

Elaine Montgomery

6/21/02, T1, S2

EM: ...Elaine Montgomery Orbet.

JT: And...

EM: And Jackson.

JT: And you were born when?

EM: I was [tape glitch] in Enterprise the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 1909.

JT: And you moved to La Grande?

EM: Yes. My aunt and uncle lived out to be because my father was shot and paralyzed for the rest of his life from the waist down. And my grandmother would take care of him and my brother and me so my uncle adopted me. And his name William Scrap Montgomery. [tape glitch] ...out there. That's fine.

JT: And what age were you when you went to La Grande?

EM: Three. I was three years old.

JT: And then you started to school and what school did you go to?

EM: I went to Central.

JT: To Central. And do you remember some of the teachers that taught you?

EM: I remember Ms. Ingall. I believe her name was Ingall. And Ms. Steel and Ms. Mahathy, Ms. Sneider, Mrs. Dower and Ms. Tiggelbeck. And our principal of the grade school I believe his name was Mr. Prince.

JT: And you went to all the grades at Central School?

EM: Yes.

JT: Is there anything particularly that happened when you went to grade school there that...

EM: Grade school?

JT: ...that you remember?

EM: I was very proud that I was never late or never absent. And one day it was wintertime and there weren't any kids out playing and I thought I was late so I went clear back home. I ate my lunch going home crying. Mother said, "What are you doing home?" And I didn't want to be late so she called the principal and he said, "Send her back [laughs] and we won't count her late." So she had to make me another lunch. [laughs]

JT: Well then you went on to high school.

EM: Yes. I went until the middle of my senior year and I dropped out of high school because I wanted to play basketball. And there was a girl by the name of Stang, I believed they owned the mill there, and she and I both went out to the same thing. I got on the team and she went home to her parents crying. They came down and talked to the principal, the coach, and they put her on the team and I said goodbye. So I quit in the middle of my senior year.

JT: Then what did you do after that?

EM: Then I left because I wanted to work and La Grande there wasn't much to do so I moved to Eugene where I had an aunt and I started working. I worked as a waitress. I didn't...I had no training. And I worked...it was an elegant restaurant and I went in and told the man I had experience. [laughs] And I had a friend with

me and they put us to work at night. They put her on a side there were a lot of college kids that would hang around...there was a university...and me on the dinner side. And I was really scared when it came time for my dinner. He was very elegant gentleman. He slid in food in front of me and said, "You really have never worked before, have you?" I says, "No." He said, "That's okay. I've been watching you, but I'm going to fire your girlfriend tonight." And that man and his assistant taught me the restaurant business.

JT: Did you go back to La Grande then?

EM: No, no.

JT: But you said that you had worked in some of the drugstores?

EM: Pardon?

JT: You said that you had worked in some of the drugstores? When I talked to you.

EM: Oh yes. That was later. Yes. I worked for Paul Graham and I worked for the people...I can't remember their name...at Glass Drug.

JT: McManus?

EM: Yes.

JT: Steph McManus.

EM: Yes. I worked for them a couple of times. I also worked at Montgomery Ward and I worked for Chase Bonacamp.

JT: It...now...

PT: How come you went back to La Grande?

EM: Oh, I...that was...let's see...my daughter was six years old and she was born in 1954. It was in about...I don't know. I can't remember. Around in the '50s when we went back and we stayed around here for, oh, one summer and then I left again. I never stayed very long. I think we probably lived there maybe six months.

JT: Now you told me a story over the telephone about the Chinese that did the garden.

EM: Oh, yes.

JT: Do you remember his name?

EM: We called him Charlie Chinaman, but I think his name was Wong Won Duck. I think that was his real name. Why he was called Charlie I don't know unless he took my brother's name because my brother took care of him when he was injured. He was afraid of \_\_\_ 'cause it was very prominent at that time. And he was the only one of his tong. And I believe Toy Young was the head of some those tongs. And Charlie would go downtown and gamble at Chinatown. He liked to do that. That was...then he would have to walk up Fourth Street to get home and there was a very dark place. A Mr. Birney owned it...was the jeweler. Where he lived and was a lot of shrubs and trees around there. And some of these men were hiding there and they beat up on Charlie and left him on the street for dead. And somebody found him and took him to the hospital. He was in there for a long time. And when he was released my brother Charlie Montgomery took him home with him and kept him at his house until he was able to go back to his home which was just across the street. Their property joined. And Charlie had a big truck garden. And he peddled his vegetables around town. He had an old wagon with green wooden sides and a very ancient old mare named Bess. And he peddled his vegetables around town. And he had beautiful vegetables. There was

a creek that crosses C Avenue and ran around his property so he put his vegetables in that cold water so they always looked beautiful. And that's how Charlie was injured. He was never shot, that I \_\_\_.

JT: Yeah. I don't remember if we said your address. Would you state that again please?

EM: My address?

JT: On C Avenue.

EM: 510 C Avenue. And my brother Charlie lived across the street, 509 C Avenue.

JT: Then what do you remember about the Prohibition times?

EM: The what?

JT: Prohibition?

