

Manford Morris

2/04, T1, S1

HH: ...is your name?

MM: Manford Morris.

HH: And you spell that m-a-n-f-o-r-d?

MM: Just like it sounds.

HH: Alright.

MM: Man and put Henry Ford's name on the end of it. [laughs]

HH: When were you born, Manford?

MM: Oh, up here about three-quarters...

WM: When.

MM: ...three-quarters..

WM: When.

MM: When? I was born in the eleventh month, eleventh day of 1918. I was a World War II baby. And it, supposedly, was a war to end all wars. I think they've been fighting ever since. Yeah.

WM: World War II.

HH: World War I.

MM: World War I. You're right.

HH: And you said you were born about three-quarters of a mile from here, your home?

MM: Yeah. It was downhill and I got down here. You see, my family...I guess to start to the beginning of the story, my grandfather and grandmother they got together, young people, and they got a little farm in Kansas, them and the grasshoppers, drought, hailstorm. Wilma and I know about hailstorms and freeze outs and like that. But anyway, Old Mike – his given name was Raselvis...

WM: I'd be Mike, too.

MM: Yeah, I would change my name too, but legally he didn't. Maybe when we're through here you'd like to take this book – my sister wrote this – of the Morrisises mimirs and the early days. Anyway, Old Mike comes to Oregon, got the chance to come to Oregon on a cattle drive. He saw the Grande Ronde Valley and fell in love with it. He went back to Kansas. He and Grandmother, Lydia, they bought a little place, I think 160 acres, might've been a homestead. I'm not sure about that. But he told 'em...the folks...those folks...his wife's folks – their last name was Elmer...there's Elmers here now, Russell Elmer and...part of that same family – about Oregon. They eventually come to Oregon. They came into this valley by horseback. He was lookin' for land. He didn't have any money, but guessed it didn't cost to look. He come in from, oh, Mt. Emily side and got in La Grande and was headed towards where Island City is and on the road there – we call it the Strip, you know, between La Grande and...the Subway and Island City – there's a guy out there that's diggin' a post hole. He was a farmer himself and he knew about making post holes, I reckon. He asked him... He greeted him and they talked a little bit and the fella asked him why he was here and where he was from and, well, he's from Kansas. "Well," he said, "to be up front with ya, I am lookin' for land." "Why," he says, "you don't want this land. Let me dig a little

bit deeper and I'll dig right into washed river rock. It's been washed through here. It's shallow land. You don't want this land." He said, "How much is land here?" He said, "This land here that's no good land you can buy it for three dollars an acre, but you don't want it." He went out north of Elgin – this book'll say five miles, but it was nine or ten miles – and he got a chance to homestead 160 acres out there. That's where the 160, I think, come from. And they come out, they come out to Oregon. When he went back to Kansas he told Lydia, his wife, about how great the Grande Ronde Valley was and she says, "I want a place where there's wood and water." There was no wood in Kansas. There's a lot of wind. She wanted a place where there was trees that would keep the... calm the wind somewhat. He got that little old place and they...he actually fell timber...fell trees, haul 'em in together and burned 'em to clear land so he could raise hay for some cattle. He got a chance to rent this farm...this land on what we call the home place, 320 acres. They rented it and in seven years with a lot of hard work. We paid out on it. I think this book said they did...

WM: You said they rented it. They actually didn't rent it, it was buying it.

MM: They rented it to start with for seven years and then they bought it. It tells us in this book here...

WM: Okay.

MM: Anyway, they paid it out. They knew how to work, hard workers. They were frugal people. They had to be. They paid it out and they increased the timber land and pasture land and eventually accumulated two or three thousand acres.

HH: What did they... What did they do with their land? You said he raised...he grew hay.

MM: They sold off part of the land, two parcels were pasture land. Do you know where Union is? Sure you do.

HH: Yes.

MM: And Pyles Canyon, up towards Baker, was up there 700 acres out in there. In those days, of course, no tractors, they farmed with horses. It took quite a few horses to farm. And they bought it for a horse pasture. And then they had cattle and they bought 800 acres in Ladd Canyon. A total of 1,600 acres. But, eventually, it was sold off. And then they bought...back to homestead again. My dad went and done that for them. He homesteaded 240 acres up on Mt. Harris.

HH: Your father did?

MM: Yeah. But that was part of this 3,000.

HH: What did he... What did he do with that land up on Mt. Harris?

MM: He cut timber off. We built a little sawmill here on the ranch. We sawed it and put up these buildings here, us boys. Anyway, we built a cabin out there, us fellas, us boys. There's four boys and three girls in my immediate family. We built a log cabin. There's a painting of it just around the other room there.

HH: Okay.

MM: But now there's the old home place with the 320 that they originally leased. Then they bought 160 that joined it down there. Then they bought another 320 acres across the road. That made them 960 acres in the home place and the plan is still have that __ four boys and three girls, you know. I was the only boy out of the four boys that opt to stay with the land. World War II came along and, you know,

jobs in shipyards and one boy went to work for John Deere Implement Company, a local company. The other a little older than I he got a job on the railroad. My oldest brother – the oldest of the boys – he got a truck driving job hauling gas and oil, tanker truck and trailer, Atellia, a barge up the Columbia river, Atellia, Washington. He hauled regularly for a long, long time to Snowville, Utah. I mentioned World War II come along...

HH: What... What... How old were you when World War II started? Do you remember?

MM: I had to sign up for the draft. I was ripe to go to war.

HH: Oh, you were?

MM: Yes.

WM: We were married.

HH: Oh, you were?

WM: We were married in '41 and I think the war started in '42.

MM: Winter of 1941.

WM: ___ my folks said ___ war. We lived up in our cabin the first winter.

MM: We didn't have any livestock, we didn't have any chores.

WM: We had this house, but the grandparents had built this house – after '13 or '14 – and they... Do you want to tell it, or should I tell her about how you got the house?

MM: My grandmother left it to me.

WM: I know, but... In 1918 was the flu epidemic and a lot of people died. And she had three children, three boys, and he was two months old when she got sick. So the grandmother went up in the fields where their house from here and she says, "We'll take the baby and take care of him." And the other two were just little kids. So then when she got better they came down to get the baby – and I don't know how long it was, but it was a while...

MM: Somehow I don't remember, either.

WM: I'm sure you don't. This is what his mother told me. And Grandmother says, "You've got two to take care of and you're not very well." She says, "We want to keep him." So, I don't think...well, she told me...his mother told me that they didn't intend to leave him here. They were just gonna...they said, well, that was alright because she still wasn't very well. And then not long after that they bought the house that was up the road. It has since burned, but it was up straight across. So then they moved into that and it made 'em, you know, families were altogether and the children were all raised together, but the grandparents kept him.

HH: Kept Manford?

WM: Kept Manford. He was raised in this house.

MM: I've been in this house all my life.

HH: Wow.

MM: Yeah.

WM: All but those first two months that the mother had him. Then when they made their will, why, they gave him the middle 160. Supposedly because the house was one it, but we found out afterwards that the house – they did have it surveyed – and we found out that we had to buy an acre from the younger brother because the house was on his land instead of ours. That's how he come to have this house.

