

**LEON and MARY PAROZ**

**June 24, 2005**

Interviewed by April Curtis

Transcribed by Ryan Shearer

Transcription revised by Paula Helten (01/24/2012)

[audio begins]

I: Okay, today is May 24th, 2005. I'm interviewing Leon and Mary Pare-- Paroz? Paroz. Uh, in their home in Imbler, Oregon. [audio noise - getting set up]. Good here? All right Mary, can I ask you to give your full name?

MP: Mary Adele Paroz. Mary Adele Rollins Paroz.

I: Alright, and can I have you give your full name, please?

LP: Leon Andrew Paroz.

I: Alright, and I'm going to ask you, Mary, where were you born and when where you born? Do you remember?

MP: I was born in La Grande in 1931.

I: Alright, and Leon?

LP: I was born in La Grande in 1927.

I: Alright, and Mary, can we-- let me talk to you about your parents, what their names were and when-- how-- when-- uh, when they came to La Grande?

LP: \_\_\_\_\_--

MP: My parents were Howard and Ruth Rollins, and they were born and raised right in this area.

I: Uh-huh. And you said that they had a store?

MP: Yeah, they had the store in town, I know for several years up until 1948.

I: Did your parents come here from somewhere else? Did they-- were they already born and raised--?

MP: No, they were born and raised here.

I: Uh-huh. And what was the name of that store?

MP: \_\_\_\_\_ Grocery.

I: So when you were born they were running the grocery?

MP: No, we started-- uh, it must have started in '36. I was about five years old I guess, when they started the store.

I: Mm-hm. What do you remember about that-- that store?

MP: Uh, the thing I remember most is when we went to school every time they wanted volunteers for free stuff for the kids my brother and I volunteered. We didn't think about it costing my dad anything, you know. We just went in the store and got what we wanted.

I: [chuckles]. What did they have in the store? What kinds of things did they sell?

MP: Well, groceries, uh, canned stuff, meat, cheese.

I: Where'd they get the-- the produce from that they sold in the store?

MP: What was the name of that--? \_\_\_\_\_ that was in La Grande right there on the back street back \_\_\_\_\_ I heard the name on. Do you remember the name of it, of Howard somebody \_\_\_\_\_?

LP: No, I don't remember.

I: So you bought your produce in La Grande?

MP: We bought all of our stuff in La Grande. Most of it my dad hauled out. He had a pickup and he went to La Grande about once a week.

I: Was it-- was it local produce that you bought, or did you--?

MP: Well, it was whatever we could get.

I: What else do you remember about being in the store, or them running the store?

MP: I can imagine-- I can remember selling stuff for a lot cheaper than we're paying for it now! [laughs].

I: So, who worked in the store?

MP: My dad and mother and brother and I.

I: And what-- what did you-- what was your job at the store?

MP: Taking care of customers.

I: Did you work the cash registers, or did you bag groceries, or--?

MP: Yeah, lots of times I was in there by myself so I had to do everything.

I: You were pretty young when you were doing, huh?

MP: Oh yeah, before I was twelve years old. [laughs].

I: Wow. So what would a day start like for your parents?

MP: Well, my mother was the postmistress-- postmistress here. \_\_\_\_\_ and she's just a little, \_\_\_\_\_ mail carrier. But it started pretty early in the morning.

I: Mm-hm. So she would work at the store after she-- her post office duties? What were her duties in the post office?

MP: Distribute mail, and you know what mistresses do.

I: And how would she deliv-- what-- what kind of vehicle would she deliver the mail in?

MP: I think the last one was a Land Rover \_\_\_\_\_. Whatever was handy, she'd deliver the mail in it.

I: And your father would go get the groceries early in the morning?

MP: Oh, he'd make a trip about once a week. We sold beer and stuff like that, so it all had to be trucked in. Me, I'd rather help him unload groceries than package so that's what I did. [laughs].

I: Oh! [chuckles]. Uh-huh. And so what kinds of cash registers and was it a-- did you-- do you have an older style cash register? Were you-- what kind of equipment were using in the store?

MP: Till. Just a thing on the counter that we pulled out and there was the money. We didn't have a very \_\_\_\_\_.

I: Did you have a bank, or a bank that you took it to, the money to?

MP: \_\_\_\_\_ bank. We've done our banking in La Grande. \_\_\_\_\_ banks-- well, at one time there was a bank here in Imbler but it went out in one year.

LP: I can't tell you that. \_\_\_\_\_ my time.

MP: Before your time?

LP: The bank went out before my time.

MP: Oh well, I-- I know it went out before my time, but I didn't know.

I: What kinds of foods were real popular items for people to buy at the store? What-- what did you sell out of?

MP: Wieners. [laughs].

I: [laughs]. Uh-huh.

MP: \_\_\_\_\_ wieners and cheese. 'Course that was before we had a lot of this fast food. People had to buy their own and cook it. But-- and they'd come in. Oh, like Mr. Star, he lived up-- but he-- and when he'd go to town to trade he'd always stop at our store and see what we had. And then walk-- we didn't have he got in La Grande.

