in August, and he died in October. He was diagnosed in August and died in October of 2000. My dad passed away in May of 2001, and my mother passed away in December of 2002.

I: Was your mother ill or--?

MJL: She had a massive stroke here at my house and uh, never came out of it. She lived-- she-- that was on the 19th of December and she didn't pass away until the 27th. So we-- it was a-- it was a blessing that I was retired and my college supervising didn't interfere, uh, with it at all because I could, um, make an appointment in Union and run back or I could make an appointment in Pendleton and run back. And so the only time that was hard was when I had to go to John Day, and then I had a sister here that would take over.

I: How do you feel about that? Uh, how do you feel about yourself and uh-- and doing that, taking care of--

MJL: Well I just-- I--

I: these _____ after?

MJL: I was glad to do it. I-- you know, my parents were always there for me if I needed 'em. And so I just felt it was a real privilege to be there. So I am glad that I was able to do it myself. I feel sorry for those who-- who never get a chance to do that. You know, you become the parent and they become the child, really. You know, I was get-- setting up mother's medications and checking on her every day and-- and making sure she did her blood sugars and all that and, uh--

I: Was your mother diabetic as well?

MJL: She was. Uh, but I-- I would take her to the doctor, and she'd call me if something was wrong and I'd run over. And-- but I was so glad to do it because if I needed my parents for anything, just-- they were always there for me. So it was a privilege.

I: Now uh, I'm a little disordered here on some of this, so um, I have uh-- well, I'm just gonna skip around here. It talks about, uh, your first house. Now you said that you rented for a while in this house and then um, had the first house built '77, '78?

MJL: This-- that was our second house.

I: How 'bout your first house?

MJL: Our first house we bought, uh, was on 9th Street, um, and I think that was the one I was telling you we paid \$10,000 for.

I: Right.

MJL: And um, it had a bedroom in the basement and two upstairs. And when we had Greg, he was in the other bedroom. Well, sixteen months later I had Jennifer.

I: Now, this um--

MJL: And so we needed more room.

I: this house I have a note here-- 1304 9th Street?

MJL: Mm-hm.

I: Okay. And then uh, you had Jennifer and that caused a need to move?

MJL: Move-- we needed to get a bigger house and so we built this house where we are now. So we've been here since-- she was born in November of '77, and we built this house and finished it in '78. So she was about-- she was about nine months old when we moved.

I: Now you said, uh, in this first rental house that you lived, uh on-- was it on Jackson Street?

MJL: Uh-huh.

I: Um, four bedroom with a den?

MJL: With a den, yeah.

I: That house was furnished?

MJL: Furnished and it was \$75 a month.

I: Was that, was that a, was that a good price?

MJL: That was--

I: An outrageous price?

MJL: that--

I: Was that a running price?

MJL: No, that was-- that was about right.

I: Uh-huh.

MJL: And then we moved from there to L and rented a house for \$100 a month, and I remember Terry's parents thinking that was terrible.

I: The rent was terrible?

MJL: Yeah, \$100 a month! Now we look back and think gee!

I: You had it easy?

MJL: That was nothin'.

I: Uh-huh. Then-- so that takes us to Walnut Street where you live now.

MJL: Mm-hm.

I: Um--

MJL: We raised our children here and.

I: Tell me, uh-- let's-- let's cover the children again. Um, your son, tell me his name and when he was born?

MJL: Uh, his name is Gregory John Lemon, and he is-- he was born uh, July the 1st in 1976.

I: And your daughter?

MJL: Was Jennifer Ann Lemon and she was born November 1st of 1977.

I: And your children also attended Eastern?

MJL: Yes and both graduates. Greg graduated with a Bachelor's in Art and English in 2000. And my daughter graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2000.

I: And um, then what did they do?

MJL: Um, well Greg um-- uh, he lived in Montana. Actually he got his degree through distance ed. from uh, Missoula, Montana through uh, the distance ed. program. But he went on to get his Master's in Journalism at Missoula.

I: University of Montana, Missoula?

MJL: Yeah, mm-hm. It was a two-year program. And he um, lived in an off-campus ministry house and was the instrument-- was a counselor. He worked in uh, Young Life and is still active in Young Life working with high school kids with their faith. Uh, his thesis was "Rural Churches of Montana." So he did a lot of traveling.

I: His Master's thesis?

MJL: His Master's thesis was "Rural Churches of Montana." So he had to go all over, and he went up to Wolf Point. And I don't know if you're familiar with that, but it's a reservation. And um, interviewed in a church uh, the people up in that area, was all over Montana in old, old churches. He said one church in an area that he interviewed, uh, several churches-- several denominations were using this church at different times of the year. But he said like farmers would come from miles around to uh-- it was right out in the middle of nowhere and go to church on Sunday. And uh-- but anyway, he uh-- I-- I was surprised for the whole state. 'Cause I said, "Greg, gosh, you could have just done a county." And he wanted to do it. He wanted to meet people. He loves older people. And loves um-- part of what you're doing, he'd love to do.

I: Yeah?

MJL: Because he likes talking with older people and-- and uh, spending time with them. And um, he loved his grandparents, uh, just sitting and talking to 'em and-- and-- and learning about some of the things, you know? He loved that. And uh, fact, he gave the homilies at their funerals. Uh, and he now is work-- he's an environmental reporter for the Ravalli News. Uh, Ravalli is the biggest county in Montana. Uh, Missoula is part of it, I believe. But he's in Hamilton, Montana which is around seven or eight thousand people, close to Darby. It's right in the Bitterroot. And he, uh-- his hobbies are fly fishing. Uh, he fought fires there too for several years with the Forest Service in the summers.

I: And your daughter got married and--?

MJL: She was married May 1st of last year to Steven Smitt. Uh, and they-- she is an RN at St. Luke's in Boise, and he's a um, structural engineer. He has his degree in Mechanical Engineering, but they had a job opening for a structural engineering. And he's doing that with a firm in Boise. And uh, they just purchased a home. Jennifer is-- Greg is 28 and Jennifer's 27. Greg's not married.

I: Yet.

MJL: Yet.

I: Mm-hm. [throat clearing]. Excuse me. Let's, um, cover some teaching highlights that I have notes about here. Um, you said that you uh, went to New York City on a National--

MJL: Oh.

I: Diffusion Grant?

MJL: Yeah, National Diffusion Grant.

I: Tell us about that.

MJL: Uh, well-- um, a friend of mine, another teacher, Carol James and I applied for this grant and were accepted. And I think we were the only ones this side of the Mississippi. And uh, a group of teachers from Union had gone the year before in the upper grades. But they had a program for grades K through 3 which was called Pablo the Python Program. So we went to New York and the classes were for a week, and we went early and stayed uh, at the Marriott on Times Square. And went to some Broadway plays which was a highlight of my life. To be able to-- to go to those Broadway plays, Les Miserables, wonderful! And tour New York. We toured every day. We toured 'til we dropped. And then we went to the classes and took these classes at the Bronx Zoo and, uh, learned so much _____.

I: Tell us about those classes.

MJL: Well they-- they were in a classroom inside a great big boulder. From the outside--

I: A rock boulder?

MJL: A rock boulder. It looked like a boulder from the outside and you could see people through little windows. And you could see the monkeys, but they couldn't see you, and this was a regular classroom in there. And we had-- we-- and we each toured all but like the-- the insects, and we toured uh, nurseries like for the reptiles-- the nurseries and the feeding stations. All the different uh-- like the-- the apes. They all had a nursery and a kitchen, and the reptiles had a nursery and a kitchen. And uh, the birds had a nursery and a kitchen, you know. And we got to tour all those and that. But it was a-- it was great. And the one thing that was so funny, they bring our lunch in on this-- on the-- this rolling tray covered with white, linen sheets.

I: Like a conveyor?

MJL: Yeah. Well, it was a-- it was actually-- it probably-- it was just a table on rollers.

I: Oh.

MJL: And they'd bring it in. And they took-- first day they were there they took that off. And I looked over, and I saw bugs crawling all over the food and scurrying away. And they were cockroaches, and you know they don't think anything about it, but I just about fell over. I could not believe it. I'd never seen anything as big in my-- as my life as those cockroaches.

I: On your lunch?

MJL: On our lunch. Though everybody else said, "Ah, they're the cleanest insects there are! They're cleaner than-- than probably you are 'cause they bathe themselves all the time." So we had a lesson on cockroaches. Well, I knew that where there was food there's cockroaches. And 'course when we see on TV it's never a clean place you see them. But I was very uncomfortable with that, and the other teachers all thought they're just cockroaches, you know?

I: So, did you overcome that?

MJL: Uh, well I had to. [chuckles].

I: Or did you start bringing a lunch?

MJL: [laughs].

I: [chuckles].

MJL: I had to if I wanted to eat, but I'd-- I checked my food out before I ever put one, bit into my sandwich. I went through my sandwich and put my spoon through my soup.

I: Uh, I have notes about um; you took particular classes at the Bronx Zoo. Was this at the Bronx Zoo--

MJL: Yeah.

I: when you were there?

MJL: Actually we were right into the zoo.

I: Mm-hm. Or I should say in the Bronx. Um, and uh, how did this-- how did this program help you with your teaching when you came back? How did you use it?

MJL: Well, it just inspired me to spend more time teaching about animals, and it just-- just lit a fuse under me, really. It just-- it was probably one of the neatest classes I've ever had. I uh-- it was interesting. The kids loved it. And it was part-- partly visual, um-- uh partly auditory so you know there were films, there was music. There was uh, just so many things it covered and the kids ended up becoming so well versed on animals. My first graders could compete with fourth graders as far as what they knew about animals. And why animals were shaped the way they were, why animals had all the color they are. You know, why-- why animals live in the ground, why they're shaped the way they are. I think about a badger. Why is a badger shaped the way they are? Why did-- why are their paws shaped the way they are, their claws? Um, you know, it's just-- and birds. Why are birds the color that they are? We learned about the rain forest, the

levels of the rain forest. We learned about, um, bats. Uh, just-- we learned about um-- and the vocabulary was outstanding. Uh, but um-- trying to think of some of the words. Uh-- oh, I can't think, but anyway, they-- there were tests. Tests that were given on their knowledge of the vocabulary and their knowledge--

[End of Side B - End of tape #1]

[Tape # 2 - Side A]

I: We're continuing the interview with Mary Jo Peck Lemon. It is still April 19th, 2005. All right, so you were telling us about, uh, how you were incorporating these lessons into units.

MJL: Well, lots of vocabulary. I was trying to think of the words, like omnivore and herbivore and those type of words. My kids-- there's a _____. [008] And my kids learned it.

I: Your first graders?

MJL: Yeah. And nobody else in that school knew that, but that-- but that was true. And it-- it's a special bird. Uh, but anyway they just became so keen to-- to animals and to the science of animals and why, uh, habitat, environment, what they ate. And it just, uh-- and they-- it-- their-- their interest level 'cause well actually you should have a zoo that you can take 'em to. Which we didn't have, but I had several uh, zoo programs on the computer that we could travel through. And then I would get on the Internet to the Bronx Zoo and go through the zoo with them, so, uh.

I: Did you consider this, uh-- was this learning for you when you went? Did you know this stuff when you went?

MJL: Oh, absolutely. No-- well I knew some of it, but I didn't put it all together as why. And so, yeah, I learned there was why. It was awesome, and uh, so my enthusiasm I'm sure went through with, you know, the kids could. You know when you're enthusiastic about what you're teaching, your students certainly will be. And uh, it was just fun to see them discover. And uh, it made my units like on rainfall. They know _____. [027] Animals in winter and just a lot of the things. And then the end of the year we incubate chicken eggs and duck eggs. And uh-- and then I would remind them, look at their feet, look at the duck's feet. Why are they webbed? Do you remember back when we talked about it? And chickens, and um, the

other chickens. ‘Course then the chicken in the water, but we had a little _____. [032] But we-- that was just something we did. Uh, I’ve been doing it for years, incubating eggs and--

I: Did you, uh-- how did you share this knowledge with others when you came back?

MJL: Well, um, the other teacher and I were just-- were real enthusiastic about it, and so when they hired another first grade teacher I asked her if she wanted to do the program and she did. So, I shared my work with her, all my materials, and when I retired I gave ‘em to her.

I: Did other teachers in school catch on or incorporate these things into their program?

MJL: Well, um, just a couple of us, and-- but the fourth through sixth grade teachers went back twice and their program was different. You had to do uh, water uh, animals in the water. And uh, in fact Sharon Freeman who taught fourth grade at Union, she was Science Teacher of the Year when-- and-- and a lot of it was part of this program. It was called _____ [046] the Python Program. I’m not sure what the program was. But anyway, it was-- there were probably forty people in the class, but we was the only ones this side of the Mississippi. They could not pronounce Oregon.

I: I’m familiar with that for sure. Most of us Oregonians are, I think, unless you go to Oregon or California. They seem to know.

MJL: Ore-gone.

I: Mm-hm. Um, so now let’s see, I have notes-- we talked about you did teach with some old time teachers and you learned quite a bit from them.

MJL: Oh yeah.

I: Mentored by a few of them. Um, tell me about your experience teaching music, uh, to your students. Because you said you didn’t have a music teacher in the school district.

MJL: We did-- well, we had, but they didn’t come down and teach our music.

I: Grade school I assume.

MJL: Yeah. And so I learned enough piano from Terry to get by just playing some chords. And so I was teaching because I had a, um-- some instruments and things and so I was able to do some-- some music. And I-- I-- probably the first fifteen years I taught the uh, first and second grade music out there. They'd bring the kids to my class for music and they'd take my kids for PE, so we shared. And then we always, you know, did our Christmas program. And in those days we had a manger and wise men and angels, and you can't do that anymore. But we had the old style Christmas song.

I: I do remember that um, elementary teachers were required to take a-- a course in teaching music. But most probably didn't expect or ever have to do that?

MJL: Huh-uh. I had to teach my own PE, uh, my own art and my own music. And we didn't only-- had fifteen minutes for lunch. It's all we had.

I: Students and the teachers?

MJL: No just the teachers. Fifteen minutes for lunch. And uh, through the union OEA we now have a half an hour for lunch. And you have to have, uh, so many minutes per day for a prep period. Uh, high school teachers had a prep period for years, but the elementary didn't. So, when I ___ [078] our prep period, um, they had somebody come down and teach our music. So I had a half an hour twice a week prep period when I left. And then right now they-- they've got somebody teaching a PE. So they have somebody teaching music and somebody teaching PE so their prep periods are now longer. Uh, so, that was nice. That was very nice havin' a half hour lunch was really nice.

I: And this was away from the students so you actually had a break?

MJL: Uh-huh.

I: Uh-huh.

MJL: Uninterrupted lunch.

I: Um, we uh missed a few things here about your time at Eastern. You were quite involved actually in music activities in college. Tell us about that.

MJL: I was. Well I was in Blue & Gold Singers.

I: At Eastern?

MJL: At Eastern. And we uh, toured. We were a singing group of about twelve that did concerts and toured. And then I was in uh, choir with John Cobb. He was the instructor. Uh, I was in um-- um, campus organization uh, what was it called? Um, can't think of it now. Just of the town-- just we call it ourselves townies. Um, I don't think it's up there anymore, is it?

I: Was this a music organization?

MJL: No, no, it was just a townies group-- Collegians-- Collegians. Um, I became involved in a sorority, Beta Sigma Phi which is now a college sorority, but it's a sorority. A mother of the founding member of it, uh, in 1936. And I joined, and I've been in forty-one years.

I: I had a year of 1970 was this Beta Sigma Phi?

MJL: Yeah.

I: Be about right there?

MJL: Yeah, been in before that, and um-- and then I belonged to Delta Kappa Gamma which is a woman's teaching society. Um--

I: You still belong to that?

MJL: Yes I do. Uh, we're all women educators.

I: Hold any positions of--?

MJL: I was president, um, for two years. It's a biennium type thing.

I: I also, uh--

MJL: Oh, St. Peter's-- my membership, yeah, in the church.