HH: What was your grandmother's name?
MM: Lydia.
HH: Lydia.
MM: L-y-d-i-a.
HH: And how do you spell your name?
WM: Wilma, w-i-l-m-a.
MM: Her and I got acquainted high school days.
HH: Did you?
MM: We went to my dad's...no, well, Cove didn't have the subjects offered at La Grande _____. We rented a little old house ____ kids ____ high school. And later on ____ see the seven of us kids go through high school. I met Wilma in our high school days. I knew her dad before I knew her. Her dad worked for Union County Road Department, run a motor grader, graded roads. He stopped up here...
WM: They put a road through here so he was working out here for a long time.
HH: So you worked with her dad?
MM: Yeah.
WM: No, didn't work with my dad. My dad worked on the road. He run the roader grader and got acquainted with the family. And he has pictures that showed a picture and I always hated that picture. It was, in those days, we wore cloth satin bloomers. You've probably heard about 'em. They had elastic, one of my elastic broke and Mother took my picture – we were up Catherine Creek – so that was hangin' down below my knee. And that's the picture that my dad always carried and showed him. [laughs] Good grief.
HH: So that's how you two met, then? And you were going to La Grande High School? And you and your siblings rented a house there to go to school?
WM: Yes. They did have a lady and her two children live there. Not right at first, was it?
MM: No.
HH: But she finally moved in there and she kept it...
MM: Anyway. We got married... We graduated the class 1938.
WM: We graduated together because he had had some appendicitis surgery and lost some school so he didn't graduate until '38. He would've graduated in '37. So we knew each other from school.
MM: And in 1941...
HH: So you got married in the winter of 1941?
WM: No, in August.
MM: August. The last day of August, 1941. We spent our first winter...we didn't have livestock at the cabin. It wasn't...yeah, it was finished then. It was finished then. We lived up there and cut forty cords of four foot wood, crosscut saw. We didn't have any chainsaw. We couldn't have bought oats for a nightmare. If they had chainsaws, we didn't buy 'em.
WM: I'd go out and help him with the crosscut saw. I helped... We had the cutest little dog. We had an Australian Shepard we called Duke. I'd carry him because the snow was deep up there and he couldn't go up where Manford was so I carried him in my arms and take him up there. But we had fun. My friends would say, "I

can't imagine living up in that cabin away from everybody." But it was wonderful. We loved it.

HH: So that's what you did your first winter together? You cut wood?

WM: Mm-hmm. We sold it.

MM: Bit by bit. We worked like beavers. Somehow, someway, we got into the ___ business raisin' ___ seed. We got into it the right time and there was money to be made there, we could see that. There's a lot of ___ out Summerville area. I have a friend down there that kind of pioneered bringin' grass into the Grande Ronde Valley. For some reason or other he liked me. First of all, I worked hard. I don't mean that to be prideful. I wanted to have somethin'. I wanted to get ahead. I wanted to have things. He brought three fellas over here one day – it was in the wintertime – I don't remember which winter it was – those people are still in business. Old ____. If you go into a good garden store and lookin' for lawn ___ seed ____. They had contracts, O. M. Scott, Headquarters, Marysville, Ohio. They were comin' in here...come in here lookin' for new ground that hadn't had grass on it that it wouldn't have all types of different varieties to contend with. This fellow down at Imbler...Summerville, George Royce – maybe you've heard that name?

HH: George Rice?

MM: Royce.

HH: Oh, Royce. I've heard Royce.

MM: R-o-y-c-e, George Royce. He seemed to like me. He said, "you get into that." I said, "I don't know how to raise grass." He said, "I'll teach ya." I knew he knew how. So I went into that.

HH: Where did you grow it? Did you grow it up there or did you come down here?

WM: He came down here.

MM: Right here on this land.

WM: We were living down here.

MM: We eventually put in a hundred acres. We didn't have any...as I mentioned, we didn't have any money. We didn't even own a hoe. I went to the junk yard, picked up some suitable material out of the junk piles that's suitable to make the hoe. I made a hoes and brought poles down for the pole handles. This girl here and I...getting back...we couldn't hire help. They didn't have chemicals. They didn't have sprays like they've got now to control the weeds. Her and I found out that there are different kinds of hoes. There's the ho-ho-ho that Santa Clause talks about and then there's the hoe-hoe-hoe that her and I got. You start into hoe a hundred acres with a blade in a hoe about that wide. Of course there's some sprays, but it took a lot of hoein'. And we figured five weeks every spring.

HH: Five weeks of hoeing?

MM: Hoeing.

WM: George Royce hired people to do his, but we couldn't. The only money...he said we didn't have any money...the only money that we had was our cream checks.

MM: At that time we got milk cows.

WM: We had some milk cows there.

HH: And you lived here in this house then?

MM: Yeah.

HH: Okay.

WM: And that was the only money we had is what we got from the cream checks. So we didn't have very much.

HH: Did you sell the cream to the creamery in town?

MM: A cream route that they picked it up right here. We eventually built a grade A...that's where the sawmill, pretty near it. These buildings here, the garage and machine shed shop.

WM: And there's a barn out there.

MM: We built... We built it on...

WM: We built all ___.

HH: So you're grow...you're hoeing and you're growing grass.

MM: Yes. Of course we had the cows. We milked twenty-nine cows. We eventually built a, as I mentioned, a new dairy barn. It would come up to grade A specification. We got milkin' machines.

WM: We didn't raise the grass while we were...had those cows.

MM: Anyway... Yeah, we did. ___ Anyway, we've had a good life, you know. We both admit it's been a good life. It's been a hard life. We've worked hard. But, you know, we can look back and we can smile 'cause we knew young couples that set off to farm and they were movin' a little too fast, had to have a new home, they had to have a new automobile, a new this, a new that, move a little too fast and move off. We're still here and we don't... ___ for the good, you know. We've had a good life here. It hasn't always been easy, but we've had a good life here.

WM: We raised four daughters. We didn't have any farmers, we just had farmerettes all of our life, three of 'em. The oldest one like to cook and keep house so we let her do it and the younger three worked in the fields. All of the girls cooks before they were, you know, in the field, before they were old enough to have license.

MM: They learned to drive and they could drive a grain truck, drive the grass seed truck and whatever, you know.

HH: Did they work out there with you then?

MM: They didn't hoe.

WM: They didn't have that, that kind of grass. I mean, we didn't have grass when they were...

MM: Little kids.

WM: ...little kids.

MM: Old enough to hoe, though.

HH: What did you grow then? You grew hay...or you grew...

MM: Alfalfa.

HH: Okay.

MM: Alfalfa hay. We raised peas 'cause Smith Canning and Freezing Compnay there in Walla Walla. We raised freezer peas, we raised that, we raised wheat, barley, oats. We never did raise much for hogs. But of course we had our beef, our own beef. And Wilma canned a lot. She canned all these and she...

WM: We had this whole back yard in garden.

MM: We remember back the days when it was dirt road. There was no gravel roads. We didn't have a phone line at all. The first place we couldn't have paid the...paid the phone bill.

HH: When did you first get a phone?

MM: About 19... We was married in '41, probably about 1944 or '5.

WM: I would say '45. But his folks lived across the road and they had a phone.

HH: Oh, I see.

