EMERY OLIVER

Union County resident for 92 years

AN ORAL HISTORY

Interviews in August and November, 2002
and February, 2004
at his home in Summerville OR

Interviewers: Marshall Kilby and Eugene Smith

UNION COUNTY, OREGON HISTORY PROJECT
2004
(revised from 2003)

UNION COUNTY, OREGON HISTORY PROJECT

An Affiliate of the Oregon Historical Society

A non-profit, tax-exempt corporation formed in 2002

In collaboration with Eastern Oregon University
Cove Improvement Club History Committee
Elgin Museum & Historical Society
Union Museum Society

Purposes

To record & publish oral histories of long-time Union County residents
&
To create a community encyclopedia

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copies of transcripts are $4.00 each + shipping & handling

Preface

Much of the history of a place is stored in the memories of people who have lived there. Their stories may be told to family members, but, unless someone makes a special effort to record these stories, they become lost to future generations.

Each of the historical societies in Union County, Oregon has begun to make that effort. Tape recordings exist in several locations, some of them transcribed in written form, others not. A more ambitious and thorough effort seemed necessary so that more of the oral history of Union County could be captured and preserved.

The Union County, Oregon History Project, begun in 2002, is making that more ambitious effort. One of its principal purposes is to collect as many oral histories of older Union County residents as possible and to make them available in both taped and written form. This edited transcript is part of the series of oral histories to be produced by that project.

About the Interviews and this Edited Version

The interviews with Emery Oliver took place at his home in Summerville, where he has lived with his wife, Thelma, since 1947. At age 92, Emery is cheerful and alert mentally; his mobility is slightly impaired because of a fall and subsequent hip replacement—not enough, however, to prevent his going to the Summerville Post Office/Tavern nearly every morning for coffee and conversation.

The first interviewer was Marshall Kilby, a volunteer with the Union County, Oregon History Project, in August and November, 2002. Eugene Smith, Director of UCOHP, was the second interviewer on February 11, 2004.

Heather Pilling's full transcription (available for research purposes) presents the literal contents of the interview. The edited version presented here differs from the literal transcription in the following characteristics:

- reorganization of content

- deletion of some extraneous comments

- omission of false sentence starts and other normal speech fillers that detract from readability

- normalization of pronunciation and grammar in conformity with standards of written English.

EO designates Emery Oliver's words, *I* the interviewers'.

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Born in Union County into a Pioneer Family

I: Would you tell me when you were born?

EO: I was born March 27, 1912.

I: Where were you born?

EO: Three miles north of Summerville.

I: In your parents' house?

EO: Yes. There had been a big snow storm. In those days most farms had rail fences that caused snow to cover the roads. So the neighbors had to use their horses to break track through to Elgin for the doctor to come in the sled and deliver me. A new doctor in Elgin named Kirby delivered me.

I: Were you the first child born in that family?

EO: No. The folks had three before me—all killed in a fire.

Emery in 1912
Photo courtesy Emery & Thelma Oliver

I: What kind of a fire?

EO: House fire.

I: Do you know the cause of it?

EO: They thought the kids tipped a lamp over. It was 4th of July and one of my uncles had gone to town to buy fireworks. When he returned to my parents' house, he put them up in a cupboard. These kids wanted them and, of course, the folks wouldn't let them have them. My dad went down to milk the cows or do something in the barn, and my mother was caring for the baby. She heard a big crash, ran inside, and the house was on fire. She ran out and hollered for my father to come. He got two of the kids out, but they were dead; the third one didn't even get out.

They figured the kids had tried to climb up in the cupboard to get the fireworks and then upset a kerosene lamp my mother had sitting on a table.

Emery's parents, Bessie and Burt, ca. 1905
Photo courtesy Emery & Thelma Oliver

My dad's hands were badly burned. Someone took him to La Grande to a doctor, who was going to cut his hands off, but my dad wouldn't let him. Whoever took him to La Grande brought him back to Elgin, where Dr. Kirby said he didn't know whether he could save his hands or not, but he sure wouldn't cut them off. He saved his hands all right.

After the fire, a brother was born two years ahead of me and a sister two years after me.

I: Was it your father's parents who had come to the Grande Ronde Valley?

EO: Yes, they came in 1864. My father was born here.

I: What were your father's parents' names?

EO: Dad's father was Hiram Wesley Oliver. He always went by Wes. Everybody called him Uncle Wes. It was kind of funny about these Olivers: they all seemed to go by nicknames. When my great-granddad and his wife came across the plains, he was 61 years old and she was 59. They were pretty tough old people, I'll tell you.

I: Do you know about what year that was?

EO: 1864.

I: Do you know why they were coming here?

EO: No. They moved around a lot for some reason. He was born in Indiana. They went to Iowa and came from Iowa to here.

I: Do you think that they were aiming to come specifically to the Grande Ronde Valley, or were they maybe going to the Willamette Valley?

H.W. Oliver, Emery's grandfather (1827-1908)
photo courtesy Emery & Thelma Oliver

Emery's great grandmother, Catherine Boone Oliver(1806-1888)
photo courtesy Emery & Thelma Oliver

From Emery's Early Years

Photos courtesy Emery & Thelma Oliver

At Mill Creek with brother Harold (left) and friend Ella Bay (ctr), ca. 1915

With brother Harold (r.), ca. 1916

Top row: Emery (l.) Virgil Sanderson ctr.). Emery's brother Harold r.)
Front row: neighbor Grover l.), Emery's sister Madelene (ctr.) and Lyle Snderson (r.) , ca. 1917

Emery (ctr.) entering 9th grade at Imbler High School, with friends Fay Hamilton (l.), Zack Pugh (next to Emery), and Bonnie Osborne, 1925

EO: My granddad and two of his brothers stopped off here in the train that came here. Joseph Oliver stayed over winter because his wife was pregnant; then they went on to the Willamette Valley. Elial Oliver went on with the rest of the wagon train to Portland. Later he moved back and had a farm over at Pomeroy, Washington. I was named after one of Joseph's sons, who surveyed for railroads; the first one he surveyed went from Pendleton to Heppner [59 miles southwest].

I: Tell me more about your grandfather.

EO: His first wife died in 1874, I think it was, and then he married my grandmother, Maria Burt. They had ten kids all together; my dad was the youngest in their family—one girl, all the rest boys.

I: Where did the family live?

EO: He built two log cabins.

I: How do you think he knew how to do that?

EO: I suppose they built log cabins back where they were in Iowa. The first winter they got in these cabins and a big storm came up so that they couldn't get out in the morning because it drifted the cabin practically clear over with snow. They'd built a fireplace in there, so they let the fire go out and he had to crawl up the stack out of the fireplace to get out. He shoveled the doors of both cabins loose so they could get out.

I: How did you hear about that?

EO: Through my dad and my cousin Rebecca.

The Oliver Sawmill and Later Fiber Factory

I: What did the Olivers who stayed in the Grande Ronde Valley do when they got here?

EO: In 1865 my granddad put in a sawmill run with water power.

I: Was that right after he arrived?

EO: It was the next year.

I: Did he own the land?

EO: He homesteaded a lot of land. My great-granddad homesteaded some, too, right next to it.

I: Was his sawmill near where Dry Creek School is now [approximately two miles north of Summerville]?

EO: Yes.

I: What was the stream that supplied water power called?

EO: We always called it Mill Creek. Some of the old government maps had it as Spring Creek. A fellow come along one time and asked me where Spring Creek was. I'd never heard that before, so I said, "The only one I know is on the other side of the mountain up here [Mt. Emily]." "No," he said, "it's right here." He got his map out and showed me. But it was always called Mill Creek as far as we knew.

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Two Views of the Oliver Sawmill in Summerville

Photos courtesy of Emery and Thelma Oliver

I: Mill Creek at that time must have had a heavier flow than it does now.

EO: Yes, a little bit more.

I: Isn't it fed by Sanderson Springs?

EO: Sanderson Springs, yes [approximately four miles north of Summerville].

I: Do you have any descriptions from your grandfather of what the creek was like—how full it was or how fast it flowed?

EO: No.

I: Was the mill still there when you were a child?

EO: No. It went out in about 1902. But when my granddad had the sawmill, he even hauled lumber across the mountains to Walla Walla. And he hauled a lot of lumber to La Grande for buildings there.

I: Was he making two-by-fours, do you think?

EO: He made everything.

I: What was it called?

EO: Oliver Mill. Later, Uncle Turner, the second of my granddad's kids, built a three-story building there—a pine-needle fiber factory.

I: Lyle Sanderson told me a little about that pine-needle factory. He said that the idea was to make mattresses.

EO: Yes. They made mattresses.

I: What else do you know about that?

EO: My folks had some when I was a kid that we slept on. The folks told me that in early days, people used them to kill bed bugs.

Portion of fiber factory at left
Charles Oliver children on horse (l. to r.): Athol, Loueene, Bonnie, Edgar
boys at right: Dewey, Mark, ca 1908
Photo courtesy Emery & Thelma Oliver

I: Could you describe that kind of mattress?

EO: It was a little bit hard.

I: Was the cover made of cloth?

EO: Yes, a cloth outside. It had green and white stripes.

I: How thick?

EO: They must have been about six inches thick.

I: Was it heavy?

EO: Yes, it was pretty heavy.

I: Could a child pick it up?

EO: A ten-year-old could.

I: [accepting a bottle of pine-needle oil] Here's a bottle of pure pine needle oil from La Grande, Oregon, made at the Oregon Pine Needle Fiber Company. Was that the name of his business?

Bottle containing pine-needle oil made at Oliver fiber factory, Summerville, 1905
Photo by Eugene Smith

EO: That's what he called it.

I: Who ran the business?

EO: My uncle, Turner Oliver. He had that a little while and pretty quick they found out that cotton was better than fiber for mattresses.

I: Did you hear stories about how Turner Oliver got the idea for this pine-needle factory?

EO: No.

I: Obviously there were lots of pine needles around here.

EO: There were pine trees clear to Summerville.

I: Do you think that there had been any other company anywhere else that made mattresses out of pine needles?

EO: I have no idea.

I: Do you think his idea was that he could make a lot of money out of this kind of business?

EO: He thought he'd make money, but he lost money. Didn't run long enough. He had a big baler in there and big bales of needles that were stored in there when I was a kid going to Dry Creek School—just north of the Dry Creek schoolyard over on the creek. We kids went over there, rolled some of the needles up in paper, lit a cigar, and smoked it. It's a wonder it didn't kill us. There were also some barns back in that corner; kids rode to school on horses and put their horses in the barns.

I: Do you have any idea how the pine needles were gathered?

EO: They had people out picking them by hand.

I: You mean gathering them off the ground?

EO: No. They were all green. They took them in to a boiler and they steamed them. Then they run them through a machine that my dad had used to pick beans. It ran by hand; it went around and had spikes sticking out. After we raised our dry beans in the year, we ran them through that machine onto a canvas. The beans were hulled there. Then we'd get out in the wind and keep pouring them till all the trash blew out of them.

I: How was that machine used with the pine needles?

EO: They ran the pine needles through it, I suppose, to tear them up a little.

I: Were the pine needles about three or four inches long?

EO: No. They'd be seven or eight inches.

I: Did they want them to be shorter?

EO: They wanted them busted up. The reason they hit them after they steamed them was to get the juice out of them—the pine needle oil—which was supposed to cure everything.

I: So this bottle of pine needle oil was supposedly a kind of a medicine?

EO: Yes. Read on there what it's supposed to cure.