I: Oh? Mm-hm.

MP: That's how we got along with \_\_\_\_\_ because they'd come to us first, and then they'd go on and do their shopping.

I: Because they wanted to support the local--

MP: Right.

I: stores? Okay Leon, I'm going to ask you about your family, your-- your parents first. Did-- were they raised here?

LP: Well, my mother was born and raised here. She-- her hus-- or her dad was Sam Ruckman.

I: Sam Ruckman?

LP: Sam Ruckman, yeah. He was-- they had a ranch in Alicel, east of Alicel. My dad was born in Switzerland.

I: Oh?

LP: My mother met him in Idaho when she was working in a hospital over there after she'd taken some training to work in a hospital. And they come back here, and then I was born here after they were married.

I: So, where-- where-- your mother was born in Imbler or--?

LP: She was born on the farm where Shaun and them--

I: Live now?

LP: The Imbler farm.

I: Now?

LP: Yeah. She was born there. I'm not-- I'm not sure whether she was born on their farm or on somebody else's farm, but they were--

I: Did she ever tell you anything about what it was like to be a young girl on a farm in Alicel?

LP: Well, her mother died when she was real young so she lived a lot with her aunt in-- right in Alicel. When she went to school she rode the-- she rode the train from Alicel to Imbler.

I: Oh, really?

LP: And rode the train back at night.

I: What train was that do you know?

LP: It's the same train that runs on the track now. [laughs].

I: [laughs]. Wow.

LP: Yeah, it was, yeah. I don't-- I don't know that she done that all the time, but pretty-- pretty regular. She lived with the Clarks, so.

I: Who were the Clarks?

LP: And she al-- uh, Bruce Clark. They lived right in Alicel. They owned a farm there.

MP: Wasn't Bruce some relation to your mother?

LP: Yes.

MP: He was an uncle.

LP: Uncle.

I: So, she \_\_\_\_\_ uncle, mm-hm. And she'd ride the train back and forth. What was that school that she-- it's the same school that's here right now? Uh-huh.

LP: She went to school for a short time at the little school that's here on the south side of Imbler, down here on the highway.

I: Well, what's the name of that school?

LP: Is that the \_\_\_\_\_ School?

I: Huh?

LP: I don't know if it had a name.

I: Was that a one-room schoolhouse or--?

LP: I think it's a two room. But I've been in it, but it's been \_\_\_\_\_. I hauled grain and put it in grain into that back room.

MP: The grain \_\_\_\_\_ restored. It's still there, and they \_\_\_\_\_ kept it \_\_\_\_\_.

I: Oh, so it's an historical monument.

LP: That was probably the grade school because she went to graded-- she went to grade school most of the years in Ice-- in Alicel.

I: So your parents got married, and where did they live after they got married?

LP: They lived here in Imbler. I guess about three different places here in Imbler, not very long in the first two places. And then they-- they lived in my, what would be my great-grandmother's house.

I: Where is that?

LP: Which is-- which is just about a block from here where we live now, just across-- just across the alley.

I: And would have that have been in the '20's?

LP: That would have been in the late, no-- yeah, late '20's and the '30's. Clear up until we sold the place after Mother died. We sold it about four years ago.

I: Mm-hm. What street is that place \_\_\_\_\_? It's right-- is it on 3<sup>rd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_?

LP: It's on-- no, it's on Main Street.

I: Main Street.

LP: Main Street runs this way.

MP: It's actually 4<sup>th</sup> Street. You take all of Main, and then you go 3<sup>rd</sup> to Main to 5<sup>th</sup>.

I: Mm-hm, yeah. So, do you remember being in that house,--

LP: Oh, yes.

I: and what it was like?

LP: Oh, yeah.

I: Can you explain what-- what you might have seen if you'd gone into that big house?

LP: Well, I-- I just remember that when-- when we first moved there, they uh-- one thing that I remember, it was the well was just a dug well. It was dug with a posthole digger, and it's about twenty some feet deep. Water was a big thing at that time because we had very little water. But as I remember it, it was a good life. Anyways, just lived there as a kid.

I: Mm-hm, so were you born in Imbler or Al?

LP: I was born in La Grande.

I: You were born in La Grande, at the hospital?

LP: [gives some form of affirmative]

I: Mm-hm.



LP: And when-- for about a year I lived in Idaho where my dad lived up there before they were married. And I went to school first grade in Potlatch, Idaho in a rural school.

I: Now, what did you--?

LP: Then I-- then we moved back here, and I've been in Imbler ever since. I've-- I-- I was right here in Imbler 'til I was twenty-- about twenty-three years old.

I: What did your parents do here in Imbler?

LP: My-- well, my mother was a-- she was just a housewife, and-- and she worked some at the-- at the St. Joseph Hospital and then later at the school district. She worked as a secretary at the school district-- years she worked up there. My dad was a mechanic. And in the tough times he'd mechanic'd every place for farmers. He mechanic'd in this garage down here belonged to L. J. Martin. It was a Ford garage. They sold Ford cars in Imbler.