MM: But you know, how things have changed from then to now! The flat weight on a telephone...the old telephone poles and wire above the...up on the poles, you know, pretty much what they called a farmer's line and if the pole rotted off and fell down the old farmer went out and stubbed that pole or reset it. Somebody pulled a derrick under it and broke the wire – and that would happen. I'd climb up on the derrick and fix the wire. As I say, the flat rate was a dollar a month, whether you used it or not. And I remember talkin' about the good old days, talkin' about the not-so-good old days. Wilma said my folks had a phone. Times were hard. Times was tough. They made everything count ____. They set around the supper table and talk about the phone. ____ said, "You know, that phone, a dollar a month, we could get a long without that. We don't need that phone. Besides, the neighbor down here, they have phone." And they were good neighbors and back and forth. Kerosene lights – there was no electricity through here. Wilma mentioned that we were married in 1941. She come out here as a bride and no electricity, a wood stove, kerosene lights. Can you imagine kerosene being fifteen cents a gallon? And they got kerosene in five-gallon tanks, a couple cans at a time. I don't know how long a can of kerosene would last, but seventy-five cents for a five-gallon can of kerosene. ____ said that dollar a month they could get seventy-five cents for a can and have twenty-five cents left over.

HH: When did you get electricity through here?

MM: 1948. Seven years.

WM: Seven years without it.

MM: We had an old gas-powered Maytag washin' machine. Sometimes it wouldn't start.

WM: The only time I could get it started was when he was around the place, in the yard or someplace. If he was gone in the field it wouldn't start and I'd have to go get him. [laugh] I had an awful time with that washer. But as far as the wood stove, I was raised in La Grande, but we had a wood stove. A lot of people did in those days.

HH: You cooked with it and whatnot?

WM: Oh yeah. And I...

MM: ____ schools a little bit back then.

HH: Yes. I want to know about the schools and I want to know how...you said things were tight and you really knew how to be frugal, was that because of the Great Depression or was that just the way life was around here?

MM: I think we were in depression, recession, whichever word you want to put in there, I don't think it makes that much difference.

WM: It wasn't actually the Depression, though. That was over, wasn't it, before we were married?

HH: Yeah. It was over before you were married, yeah. But it would've been during your junior high or your school days, your middle school days.

WM: Yes.

HH: How did that affect...[end tape]

4/02, T1, S2

HH: So you said kids in school were passing on their clothes?

MM: I don't know about town kids...high school kids did much.

WM: Most of it was girls. I had one sister that just girls in our family, but there were families that...I went to Willow School and there was families that had boys and they did, they had patches on their knees and patches on the elbows of their shirts. Nobody had money, even people in town. My dad worked for the county, but he didn't...didn't make a lot of money. I don't remember what he started at, sixty cents an hour.

MM: Probably.

WM: And then they raised it after a while. But that's what he got at first.

HH: Were they that poor before the Great Depression or did the Great Depression hurt and cause the need for patches? Did you feel the affect of the standard of living?

WM: Yes. It definitely did. Because you didn't have... Dad'd have his job, but it didn't...it wasn't enough money to buy a lot of things. We wore hand-me-down clothes that a family gave us. We had... Mother had two sisters that were teachers and they would give their clothes that they didn't want anymore to Mother and she'd make clothes for us.

HH: What about you, Manford?

MM: I wore my shirt patches, I guess. But I never...I never felt like I was poor. Everybody's poor.

WM: 'Cause everybody was, even in town.

MM: We rode... You see this little white school set up here in Cove?

HH: The Shanghias School?

WM: The one at the corner.

MM: No, ___.

WM: ___. The one as you go around the corner then it's down in the field.

HH: Yes.

MM: That's quite a school there. One winter __ back up to the road a little bit. It was __ dirt road and we...my brother just older than me and my sister __ youngest girl went to grade school there. One winter, especially, there was a little old lady taught school there. She drove a horse and buggy, one horse, and she boarded down here with family. I spent quite a few years, not quite a few, but several years when I was...us kids goin' to high school...goin' to grade school, whatever, in Cove... In comparison with what teacher's salaries or wages or what they __, compared to nowadays, this little old lady that taught up here at __, horse and buggy, one-room school, that winter there was twenty-nine students went there in a one-room school. All around comes the good part. [laugh] She didn't get paid for twelve months. School was nine months. She got paid nine months. She got the awful big salary of two dollars a month. I know that she taught two years for

forty dollars a month. Then she got the big raise to sixty. You can blame this on the poor farmers. Maybe they weren't able to pay their full taxes. School...a big share of the cost of runnin' the school was some farms, ranches, the neighborhood the taxes wasn't...they were hard for them, _____. But they run out of money and this girl teaching school for forty dollars a month who couldn't...they couldn't...they'd write a warrant, write 'em a check, a warrant, they called 'em warrants. There was a fella in La Grande he was in the automobile business, L. C. Smith. _____ He was considered the weathliest man in La Grande. Why, they said he had a \$100,000 in the bank. And he'd buy them warrants ___ ten percent. Ten percent off of forty dollars could cause a little white out...cause a little ___ out of nothin'. When she got that sixty dollars a month...

HH: You said she taught twenty-nine students. How was... What is the...

MM: Twenty-nine.

HH: Twenty-nine.

MM: Twenty-nine students.

HH: What was the... What was the range of the age and grades and how did she manage everyone?

MM: First grade... First grade... A lot of kids started school when they were five. I started when I was five goin' to school, rode a horse to school.

HH: Through the eighth grade?

MM: Through the eighth grade. But in the wintertime when it was cold they say this is where _____ and they had an old potbellied wood stove right in the center of the room. Pipe went right up and out the top, you know. The teacher would set our desks all along the perimeter around the stove, that's here and right around, sit right around the fire, clear around the stove.

HH: So you're a circle around the fire?

MM: Yeah, to keep warm. That old school at that time it did have, and still does – I think every winter it _____ out now. You don't have windows on the east side. When they built that they built it with them fancy _____ they'd have to get the window. Snowy days, stormy days, windy day, whatever, the wide window ledge there, the teacher'd say, "You can go to the window and study," cause it was light over there. Put your elbow up on this wide window ledge here and maybe we would sit like that _____ or somethin' else. Anyway...

WM: Some of the teachers weren't too good _____. They didn't have to know...they didn't have to go to college to teach. They could teach _____.

HH: So you went to school there kindergarden through eight.

MM: Yeah. Excuse me...

HH: Yes.

MM: Do you know Maxine Stewart?

HH: No, I don't.

MM: Maxine Conley?

HH: I know the Conley Road.

WM: The big house that sits on the...well, the Conley Road just through here, the big house?

MM: You mentioned Shanghia.

HH: Yes.

MM: Do you know where... Well, Maxine's is just down the road on the... across the road. She was the only eighth grader at Shanghia and I was the only eighth grader at _____. The county... They had a county school superintendent – I don't know whether that man had a first name or not – he used this initial P. A. Sayer, s-a-y-e-r. P. A. Sayer.

WM: _____ that's what he went by, P. A.

MM: Anyway, he notified the teacher at Shanghi and the teacher at _____ that she would...he would give the eighth grade written examination and he would appreciate it if there'd be a day there wouldn't be the whole school there. He said he would come out on Saturday. With Maxine alone, myself at Foster, could get together so he didn't have to give it up at Shanghia and down here at Foster. So Maxine didn't have to walk to far on up, she walked up there and I rode my horse from here, it was about four miles.

HH: A nice ride.

MM: Yeah. And we met there and back in those days a lot of them older schools two students in a wide _____ desktop, two students would set together. That was...

HH: Yes.

