

Anita Pipes

6/11/03, T1, S1

ES: This is an interview with Anita Pipes on June...what is it, the 10<sup>th</sup>?

AP: 11<sup>th</sup>.

ES: 10<sup>th</sup>...June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2003 in the Grande Ronde Retirement Residence. As I recall from listening to the previous tape, you came at a very early age to Union County. Is that correct?

AP: Yes. Three months old.

ES: Three months old. And where had your parents been living previously?

AP: They were both raised in Illinois, Quincy, Illinois. Some of the family had moved out here, bought some farm land and encouraged them to come out to beautiful Oregon. They thought Oregon was great. In 1916 things were a lot different then they are now.

ES: Yes. Did your parents later tell you some of the specific things they heard about the Grande Ronde Valley?

AP: Not...not a lot.

ES: Just that it was beautiful and some farming potential, obviously, they must've learned about that.

AP: Yes. So Dad rented a forty-acre...I think it was forty acres...but you couldn't make a living a forty acres.

ES: Had he ever farmed before?

AP: No.

ES: Wow. [laughs]

AP: So he...he got a job at the mill.

ES: Which mill was that? Mt. Emily? Bowman Hicks?

AP: I think it was Bowman Hicks. And we lived on that forty-acre place until I was about ten or eleven, I think.

ES: Can you tell me exactly where it is?

AP: About three-and-a-half miles east of Island City on the Cove Road. And at that time there was a slough that's since been filled in...made a highway...that was our swimming...where we learned to swim in that little old slough and ice skate in wintertime. I had a brother...had a brother, he is now deceased, about three years...three to four years younger than I. I was the only girl in the region and so I became a tomboy.

ES: What do you remember about the building or buildings on the piece of land?

AP: There was a nice barn, the house wasn't too old. We didn't have indoor plumbing or indoor...I just won't remember whether there was any indoor plumbing. I know there was an outside toilet.

ES: Was it a two-story frame house?

AP: No. It was a single, two-bedroom, no bath of course, kitchen. Pretty nice little house, really, for the country. Not too old.

ES: Your parents were renting the house as well as the land?

AP: Yes. There was a little woodshed there that would furnish us...us kids with jobs takin' care of that wood, pile it and splitting it and taking it in the house. Nice

garage. My dad was pretty much the neighborhood mechanic for the tractors and that sort of thing. Of course the tractors then were very simple or he couldn't have been...been able to do it.

ES: Was he making some extra money that way?

AP: I think it was just a gratis thing. Of course times weren't very good at that time. We lived there until I think I was about eleven and moved...

ES: Before you go to that tell me more about being a tomboy in that place.

AP: [laugh] Being the only girl in the neighborhood...there were several cousins down the road another quarter-mile, third cousins, and a neighborhood boy lived about, oh, three blocks from us. We all had access to a horse and we had dogs, of course. We made our own fun. But one day this neighbor boy his folks had a hired man and he smoked cigars. So \_\_ [tape interruption]...cigars. There were four or five of us together and we took this cigar back behind our barn we were sitting in a row behind the barn passing this cigar from one to the other. And I think we were all begin to go a little bit like that, a little bit dizzy. \_\_ stuck her head around the corner. Well, that ended the cigar business, of course. I think I was a little bit sicker after she came then I was before. We would go cat fishing, mud cats.

ES: Was the slough full of them?

AP: Yes. We'd take a skillet and whatever was necessary to take care of frying those catfish. We'd have our own little picnic down by the slough there. Then the wintertime...

ES: This was not very elaborate fishing equipment, I'm pretty sure.

AP: No. No, just a...

ES: Just a line with a hook on it?

AP: Right.

ES: And a worm?

AP: Yes.

ES: Is that all it took?

AP: That's all it took.

ES: How did...

AP: Today I couldn't...I don't want any...even think about eating a catfish [laughs] and a mud cat.

ES: Presumably, you learned to open up the fish and take out the innards.

AP: Somebody did. I don't remember what I was...

ES: It sounds like a Tom Sawyer kind of existence.

AP: And about this time...no, it was later than that...my folks went in the dairy business. But while we were still living on this place in the wintertime we would skate all winter long. We would... We had winters where you...you probably weren't here when the hard winters were.

ES: No, but many people have told me about them.