I: They do.

LP: I don't' know how many years he worked there, but--

I: So when you say he was a mechanic, what exactly would he do?

LP: He worked on engines and tractors and combines, whatever it took to make them run. Then later in years he uh-- he worked at the roundhouse for the railroad, Union-- Union Pacific. Then after that he-- he worked at the school district again.

I: What-- what is it you-- what do you mean he worked at the roundhouse?

LP: He was a mechanic up there. He was a machinist up there.

I: Was that dangerous work, difficult work? 'Cause I know there was--

LP: I don't think it was dangerous work. All the years that he worked there he worked at night. I don't think-- he kind of liked that in a way because he could do his work here at home in the daytime.

I: So, what work-- work would he be doing at home? What kind of--?

LP: Oh, he raised-- he raised a few cows and a few pigs and chickens that, uh-- things for the family to eat.

I: What year was your father's full name?

LP: Andrew Bobell Earl.

I: And how did he come from Switzerland-- come here?

LP: Boat.

I: Huh.

LP: His father-- his father and I think two of his uncles and maybe a sister come here early and found a place to-- where they were gonna maybe live. Several years later then, my grandmother come and brought the rest of the kids. There was thirteen kids in the family. She come and brought the rest of those kids by herself on a boat. And that's another story. [laughs].

I: [laughs]. How did they come to-- come to Imbler and-- and to Al-- I mean, they-- there were here in Imbler, not Al.

LP: They-- they-- they come into New York, and then-- then they come by train.

I: Why did they pick this particular part of the world to settle?

LP: Well, my grandfather was kind of a-- he was a carpenter. And kind of a watchmaker too, but that-- that was over in Swit-- the watch making was in Switzerland. But they were in-- there were lot of logging, lots of the Potlatch Forest cut. That's-- they didn't stay there. They didn't come there right away. They went to a lot of logging places in

Canada first for a short time. Then they-- then they come to Potlatch, and they homesteaded there.

I: And then, \_\_\_\_\_--?

LP: Then my grandfather died in an accident. Oh, I don't know. It was about six or seven years after they moved and got the place. They built their own home. The home was a three story home 'cause they had so many kids, three stories on top and a basement.

I: So this was a good place because they could work with the loggers and-- and--?

LP: And then the reason that my-- that my dad and mother moved to here because mother wanted to come back to Washington.

I: I see.

LP: And the work was-- Dad-- Dad was able to get work here.

I: Was this in the '30's?

LP: This was in the '30's, yeah.

I: So, things were tough all over. So, when did, um-- when did the-- you-- did-- now, were you a logger for awhile?

LP: I went to--

I: Or was your father a logger before you?

LP: No, no. He, uh-- he'd just-- he was-- he was just always a mechanic.

I: How did you get into logging?

LP: Well, I quit the farming, and I went to work in a sawmill.

I: Which one?

LP: And because-- uh, Hewitt Sawmill in Summerville. Small, small, mill, but money was about three times the wages-- about three times what I was getting working on the farm.

I: At the farm? What farm did you work on?

LP: The Ruckman Farm. This \_\_\_\_\_ was a distant cousin of mine. I worked on the farm in the-- in the seed plant.

I: Oh, so was--?

LP He had-- he had two seed plants, and I worked in those seed plants. In fact, I run one of them.

I: What did you do in the seed plant when your first started working there?

LP: Well, mainly take in seed and just-- that-- that's what mainly it was. It was all sack stuff, so it was a lot of-- a lot of handy work.

I: When did you start working in the seed plant? How old were you?

LP: Oh, I was eighteen.

I: So, you got through school and then worked there?

LP: Yeah.

I: I want to go back--

LP: I didn't go to school. I didn't-- I took my last year and a half, I'd just go to school and get the papers and come home to make them because I worked. I worked when I was-- the last part of junior and pretty all my senior year.

I: Can I go back to when you met in the Imbler School? When did you first meet each other?

MP: He was a senior and I was a freshman, and I saw him twice that year at the ball games.

I: Uh-huh.

MP: Well, because he didn't come to school very often.

I: So, how'd you end up getting together?

MP: Well, he's a good friend of mine first noticed \_\_\_\_\_ me. [chuckles].  
I no longer \_\_\_\_\_ got together, I guess.

I: So, can you give me some-- give me some description of what Imbler School was like when you were going there? What was-- I mean, what the experience of going to Imbler School?

MP: We had Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. Oh, we had History and Geography and a few other things, but we went to school to get an education. I don't know whether he went or not.

I: [chuckles]. So, you both-- how old were you when you started school there?

MP: Oh, I was a freshman. \_\_\_\_\_.

I: Mm-hm. So, where had you gone to school before that?

MP: Summerville.

I: Oh, so you were at Summerville, and then you went to the-- oh, when you were in high school you moved in and went to school in Imbler, is that right?

MP: Uh-huh. Went to grade school in Summerville for eight years-- seven years, and then come out here and went to school.

I: High school.

MP: High school for four years.