MM: Yeah. So he said, "you set up here." Maxine set here and I set here. He stood up in front and right in front of our desktop – and he had a cane _____. He had a yardstick _____. He said, "When I drop that yardstick you start." I don't know how much time we were allowed, maybe ten minutes, fifteen, I don't know, don't remember. I lot of things I didn't remember.

WM: Probalby longer than that, but probably about a page.

MM: Anyway, "when I drop my yardstick again you stop." Maxine was...she was smarter than I was. She _____. But we got through the eighth grade...I should say, I got through the eighth grade, she breezed through that. Maybe she didn't think she did, I thought she did.

WM: She told me, though, that you almost got as many right as she did.

MM: Anyway, the old _____... Did you ever hear of Hardscramble...Hardscramble School?

HH: No. Where's that?

MM: Do you know where this little cemetery is down here just a little ways?

HH: Yeah. Lower Cove Cemetery?

MM: Yes.

HH: Yeah.

MM: That place right just below the cemetery, that old barn there, that was a schoolhouse.

HH: Really?

MM: It didn't have the sheds on the side, just a roof like this. It set down below the road a little ways. Where Eddie Hoofnagle lives. You know where he lives?

HH: Mm-hmm.

MM: Right down past...you head right across where the Lower Cove Road goes now, then it turns and went up to where that...about where that barn is. That was a schoolhouse and they moved that thing down... It's original site up where the barn is and built it into a barn. Later on they built Lower Cove, it's gone, moved away...moved away now. There's a sign down there on the road, I think it says

“Site of Lower Cove School.” Cove was just a ____ back in those days. I think Shangia was _____. I wonder what Cove is now.

HH: I don’t know.

MM: I should know. _____

HH: Can I ask you a little bit more about your school days? You remember sittin’ around the stove. Do you remember what you did for recess? Did you have recess once a day or twice a day?

MM: Twice in the morning, twice in the afternoon.

WM: Feed your horses.

MM: Pardon?

WM: Didn’t have to feed the horses? Feed your horses? Isn’t that what you did at one of the recesses?

MM: Yeah. There was a farm...they didn’t have balers in those years, the parents, ___ somebody’d buy some bales hale and you’d throw to your horse a ___ of hay and maybe...pretty near everybody raised oats...you’d give your horse a little nip of oats. The pony that I rode he was about have Shetland. My sister, Lavene, she was _____ many years back now. She rode a _____ pony that I rode and I want her to remain my pony, I called him Togo. I guess you spell, t-o-g-o, I don’t know.

HH: To go.

MM: To go. And they call her baby... We rode from the ranch here a mile and three-quarters. And I can’t remember the road ever bein’ nothin’ but mud, but I know that it was dry at some season. [laugh]

HH: Did everybody ride to school?

MM: Or walk.

WM: None of our family did.

MM: We all rode. We had horses, we rode horses. This little Togo, my little old barn it had a manger in it and in front of the manger it had pole _____ and tied the rope, all the rope, to hold your horse, secure your horse while you’s at school. That little horse was pretty smart. It didn’t take him all day to get his lesson. Along in that afternoon you had to kind of keep your eye out for one of those _____. You take...put that rope around the pole a couple times then you tie it. _____ untie that.

HH: Wow.

MM: Somebody said, “Manford, your horse is out.” Out in the yard grazin’. So I said, “I’ll fix that. I’ll tie him up.” I’ll tie another knot on top of that. That little begger, _____ that. He had his lesson, no use hangin’ around ‘til school was out, get home. He wouldn’t show up where you could see him. He’d step out and maybe he’d be home by the time school was out.

WM: How many times did he leave you up there?

MM: I could only count to ten. [laughs]

WM: I thought it was just a few times and then you were _____.

MM: I look back on those days, as I said earlier, we never knew we was poor. Everybody was in the same boat.

WM: We lived in town, knew it was different. But we didn’t know we were poor because everybody else wore the same faded patched clothes like we did. It didn’t affect the children at all. Of course it did affect the parents because they didn’t have as much for their children and they had lived in good times. And then

when the Depression came along and they had family they didn't have hardly enough to feed 'em and clothe 'em...

MM: We always had plenty to eat, like that, you know.

WM: And we did, too. We didn't have very good clothes. We lived behind a little grocery. It's a different now back there. But we had a garden. We canned things. And we even had farmer friends and we could buy a quarter of a beef or something like that. We had plenty to eat. We lived, you know, a lot different than the way people live now.

HH: Do you remember when times started to change? What were some of the things that made you realize that things were better?

MM: Better clothes. I don't think we ate any better. Wilma says that we raised what we...ate what we raised. Oh, maybe fix the old porch roof up and paint the house, paint the barn. You could tell things was...they was makin' money, things was better for 'em.

WM: What year was it the year was supposed to be ended?

HH: '29.

MM: It started... We got it here...the folks talk about 1929 when the Great Depression came.

HH: Yes, got started.

WM: That's when it started.

MM: And I don't remember things, as a kid, getting much better about 1934. There was more jobs. Remember what they call the old CC camps?

HH: Yes. You had those around here?

MM: Yeah.

WM: There's one up on the road that turns off toward Starkey.

HH: Okay. Did you have friends that were involved in that? No?

MM: Most of the fellas...young men that was here was from the eastern part...New England part of the United States. They kept busy trimmin' unwanted trees out. They done a lot of work in the woods. They made trails...well, I'm afraid I'm not too good...CC boys built it. What'd they get? A dollar a day?

HH: Somethin' like that.

MM: Yeah. Anyway, I noticed with my family they had an old car, an old 1914 Studebaker.

HH: Wow.

MM: ___ And I remember the gas tank on one of those things ten gallons. Gas was high, for then.

HH: What was it?

MM: Twenty-three cents.

HH: What was it normally?

MM: Oh, that's about what it was normal quite a little while through there.

HH: But that was high.

MM: Then finally gas really went up. You could get four gallons for a dollar, twenty-five cents...

HH: Wow. Twenty-five cents.

MM: Yeah. Got so high that they couldn't afford to drive their cars, gas was too high. Twenty-five cents a gallon.

HH: Yeah. Wouldn't that be nice today?

MM: Our first diesel farm tractor Dad bought burnt gasoline. If you didn't burn it on the road you didn't pay a road tax. If you burned it on the highway you had to pay that tax. That's what kept up the highway. The guy that wore the highway out had to pay for it, you know, pay road tax...pay road tax on it. Finally, diesel oil...the first gallon of diesel oil that I ever remember Dad buyin' it was cheaper. He bought his first diesel tractor, diesel oil was seven cents a gallon. Can you imagine that?

HH: Just barely.

MM: I worked for... When I was nineteen years old I worked for a valley farmer out in the middle of the valley here. He seemed like... He seemed like an old man to me. I think his name was Miller, Bill Miller, William Henry Miller...William Dougley Miller, W. D. Miller. He had a new Caterpillar and he didn't know beans about it. I climbed... I was eager to learn how to take care of a Caterpillar and was crazy to drive it. He wanted somebody that was willing to work to take care of that new Caterpillar and he paid good. I got two dollars a day and my room and board.

HH: Wow. Oh.

WM: That was big wages in those days.