- I: Mm-hm. Well, actually before we go there, one more thing about Eastern, and I asked, uh, your husband about this too. Tell me about having Miss Loso for an instructor, what that meant and how that worked?
- MJL: Well, I-- I really liked her, and I highly respected um, her. Uh, but her classes were very, very difficult. Uh she was so knowledgeable. Oh, it was just, I'd sit there in awe of how much she knew. I didn't know anything. I was so ill-prepared. Uh, my senior year in English was spent copying grammar rules off the blackboard. Everyday we'd go in and sit down and take out our book and we'd copy this writing. Real tiny writing on the board, you know. I often thought, gosh, if I had to have glasses I, you know, how did the kids see in the back? I wouldn't have been able to see in the back. And one-- one book report a term. That was all we did my whole senior English.
- I: So at the end of the year you had read four books?
- MJL: I had a-- I had folder that thick of grammar rules that meant nothing to me 'cause they weren't discussed. They were not discussed, they were just copied. Nothing was discussed on the board. We just copied it.
- I: So what did that mean when you went to--?
- MJL: I meant I didn't get any literature. I got a little literature from a little gal from Puerto Rico, and I think we read King Lear. And I don't know what else. Not much. And we just-- I just did not come out of there with any literature, uh background. And uh, we just struggled in her class.
- I: When you both had Professor Loso?
- MJL: Both. Oh, oh, the very first book we read was the Iliad and Odyssey. And let me tell you that was like Greek to me. I mean I couldn't-- and it was-- she-- it was so difficult because I would sit there. And uh, you know the-- if I just knew how to read it, so I-- I could pass but just barely. It was not uh, world civilization. It was world literature. Terry-- the wrong class. It was world literature that she taught. And uh, it was a struggle, and all these books, thirty-seven books in one year.
- I: Um, you had her all year?

MJL: I had her all year. Thirty-seven books, some of them were little paperback books.

I: Did that pay off for you?

MJL: Not really.

I: No?

MJL: No, not really. I read all the time, but if I would get a book like The Iliad and The Odyssey, I can tell you right now I would not read it this day. I was not interested in it. Had I dissected that back in high school and read Shakespeare and dissected it like we should have, Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth, I know I would have been interested in it. And I was. I just was-- just in a hurry to get through with that class, and um, so was everybody else. But there were some kids that were well um-- well prepared 'cause she talked to me about that. She said that that's one thing La Grande didn't do was prepare the kids in literature.

I: Now you told me a very interesting story about Miss Loso in connection-- that led back to where she was from. Let's hear about that.

MJL: Oh, well, she's from a town called Belgrade, Minnesota. And we have a friend of ours, uh, we met through his-- was a Commander in the Navy. In fact, it was his ship that they took Alan Shepard and John Glenn out of the water and took 'em to his ship, and it was out of ____ [173] And Howard was quite ____ [174] He was six foot seven. He was Commander of this ship. And Howard's last ____ [175] of duty was at the Pentagon when they had that big computer, first computer. And he said that he took the newspaper for four different areas of the United States 'cause he wanted to be a rancher. He-- his family was in banking, and he wanted to do something different. So he took these newspapers for four areas, and one of them was the Wallowa Valley Chieftain. And he kept track of the ____ [181] and all the statistics and put that in-- those statistics into the computer, and it came out that the best place was Wallowa County. So he went up and bought quite a bit of land-- Big Sheep Creek-- up at Big Sheep Creek to Mar Flat. [185] And brought his children and he had five children. And um, he used to take-- he was a very patriotic man. ____ [188] He was an Annapolis graduate and a Commander in the Navy. So what-- he had these signal flags off his ship which I ironed every one of those.

Those are huge, and one of the biggest flags I've ever seen. And he had a flagpole, and they used to do a 4th of July party. Had a flag raising ceremony and then he would cook a whole beef on a spit. And had an old spit and it had holes underneath and-- and uh, so they'd had a 4th of July party. And then I was up at the college, and I was talking to Dr. Briggs, my mother's boss. And he was just telling me that his daughter was married and was spending their honeymoon in Belgrade, Minnesota. And I said, "You know, I have a check in my purse on the Bank of Belgrade." So I showed it to him, and he said, "My best friend is the Vice President of this bank." And that's where this was from. And he knew the ____, [203] and Mary Jane had taught Howard. And her sister had taught Howard and his brother and his sisters in school. So, Mary Jane had a sister, and those two women taught in the high school there. So we got them all connected. We got Dr. Briggs connected with Howard, and he got Mary Jane connected with Howard. And, when Mary Jane passed away here uh, last year, I sent her obituary to Howard. And he was very appreciative, yeah.

I: He was still alive? He's still over in Wallowa County?

MJL: He's still--- he-- no, he turned the ranch over to his kids, and he is now uh, President of the bank in Belgrade. And he's in his seventies.

I: We have one other job to talk about that you held for a while. You were telling me about selling hot tubs.

MJL: Oh yeah, for Monty Patterson. Well, I was out at Monty's Trailers there-- he sold RV's-- one day to get something that Terry sent me out there. And the phone rang and Monty wasn't-- he was out on the lot somewhere, and so I answered the phone and took the message. And when I answered the phone took the message and-- and then when Monty got back in, I said, "Monty you need a secretary." And he said, "Oh, I know it." And I said, "Well, if you somebody really bad give me a call." 'Cause I had my summers off. My kids were all busy workin' and stuff so he didn't call me that year. But the next year he called me, and he said, "You know, were you serious?" And I said, "Yes, I was." So he said, "Well," he said, "I-- I don't own the lot of the RV business anymore, but I've-- I've opened up a hot tub and I need, uh-- a shop, and I need the help." So I went out there, and uh, he didn't pay me in money. He pay-- I worked it off for a hot tub. And I worked long enough that I got four hot tubs. I-- every year I got a new hot tub. And the last hot tub I bought-- this last one I did have to pay--

pay for it because he had moved to Elko, Nevada and so we stopped in Elko and we traded. But I had worked it off. I worked on weekends for him once in a while, sold Christmas trees for him, but it was fun to do. And uh, it gave me something to do. My kids were off working in their jobs, and I didn't wanna' sit home by myself. Terry was working and so that's what I did.

I: Where are these four hot tubs that you--?

MJL: Well, I-- I-- I'd keep 'em for a year and then trade it for another one to have. But this last one came from Elko, Nevada. But I had one that had seventy-two jets in it.

I: Huh. How many people can sit in that?

MJL: Oh there's probably room for six or seven. But we got-- it's-- they're smaller now.

I: What was the name of that, uh, business?

MJL: Uh, Blue Mountain Spas.

I: Where was it?

MJL: Island City, um, Highway.

I: And that-- I show that you did this from about '94 to '98?

MJL: Yeah.

I: Did you sell a lot of hot tubs?

MJL: Yes, I did.

I: Uh-huh. Was it a commission for that? Was it a commission thing? You said you were working for hot tubs.

MJL: Just worked-- just work, yeah, just went toward my hot tub.

I: There's two more things here about teaching. Um, let's talk about uh-- you are very proud of this, I know. Um, you incorporated uh, Native American culture and lessons into your classroom?

MJL: A little girl that was Native American and the children would kind of make fun of her a little bit. And um, I had several Native American children in my classroom. And so rather than take the kids aside and give them a stern talking to about that, I decided that in talking with her mother, I would have her start out by bringing things for show and tell from-- from uh-- that her mother had.

I: The students then would see?

MJL: Uh-huh. And oh, the kids loved the things that she brought. Well, I eventually made it into a unit. And at Thanksgiving they would um-- uh, choose a Native American name. And then when they would, with the fourth-- with the help of the fourth graders, they would come over to help 'em write a story on how they got their name. And they could make it a, you know, maybe a-- maybe their name was, you know, Running Bear. Well, then they had to make up a story. "Well my father was out hunting and bear was out there and got away, and-- and-- and he called me Running Bear." You know, but, they had to write it. They had to talk about it with the fourth grader, and then they had to-- they had to help 'em write it. Actually help with printing 'cause their dexterity-- they haven't been to school that long. So they had to actually help 'em write it, but they couldn't write it. They had to help 'em. And so they made 'em write that name on their papers all the rest of the month. Uh, you know, Running Bear, Dancing Flower, whatever. So I knew, you know, I-- I'd-- was able to, and then they-- and they had it on their desk.

I: So it would be not too difficult for you to remember, either then?

MJL: Huh-uh. They had the name on their desk. And then they made ____, [295] and they had to-- they made vests. Have you ever seen them made out of brown paper bags?

I: I haven't seen those.

MJL: The vests? Well, you put arm holes in it, and then you have-- fix uh, looks like leather strings, and-- and they had to use their crayons. And they had

to-- to-- we spent probably a week on-- on, uh symbols that different, uh-- um, tribes use for the sun and use for deer. And 'cause the tribes down in-- in Arizona, there's some look different than the tribes up in here. And we-- and we talked about all the different tribes and the different um-- uh, clothes they wore. And so they would, but part of _____. [310] They could have deer on their symbols or whatever. Had to be-- use part of their name that their _____. [311] They had to have a flower somewhere on it. And then they would take those after they were all done, and they would take 'em and uh, wad 'em up and sit on 'em, and wad 'em and sit on 'em for about-- and then they would put 'em into this brownish glue, uh water that brown and glue paint in it. And then we'd lay 'em out on the floor, and then they would take 'em and do that again with them after they dried. It would make 'em real soft. Then we did have _____. [321] And then they made, uh, their beads. They would string a bead necklace, ____ [325] or a bag. We'd make little bags and--

I: What would you make those out of?

MJL: Uh, material, raw material, and they'd put beads on the, uh-- sew beads on 'em. And then we made 'em for gifts for the fourth graders, and then we would have Indian fry bread. The fourth graders made stew, and they would come together and we would have a meal. And then we would dance the friendship dance.

I: Who taught the fry bread making?

MJL: Uh, I had a little girl whose mother was an Indian princess. Her name was Diane Walker. She wore a white doe skin beautiful dress and her daughter had one, too. And Diane came back every year and did this with us. I had the recipe, and so we did this and-- and we'd do the friendship dance. And then we'd exchange gifts, and we had popcorn.

I: Um, this mother came and actually helped you teach these units and all?

MJL: Oh yeah, yeah.

I: So you were using um--?

MJL: And the fourth graders came dressed as pilgrims, so.

- I: How about these friendship bracelets that you--?
- MJL: They did 'em with beads, and they would, uh, give 'em-- if their friend was girl, they gave 'em a bracelet, and if it-- it was a boy have the bag that they wore.
- I: Did you feel that that?
- MJL: That stopped it immediately, but there was-- no one ever made fun of her again, ever. They want-- they wanted to be Native American so bad.
- I: So the lesson wasn't necessarily just about the Native Americans, but perhaps about getting along and understanding other cultures and their differences.
- MJL: Right, right. We had a Korean child one year, and so we did some-- the mother came in and we-- we made a Korean ____ [363] She brought some things from Korea, and it was just neat, you know. I-- I ____ [364] student of the month too, but-- and-- or student of the week. And then that child could bring anything that they wanted. Uh, you know, pictures and any trophies they had, or anything special-- their special dolls or toys, and then they displayed 'em. And they got-- their parents got to come and have lunch with 'em, and they got to be head of the line, and you know we did that. And then we'd do-- we'd visit Daddy's job or Mom's job too. We tried to do that ____ [375]
- I: What kind of jobs did you visit?
- MJL: Oh, sometimes we'd go out to Terry trailers. Sometimes we'd go up to the hospital and uh, we had a parent that was cook at Albertson's that we go to go through the Albertson's kitchen. And he'd ____ [381] father did the touring, give the kids cookies and--
- I: Any very unusual places that you ended taking your kids?
- MJL: Not really. Not really. But it was kind of neat. And then if they had fathers that didn't have jobs-- that were unemployed, he would come and help the kids and help me-- or mothers come and help in the classroom.
- I: So then everybody got a chance to participate?

MJL: We tried-- we tried to, yeah.

I: Think that worked out?

MJL: Yeah I think so. I-- I really do. We'd visit ranches, and we went to dairies, and we went to ___ [394] farms, and you know we did a lot of that.

I: Tell us about, um, Governor Kitzhaber coming to your classroom.

MJL: Well, I think he was campaigning, and so he wanted to come to a classroom and read a story to the kids. And so they-- 'cause I think it was because I was the oldest teacher. [laughs]. I'm not sure. But anyway he came and uh, I had a piece of carpet over in the corner, a big piece, and I had a chair over there. And he came over and uh, read to the students, and they loved it.

I: Did you get to meet with him?

MJL: Hmm?

I: Did you get to meet with him afterwards?

MJL: Yeah. And one-- and another highlight of my career was um, I had a cousin, uh, whose son Scott Kendall was called into Desert Storm. And I had Scott's picture, and 8 x 10 of him with his uniform on. So I decided that I would have my children write to Scott. So I had his picture up on the wall. I hung it up on the wall up by the flag. And they wrote him letters, and this was part of our writing. We were learning how to write. And so I would-- I-- they would dictate to me, and I would write it out and then they would copy it. And then, it got so that they didn't have to do that. They were getting so good at that that they could just, you know, write it out, and then I would correct their spelling. So we ___ [431] spelling, wrote out everything that-- so that Scott could read it. And then once a month we would send off these letters in a package to Scott. And, uh, they'd draw him pictures and ask him, "Have you ever eaten a camel?" You know all these-- but anyway, and he always wrote a letter back to the class. He tried to answer some, rather than individually they were ___. [439] Well, when he came home he landed in Portland, and he wanted to come visit the class. And he brought-- brought some things from Kuwait and-- and brought gifts for the kids. And so it was arranged he would arrive at noon at a certain

time, and I didn't tell my children. And-- but I called the newspaper, and they did not want to come and do the story because they said, "Stories like that have already been done." And they thought that this-- and I did not realize that there had been any in the-- our La Grande paper. But they didn't wanna come do it. Uh, I felt really bad. So I had the high school come over and be there to film it. And uh, he walked in the room, and I said, "Boys and girls look who's here." And they knew him immediately. "SCOTT!" And they ran to him. They just-- oh, you know the ___ [462] and just hung on to him. Got him over on the carpet and then he sat down with them on the floor and talked to them in his uniform. They-- they'd touch him and everything, and he was there an hour.

I: How did that go over?

MJL: Oh, it was wonderful. And he has the video. I gave the video to him. But it was just-- the kids were just--

I: It sounds like a very emotional experience.

MJL: It was. But the newspaper-- La Grande's newspaper would not come out.

I: Meanwhile, uh, they did come to your classroom once. Uh, you were telling me, uh--

MJL: Oh yeah, to take pictures of our chickens.

I: Uh-huh.

MJL: Well, we had a janitor. His name was, uh, Herman Edvalson, and he was a-- he was just always everywhere cleaning-- clean-- and my room was spotless. And he-- he was a jack-of-all-trades. He could do any ___, [484] you know? I need an incubator. And my dad had tried to make me an incubator, but it was-- the wood was real fresh, and it was just absorbing all the water. And I couldn't keep enough water in there, you know, for the humidity. So he found an old popcorn popper that said, FRESH HOT POPCORN on the front, and he made an incubator out of that. And soaked the trays in water for-- I gave him enough-- I gave him several months notice so that they were water logged pretty much. And I had a wafer, thermostat, everything. And so when you looked at the front of the incubator it said, FRESH HOT POPCORN. [chuckles]. And that's what

they took. The photographer went through the back and opened up the door in the back. Took a picture of the-- my students looking through, and it-- and we had all these little chickens hatching out. That was kind of neat.

I: Sounds like that janitor was part teacher himself.

MJL: Oh, he was. He was something. He was wonderful.

I: You have talked about, um-- uh, let's-- let's cover some of the uh, general highlights here. Um, you belong to St Anne's.

[End of Side A]

[Side B]

I: We're talking about St. Anne's Guild and what they-- what-- what you did with them and what they do.

MJL: They-- they um-- they have oh, like uh, rummage sales and bazaars, and the money is uh, given to Outreach, uh Neighbor to Neighbor, Shelter For The Storm, uh K-House-- Koinonia. We've been one of Koinonia House's sponsors. In fact, I'm on the board there. And um-- but we're just a women's organization. We start the meeting with a prayer, and-- and then we have a program. And then we uh, have devotionals, and um, there's about twenty, twenty-five members.

I: How long have you belonged to that?

MJL: Well actually I've only belonged, I think, for about five years. But I've been going for years, so. And my mom belonged. Anybody that attends St. Peter's can belong. So, they all belong to St. Peter's.

I: Um, also I uh, have a note here that you're-- you as well as your husband are a member of the vestry? Is that the governing board?

MJL: At one time, at one time. I've been on the vestry several times and so has my husband uh, at the church, and it's kind of the governing body of the church. We take care of the financial and, you know important decisions. Like do we need a new roof, or-- or those type of things, and hiring. Uh--

I: Hiring who?

MJL: Oh, like a secretary or-- or whatever. It goes through the vestry. And uh, so we're kind of like school board maybe, or a-- a board.