EM: I don't know much about it. I know there were a lot of moonshiners. [laughs]

PT: I want to ask you something about Chinatown. Did you go...did you go down into Chinatown? Were you down...did you ever go down in that Chinatown?

EM: Yeah. We used to go down there and buy fireworks 'cause they sold at the Fourth of July. And I was gonna say should we get them. But I don't remember too much about Chinatown. It was down around where the Foley buildings are. I believe there was a Safeway store there later.

JT: Later.

EM: It was in that area.

JT: You were there when the old La Grande Hotel was built?

EM: I was there when the what?

JT: La Grande Hotel was built where the Safeway was later?

EM: No. What...but I remember the Sacagawea Hotel. That was built when I was a junior in high school. And then there were the two Foley buildings. The old Foley building and the new one. And I don't remember too much about that area.

PT: Was Chinatown kind of scary? Was it scary to go in there?

EM: No, I don't think so. Nobody thought that way about them.

PT: I wondered about that.

EM: I understand they ran all of those Chiny people out in the '30s. I remember them saying the ones who have money could ride on the train and the rest they could drove out like cattle. But I was gone by then 'cause that was in the '30s. And I don't know what ever happened to Charlie.

JT: Do you remember anything about the Klu Klux Klan that was in La Grande?

EM: Yes. I remember they built one of those crosses that they set on fire on the hill above the...and I just remember they were very active.

JT: Did you see them in their...sheets?

EM: No. I saw one...one man came talking to my father...my father was not like that...but I remember hearing him talk to him, but I never saw... I don't know any of the other people that were belonged to it.

JT: What did you think about La Grande when you lived here?

EM: About La Grande?

JT: Yes.

EM: I liked it. I like La Grande.

JT: Nice place to grow up in?

EM: Yes. I think...I thought it was, yes. It was a small town and there weren't a lot of drugs and things like there are that...and kids hanging around on corners. We always had something to do. Everybody played sports in school. We were all involved with basketball, tennis. Our high school proms. Yes, it was a good place to grow up.

PT: Did you feel you got a good education?

EM: Pardon?

PT: Did you get a good education in La Grande?

EM: Yes. I thought we had very good teachers at that time. Real good teachers. They were interested and they taught us at school. They didn't send a lot of homework problems. They were very good teachers.

PT: When you all came together in the high school after having...like you went to Central, did you...was it fun to get to know all the other kids from all over town?

EM: Oh yes, yes, yes. Of course we always had our own groups, you know, up in old town we had our own group. I had cousins and we pretty much stuck together. One of us got in a fight and couldn't win we had a bunch to jump in and help. Leonard Grow and Malcolm Grow were my cousins. And then there were Marjorie, Helen, Raymond Montgomery. And we five were very close.

JT: There was a definite division between the railroad on the north side and the south side in those days.

EM: Oh yes. Oh yes. Central School was the elite. [laughs] There was Greenwood, Riveria, and Willow across the tracks. Oh yes.

PT: Ackerman wasn't there yet. Ackerman wasn't a grade school yet when you were there, was it? Over on the college...at the college. Ackerman.

EM: There was no college there.

PT: It wasn't there yet?

EM: No. I think there was...it was there, though, before I...oh no, I was back visiting when it was there because I remember the Strike girls and I remember making her a costume for one of their...and she was in college.

JT: They built the college in 1929 and that's when you quit school and went...

EM: Yes. Yes. Uh-huh.

PT: Did you ever know any Talbots? And family named Talbot?

EM: Talbot. No. I don't...I don't remember that name.

PT: 'Cause they lived up in Old Town.

EM: They did?

PT: Uh-huh. Didn't they John?

JT: Yes. Uh-huh. They came there in 1923.

EM: There were...up in Old Town there were Knapps and Turbulls and Rowes and McClures and Malhogs, Warnicks and...now I've forgotten their names that owned the dairy downtown...and Hoffmans. There was a little grocery store up in old town and the old man names Spear \_\_.

JT: Yes.

EM: We always called him Old Man Spears. \_\_ And then Hoffman's owned a dairy up in Ladd Canyon and they built a big round dancehall up there. And when the dances were over downtown people would come up there. They owned a dairy too. Then when there children had grown they didn't have the dairy anymore and

they had a little grocery store right at the head of Fourth Street. And Fourth Street ended at C Avenue and there was the family named Edwick and they owned the butcher shop downtown. Do you remember them?

PT: Uh-huh.

JT: Yeah.

EM: Yeah. And then Hoffmans had that little grocery store at the head of Fourth Street. And Ms. Steel lived there on Fourth Street and I went to summer school to her one summer. And I liked to go because she had a well on her back porch and I thought it was fun to go out there and get a drink.

JT: Was it the cold water?

EM: Yes. I remember her real well. I liked her. She was a good teacher. And she kept a little hose in her desk and if you didn't behave she'd get a touch of that hose. And she had a chalkboard on the...blackboard and if we could say our times table we could look behind that cart and see what's back there. Wasn't anything back there but a clown. [laughs] But we worked real hard to learn our times table.

JT: What did you adopted parents do?

EM: My father was in the wood business and he contracted with the businesses and all the schools for their winter wood. And that's all he did. He didn't have a job, he just... 'cause that kept him busy.