MM: I milked the two cows. I thought old W. D., as she called him, I thought he was crazy. I still thought _____. [laughs] He didn't work much, but I never worked for a finer man than W. D. They milked seven cows. I got up at four, his wife got up at four and her and I went out and milked those seven cows. Then they had a little hand-powered crank cream separator – of course there was no electricity. An electric cream separator _____. I aimed to be in the field, golly, with the Caterpillar at six in the morning. I started to get the cows milked and I went out and took the skim milk to the hogs and the calves or whatever. She got back... Bill, or Old W. D., he piled right out around ten o'clock maybe sleep in until eleven. He's just movin' around... He says, "You think you always have to turn right on this corner here by the house where I'm tryin' to sleep." [laugh] But they were good people. I worked for a long time, several summers. I was workin' there when Wilma and I was goin' together.

WM: You..._____ she hadn't...she had classes or somebody showed her how to _____.

MM: She was a good cook. She could _____ milk cows she was a good cook.

WM: She was good at anything. She could do anything. She made a lot of her own clothes. They didn't have any children. Oh, she had...

MM: She had...

WM: Orin and he had two because...

MM: She come in this valley, originally, in a...oh...Ozarks.

HH: Oh.

MM: Ozarks. Bill had lost his first wife and he needed somebody to keep house and somebody to cook and she got a job. I don't know. It wasn't much of a house. It'd been a house too long. Run down bad. I'd done some work on it, built a nice porch, screened-in porch for 'em. Talk about economy, I went to _____ a while he said...he swore quite a little bit _____. One day...we have an old hand-powered, hand-cranked _____ mill that'd screen the weeds through there _____ wheat cleaner.

- And he'd say, "You know, I don't know whether I'm gonna be able to hand onto this now," 'cause he hadn't ___ in a while. Nice farm, rundown, the barns, the houses _____. He said...The way things are I plow...I plowed a hundred...no, a thous...I plowed a 160 acres in four days. I averaged 40 acres a day. Six hours... Six in the morning, six that evening. And milked those pesky cows. But anyway, diesel oil, as I mentioned earlier, was seven cents a gallon. He said, "the way costs are now, what it costs to operate a farm and the way it is" – he didn't say high wages. I wouldn't know what he was talkin' about, two dollars a day. But anyway...
- WM: But two dollars a day and room and board was high...pretty high wages for farm labor then.
- MM: I finally got a job in town workin' at the mill. I and my pig went someplace and bought my noodles. I'd been just as well off to stay where I was. I realize that. But he told me this in confidence, he said...I knew he banked over at Union, First State Bank there in Union...he said, "I borrowed seven or eight..." I think he said "seven years ago I borrowed \$15,000 at the bank." Using his words, "I don't think I'll ever be able to pay that off." He said, using these words, he said, "I can't even hardly pay the interest. I can't shake that debt." That land wasn't being farmed _____. You didn't have to be a college graduate to notice that. Well, I don't want to... I don't want to...
- WM: That's the truth.
- MM: I farmed the very best I knew how, my dad was a good farmer. Five years _____.
- HH: Wow.
- MM: And his wife was a good little old hard worker, frugal, conservative – whatever word you want to use.
- WM: She ___ him. ___ five years and then, as I said, she made our wedding cake. It was a five tier wedding cake all decorated. She got the little top sent from New York. We've got the little topper still.
- HH: Wow. What does it look like?
- WM: Most of our children and my sister have used it.
- HH: Wow. How fun!
- WM: There's not another like it.
- MM: As I mentioned a couple times, I tell this to any company. Wilma and I have had a good life here. It's been a hard life, but we...we've had...there's been some shining roses, of course there has, but we've had a good life here.
- HH: That's adorable!
- WM: Isn't that cute? And there's an arch...[end tape]

4/02, T2, S1

HH: When you were kids, what did you do for fun?

MM: In the wintertime we made homemade skis and we skied down the hills. Springtime we had willow fish poles and went fishin' a lot down here...

WM: In the river.

MM: ...Catherine Creek.

WM: Part of it goes through our land.

MM: We went picnicking, we done that. Of course school days...country school days we played baseball, done a lot of that, and then some after we was out of school we'd still play baseball some. It seemed like... It seemed like to me that I was kind of like the young fellow I used to know...you said that he was sixteen years old, fourteen years old maybe...and he didn't know what his name was. He said, "I thought my name was Getwood." [laughs] I remember that wasn't the fun part of ___, but we'd go up the hills, my dad and us boys, two of us boys, probably. We'd cut the wood and we liked that and camp out up there. I mentioned pasture they owned and ___ the ranch. And they said that they had twenty-seven or eight miles of fence. I thought it must be forty-seven or ninety-seven. But it was fun. We'd camp out in the ___ and ___ but mostly us country boys we worked pretty steady here on the ranch and help our old Granddad, Old Mike, ___. He paid us for it, for work. We got a staggering big three dollars a week. We saved that money, us three older boys, that three dollars a week. We spent the month...not we, Old Mike, spent the month down ___ with one bicycle. We had a lot of fun ___ on his bicycle. Bicycles in those days were very top of the line, not any of the bells and whistles bikes, of course, for twenty-seven dollars. ___ the bicycles. There was no two-speeds or anything like that.

HH: So did you each save up money for your own bike? Or did you...

MM: Yeah. We saved up three dollars a week ___ yeah.

HH: For twenty-seven dollars?

WM: For four weeks in a month.

HH: About nine weeks then.

MM: Yeah. Not too much was available. Of course good wages and all.

HH: Was it satisfying? Did the bikes meet your expectations?

MM: Yeah. ___ our chores...helpin' our folks with the chores, milking – of course hand milking in those days. My brother and I we decided we could really wheel those bikes and come right here at twenty miles to Elgin. You could get a milkshake for fifteen cents. Sunday afternoon we'd wheel them bikes...we'd ride down to Elgin ___ five, six o'clock. We left town and go around the ___, it's shorter that way. We'd go down and get a fifteen cent milkshake and ride our bikes back. We just really wheeled along on those bicycles.

HH: You did. Yeah. And that was dirt roads that you rode on?

MM: Yeah. Well, over here in the La Grande-Joseph highway that was...well, maybe later on it was. I can remember when they got the gravel road in here. That was

in 1928, I think. Prior to that it was... ___ just a gravel road could be an all-season highway. It was high livin'. All-season highway.

HH: When were they doing that?

MM: Pardon?

HH: They made the...they were gonna make the all-season highway?

WM: It was gravel.

HH: When about was that? About what year? Do you remember?

MM: 1928, '29. Then this one come...we got that in 1948. Her and I lived here, as we mentioned earlier. Kerosene lights. These grandsons we finished raisin', Jeff, the oldest...youngest boy, I had an old kerosene lantern hanging in the basement. He wanted to know what that was. He said, "did make good light." "Oh, not bad." "Tell me about it." Took the cap off here and poured in the kerosene and got an old chimney and got smoky and got to wash it, you know. He said, "Do you light it with a match." I said, "Not with a match, it took two matches." "Oh. Why'd it take two?" You'd light it then you'd light another match to see if it was burning. He wanted to know if it made a good light. Oh yeah, it made good light. No, it didn't. Smoky chimney and an old kerosene lamp. There's an old kerosene lamp.

HH: Right there, yeah, I saw it.

WM: That's all we had when we moved here, those kind. And then my folks – they had lived in Elgin and they had with the mantels on 'em.

MM: Big old mantels, you know. But they made good light, but not much of it.

HH: So when you were in high school, then, you were in La Grande.