I: Can you describe the Summerville School for kids, those six? Some kids were reading your-- your biography. They-- and they want to

know what the school was like and what-- what your experience the school was in Summerville.

MP: Oh, it was a big, two-- two story-- two-room building. The pump was out in front of it, and of course, if you wanted a drink we had to go out and pump our own water. And-- and it had a big, wood stove. So, we really had it made.

I: [chuckles].

MP: Now these kids would be deprived if they had to go to the \_\_\_\_\_ place.

I: Uh-huh, so you had two teachers?

MP: Just one.

I: Just one in the school? So, how did they divide the children up?

MP: One teacher taught us all, and then they used the other room for-- to have fun in. [laughs].

I: Oh really?

MP: Yeah.

I: And they just mixed up the grades?

MP: \_\_\_\_\_.

I: And how-- how did you learn?

MP: The teachers taught one through eight. Now Mrs. Herrmann-- Lena Herrmann was a teacher out there. It was probably one of her first-- first places she taught. Do you know Lena?

I: No, I don't.

MP: \_\_\_\_\_ Lena \_\_\_\_\_.

I: Uh-huh. So, when you came in the morning did you, um-- did you bring your own lunch and that kind of thing or was lunch provided?

MP: Well, we just lived a block from the schoolhouse, so no, I went home for lunch. [chuckles].

I: And so all the kids were in one room together. Did you end up teaching each other, like the youngers teach the olders?

MP: Yeah.

I: How'd that work?

MP: Yeah, I think the teacher would-- she'd take the prow-- of the children that needed more attention and some of the rest of us taught the, uh-- the uh, you know teach 'em the \_\_\_\_\_.

I: What kinds of games did you play?

MP: Tag and stuff like that.

I: [chuckles].

MP: In a vale-- in a room that by the time we got through recess it was so \_\_\_\_\_ me. I suppose it was at best it was in the-- and everybody came out.

I: Finish up because there was a bell on your school? Did the school bell ring or--?

MP: It wasn't that bell.

LP: I don't know if there was a bell on it.

MP: Ah, where is that picture that we found of the school that they said was-- they said it was Dry Creek School, but it wasn't. I thought I could have seen them \_\_\_\_\_.

I: You remember your favorite subject?

MP: Recess. [laughs].

I: [laughs]. Uh-huh. And so you went to grade school where?

LP: I went there.

I: Yeah?

LP: I went to grade school there in Imbler.

I: And--?

LP: All except that first year.

I: Can you describe what your school was like?

LP: Not really.

I: [laughs].

LP: [laughs]. I just--

I: Was it a one or two-room school?

LP: No.

I: Oh, it was a bigger one?

LP: It's just like it is now.

I: Okay.

LP: But they called it the Big Red School, the red part of it. That's all that was there when \_\_\_\_\_.

I: Mm-hm.

LP: Yeah.

I: Do you remember having a favorite subject or favorite teacher or--?



LP: Well, I liked-- I liked math, and I took a lot of math all through school. I took any kind of mechanic work that I could take. We did have that in high school. I think the two years that I was there most of the time, why, I didn't particularly like school, but I knew I had to take it. I had to go there, so.

I: So, can we go back to the-- to logging again 'cause I think that would be really interesting for people to know about how logging might have differed, and at the time you were doing it than it is now.

LP: Well, I really did-- I was in logging. I didn't do much logging myself. I was in every part of it as we went along, but I actually was a mechanical maintenance man. After the sawmill, I went-- I did go into the logging part of it and run CATS and skidded logs and drove truck, hauled logs. And eventually I went to work for Boise Cascade. I worked for them a short time, and then they sold out. That they sold out that part of it.

I: Now what-- what does it mean, skidding logs? What is that?

LP: After the-- after they fall the logs, they have to skid 'em to an area where they can load 'em on a truck.

I: And how did they do that?

LP: It's-- they'd drag 'em with a tractor.

I: Oh, okay. Is that-- I don't know if I'd \_\_\_\_\_.

MP: They can use more \_\_\_\_\_--

LP: They drag 'em with a tractor, and then--

I: Mm-hm.

MP: \_\_\_\_\_.

I: 'Cause you had the tractor?

LP: Then-- then they had-- and then they had loaders that-- that picks 'em up and loads 'em. I did for a short time, worked in a place where they didn't have self-propelled loaders. They-- they'd load them the old way like probably could see 'em back in years ago. But that was just a short time. They'd just load-- they pulled 'em up with a cable with another tractor, load them on-- on the trucks. I was glad to get out of that part.

I: [chuckles]. Why is that?

LP: The dangerous grading is.

I: So, was Boise Cascade-- Cascade a fairly young company when you started working for it?

LP: They were--

I: Was it-- was it--?

LP: They were a young company here, yes.

MP: You worked Western Studs to start out, didn't you?

LP: Yeah. You know, there was-- there was probably in a period of four or five years I worked for several companies because they were-- they weren't lasting. They were selling out. They were logging and then selling out, changin' hands.

I: Why was that?