JT: In those times were tough there wasn't a lot of money.

EM: No, no, there wasn't.

PT: Where did he go to cut wood? Up...did he cut wood up in the mountains?

EM: Yes. My dad owned some homestead property up there. And he had a few cattle. And his property joined Governor Pierce's property.

JT: Oh.

PT: Oh, right.

EM: And that's...he got rid of the cattle. We didn't have those too long because the wood business kept him busy. My dad walked with a cane and he'd walk all town down...he liked to play cards, too. And comin' up Fourth Street there big kids sittin' on the curb waitin' for Mr. Montgomery because he had candy in his pockets and the kids were waiting for that.

PT: And he'd walk clear downtown?

EM: Yeah.

PT: That's a long way.

EM: Yeah.

PT: Yeah.

JT: It's over a mile. And the theatres that you went to at that time, if you went to a show...?

EM: There used to be three, but when Daddy was alive I think there was only one. 'Cause we'd go every Saturday night and they had cereal toy. And there was a popcorn wagon on the corner that was Depot and Adams. And we'd always get popped popcorn and peanuts there. And there was a drugstore on that corner. At that time it's owned by Moons. Do you remember them?

JT: Mm-hmm. Moon Drugstore.

EM: That's a long time ago. And I remember all the drugstores that Harry, Eddy and Elmer Moon they owned. And there was Payless Drug and Paul Graham and Glass and Wrights, spelled with a w.

JT: Yeah. Glen and Midge Wright.

EM: Yeah. Yeah. And I believe there was only one theater at that time.

JT: Do you remember the name of the theater that...?

EM: No. I can't remember.

PT: Remember where...Remember where it was? Was it down by the Foley?

EM: Yes. It was on the same side of the street that Birney Jeweler and Dr. Pear. It was on that side of the street as I remember.

JT: Was it the Liberty or the Arcade? It'd been the Arcade first and then the Liberty.

EM: Yes. That sounds familiar. And...oh, and I remember a doctor at that time too, Dr. Biggers.

JT: Oh yes.

EM: Do you remember him?

JT: Yes.

EM: He was our family doctor.

JT: He lost his fingers because he was an x-ray technician and he got cancer and they cut off his fingers.

EM: Oh my!

JT: But he had a vocabulary that was just...

EM: Oh I know! [laugh]

JT: He swore every other word!

EM: As good as I was I remember that! [laughs] 'Cause one of my cousins had swallowed a rock and she would...we would...at our house if they...Dr. Biggers came up. And she was whining and wantin' Grandma to stay and "Oh hell yes! Get in here and stay with me." [laughs] He was a funny old doctor. A good doctor.

JT: Yes.

EM: Good doctor.

JT: He kind of looked like Dillenger, you know.

EM: Yeah. [laughs]

JT: There's a picture of him in the Elks building.

EM: Yeah. I know my father thought a lot of him.

PT: Was any family...any part of your family...was your dad an Elk? Did he belong to the Elks?

EM: He was a Moose.

PT: A Moose?

EM: Belonged to the Moose. Now I was not adopted out of the family. My father...my foster father was his uncle. And he was shot and paralyzed from his waist down by a man named Dig Tippet. They're local here.

PT: That's from up here. That's in Enterprise, isn't it? Yeah.

EM: My father and mother and I lived Chico and they were neighbors of this Tippet family. And from old-timers here I understand it was a large family of boys. And my father and this one were not very good friends. And anyway he was riding by our place with some of his friends and conversation ensued between my father

and Dig Tippet and Dig said, "He bent down. I thought he was going to pick up a rock so I shot him." Shot him in the leg, then the arm and then the stomach and one bullet lodged in his spine and was inoperable. And I looked that up, it's in the *Chieftain* over here in the year of 1912. I went through all that book and I found the article where he shot. Then I didn't go far enough so I don't know what they did with him, but he grew up to be a very wealthy rancher here.

JT: They were a little rough in those times.

EM: It was mighty rough. They carried guns and thought nothing of it.

PT: How long did your real...did your father...your paralyzed father live then?

EM: He lived until he...he died in 1925. And my mother left. When he was shot she left and she lived in Spokane. She owned a barbershop. So my brother was back and forth between here and my father. I saw her when I was twelve years old, the first time I saw her. And my father lived until I was sixteen, my brother was eighteen. And he felt that...he knew we were okay so he committed suicide. Somebody gave him a gun and shot himself.

PT: He was probably awfully tired.

EM: Yes. He was...had spent all those years in bed. He couldn't do anything. Somebody slipped him out of bed into his wheelchair, but that wasn't much of a life.

PT: But sure that his kids were alright.

EM: Yes.

PT: That's good.

EM: We were fine. My brother was a \_\_\_.

PT: Oh.

EM: All my family were riders. And I have a little eight year old granddaughter that's learning to ride.

PT: Did they ride at the Stock Show? The Union Stock Show?

EM: Yes. He rode at the Pendleton Round-Up and all the rodeos around here. Even...everybody around here knew him. Cleve Montgomery.

PT: Did you have horses?

EM: Pardon?