I: I do assume that's volunteer work?

MJL: Oh, absolutely.

I: Um, how-- how's the-- how's the income? How-- where does the income originating from that gives you the money to do what you need to do?

MJL: Uh, pledges. We pledge, uh-huh. Yeah, we need somebody to pay the electrical bill and so we uh, pledge. We pledge so much a year. And uh, we pay it just like we would rent, a house payment, you know. We pledge. Most churches do it that way. Some-- some churches it's 10% of your total income.

I: A tithe?

MJL: Yeah.

I: Mm-hm. Um, then you said uh, you're also a member of the board with the K-House?

MJL: Yes.

I: How long have you been doing that?

MJL: Ah, I was trying to remember for sure. I think probably like six or seven years, somewhere in there.

I: What is-- what do you do with them?

MJL: Well, just, it's a board, a governing board. We go through a financial statement each month-- uh, each meeting and talk about what's going on. And if we need new carpet, we make a motion for new carpet, or if we need new tables. And we do a breakfast uh, every Sunday before final week, a free breakfast for the students at the college. And then they have uh, a program on Monday and Thursday nights that we sponsor of music-- and uh, music. We make cookies for that. Uh, we sign up for which week we're gonna do and take the refreshments.

I: How is their organization funded?

MJL: Uh, mainly through churches. There's six of us.

I: Six churches in town that are in the area?

MJL: Uh-huh. Mm-hm. Yeah. But we don't limit to those six churches. A student can come that, you know-- it's non-denominational.

I: How long have you been doing that?

MJL: Probably six or seven years.

I: Also, I show that you're a member of the EOU Alumni Board?

MJL: Yes.

I: How long and what do they do?

MJL: Well, I've been about five years. Uh, well, we're just really trying to get um-- uh, a database going to get information out to our alumni. Uh, we uh, are participants in Commencement. We, uh, help organize Homecoming. And uh, we weren't an active Alumni Association-- hasn't been active for years, and we have really, really become active. And so Homecoming is-- I don't know if you've ever participated in Homecoming, but it's a big thing now on campus.

I: Yes.

MJL: Because of us and because we're working with students. We have a parade now that we're doing that's back. You know, for a long time they didn't do a parade. Well, we-- it needs to come back. We-- next year we're gonna be doing Oktoberfest which we had for years, but so quit have-- having it. So now we're gonna have it back. And so we're gonna have artists and um, coming with their booths and selling their paintings or their uh-- um, pottery or uh, poetry. And we're gonna have music. And we're gonna have-- actually, I mean where people can go and actually buy pottery or buy a painting or buy a book that some local artist from Eastern has written. And-- and then we'll have the music people playing and then we'll have plays.

I: I was gonna say I'd like to see theatre people.

MJL: Yeah, me too.

I: And we were very involved in, uh, Homecoming last year.

MJL: Yes, yes. And so, um-- but we're gonna bring, uh-- we're gonna have a beer garden out there on Hoke. And then in the-- in the complex between the library and Hoke is where we're gonna have all these different tents and booths. So that's on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. And uh, we're gonna organize things for children to do during Homecoming which we haven't had before so that they're not runnin' over people at the game. ____ [077] We'll have a golf tournament. But we're-- the Arts Council is. We're gonna be working with the Arts Council on this.

I: Is this a fundraising project also, or is it part of really just the--?

MJL: Not really, not really.

I: For just alumni?

MJL: Eventually we hope the alumni want to give to the college. And anything that given to the alumni goes into the foundation. But hopefully that-- that they come and they like what's going on at Eastern, the new buildings and what's happening. That-- that they'll give to us, you know because that's a scholarship for somebody, or that's um, money for the new science building or whatever. Yeah, so.

I: Tell me about uh-- uh, becoming a member of Who's Who-- Who's Outstanding Woman of America?

MJL: Oh, I was nominated by Beta Sigma Phi for La Grande's Outstanding Woman of the Year, so I-- I think I made it in the book, 1976.

I: Says 1972 here.

MJL: Uh, '72.

I: Uh-huh.

MJL: Yeah.

I: Um--

MJL: Probably at the time I didn't have children. Had a job but I was often doing many things in La Grande, um at the time and doing a lot of service work. Uh, after my kids I didn't do as much. But, you know when you're-- when you're married and-- and uh, you have time. You know, when you don't have a family. You have a family then suddenly that comes uh-- 'course is the way it should be.

I: How about this uh, nomination as Outstanding Science Teacher of the Year. What happened there?

MJL: Well, I just didn't feel like I deserved it so I didn't pursue it. I was nominated by a lady in the-- at the EOC who has since moved on. And she'd been in my classroom a lot, and she, uh-- I-- and she was very upset with me because I didn't pursue it. But I didn't feel like I deserved it. I said, "This is something I'm enjoying." And I, you know, I-- I could if somebody had nominated me for reading teacher I might have taken 'em up on it, but I didn't feel that I deserved it. And as it was, Sharon Freeman a couple years after got it, and she did deserve it because she was an outstanding science teacher. ___ still.[112] But I don't know, I just didn't think it was.

I: You were telling me that, um-- uh, your mother, who I think actually is probably got uh, some amount of fame in her own right because of her position as uh, president's secretary up there, uh, was helpful with Kennedy's when they came through.

MJL: Oh yeah, Jackie Kennedy. She uh-- Jackie Kennedy and President Kennedy and I'm sure which year it was that they were through. He-- he died in what '63? So he was campaigning what, '60, '61? She was pregnant with John at the time, and uh, she was very sick when she got-- when they landed in La Grande she was. So mom took her down to the faculty room and fed her tea and crackers. And uh, was-- just thought she was absolutely wonderful. She was very gracious. He was very gracious. That night uh, she went to dinner. They ate at the-- which would be Woodshed. And Mom uh, said she was feeling a lot better. Mother went to the dinner, and um-- but she in her position, she got to meet you know,

people that did come to the college. And she was like actually the first one to-- to meet 'em and then introduce 'em to the President. Uh, Hatfield always uh, was ___ [134] with television crew, you know. Mom uh, she always knew when Hatfield was coming 'cause-- [chuckles].

I: The crews would be here first?

MJL: Yeah! But uh, she uh-- she was very impressed with President Kennedy and Jackie.

I: Did you get to see them on this trip when they came through?

MJL: I don't remember that at all. Uh, I went out to see Rockefeller and-- at the airport. I remember how short he was.

I: Was this Vice President Rockefeller that you're talking about?

MJL: Uh, I don't think he--

I: Governor became Vice President?

MJL: I don't-- he-- I don't think he ever became Vice President.

I: Which Rockefeller are you talking about?

MJL: Um, I don't remember him being Vice President, but I remember him being just-- this was-- he was running for President. He was running for President.

I: Mm-hm. So it was during an election, an election season?

MJL: It was an election season, and Bobby Kennedy was in La Grande and Hubert Humphrey was here. I-- I remember uh, when I was little in my dad's shoulders and saw Roy Rogers go through on Trigger on a-- in a parade.

I: In town here?

MJL: In town.

I: Uh-huh.

MJL: And all the silver down this-- oh, and Dale Evans was with him. And I remember being on my dad's shoulders or in his arms, one or the other and seeing Truman go through on the train. Saw this American flag on this back end of the train and the train stopped and he came out. And then ____.
[158] I was probably three, maybe.

I: Let's talk about, um-- talk about these hobbies. Uh, there's quite a list of 'em here. What are some of your hobbies?

MJL: Well Terry and I like to country-western dance.

I: Do you belong to an organization?

MJL: We belong to the Dancing Cowboys, uh, and actually competed. Won the northwest-- I can't remember the year. Terry-- Terry would remember. Uh, it was in the 80's. Uh, I like to uh-- we-- we like to RV camp, like to fish. I like to crochet and knit. I like to read. Um, I try to read a lot.

I: I have computer and cooking here.

MJL: Yeah, cook. I like to cook. My computer, I don't what I'd do without my computer. I-- I used to think what I'd do without the typewriter? We have a typewriter in there-- an electric typewriter and I have yet to plug it in.

I: Because you have your computer?

MJL: I have my computer.

I: Are you happily unemployed?

MJL: Yes.

I: And it sounds like you're very busy?

MJL: Well I took, you know-- we went to-- we went to uh, ____ [183] City, Arizona for two months, and they had a very great opening over there for teaching. And I told Terry. I says, "You know, I could do that, but I'm not." [chuckles].

I: Did that take long to make that decision?

MJL: It was real hard for me, uh, to leave teaching. It was one of the hardest things I've ever done. Um, and we made sure that uh, weren't in town on the starting of school.

I: Of the next year after you retired?

MJL: Yeah, yeah.

I: That was ___? [192]

MJL: Following September, yeah.

I: So you-- you took--?

MJL: It had been my life for thirty-two years, my home, my room. Um, you know, all of a sudden you know, you give all that up. And it was hard. And I never-- and it was hard for my mother to leave her job, and I never really understood why. "Gosh Mom, Dad's retired. You could." You know? But now that I had to do it I look at her and I could understand.

I: Did you have to do it?

MJL: I didn't have to, but it was smart for me to do it and my insurance. The-- I-- I taught school for a-- a school that appreciated their teachers. Um, so that under the old contract they were paying my insurance until I-- and Terry's-- until I turn sixty-five. And they were going to open up the health insurance, and I thought I better retire while I was under the old contract so they are paying my medical insurance until I'm sixty-five. So I was fifty-five. I could have retired at fifty-three, but who else can retire at fifty-five? You know? And if I had it to do over again I'd probably do the same thing. I had a good job. I-- I don't think you could raise a family on one income on-- on a teacher's salary. So for our second income it was-- I couldn't complain. Uh--

I: So you're um-- you'll be under the older PERS system that was in effect. So did that have some influence on your decision?

MJL: Right, none at all. Oh no, because at the time we didn't know there was a problem in '99. It wasn't-- it didn't come out until June I think, of '99 did they start talking about it. But I got the 2% standard of living every year. Well there were years I didn't get a 2% raise at school because we'd take a freeze. So a 2% every year is-- isn't too bad really when you think about it.

I: So you did belong to a-- a teaching organization, a teacher's union?

MJL: A teacher's union, yeah.

I: Which one was that?

MJL: OEA.

I: Oregon Educator's Association.

MJL: Uh-huh, NEA-- NEA, OEA, and UEA.

I: What's UEA?

MJL: Union Education Association and I was an officer in that. Um, well, if it wasn't for our union we wouldn't have a thirty minute lunch. Most professionals have an hour, or hour and a half, or however long they want, but I had fifteen minutes when I started teaching. And now we have half hour.

I: What other kinds of changes did you witness then before you got done there that's much different than when you began?

MJL: Um, gosh-- uh, discipline of children is different. Uh, I think that we're more ____ [238] the parents. Uh, I started, uh-- I asked the parents to volunteer in the classroom before most of the other teachers did. But we handed a survey out and one of the parents wrote that she didn't think that I liked parents. And that really disturbed me. So I was tryin' to think what could I do with parents to get them to feel differently about me and how I perceived them? So I started asking parents to come into the classroom and help. And I'd have four and five a day come in and it really did. So we organized a volunteer group out there. Some teachers didn't want parents in the classroom. They felt intimidated by them. And it's not funny 'cause most parents feel intimidated by the teacher. But, um, it didn't bother me

at all. I made some very good friends. Um, what I think too-- I think teachers are gentler than they used to be. I used to teach standing up in front of the classroom, read out of a book. Now you, you know you've got more things that are hands-on. Math is so much different. Science, you actually, you know, examine the owl balls. You know what owl balls are? You-- what owls cough up?

I: Oh.

MJL: You know, my little kids-- the high school kids came down in the science class with my kids. And we examined them and tell 'em which-- what bones were, uh, a mouse and what were a, uh, gopher. You know we could tell the difference. Put 'em on black paper and then put the bones together in the shape of an animal, yeah. Um, I'd never done that the first years teaching because things weren't hands-on. They were in the book-- were in the book. And you had the book-- and the book, you had to make sure got through the books. [chuckles]. So, well-- and I taught reading different. I learned a-- an individualized reading program that I liked. A child came to me and they were reading first grade second month. I put 'em in a pre-primer. So I made 'em go back. And they were already reading. What you needed to do was find their comprehension level and what they needed phonetically. And uh, so, uh, if they were reading at second grade third month, and they were comprehending first grade eighth month, they started at a first grade eighth month level. So, uh, I would-- I had as many as seven groups. Maybe two in one group, maybe four in another. So I'd have parents in to help me. And uh, I loved that program and now that ____ [287] doing that. But I-- after doing that I didn't wanna go back and teach, "See Spot run." You know, boring, boring, boring. I'd rather teach, "The Tale of the Life of the Dog," or the Francis books, you know, um, Dr. Seuss books, some of those fun books that kids-- so-- and then I taught a phonetic program that I'd learned. Uh, ____ [295] I learned it from a Catholic man in Baker. And I loved it and uh, so my kids got the rules. And, you know, they learned their sounds. But um, they got-- I took 'em as far as they could go and some of them into third grade level books, you know. So, and that's great. But I finally said when you have a kid reading much higher than that then they don't have pictures anymore, and my little kids still liked pictures. So, uh, but anyway I-- I think a lot of things have changed ____ [308] More things are hands-on. I think parents are trying to become closer to teachers and vice versa. There's better communication with the parents. Uh, there's some things that you have to be more aware

of now than I didn't even think about, sexual abuse. Children-- when I started teaching-- from things like that, I didn't even think about it. Now it's uh, it's something you have to be aware of.

I: Anything in your-- in your personal life uh, that you're particularly proud of, or have accomplished that maybe-- that you didn't think you were gonna do and you did? Or anything you're just really proud of that--?

MJL: Probably my kids. They're both uh, wonderful citizens. They're both uh, strong Christians. Uh, they are wonderful children. I mean adults now, but um, they-- just their ethics, their morals, everything. They're just-- I'm amazed at just how they feel about the world and how they feel about themselves, other people, and their kindness. You know, it means I lived-- that I was successful, that Terry and I together did a good job.

I: Well, what's your take on family?

MJL: Well, family's important, that's for sure. You don't wanna do-- we do things together. You don't wanna do things by yourselves. Uh, Terry didn't golf because he had a father that golfed all the time, and Terry said every time-- every time you're out golfing you're leaving your kids at home. So, he didn't do that, you know. And we do our vacations together and-- and uh, fish together and water ski. Terry's tryin' to keep up with the kid's water skiing and for years they were tryin' to keep up with their dad. Um, but they love to water ski, and they're both very good. Terry's an excellent water skier. Um, you know we just did things as a family. You know, did church as a family so we worshipped together. And uh, I just think that's important.

I: Anything else we haven't covered?

MJL: I don't think so. I think you know my whole life.

I: It's a very interesting life.

MJL: I wish my grandmother and my great-grandmother were here to tell you about their lives because they were, you know, I'd love to hear it. I think that's it.

I: I wanna thank you for doing this because I think it's important for the long run. We've missed detail because people maybe weren't collecting these oral histories when-- in your mother and your grandmother's time.

MJL: Yeah.

I: And uh, so I think this is actually important. Would you agree?

MJL: I agree. And you know I've bought my grandmother a tape recorder, but I bought it too late in her life. I needed to get it when she had the time. She was so busy, and she died at ninety-six. And she was busy, busy, but she could sit down and tell her life story. And I wished I'd-- today I'd listened closer, you know. We all do. We'd asked more questions.

I: Thank you Mrs. Lemon.

MJL: Mm-hm.

[End of Side B - End of tape #2]

July 5, 2005

Interviewed by Eugene Smith

Transcribed by Paula Helten (03/27/2012)

[audio begins]

MJL: My name is Mary Jo Lemon. Uh, I was born at St. Joseph Hospital at La Grande, Oregon in 1944-- February 12th, 1944 and so I'm sixty-one years old.

I: And you've been in Union County for--?

MJL: All my life.

I: Sixty?

MJL: Well, yeah, yeah.

I: Yes.

MJL: I-- I-- you know, I'm a-- born and raised here, so I-- I took a year off and went away to college.