I: "For burns, bruises, and cuts apply externally." I'm beginning to understand the process now. They boiled the needles in order to get the oil out and then that would mash the needles up some. Is that how they made the fiber?

EO: Evidently.

I: Did they press the needles together?

EO: They ran them through a machine to fluff them up.

I: Do you know where they tried to sell these mattresses?

EO: They shipped bales of fiber to Portland, where the mattresses were made.

I: Do you have any idea how much they asked for the fiber?

EO: No.

I: But you said you slept on one?

EO: Yes, it was a little hard.

I: When was the last time you saw one of those? Do you think that any of them might exist anywhere?

EO: I doubt if there'd be any anywhere.

I: Why did the fiber business quit?

EO: When the factories started using cotton, they didn't want pine-needle fiber anymore. Uncle Turner lost quite a bit of money, I think, on that mill.

Woodard Wagon Road

I: Tell me more from what you know about your grandfather's taking wagonloads of lumber over to Walla Walla.

EO: They built the road up past what they call Ruckle now. In those days they called the area up on top Summit Prairie.

I: North of Mt. Emily, do you mean?

EO: North of Summerville.

I: But the road went up into the mountains north of Mt. Emily?

EO: Yes, way northwest of there. [giving interviewer an envelope] That name was after the road washed out up here.

I: This is an envelope that says "Woodard Wagon Road Company Incorporated, Elgin, Oregon. Established 1871."

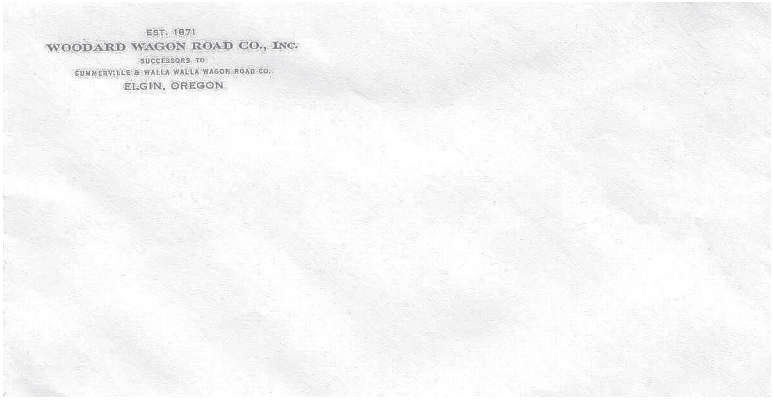
EO: The Woodard Road took the place of another road: [reading] "Successor to Summerville-Walla Walla Wagon Road Company."

I: Who was Woodard?

EO: The guy's name was actually *Woodward*, but they called him Woodard for some reason. He was here in the early days of Summerville. He finally moved to Tollgate and ran the toll road there. He came out to Elgin to get supplies in the wintertime, pulling a sled, started back, and never made it. Several men hunted for him but never did find the sled or him. It's kind of a mystery of the mountains.

I: What was your grandfather's role in rebuilding the road?

EO: He had stock in this road company. He put a lot of money in to help build it. It evidently started in 1871, and it washed out in a big storm, I think, in '83. I heard from a Summerville oldtimer that there was a lot of snow, and in January a big rain melted the snow. She said the water came down and flooded everything—water running right through Summerville. You could hardly get down the street because the water ran there so bad. They couldn't repair the road because the damage



Envelope with return address for Woodard Wagon Road Co., in which Emery's grandfather owned stock
Original courtesy of Emery & Thelma Oliver

was too bad. So they just tore it out. The work crew lived up where Ruckle Springs is now. There was no brush, just big pine and fir trees up there in those days.

I: What do you know about your grandfather's participation in building the road?

EO: He sent some of his older boys up there to work on it. It cost him $5,000 to pay his share when it washed out—quite a bit of money in those days.

I: I'm wondering if you could tell me more about the process of building the road. Did they use a fresno, for example, with a horse?

EO: They didn't use a fresno too much on that. They used just a scraper. They had to build a lot of bridges up the creek. A lot of them had eight horses and two wagons behind.

I: Two wagons hitched together?

EO: Yes. In the wintertime on the other side of the mountain, they had to unhook and put stuff on sleds and go on down to a place where they could load it back on the wagons. They hauled stuff clear into Idaho.

I: So the market in the Grande Ronde Valley for the lumber that your grandfather had sawed wasn't enough to keep him going? He had to go beyond this valley?

EO: Evidently. I read a piece that Turner Oliver wrote that said, when the railroad come into La Grande, they built a big warehouse and all the lumber was furnished out of the Oliver mill.

I: What else do you know about what your grandfather did after the sawmill closed?

EO: By that time he was getting pretty old, but before it closed, he put in about a 20-acre orchard on top of the hill. Before that, people thought nothing would grow there.

I: Which hill—Pumpkin Ridge?

EO: On the breaks of it. He had all kinds of apples, pears, and cherries; he raised all kinds of fruit. I think there were 24 walnut trees. And after my mother sold the place to Larry Starr, he cut the walnut trees down. They were big.

Woodard Road-building equipment and crews
Photos courtesy Emery & Thelma Oliver

I: Where do you think he would have sold the fruit and the nuts?

EO: He'd get somebody to go with him—he was getting old—load the hack up with fruit and go to Elgin and other places. In early days Summerville was the only town in this end of the valley; there wasn't any Elgin or Imbler. It was really quite a little burg here; Charlie Oswald claimed it was bigger than La Grande at one time, but I don't know about that. Charlie said that Summerville at one time was bigger than La Grande.

Early Summerville and Native Americans

EO: My dad told me that his dad said that the pine trees went clear to Summerville up there—all big, nice pine trees. Up where the folks lived, half a mile north of Dry Creek Schoolhouse, my granddad had a place where people could camp. He was very religious and held church meetings there. He wouldn't cut those trees. My dad told me that the Indians had camped in there a lot, and each tree had a blaze on its side where the Indians cut in to get the inner bark for their tanning. The Indian trail came right down the mountain by what some people call Indian Rock; one branch of it went toward La Grande and the other came across close to where my dad had his place and went through the little park my granddad had saved. My dad said he could remember that the trail was about 18 inches deep from the wear and tear of the horses going through.

I: Did he have any direct connections with the Indians, do you think?

EO: My dad said that, when Joseph had his war over in Wallowa, the women went to Summerville to a fort, but he and the boys stayed home. He talked like my granddad knew Joseph. He said, "I knew Joseph. He was a good man; he wouldn't bother anybody; he wouldn't harm anybody."

I: Do you think that Joseph came to Summerville?

EO: I think so. I think they came over here to dig camas. Anytime the Indians came by he told his wife to feed them something.

I: Did you say there was a fort in Summerville?

EO: Yes. At the north end of Summerville.

I: I noticed that there's a sign there [on Courtney Lane] that says something about a stockade.

EO: Stockade, yes.

Knowing a Member of the Hug Family

I: Did your father know the Hugs?

EO: Yes. Al Hug, that was on Pumpkin Ridge. He and my dad were pitchers for the Summerville baseball team. They all got in a wagon and went to La Grande to play baseball. The La Grande team had a guy who was supposed to have been a Pacific Coast

homerun hitter. They bragged about how they were really going to take Summerville. My dad said he pitched the first four innings; he worked like the dickens on this guy and got him out every time. Then Al went in to pitch. When Al pitched, he reared back and the ball would almost smoke when it went by. He could really throw hard. My dad was a curveball pitcher.

Come the last inning, Summerville was one run ahead. La Grande had the last up, with a guy on base. Al threw a couple past the batter, really fired like before. They were all hooping and hollering about the great home run king. Al said, "We'll see if he can hit this," and he underhanded it. The guy put it clear over the fence. My dad said they wouldn't even talk to Al when they were coming home they were so mad at him.

He told another story about Al when a whole bunch of them went to town to the circus. They'd give $10 to anybody who could throw a bear wearing boxing gloves off its feet. That bear threw most people down right quick. Al said, "I can put him down" and signed up to throw the bear. He ran in quickly, grabbed the bear by the hind feet, and hit him with his shoulder. Down the bear went on its back, though it cuffed the heck out of Al before they got him pulled off. Al got the $10. My dad used to laugh about that.

More about the Oliver Forebears

I: What did your father do when he was a young man?

EO: He worked some in the sawmill, and he ran the ranch. He was a farmer.

I: You didn't mention a ranch in connection with your grandfather. Do you mean that the orchard was on a ranch?

EO: Yes, My granddad, I imagine, had close to 300 acres altogether. My great-granddad had homesteaded 162, I think it was. It went clear up to where Sanderson Springs was.

I: Was your father using some of the land to grow wheat or crops like that?

EO: Wheat, barley, and hay.

I: What education had your father had?

EO: Just grade school here. The first school a half mile south of Dry Creek School. There's a gravel pit now where the first Dry Creek School was—Dry Creek #17 School. Finally in 1885, I guess it was, they built the school where it is now. Turner Oliver was there after people had twice voted down money to build a new school. That made Turner mad. "Damn bunch of people," he said, "you've got better places for your hogs to sleep at home than you have here for your kids to go to school in." It finally passed and they built the new school—the one that's still there. I made two grades the first year, so I went there a total of seven years.

I: Did your dad have cattle, too?

EO: Yes, my dad ran stock on government land. They built two cabins up there to use when they were for riding stock. One was at Finley Creek. My dad helped build that cabin, along with Clyde McKenzie, Dillard Choate, and Art Burns. They went up and stayed in that cabin near the cattle.

I: Can you tell me more about where it is?

EO: It's up going toward Ruckle—right off that way, northwest of Summerville, more north than west. Two or three years later, a group of men went up on that ridge just off of Nine Mile Ridge and built a log cabin in there. Frank Oliver, Hugh and Earl Park, Frank Woodell, and John Schleppy all worked on that cabin. They got Dick End's dad to haul the lumber to floor it. He come across the old trail on the back end, tied another bunch of boards on each side of the horse, and went down the ridge across from the cabin. Then we put a rope around the boards and slid then down to the bottom there where the cabin was. What a noisy thing! I helped do that.

They had hired a guy in the summer to herd the cattle, keep the trails open, and haul saltlicks around to different places. He stayed in one or the other cabin all the time and herded up there quite a few years. Finally, he hung himself in the cabin.

I: Does anyone know why he hung himself?

EO: No. He was an old bachelor. Nobody ever did know just why he hung himself.

I: Who found him?

EO: A kid who lived here in Summerville. He was camping up there. He went over to visit with the guy that evening, and the next morning went over to the cabin and there the old guy was—hanging there. It just about scared that kid to death.

We used to go a lot to one of the cabins to hunt up there. One year I remember that quite a few cattle didn't come in, and they didn't know where they went. So they asked one of the Murchison boys and me if we'd go back up to that cabin and ride around in the snow to see if we could find any cattle tracks.

Ruckle Ranger Station, Oct., 1934
Photo courtesy Emery & Thelma Oliver

Cabin at Finley Creek, Oct., 1935
Photo courtesy Emery & Thelma Oliver

We went over Middle Ridge and saw some ski tracks ahead of us. When we got down to the cabin, we saw mud all over the snow by the cabin. It was Jay Johns from Elgin, who had gone in there to trap. He had shot a deer—out of season. When he heard our horses coming, he grabbed the deer, ran, and hid it in the snow. We rode around and saw a few elk, but we didn't find any cattle.

I: Was it common for deer and elk to be killed out of season?