LP: I don't know why. And I eventually went to work for a logger that-- that logged for Boise Cascade. So, I again I was-- I was back with Boise Cascade and logging, workin' for another man. I worked for--

I: And you were a machinist for--?

LP: I worked for Daugherty Logging, and he was a very well-known man.

I: Daugherty Logging?

LP: Daugherty Logging.

I: Where were they housed?

LP: They were in La Grande.

I: And did most of the time you'd do the machinist work?

LP: Yeah, I did mechanic work for them. That was what I-- but I did a lot of other work just--

I: When you do mechanic work in-- in logging, what-- what kinds of things would you do?

LP: I don't know why I don't recall them orders. If somethin' broke down-- I did a lot of welding.

I: How is welding-- what was weld-- welding's probably different now than in what you-- what would equipment would you have to--?

LP: We had portable welders because all-- all of our-- most of our work was out of the shop so a lot of portables. It was arc welding. And then we made-- we made logging equipment because we didn't like what was made and we made our own.

I: What kinds would you make?

LP: Well, we just modified-- we'd-- skidding, like skidders and things. And we made our own grapples to lift the logs to load 'em on the truck.

I: Why weren't they-- why weren't there-- they-- what was the problem that made them, the original ones not work?

LP: Well, they were designed for logs in more or less a big logging company where they had huge logs. And our logs here in this country wasn't that big. So, it was-- we just modified everything, lot-- just a lot of the stuff.

I: So, would you--?

LP: We just--

I: Would you come in on a special job to-- to fix something, or would you just be available whenever anything needed fixing? Or was there always things that needed fixing?

LP: There was always things that needed fixing, but usually at that time-- by that time we had radios. They could-- they'd call into the shop and who was working at the shop.

I: So, the shop was in La Grande?

LP: More-- more times-- more times we were out of the shop, and they would call us back to the shop.

I: Ah. So, the shop was in La Grande?

LP: Yes.

I: Okay. And were--?

LP: It was--

I: Were there several-- several companies had that shop, or was that just the Boise Cascade shop?

LP: That was Daugherty's shop.

I: Oh, Daugherty's shop, uh-huh. Where was the shop located in La Grande?

LP: It, uh-- it's where-- it's on Cove Avenue. It was the old Larison building where they sold logging trailers at one time. Then I worked for Daugherty for, I think nine years. And then I went to work for Demon D Logging which was-- which was very same, just almost identical to the job I had for before.

I: And were-- where were they located in La Grande as well?

LP: They were located along the freeway on May Lane. By \_\_\_\_\_--

I: So, how many logging companies were-- were in La Grande, in and around La Grande, lots of 'em?

LP: There was-- there was probably ten or fifteen at that time, I guess.

I: Were they real competitive?

LP: Yes, yes they were.

I: So did people get along with each other who-- who did logging in different areas? I mean, would--?

LP: Pretty good. They got--  
[audio clicks off - 12 second delay]

I: Okay. Another question I might have about you being a machinist for-- because I think machinists-- machinists now probably do different things. What was your favorite part of the job? What kinds of things did you really enjoy doing when you were working with the logging as a machinist?

LP: I-- I enjoyed the-- the welding part of it, I think the most. I could-- 'cause we could manufacture, use our own line to build things.

I: It was creative.

LP: I enjoyed it.

I: Mm-hm.

LP: I guess the part that I didn't like the most was being away from home so much because our-- our logging jobs were probably an average of sixty, seventy miles away every day. So you-- you left home in the morning, and it was late at night before you got home. That was-- that was probably the worst part of it.

I: What was it like for you? So, you were-- were you-- you were working also and--?

MP: Yeah, I worked at the telephone company. \_\_\_\_\_.

I: Which telephone company?

MP: The one in La Grande.

I: Oh, okay.

MP: We lived in La Grande for, oh, \_\_\_\_\_ years, \_\_\_\_\_. We lived in La Grande for thirty-seven years.

I: Where were you in La Grande before?

MP: On Walnut.

I: Where'd you live, on Walnut?

MP: Yeah, I used to walk to the telephone company.

I: Oh?

MP: Our son had the house built. \_\_\_\_\_. Yeah, I raised, what, three kids by myself?

I: [chuckles]. Because you were away so much, right?

MP: \_\_\_\_\_.

I: And you also were working-- when did you start working at the telephone company?

MP: Right after I got out of high school.

I: So, was that in the '40's? '48, uh-huh. Describe what it was like to work for the-- the telephone company. What was your average day as you went into the telephone company to work?

MP: Well, I enjoyed my work at the telephone company.

I: What did you do?

MP: Answered calls. When I first started workin' for 'em, \_\_\_\_\_. Well, the numbers in La Grande had alphabet after 'em, like \_\_\_\_\_.

I: Oh!

MP: Generally, you'd find everybody was on the \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_, dial-- fix the right thing to get the call to go through! [chuckles].

I: [chuckles]. Was it a switchboard or--? What did that look like? Would you describe it for me?

MP: It was just a great, big, tall, thing with a bunch of holes in it that you plugged into.