[audio clicks - no delay]

I: We're gonna be talking about-- about um, your experiences as they connect with the values that people like you and others in Union County lived by. I think, this is with the-- it's particular of interest because you grew up at time that I would call transitional. Between a time when values that many people were held were quite stable. Um, everybody probably understood pretty well what the orthodox, um procedures, beliefs, attitudes were. Lines tended to be fairly clear on moral matters. Um, on the role of the Christian-- of Christian churches, the role of schools, the role of politics, all of these things for the most part, in this-- in this country were fairly stable during about the first half of the twentieth century, um, succeeding from the nineteenth. And you are born and grew up at a time when all of these things started to change. So I think many would-- many people would say that while there are traces of these values left, uh, there has been so much change in attitudes towards work, in attitudes toward sexual freedom and so on that we are in a time now that contrasts rather markedly. I'm not-- not primarily interested in pointing out the contrasts. Just having you recall from your experience how these values shaped your life and probably that of many others. And could we start with the childhood games that you remember playing? You moved to Oak Street when you were six, I think, having been over on the other side of the tracks earlier. You probably will remember a little more from the time you were living on this side [chuckles] of the track, than on the other. But what-- what games do you recall children's spontaneously playing?

MJL: Um, well, in the summer time, we were all outside. I mean-- and we just-- we were stopped fight all the time, like playing in the water or--

I: Essentially unsupervised?

MJL: Uh, well, Mom worked and uh, she got-- had a babysitter for us because I was six years old when we moved up there. My sister was eight, my brother was ten, uh, and my baby sister was a baby. She was born when I was, uh, six. So, we had a babysitter, and-- but we were still outside, um, playing. And all the neighborhood was and once in awhile a parent would come out and check on us, but I don't remember um, a time when we'd-- did anything harmful, either to each other or to the neighborhood. We just-- we'd play, um, baseball on the corner. Um, we played tag.

I: These were pick-up-- pick-up baseball games?

MJL: Yeah.

I: Not organized by adults?

MJL: Not-- no, no. We played tag. We didn't have Little League then, remember?

I: Right.

MJL: And so any time-- I mean, it was up to us to entertain ourselves. We didn't have television. Um, my parents didn't get television until I was going into, probably junior high or high school.

I: Well, if you could think of a particular day that might remain in your mind as that would--

MJL: Well, mainly it's just, um-- uh, playing in-- playing in the water. Putting our bathing suits on, putting the sprinkler on, playing in the water. Um, we had chores to do, so I remember we'd get up in the morning and we'd fix breakfast. And we'd do the dishes, and Mom would go to work and say, "Okay, when I come home, I want this done, this done, and this done." And she eventually got so she wrote it down. "Mary Jo, you do this. Libby you do this. Ron you do this." Even if there was a babysitter there we had things we had to do, and so when we'd get 'em done, then we'd go outside and play.

I: Uh, what-- what were some of these chores?

MJL: Um, make the beds, do the dishes, uh, pick up the living room. Uh, in fact all the years that my mom worked, um, we essentially did the housework. And--

I: Were-- was there--

MJL: even cooked.

I: was there any reward or punishment suggested for--

MJL: No.

I: doing those things?

MJL: No, no, we had--

I: Why-- why do you think that you went ahead and did them?

MJL: 'Cause my mother asked us to. But if we didn't do it, she'd probably-- well, I'm sure she got upset with us, but it wasn't-- we weren't getting an allowance. I did at one time get an allowance because um, Mom said, "Rather than work outside the home, why don't you just keep house for me, and I'll pay you what you would make at the hospital or somewhere else?" And I'll--

I: This was when you were a little older?

MJL: Yeah, a little older. Well so, I cleaned house every day. That was my job, and um--

I: With a vacuum cleaner?

MJL: Oh yeah! I mean, I just really cleaned every day. And when Mommy would come home from work, she'd put her coat down on the chair, and I'd pick it up and go hang it up. And she'd sit down, and she'd open up the newspaper. And then she'd put it on the floor, and then I'd pick it up and--

I: [chuckles].

MJL: About after two weeks, she fired me 'cause I was driving her nuts, and she was driving me nuts because I was working my tail off to keep house. And you know, so-- but [chuckles].

I: No, I don't know. Can you go ahead and tell me?

MJL: Um, well, I mean, you know it was--

I: Were you getting resentful?

MJL: Yeah, oh yeah! And--

I: Because it was too much work?

MJL: Well, it was just that, you know I-- you'd work hard. Can you imagine working hard and having that house spotless, someone coming home and messing it up, you know? I mean, it was uh-- I was getting paid,--

I: _____.

MJL: and I was also picking up after it.

I: Well, maybe that was just a personality quirk. Um, looking at what other children were doing, uh, was-- did some of them have parents who worked?

MJL: Oh, yeah.

I: Outside the home?

MJL: Oh, yeah.

I: Did-- would they have a similar arrangement about doing chores?

MJL: I-- you know, I don't know, uh, because a lot of my friends were on the swim team and--

I: Well--

MJL: so they--

I: you're-- you're skipping--

MJL: I don't know, but.

I: you're skipping in-- I think, into teenage years now.

MJL: Yeah, I was a teenager when I did that.

I: But previous to that you and your siblings were doing housework when your mother went to school routinely?

MJL: We did all of it.

I: Yes.

MJL: Yeah, we did all the cooking.

I: Well, that meant that you couldn't go out to play and until that was done.

MJL: Until it was done.

I: Was it the same with the other children? Did-- did they have to stay home too--

MJL: You know, I--

I: until they finished their jobs?

MJL: I suppose. I don't-- I don't think I paid enough attention.

I: Well, if there had been a difference, I would have-- think you would have talked to them about it. And say-- you might have said, "We're the only kids in this whole block who have to work at home! How come you don't?"

MJL: You know, it-- I don't know because we'd get up in the morning and do our chores and then go out and play. And I suppose that everybody had chores. I-- it wasn't an-- to me it wasn't that important. It's just something we had to do.

I: Well, then you--

MJL: I-- I think that-- I-- I-- I don't know for sure that other kids had-- didn't have things to do, but I would think at that time in our lives, in 1950's or so, uh-- or-- that everybody had chores to do. Uh, and kids start going to work early. We start-- I started workin' out of the home when I was fifteen years old. Uh, we all had jobs, and I can remember my friends talking about, uh, they worked in a restaurant or they worked, uh-- they worked, um-- uh, at train shop. Uh, they worked at the swimming pool, but we all got jobs when we were-- out in the fields, big time. A lot of the kids

worked out in the fields, uh, picking spinach, when they were twelve, thirteen years old.

I: In fact, it was assumed that children as soon as they were able to do it would work--

MJL: Yeah.

I: either for their parents or for money outside the home.

MJL: Yeah.

I: And since you don't remember talking to other kids about it,--

MJL: No.

I: it must have been normal--

MJL: Yeah.

I: for everyone to do that.

MJL: I never-- I never questioned the fact that I had things to do. My mom, uh, worked. My dad worked and wasn't home a lot because he was a railroader, and so we helped Mom out. And Dad explained to all of us our responsibilities to help Mother out. Mother was bringing home a paycheck that was buying out groceries and you know just-- it was just-- you know, I suppose if I lived on a farm, I'd be working on the farm. So--

I: Yes.

MJL: Uh, I think Terry worked in the furniture store when he was little. Even when he was old enough to pick up things and carry some responsibility, I think he went-- he helped, uh, deliver furniture. So, I mean it was just expected. Nobody sat around, and-- and I started cooking at a very young age. Uh, all of us did, and if you cooked dinner, you didn't do the dishes. That was the rule, and so I loved to cook [chuckles] 'cause I hated doing dishes. But I can remember cooking and Mom would put--

I: When-- when you were about how old?

MJL: Oh gosh, I can-- I remember standing on a stool stirring gravy before we ever moved up there on Oak Street. Uh, but I can remember Mom saying-- putting meat out for dinner and telling us what she wanted. And if I needed to go to the store, I walked down about six blocks to-- to Joel's Grocery, put the food in the cart and charged it and went home, walked home. That was-- or I'd send my brother to the store. Um, so--

I: Were you learning to cook largely by trial and error?

MJL: Oh yeah, I'd-- I'd watch Dad, and Dad was a wonderful cook. And I'd watch my mom. Uh, but-- uh, but by the time I got married I was a really good cook. I-- I-- my sister was a good baker. She'd love to bake. Um, and she's a very good cook. Uh, the-- Kathy, my younger sister, didn't, uh, cook as much because she was the baby. You know, babies don't cook, but we all learned.

I: Did you know children from other families who were doing a similar thing?

MJL: You know, I don't remember that it ever came up, but I do-- I'm sure that my-- the kids I was in school with and the kids I graduate with, well, they all did their share. It was never something we talked about. Uh, I think it was just taken for granted that you helped out when you could.

I: What-- gen-- generalizing a little bit from your own attitudes toward having to do this work, what do you think were the prevailing attitude-- attitudes among young people about the need, the responsibility, the inevitability of their starting to work when they were quite young?

MJL: Well, I think they liked it. I think kids liked earning money, and I think that if the-- they worked, they bought their car or they paid for their gas. I used my money to buy clothes. I-- I helped-- I was helping my parents out. It was never a problem when I was old enough to go to work. It-- I was excited about it. And I worked at the hospital for what I thought was pretty good wages, but now of course, it was next to nothin'. So, I was so proud of myself and bringing home a paycheck and-- and uh-- uh, paying Social Security. Everyone thought that was great. And my mom was happy when I got a job. I'd worked in a motel. I worked in a printing shop. Um, you know and--

I: Some of these kinds of work, whether they're at home or in some other place in the community, involved certain kinds of risk, safety questions. What seemed to be the assumption about children's-- young children's ability to conduct their lives so that they were safe most of the time, physically and otherwise?

MJL: Well um, I know that some nights I worked at the hospital, I got off at like 11:00, and my mother and dad would either pick me up or Terry would pick me up, but I never walked home, uh, at night. When I dated Terry and we weren't old enough-- he wasn't old enough to drive, his parents took us or we walked. You know, I--

I: Were they taking you because of safety considerations?

MJL: I think so. Well, I don't know, maybe not; if you ask them maybe not. I-- I always thought it was because they didn't want us walking in the dark, but uh--

I: That-- that was a matter of safety probably.

MJL: Probably.

I: Were-- were there enough incidents around town of people being accosted or assaulted or whatever it might-- no, um, burgled so that one needed to be worried?

MJL: You know there really wasn't. The only thing that I can remember maybe reading about was fighting, maybe somebody drinking too much getting in a fight. We didn't have drugs then. When I graduated high school in '62, I hadn't heard of cocaine. I hadn't heard of some of these drugs. There was liquor, yes, and kids drank. Uh, and I had classmates that drank a lot. Um, and the police would stop you and you're-- you had an open container, you pour it out and say, "Get your butt home." Didn't-- unless you were still visibly drunk and he'd probably put you in jail, you know. I-- course I never had that problem 'cause I didn't drink. But um, they're just-- you know everybody was happy. There just-- there wasn't any-- there weren't the drugs problem. Uh, there later it became out later, and I just can't remember, uh, kids, uh, participating on-- on drugs other than the alcohol. And that-- that was-- I think that was a problem. I had several classmates who that became a problem with them later-- in later life. But um-- and I

think-- I remember a class a few years ahead of me a kid was killed and that just really shocked everybody, and it was alcohol related. And it was just a real rude awakening that maybe there is a problem. And he was a-- a son of a very well-known prominent family in town, and it just shook everyone up. And they still talk about that.

I: The fact that it was so unusual--

MJL: Our parents--

I: _____--?

MJL: are still talking about that when they-- when my mother died they were still talking about what a shame that was. And I think it really jostled this town, you know. But we-- I don't remember locking our doors at night because that--

I: When you say jostled the town, you mean people became more--

MJL: Really shocked!

I: more fearful about their--

MJL: I think it brought them--

I: children's welfare?

MJL: to an awareness that alcohol was a problem. I really do.

I: Well, of course that isn't going on in the '20's or--

MJL: Sure, sure.

I: Prohibition time in probably more egregious ways than later.

MJL: Right. Um--

I: As-- as you were saying about the seventh, eighth grade and with other kids, uh, your parents wanted to take you and pick you up from going to a movie, otherwise were you free to walk around town?

MJL: Yeah, my parents just sat us down and talked about shoplifting, and how important it was that we didn't do that. And if I was there--

I: How did that come up?

MJL: Well, I think that probably, um, kids were doing it. I remember coming home and telling my mother that I was in a store with my friend and my friend took something. So I--

I: So we shouldn't romanticize the time and say that children never did anything bad.

MJL: No, uh, and we were in high-- we were in-- I think we were-- we were at a four-year high school so I think I was a freshman then. And my mother said, "Don't ever go to town without money." And um, she was really-- she really didn't want me to--

I: To sh--?

MJL: go back to town with that gal again. Uh, but I can remember I could go to a movie with a girl. I-- I-- in high school I ran around with about thirty or thirty-five girls, and we had a mother that would take us all the time down to town for Cokes and we all went. It would be one couldn't go and another would. I never went by myself anywhere.

I: This wasn't a gang, was it?

MJL: No.

I: [chuckles].

MJL: It was just a bunch of girls and a bunch of boys. And when we got into junior high, the parents of all those kids-- and there were a lot of kids-- were all popular kids in school, and we weren't a clique. I mean, a new-- new student comin' in, um, we were nice to. We introduced ourselves, you know. Uh, but we were good students. We were popular students. Um, but the parents of all those kids always had something on the weekends for us even in the summer time. And those parents started the dances at the Armory. It was my parents and uh, all those parents got together because they wanted to keep us active on the weekends and yet out of trouble with

alcohol because I think that-- that boy having that car wreck really shook 'em up. And he was like-- he-- he was older than I was. And so they had things. They had picnics. They had things at the park during the summer and had games, and there was always something that these kids could do. We even did, "This Is Your Life" and each different kid. And they'd rent a room down at the Armory, and we'd-- and the sup-- they brought treats. And then they had Saturday night dances. My parents, and the Fisks, and Tuttle, and all of them, they got together and they arranged for music. And they rented that thing on Saturday nights at the Armory, and all-- and they'd-- they'd be at the door to check the kids for alcohol. And if they had alcohol on their breath, they could come out. And we had those Saturday night dances 'til I graduated high school. And my group of parents-- those group of parents are the ones that or-- organized the first graduation party, all-night graduation party. 1962 was at Greenwood School, and we had a live music, and it was Terry's band he was playing in. And we had a party, and those parents organized food all night coming in and everything because they wanted to keep everybody out of trouble. And they did. They kept us active and-- but I think what really-- I think because alcohol was a problem with the kids-- and my brother had a class he graduated with, alcohol was a problem with a lot of the kids. And so I think that even though, um, Dad wasn't home a lot, when he was home they tried their best to-- to make sure that we got-- we-- good moral values. That we were, you know what-- safe. And we went to church on Sunday as a family. It wasn't Mom and the kids. If Dad was home, they both went. Uh, I-- I helped teach Sunday School and all that, so.

I: Let-- let's say switch specifically to the time when you first started going to Sunday School at St. Peter's Episcopal Church. Do you remember how a cl-- a typical class was set up, what you did?

MJL: Yeah, we-- we gathered all of us of all ages we gathered and sang for, um, a little while. And then we went--

I: Hymns?

MJL: Hymns. And we sang to this old, pump organ of my grandmother's that she'd given to the church, and it was downstairs. And then we all went to our little, respective areas because it was just one, huge room. And we had a teacher, and um taught us Bible stories and um--

I: How was that done?

MJL: Uh, usually, um through instruction.

I: I know, but--

MJL: A teacher getting--

I: Would it-- did the-- did the teacher read a passage from the Bible, or--

MJL: Sometimes.

I: was it retelling--

MJL: Sometimes.

I: stories from the Bible?

MJL: And then-- then she would tell us about some of the things that would-- like the Good Samaritan and those type of things. Um, so we learned a lot of the stories-- Jesus-- the stories of Jesus. Didn't learn a lot about the Old Testament, it was mostly New Testament.

I: Would-- I assume or I suppose that the teacher might tell the story and then make sure that the moral of the story was clear?

MJL: Yeah.

I: Okay.

MJL: But sometimes we worked in a book, so.

I: Was there any participation of the students?

MJL: Oh, yeah. Oh yeah, you can ask questions.

I: How did you participate?

MJL: Well, she'd ask questions we'd answer, or we'd ask questions and she'd answer.

I: Like, “Do you remember the name of So-and-So in the story?” That kind of question, or would it be a question, “Why--

MJL: Well, as she was teaching us about--

I: would So-and-So do this?

MJL: the Good Samaritan, then she’d ask us to see if we were learning anything. She was always checkin’ on us to see if we-- we remembered anything she was telling us. And then if we had questions, we could ask. Um--

I: Do you remember details of what she had said?

MJL: Sure. Sure, details of the stories.