AP: So we could skate for miles \_\_ across the fence, across that slough just went on and on. We'd build a bonfire and have a \_\_ on the ice, too. We made our own entertainment.

ES: It sounds as though most of your play was unsupervised.

AP: Oh yes.

ES: And very improvised. You just found things to do without much of a plan?  
AP: Yeah.  
ES: Yes. That's often the best kind of fun, isn't it?  
AP: Oh yes.  
ES: Any difficulties you remember getting into with these boys?  
AP: No.  
ES: Sometimes fun turns into mischief.  
AP: Yes. I can't remember what age we...what age I was when we moved. Oh, about half-a-mile up the road toward Island City and folks ran a dairy there, delivered bottled milk. And I don't remember how many cows they had, maybe half a dozen.  
ES: This must've been a dairy owned by someone else?  
AP: My folks.  
ES: Oh, they bought it?  
AP: No, they developed it. They bought the...bought the cows, milkin' equipment, cooling equipment and bottling equipment. My mother did the milking, my dad did the bottle washing and taking care of the \_\_\_...put a certain amount through the separator, sold some cream. Basically it was better than four percent milk. That left me to do some cooking 'cause they were busy down there. And my mother delivered the milk to the houses in town with the crates of milk in the back of the...I don't remember what year Chevrolet it was.  
ES: A truck?  
AP: No, a...  
ES: A passenger car?  
AP: A two-door passenger car.  
ES: That wasn't so handy for delivery.  
AP: No, it wasn't.  
ES: How did she keep it cool? Or was it just a matter of just delivering it as quickly as possible?  
AP: Uh-huh. I had started taking violin lessons when I was nine. Tried that, but, oh, five or six years of age, I think, I heard Jenny Neilson play violin. She's Jenny White now. And I told Mom, "I want to play violin like Jenny." So I started when I was nine.  
ES: Where did you hear her play?  
AP: Oh, probably some grange meeting. All the farmers belonged to the grange. I don't recall exactly.  
ES: This must've been what we call fiddle playing rather than classical violin.  
AP: No, she was playing classical.  
ES: Oh, she was?  
AP: Uh-huh, as I remember. I would... I started taking lessons from Mrs. Rob...Mrs. Robinson on the corner of Fourth and 'O'.  
ES: What was her first name, do you know?  
AP: His name was Ples, p-l-e-s, and I don't recall I'd ever heard her first name.  
ES: Huh. Just Mrs. Robinson.  
AP: Uh-huh.  
ES: What did she look like?

AP: Oh, she was a...not a tall person, but she had a fair size build. She wasn't heavy. Nice looking women.

ES: Did she play the piano while you played your pieces?

AP: Occasionally, but just mostly listening to me.

ES: Do you have any idea where she'd gotten her training?

AP: No, I don't.

ES: Did she have many students, do you think?

AP: I knew of four or five. One of 'em was Ernest Briggs. I don't know that I knew any of the others.

ES: At that time there were several music teachers, I think, in La Grande. Do you know of any other teachers of violin?

AP: The only ones I knew of was Florence Miller and...I think they called him Dr. Bryant. I don't know how long he was in La Grande. I started with Mrs. Robinson...the time I...I was so small at nine that I started on three-quarter size violin. We tied that violin on the back of my saddle and I would ride my pony about almost six miles in to take my lessons. And here was that poor violin bounce...[laughs]

ES: And it didn't have a very strong case, I suppose.

AP: No. But it survived anyway. I don't recall how many years that I did that.

ES: Tell me about paying for the lessons.

AP: Probably chicken, eggs and milk and cream, part of it anyway.

ES: Money that essentially you would earn?

AP: No.

ES: Oh. Your parents gave you the money for it?

AP: Yes. And they were struggling to get it together.

ES: Uh-huh. 'Cause it'd be about twenty-five cents a lesson, maybe?

AP: I don't know.

ES: Coins rather than dollar bills?

AP: Yes. But times were tough for sure.

ES: Oh sure. Of course.

AP: And they were struggling to give me...give me lessons.

ES: Did you put the money in your pocket each time and give it to her after the lesson?

AP: You know, I don't know.

ES: That's a detail that might have slipped, yes.

AP: Yeah.

ES: These lessons, I'm sure, were during the daytime.