MM: Yes.

HH: Now what did you do as a high school boy for fun?

MM: We didn't go out for sports.

HH: Why?

MM: My dad he was here on the ranch alone, pretty much. Of course Mom was here. He'd say don't ___ I have chores that I want you boys to help me do over the weekend. I didn't give a hoot about sports. I'm not a...

WM: None of 'em did. They didn't have sports in their grade schools and they didn't care whether they played or not. None of 'em did, did they?

MM: No. They had some football games in Cove, I think. I know they had baseball.

HH: Yeah, they did have football games. I talked to Mr. Roy Comstock...

MM: Yes, I know him.

HH: ...and they had football.

WM: But you kids never went to Cove school.

MM: Then all those people in High Valley in school days they had a good baseball team they called the Town Team. There was an old pioneer family up there, there's still some of those people, descendants of those pioneer people. ___ Zanders, you've heard that name?

HH: Yes.

MM: One fellow... One of those fellows, at least, bright red hair, real red hair. They called him Red Alex, Red Alex, Alexander. He was on the top baseball players, I think, of any place at that point. They went off...well, they had a few celebrations around Cove and ___ Cherry Festival. I remember when I was a kid the down a ways from Cove cherry season, cherry pickin' time, it was a ___ time.

I'll have to tell ya a little bit about that. One year we didn't go to Cove for cherries. ___ Over at Union there's a ___ there. I think it's a little bit south and west of Union. People lived down there by the name of ____. They live over there for a little change and I stole from them. There's a little store, a little kind of summer, soda pop store down by ___'s place and I never had any money. In those days kids didn't have money like kids do nowadays. I saw kids drinkin' ...

WM: Most kids didn't have any money. I didn't either.

MM: I saw kids ___. I thought, boy, I wish I had some ___. I went down to this little store, the ___ was taking his lunch ____. There was a shelf, oh, about probably as high as the shelf ___ a single stick of gum, stickin' out about this far just layin' on that top counter, top shelf, stickin' out about that far. I kept lookin' at it. ___ chewing gum, oh, I wish I had some gum. I don't know that I've ever chewed any gum in my life, I suppose I must've.

WM: I don't think so. I think that...

MM: Anyway, ___ stick of gum. People in there, kids buyin' soda pop, chewing gum. I saw that stickin' out there and I took hold of it and pulled it out like this and put it in my pocket. I knew better than to steal. I knew it wasn't right.

HH: How old were you?

MM: Five or six years old, I suppose.

WM: You were in school.

MM: Yeah, to school a little bit. I got out of there, I's thinkin', "What'll I do if they happened to see me get that?" ___ I got back to where the folks were, I'd go about chewin' that gum and, no, I'd better not. They knew that I didn't have any money. Where'd I get it? I wasn't gonna ___ That bothered me so bad. We had a picnic lunch. I high-tailed it back down to that store, there was still people in there. Same place on the counter, I slide it up there to the counter. In the meantime I had that out of my pocket and I had it in my hand and I...like this, stickin' out. I got out of there.

HH: You put it back.

MM: I put it back.

HH: Good.

MM: ___ for that, whatever, chocolate is now days. I've never forgot that. I don't know how many groups I've told that, well, ___ We was raised that way. To go to church has been a part of our lives ____. Anyway, do you have more questions?

HH: Yeah.

MM: ___

HH: No, that's good. I appreciate you sharing. When you... You said that in high school then that you came home to do chores, but you also had time somewhere in there to date your wife. What did you do on your dates? What did people around here do for an outing together?

MM: Back up just a little bit into high school days...high school days the theaters had what they called a pal night. Every Thursday night the moving picture downtown La Grande, two for a quarter – how nice – to go to the picture show. Big spender, you know, I might've had a dollar, oh, probably not a dollar, maybe seventy-five cents. ___ high school days they had a homeroom, you know, where they counted noses there, who was there, who wasn't, whatever. Her dad was the

district manager for the telephone company in La Grande. She was an only child. She wore good clothes and she had ___ allowance, kids get an allowance. She was takin' shorthand. I never took shorthand, but I was kind of interested in that and I'd ___ before the class took ___. Her name was Eraline Barber. ___ crooked line, you know, shorthand. "Eraline, what's that?" "Oh, that's so-and-so," she'd say. I kind of liked her. We used to date once in a while, but she'd get...she had her allowance and we'd go to town on it. Wilma and I, of course I was workin' then, big, big, money, two dollars a day, why shouldn't I? Wilma fixed a picnic lunch and we'd go ___. She was raised in the Presbyterian church in La Grande and they had a young people's meeting Sunday night. We'd go together to that. We'd go huckleberrying.

WM:

MM: Yeah, go get huckleberries.

WM: Should I tell her about...

MM: I never learned to swim, never did learn to swim, so I didn't go swimmin'.

WM: We'd been out to Cove swimming pool, but we'd watch 'em swim. I could've gone in 'cause I could swim, but he couldn't so we just watched. But I want to tell you a little ___. My sister was ___ and she had quite a few ___ and she ___. And this was probably two years wasn't it? Two or three years, before I got a ___. Three years. And he came to get her, he was her age, and he came to get her – I think you were goin' to the movies, weren't ya?

MM: ___ back.

WM: ___ and then they ___ I was in what they called Expression class. I don't think they call that now. They still got something like that.

HH: What did you do in Expression class?

WM: Acting and...what I was doing right then was making a scrapbook of...

MM: Movie stars.

WM: ...movie stars. And I had all my stuff down on the floor when he came to get Jean. So I was cuttin' things and he asked me if he could have some scissors and help. So I found him some scissors and he got down on the floor and helped me. He didn't...you know, time was hard, but we didn't realize it. Jean was ___ because he was helping me and ___. [laugh] But anyway, he was the only boyfriend that she had that I liked. So when he decided to come and see me ___ no, I was out of high school then.

MM: You was in the high school, yeah.

WM: When you started goin' with me?

MM: No. No, no. But when with the scrapbook...

WM: Yeah. I was in my freshman year. So Jean ___ she didn't go with him very long. And then he decided that he would come to see me, and I was out of high school. And so he came...I don't think he even called to say he came, I think he just came. Anyway, he decided to go to Cove and go swimmin'. I thought he was just coming to see her again. It'd been several years, but I never thought about him coming to see me. So I put her in the middle of the front seat and we went to Cove and went swimming. And then when he came again ___ and I did the same thing and had her sit by him. And when we got home that night he said...she'd gone with him, but not very long...and so she said...

MM: You missed the __ part. We went to the picture show and in those days I'd wear striped overalls, bib-overalls...

WM: Brand new ones, and a white shirt and a tie and white shoes.

HH: Wow.

WM: And when he came to go to the movies... That was after this that's I'm telling now. I was going with you then. Anyway, back to where we were, the second time that he came we went to the movies __ she pushes me __ and I don't want to go to see him. So they went and went someplace for something and then he decided to come in. I was home alone. My folks had gone someplace and Jean had gone someplace – I didn't remember where they were – anyway, I had to __.

HH: Bottom line, we've been goin' together ever since. [laughs]

WM: And so he came and I said, "Jean's not here." He said, "That's alright, I don't want Jean," or something, I don't know what he said, didn't come to see Jean. I told him "I have to __ tonight." He said, "Fine, I'll go with ya." __ But he had told 'em if I wasn't...you know, if I did the same thing ___...