I: How did she get around to having you draw some conclusions from the story?

MJL: Uh, through discussion.

I: Did she ask you to come up with examples from your own experience?

MJL: Uh, I’m sure. I’m sure ‘cause you always want to relate it to everyday life.

I: Mm-hm.

MJL: And then I had with those women--

I: Before we leave that--

MJL: Okay.

I: what did you observe about the responses of the other kids in the class?

MJL: Oh, everybody responded. Everybody is-- you know, it just, uh-- I was with a, uh, fairly large group of kids. And um, yeah, I-- I remember a lot of discussion. We’d do crossword puzzles that maybe had to do with the theme. We did, um-- we had art. We had time for art. We didn’t have Communion upstairs every Sunday so sometimes we never went upstairs.

Um, but I know we had, uh, snacks. So, it would be, you know instruction-
- music, instruction, and then art, and then snack.

I: What sort of art?

MJL: Um, painting or whatever went in with the theme of the story. It always had to do with the theme of the story.

I: What happened with the art after it was completed?

MJL: Uh, hung up on the wall.

I: And then--

MJL: Parents could see what we did.

I: Okay. Was it-- was it supposed to be some other indication of what you had learned?

MJL: Sure, sure. Usually it was from whatever the-- whatever the, uh, objective was of the lesson. And uh--

I: How do you think that you and others carried over whatever you were learning in the Sunday School classes to other parts of your life?

MJL: Well, I don't think I did as good a job as I could have.

I: [chuckles].

MJL: Uh, but the years later I reflect back and I think it helped make me a good person. Um, I think, uh, when it's time for my kids to go to Sunday School, I can relate some of those things.

I: Well, would it be type at the level of, um, the Golden Rule?

MJL: Do unto others, yeah. Oh yeah! Oh, yes.

I: Were-- were there opportunities, or did the teacher make opportunities in the class to say, "Last week, we talked-- learned about the Golden Rule. Where it came from and what it means and how people can carry out the

Golden Rule in their everyday lives. Now this week I would like each of you to give me an example of something you did this past week that showed that you applied the Golden Rule.” Do you remember anything like that?

MJL: Uh, yeah, I do. And, um, I think-- I think we all participated in that, and-- but you know, you can't help but gain or-- or reap something from your Christian education. You know--

I: Well, that's certainly the assumption.

MJL: Absolutely! And uh-- and then if you were-- if you were raised at home with good strong morals and values, that just kind of, um-- uh, I don't know. It's like a boost to it. You just reinforce what was being taught at home. And then I had a grandmother who was almost a saint. In fact, they called her, uh, Mrs. Saint Peters.

I: [chuckles].

MJL: And she, uh-- I mean if I was gonna say something cruel, she would stop me. And-- and you know, she-- she was just such a nice lady. And so I, you know, I'd-- I wanted-- I loved my grandmother, and so I wanted to be like Grandmother, but I never was. And-- but she, um-- she reinforced that too. And um--

I: Did you have any, uh-- any way of knowing what was go-- being taught to children in other churches in La Grande or in the County?

MJL: When I was in high school I belonged to a group called, Tri-Hi-Y, and it was a religious group. And we just studied other--

I: What did Tri-Hi-Y--?

MJL: Tri-Hi-Y. I don't know what it stands--

I: Three?

MJL: “Look forward to this day.”

I: Three high school--

MJL: I don't know.

I: youth? [chuckles].

MJL: I don't know. It could have been trinity. You know, uh, but we visited other churches. And we-- and we, um--

I: The adult service or the Sunday School?

MJL: No, the adult services. And I was in Rainbow, and then Rainbow--

I: That was part of Eastern Star?

MJL: Yeah, and so we visited church--

I: Eastern Star was not religious though, was it?

MJL: Reasons?

I: Or did it have religious-- did it have--

MJL: I have no idea.

I: Well, it had some pseudo-religious--

MJL: Oh, yeah.

I: habits anyway.

MJL: Yeah. Uh, and-- and so we visited church once a year with Rainbow, and I was in Rainbow a long time. My mother was in Rainbow. My grandmother was Eastern Star so that-- I came from a background of Masons. So I-- but in this group-- I only was with them a year, but I did visit other churches. And I did-- was able to compare. Well, we don't do this, and uh, we do this differently. But it was amazing that the Lord's Prayer was the same in every church and the little song you sing when you, uh, take the money to the altar. And all the churches have altars.

I: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow?"

MJL: Absolutely.

I: Yes.

MJL: And they all--

I: Doxology.

MJL: And all-- the doxology-- and they all had altars which now they don't. And that's not-- and when I go to those churches which I-- my daughter belongs to one now. That's the part I miss. There is not an altar. We prayed for other people besides ourselves. We prayed for the President of the United States. We prayed for our troops. We prayed for the poor, the sick, and the hungry.

I: In all churches, you mean?

MJL: In all those churches. They don't do that now.

I: How did you, um-- what impressions did you have about the importance of the differences among these churches? Were the-- were any of them large enough to make you think, or give you the impression that there was some kind of a contradiction or a rivalry between churches?

MJL: No, I-- I-- I didn't. It made me appreciate my church more 'cause some of those churches were pretty scary.

I: Because?

MJL: Because there was a lot of shouting and crying.

I: They were demonstrative about their _____?

MJL: Very!

I: Yes.

MJL: Crying and there was no make-up, and of course in high school I loved wearing make-up.

I: [chuckles].

MJL: No make-up. Um, they would actually get down on the floor and-- and roll.

I: That's holy-rollers.

MJL: And um, I just stood there with my mouth open. And I dated a minister's son for a year at the Gospel Tabernacle Church in _____. We dated for a year, and I went because he asked me to go. And it-- it was just complete opposite from little St. Peter's ritual to their church. And yet their church was so strict in the clothes you wore. You could not watch TV. You could not wear make-up. You could not dance. And at the prom-- he couldn't invite me to the prom 'cause they couldn't dance. But we went to the Honan Hall next to Craig's Cleaners and watched a Disney movie and had dinner served. I dressed up. I had a corsage. But we watched, "The Living Desert." And Bob played basketball, and his father would not come and watch. And Bob liked Hawaiian music, and I got him an album. And the girls had hula skirts on, and his father took that off the cover-- took that cover off the album.

I: Are you telling me this because this illustrates some--

MJL: This illustrates--

I: differences--

MJL: the complete--

I: between churches?

MJL: difference!

I: Yes.

MJL: Not only in their service, but in their way of life.

I: Do you have any way of being aware that for adults, many adults, these differences were enough to arouse hostility?

MJL: No.

I: You sure?

MJL: I-- I didn't feel hostility at all.

I: Is it there was a time earlier in La Grande I know that the Catholics were viewed with almost horror by many people in the-- in the community.

MJL: I didn't feel that at all! I didn't feel that at all. My babysitter belonged to this church, so I-- I was aware that there was this faction here-- over here. But it-- it made me appreciate St. Peter's all the more. It made me love my church because this was such-- I was so horrified. Uh, I go when I was little with the babysitter, and-- and-- and put my face into her skirt. And I remember doing that. An going to my church where everything was just-- it was this way. You know, the rich world of candles, the cross, the acolyte. And I'd go, "Oh, it's so calm, so calm." And go back here-- and when I dated Bob I went back and the kids could-- I used to feel sorry for him because the kids couldn't go to movies. They could bowl. They could go bowling or they could park. And there were a lot of pregnant girls in his church, and he talked about that.

I: They could park being--

MJL: And neck.

I: have sex in cars?

MJL: Yes. They could-- I mean, what was left for them to do?

I: [chuckles]. Geez.

MJL: It wasn't that somebody gave them permission. You either go bowling. You couldn't watch TV. And his father was in the war and confiscated some film from the Germans. And on his father's birthday I went with him-- with his son to celebrate his father's birthday. And he got out those old movies, and they were shooting the Americans and watching this. And I sat in horror and watched his dad just, you know, so excited over these films. And, "This is my life." And I-- I went home sick to my stomach because I saw for the first time they are not living what they preach. They

couldn't go downtown and watch films, but he'd watch something horrible like that. That was horrible what I saw. And so, I-- I thought of them suddenly as being hypocritical, and it just made me love my church more! [laughs]. So, by the time I-- I was a junior in high school or a sophomore in high school, I loved St. Peter's! Terry's parents belonged to the Christian Church, and they had their service. And it was nice. Been to that, been to the Presbyterian, been to the Methodist, everything was nice. I thought I could, you know, I could get along with all of those, but this one church over here is the one that really-- and yet I have friends to this day in that church that are good people.

I: Do you think this might have been your unique reaction, and it wasn't shared by many other people in town?

MJL: Might not have been, might not have been, but it made a believer in, uh, my church.

I: Yeah.

MJL: It totally did.

I: What I am trying to get at though is-- is your perceptions during that period of the amount of harmony or disharmony among the various churches in the county?

MJL: You know, I don't know. I don't know. I just-- you know, I can't remember churches not getting along. I never-- I guess I never even thought about it. Um, we lived across the street. The ch-- uh, the Episcopal Church was across the street from the Mormon Church, and it was a big cathedral type. And the only thing we argued with them is over parking and we finally came to an agreement. And only reason I know that is my mother talked about it because my mom was on the vestry, and they had approached them that we'd try to get our services at different times so that we could have parking. And we were so glad when they put the newspaper there and took that church down, and you know, because we had parking. But as far as, uh, problems with the-- the Catholic Church, no. Um, when I was growing up I knew that there were black people in La Grande. I had no problem walking down the street, and they didn't bother me. I was-- went to school with, uh, some boys, uh, black boys, and I

never ever considered it a problem 'til we went away to a game and kids started making fun of the boy. And then it really dawned on me--

I: In this other county?

MJL: that-- yeah-- no, in another city, Baker, Oregon.

I: That was another county.

MJL: Yeah, that yeah. Excuse me. And they started saying awful things to him, and it was a real rude awakening.

I: So, can you say that as far as you were concerned, and maybe your friends, you were not aware of any sort of racial or religious pred-- uh, prejudice?

MJL: I'm sure they were there because in later years Mom would tell me stories about things that went on. We had a-- a black family in La Grande that the father fathered children from and how awful they thought it was. I remember being scared to death and had dreams for years about a, um-- uh, there was a black man in La Grande that owned a shoe store down in-- the picture's in Harris' office. But it was a shoe store down by where a blacksmith's is now, or next door to it. And he had a peg leg, and he used to walk around with that peg leg. And I had nightmares of-- of walking by and him grabbing me. Um, that's the only--

I: Was that with your hypersensitivity?

MJL: I don't know.

I: There was no actual threat?

MJL: No, no, 'cause I had that dream.

I: [chuckles].

MJL: And I took care of 'em in the hospital and loved 'em. They were funny people. They were-- they were nice people. They had a good sense of humor. Um, but years later Mom would tell 'em-- told-- and Dad talked about some of the things, so we had a Ku Klux Klan here.

I: Yes.

MJL: So, I know--

I: Before the _____.

MJL: there must have been a problem. But--

I: No, it wasn't particularly.

MJL: I don't know. I-- I-- may-- if I was sheltered, maybe I was.

I: There was some boycotting of businesses encouraged by the Klan, but it never lasted. The whole organization only lasted about a year and a half.

MJL: And then I remember, um-- uh, Mother telling me one time that when I was born, Dad wanted-- or one of the friends wanted-- I told _____ it was Dad. If I was a boy, I was gonna be called, Jack Allen Peck, and my mother's friend said, "You can't call that baby Jack Allen Peck because that was JAP." This was during the war in '44.

I: What was JAP?

MJL: My initials would spell out JAP.

I: Oh, I see, I see. [chuckles].

MJL: So you see there was that prejudice.

I: Mm-hm.

MJL: We had a--

I: That was here?

MJL: Yeah. We had a neighbor next to us who was German, very German name, and I could barely understand her. And her daughter lived across the street was a school teacher, and nobody in the neighborhood could get along with that daughter. She's-- she's German too. Well anyway, I remember Mother and Dad talking one night in front of us kids about the grocery-- the

man that owned the grocery store. He was an old man. Refused them-- to let them go into his store and wouldn't let them buy groceries there because they were German. When he died his son called them up and said, "I apologize for my father's actions. You are welcome to come any time." Well I can remember about my parents talking about that. So you know there were prejudice, and I guess I wouldn't of known about 'em if-- if my parents didn't communicate with each other once in awhile. They come home and talk about it. But um, I think I-- I don't know if my dad was any different than most men, but my dad held grudges. If he didn't like the father, he didn't like the kid, and so I had a-- a hard time getting him to like some of my friends because he didn't care for the dad. And it didn't matter. The dad-- the father was no good, so the son was no good. I had-- and I-- and I told my husband when we got married, I'll never do that with my kids. I never have. I never have. I don't try to hold grudges. I try. I believe in forgiveness. And I used to talk to my dad 'til I was blue in the face, "Don't you believe in forgiveness, Dad?" You know, "Blah-da blah." But, you know, um, I loved Dad dearly, and he was unique and special.

I: The fact that he worked for the railroad, was he a conductor or a brakeman or what?

MJL: He was a brakeman, and then years later became a conductor.

I: Uh, passenger or freight?

MJL: He did passenger for awhile, and uh--

I: That's the one where it is a more predictable schedule.

MJL: Right.

I: And then on freight it's very--

MJL: And then freight.

I: unpredictable.

MJL: So he was unpredictable. He-- he tr-- he made it to some of our things. He made it to our graduations, and he made it to some of our concerts 'cause I participated in a lot of music. Uh, but Dad, uh, got a uniform and a

conductor's hat. We had that for a long time, and when Dad passed away, we got it out, and it was just full of moth holes. I was just--

I: Yes.

MJL: sick! So, we took the buttons, and we have all the buttons and everything on that, but they-- they even ate into his hat. But he, uh--

I: How exactly did his irregular work schedule affect family life?

MJL: Well, when Dad was home we towed the mark, let me tell you. He-- he didn't stand for any sassing. I was probably the worst. That's because I was the middle child. I-- I probably fought more than any of 'em, and--

I: Was his response to, uh--?

MJL: Oh, real spankings!

I: Corporal punishment.

MJL: You know, Dad's-- oh, yeah!

I: Mm-hm.

MJL: You know, it didn't-- it--

I: Did you hear of other children being spanked for similar reasons?

MJL: You know, we nev-- I never heard about it from them.

I: Could that be you kept secret?

MJL: I guess so. I don't know. We never thought-- we just thought that was the way things were. Um, I don't know that I ever-- I probably was ashamed of it and the one that told my--

I: Mm-hm.

MJL: girlfriends that I-- there was a point in time when he didn't spank me anymore. You know, when I was probably junior high.

I: Uh-huh.

MJL: I got in--

I: 'Cause that was a-- a--

MJL: 'Cause I was--

I: a-- a result of his particular temperament, or was there something about that kind of work schedule that made him more, uh--

MJL: Well, he would-- he would--

I: edgy?

MJL: It made him more edgy 'cause, you know, he would work and then come home to sleep.

I: Probably never get enough sleep.

MJL: Not-- not getting enough sleep, and so, you know. And he was-- he'd be cranky and trying to sleep during the day, and so. But, um--

I: If-- if that was the common pattern when he was at home, why would you feel affection toward him?

MJL: Well, I don't know. I'd-- he was a loving father also. He, uh--

I: Other moments were better?

MJL: Oh yeah, absolutely.

I: Yes, yes.

MJL: I wasn't afraid of him. I just-- you know I wasn't an easy child. I mean, I sassed and probably like most kids, I guess. I don't know. But um, I don't think I was-- had been a perfect child.

I: Well, and that's not--

MJL: And with--

I: that's not what I'm getting at.

MJL: with-- with all of us two years apart, there was--

I: Yeah.

MJL: a little bit of bickering, you know. We--

I: Yes.

MJL: my-- with my sisters and I had a sister that-- older sister that never did anything wrong. She was-- never said-- [chuckles] she never sassed. She never did anything wrong, and I used to resent it 'cause I'm the one that got in trouble all the time. And we've talked about that later and laughed about it, but--

I: Well, I think these are parts of normal family relationships.

MJL: She says, "I learned by watching you, Mary Jo." [chuckles].

I: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

MJL: You know, but uh--

I: Were-- were there certain, special arrangements that had to be made because of your father's work schedule, as to what could be done in the house for example, or what the family could do together, or--

MJL: Oh, yeah.

I: travelling?

MJL: When Daddy was--

I: _____?