I: So, if-- if a call came what would exactly would you do?

MP: Answer it \_\_\_\_\_.

LP: Like a call coming--

MP: \_\_\_\_\_ would like that. Is he back?

LP: No, he's not.

I: So, so the call came in, and then they want you to-- to put them through to someone else? Is that what it was, or how did-- how did it work?

MP: Well, they'd call in, and we would connect 'em to you. Or whatever they wanted they had to go through an operator.

I: Oh, I see.

MP: Not like now where you can dial. You had to have an operator connect you to whatever you wanted.

I: So then they called and then you had to get them in touch with the operator, and then they'd--? Uh-huh.

MP: Call into the operator and then we'd connect them on through. And we had an old rural board that-- you know, going up towards Perry? [chuckles]. Every time a lightning-- a lightning would come on the roof the worst of the \_\_\_\_\_ would knock you off!

I: [chuckles]. Oh no! What's a rural board?

MP: Well, it was just that thing lined up towards Perry, and \_\_\_\_\_ rural line. There was just one-- one per operator that answered the rural and the ones the rest of 'em were local or long distance.

I: Oh, really? So one operator every time would work just this one board, or--?

MP: One that worked that rural board. Oh, I-- there was, oh, four or five local, and a need would come through and there'd be two or three, four or five long distance ones.

I: Oh!

MP: If you wanted a long distance call, you had to go through an operator, and she had to go through about ten operators to get you where you were going. And you'd just almost get there, and they'd say, " \_\_\_\_\_ proceeds," and they'd take the line away from you.

I: Oh no!

MP: Yeah. We just had a lot of fun with that. We got to be terrible liars! [laughs].

I: [laughs].

MP: We'd always found-- they go by time, and we got so we advanced our times so that we were earlier than they were. But I worked with some wonderful people up there.

I: Were they all women?

MP: Yeah, \_\_\_\_\_. The last-- just before we went out of business we had men operators too.



I: What was the name of the telephone company?

MP: General.

I: The General-- General Telephone? And where was that located in La Grande?

MP: Oh, it's now-- well, across from Foley Annex where the old Foley hotel used to be. And when I first worked for them, we were up-- upstairs over at the-- well, I don't know what's in there now, but it's in the block where the ice cream parlor is at. Then we moved to a new building, and we got male boy operators-- men, not boys, uh, operators. We had one, Jim Herrmann. I don't know whether you knew him. Do you know Annie and Jim were around \_\_\_\_\_?

I: Mr. Herrmann? Mm-hm.

MP: \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_. The operators had good times. We had a lot of cranky customers, too! [chuckles].

I: [laughs].

MP: But we-- most of 'em were not.

I: What-- why would they get it-- cranky? What was-- what was usually the problem that makes them cranky?

MP: They just got up on the wrong side of the bed, I tell ya! [chuckles].

I: [laughs]. Uh-huh. So-- so, the um-- the layout of where you were working was a bank of different places for different kinds of calls? Is that right? Is that what I understood?

MP: In that old-- old office that was the case. In the new office everything was now automated. It had a-- a board which you just put a line through, and to have long distance of course you dialed. There wasn't a lot of--

LP: C'mon in!

MP: \_\_\_\_\_ dial. You could dial it-- dial it yourself.

O: Sorry!

I: It's alright. So, on a typical day would you get up early and get the kids to school and go to work? Is that your--?

MP: Timeline?

I: Uh-huh.

MP: And then come home and \_\_\_\_\_.

I: Make dinner? [chuckles].

MP: Yeah. I was laughing at my grandson. He just stopped into today. He tried to tell his wife that he used to come visit with Grandma-- come to La Grande. He lived in Baker. And he'd be there maybe two weeks, and he wouldn't see his granddad because he'd be in bed by the time his granddad got home. And his granddad would be gone by the time he got up, so. But that's okay. It's time to raise \_\_\_\_\_. And he's got time for his great-grandchildren.

I: Yeah, there you go.

MP: Grandchildren, they can't quite figure it out. Maybe they will some day.

I: When-- where did you go shopping when you-- when you bought food after you'd worked in the market, um, when you lived in Imbler? What-- what-- what stores were around when you were living in La Grande?

MP: Oh, I done lots of shopping in \_\_\_\_\_ places, so. The one I miss the most I think is the one that went out of business. It was next to Wal-Mart.

I: Was that The \_\_\_\_\_?

MP: You know, next to Wal-Mart.

I: Oh, Shop N Kart?

MP: Shop N Kart.

I: Yeah!

MP: I really miss that place.

I: Yeah.

MP: No, I never did do too much business in-- when did he get home?

LP: Yesterday.

MP: Did he have his operation?

LP: No. They expelled him on the--  
[recording clicks - 4 second delay]

I: So uh, I wanna ask about the Boise Cascade families. That obviously, the men were gone, right, a lot? Did the women get together and do social activities so that the men while they were gone?

MP: At one point they did \_\_\_\_\_ here.