EO: Every once in a while. There were quite a few people who killed them whenever they saw them, yes.

I: Were they doing it just because they needed the meat?

EO: Some of them. One guy I knew used to shoot them and didn't need the meat, but he liked it for the sport.

I: Is that cabin still there?

EO: No, it burned down.

The Second Dry Creek School, which Emery Attended

I: Tell me a little more about your memories of a typical day at Dry Creek School.

EO: We used to play Anti-over a lot—throwing a ball up over the building, somebody catching it, and then coming around one end of the school and trying to tag people.

I: Was this mainly for boys to play?

EO: The girls played, too. You never knew who was coming with the ball to tag you. You'd see somebody coming and run around the other way. If they tagged you, you had to go on the other side.

I: And how did you determine who won?

EO: When they finally tagged the last guy, that was it. If you were alone on one side, you didn't have a chance.

I: Why was that game fun to play?

EO: Oh, just to be doing something. As soon as we went to school, we took a baseball glove and a bat, and we had baseballs. We played ball.

I: Before school, during recess, and after school?

EO: Recess and all, yes.

I: Tell me what you can remember about a typical day inside the school.

EO: Usually the teacher would pick out two

Dry Creek School as it appeared in 2002, the exterior little changed from when Emery attended first through eighth grades, 1920s
Photo by Eugene Smith

or three of the seventh or eighth graders to help the little ones.

I: Tell me exactly what you did to help the little ones.

EO: We helped especially in their arithmetic and reading.

I: When you helped them with their reading, did you have them read something and then you'd correct them if they couldn't get the words right?

EO: Correct them, yes.

I: When the teacher was having you learn history, for example, what did she have you do?

EO: We had history books.

I: Did she say, "I want you to read pages so-and-so."

EO: She'd assign a certain two or three pages.

I: And then what?

EO: Then maybe she'd give us a little test on what we were supposed to read. Maybe she'd have us get up and answer questions orally. Arithmetic was always my easy grade. When I went in the Navy—I was 28 years old—they sent me to trade school. They gave us mathematics problems. After a couple of days, I'd sat down and wrote the answers out. It was easy for me; it all come right back to me. Pretty quickly those chiefs came around and said, "Oliver, we can see we ain't teachin' you nothin'. You go around and help these guys." So they'd sit and drink coffee, and I'd go around and do their work for them.

Attending High School in Imbler

I: After you finished eighth grade at Dry Creek School, did you go to high school?

EO: I went to Imbler to high school. My dad bought an old 1926 Ford touring car, and my older brother he drove it two years—I was only one year behind him—and then my sister she drove it a couple of years.

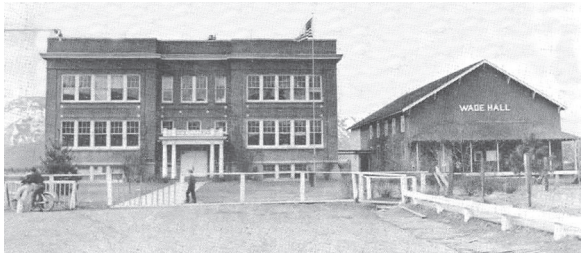
Boys' baseball teams for Summerville and Dry Creek schools, ca. 1922
(Emery in back row, 3rd from left)
Photo courtesy Emery & Thelma Oliver

I: Can you remember anything about an eighth grade graduation ceremony?

EO: No, they just give us a diploma. The county superintendent was the one that signed the record when we went from one grade to the next. He came out to visit once or twice a year.

I: Did you graduate from Imbler High School then?

EO: Imbler High School, 1929. You're from La Grande, so I have to tell you a story. In 1929 Imbler had had baseball teams for years; we'd never been beaten in baseball, but we didn't win very many games in other sports. The Mormons of La Grande built a gymnasium next to their church in 1928 [buildings, now demolished, were at 4th Street between N and O Avenues] In '29, we got to go to a basketball tournament in that gym. Wallowa High School had a very good team that year. Wallowa and La Grande drew the first game. We didn't like La Grande too well because they were always much better than us in basketball. So we all rooted for Wallowa and Wallowa beat La Grande. Boy, they were mad at us. In the next game we played Enterprise, and they beat us, so we had to drop down and play La Grande. They beat us 70 to 20, which was terrible of them. So the next spring, they sent a baseball team out to try us in baseball. We beat them 23 to 0. La Grande didn't have baseball for 10 years; they went right to track. They couldn't take it! We would have beat them 100 to 0 if we could have played them.



Imbler School (elementary and secondary) with Wade Hall gymnasium at right, ca. 1930s
Photo courtesy of John Turner and Richard Hermens

Daily Family Life at the Olivers'

I: Could you describe a little about your family life—food, clothing, and the routine around the house?

EO: The folks they wanted us to go to Sunday School, so we walked down to Summerville to go to Sunday school. When Sunday school was over, we had lunch with it. Then we'd go over to Glen McKenzie's and go swimming in Dry Creek. Of course, we'd swim in the nude; we didn't have bathing suits.

I: Let's get back to life inside your house. What was breakfast like?

EO: The folks were good to us. Mother made oatmeal mush every morning. I think she made that every day of her life, practically, although once in a while we got hotcakes. She also made biscuits everyday. The folks butchered at least six pigs every year, and we had bacon and ham.

I: Was she cooking on a wood stove?

EO: Yes.

I: Who had to get up first to get the stove started?

EO: My dad did that.

I: Was it going and all warm by the time you got there?

EO: Yes, by the time I got downstairs.

I: What happened after breakfast?

EO: Usually after breakfast, it wasn't too long till we went to school—half-a-mile. We walked there. During high school, we had to stay in Imbler a couple of months in the wintertime. The folks had to board us out there. My father came after us on Friday night with a team and sled.

I: Who would you stay with?

EO: We stayed with Mrs. Litteral the first year and from then on with Hattie Wise.

I: Living there as though you were part of the family?

EO: Yes.

I: Do you know how much that cost?

EO: About $1.00 a day.

I: What did you do for lunch usually?

EO: When we went from home, we took a lunch to school. After I got out of school, when my sister was still in school, they had their first bus—an old truck with wooden benches around the outside of it.

I: An open truck?

EO: It had a canvas up over the top.

I: What was in your lunch?

EO: Mainly a sandwich or two—a lot of times pork sandwiches. We didn't get too many bananas.

I: Maybe an apple?

EO: We ate lots of apples.

I: Anything to drink?

EO: No. We just drank water at school.

I: What did dinner consist of?

EO: Usually in the evening, we had a pretty good dinner waiting for us. Mother cooked a pretty good dinner. Maybe she'd have a roast and the next day we'd have roast beef sandwiches.

I: Was this all food that you'd grown?

EO: Mostly what was home grown.

I: What time did you go to bed?

EO: Probably 9:00 or 10:00.

I: What did you do between dinnertime and going-to-bed time?

EO: If it was basketball season, I went to Imbler to practice. I didn't take any books home. We were supposed to take books home and study them. I didn't, so I didn't get very good grades. My worst grade was in English. I forget the name of the book the teacher wanted us to study for six weeks but I took it home and read it clear through. I wrote the answers to her questions. "Boy, Emery," she said,

"I sure wish you'd study like that in English all the time. You'd get the top grade here in six weeks." I never told her that I read it all in one night. But anyway, when I was a freshman at Imbler High School, they started to build the gymnasium—what they call Wade Hall. All of us boys took agriculture, and the superintendent was the agriculture teacher. He arranged our time to go to take our classes so that part of us took them in the morning and part in the afternoon; the other part of the day we worked on that gymnasium. We dug the trenches for the cement, helped mix cement, and wheeled it in. When they started putting stringers across, we helped with that. We laid some floor and tacked siding on. When they got ready to shingle, we put our basketball shoes on and went up on top; we had races up and down the top of that roof. It's a wonder somebody didn't fall off, but nobody got hurt. Imagine nowadays, they wouldn't even let a kid around it when they are building.

I: Who was Wade?

EO: It was a woman named Lucy Wade, an aunt of Dick Hibberd [a long-time resident and rancher in Imbler, now deceased]. She was an old maid and had quite a bit of money. She agreed to give $500 or so for the school gymnasium if they would name it Wade Hall.

I: And it's still in use.

EO: Yes, but they want to get rid of it.

Newspapers and Radio

I: In your early years did you read a newspaper regularly?

EO: My folks used to take *The Oregon Journal* that came in the mail six days a week. I'd go down every Sunday morning and buy an *Oregonian*. When it went up above 50 cents a copy, I was going to quit, but I still buy it.

I: What about local papers?

EO: I take the La Grande paper. You've got to have that—see who died, see if I'm still alive.

I: You probably remember when your family got the first radio.

EO: Yes.

I: About 1920?

EO: I don't remember what year it was, but it had three tuners on it. It was a Thompson radio. My dad cut a couple of the tallest tamarack trees he could find, dug holes, and put a hook in each. He pulled a double antenna up with a horse and ran it between the trees. We could get anything on that radio. My brother sat up at night and listened to stations in New York, Pennsylvania, and other places. When they had a fight for the championship, everybody in the country came. The house was full of people to listen to the fight. They'd have a round and then they'd talk about the round.

I: Did you listen to the radio often?

EO: Yes.

I: What kinds of programs were you getting?

EO: Amos and Andy. The first radio I heard belonged to my uncle's father. I never heard such a squeaking, squawking thing in my life.

I: Did your family have a phonograph?

EO: Yes.

I: With a lot of records?

EO: Yes.

I: Was it dance tunes?

EO: Mostly dance tunes.

I: Any opera?

EO: No opera.

Jobs after High School

I: What was one of the first jobs you had after high school?

EO: After I was out of high school a year or two, I worked for the farmers around here—$1.00 a day and board. I had started working for my uncle, Wayne Park, when I was about ten years old—driving the derrick on the header. I had a team of horses and a cart. I'd raise the derrick and make big swings up with loads of hay. I was pretty young to be driving the team; I even had to back them up and wait for another load to come in.

Two winters I went to California. A neighbor here ran a fruit rig in Orange, California, and he give me job picking lemons. I didn't get rich, but I made enough to live on. Lynn Woodell and I went first and then Virgil Sanderson and I went. We also got jobs pulling tents on orange trees to fumigate. Whatever we could get to do, we'd work at.

I: It sounds to me as though when you graduated from high school, you didn't have a plan about what kind of work you wanted to do the rest of your life.

I: Were you a kind of a drifter for a while?

EO: In 1937 I went to Sisters, Oregon, and got a job at a sawmill pulling lumber on the green chain. I worked there two years. In the wintertime they shut the mill down for a while, and the guy that ran state highway crews there gave me a job driving an old push-truck for pushing snow off the center of the road. I had to work midnight till eight in the morning. During the night sometime I had to stop and put 50 gallons of diesel in the rotary snowplow.

I: Why didn't you stay around the Grande Ronde Valley to work?

EO: There weren't too many jobs here in those days—1937 and '38. The next year, I went down on the coast of Oregon and went to work for a fellow named Carl Washburn, who had the biggest store in Eugene—a five-story building, kind of like Meier and Frank in Portland. He was rated a millionaire. He had bought 2900

acres on the coast, and in some places where the sand had blown up. I planted trees, brush, and grass on them part of the time. Then we built a road up around the mountain and leveled off the place where he was going to build a big house—70' by 120'. When fall came, he told me, "Emery, I hate to lay you off, but I'm gonna have to. We're gonna get in that war with Germany, and all my money's gonna have to go to that war effort." So he never did build that big house. After he died, his wife gave it to the State of Oregon and that's where Washburn State Park is, about ten miles north of Florence.