MJL: when Daddy was home-- and in the summer time when he was home and he was, uh, not gonna be working for twenty-four hours, we'd pack up a

lunch and do a picnic and-- or we'd go to church and then go for a ride after the picnic and maybe go get a hamburger afterwards or something. It was the day we were all looking forward-- but his rides sometimes took us to Hell and gone because we never knew where he was going. It was always a surprise and sometimes scary.

I: You mean, he'd-- he'd said, "Will you get in the car?" and--

MJL: Go in the mountains.

I: wouldn't tell you?

MJL: Oh, yeah.

I: [chuckles].

MJL: Some of Dad's--

I: This-- this is at his-- was his idea of how to--

MJL: It's how to relax.

I: surprise the family _____?

MJL: How to relax, yeah. And we went on a lot of picnics-- lot of picnics. Packed a lunch and, uh, before we moved up on Oak, we used to pack the horses and go up on the mountains and uh--

I: Was this common among other families?

MJL: I don't know. I don't know.

I: Well, didn't you ever meet them out on any of these trips?

MJL: You know, the families didn't-- because there wasn't Little League and all these, the families didn't participate a lot together. My folks did not have a lot of friends. They had family. They had my mother's family. My dad had his family. If we got together with anybody, it was family. But they didn't have-- once in awhile they'd have somebody over for cards. But they never had friends over for dinner. Uh, the friends all didn't get

together with their kids, except like on a Saturday night at the Armory. You know that type of thing. We do this now, call up our friends and bring the kids and we'll have, you know. My folks didn't do that. Um, I don't think peep-- I don't think people did that then--

I: Could part of that be--

MJL: to the extent they do now.

I: because many people had longer work hours six days a week--

MJL: It could have--

I: in towns that--?

MJL: It could very well have been. Uh, a lot of the mothers did not work then. My mother was an exception. And uh, if the-- if my friend's families got together with their other friend's families, I didn't know about it. Maybe we were excluded, but I don't think so. I don't remember my friend's saying-- going places with their other friend's families. I just don't remember that happening.

[audio ends]

Transcribed by Micheal L. Minthorn (01/07/2008)

Transcription revised by Paula Helten (03/29/2012)

[Tape #3 - Side A]

I: It's July 5th. I'm continuing the interview with Mary Jo Lemon. Tell me about the incident of the eighth grade girl who uh, surprised everyone.

MJL: Well, when I was-- when I was in the eighth grade, um, we were all a fairly-- fairly-- fairly large class. Um--

I: This was at Central School?

MJL: This was-- yeah. The-- it-- it-- it was called Junior High then.

I: Mm-hm.

MJL: And um-- uh, one of the girls in the class, uh, got pregnant and had to quit school. And it just threw everybody for a loop. I mean, we just couldn't believe it. And uh, she didn't get married. But we were so surprised, uh, because-- _____! I was surprised 'cause I hadn't thought about it, except that happening to somebody. And uh, we were-- you know kids. We were-- of course you condemn. And um, so um, my mother sat down and talked to me about it and said, "Hey, you know we don't condemn people that make mistakes."

I: Was she doing this on religious grounds, do you think?

MJL: Well I think-- I think so. I think it was my mother's morals, and I think she always, you know uh, looked at both sides. And she um-- she said, "You know it's sometimes nice girls that get caught." And uh, so we-- we start-- we talked about it and--

I: As you talked, uh, the-- to your friends about it, did they-- did you find that their parents took the same approach as your mother?

MJL: Um, you know, I don't-- I don't remember. I really don't remember. I just know that they were just so surprised and told us about it.

I: How were-- how were teachers reacting as far as you could tell?

MJL: Uh, not good, not good.

I: Were they condemning?

MJL: Yes. And uh--

I: Overtly?

MJL: Well, you could just-- you could just have a sense that they didn't think much of her anymore. And um, the school wouldn't let her attend school. And uh, when I got into high school, um, it happened again, and I was a-- a-- a junior. And one of the little sophomore-- freshmen girls we had-- well, we had a three-year high school. So I must have been a senior 'cause she was two years younger. Got pregnant with, uh-- and the kid was in my class! And one of the nicer, um, student body officer, you know. And she belonged to our church and lived a few blocks away. And I was just--

really felt bad for her. I really did. Her parents, um, were business people in the town. And his parents were-- his father was a college professor at Eastern, a well-loved man and a wonderful mother. And um, there was no marriage. She was going to adopt it out which she did. But I felt so sorry for her that I would walk down and see her after school. She was not allowed to go to school. She was not allowed to [phone rings] attend at all.

[audio clicks - no delay]

But anyway-- and I-- I be-- you know I just was there for her. And um, she had the baby, adopted it out, and um then they let her come back to school. And I remember she wanted to go to the prom, and she didn't have a dress. So, I gave her one of my dresses, and um, I went down and took pictures of her. And I think-- [phone rings].

[audio clicks - no delay]

Uh-- uh, just-- we just-- I felt so sad, so sorry for her, and I even felt bad that she wasn't allowed to go to school. And you know this was in the '6-- early '60's, and um, you kinda kept things like that quiet. The baby was adopted out, and I know it was upsetting to her. And years later I talked to her, and she said, "Mary Jo, you were the only one that was kind to me, your family." My mom, and she remembered my letting her wear that dress.

I: What was there in the reactions of, uh, adults and fellow students that made you think that it should be kept quiet?

MJL: Well, it-- that was kind-- was kind of, you know the ti-- a sign of the times then-- then. Um, if--if it happened, it happened behind closed doors, and uh, you'd-- an example of the times was they used to have what they call Pendleton jackets. That were a loose jacket that buttoned down the front, had a pocket on the sides, and the girls were wearing them. And they were-- they were plaid, expensive. Well all of sudden we couldn't wear 'em anymore because they would hide a pregnancy. And I mean we-- we were told by the, uh-- um, dean of women or dean of girls at the high school that we were not allowed to wear 'em anymore. And we were just-- I mean, it only happened twice that I knew of. And must have happened more, I don't know, but that's the thing. And we were all just blown over, the girls were by that.

I: Well, did the woman who was dean say, "The reason that you cannot wear these is--

MJL: Oh, yeah!

I: you might be hiding a pregnancy?

MJL: Oh, yeah!

I: So, she was explicit about it?

MJL: Oh, very.

I: Was she explicit about anything else?

MJL: Oh, she was so old fashioned. [chuckles]. You know when-- when you'd walk down the hallway with your boyfriend and he'd put his hand on your shoulder or on your back, she would call you in and talk to you about it. There was no showing of any affection at all in your daily life at school, period. And uh, holding hands was absolutely condemned. And when we went to dances we couldn't dance cheek to cheek. No, she'd come up and actually tell us to stop.

I: Uh, was she the only one who was enforcing--

MJL: Well, the whole--

I: these strict standards?

MJL: I think the whole, uh, faculty felt that way, but that's the way it was then.

I: Yes.

MJL: Um, and it just--

I: La Grande wasn't unique in that respect.

MJL: I don't think so. I don't think so. We didn't have drugs then. Uh, we wore um-- uh, slack-- dresses to school. There were no slacks, no jeans to school. Uh, in fact I was teaching about three or four years before we were allowed to wear a pantsuit to teach in.

I: At the time do you remember that you and your friends were in any way protesting against these kinds of standards?

MJL: You know, because of maybe my background with my mom and dad, my upbringing and my upbringing in the church, you know, people sin but God forgives, it was hard for me to think that somebody would be that condemning. But I remember that dean of women, and I didn't like her because of it. And I thought, you know um, how can you do that to somebody? There's no room for forgiveness in her heart at all, and I didn't like that. I didn't feel comfortable with that attitude.

I: Was that, you think, your feeling alone, or did you did see that it was shared by other people?

MJL: You know I don't-- I don't think I talked about it much, uh, because the group of kids I ran around with didn't gossip a lot. We just weren't--

I: Well, in-- in--

MJL: you know--

I: the high school biology classes was sex ever--

MJL: No.

I: mentioned?

MJL: Oh, no.

I: As-- as if it didn't exist or wasn't supposed--

MJL: You just didn't--

I: to exist?

MJL: it didn't exist, you know. And I can remember in the eighth grade when this girl got pregnant, I didn't, you know. Uh, my folks had-- had talked about sex and everything, but I'm goin', "Oh! You know, she! This is-- boy!" So, I never-- I dated, but I never had any problems, uh, you know that I felt intimidated or uncomfortable with anyone. So--

I: Were there any places around town where activities were going on that might violate those social codes that people talked and have? Did people talk about them?

MJL: You know, I-- Terry and I were talking about just that thing, and there was a-- a-- a group of kids that were pretty, pretty bad. They shoplifted and things. They had a little gang. And I do know they got in trouble a lot-- a lot! And one-- one of the daughters, her mother was a teacher, and the kids all rebelled. And uh, the authorities in La Grande kinda squelched that right away. They kinda put a damper on it.

I: The police, you mean?

MJL: Yeah, they did. But um as far as activities, uh, the activities I was involved in were all to keep us busy and-- and--

I: Well, I'm thinking of, specifically of places like taverns and brothels.

MJL: No. Well, you know I think there were uh-- uh brothels above Red Cross and down that row. I think there were 'cause my brother delivered papers and would talk about.

I: Oh, what-- what were kids reactions to the knowledge of that--

MJL: You know--

I: that those places existed?

MJL: I don't know. I just know my folk-- folks thought it was terrible. And uh, my mother wanted to go with my brother to deliver the papers because she didn't trust-- she thought they might grab him in through the door. Uh--

I: There was fear?

MJL: Well, yeah! And um-- uh, I think it was an accepted thing in La Grande just like the Ku Klux Klan was an accepted thing, but I don't think it was talked a lot. I never discussed that with my friends that there was a brothel. Um, it was somethin' we just didn't talk about. And that's why I think when my friend got pregnant, and we did talk about it a little bit, it was just, whoa! Can you believe that? You know? And then when my-- it

happened the second time we really felt bad for her. And I think I stood up for her because of my church, because of my mom, and because of that damned faculty at La Grande High School condemned her so badly. You know they wouldn't even let her finish school. They did let her come back after the baby was born. Then we all of a sudden we couldn't wear these jackets, and I had a very nice one that my mother had bought. Couldn't wear it anymore and I thought your minds are in the gutter, you know.

I: [chuckles].

MJL: I remember that faculty-- that woman. Her name I never will forget, but I remember that at my ten-year reunion she sat next to me. Of course I was married by then, and I was so uncomfortable next to her, thinking, you know you just missed so much because of your--

I: Well, as you reflect on the ways that teachers are made to conform to certain standards--

MJL: Oh, yeah.

I: and expectations,--

MJL: Oh, yeah.

I: do you now think that uh, she was perhaps less vindictive or unforgiving than she might really have been? That in fact what she was doing was enforcing the school standards--

MJL: I think she was--

I: as she understood them?

MJL: enforcing the school standards, but I think she was also, um-- um, I don't what the word to say, but prude. She was old school. I mean, she was, you know of the attitude that you didn't-- you didn't talk about it. And um, that like touching would lead to things, like-- so, she was always taking boy's hands out of the girl's hands, you know when they were holding hands. And-- and uh, I remember goin' down the hallway one time, and Terry put his hand on my back because--

I: _____.

MJL: class was out. And they were, um--

O: [whispers]. Do you want me to take her?

MJL: [whispers]. No, she's fine.

Class was out and Terry was kind of directing me through the crowd, and she jerked his hand away and gave us a lecture, "How do you keep your hands off of her."

I: Let's broaden this a little bit to, uh, school discipline. Could you think of a couple examples from elementary school years, um, as to the kind of discipline that appeared to be acceptable among the teachers--

MJL: Well--

I: and the principal?

MJL: spanking was acceptable. I spanked when I first started teaching because that was acceptable, um.

I: Why do you think that they thought that spanking was an appropriate form of discipline?

MJL: Well, I think that was-- it was the accepted form. Um, I--

I: What-- what do--

MJL: was one.

I: what do you perceive now was-- might have been in their minds about the result of spanking?

MJL: That-- that-- well, if you spanked them then their behavior would change.

I: Because they feared something?

MJL: I don't know. Um, I-- Terry and I spanked our two children, but we only spanked them if they lied. That's the only time they ever got a spanking.

The rest of the time they were disciplined. But I do know that children who were spanked a lot at home, and this was from my experience in teaching; they were spanked for everything they did turned out to be liars. And I think it was because they thought, "Well maybe just this one time Mom will believe me, whatever." So, I used a lot of other psychology before I spanked.

I: But do you think that the people in the-- the administrators and the teachers who were in charge of the schools when you were here--

MJL: Spanking was acceptable.

I: implicitly were following the "spare the rod, spoil the child" idea?

MJL: Probably. That was the accepted form of discipline. That was accepted when I was in school and when I was out of school. That was accepted. I-- my great-grandmother taught first grade; she was the principal at Riveria. And the teachers were so strict then that she-- she hit their hands with rulers. Well, I would never have done that, but I'm saying that was accepted. She spanked. Um, I-- and I've talked to some of her students that said, "I learned more from her than any other teacher I ever had, but boy was she strict!" And you walked in a straight line and you kept your mouth shut and blah, blah, blah. Well, I was-- 'course I wasn't that strict, and I allowed kids to-- to visit and talk and things like that. But that was the accepted form. Now I didn't see it happen in high school.

I: The interesting question is why was it accepted?

MJL: Because I think that was society then. I think that was done at home.

I: What was-- what were one or two of the underlying beliefs that most people in society at that time seemed to hold?

MJL: Uh, that you obeyed. That you, um-- that if you didn't, then you'd be punished. And that was the form of punishment. It wasn't, uh, time-out. It wasn't giving them M&M's when they were good.

I: Would you call it an authoritarian approach?

MJL: Prob-- yeah! Absolutely.

I: And this was--

MJL: That's the way I was raised. That's the way, um, it was accepted when I was in college and when I fir-- and started teaching. Absolutely. Um--

I: Was the same approach--

MJL: Uh, but I think it was stricter, uh, when I was in school than it was. I mean, I think that was the only form of punishment.

I: Of like-- of like forced to stick the-- that early time where--

MJL: I think that was the only form of punishment. I don't know that they took the child out in the hallway and talked to 'em. I don't know that they uh-- uh, they might have sent 'em to the principal's office. But if you went to the principal's office then you probably got a spanking from the principal.

I: There was not much attempt to reason or--

MJL: No.

I: to find causes? Just you did this, so you get this punishment?

MJL: And that's wrong.

I: Yes.

MJL: And I don't-- I don't even know if they talked about it much as you know, "bend over and grab your ankles," and you got it. And Terry was a-- he spent his first week in the principal's office because he kept running away from school.

I: Mm-hm.

MJL: Rather than sit down and say, "Terry why--

I: Yes, yes.

MJL: are you running away from school? Why are you afraid of school?" They spanked him.

I: Let's-- let's apply that same principle, if indeed that was the common approach--

MJL: Yeah.

I: and common set of values that principals and teachers held, to some of the act-- actual teaching in classes. Let's take reading for example, early experiences in learning to read. What do you recall about how teachers approached, uh, making sure that students were gaining skills in reading?

MJL: Well, reading was taught differently, uh, than I taught reading.

I: Yes.

MJL: But when I-- when I learned to read, uh, you read in the "See Spot run," uh, the Jane--

I: Yeah, mm-hm.

MJL: and you know those type of books.

I: Mm-hm.

MJL: Um, and you, uh, had different activities to do with the story. You learned the vocabulary. You were taught your phonics. Um--

I: Could you-- could you remember some of the ways in which the teaching occurred?

MJL: Well, they were taught phonics until there was a certain time in the-- in the '50's. And when I was six-- I think it started in about '48 where they took phonics out of the school.

I: I know, but when they were teaching phonics, and as you experienced it, what did the teacher do to cause students to learn phonics?

MJL: Well, she had flashcards. She taught them the alphabet. She taught 'em the sounds.

I: A flashcard that might have TH on it or a P?

MJL: Not the phonograms, but, uh, the-- like a B. And then she-- we'd talk about the B sound, and we'd look at pictures of things that, uh, started with the sound of B. And I don't remember learning my vowels until later on in the year and the rules for the vowels. What we were first taught to memorize approximately a hundred words. Then we were taught-- then we started the phonics.

I: The sight vocabulary?

MJL: The-- yeah. So, you were taught both look-- the look and say method and the phonetic. And-- but I don't remember them teaching phonograms.

I: Give me an example of how the memorization of these sight vocabulary words would occur.