MM: __ The other thing we used to do, we mentioned horses earlier, there was a big old horse barn out there __ gone now, but they used to hang horse shoes up on a pole. If this is the pole and the horseshoes were about this long. We pitched horseshoes __ clear back __. We done a lot of pitchin' horseshoes. Never get good at it like that. Oh, we gotta entertain this country kids, you know. __

HH: Let me ask you a different sort of question, and that is, did you get the newspaper out here? Did you have a radio? What was your connection to the world, I guess?

MM: They took my Grandmother – Wilma mentioned ____ . And old granddad, Old Mike, I don't think he had a ____ . He couldn't even sign his name when he was married. But anyway, my grandmother some grade school education, she was a reader. She read lots. She churned butter in an old churn, you know, she read the newspaper. She took a newspaper, they called it the *Portland News Telegraph*. It was their Monday morning paper she'd get Wednesday, about Wednesday noon.

WM: By railroad.

HH: Oh.

MM: By railroad. __ Where do you live? Up around the hill. __ up there. I knew that route. I'd substitute on that mail route for one time...for a while one time. She got __ the news. Old Mike he couldn't hardly read. He pretended to read. He'd hold the paper up and he'd look over the top, you know, so people would think he could read.

WM: She taught him to write...

MM: In 1935, that was long before the power lines, electricity, by dad bought an old – it wasn't old – brand new Montgomery Ward battery radio. Had a whole bunch of batteries...batteries alone probably weighed fifty pounds dry...dry cell batteries. They would get "Amos and Andy" and old...the old guys we used to listen to, radio programs, __.

WM: "Amos and Andy" and then the other one...

MM: Some of those old, old programs. But that was... They got the newspaper, to answer your question. The battery radio, that was about __ newspaper news three or four days old or maybe older than that before my grandmother got a hold of it.

HH: Did she share the news with you or read out loud?

MM: Oh sure. She read out loud. Couldn't read very fast, but she'd go along with her finger and it was black, I remember that.

HH: Did she read other things? Other books like the Bible or stories?

MM: Yeah, she read the Bible. She was raised a Mormon. I have her old Mormon bible here in the house. I remember her reading her Mormon bible. She read her bible. She took quite a few magazines. I remember the old Saturday Evening Post that __. Are they still around?

WM: Yeah, they're still around. But it was a big one.

MM: Yeah, quite a big. It was about like that.

WM: And now they're just like regular magazines.

MM: __ should get a hold of it, well, they didn't have a lot to read. To my knowledge, she died in 1935. She had never heard a radio. I don't think she ever heard a radio.

WM: You mean television?

MM: Hmm?

WM: You mean television?

MM: No. I mean radio. Radio.

WM: You said she had a radio with batteries.

HH: In 1935.

MM: Dad did.

WM: Oh. I see.

MM: It definitely was a little different pace than nowadays. __ move slower. __ but __ on a farm. __ my dad __ 16th of July and they always had a big old willow creek __. __ just givin' __ story. Birthday party. You remember, that's the 16th. Don't forget that. Neighbors come in and they'd have a big picnic, you know. Homemade ice cream and fried chicken. There was a lot of that.

HH: So birthdays were a good time for partying and everybody getting together?

MM: Yeah.

HH: What sort of games... Did play games or just eat and fellowship?

MM: Fellowship mostly. All the men talked about how the haying was going and how the crops was growing. The women talked about how they made jelly or how they were gettin' ready to...[end tape]

2/04, T2, S2

HH: What about you living in town? What was your life like as a child? Do you remember your parents reading much, when you had a radio come in?

WM: We got that __ radio... I don't know what year that was. Do you? That was probably about the same time as...

MM: __ listen to __, I imagine.

WM: But that was probably about the same year that they got a radio here.

MM: Yeah.

WM: What year'd you say that was?

MM: 1935, if I remember right.

WM: That's probably when they got a radio. It had __ you could... Mother read quite a bit. Mother had been a teacher and she had taught at Punkin Ridge School.

HH: Summerville area?

WM: Yeah.

HH: Oh.

WM: She was the first teacher _____. And in those days they could...they could teach right out of high school. So that was her... She lived in Ontario and this was the first school that she taught and that's where she met my dad _____ lived in _____. So Mother read a lot, but Daddy _____ kind of like Manford's dad. He went to the fourth grade. But he could read, he could read the paper. He was self-taught. He'd just read it himself. But he could read the paper. But he didn't read books _____. She's read _____, they were married, and making a family, probably worked for the Union County. He was a road builder, graded roads and plowed snow in the wintertime. They always had so much snow out at Summerville that's where most _____. He went out there one time and they had lots of snow and he was forty-eight hours before he got done. But the people brought him food and he went someplace and stayed all night. _____ But he...it was snowing and there was a lot of snow and he would stay there and help the people get out. But he worked at that for...I think from 1943 _____.

HH: Do you remember, did your mother read to you as a child?

WM: Yes.

HH: So she read books. What sort of... Did she read children's stories to you?

WM: Yes. What she read to us was children's stories. And we had Nancy Drew. One of our relatives would give us some Nancy Drew books. She'd read those to us. So we were old enough to read...but then when we were old enough to read we read those things. It was _____.

MM: Do you know if we're _____?

HH: I think I'm doing really fine, thank you. Let's see another question I could ask. Oh, this is what I wanted to ask you. Nowadays, we really recognize the pioneers that came out here on the Oregon Trail and you were sort of, Manford, you're folks were sort of part of that, but quite a bit after that. They were pioneers comin' out here to farm from Kansas. When you were growing up did anybody talk about the pioneers coming over? Did you study that in school? Did people think about that much?

MM: It don't seem like I remember much about it. I'll tell you one thing that I remember talking about. They had this part of the...come about by the government get people excited to come from the East to the West and organize states to settle, settle land. They had a deal and they instigated about what they called the Pioneer Train, pioneer train railroad passage. They say that the family, man and his family, wife and children, and they had a load of two head of livestock and maybe have a few cows or a few horses or they have a walking plow or little farm machinery, encourage those people to come to Washington, Oregon. And the railroad, through the government, they called it the Pioneer Train. And they had the coach, the passenger coach, the wife and children could ride in that, but the man couldn't. They had a car, a cabin car to haul the livestock if they had some horses and cows and there was sheep. He'd ride in there. That was free. But he had to pay the trade on the horses, the livestock. The wife and the children they rode in the passenger coach. They had a place where they could

get something eat on the trip out. That's how Granddad, Old Mike, ___ - my dad was a baby – come to Oregon. And they pulled into Imbler, Oregon in the wintertime, snow on the ground, and about all they had was the clothes on their back, but ___ of course they got free passage on the train, the wife and the children. They say... They talked about hard times and, of course, hard work. In this book here – you'd like to read that?

HH: Yeah.

MM: Take it home with one stipulation.

HH: Bring it back?

MM: Get it back. I get it back. [laughs]

HH: Yes.

MM: 'Cause there's not very many of them around. I've let people have it different times.

WM: But she did have 'em made, though, for our children ____. It's a wonderful book. She did a lot of research for it and she's a good writer. We'd like to get her to write another one now for this generation. But this is all the generation of the grandparents.