PT: Did you have horses when you were a kid?

EM: Yes, yes. My dad...his younger son had two teams of saddle horse and we always had horses, cows, chickens.

PT: Did you like to ride?

EM: Yeah, I did, but I wasn't the best. I was as good as my mother. I could stick on a horse.

PT: But your mom was good. [laughs] Was it pretty in La Grande? When you were there was it a pretty town?

EM: I thought it was a lovely town, yes. Really.

PT: Lots of trees.

EM: Yes. Everybody had a nice garden. Yeah, this was lovely town.

JT: About how many people do you think lived in La Grande during that period of town?

EM: Up there in Old Town or...?

JT: Yes. Well, the whole town.

EM: Oh, probably two thousand 'cause it's grown so much it would be hard to put... Up in Old Town it wasn't built up. There weren't, you know, a lot of houses. But now it's solid clear up to the foothills.

JT: Actually there were very few houses from Old Town then to New Town you might say. A lot of blank spaces.

EM: Yeah, oh, yes. Everybody had a lot of space around their yard, you know, they weren't little postage stamp yards.

PT: What kind of winters? How were your winters? Did you have a lot of snow then?

EM: Yes we did when I was a kid. A lot more snow than they get now. Yes. 'Cause I walked up to...it was almost a mile to school. And yes, it was a lot of snow.

PT: When you went to Central it was Central on Fourth Street?

EM: Mm-hmm.

PT: You went straight down Fourth Street, didn't ya?

EM: Yeah. There also was a Catholic boarding school. Do you remember that? Way back off the fields.

JT: I know of it.

EM: Yeah. Did you find out when that Catholic church was built?

JT: No, I didn't.

EM: I think it was there when I was goin' to school. When I was in grade school. I tried ask...there's a lady lives here that used to live in La Grande, but she didn't know either.

JT: I've got a picture of it being built, but I'm not sure when it was built.

EM: I don't either, but it seems to me like it was there when I was in grade school. I know that Catholic boarding school was there.

JT: That's where the St. Joseph Hospital was then later built?

EM: Yes, uh-huh.

JT: It burned down, didn't it?

EM: I guess it did. I don't remember what happened to it, but I know it was there when I was there. And in the courthouse in that area too.

JT: Yes. It was built...well, it's been torn down now.

EM: Has it?

JT: Uh-huh. They use the old St. Joseph Hospital and a building that has built right next to it for court and then the assessor and recorder/treasurer's office. Now when you were a kid and the circuses used to come to town with the train...

EM: Oh yeah.

JT: ...did they march the elephants up Fourth Street?

EM: Yes they did. Yes. [laugh]

JT: Did you ever go down and watch them do that?

EM: Oh yes! That was a big thing.

JT: There's a lady that we interviewed named Lavell Ritchie. Does that name sound familiar to you? She told us...and she's about your age...she could remember marching the elephants up to Fourth Street to K and then going over to where the college is now.

EM: Yes, that's right. Uh-huh. That was a big thing going to the circus. And the carnival used to come, too.



JT: And where was the carnival built?  
EM: That I can't remember, but I remember the...riding the Merry-Go-Round. That was a big thing, too.  
JT: I've seen pictures of a carnival on Jefferson there near the railroad depot there on that back street.  
EM: Yeah. Yeah, right. You know, I don't have this picture, but I will see if I can get it. My father owned a merry-go-round way back and it was pulled by a horse. And he used to take it around to the different towns. And I sent that picture to my granddaughter. I'll see if I can get it back.  
JT: That'd be interesting.  
EM: But he's standing in front of his merry-go-round. I'd forgotten about that. I never saw it because that was before my time.  
JT: A lot of these things are before our time.  
EM: I know. [laughs]  
JT: But it's so fun to...and for people to know what La Grande was like.  
EM: It was just a little sleepy town, you know. Nothing exciting going on.  
PT: How important was the railroad? Did you feel that the railroad was really important?  
EM: Yes it was until they took...I forget what it was they took away, but yes. It was a hub for the railroad. And then they...I can't remember what it was part of it that they moved that someplace else.  
JT: The roundhouse took out.  
EM: Yeah, right.  
PT: Was there any kind of a mill?  
EM: There were two mills up there. There were Stang's mill and I don't know who owned the other one.  
JT: Bowman Hicks.  
EM: Oh, yeah. But August Stang owned the other one. [end tape]

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EM: ...going. I mean that and the railroad. That's about all there was.  
JT: And the farming.  
EM: Yeah, and the farming. Yeah. Now there's everything out there. I couldn't believe it when I drove in and saw McDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken. I couldn't believe it!  
PT: They're progressive down there. And the Wal-Mart. Have you been to the Wal-Mart?  
EM: Oh yes. Yes. But it's not the pretty little town. Adams Avenue was...it was a beautiful town, but I don't think it is anymore. It's the same way with Joseph up here. Joseph was a charming old town. Now they got baskets of flowers hanging and artwork all over the street and rocks. It's not the beautiful old town that it was. Outsiders come in and try to beautiful something that's already beautiful.  
JT: What were some of the shops that you shopped in when you were downtown La Grande?