AP: Oh yes.

ES: Were they on school days?

AP: Oh, I'm sure not. It must've been Saturdays.

ES: Saturday, mm-hmm. And what did your parents think of your riding the pony with the violin by yourself into town and back?

AP: Oh, that was fine. That was the only way I was gonna get there.

ES: What happened to the pony during the lesson?

AP: Tied him up to their tree out there. [laughs]

ES: Did you have any trouble with somebody wanting to make off with the pony while you were in there?

AP: No.

ES: No. The pony would wait patiently?

AP: Oh yes.

ES: What was the pony's name?

AP: I don't recall that.

ES: Okay.

AP: Through the years we had several horses. I don't remember that one. But he was...we bought him from Fred in Island City. Oh, \_\_\_ his last name. He had trained...it was a mare and kind of chubby and he had trained her to lie down and the kids played cards on her...on her sides. [laughs] She was very tame. I don't recall how many years I took from Ms. Robinson.

ES: Do you recall anything about the music she had you play?

AP: Just the regular beginner stuff, as I remember.

ES: Perhaps a book of exercises?

AP: Oh yes.

ES: Scales and so on. And then maybe another book of compositions, simple compositions, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"?

AP: Yeah. And not all in books. Quite a few were...

ES: Sheet music?

AP: Sheet music.

ES: Uh-huh. Did you have to buy that or did she loan them?

AP: She loaned some, but I had to buy most of 'em. Of course I can't...

ES: What do you remember about practicing in-between lessons?

AP: Rarely did my mother have to push me.

ES: You had announced that you wanted to take lessons, so that was a good sign.

AP: Once in a while she'd have to push a little bit, but I...

ES: Did you have a regular time set aside?

AP: I don't recall that, but apparently I did because I had schoolwork to take care of during the week. But I'm sure we practiced every day. And I must've been horrible to listen to. [laughs]

ES: If it wasn't for more than fifteen minutes or so at a time a parent can stand that.

AP: Nothing worse than a string instru...instrument when they're in the learning phase.

ES: You took these lessons then, I think you said, for several years?

AP: Mm-hmm.

ES: So you must've been making satisfactory progress, at least satisfactory to you.

AP: Yes, to the teacher.

ES: Did she have you do recitals?

AP: Yes.

ES: Most music teachers do at least once a year.

AP: Yes. And it was held in the La Grande Hotel.

ES: Oh yes. A very fancy hotel.

AP: Which was... Which was... Yes. And there was...

ES: Did you have to wear a pretty dress for that?

AP: Yeah. And...

ES: Must've been a little hard for a tomboy to do.

AP: Yes. [laughs] She had a grand piano put in there. And I can't remember the name of the woman who danced. She had hired her to...between solos to dance. We must've spent quite a little bit on the...to rent the...

ES: It sounds like it.

AP: Flowers of course.

ES: I'd be interested if you could describe more about the...that hotel, especially the interior.

AP: As a kid you don't pay much attention.

ES: I realize, but you probably have some images.

AP: It seemed huge, of course. And the ballroom...it was in this ballroom where we had... And it was just a lovely building. Couldn't have been many years old at that time.

ES: It wasn't there for very many years.

AP: No. Like I say, it just seemed huge to me. Of course, when you're young...

ES: Yes.

AP: But I really don't recall much about it.

ES: There were several students who played on program.

AP: Yes.

ES: Did you...you sat and listened to all of them?

AP: Oh, there weren't either. I was the only one. It was my recital.

ES: Really?

AP: This woman...this other person danced several times.

ES: That's unusual I would think.

AP: Yes. And of course I got a bouquet of flowers and I don't know who that was from.

ES: Do you by any chance have a copy of the printed program?

AP: No.

ES: I'll bet there was one.

AP: Oh, I'm sure there was.

ES: It sounds as though it was fairly formal and usually there is a printed program.

AP: Yeah, I'm sure there was.

ES: Would you... Do you think you might have played eight or ten pieces?

AP: Probably yes. I suppose I would've been taking three, maybe four years by then. I was playing around different granges playing solos. Practically all the granges. My mother would haul me here and haul me there. And my accomp...that was more when I was in high school. That was not in grade school.

ES: I would say probably the teacher and other adults in the valley regarded you as a very promising player.