Effects of the Depression

I: Let's come back to Union County. What were some of the effects of the Depression in this county that you remember noticing?

EO: We never went hungry. Of course, nobody had money in those days.

EO: One winter a bunch of guys came in here and were working for an old guy way up by Finley Creek. One of them killed a deer. Somebody turned him in, so the game warden skied in. He saw the deer and saw how hard up they were, so he just turned his head the other way and came back out. He stopped at the store in Summerville and said, "Those people are starving up there. Can you guys take them something to eat?" So a bunch of us packed in groceries to them, skiing in. The guy told us, "The game warden had me dead to the world. That deer he saw was all we had to eat."

Life in Summerville in the Early 20th Century

I: Tell me more about life in Summerville in the early part of the 20th century.

EO: They had all kinds of lodges in Summerville. The Odd Fellow building, which is still there, is probably the oldest building in the county, built in 1876. The lodge started in 1874. Before that they had Independent Order of Good Templars. There was a Grange.

I: Did you belong to any of those groups?

EO: I belong to the Masons. The first thing I did when I came back from the service was to join the Masonic Lodge. I've been a member since 1947. Later I joined the Odd Fellows Lodge and have been an Odd Fellow over 30 years. I love to work in the Masons. A neighbor and I studied and got what is called a proficiency in the work. After reading a whole little book, we had to

Odd Fellows building in Summerville as it appeared in 2003 (built in 1876)
Photo by Eugene Smith

take an examination three times. Passing them gives you proficiency for life. I don't think I could pass it again now.

In 1937 the lodge at Summerville was getting short on members, and Elgin was also having trouble so they all went to Elgin. I was in Elgin when that building burned up in 1947, waiting for my third and last degree. Another guy was ahead of me when the fire siren rang. I looked down behind and the fire was right there by us.

I: What did the Odd Fellows and the Masons do for Summerville? Were they helping people in Summerville in some way?

EO: They did a little good, you bet.

I: Like what?

EO: If somebody was hard up, they took up a collection.

I: So one of their main purposes was to help people in need?

EO: Yes, it was.

I: What did the Odd Fellows and the Masons do socially?

EO: They had dinners once in a while.

I: Was everybody in the community invited ?

EO: Sometimes. In Elgin during the Stampede, they have a breakfast and sell tickets; then they used that money to help the Masonic Eastern Star Home. I belong to the Scottish Rite, too. I used to work on the football games all the time till it got so I couldn't go. Hugh Park told me that, when he was a young guy here in Summerville, around the turn of the century, three lodges had dances on Saturday nights. He said you could hardly find a place to tie your saddle horse in Summerville. Everybody in the country came to those dances.

There were also two saloons in Summerville and a brewery. I went through the records and found the name of a fellow who joined the Odd Fellows Lodge, and I imagine he must have built the brewery and sold it to Ott. George Ott had the brewery. Wayne Park told me the beer he brewed would sit in the glass and the foam would stay on the top. He said it was a lot better beer than you get nowadays. The foam goes off the stuff they serve nowadays. I've been looking for a picture of that brewery for ten years and I can't find one. Nobody's got one.

I: How much drunkenness did you observe?

EO: I think they had quite a bit in those early days. Like the old man Shaw here in Summerville. The Shaws came in 1863 with the Scotch train; a whole bunch of Scotsmen come in—Murchison, McDonald, and Shaw. Old Shaw drank quite a bit. He drove a sled to La Grande one night in the wintertime and got pretty well oiled up. He drove home and didn't realize, but by the time he got home, his fingers were frozen. He had to go to the doctor, who

The Town of Summerville in Early 20th Century

Photos courtesy of Emery & Thelma Oliver

Main Street of Summerville, early 1900s
(Odd Fellows building furthest away on left side)

Methodist parsonage at left
(where Emery and Oliver were married),
Masonic Hall at right (both now demolished)

Klees' direct current generating station at right;
sawmill center foreground

Fire destroyed one whole block of buildings on Summerville main street, April 23, 1909.

cut his fingers off. Wayne said the old guy went to the tavern, ordered a glass of beer, picked it up like this [miming picking up a glass with his wrists] and drank it. He'd stay there and get drunk. Finally, why, the old lady and her nephew came with a wheelbarrow and wheeled him home.

I: Did Summerville ever have a jail?

EO: Yes, we had a jail in Summerville. We had a stagecoach robbery one time.

I: Tell me what you remember about that.

EO: They were shipping gold from the other side of Union. A doctor here in Summerville and another couple of guys stopped the stagecoach somewhere up on the mountain. But the stage guy from Union had got wind of it, so he took the gold out of the box and put it in a safe; he put rocks in the box. The thieves got the box and all it had was a bunch of rocks. The doctor came back to Summerville, where he was arrested and sent him to the pen.

I: What other kinds of crime were there in Summerville and nearby?

EO: It wasn't too bad. I guess probably stealing a few head of cattle.

I: I've seen one or two different explanations for how Summerville got its name. What's your understanding?

EO: There was a guy named Sommerville (*o* instead of *u*). None of the old-timers that I knew ever heard of him. Whether it was true or not, I don't know. The way it was always handed down to me was that there was a group of settlers who wanted to build a town up north and call it Winterville. The people farther south wanted to put one there since there wasn't as much snow, and they wanted to call it Summerville.

I: I heard that story. Do you think that's true?

EO: I think that's true. I really do.

I: There never was a town called Winterville, was there?

EO: No. Up where the Oliver Mill was, above Dry Creek Schoolhouse, people down here called that Slabtown. I guess there were slabs all over around that old mill.

Forest Fires Nearby

I: Do you remember any fires in the trees around here?

EO: Yes. One year the fire started near here and went almost to Elgin.

I: Was it a lightning fire?

EO: No, somebody had built a fire and it got away from them. I was just a kid then—about seven. My dad was out fighting the fire. My mother made a bunch of food that we took on the hack over to the fire and fed the guys working it.

I: How did they fight the fire?

EO: They had a hard time fighting fire in those days.

I: There wasn't anyway of getting water, was there?

EO: No. My dad had a team and that old scraper; he tried to build a berm to stop it, but I think that fire jumped right over it. He didn't have enough men.

I: Did most of the fires just burn themselves out then?

EO: It finally burned itself out, yes. I don't remember what really did stop it.

Entertainment in and near Summerville

EO: They used to have dances around the country. Duck Slack's* dad used to do the fiddle and my ma played the organ. They had an organ in those days—an old pump organ. They danced clear till mornings sometimes. We kids all lay down on a bed somewhere and went to sleep finally.

I: Did people bring a lot of food to these dances?

EO: They'd bring food, yes.

I: And a little wet stuff?

EO: I suppose they had a little liquor there. We used to shivaree everybody in the country, you know.

I: I know what a shivaree is, but would you explain it?

EO: When we got married, I was learning my lectures in the Masonic lodge. (We got lectures between every degree.) I was up at the neighbors, and they got to acting kind of antsy. Thelma finally said to Vita, "Are they gonna shivaree** us tonight?" Vita said, "Yes, go home." So we came home. We didn't use the bedroom then; we just had a bed over here [pointing to a place in the living room].

I: It was this house?

EO: Yes. We turned the lights off and lay down on the bed. Pretty quick, they opened up with shotguns and beating on tin cans—the darndest racket you ever heard.

I: Were they all close by the house?

EO: They were all outside here. We finally got up and broke out the candy for the women and cigars for the men.

I: Oh, they wanted to be invited in?

EO: Yes. They came in and stayed the rest of the night.

I: Was this on your wedding night?

EO: No. We'd been married a little while, not very long [1947]. I remember when I was a kid—probably six or seven years old—Sam Craig got married. We kids sneaked around behind the house where we were going to shivaree. He had some old bait out there for coyote traps. We got into that

*Editor's note: The edited transcript of interviews with Clifton "Duck" Slack is available from the Union County, Oregon History Project.

**Dictionary definition of shivaree: a noisy mock serenade to a newly married couple, who are sometimes expected to provide refreshments for the serenaders

all over our shoes. But we kids all got a cigar. We thought we were pretty big smoking a cigar.

I: After they shivareed you, did you shivaree other people?

EO: I don't think so. That was about the last one I we heard of around here. We had an old fellow here at Summerville, it must've been in the '20s, maybe early '30s—an old bachelor, who got married. The woman had a couple of kids. I wasn't with them, but a bunch in Summerville went over to shivaree. They got up there, beating, and he came out with a shotgun and ran them off.

I: So not everybody liked the idea?

EO: Most people liked it, yes.

I: What did you like about it?

EO: Just waking them up, making a lot of noise, and getting a cigar—strictly fun.

I: Did most people who were subjects of the shivaree liked having that done to them?

Emery and Thelma Oliver shortly after their marriage in 1947
Photo courtesy Emery & Thelma Oliver

EO: They kind of expected it.

I: Was the shivaree common from the earliest days that you can remember?

EO: Yes.

I: Did you ever wonder where that idea came from?

EO: No. Never thought about it.

I: Do you remember your parents' talking about it?

EO: I don't.

I: Do you think it was more common out in this end of the valley than it was, say, in La Grande?

EO: I wouldn't know. When I was a kid, we went to town only once a year, usually for the circus and for the folks to buy us clothes for going to school. We always had to go to the circus; that was quite a deal to us to go to the circus.

I: But you didn't know much else about what was going on in La Grande?

EO: We didn't know too much about what was going on. After we got in high school, we went more.

A Potential Railroad Line near Summerville

EO: In early days, surveyors for the railroad came up here to Summerville; they talked about bringing the railroad around the side of the mountain [i.e., Mt. Emily] and going through the mountain with a tunnel. They still talk

about that. It would have been an awful job in those days.

I: Did you have any direct experience with that?

EO: No, that was before my time. I heard stories about it. They came from Union and ran a grade clear into Summerville. It's still visible off west of the cemetery—about an eighth-of-a-mile of it.

Return from Military Service and Resumption of Farming

I: Let's talk about your house. You've lived here all your married life?

EO: Yes.

I: Has your house been a good one to live in for all your married life?

EO: Yes. I'm going to die here. It's where we've lived all my life, and I want to stay here.

I: What would you like to see happen to this house?

EO: When we die, the kids will sell it, that's for sure. We have 180 acres here.

I: Who built this house?

EO: Van Long built this house.

I: In about 1890?

EO: 1893. My uncle, Wayne Park, and his brother bought it in 1919. I worked for them so much that, when I came home from the service [in 1947], they wanted me to farm on some land I rented from them, and I used their machinery. They had a Caterpillar tractor and about a year later, I bought a secondhand John Deere Model-A, one. I farmed most of their land, too.

I: Did you ever have a tractor with a cab?

EO: Never did. Those old diesels, open like that, were noisy!

The Parks had bought a combine in 1927, I think it was, that had a 12' rig on it. When they first bought it, I hauled grain with a team and a wagon to Imbler. That was a long trip with horses.

I: How much could you haul in a wagon?

EO: About 100 bushels.

I: So that'd be about three tons. How many trips did you make a day?

EO: Three or four. Sometimes I got in at 8:00 or 9:00 at night, and Annie would have something left for me to eat.

I: You still had to take care of your team too, didn't you?

EO: I had to take care of our team at night, and I got up early in the morning to take care of them before breakfast. They had eight head of horses on the combine.