EM: Like there was Evan's butcher shop and I can't remember any big markets downtown because we did a lot of our shopping...Betty did it and I don't remember that. Of course we did a lot of our grocery shopping from Spears, Old Man Spears.

JT: I know his grandson.

EM: Do you?

JT: Yes. He lives in La Grande just three blocks from us.

EM: He married Mrs. McClure. They lived across the street from us and he married...she married him. They were kind of old.

JT: That was the grandfather.

EM: I guess.

JT: Then Leonard Spears was his son.

EM: Leonard. I remember him.

JT: Yes. And now the one that I know is young Leonard and he lives three blocks from us.

EM: Leonard Spears married I think it was the McClure girl. Yes it was.

PT: What...what other McClures were there? Do you remember any of the McClure kids's names?

EM: Nellie was one. She was my age. I think there was named Gertrude, but I'm not sure. There were...I think there were three girls and a boy.

PT: What was the boy's name?

EM: That I can't remember.

PT: Was it George?

EM: I don't know. He was the younger one. I don't remember. But they...they never played out like we kids did and they were always doing work around. They were never allowed outside the yard. So we Montgomery kids we ran the whole town playin'. So I don't remember. I just remember Nellie and I think Gertrude. And Gertrude I believe was the one that married Leonard Sperry.

PT: And were they...and where was their...where was their house?

EM: They lived right across from us on C.

PT: On C.

EM: On C Avenue.

PT: Okay.

EM: We lived...across from us my brother lived and then there was a family named Mulhollen, and that would be the last house. Then you went around the corner in a lane and that's where Hopkins who owned the creamery lived.

PT: Is that the Blue Mountain Creamery? Do you remember?

EM: Probably. I don't know. I don't know who that...

PT: Yeah, downtown. Was it downtown?

EM: Yes. Yes it was. Uh-huh. And Hoffmans had a dairy up in Ladd Canyon and then George Clark lived up in Old Town he had a dairy, too.

JT: I knew the Clarks. We knew Marvin Clark.

EM: Oh yeah. He's one of the younger ones. Yeah. His mother, I believe, was Ida. They was my foster mother's relative.

PT: We used to take milk from Marvin Clark.

EM: Yeah.

PT: He brought milk, you know the way that was before they pasteurized milk, you know, and the cream would come up to the top of the bottle.

EM: I know.

PT: You would save it and whip cream.

EM: Yeah. My mother did that. She made her own butter, bread. I remember Marvin. Marvin and I had a big fight. We were right down on the ground rolling around. [laughs]

PT: Were you maybe like a tomboy?

EM: Huh?

PT: Were you kind of a tomboy?

EM: Oh, I was a real tomboy. I didn't want just nice, pretty, little girl with hair ribbons. I was anything but. [laughs]

PT: I thought maybe you were. You liked sports and you liked all those kinds of things.

EM: I grew up with a bunch of boys. I had a bunch of boy cousins.

JT: Did you walk up Mill Canyon to Morgan Lake?

EM: Pardon?

JT: Did you walk up Mill Canyon to Morgan Lake?

EM: Oh yeah. We used to go ice skating up there.

JT: Oh.

EM: Yeah. Mother didn't want me to do things like that. She wanted me to play with dolls. But Daddy bought some ice skates for me and I said, "Now you go skating tonight." So I went skating. I fell down. I was wearing a little ruby ring my father, my real father, gave me. I broke that ring in two and lost half of it, lost one of my skates. Daddy didn't bawl me out about it, but he didn't buy me another pair of skates either. [laughs]

PT: Did you ever learn to skate? Did you ever...

EM: No, not very well. [laugh] It's kind of hard on one skate.

JT: What kind of games did you play? Like Kick the Can and...

EM: We used to play Run, Sheep, Run and Hide and Seek and one of our favorite sports was throwing rocks at the bats and breakin' out \_\_. Two or three times a month they's have to stop and put in new \_\_. We kids would sit on the fence and watch 'em do it.

PT: Oh dear. Was your street paved then? Did you live on a paved street, or do you remember.

EM: No. Well, yeah. Most of 'em were. Most of 'em were pretty well. I remember one...like I was tellin' yea the governor's property joined my dad's property. And the governor was in Salem and his brother was takin' care of his property. And people didn't like him too well. He was kind of a crappy old guy. Anyway, it was really hot day and my cousin and I were all sittin' on top of the fence when the governor's brother rode up and wanted to know who my father was. I big mouthed and I fudged I didn't know where he was. And he said our \_\_ got through the fence and on his property and he was talkin' way about it. Took off his hat to wipe his brow and he was bald headed. And I called him a...a bad name. [laughs] I thought that man was gonna have a stroke. If my father

had...somebody'd told my father he'd said, "Well, that's what he is." But if he'd heard me I'd got a good spankin'. [laughs]

JT: Did you ever have...go out to Hot Lake?

EM: No. I know where it was. It was very popular. I think it's such a shame. It's just abandoned, isn't it?

JT: Yes.

EM: What a shame.

JT: There's been a movie recently that it was a haunted building, but I don't think so.

EM: [laugh] No, I don't think so either. How long's it been since not in use?

JT: Oh...