MM: It'll tell you more in a better way than a...a lot of things that they'd done. ___ that in there. But anyway, oh, some of the men worked in logging camps and some were...worked on the road. Now, I've heard my dad and granddad, more my granddad, talkin' about the road tax. They had a road tax. Everybody paid taxes. Pay taxes to keep up the roads. But they could work on them dirt roads...they could put in a new culvert or they could build a...they called 'em drags, drag the roughs down a little bit, the dirt roads. And they could get a team of horses, you have a plow they called a road plow and they could do some plowin', plow a ditch along the road or something and drain the water or drain...but they could work out the roads then.

HH: Oh. So instead of paying if they put a labor into it.

MM: Yes. Pay with labor. They'd loan 'em so much for a team of horses...

HH: That was your grandfather that was doing that?

MM: Yes. ___ I don't have any idea what the taxes were. I don't think I ever heard 'em say. It was real money and they didn't have much of that.

WM: A lot of people in the county did work out their tax amounts.

MM: I mentioned what they called the old farmer's telephone line. ___ go out you'd set that pole...if it was long enough you'd set...sometimes you'd set another post in by it and then wire...tie it up to it ____. They were hardy people and they were people ____. You'll see that in this book. ___

HH: Okay. I look forward to reading it.

WM: Yeah. You'll enjoy it.

MM: I got it out when ___ schedule here that talked about the olden days. And I ___ I still enjoy ___ I'll tell you something about the old...old days, almost before my time, but I did this then. A ___ I never ___ When it comin' to harrowin' your ground down we didn't have a harrow. ___ to harrow the ground down. But we did have thorn bush that grew along the riverbank. Farmers in those days, the young ___ and more of the old farmers, they started out with a thorn bush for a harrow. But they cut that off...they generally cut three of 'em, three of whole

bush comin' off right at the ground. They'd pull the trucks together like this and one down the middle and they'd tie it and they'd put a chain on the end. The trunk of those __ horses, three horses or whatever it took to pull that brush to harrow the ground.

HH: Wow.

MM: I done a little of that. We didn't have a harrow and got a harrow...we had...eventually we had good machinery, good combines, good tractors, a bulldozer. We – I don't mean to brag – but we had good machinery and I enjoyed it and I took great care of it, built a shop. Still got that. I like to go out and fire away sometime and tinker around.

WM: He built our garage and our shop, our barn, and then there's another shed out there.

HH: I have to ask this question, it's only because I'm ignorant, and that is, harrowing the ground? Is that...like I see when I drive through the valley the humps of ground go up and straightened out?

WM: Yes.

HH: Okay.

MM: We like to fall plow with the tractors, they break up ____. You lay up in the winter...the freezing and pouring, freezing and pouring ____ and the harrowed ground much nicer in the spring. We done a lot of that. Dry falls... I remember one fall here there was exception, you wanted to get the fall plowing down. Of course we'd get on in the spring of the year, early on, get a seed bed and we'd sow rye and barley, oh brother. Cattle __ we didn't do ____ just walk right along through that. What they done is wherever the dry part of ground was __ shoots out ____. But we done a lot of that fall plowing and that made the seed bed better. As I said, the freezing, the thawing ____. We ____ we wasn't much for ____ grass fields we pretty near had to burn everything and straw, we got rid of it. Grass diseases __ another one.

MM: Didn't hardly _____. At times ____ invent something that they could put on it so that they don't have to drive. Grass __ big bale, big stacks. ____ that's what that come from, the grass fields. And they tell me they cut a lot of that down in Idaho someplace. I'd say they raise toadstools, __ mushrooms. I don't care... I don't care for toadstools. [laughs] They probably raise a lot of the...

HH: The mushrooms.

MM: ...mushrooms. You bet.

WM: And that's the biggest __ close to Caldwell.

MM: Down in that area.

HH: Caldwell.

WM: Yeah. And I think that's the biggest mushroom raising place and producing, in Oregon anyway.

HH: I know that mushrooms like dark places.

WM: Mm-hmm. Yeah, we put that straw on, plant their mushrooms and...

MM: Keep 'em moist.

HH: Right. And covered from the sun. I didn't know that. That's interesting.

WM: And most of the __...a lot of the __ come from this valley and, I suppose, Baker Valley, too.

MM: They don't raise... They raise more hay over there.

WM: Oh.

MM: This Imbler area, I mentioned earlier about the grass trade ____, mentioned Imbler, Oregon, was the blue...considered the bluegrass capital of the world. Maybe that was propoganda made to advertise their seed, I don't know. [laugh] ____

WM: It said... I think they called of the United States, but there wasn't grass raising except in the United States.

HH: Right.

MM: Raised a lot of that better seed. The __ Scott people so concerned about raisin' clean seed. They say people already got weeds, they don't want to pay to grass seed with weed seed in it. They want it clean. They had a program in connection with Oregon State College and they'd hire kids, O. M. Scott, they'd hire kids, college kids, to come out and walk those fields in the growing season, spring season, before harvest, more so in the growing season, and check 'em for weeds, noxious weeds. They turned that field down to the college...Oregon State...test of Oregon State College, checked it for _____. Wilma and I never had a field turned down.

WM: But we worked hard on it. ____ the man that – what is his name?

MM: Bob?

WM: No. That you said brought you into the grass field?

MM: George Royce.

WM: George Royce. He says, do it yourself, you'll get it done better. We hired some kids from the college and they came out and we went down the rows after they did...

MM: Hoed behind 'em.

WM: ...and hoed behind 'em so we finally...we didn't have 'em very long because they weren't getting 'em out.

HH: So your grasses were inspected, then?

MM: Yes. If they didn't pass that you didn't harvest it _____. See, we had a contract with them for a \$1.10 a pound that had been cleaned, that made the "easy test", that was for ___, weed-free, __ grass seed. \$1.10 a pound _____. We had, I think, three crops that we raised a ton of clean hard seed per acre.

WM: Of course it had to be inspected.

MM: And that counts up... It took a lot of them old _____. [laughs]

WM: One of the things that we have, and have had, we used to have, a travel trailer. A lot of things that we got was bought with grass money that we'd 've never had if we hadn't raised grass. Because you don't make that kind of money raisin' wheat.

MM: You know, I could drive you around the valley and show you the people that raise __ grass seed. They are the better farmers to start with. They are the ones that got the better machinery, got new homes. The places... I had a banker tell me one time, he said, I can drive...I can drive around the valley here and not know where you live, or where you live, better kept farms, takin' pride in the farm, there isn't old machinery and old junk settin'... You've seen that place around the valley. I can tell you they're not gonna make any money. If their places are junky and the land, they farm just like they keep the place. And they're not maki'

any money. But they're... That's the way they're farming in the field. They're not making any money.

WM: Like he said, there's only one of the four boys that opted to stay with the land. He's always loved his land and taken good care of it ___ but no junk.

HH: It's very nice. Speaking of your property here, I brought a camera – it's a digital camera, so it doesn't use any film so hopefully the battery will keep it's power – but I'd like to get a picture of the two of you and, I think, perhaps a picture of these buildings that you built, if you don't mind.

MM: That's fine. We can do that.

HH: Can you think of anything, any parting words, that you would like to share?

MM: It's been fun to meet you. I know where that new home is, how beautiful it is. And again, that place sure is fine.

HH: Yes.

MM: You'll have a little tyke __. [laugh] Pretty sure. Do you have hobbies?

HH: I do. I do, actually. I...[recording stopped]