I: How old were Wayne and Annie Park when you started farming for them?

EO: He must have been 65 or 70.

I: She was your aunt, wasn't she?

EO: Yes, my mother's sister, a Sanderson.

I: Did they always live in the old place over here?

EO: It was moved out of Summerville. Wayne told me that, when they moved it out of Summerville, he wasn't married to Aunt Annie, but they were in the house when it moved. It was moved with an old stump puller, which they hooked onto the house. They wound it up, took the house a short distance, and repeated the process.

I: Did you work on the old steam engines for threshing when you were a kid?

EO: I didn't work on the engine when I was a kid. When they come to thrash, Pete Arnoldus ran the engine. He got us to break the slabs from the sawmill up so he could throw them in the fire box. We kids worked our butts off.

I: Did just one guy own the engine?

EO: Clem McKinnis, Simon Woodell, and George McDonald all had them—three outfits.

I: And then they went from farm to farm?

EO: Farm to farm. Then later they got smaller outfits and gasoline tractors to run. When they started raising grass, that's what they used.

I: What did you raise?

EO: Wheat, barley, grass seed, and hay.

I: How many acres were farming for Wayne and Hugh?

EO: 550 acres.

I: And you did most of it yourself?

EO: I did most of it.

I: Do you remember what kind of combine you used?

EO: I bought a little combine; the first one I had that only cut a six-foot swath. It was a Case combine. Then I bought another secondhand combine was an Oliver that cut 14 feet.

I: Do you remember how many acres a day could you cut with that six-foot Case?

EO: About ten acres. It wasn't very many.

I: Do you remember how many bushels an acre you got?

EO: If we got 50 bushels to the acre, we were doing pretty well.

I: You weren't using fertilizers, were you?

EO: No, no fertilizer.

I: Did you have sprays?

EO: We had one spray for thistles and morning glory.

I: Did you summer fallow?

EO: Yes. We usually raised one year of wheat and one year of barley and then summer fallow.

I: That was a hard way to make a living, wasn't it?

EO: Yes. When I started farming here, Wayne had a lot of vetch; the fields were full of vetch. Thelma and I pulled vetch and got rid of all of that damn vetch.

I: Is that the stuff with the purple flowers?

EO: Purple flowers and it's hard to pull up.

I: Cows like it.

.

EO: The cows like it, yes.

I: What crops have you been raising on this land?

EO: We raise wheat and grass seed. We raised peas for a few years but didn't make any money out of the damn peas. We had to try them. But the price of wheat was pretty good this year, and our grass seed has done pretty well this year. But machinery costs so much nowadays—terrible, the price of machinery.

I: Have you done most of the work on the farm yourself?

EO: I farmed till I was 75 years old.

I: Did you have hired hands?

EO: Part of the time. The kids [i.e., three daughters] helped a lot. When I was 75, I said, "That's it."

I: Where did you get most of your knowledge about farming?

EO: Just helping the Parks when I was a kid and from my dad.

I: Did you have any connection with the county agricultural agent?

EO: Not too much.

I: Did you figure that you knew all you needed to know?

EO: If I'd known when to sell my wheat: that was where the trouble was.

I: That's something you can't control very well.

EO: Something you can't control.

I: Why did you decide to go into grass seed?

EO: There was more money in grass seed.

I: Does growing grass seed take about the same amount of labor as growing wheat?

EO: A little more labor for a little more care. At first, we had to shock and then bind it. Then came the thrashing machine.

I: What did you enjoy most about farm life?

EO: I was my own boss.

I: Which meant what? That you didn't have to listen to what anybody else thought?

EO: I didn't have to listen to somebody else tell me what to do, no. I had the responsibility.

I: In a farmer's life, wintertime is downtime, isn't it? You don't do the same kind of work. What did you do in the winters?

EO: Two winters I drove from here to Lookingglass [north of Elgin] and fired the boiler at the sawmill. They used a boiler to make steam to keep the log pond thawed out. Another winter, I worked for Ralph White, running the line up on the side of Mt. Harris for the television rig he put on top.

I: Did you ever work with the apples that were raised around here in the early 20th century?

EO: I picked a few fruit, not very many. I remember, when I just a kid,for old Marshall, who lived in Imbler. My brother and I went there with my dad and picked apples. Mostly we went there just to see what was going on. Old Marshall was sorting the apples, so we kids pitched right in and helped him sort apples. He said, "I'll hire you kids. You want to work?" So we sorted apples for ten cents or two bits an hour, I think it was. We thought we were rich as hell. But I never was too good an apple picker.

Memories of H.L. Wagner, the Grass Seed Innovator

I: Tell me some of the things you remember about H.L. Wagner and how he got grass seed started here.

EO: When he first came, he raised a lot of peas. He lived in my uncle's house near Summerville--at the edge of town. When I started farming, he talked me into planting Astoria bent grass. I got the ground ready and he sent his hired man, John Monroe, over to run the seeder and put it all in rows, as we did in those days.

I: When H.L. had this idea of growing grass seed here, had he done it before? How did he learn how to do it?

EO: Evidently he raised some in the Willamette Valley. He had a farm down there in Monroe.

I: It was a completely new idea for other people in Union County, wasn't it?

EO: Yes, a new idea.

I: Did he have arrangements with buyers?

EO: I don't know who he sold to. When I came home from the service, he heard I was home, so he told my brother, "You bring him out here. I want to see him." So my brother hauled me to Imbler. As I walked across to meet him, he hollered at a guy named Carl Fuller, who was working for him, "Come in here, Carl. We're gonna get some news from Emery." He set a bottle of whiskey up on the desk in front of us and said, "I don't know what you can tell me about Pearl Harbor, but I want to know what happened there." So I told him. The three of us just about killed that fifth of whiskey.

I: The techniques for growing grass were somewhat different from growing wheat and other crops, weren't they?

EO: Yes.

I: Was there quite a bit of experimentation at first about how to do it?

EO: First they planted it in rows and then they ran cultivators down the rows.

I: You had to be very careful about keeping the weeds out, didn't you?

EO: Nowadays they plant it solid and use spray to take care of most of the old grass and weeds.

I: Who ran the cultivators—guys who lived around here or foreign labor?

EO: Mostly farm labor around here. Young kids did a lot of it.

I: Where was H.L. getting his grass seed cleaned?

EO: They had cleaners in Imbler, where his grandson is now—on the other side of the railroad track.

I: Was grass seed commercially successful right from the beginning?

EO: Yes, very much so. He got a lot of the new grasses, developed at Washington State College [now University]. He always seemed to get all the new grasses.

I: What sort of a man was he?

EO: Really nice fellow.

I: Did you ever want to do anything else than farming?

EO: I don't know what I would have liked to do. When I came out of the Navy, my brother-in-law wanted me to work on the ferries in Seattle; I always wondered if I wouldn't have been a lot better off if I did. Maybe I should have been a schoolteacher.

Some of Emery's Activities in Later Life

Photos courtesy Emery & Thelma Oliver

Emery sharing his father's celebration of 50 years as a member of the Elgin Masonic Lodge, 1960

Emery dressed for his annual Santa stint in Summerville

Emery as grand marshall in an Imbler parade, seated in his pickup, 1983

Biography of Thelma Kennedy Oliver

Unlike her husband, Emery, Thelma is not a Union County native. Born in 1926 in Altoona, Pennsylvania, she came with her family to try to find a better life in Oregon. The Depression had decimated the family's finances and left them homeless. One of her father's friends was a man who had homesteaded at Palmer Junction, near Elgin, but had returned to Pennsylvania. The man's account of opportunities in Union County apparently seemed credible to her father, so in 1930 he decided to squeeze the family of eight into an Essex car and make the transcontinental journey.

They arrived in Elgin in the fall, right after much of downtown Elgin had been destroyed by fire. That meant there was no place for the Kennedys to live, so they pitched a tent in the Elgin City Park. They stayed there for several days while their father, a carpenter, looked for work without immediate success.

Eventually, though, they found a house and Thelma started school with Stella Mayfield as her first teacher. "She was an ornery little old thing—very strict," Thelma recalled. From the start, school work was difficult for her because she had difficulty seeing clearly, a problem that culminated in her dropping out of school in her sophomore year at Elgin High School. No one had checked her vision to determine what the problem was, although she wasn't shy about telling people she couldn't see the words in the books and on the chalkboards. But, she said, "A lot of kids were in my shoes. There wasn't money for anybody to have glasses."

When she quit school, no work was available for an underage person in Elgin, but she learned of the need for welders at the World War II shipbuilding yard near Portland. (She admits that she lied about her age.) It was the welding supervisor who noticed her vision difficulty and recommended that she see an optometrist. With a lens prescription in hand and with money from her first paycheck, she ended her years of impaired vision. She could finally see clearly the stars of the Milky Way and the many other things of everyday life.

When the war ended, she wanted to come back to Elgin to see her family, knowing that a few jobs might be available—in warehouses and restaurants, for example. The work was far from satisfying; she was ready to look for something more fulfilling. Having known the Oliver family earlier, she took the opportunity to reacquaint herself with Emery in 1945 and to marry him in 1947, when he was discharged from service in the U.S. Navy. "He wanted to get married, and I wanted to get married, too, so we got married in the Methodist parsonage in Summerville. There was no honeymoon. We came immediately to the house we still live in."

The house was unfinished and far from modern—a hand pump, no indoor toilet, a woodstove for cooking, and crude electrical wiring. Refrigerators and washing machines were hard to come by, though they did come later. Among her principal hopes at the time was to have an indoor bathroom, which also did eventually materialize.

The advantage of the wood stove, so far as Thelma was concerned, was that she "could make darned good biscuits—a lot nicer than I could in the electric stove." Her way of keeping the stove going in winter was to stay up till about 3:00 a.m., "when he'd [Emery] get up." As the years when by, they gradually made the house more comfortable and adopted a less punishing routine.