PT: Oh gosh. Twenty, thirty years.

JT: Well, it had...

PT: For a while there was...

JT: Maybe twenty years.

EM: Really.

PT: For a while they had a kind of nursing home out there. It had...well, it was a nursing home.

JT: Yes.

PT: Yeah and cared for, you know, seniors people that were not...were needed.

EM: Why did it become like that?

JT: Nobody took care of it. All the antique furniture was sold out to someplace.

EM: Oh, what a shame!

JT: They've just let it go to rack and ruin. It's a shame. Now the wind has taken a lot of the roof off and people have broken windows.

EM: Oh, isn't that terrible!

JT: They just destroyed things. Sad.

PT: Yeah because it was very important. My mother can remember it being really...people would come there for treatment. There was even a...the railroad it had a depot. I mean it stopped, people stopped and got off the train and went over there for air. But I know things change.

EM: Are those hot springs are they still there?

JT: They're still there. They haven't lost any of their heat.

EM: I just think that's a shame that somebody had taken that over and done something with it.

JT: There's two or three developers have talked about it, but it...I think they want too much money for it and I don't know what'll ever happen to it.

EM: They ought to be glad to get rid of it to do something with it.

JT: It's a shame.

PT: You know one of the things that happens out there though, that smell of the sulfur, you know, is so bad. We...there's an RV park where people can park trailers, you know, and stay over night. And we had some friends that stayed out there, but the water tastes a little funny because of the sulfur...the whatever's in the water, you know, and that smell. Remember how it smelled when you'd go by and you could smell that funny smell, you know?

EM: Yeah.

PT: People don't seem to like that. That's too bad.

EM: That's too bad. What brought all of this business into La Grande?

JT: It's a nice little community, I think, and some of the people wanted to get out of the city. We could use more. We have two trailer plants, Fleetwood and Nash Trailers.

PT: There isn't really enough work there in town. The railroad is downsized, you know, so much.

EM: Yeah.

PT: And the mill is always...there's always worry about the mill. And so like our kids. We raised two boys and they both have gone...they're teachers...and they've gone away. They don't...you know...and they would like to...one of 'em particularly...

EM: That's what's surprising. All this business wonder what keeps...

PT: It's hard to tell what keeps it there, isn't it?

JT: Large employers are the college and now we have an insurance office there, ODS. And they want to build a new building where the old Safeway was. Have you been since the new Safeway?

EM: I can't remember that Safeway store at all.

JT: There at Fourth at Adams.

PT: Where the La Grande Hotel was.

JT: Where the...anyway, they want to build a new building there and they would hire fifty new employees which would be good. That's nonpolluting and would be a real benefit to the city. And then the computer outfit wants to go there and they want to talk about putting the public library there.

EM: Oh.

PT: Did you use the library? Did you go to the public library when you were little?

EM: Oh, I used to live there. I loved the library! Yes. I read...I started out reading caveman books and then I graduated to Tarzan. Then I graduated to Zane Grey. And I fell in love with one of his books and I stole it out of the library.

JT: Oh! Well, their statues of limitations are over. [laughs]

EM: My father would have bought that book for me, but I just didn't think to ask him about it. I wanted it so bad. It was called *The Wanders of the Wasteland*.

PT: Did you go...did you go downstairs into the children's room down in the basement?

EM: Yeah. Yes, I went downstairs one time and got kicked out. I was a little old. They were...had the little ones down there and she made me get out. And when I got outside there was this big dog out there and I dragged him down the steps and opened that door and shoved the dog in.

PT: In the library?

EM: Yes. [laughs] Created a riot. There was all those little kids.

PT: I worked down in the children's room of the library for about twenty to twenty-five years.

EM: You did?

PT: Yeah.

EM: Oh, I loved that library.

PT: It's...It's great. It's a great place. And people...we need a new library badly because it's very, very old, but people are really gonna miss it, you know.

Because they lo...they liked it. They liked that building. They don't...just like you did. They loved to go there.

EM: Yeah. I loved that place. I've always been a big reader. I still am. I read two or three books a week.

PT: That's good. That's good. Have you got a...you have a library up here, don't you?

EM: Yes. There's one here and one in Joseph.

PT: Yeah.

EM: I can't climb the stairs, but the library and I have picked out books...somebody picks 'em up for me every week.

PT: Oh do they? Great.

EM: Uh-huh.

PT: Is there a girl here works at this library named Denine?

EM: That's her.

PT: She's my friend.

EM: I love her.

PT: I worked with her at the La Grande Public Library.

EM: You did?

PT: You tell her that I said to say hello.

EM: Oh, I will.

PT: She's a very patient girl.

EM: She's the nicest lady. I just love Denine.

PT: Good, good.

EM: And she has a wonderful husband, too.

PT: Good. Rich.

EM: Do you know him?

PT: Rich?

EM: Uh-huh.

PT: Yeah. Yes.

EM: And his brother lives...sports writer for *The Chieftain*.

PT: The \_\_.

EM: Oh, I can't pronounce their name.

PT: Yeah, they're very hard to say. Yeah.

EM: Rich and I forget what the other one's name is...yes, she's a very neat lady.