I: What kinds of things did you do to-- to keep your spirits up when your men were gone?

MP: Oh, we had make-up parties, and we had sewing parties, and Mary-- Mary Kay parties. My son was just reminding me of that yesterday. Somebody was at my house, and he said, "It must have been a party!" And I said, "Yeah, it must have been!"

I: [chuckles].

MP: Oh Geri, \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_? In Elgin she used to work for the telephone company. 'Course I haven't been there for ages, but now our kids are working together for the county which I think is nice.

I: So, would you say that them-- I mean, did you uh-- so, were the women that worked at the telephone company-- did you-- did you do social things with them also?

MP: Oh yeah.

I: What kinds of things would you guys--?

MP: Parties. And feasts. [chuckles].

I: [chuckles].

MP: We had one operator that was always bringing something to eat, Margaret Allen. \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ one of the people that learned to make homemade chocolate.

I: Oh?

MP: She was very much-- we really appreciated her. [chuckles]. Once a week she'd treat us.

I: So, going back to Boise Cascade, and then going to Daugherty's, so-- how do-- how do you think that um-- were the-- the lumber industry changed as you got to-- towards the end of your time working as a machinist? How did-- how did you see them, the lumber industry changing in La Grande and in Union County while you were there?

LP: Well, I don't-- I don't really know how the lumber part of it changed so much. The part that-- the work that I did seemed to change a lot because the machinery kept changing. Yeah, I don't know. I-- I really didn't-- don't know how the logging part of it changed. That was mostly in-- in the offices for Boise Cascade.

I: What kinds of new equipment--

LP: But when--

I: did you deal with?

LP: Well, we went from-- from Caterpillars to rubber-tired skidders, and-- and-- and many more modern machineries because we was just different then. And they-- you could do so much more. You could do so much more in one day than you did when I first started in the logging part. So I-- I can't say that I know too much about how the logging part changed, just how the-- the taking care of the machinery changed. Then after I worked for-- for Daugherty, I worked for Demon D, and then he was with Boise Cascade too. And I worked for-- I worked for Demon D for seventeen years.

MP: He was a rock crusher too.

LP: I logged with him for about six years, and then he bought a rock-- actually, he bought a rock crusher while I was logging his \_\_\_\_\_. Actually, he had two kinds. Rock crushing involved them both, and I-- I kind of worked in between the two of them mostly with rock crushing.

I: Where was the rock-- rock crushing?

LP: It was-- it was portable. We just went all over Oregon and Washington.

I: So, you went out and-- with the rock crusher to wherever?

LP: Yes, I--

I: And what were you crushing the rocks for? What--?

LP: Mostly for-- mostly for state jobs, some county jobs crushing the road-- road rock. Then-- then he was also into road building, so that was another company. So those two-- all three of those companies that he owned kind of tied together and kept me pretty busy.

I: So were you gone from home quite a bit then?

LP: Yeah, yeah. I had a trailer house, and I just went to work and tried to get home on weekends.

I: So, can you describe what-- what you would do with the-- I mean, how-- what the machine-- how you would work the machine to do the rock crushing?

LP: Well, let's see, it was mostly-- mostly just maintenance. Welding-- lots of welding. Lots of-- lots of building things just like I did in the logging because he didn't like the way that it-- we modified it to make it work.

I: So what was the machine like that crushed the rocks? What did it look like? What-- describe it.

LP: I don't know how to describe a rock crusher.

I: [laughs].

LP: It-- it's uh-- it's uh, quite an operation.

MP: \_\_\_\_\_.

LP: First-- first they'd-- we'd-- we'd drill the rock and then blast it. And they'd load it into a-- the jaw-crusher. It was a jaw-crusher. That reduces the size of the rock from about eight to twelve inches down to about three or four inches. Then it goes from the jaw-crusher to a roll-crusher. And that reduces-- that's-- that reduces the size again from three inches down to as small as a quarter inch. Then they had-- then there's other machine that can also make it finer, or-- or make the size all uniform. And there's screening, lots of screening to-- to get the different sizes sorted out.

I: So, did you operate the machine as well as maintaining it?

LP: Yeah, I run the machine for him besides the maintenance all one year. For one shift we'd run it twenty hours a day in that one shift there. It-- and that was up at-- it takes-- it takes about nine men, eight or nine men to operate a rock crusher.

I: Wow. So it's a huge piece of machinery.

LP: Yeah.

I: And so anytime anything went wrong you were the--?

LP: The pile driver. I was there.

I: Well, Mary just said that it was very loud. Well, did you put--?

LP: No.

I: Did you have any-- anything in your ears while you were operating, or--?

LP: Should have had.

I: Should have had? [chuckles]. Uh-huh.

LP: Yeah, lot of them that wore things. It irritated me. The dust-- the dust would get in where the plugs were in your ears, and it'd irritate my ears 'till I couldn't stand it. Now they have different kinds of things that they put over their head, didn't have that then.

I: So where did you travel with the rock crusher, I mean?

LP: Oh, in-- all over Oregon and a lot in southern Oregon, some in Idaho, some in Washington.