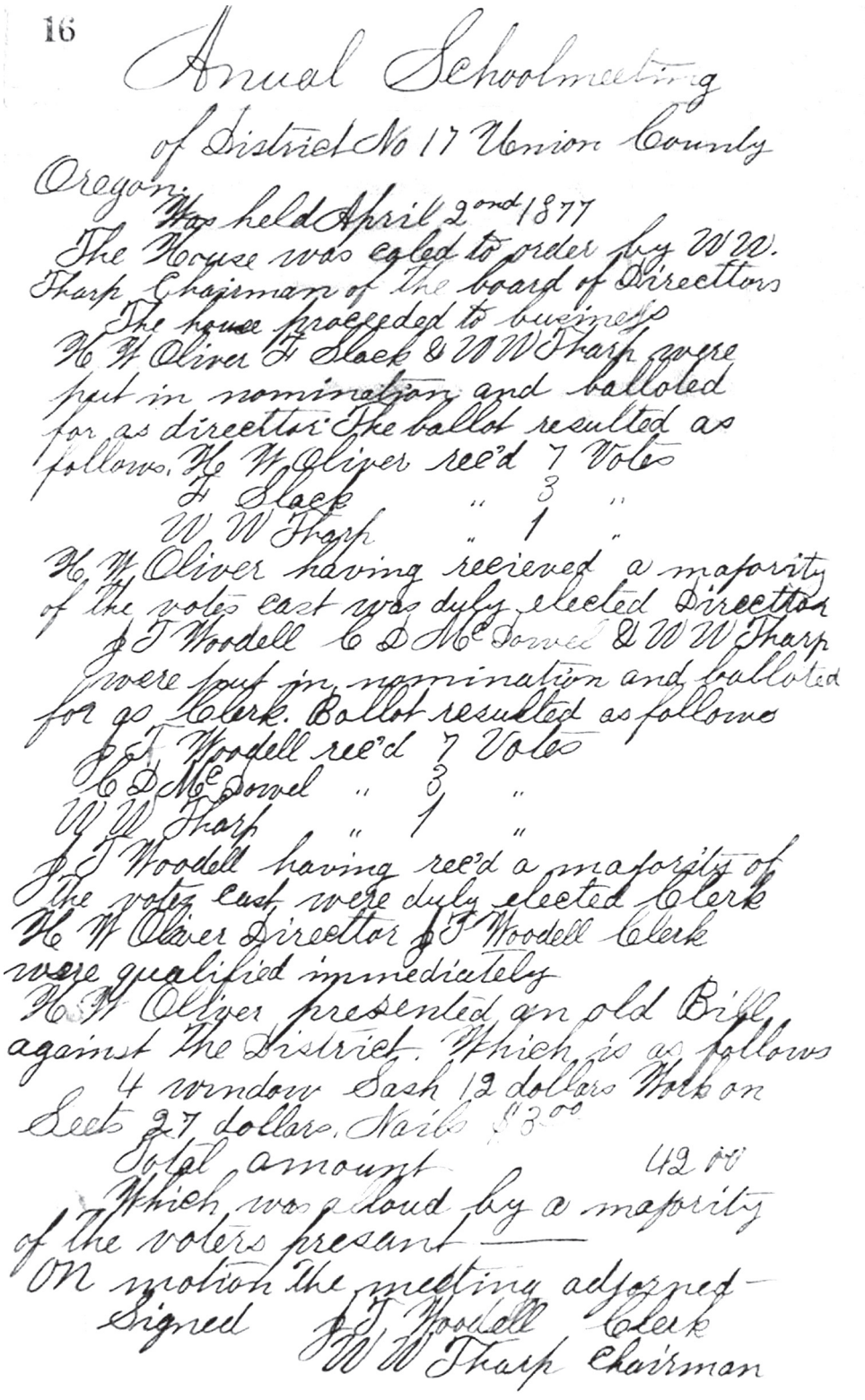
Their social lives revolved largely around the the lodge, though such activities were infrequent because of all the work to do in the house and on the farm. The arrival of three daughters in quick succession—Ann, Carol, and Marilyn—further constrained their outside activities, though, she attested, "I think they learned how to work. Our girls are intelligent and I wanted them to finish at Eastern Oregon College, but the older two dropped out. Marilyn finished at Oregon State and became a teacher. I missed out on so much, and I wanted my kids to be educated."

The Olivers, during their middle years, have enjoyed traveling in various parts of the United States, often to attend reunions of Emery's Navy-years shipmates. Thelma has also visited her relatives in Pennsylvania several times.

Her health in recent years, however, has been below par. Treatment has included open heart bypass surgery, which, though it saved her life, has resulted in severe restrictions on her activity. Nevertheless, she says, "We've had a happy life, I think."

Appendix A

Ledger sheet from Dry Creek School records, 1877, which includes Emery's grandfather's name, listed as a nominee for election to the board



16

Anual Schoolmeeting
of District No 17 Union County
Oregon
Was held April 2nd 1877
The House was caled to order by W W.
Tharp Chairman of the board of Directors
The house proceeded to business
H H Oliver F Slack & W W Tharp were
put in nomination and balloted
for as director The ballot resulted as
follows. H H Oliver ree'd 7 Votes
F Slack " 3 "
W W Tharp " 1 "
H H Oliver having receieved a mapority
of the votes cast was duly elected Director
J J Woodell C D McDonel & W W Tharp
were put in nomination and balloted
for as Clerk. Ballot resulted as follows
J J Woodell ree'd 7 Votes
C D McDonel " 3 "
W W Tharp " 1 "
J J Woodell having ree'd a mapority of
the votes cast were duly elected Clerk
H H Oliver Director J J Woodell Clerk
were qualified immediately
H H Oliver presented an old Bill
against the District. Which is as follows
4 window Sash 12 dollars Work on
Sect 27 dollars. Nails $3.00
Total amount 42.00
Which was aloud by a mapority
of the voters present
On motion the meeting adjourned
Signed J J Woodell Clerk
W W Tharp Chairman

Appendix B
Program for a Summerville School play, 1915,
which includes names of Emery's cousins--Edgar, Mark,and Dewey

Scenes in the Union Depot

A Humorous Entertainment in One Scene

Presented by Summerville Shool at Masonic Hall, Friday Eve. April 2, 1915

Music by Summerville School Band assisted by Local Talent

CAST

Ticket Agent ..... Merald Murchison
Depot Master ..... Elvin Thompson
Lunch and Candy Man ..... William Needham
Bootblacks ..... Ray Vermillion, Francis Ott
Newsboys ..... Edgar Oliver, Fenton Hamilton
Bohemian Women ..... Marion Murchison, Florence Bancroft
Bohemian Boys.... Johnny ..... Owen Buchanan
Jimmy ..... Charlie Myers
Mrs. Snyder ..... Fern McKinnis
Miranda Snyder ..... Irene Wagner
Mrs. Larkin ..... Florence Bancroft
Mr. Jones ..... Stuart Sanderson
Miss Sophia Piper ..... Birdie Starns
Mrs. Hustler (woman with baby) ..... Ona McKinnis
Miss Jerusia Goodwell, (her sister-in-law) ..... Ida West
Uncle John ..... Ralph McKinnis
Little Harry ..... Kenneth McKenzie
Josiah Potter ..... Mark Oliver
Nancy Potter (his wife) ..... Clara Pfefferkorn
Mr. Armstrong, with five children ..... Stuart Sanderson
Three School Girls: Bes ..... Bianch Combes; Dot ..... Irene Wagner; Trix ..... Thelma Choate
Dude ..... Dewey Oliver
The Irish Cinderella ..... Irene Ott
Marigold ..... Ida West
Sherlocko Combes (the detective) ..... Otto Ott
Jake Heinz ..... Leslie Thompson
Mrs. Amelia Hummer ..... Sylvia Woods
Italian Musicians ..... Leighton Sion, Ray West Frank Emmerson
Mrs. Martindale (the woman who runs things) ..... Lillian Wagner
Mr. Martindale ..... Ralph McKinnis
Bride and Groom ..... Juanita Choate, Dewey Oliver
Four Young People: Rosa ..... Ardra Littreal; Molly ..... Thelma Choate; Rob ..... Otto Ott; Dick ..... Loyd Thompson
Father ..... Mark Oliver
Cassiopeo ..... Ruth Littreal
Jupy ..... Georgia Moates
College Quartet ..... Lillian, Irene, Dewey, Ralph
Negroes..... Brudder Samson ..... Leslie Thompson; Dorothy Singwell ..... Marion Murchison; George Henderson ..... Otto Ott; Liza Green ..... Irene Ott; Lillie Brown ..... Ona McKinnis; Mr. White ..... Stuart Sanderson
Mr. Linton ..... Ralph McKinnis
Mrs. Linton ..... Fern McKinnis
Harold, Flossie — The Two Elopers ..... Thelma Choate, Loyd Thompson

MUSIC. .

De Hen Roost Club..... Stuart, Dewey, Ralph and Leslie
Duet ..... Fern and Ona McKinnis
Pianist for the evening ..... Juanita Choate

PROGRAM BEGINS 8:15 P. M.

Observer Job Ptg. Dept. La Grande

The Apprehension of Outlaws Hart and Owens

"Most people don't remember too much what happened 80 years ago, but at 8 years of age, I plainly can remember the capture of the killers of Til Taylor, not by a posse with blood hounds, but by a posse consisting of John Walden (Deputy Sheriff of Union County), Dan Murchison, Arthur Furman, Bill Glenn, Bud Glenn and my father, Burt Oliver. Hart and Owens had killed Til Taylor in escaping from the Umatilla County jail in Pendleton and a big man hunt had been on for six days. Tracks of two people were discovered east of what we now call Ruckle Junction (formerly Summit Meadows) going east on the Skyline Trail.

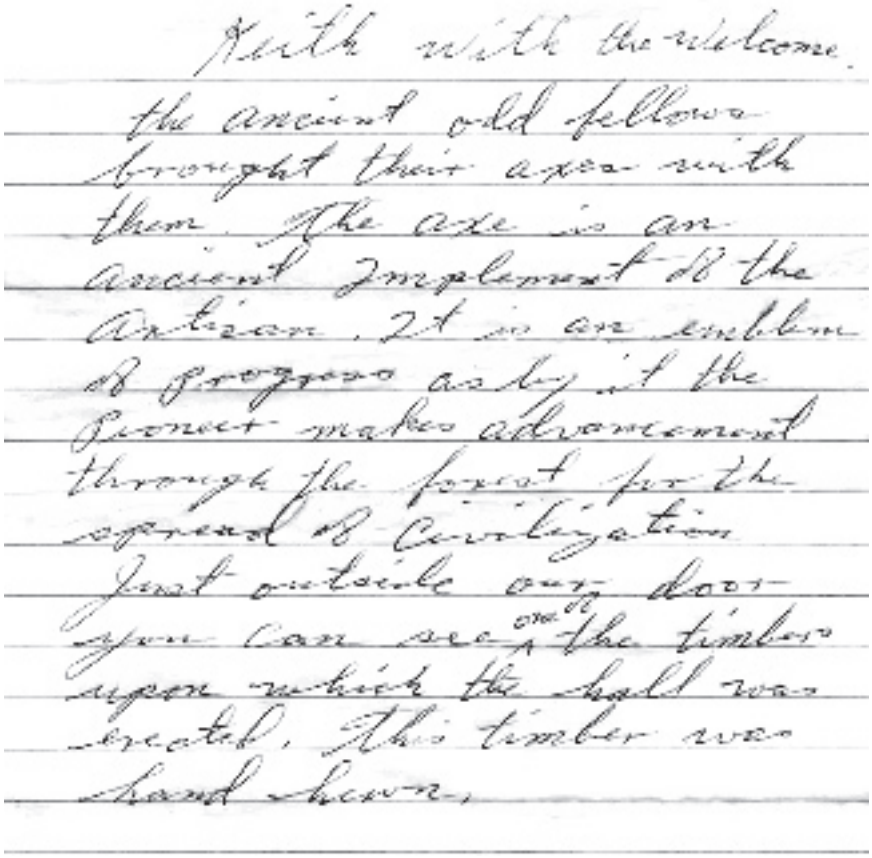
Someone got to a telephone and called La Grande and asked if a posse could go up Woodard Wagon Road and cut them off. John Walden called Summerville for help. He took Murchison and Furman in his car. Bill Glenn took Bud Glenn and Burt Oliver and followed. I and my brother, Harold, who was 10 years old at the time, helped pack thermoses and sandwiches to Bill's car and recall my father taking his deer rifle and a full box of shells. It was evening when they left and was dark by the time they got to the top of the grade, one mile north of Three Mile Bridge when they passed the gravelly part of the road and got in the dusty sections. They had to stop and wait for the dust to settle, so they got about 20 minutes behind.