PT: When you see her you tell her that Patty...I'm Patty and she'll know.

EM: When the lady went into get my books yesterday Denine came out with her and talked for a few minutes.

PT: Next time you see her.

EM: Once in a while I make cookies and take over to her because she's so nice to pick out all those books for me.

PT: She's a doll.

EM: And her husband's just as nice, too. Really nice people. A lot of the people up here...people that are helpful, that give from the heart at the time that counts.

PT: It's a nice place to live then.

EM: Yes it is. Yes it is. Very nice.

JT: Did you notice that about La Grande where people helped one another back in the days that you were growing up?

EM: Yeah.

JT: That there wasn't a lot of money and things and people helped one another. And you said that you went to dances downtown.

EM: Yes.

JT: Was the Zuber Hall going at that time?

EM: The Zuber Hall and the Eagles was it?

JT: Uh-huh.

EM: There was another dance hall by the Elks Club.

PT: Called the Conan Hall, I'll bet.

JT: It was the Commercial Club that...right next to the Elks before they moved.

EM: Yes. And I remember at Christmastime the Elks used to open those windows downstairs and give out candy and...

JT: Candy. People used to line up for a blot there.

EM: Blots!

JT: And do you know it's down to where we're lucky if we have fifty kids come at Christmas now days.

EM: Really? Mother used to make me go and I didn't want to go.

JT: But we still do it. We give out a sack of candy with an orange and an apple and peanuts and candy.

EM: Isn't that nice!

PT: Yeah, it is.

EM: Here they give...they send boxes of stuff around people...the Elks Club.

JT: La Grande sponsored this Elks Club here in town.

EM: Oh.

JT: We were the ones that sponsored them when they started.

EM: That's really a nice thing to do. I didn't think they still did that.

JT: Yeah, they still do.

EM: \_\_\_there'd be lines...there was no end to it.

JT: Oh! I can remember the whole street was full.

EM: Yeah!

JT: They had the Christmas tree out there in the street.

EM: Oh, it was a big thing!

JT: It...you know there's so many other things for people to do now days.

EM: Yeah. Yeah.

JT: It...

EM: I was never to...Salvation Army always used to stand out on the street at the corner of Adams and Depot and sing.

JT: Usually they had a couple instruments.

EM: Yeah. Yeah. They had...

JT: That's progress and it is necessary to the best.

EM: Yeah.

JT: You talked about Payless Drugstore. You knew that that was the first Payless Drugstore in the whole United States was in La Grande.

EM: You know, I was surprised thinking back about that being there 'cause there was the...in the city, but a little town like this.

JT: Gene Detrick was the manager of the first...

EM: I didn't know anybody in that drugstore, but I...I worked for Paul Graham and he had a druggist that worked with him. His name was Les. And I was driving this old 1928 Plymouth it had a whole in the top. It would rain the rain would come down and I asked Les one day, "You want a ride home." And he said, "I don't know whether it's worth ridin' home in the rain with you or walking." [laughs]

JT: We see Powell.

EM: Do ya?

JT: In church mostly on Sunday. And they live up at the lake during the summertime.

EM: Yeah, I heard they were up here. I liked workin' for him.

JT: His first wife passed away and he married Ruth Lacer, Dr. Lacer's widow.

EM: I remember one time there was a lady that...they had a \_\_, you know, and they served lunches?

JT: Yes.

EM: And this girl that worked behind the pharm her mother would come in there sometimes and she was strange person. Les was sitting up there eating a piece of pie and somebody came and wanted a prescription filled. He had to go back and fill it. And her mother moved over and ate his pie. [laughs] But she was sitting in there one day and I was putting...I worked the drugstore part, not at the fountain...and I was putting magazines away and I found one with a picture of Doris...some movie actress and I said, "Gee, she's pretty! I wish I was that pretty." And she said, "Oh, I don't know. I think your just as pretty as she is. Of course she's awful ugly in the face." [laughs]

JT: Do you remember the Dutch bakery?

EM: The what?

JT: The Dutch bakery there by the Elks building where Mr. Pretty, Paul Graham's father-in-law, ran the Dutch bakery?

PT: That little...that little Dutch mill...looked like a Dutch mill and it had a...

EM: Isn't that funny? I don't remember that.

PT: Don't remember that. That is funny, yeah. \_\_ forget.

EM: I remember Ruth's...you know Ruth Stoddard?

JT: Mm-hmm.

EM: And was it the Lavender Lunch?

JT: Uh-huh.

EM: That was hers?

JT: They bought it from Charlie Carther.

EM: Yeah. Okay. Well, I worked for her in that. I worked there. And there was another place on Adams Avenue on the same side of the street that Burley's and Dr. Per... and there was a meeting place in there. Do you know what that was?

JT: There was the Fountain and earlier there was Dell's Place. Dell Hesbeth.

EM: It was a really nice eating...the name of it. I can't remember. But I worked at the Lavender Lunch.

PT: You never...you didn't work for the Charlie Carther, though? You worked for Ruth Stoddard.



EM: No, uh-uh. No I worked for...when Ruth had it. Then she also took over the dining room at the Sacagawea. Yeah.