MJL: What I remember is uh flashcards and making sentences. Uh--

I: What-- what-- what did she do with flashcards?

MJL: Just would flash.

I: With the whole class sitting up there looking at her holding the flashcards?

MJL: Uh, I-- uh, I think we did it in groups. You had three groups, three reading groups, the top, middle, and bottom. Sometimes they had names. Robins--

I: Yes.

MJL: and sparrows.

I: Yes.

MJL: Yeah. And she did all that preparatory work, uh, the pre-- talk-- talking a little bit about the story. In fact, they're teaching reading very similar to that today; uh, going through the vocabulary in the story, doing some silent

reading, doing some oral reading. The oral reading was hard if you were not a good oral reader. Uh, you struggled. And um, I was an average reader. Uh, but I didn't get the phonics. So we got strictly-- we were strictly taught to memorize. Because when I was in school, phonics-- they decided to take phonics out and that children were gonna learn it through osmosis. I guess they thought that because the teacher said and like-- I talked to my first grade teacher. We couldn't even use the word in the faculty room. So, anybody taught phonics, they had to have that door closed and their window covered. So I didn't get the phonics until about fourth grade, and by then it was almost too late. So I had-- I'm-- I actually learned more teaching first grade than I did _____.

I: Well, were some teachers apparently teaching phonics surreptitiously then?

MJL: I don't know. I just don't know, but I know that if I was uh teaching at that era, I would have shut my door and-- and covered my windows with my blinds.

I: Well, what does that say possibly about the values that teachers were living by then?

MJL: Well, I think if you'd-- if-- I think that teachers had to do what they were told. If the principal said you're not gonna teach phonics anymore and they-- they could probably have a fit, but it was-- that was-- that was the way it was. And so--

I: The principal was the decision maker there.

MJL: Absolutely.

I: Where was the principal getting the information?

MJL: The school boards. The school boards. That--

I: The school boards don't know anything about teaching.

MJL: No, but it was a-- it was a-- it's called a pendulum. It was a new style you know, and it-- you swing way out here.

I: Was that-- was that coming from this teacher education institution _____?

MJL: Probably, and coming from all over the United States.

I: Mm-hm.

MJL: It-- it was an era that phonics just plain wasn't taught. And the pendulum, the teacher's said, "I knew it was gonna swing back." But-- so they thought, "Well if we teach 'em to memorize, the kids will learn more where it's more vocabulary, score better on the tests, the achievement tests." And then the pendulum came back in about third or fourth grade.

I: Mm-hm. What do you remember about how, uh, elementary arithmetic was taught when you were in school?

MJL: Out of a book and at the blackboard.

I: Can you give me a couple of examples?

MJL: And we didn't have hands-on things to count. Uh--

I: Adding, subtracting, multiplying--

MJL: Manipulatives. We didn't have manipulatives.

I: dividing?

MJL: Yeah, we counted on our fingers.

I: And your success was measured by what?

MJL: How well you, uh, did your story problems, how well you, uh, did your, uh, math facts, you know.

I: Do you remember taking tests then?

MJL: Oh, yeah.

I: Frequent?

MJL: Uh yeah, usually the teachers tested at the end of each chapter. Math uh-- I liked math, but um, it wasn't-- I was more interested in social studies and history and that kind of thing.

I: What-- what-- what seemed to be the underlying value that teachers held about how to teach arithmetic?

MJL: Well, I don't know. You know, I suppose they taught math the way that they were taught, or the way that the manual told 'em to.

I: Would it be accurate to say that they were full believers in the rote system of learning arithmetic?

MJL: Probably. The new math wasn't then. There wasn't a new math then. But you had a manual-- you had a manual and the manual that told you how to teach, and you followed the manual. And uh, they gave you some extended activities that you could do, but you had a scope of sequence to follow. You know, by in first grade this is what you teach, and in second grade this is what you teach, and uh--

I: As you look back now on the teachers that you had, let's say in the first four or five grades, do you think they were all consistent in the methods they were using?

MJL: They were consistent, but what they lacked was understanding.

I: Yes. But getting at the values--

MJL: Right.

I: that they apparently held--

MJL: Right.

I: about teaching, um, they all apparently sub-- subscribed or were bow--brow beaten into--

MJL: Yeah.

I: teaching pretty much the same way.

MJL: Right, right.

I: What-- what do you remember some of the teachers you had in elementary school when it came to art?

MJL: [chuckles]. Oh, uh, they did art on Fridays, and it was, um-- we-- I don't remember anything too, um, tremendously fun other than, uh, maybe finger painting. But um, they used different methods of teaching art. We never learned about the artists. Uh-- uh, we never learned about Picasso in any of that, um, which I always thought was kind of important, uh, that kids learn it, so I taught it, uh, in my first grade my children.

I: But when you were going through--

MJL: But when--

I: as far as experiences, were--

MJL: I was going through I never learned any of that.

I: did it amount to, uh-- fing-- finger painting can be pretty free and open and self-expressive, but was there a lot of cutting out tulips or--

MJL: A lot of cutting out, uh--

I: animals and all the same?

MJL: You had-- you did a Valentine thing at Valentine's Day, and it was in red, pink, and white. You did, uh, Christmas things.

I: Was something that you invented or something that--

MJL: Well, we--

I: everybody did the same way?

MJL: we all did it the same way, you know. And that's how I first started teaching. I-- when I was teaching at Christmas time you did-- you did Christmas activities with the Christmas colors, and in the spring you did flowers and-- and things like that. Uh, and then I took some classes at the

college, and they said, “No, no we do not want red and pink and white at Valentine’s. Let’s do black and orange and yellow. Let’s change this.” You know, but uh--

I: You are right at that time when things were changing quite a bit.

MJL: Yeah.

I: Almost-- well you mentioned pendulum, but--

MJL: Yeah.

I: there in many instances it may have been more than simply a new fad, although fads are common in education. It may have arisen from some leader’s ideas that they had more insightful ways to help students learn.

MJL: Well, and-- and they-- and they wanted you to be creative--

I: Yeah.

MJL: you know. But I found that most of the art things that I did were all-- if we made a dog, we all made the same dog, you know. And we all-- and I had never done a collage.

I: What were you praised for when you were doing art activities like that?

MJL: If I stayed in the lines and I cut on the lines. [chuckles]. Bleah!

I: [chuckles].

MJL: And that I used--

I: Artist discipline! [chuckles].

MJL: just a little bit of glue, not a lot.

I: Yes, yes, yes.

MJL: But I mean we never did collages or any--

I: Yeah.

MJL: any-- any murals or anything like that. And the finger painting, you know you did it the way the teacher told you. And-- and so when I started teaching, um, we finger painted on the floor. And uh, I had taken a class from a gal that was a national leader in finger painting and learned that you could use your elbows and you could use your nose and you could use your knuckles, and-- and-- and I enjoyed art. And yet-- and yet there were some days that we all did the same thing. We all made the same spider at Halloween. Uh, but um, we tried to-- tried to bring out a child's creativity and-- and um, not make us all little boxes that worked.

I: What-- when you were quite young in school, what do you recall about activities that were intended to promote patriotism?

MJL: Well there were a lot of uh-- we-- we always said the flag salute and--

I: Always, you mean every day?

MJL: Always, every day, every day.

I: Do you remember exactly how you did it?

MJL: We stood up.

I: This is at body position--?

MJL: We stood up and looked at the flag and put our hand over our heart always.

I: A teacher leading?

MJL: Always. In the front of the room-- she stood in the front of the room.

I: Was there ever any discussion of what words like indivisible mean?

MJL: Yeah, we talked about it, talked about the colors of the flag. We talked about, um, what the red meant, what the blue meant, what the white meant.

I: Was this always done in a kind of tone of reverence?

- MJL: I think so because people were very patriotic then. We were just come out of the war, you know. And um-- uh, in the 50's we were just kind of picking ourselves up from the Korean War. And uh, Vietnam was not even talked about at all. I mean, it wasn't even anything then. And-- and um, when kids went into the service that was the thing to do, you know.
- I: Was-- in your elementary school experience, was being patriotic-- patriotic, doing things that were thought to be patriotic, apparently agreed to and accepted by everyone?
- MJL: I think so. I think so. And uh, uh we learned all the patriotic songs in music and sang 'em, you know. Every once in a while we'd sing uh, The Grand Ole Flag and some of those songs. And I continued that with my first graders.
- I: Mm-hm.
- MJL: Um-- uh, and the Lion's Club when I was teaching, brought out a flag for all the students, and uh, they still do that. On a little block of wood and uh-- uh, my kids knew how many stripes there were and what they represented. And-- but I think-- I think it was a good thing. We started our games off with the flag, uh, saying the Pledge of Allegiance. Um, it was just accepted. And uh--
- I: Did you ever detect any sense along with this you were supposed to feel that the United States was superior to all other-- other countries?
- MJL: I think so. I think we were made to-- we were made to be proud of our country and--
- I: But superior?
- MJL: And well, I don't know if I thought about it then. I just thought we were a pretty neat country, and we were pretty big. And I know we were afraid of Russia, uh, you know and uh, China.
- I: Were you made aware at that time that the United States was militarily stronger than any other country?

MJL: I think-- I think we talked about that in some of our high school classes, uh-huh. Um, I do know that there were people in La Grande that, uh, still held deep feelings against the Germans and the Japanese. You know, we had several professors-- we had one-- I shouldn't say they were all professors-- families in La Grande and one professor that were taken, um, and put--

[End of Side A]

[Side B]

MJL: But you know, all the wars were not in the United States. Uh, the Civil War-- and so I think we-- we had a complacency that we didn't have to worry about our land, and you know.

I: You mentioned earlier that you thought maybe people living in Union County had a kind of a sheltered existence, protected from many outside influences. So far everything you've said about school, about patriotism, about attitudes toward other countries makes me think that attitudes here were quite similar to every-- everywhere else in the country.

MJL: Well, I think we're sheltered in the fact that in the big cities they have more problems with crime and-- and maybe drugs by the time I was--

I: Yeah.

MJL: in high school. And they had more people who were speaking their opinion, um-- um, through the newspaper or radio or whatever. Uh--

I: So does that mean that in Union County--

MJL: but I think--

I: attitudes were more uniform?

MJL: I just feel like that we were kind of rural America. That we-- you know we didn't have these anti-attitudes so-- so much as-- as you would in a big city. We were more conformed to the small town-- the small town attitude, and yet we have people that-- I mean, I'm not saying that we all didn't have-- that we all have the same attitude. But I think that people were respectful of others and their opinion. And-- and-- and uh, I think they appreciated the small town atmosphere. It's a good place to raise your kids. We didn't have a lot of high crime, you know like they had in Portland. And I'm sure

my parents took the newspaper from Portland, The Oregonian. Um, and we're glad they were here.

I: Uh-huh. Maybe there was a general awareness and appreciation for uh, relatively slow--

MJL: Yeah.

I: rate of change--

MJL: Yeah.

I: in anything?

MJL: Yeah. We didn't have sports for the girls then, but we had sports for the boys. And-- but kids had jobs all summer. They worked in the fields, the spinach fields. They worked, you know with hay. And-- and so I-- you know I worked in the summer, and everybody worked. Everybody had a job. That was, you know uh-- and if you didn't have a job you were home and probably helpin' out where you could. You know we were rural America, so some-- we had some big families on the ranches and farms. And those, it was kind of probably taken for granted those kids would someday run the farm. And um, we had a college, so we had kids that went to college. In fact, my graduating class, the percentage of them went to college is the highest I think since-- since we graduated. I don't know that anybody else has measured that percentage. We had over 80% go to college in my class alone. And-- and so, you know it was just taken for granted I was gonna go to college. My dad didn't go past the eighth grade. My mother went to college. Um, so my sisters went to college. I was the only one to graduate though.

I: When it came it healthcare in your early years, what seemed to be the attitude that most people had about, um, dealing with everyday injuries, uh, communicable diseases, the ordinary kinds of health problems that people have, especially when they're young?

MJL: Well, we had a health, uh, department here in La Grande, and when the immunizations started coming out we would line up and get-- and be immunized for school. We'd walk across the street to the health--

I: Was this compulsory?

MJL: Um, you know, I don't know. I think Mom had to sign something. But I remember the polio vaccine and--

I: Smallpox.

MJL: TB and all that, yeah. Now-- now, the smallpox we got when we were little, and uh, so um-- and then I didn't get one again until years later. But I-- so Mom took care of those, and the diphtheria, pertussin that we got as babies. But there was polio--

I: Do you think that was routine care--

MJL: I think so.

I: for most children?

MJL: I think so. I think so. I remember Mom telling me that, uh, they had to cut my shots in half because I had convulsions when I got my, uh, DPT. And the doctor thought that I was allergic to the pertussin, so the next shot was only half a shot. And because of that my children only got half shots. I didn't get-- have the full immunization, and _____ said, "I think you're smart for doing that." So we went for three shots per-- or two shots we'd go four times. And uh, only because of the way I reacted. But anyway, uh, we all had our shots, and we all, um-- I remember, um, one time in the third grade we had pinworms. Everybody had 'em. And we had to stand in line. Now do you know what those are?

I: Mm-hm.

MJL: We had to stand in line. And the teacher handed us out these purple pills, and we-- every day for I don't know how long. And then our mothers would check us at night with a flashlight to see if those little worms came out. [laughs].

I: There--

MJL: But everybody had to do it! So, I mean it wasn't embarrassing because we all figured we had it.

I: It-- it--

MJL: I don't know--

I: In fact, there--

MJL: if I ever had 'em or not, but I-- I had to take those little pills!

I: In fact, there was an epidemic.

MJL: It was! And it-- it--

I: Why-- why do you think that the school administration took over the responsibility of dispensing medical-- medications?

MJL: Because they had us all there together. [chuckles].

I: Yes, but that-- is it-- isn't that an encroachment, or did it not seem an encroachment at the time--

MJL: Oh, my mother--

I: on the doctors could have provided this?

MJL: was delighted that we were doing it. I mean, sure.

I: But is it--?

MJL: You know she didn't have to fool with the medicine. I was getting it at school. It was free. It was handed out.

I: Mm-hm.

MJL: All these purple pills. Teacher--

I: Can you--

MJL: _____.

I: can you think of anything else that went on at school that was a-- a form of compulsory healthcare?

MJL: Oh, I was tryin' to think. Um, well I just know we had to have our shots. And uh--

I: How about care of teeth?

MJL: Oh, uh, well, that was up to your parent to get you to the dentist.

I: Nothing a school about that?

MJL: No. Well, we learned about it, you know. We learned about our teeth. Uh, but Mom had four-- Mom and Dad had four kids, and so we only went to the dentist when we had toothache, and by then it was always too late. We had--

I: Was there a school nurse?

MJL: Uh, no. No, our first--

I: What happened then during school when children had various health difficulties?

MJL: They were sent home. I uh-- I remember in junior high, I was um-- I got sick. And I started vomiting, and uh, I had left a class, Mrs. Hessler's class. She's a sweet lady. And I said, "I don't feel good." She said, "Go down to the girl's breaker room and-- and rest a while and see how feel." Well, I went down there and got sick. So I went back, and I said, "I-- I-- I just vomited." She said, "Well, you need to call your mom and go home." Well, I was running a raging fever, and I went into the principal's office. And my mom-- I couldn't get through to my mom. The line was busy at the college. And I called home and my dad wasn't home. So the principal said, "Why don't you just go on home." That I was to walk home and I lived six or seven blocks away. Well, I-- I made it, and I remember sittin' down on the curb, and I remember throwin' up on the way home. And I made it home, and I walked in the door, and I just passed out. And I guess my dad had just come home. Well, I ended up in the hospital, and I was one sick girl with strep throat. And my dad just cleaned house at that

school for not putting me in a car and taking me home, or calling my mother so somebody-- he was furious. And so the school sent me flowers.

I: [chuckles].

MJL: But from then on when a kid came in the office and was sick, they made sure they got home. That was because of sending me which you would never send a chick--sick child home to an empty house.

I: Mm-hm. Do you remember any discussions as part of school classes about health and dental care?

MJL: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Oh, a lot. We had--

I: What-- what form of--?

MJL: We had a class called health.

I: What-- what form of instruction was that?

MJL: Book and, uh, films and lecture.

I: Was this pretty much in the nature of do's and don'ts?

MJL: Yep. Yeah. And um, you know with dental, your dental care was up to you. You know, if-- if, uh, you'd brush your teeth every day. We talked about how to do it. You know I got a-- I got a good background in health in school. Um--

I: Good, meaning?