When Walden's car arrived at a sheep camp near Spout Springs, the herder met them and told them two men had come to the camp. He had fed them supper and they were asleep in his bed. The three crept near the tent and could hear both snoring. They crept in, put a gun to each bandit's head and Walden turned on his flashlight. He then put handcuffs on them. About this time the Glenns and my father arrived and loading their guns, helped escort Hart and Owens to Walden's car. They were placed in the rear seat with Murchison in the front with a big six shooter and Walden driving. The other four were following in Bill Glenn's car.

As before, the soft dirt caused them to pause 'til the dust settled so they were probably 20 minutes behind. Harold and I were sleeping in a tent in the yard when the first car went by. We woke up a little later when we saw lights of another coming when it stopped to let my dad out. We jumped out of bed into our overalls and barefooted we ran to the car hoping to see the outlaws, only to find they had gone, passed in the first car. The murderers were later tried in Pendleton and sentenced to hang, which was later done. A large statue of Sheriff Taylor on his horse is in Til Taylor Park in Pendleton."

By Emery Oliver
Summerville, Oregon

Appendix D
Minutes of an Odd Fellows meeting in Summerville,
1974 (100th anniversary of this lodge)



Ruth with the welcome.
the ancient odd fellows
brought their axes with
them. The axe is an
ancient implement of the
Artisan. It is an emblem
of progress and by it the
pioneer makes advancement
through the forest for the
spread of Civilization.
Just outside our door
you can see the timbers
upon which the hall was
erected. The timber was
hand hewn.

Odd fellowship is founded upon that
eternal principle which recognizing
man as a constituent of one
universal brotherhood teaches him
that as he came from the hands of
a common parent he is bound to
to cherish and protect his fellow man,
It thus presents a broad platform
upon which mankind may
unite in offices of human benefaction
under its comprehensive influence
all the nations of the earth may
concentrate their energies for the
good of the common race.
based upon certain truths which
are alike axioms among all
nations tongues and creeds it
~~[illegible]~~ sacred tolerance presents
a nucleus which by its
gentle influence gathers within
its orbit antagonistic natures
controls the elements of discord
stills the storm and soothes
the spirit of passion and
directs in harmony means united
effort to better the whole

my friend & Brother you are now
initiated into and made acquainted with
the organization and work of a Lodge of the
I O O F and are recognized as a member.
the ~~probation~~ initiation of Odd
fellowship is progressive in its Character
you have passed its threshold and after
a reasonable probation may advance
step by step through its gradations
until you shall have fully attained
a knowledge of its intrinsic excellencies
its adaption for the promotion of
good will among men and its fitness
as a minister to the trials and
adversities which are inseparable
from human life.
we have at this time a few general
lessons to inculcate which in
addition to those you have
received in your progress to this
chair will serve to give you proper
views as to the Character and true
" -ts of Odd fellowship

Appendix E

Speech Read by Emery Oliver at Meeting of Union County Historical Society March 14, 1992

OLIVER WAGON TRAIN

In 1864 my Grandparents and Great-grandparents arrived.Among these settlers were John Von Blockland, W.H. Patten, C.L.Blakeslee, and John McKinnis. Some stayed in old abandoned cabins the first winter while others built log cabins. ~~One~~ of my Grandfathers brothers stayed the first winter then went on to Portland in 1865.

In 1865 everyone began thinking of a town and post office. The group near the present ~~Asel~~ ASAHEL Colt and Fisher places wanted to start the town there and call is Winterville while the ones around where Summerville is prevailed and W.H. Patten who had the ground where Summerville is now put in a post office. W.S.Glenn put in a stock of groceries and supplies. Henry Rinehart started a meat market in 1866, Hannah and Wright built a grist mill on land now owned by Arthur Behrens and that fall sold it to the Rinehart brothers. This mill was taken over by James Rinehart and destroyed by fire in 1885 and rebuilt with a roller mill and named the Anna Lulu Mill after his two daughters.

In 1865 my grandfather Hiram Oliver put in a saw mill on Mill Creek behind the Dry Creek School. This was run by water power. A ditch being built from below where my parent,s house is now and following around the hill east down to the mill. This mill had an up and down saw and I don,t think cut a great lot of lumber each day. My father had an old picture with an ox team dragging a big log into it. but the picture was borrowed and either kept or lost. In 1883 the mill was rebuilt and a circular saw installed plus a planeing mill. This mill ran until 1900 or 1902. The people of Summerville referred to this settlement as Slab Town. Leo Neiderer told me once he could count 17 houses in this general area.

In 1865 or 66 the settlers here wanted a road to cross the mountains to the Walla Walla country so by following the old Indian trail built the Thomas and Ruckle Toll Road. Molly McDowell and her husband Cyrus, ran the ~~boarding~~ BOARDING house and toll station at Ruckle Spring. She stated that in those days there was no brush there but lots of nice big trees. This road washed out in 1883 costing all the owners, including my grandfater, a goodly sum of money they had invested. George Thomas was running a stage line through there and there were a number of freighters hauling supplies through there to the mines in Idaho. Old timers said they had eight horse teams with two wagons behind each team. All had bells on the hames of the lead teams so they could stop and listen to see if others were coming so as to find a place where they could pass. THE AREA NOW KNOWN AS RUCKLE WAS THEN CALLED SUMMIT MEADOWS.

After the road washed out the pioneers built the Woodyard Wagon Road past Tollgate. Everyone called it the Woodard Wagon Road and I have some envelopes with that name on them. Whether these were a misprint or what I do not know but the toll keeper's name was Dave Woodward. He came out on skis pulling a sled in the early 1900 loaded with provisions but disapeared on his way back. He and his sled were never found, which is one of the mysteries of Eastern Oregon although there was a great search made for him.

William Patten plotted out the city of Summerville on the west end of his property and as it was the only town in the north end of the county it grew rapidly. Seems as if it, Union and La Grande were all about the same size up till after the coming of the railroad in 1884.

When the Oregon Washington Railroad and Navigation Company (OWRN) surveyed for the railroad there was much speculation the railroad would go through here with a tunnel about eight miles long northwest of the town. When the road was built a man by the name of Hunt started to build a railroad from Union. The people here put a lot of money into this and a grade was built all the way to Summerville. No rails or ties were ever laid and everyone lost the money they had put up. There is still about one-eight mile of this grade on the west edge of the Frank Woodell place west of the cemetery. The OWRN then wanted money and land for yards when building to Elgin but everyone said they couldn't skip Summerville and withheld their money. The OWRN went straight down the valley which was the start of the end of the town. There was a lot of speculation whether the Hunt Road would go from Elgin to Walla Walla or shoot for the Wallowa area.

Summerville being the only town in the north end of the valley prospered and some of the early businesses were Isaac Copeland Blacksmith, Silsby Livery Barn, Daniel Sommers General Store, Cleavenger Blacksmith, I.M. Moats Gemeral Store, Farmer's Mortgage and Savings Bank owned by James Rinehart, Wade's Clothing Store, Simon McKenzie Drug Store, Hardward Store and Tin Shop owned by Barney Hubers, two saloons and McKenzie's Livery Barn, Waelty Harness Shop. Also Mrs. Waelty's Millenery Shop, a resturant, a Creamery and a Hotel, Ruckman and Ruel Flour Mill, and Mrs. Bradshaw Dressmaker.

Summerville had board sidewalks down both sides of all the streets and hitching rails along most of the streets. Hugh Park told me that in the 1890s there were three dances every Saturday night and you had a hard time finding a place to tie your saddle horse. Sam Starr said he went through in the nineties on a stage which stopped for the night in Summerville and it was a wild town then. The poker games ran all night.

The Bonanza Brewery in Summerville , run by George Ott, was a very thriving business until closed by prohibition. Whether Ott built the brewery or not no one is sure but the Odd Fellows Lodge records show a Simon Dinkler Brewery joining in 1876. Fred Behrens said his father hauled Beer from Summerville to Union in the early 1900s. How many kegs he hauled per trip Fred didn't know but he had to open two gates on his waynto Union. Beer was also hauled to La Grande.

The hotel in Summerville was built by Patten,then run by Trusdall, Marvins, Bressee, Pat McDowell, Mike Roys, and last by John and Belle McRae.

I can remember the following businesses: J.M.Choate General Store, Harry Sanderson General Store,Claude Hale, John Wagoner, Sterns Bros. Hardware, Jasper Bonnette, blacksmith. There were a lot of sawmills. To name a few the Oliver, Wade and Wright, John McKinnis and Son, Wade and Robinson, Kentucky Mill owned by Pete Wright, Summerville Lumber Co., Snodgrass Mill, Marshall Oliver, Klees Mill, Dave McKenzie, Claude Hale, Holly Horn, Simpsons and the last one was Hewitt's Mill. Of course there were a lot of others but I have no idea of the owners

In 1905 Turner Oliver built a fiber factory on the site of the old Oliver Mill. Pine needles were picked, steamed, crushed and ran through a machine which picked them then baled and sold to a mattress factory. the oil from crushing them was sold as a cure for arthritis and reumatism. My father had a bottle of it yet. I was told this fiber would kill all bed bugs. This mill didn't last too long as cotton was cheaper than the pine needle fiber.

About 1913 a man named Klees built an electric plant in Summervillewhich was run by water from Mill Creek. This seemed to be a real going concern till he expanded too much, building lines South through the valley. I am told he was making direct current instead of alternating current. This was the cause of his failure.

William Gekeler of La Grande told Henry Fries and me that La Grande stole more history from Summerville than they ever made. You can be sure we appreciated that. One thing we thought he was referring to was Anna Kuhn Johnson who was born in November 1862 and always claimed to be the first white child born in Union County. When she was about twenty or thirty La Grande claimed someone else was born before her but she swore they were liars.

Most of our history is buried in the Summerville Cemetery. The first grave was Mary Steven's, 1866. A wagon train was stopping in the valley south of where Imbler now stands. She drowned in the river. A rough stone marked the spot till the early 1900s when the community put a monument up. No date was on the stone so a few years ago, after a lot of research I came up with the year 1847 for her birth and 1866 for her death. I told the local monument man, Dan Anderson, to cut the dates and send me the bill. His reply was he would be happy to cut the dates but I would never see the bill. The second grave was in 1867 Mrs. Angus Shaw. The cemetery has more than 3000 graves and the community has always been proud of it. In 1910 the community started giving dinners to raise money for the upkeep of the cemetery. The first dinner was chaired by Jennie Rinehart. The dinner was 25¢ and 10¢ for ice cream. In the 1950s Anna Oliver suggested at a meeting of the cemetery association that a taxing district be formed. George Cochrane said that was the best idea he had ever heard and he would donate the legal work. The tax district was then formed and I am told it was the first in the State of Oregon.

Summerville had three churches, the Methodist Episcopal South, Methodist Episcopal North, and Presbyterian. The old timers claimed the big bell in the Presbyterian Church could be heard all the way to Island City.

The Fort was aroundthe Methodist Episcopal North Church. Wayne and Anna Park erected a monument there some years ago to mark the spot. There is no record of any trouble with the Indians.

The Odd Fellow Lodge building is probably the oldest public building still in use in the county. It was built in 1875.

My grandfather started a fine orchard in the 1880s. Soon afterwards Rineharts planted a couple of apple orchards. J.O.Smith had a prune orchard and dryer in the early 1900s.

Lodges were verypopular in early days. A Grange was in Summerville and a lodge called The Independant Order of Good Templers according to the records of the Odd Fellow Lodge started in 1874. The Masonic Lodge started in 1876. There were also the Artisan Lodge, M.W.A. , Royal Neighbors, Maccabees and the Woodmen.