JT: We used to have three hotels now we have none.

EM: I know.

JT: We just have a few motels.

EM: There's no hotel at all?

JT: No.

EM: Isn't that a shame! There was that old Foley Hotel, Saca... What happened with Sacagawea?

JT: After the war they didn't think that there was that many people used it so they tore it down and put the U.S. National Bank there.

EM: Oh! I remember on the corner there was the First National Bank, there was M.K. West, that department store, and China Mary.

JT: Yes. Always China Mary.

EM: China Mary made the best food in the world. We kids used to get a quarter we'd go there and have noodles. And that was a fantastic place. So I would never could find Chinese noodles in any Chinese place I ate so when I came back here a friend here took me down and we went into this restaurant and I ordered Chinese noodles. And she said, "Are these like what you used to get?" And I said, "They're made like hers." And I told how it was. They put noodles in a bowl with chopped green onions on top, shredded egg and slices of sweet sour pork. Somebody eating in the booth next to us, an older person, she got up and slapped the table she said, "That's exactly how she served those noodles." [laughs]

JT: Everybody remembers China Mary's.

EM: Yeah. But China Mary made her own noodles. These were Top Ramen, but they were served the same.

PT: Same way. Yeah, yeah. \_\_\_ They were so good.

EM: China Mary's. She had a great place. She was very popular.

JT: Yes.

PT: Even though you had to go up those old stairs to get there. Remember going up there?

EM: Yeah. And it was on the same side of the street as M.K. West and...

PT: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

JT: Right across from the Granada Theater.

EM: Yeah. They were twenty-five cents a bowl. We'd get a bowl of noodles.

PT: Do you remember the big furniture store that was across the street from there? Would that have been...who was running that?

EM: The furnit...

JT: Fitzgerald's.

EM: The furniture store I remember was Bonakamp.

PT: Do you have Bonakamp in there?

EM: I worked for Chase Bonakamp.

PT: At their house at home or at the store or at...?

EM: At the store.

PT: At the store. Uh-huh.

EM: He was combination hardware, furniture and... Yeah, I was workin' for Montgomery Ward. When I went to work there the manager wanted to hire me. I had a good work background furniture. They didn't want to pay me so he said, "If you work on straight commission I'll hire ya." So I went to work for him. And I worked for him then Chase Bonakamp wanted me to come work for him. So I worked for him for a while. I worked a lot of places there. Somebody else I was gonna ask you? Oh, did you know Henry Hess?

JT: Yes. Uh-huh.

EM: My father-in-law and he worked...my father-in-law is George Miller. You probably didn't know him, though. He wasn't around there too long. But Henry Hess's niece and I were real good friends.

JT: Henry Hess went on to Portland and then he married a lady that was married to Skip Sherwood. She was an Owsley from Owsley Canyon out there. And we learned that recently.

EM: This lady he was married to when I knew them was...she was a Johansson. And her sister lived there with Henry and her. And they lived next...oh, I can't think of the name of that other lawyer that lived right next door to them. I don't remember. [pause]

JT: What part of town?

EM: Pardon?

JT: What part of town did they live in?

EM: There at 510 C Avenue.

JT: Oh, up there.

EM: Then when I...oh, when I was back there I lived with the family names Strike. They had a big house, had two apartments upstairs.

JT: Leo Street.

EM: Yes.

JT: Yes.

EM: Oh, I just loved those people!

JT: I worked with him on the railroad.

EM: Did ya?

JT: Yeah.

EM: He...he used to sit down the basement and he had a chair and a radio a little area of a gentleman's.

JT: He was working for the telephone company when you lived there.

EM: Yeah.

JT: Before that he worked for the railroad and my wife's father.

EM: Oh really?

JT: Yeah. So we knew him real well.

PT: That was down on O and Penn or something.

JT: On N Avenue. On N and Eighth.

EM: Yeah. He always had his drink. Once in a while he wanted to know if I'd have a drink with him. I would. I don't...I don't think she...but oh I loved her! I just love her.

PT:

EM: They had three daughters, Kay, Martha and I can't remember the other girl. Anyway, those girls still stay in touch with me.

JT: Oh good!

PT: That's nice.

EM: I haven't seen 'em in sixty years and I get a...and they were coming up here last summer, but they couldn't all get together. They still write me. Isn't that amazing?

JT: That's very nice.

PT: Yeah, it is.

EM: When I last saw them Martha was in grade school, Kay was in high school and Eileen was college.

PT: That's good.

JT: It's funny you...over a period of time you know a lot of people in common than we do because...

EM: Yeah. I lived there...my daughter and son-in-law had been living there and I lived there...my little girl was about six years old, I guess, when we lived there. And I loved that family. But he'd sit down there and...he didn't drink upstairs. I don't know if she didn't approve or what. Anyway, I'd go sit and have a drink with him. [laughs] But when we were...my son-in-law and daughter came up here when I moved up here and Janice wanted to go see that house. And I kept going by it, but I didn't think it was it because they put the yard all up. It used to be a nice big yard with a great big tree out front. That was all gone. They had just a little lawn and the house was painted green. It was white when I lived there. They move so fast...[end tape]