I: How did you deal with the dust? Wasn't it in your eyes and in your nose and--?

LP: Yeah. Well, you wear goggles sometimes.

I: Sometimes, huh?

LP: Sometimes.

I: Mm-hm. Why did it take nine people to operate it?

LP: It was one-- one man operates the machine that loads the-- puts the rock into the crusher. And then there's one that-- that kinda watches the crusher, that's one. Then there's one that take the rock away. Then there's a truck driver, sometimes two truck drivers. Especially

that load \_\_\_\_\_ in the truck. It just takes \_\_\_\_\_. There's a clean-up man, sometimes two clean-up men for the rocks that come off. They you've got-- then there's one that takes care of the water because in a lot of places we had to have water. So they had to have a truck driver to haul the water to the \_\_\_\_\_.

I: Why would you need the water?

LP: To keep the dust down. So, it's just-- it's quite an operation. Then they had a-- they had one man that tested the rock. The rock had to be tested to make sure it was spec for the state jobs.

I: Did-- how did you transport the rock crusher?

LP: It was by truck.

I: Like a flatbed truck or--?

LP: No, they were units-- some of it, yeah. Some of it on a flatbed, but each unit had its own trailer.

I: It must have--

LP It took about seven--

I: looked like a big parade!

LP seven truckloads.

I: Just to transport it?

LP: Yeah.

I: Wow.

LP Well, yeah, seven or eight trucks just to transport it. We tried to, on a move that was maybe only fifty miles away-- we tried to tear the-- the crusher down one day. Poop it, set it up the next day, and we moved it the next day so it took three days going in.



I: That's real physical work.

LP: Very physical.

I: You said it's pretty loud, Mary, huh?

MP: Oh boy!

I: Did you ever go visit when it was operating? [laughs].

MP: No, you don't visit around the rock crusher.

I: [laughs].

LP: They're all hand signals.

I: Uh-huh. So, how did he decide who got to go do the logging, and who got to do the rock crushing, and who got to do-- what other job was it that--?

MP: Road building.

I: Road building. How did he decide who got to do what?

MP: He sent Leon on all three jobs. [laughs].

I: Yeah?

LP: I-- I was-- I was always a top man, oh, from the time-- time I-- from the time I went to work for him.

I: So, you kind of went where he really needed you most?

LP: Yeah, wherever I was called to go, I went.

I: So did you end your career doing that, or were you--?

LP: No.

I: Did you back? Now what'd you do? [chuckles].

LP: Then I-- he sold out, and I went-- went to work for Weaver Construction. He was a bridge builder. He's still in business in La Grande. In fact, he's working on the Island City highway there now, but I think I worked for Jim for nine years.

MP: Don't look at me. I don't know.

I: [chuckles].

LP: Nine-- nine years. Then I retired.

I: What did you do on the bridge building?

LP: Uh, same thing, mechanic work, welding, lots of welding. Then again, I had cranes to work on and tractors and loaders and caterpillars.

I: Something was always needing.

LP: Something was always needing, yeah. After I went to work for Jim, though, we-- we took a lot of work to the other Caterpillar places and other places and truck shops because it was just more than we could handle.

I: Was that a job where you--?

LP Besides-- besides it was-- we learned it was cheaper to do it that way.

I: Was that a job where you could come home in the evening?

LP: No, this went on to be about the same kind of job. [chuckles].

I: [chuckles]. Uh-huh.

LP: Away from home a lot.

I: Uh-huh.

LP: Yeah.

I: And so he's still in business now.

LP: Yeah.

I: Do you ever go and check out to see if they do-- they're doing it right?

LP: No, I really don't. I go visit with 'em sometimes. [chuckles]. I don't say much to 'em.

I: Anything else that you'd like-- either one of you would like to talk about? About living in Imbler at all?

MP: I found out the wind blows out here! [chuckles].

I: [chuckles].

LP: I was just gonna say that about the wind.

I: More than La Grande, do you think?

MP: Yeah. Well, we lived in La Grande under the hill. You know, there on Walnut. And it wasn't, you know-- well, it was the wind comes down. It cooled us off in the evenings, but we didn't have the wind like we have out here.

LP: We bought this place in 1974, and it just-- we didn't do anything with this five acres until after I retired. But it was-- growing up, I can never remember the wind blowing here. But the reason we never noticed it is because this was all orchards in this country. This whole area, this was all in orchards. Now like this below us down here all orchards.

I: What kind of orchards?

LP: Apple, mostly apple orchards. There was some cherry orchards, but mostly apple.

I: So, have you noticed a big difference in-- in Summerville and Imbler over the years, or has it stayed pretty much the same?

MP: I used to when I was \_\_\_\_\_, younger in Imbler; I knew everybody and their dog. Now, I don't know anybody in town or Imbler.

I: Why do you think that-- that is?

MP: I just don't-- I don't get around like I used to, I guess.

I: Do you think neighbors maybe just aren't as-- as close as they were?

MP: No, \_\_\_\_\_.  
[audio ends]