John Shleppey, an old friend of mine told me a humorous story . In 1906 an old bachelor named Henry Stanley died and as in those days a group gathered to sit up with the deceased. Evidently the bottle was passed too many times. E. Rinehart picked up the body, put a hat on him, a cigar in his mouth and held him up before the mirror and introduced him to himself.

A few years ago a lady from Portland wrote wanting to know who was buried on lots owned by S.N. Smith. I wrote back giving her the names and dates as we knew them. One name was A.C. Beldin, no stone nor dates. She wrote back saying she understood they called him Acey and he was killed in a knife battle in Summerville in early days. Finally asking everyone I could think of near-by I went to La Grande to see John Lewis in the rest home. H said his folks had told him of this many times. Thus another story was added to our history.

We have at least fifteen Civil War veterans in the cemetery. A few years ago while putting out the flags for Memorial Day Mrs. Noah was in the cemetery. I asked her if she knew of anyone who deserved a flag. She said her grandfather Bault had fought for the South in the Civil War so wasn't entitled to a flag. Since then he has his flag every Decoration Day.

World War II there were three of us from here. In Pearl Harbor were Marion Pugh, Max York and Myself. Leonard Wagoner was in the Navy in the Carribean and Leo Wagoner was in the Phiiippines. Not bad for a little place that is slowly getting smaller.

This report was prepared and read at
La Grande Historical Meeting
on Saturday March 14, 1992
Mr. Emery Oliver of Summerville, Oregon

Appendix F
Speech delivered by Turner Oliver, Emery's uncle,
an attorney in La Grande, at a pioneer meeting in the 1920s

Mr. President, Pioneers and Friends:- ~~Seven~~ Four years ago to-day we held our pioneer meeting in this the garden spot of Union County, Cove. I cannot help contrasting the event with this of to-day. That was one of the most disagreeable days I ever knew at that season of the year; rain and mud everywhere. Then as now I lived in Union. The weather was so bad that people generally gave up the trip to Cove to attend the pioneer meeting, but after some pursuasion I succeeded in getting the livery man to drive me down. When we arrived I found the few that were here had abanded the grove and had accepted the hospitality of the Macabees and were assembled in their new hall which provided ample room for the crowd, since many had become disgusted with the weather and remained at home. Only a few of the old pioneers were present. I think not more than six or eight from a distance. However, I remember well that our undaunted President M. C. Baker, notwithstanding his ill health came from La Grande on horse-back that stormy day to attend our meeting, and our ex-president Terry Tuttle with his daughter Mrs. Kit Norvell one of our pioneer children came from near Summerville and I think several others whose names I have forgotten, but the attendance was small. How different here to-day in this beautiful grove, such a crowd we have never had before. People from everywhere. What a change a few years have brought about; instead of jaded teams and dusty people we see the big iron horse with his several coaches, flat cars, etc. come puffing into town and when they stop the people begin climbing down and it seems that the whole of Union County with her Aunts and Cousins from Baker and Wallowa had boarded the train for Cove bound for the Pioneer Picnic. We are gazing on the crowd; we are looking for our Mary and Hannah and Peter and John, and except for the timely warning of your efficient marshall, we would probably have been crushed beneath the wheels of some of the many horseless carriages, the automobiles, that are so in evidence to-day. We can hardly imagine our old pioneer friends flying in these hurry-up wagons, but when we see their cheerful faces and grasp their friendly hands we know that they

are the same old boys and girls of yore. It looks good to see them enjoying these comforts and luxuries. In the old days, it seems but yesterday, that we were as our children and grandchildren. As I look a little farther I see the old time platform for dancing- it it somewhat improved, instead of the old fashioned lanterns and tallow candles that was so good to drip that we used for lights, I see dozens of electric bulbs with here and there an arc light to add to the beauty of the scene and turn night into day, and I am told they have taken the power for all of this from our old fishing stream back in the mountains, the Mill Creek so familiar to the boys and girls of to-day.

All Hail the advent of the railroad to Cove. All Hail to the electric lights. Yes all hail to every enterprise that makes our country better, our people more comfortable, consequently happier. Yes all hail the day that brings about our higher ideals, for pioneers though we are, and are prowd of it, we are not content with the wilds of the wilderness, with the idleness of the land, the rudely constructed log cabin, with the one man plow, the arm strong mover, the old flale thresher, the old dash churn and no fences. Pioneers are not that kind of folks, they are not the people to be put off by these makeshifts, they want the best there is in the land as is evidenced by these beautiful and well composed farms and modern houses, not only in this immediate neighborhood but all over this country from Powder River to the extreme lower end of the Valley. No better fruit grows any where than on the high bench land near Summerville. The large fruit culture adjacent to La Grande and Union show what the soil will produce. The wheat fields and meadows are something grand as you see them from the cars from North Powder to Elgin, and now our farmers are learning the use of the different grasses for hay. Only a few years ago alfalfa and clover was very dull sale, the farmers did not like it; it often sold for $3.50 to $4.00 per ton, but now it sells readily for $7.00 to $10.00 per ton. They are learning the best varities of fruits for shipping, etc. I am glad to tell you that our farmers are up to-date. They have the latest and most improved machinery, their combined harvesters are a wonder,

taking the grain from the stalk to the sack sewer. Our mills are something to be proud of. We send flour all over the world, as we do our cherries, potatoes and apples, our plums, pears, prunes, berries, etc. have a fine eastern market. A large area of land is given over to the cultivation of the sugar beet, which improves and clears the land and gives employment to many people. We also have the sugar factory that converts the raw material into good quality of sugar. Do not be deceived when some people tell you that it is not good sugar for it has been tested and stood the test, and right here let me say I wish our county fair board would offer some premiums worth while for the best jelly cake and candy made from our very own sugar. I tell you people, I believe in being loyal to our home products, and if there is anything lacking in their worth find what it is and remedy it.

Our farmers are not the only people that have been busy. Our timber cruisers have been kept on the alert for several years locating people on timber land. There is hardly an available section out side of the reserve, the result is that many new saw mills are being built about this country right here in the little neighborhood of Tygh Valley, in one of the best timber belts east of the mountains, extending from Union to Cornucopia, and I can't tell you how much further, but in Tygh Valley alone there are five new mills, the out put for this year is estimated at about four million feet. These mills give employment to about 150 men and 100 teams, and they tell me they need both men and teams. There is also a contract for 5,000 electric light poles that are to go to the Ox Bo country the cost of which is besides there is being cut 3,000 cords of wood in these hills which employes 100 more men. You will find our old pioneers, many of them, connected with these enterprises. The mills on the other side at Perry Hill and at Elgin have been doing an extensive business for several years. I cannot give you any figures for I have not been there to obtain them, but it is suffice to say that our county is shipping all kinds of lumber to other and less fortunate states.

There has also been much attention paid to stock raising, particularly to horses and cattle. One needs only to see the fine teams coming in with the heavy loads to recognize the improvement in horses. The outside demand has been so good that almost any kind of a horse brought a good price so there are not many scrubs left. The many established creameries throughout the country have made a good demand for the product of the milch cows, so that the farmers and dairymen have had the best results. Some for the beef herd, others for butter and cheese. We have no range left for sheep except back in the mountains but we have a fine woolen mills at Union that consumes the clippings from our own sheep and many thousand pounds from outside counties, the out put of which has taken first premium wherever entered in competition, from a baby blanket to a ten pounder or a carriage robe to a tailor made made suit of clothes. Too much credit cannot be given to our old pioneer friend A. E. Eaton, for this enterprise. He with his perservering disposition and the money that he accumulated here in the early days had made it possible to have one of the best mills on the coast. I am told that the product from this mill is about three times as much as it was five years ago, and they can't nearly supply the demand for their goods. This industry employs about 35 hands the year around.

Hogs are always good property. No better place in the world for poultry raising than our side hill farms. Eggs and chickens are always a good price. This industry has been neglected, but in the busy years that have gone, too often we have neglected the smaller things in our hurry to achieve the greater. We have had our financial ups and downs, our off years, so to speak, but there has never been a time since 1864 that we have not had enough for home consumption and some to spare of what the country produced. The fininicial condition of our country is much improved the last few years. Our farmers as well as our county is getting out of debt, nothwithstanding our county seat has been on wheels much of the time. Sometimes she would be in

La Grande, sometimes in Union, and bless her heart some of the time on the road, but after a struggle of nearly thirty years she is at home in the prosperous little city of La Grande where the people of the town have provided an up-to-date little court house, which we are to occupy fifteen years free of rent if we stay that long.

I must not forget to mention some of the more substantial improvements that have been made in the last few years. There has been some fine buildings. I notice some new buildings in our little town of Cove, among others the new M. E. Church which speaks well for its membership. Union has less than a year ago completed a $10,000 M. E. Church with modern conveniences. The Hot Lake people have just about completed a fine hotel, which, when finished and furnished will cost about $100,000; quite a contrast to the little Inn that was kept by our old pioneer friends the Newhard's , the present manager Dr. W. T. Phy is a son of our old pioneer friends John and Margaret Phy who has lately taken up their residence in California. This sanatorium seems to give promise for a great business as does the Medical Springs in a smaller way and with still another fine hotel. La Grande looms up with her new school house and fine Mormon Temple, which is the first church of its kind this side of Salt Lake. Many new buildings of value have gone up in La Grande the last year. Among these is the new Savings Bank which will be a great help to the wage earner. Banking like all other business has greatly increased. Mr. W. T. Wright's word for it that the business of the First National of Union has more than doubled the last five years. No doubt the other banks in the county have experienced the same prosperity. The majority are controlled or managed by old pioneers.

Our first pioneer meeting was held in Union, May 24, 1890, twenty-two years ago. E. S. McComas called the meeting to order and delivered the address of the day. ~~Gus~~ General Stephens was elected president. The citizens of Union furnished free transportation from the depot to the city and gave a free dinner.

The following have been our presidents:

General Stephens	(2 years dead)
A. E. Eaton	
Terry Tuttle	
A. C. Crovig	
Judge Goodall	
E. P. McDaniel,	
William Huffman	(Dead)
Mrs. Harris Lewis	"
Mr. McQuirter-Hunter	"
Mr. Cage Baker	"
Mr. Joe Baker	
Mr. Ben Brown	
Mr. Bard McAlister	"

Six of whom have crossed the River. It will be seen by the long list that the Secretary has that many, very many of our old pioneers have laid down their armor; each meeting our ranks are more broken. But dear friends we have this day- it seems good to be here and to forget for a little while the busy cares of life. Here we see old faces, renew old acquaintances, there is much pleasure in the reminiscences of the long ago, so let us be faithful to our old settlers reunion. We are glad to see so many from a distance, and we should feel proud that we have such distinguished guests as our much admired and often quoted Joquine Miller and Ex Governor T. T. Geer, the chum and friend of our boy and girlhood. Yes we are proud to welcome all the pioneers. The remembrance of the trials of the early settlers makes us all akin. Nor do we stop here; the tenderfoot is a welcome visitor. We need young men and women to finish our work. It takes the young, ambitious, sturdy and capable man to grapple with the problems of the business world to-day. So I say this, Welcome Our Newcomers, every pioneer should give you a hearty shake, and now friends, with many good cheers for the early pioneers and great faith in our new people and the out come of our lovely home, Union County, I give you my greetings, and in the language of one of our old pioneers "Let us be cheerful; may the world be better for us having lived, and the remainder of our days be as restful as a summer evening, and we'll meet on that beautiful shore in the sweet bye and bye."

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