MJL: It was offset from science. You know, you'd do science for two weeks and then you'd do health for two weeks. And uh--

I: Good, meaning that you think-- do you think that you learned--

MJL: Well, yeah!

I: important elements of health?

MJL: From the manuals, from the books, I-- I felt I did. I felt that I was well-prepared to, uh-- I knew about diseases and germs. And then I took biology so that even went further in some of those issues. But.

I: Except that left out sex. [chuckles].

MJL: Sex education was not taught.

I: Reproduction was simply not a thinkable subject to talk about. [chuckles].

MJL: No. Well, you know we knew we came from an egg, we did! [laughs].

I: [laughs].

MJL: I incubated chicken eggs for a project in high school--

I: Yeah.

MJL: biology, so I knew you know that--

I: [chuckles].

MJL: I-- I think we did talk about, uh, reproduction as far as the sperm and the-- but I don't know that they went in to the degree that they do now.

I: Right, right. When it came to some of the more major, uh, health problems, um, seeing things that might have required hospitalization or the close attention of a physician, what seemed to be the prevailing attitudes and practices?

MJL: Well, a lot of your physicians then went to the house. They made house calls. Uh, if you were that sick they didn't want you in their office, so they would come. If you were runnin' a fever and you had a rash they came to see you 'cause why let somebody in your office if you have the measles or the chicken pox? Um--

I: Did you hear of children who might-- whose parents might not have been able to afford to pay a doctor?

MJL: Yes. Yes. And we--

I: What happened to them?

MJL: Well, I think they were just probably taken care of at home. Then we had a Christian Science-- quite a large Christian Science, and um, I think that they had their own little remedies. You know farmer-- the farmers then had their own remedies for everything. Bag balm was good for burns and infections. And-- and um, you know if you had an upset stomach then you drank soda water. And uh, I remember my mother, and I-- I never will forget this, I get the flu or upset stomach it was always cherry pop. And to this day I can't even get it to my nose.

I: [chuckles].

MJL: And um--

I: It was supposed to have some curative property?

MJL: It was awful! It was just awful, cherry-- cherry pop. But um, my parents did take me to a doctor if I was sick. I had the strep throat a lot and, uh, had appendicitis and had to have surgery. And so my dad had good insurance through the railroad. He didn't have dental insurance though, and so that's-- our teeth kinda went by the wayside. But-- and so because of that I made sure my kids-- my kids neither one of them had a cavity in their head. Uh, we didn't have fluoride in the water then. Um, we don't have now, but I started taking fluoride in my fourth month of pregnancy, and my kids took fluoride. And so, you know because of that I wanted to make sure that my kid's teeth were good-- in good shape. Um, and I took 'em to a doctor when they needed it, you know.

I: Can you remember yourself as a child going in to a doctor's office?

MJL: Oh, yeah.

I: What was the feeling you got from being there even before you saw the doctor?

MJL: Well, I just thought he was the-- my doctors were kind and they were gonna take care of me.

I: No, during the time when you were in the waiting room.

MJL: Oh.

I: You-- you pick up sensations and smells and various other interactions of people, what-- what do you recall as impressing you?

MJL: Well, you know I don't know. Oh gosh, if I was in the doctor's office I was usually so sick that I probably just wanted somebody to help me. You know, to take away my fever or whatever was wrong with me. But I don't remember that the smells bothered me or anything. I always knew I'd walk out with a piece of candy, one of those long sticks. Do you remember those?

I: Yes.

MJL: The doctor's used to give?

I: _____. [chuckles].

MJL: [chuckles]. And I-- I think I might have been anxious about shots. I didn't like 'em.

I: Was anything done in the office to maybe, make you feel more comfortable?

MJL: I just know the nurse was very kind, and uh, the doctor was very kind. I remember goin' for my first, uh, pelvic at sixteen, and uh, I was scared to death. I mean my mom felt it was time. I was sixteen I should do that. And so she was with me and the doctor was an old doctor. And I got up there on the table and he uses this instrument that opens you up and examined me, and I was just shaking like a leaf. And he said, "Well, you can get down now." But he forgot to take it out, and I tried to walk. And I said, "Something's inside of me." And he said, "Oh, I forgot."

I: [chuckles].

MJL: You know, and I had to climb back up on the table, and I told that story to Dr. Allen, and he said, "Oh, my word." He couldn't even imagine. Well, the-- the doctor was in his eighties. He just plain forgot. My very first time for anything like that, so you can imagine, you know what it was like

for me then the second and third time when I went to my regular doctor for my exams. It was, "Be sure you take that out." [chuckles].

I: Well, if the doctor was in his eighties, why were people--

MJL: Still going to him?

I: still taking their children to him?

MJL: Well, he was the old family doctor, you know. Delivered all of us, had been my mother's doctor, and he was a respected man in town. He was just-- just old. The dentist was so old. He was old! I mean, to me he was old. I thought he was in his eighties then. He was so shaky. And uh-- but they were the-- he was the old family dentist, you know. Everybody'd gone to him.

I: And apparently retirement wasn't part of his--

MJL: No.

I: way of thinking?

MJL: No. And this-- this man-- this doctor was very kind. He was just old. He was--

I: What did you hear from other adults or kids at the time about doctors and dentists in La Grande? What, what kinds of comments would they make about them?

MJL: Well, I don't-- I don't know. I just know my mother loved her doctor and that's who she wanted me to go to.

I: But would--

MJL: That I--

I: were you-- would this--

MJL: I think people didn't like to go to a dentist because, uh, they had the old style drills, and they didn't like the shots. And you know, they didn't wiggle your cheek and didn't have music in your ears, you know.

I: [chuckles].

MJL: And-- and they didn't wear a mask. They had bad breath. And you know, I don't think it was a fun experience at all, and we-- I think that that's why I didn't even wanna go. And I don't know that they even cleaned your teeth in those days. I think you went when you had a toothache.

I: If these older medical people continued practicing, and you say they were family doctors, they must have been respected.

MJL: They were.

I: Was-- was there a kind of reverence about people in the med-- in the medical profession?

MJL: Oh-- oh, I think so. I think, yeah.

I: That other-- other professionals maybe didn't have?

MJL: Well yeah, and-- and they'd come to your house.

I: Yeah.

MJL: You know they made house calls. And the doctor called my mother by her first name, and he was her friend, you know. He knew her so well and cared about her, and-- and she had-- you know he delivered us kids. And just-- we had a doctor that lived behind us, and I remember my sister, um, had a stomach ache. And Mother couldn't get in to her regular doctor, so she went to see him and took her to see him. And he called up at five in the morning and said, "Betty, I haven't been able to sleep all night worryin' about Libby. I want you to take her in to the hospital right now." She had her appendix out. I mean, he worried about her all night. Why my parents thought that was the nicest thing to think that he would worry about my sister all night. And call 'em up early in the morning and say, "I just-- just worrying about her." You know, well she just about had a burst appendix. Yeah. You know, uh, they were nice people. They were part of your

community. They attended church, you know, and they were just nice people.

I: Uh-huh. The fact that they had stayed here for so many years--

MJL: Oh, yeah.

I: made them--

MJL: The rural doctor.

I: really essential parts of the community.

MJL: Yeah.

I: Yes.

MJL: Yeah.

I: One final subject: At the time that you had finished high school and decided you were going-- first going to be a nurse, but you changed your mind, decide-- decided to go into teacher preparation, you started the teacher preparation at this college, didn't you?

MJL: Mm-hm.

I: Yes. And you probably took the usual, um, liberal arts courses, and-- and at what-- what point, maybe sophomore or junior year, did you start the teacher preparation courses?

MJL: Uh, you took your methods courses your senior year. And you took 'em before you did your student teaching. And the methods courses were, uh--

I: Were the only--

MJL: all out of a book.

I: were the methods courses the only ones that per-- pertained directly to teaching?

MJL: Right.

I: Right.

MJL: We were--

I: Could-- could-- could we take a-- a sample? You said they were all out of the book of a methods course, probably in teaching of reading.

MJL: Right, there was a methods in reading. There was a methods in math, and methods in your social studies. And we would sit, and we'd go through these. And the teacher would say, "Now, in a classroom this is the way you would do this, and this is what you would do." And we had no experience in the classroom! I had, because on my own I went to the teachers and said, "Can I help you and your-- help with math or tutoring." And I actually got in the classroom and sat with kids.

I: What seemed--

MJL: And watched her teach, but there was no-- we took these method courses and then went right into our student teaching.

I: what seemed to be the assumption of the instructors in these methods classes about how one learns to teach?

MJL: Well, I think that, uh, you-- my teachers that taught the methods is-- is you taught it the way the book said because that was the way it was done in the-- in-- at that time. These books were updated all the time, every two years. And it eve-- and math, uh, was taught-- this is the way math was taught. And those method classes taught you how to-- they were starting to go into using manipulatives at the time I was doing my student teaching. When I didn't-- you didn't have manipulatives. You-- you just counted on your fingers, or the teacher made marks on the board. So they were changing. And so that was brought in to those textbooks, and, uh, that's the way the instructors said, "You know, this is what we have to do." And it wasn't done by grades necessarily. Uh, the elementary methods were in one class and the secondary were in another. But-- and if you had any questions those were the type of things at times you asked. Uh, you know, "Well, what do you when a student doesn't understand, um, telling time?" And then she would give you little things to do with them. Well, telling time is

one of the most difficult things there is to teach 'cause there's like seventy different concepts. And um, in first grade I was taught by the hour. Second grade we went to the half hour. Well, when I started teaching first grade, you did the hour and half hour. So they were already putting things down. They were teaching more in the-- in first grade than you were in. And uh, I mean, you-- you started teaching some of those concepts early. Uh, same with social studies, you-- you teach the family. You teach about the family in first grade. And we had projects that we had to do for the methods courses. And we had to make our own textbook actually. And uh, we worked together, and I did that and, uh, used it. Um, so your methods courses were taught before you student taught. You were not in a classroom. So a lot of these teachers, these new prospective student teachers got into the classroom and decided they _____. This is not for me. I don't like it. I don't like teaching. Maybe they'd move 'em. We had a lot of-- a lot of teachers that had gone through almost four years of college and found out they didn't like teaching. Well, what do you do with 'em? So after I graduated they called me back on a panel, and my first recommendation was you get these prospective teachers in the classroom their sophomore year. Uh, do a-- a science practicum, do a social studies practicum, do a math practicum and let 'em teach a lesson, let 'em find out if this is their niche, and that the methods courses that are taught before student teaching need to pertain to what you're doing, so.

I: Would it be fair to say that most of the methods courses, both the instructors and the books, seemed to value rote learning above anything else?

MJL: I don't know.

I: And therefore learning how to teach-- become a teacher was simply learning the toolbox of techniques--

MJL: Right.

I: that you use for rote learning?

MJL: And the teacher was in the front of the room in a chair with a book in her lap. Everybody had the same book you know. When I-- and that's why I started teaching 'cause that's the way I was taught. But when I ended my teaching career that's not at all--

I: Yeah.

MJL: the way I was--

I: I-- I was aware of that. You had made a dramatic shift [chuckles] from--

MJL: Especially--

I: the-- where you started!

MJL: especially in reading!

I: Yes.

MJL: Especially in reading.

I: Sure, sure.

MJL: And uh--

I: Again, did it--

MJL: But that was no fault of mine, or was it any fault of the-- the college. Through the years they just decided that kids learned better in groups, that they learn when they have hands-on materials. And you can teach without a textbook.

I: It's as though in the 1940's and '50's, John Dewey had never existed or written anything about teaching and learning.

MJL: Yeah.

I: Did it seem to you that your instructors at Eastern Oregon College were aware that rote learning by that time had been brought seriously into question?

MJL: Right, right.

I: That-- that-- did they seem to be aware?

MJL: I don't think so. It was like--

I: They didn't-- they didn't indicate that there are alternatives to what we're learning here?

MJL: No, and it-- it was like they were six steps behind.

I: [laughs].

MJL: And then this new method-- these new methods came out like for reading. And I held on to that reading program 'til I retired. It was-- we threw away the "See Spot run." And we used these books like "The Tail That Wagged the Dog," and-- and the Francis--

I: Yeah.

MJL: books and some of those books. Dr. Seuss, we read him for two weeks. I had seven reading groups, where before you had three reading groups, top, middle, bottom. But I did teach out of those-- they call 'em basals for three years. And I was-- I've read this book because that's the book I was taught with. I was taught with that, and the kids weren't interested. But they loved-- and kids, you know I-- I told my parents, uh, "When a child learns to read it opens-- opens up a whole new world."

I: At the time you were doing student teaching you were at Ackerman, right?

MJL: Yeah.

I: And you were probably becoming aware because you were an adult then of community attitudes toward what was going on at Ackerman School. Can you recall any comments you heard or any attitudes that seemed to be held by townspeople generally about Ackerman?

MJL: Well, your best students came from Ackerman.

I: Is that what the townspeople thought?

MJL: Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

I: That is--

MJL: Because you had to apply to get in to Ackerman. And-- and only the rich people's kids [chuckles] went to Ackerman. Mother didn't put us in Ackerman, and she had every right to. She worked up there on campus. Uh, Terry went to Ackerman.

I: So you think generally of people in La Grande and maybe other parts of Union County thought that Ackerman was truly the best elementary school?

MJL: And it wasn't. It wasn't. But I did my student teaching in Ackerman. I did one half-day at Ackerman, and there were seven student teachers in the morning. Seven! And for one term I bet I only taught maybe three lessons.

I: I suppose the assumption was, well, you don't really need more because you've got the methods from these books, and you're expected to do it in a rote manner, so why do you need--

MJL: She had seven--

I: so much experience?

MJL: she had seven teach-- student teachers in the morning. I got to do a bulletin board, one bulletin board. You'd think--

I: You'd make it-- make it up? Put--?

MJL: Make it up.

I: Uh-huh.

MJL: But the thing I hated were the lesson plans. They had to be copied right out of the manual, right out of the-- and-- and she would take 'em apart even they were copied right out of the manual. I hated writing lesson plans.

I: What seemed to be the point?

MJL: I don't know. I even questioned that. What's the point when it's copied right out of the book? Why do I even need to write 'em down and hand 'em in for every lesson? It-- it-- whether I taught 'em or not, I had to write lesson plans.

I: Was it like having a script?

MJL: Yeah! Yeah!

I: Do you think that the supervising teacher thought that every beginning teacher needed a script?

MJL: My student teachers I had do lessons plans, but they were a lot different.

I: Yeah.

MJL: I-- I said, "When you're doing your student teaching for me, I want a lesson plan for everything you teach." But it only needed to be about this long. You know, I wanted their objectives or goals, all that. And then you needed the lesson and the closing. I had to have-- but mine was copied right out of the book. I just sat and opened up the book. We all did it. Well, we lost student teachers. They hated it. My next term of student teaching I taught a full day at Riveria with Joan Du Bosch, and it was no holds barred. What would you like to teach? I had a breakfast at school. We had a health lesson on what is a good breakfast. We planned, we cooked it. It was like a whole different world of teaching because I was not limited to "This is the way we're gonna do it." We-- I mean-- and of course I did just morning. But social studies, Joanne-- Joan would sit down and say, "What would you like to teach in social studies? We have these areas that we need to teach. Let's do something creative." The word creativity came about with Joan, and I loved my student teaching!

I: Did it seem that teachers at Riveria were permitted to rebel--

MJL: I think--

I: because that wasn't the orthodoxy?

MJL: she did. She had a--

I: And she got away with it?

MJL: She did. She had in her back room, uh, whole boxes of books for first grade called the I.T.A. Alphabet, and I'd learned a little bit of it in college.

And I said, “Mrs. Du Bosch, are you gonna be teaching this?” And she said, “No, I refuse. I’ve not even taken it out of the box.” She had taken the class just like me, and she hated it. She-- she never did teach it.

I: Well, why would a teacher--

MJL: So, she was really--

I: be-- be allowed to do that in a school system that was still pretty _____?

MJL: That was purchasing. I don’t know, and she was-- she retired and was a revered teacher. But that-- but nobody wanted to teach it. And it wasn’t two years later, and I asked her about that, and she said, “Oh we’ve moved on. We’re-- we’re gonna-- we’re gonna teach something else.” They’re not-- the school district bought all those materials and nobody-- none of the teachers-- they rebelled and-- and didn’t teach it. Now that surprised me ‘cause I don’t-- I don’t know that I could-- well, I suppose I could rebel a little bit. But I’d do it, I-- I think I would have a say in whether-- when it got time to purchase it, you know.

[End of Side B - End of Tape #3]