AP: I suppose they did. I know...

ES: You wouldn't've had so many invitations otherwise.

AP: It seemed to me like I always get too many requests. It was getting' old stuff.

ES: I see.

AP: But...

ES: Do you... Were you aware at the time, or do you remember being aware, of other musical activity at the time in the valley?

AP: No.

ES: It apparently was common for the granges to have music as part of their programs.

AP: I don't recall. Of course I played several times.

ES: And you said that Jenny White had played at a grange?

AP: I think possibly that's where I heard her. I only heard here the one time and I wasn't...oh, I suppose I was only six years old at that time.

ES: Do you remember hearing bands?

AP: No.

ES: No other musical groups?

AP: No, not till I got to high school.

ES: High school, yes, and that was the high school orchestra that you played in?

AP: Yes.

ES: Were there musical groups other than that orchestra that you were aware of?

AP: In the latter years at high school I became part of a group, the viola, two violins and a piano. And they were all about our age, mostly classmates, and we performed several times to \_\_\_. But other than that I don't recall being any...at least I wasn't aware. Living out in the country I didn't get into town except when I came to school or a lesson so I wasn't in tune, really, with what was going on.

ES: So to speak.

AP: Yeah.

ES: I don't have very much information yet about musical activity in the early part of the twentieth century in Union County. That's why I'm asking these questions. I would like to know more about that. We'll have to look in other places, probably The Observer contains articles about various groups that were playing at the time.

AP: There were probably some...

ES: Yes.

AP: ...string groups, perhaps, that I wasn't aware of.

ES: Let's switch over to the early schooling, this was in Island City, was it not?

AP: Yes. I went through all eight grades in Island City.

ES: What do you remember about the building?

AP: Two...two grades to a room and...

ES: Four rooms then.

AP: Yes. The seats were two to a seat, too...two to a desk, I should say. The seat...it was all built as a unit.

ES: Did any girls and boys share the same desk?

AP: Oh yes. And that age we...I wasn't interested in boys, anyway.

ES: Yeah, except your friends, your playmates.

AP: They assigned a certain kid to sit with me and I didn't like him. [laugh] Wasn't very pleasant for me.

ES: What, did you poke you or smell or something objectionable?

AP: No. He got sick one time and threw up right and that...that did it.

ES: Oh, that would do it! That will do it, yes. [laughs]

AP: But I did not particularly care for the boy anyway.

ES: Could you request a change in seating?

AP: Yes. One of my teachers...she would've been fourth and fifth...fifth and sixth grade...Mrs. Lesley, she was a widow and her daughter was my age and she had two sons who were older. One of the...one was in high school and I think the other was probably through high school. And my uncle was on the school board...maybe I shouldn't tell this...you might want to delete it.

ES: Alright.

AP: He was on the school board and he as instrumental in getting her teaching contract terminated because she was a widow, of all things, when she needed, but they didn't want a widow teaching. Why, I don't know. Oh, thank you. So they moved away and she got a teaching job somewhere else. But the principal was a push-over for the kids. He didn't have any discipline. He taught the seventh and eighth and was the principal, lived right across the street. And the kids, the boys, just pulled dirty tricks on him. He had a huge heater, big round heater back of the room and anybody that was being punished would have to go sit in the corner back by that heater. A couple of the boys...as he would walk up and down the aisle he wore a gray suit and as he walked up and down the aisle these boys took a pen...

ES: With ink in it.

AP: With ink in it.

ES: And it splattered on his suit.

AP: He never said one word about that. And they would take rulers and spitballs here and cover the ceiling and he would never say one word about it. He didn't last too long as a teacher, a principal either. Those days at recess the boys would play marbles. I don't recall what other games we played.

ES: What can you remember about the lessons? How they were presented and what you were expected to do?

AP: I don't really recall anything in particular about how they were presented, but we were expected to be quiet in the rooms. Most teachers...the other three teachers were...stood by the rules. But at home my folks taught my brother and I, "If you get in trouble at school you're gonna have to get in more trouble when you get home." But neither of us were that kind of kids. Never did have any problems. My grandparents lived there and, oh, about a block-and-a-half from the school. And I would spend...a lot of times I would go there for my lunch.

ES: I don't remember your telling me how your grandparents got here.

AP: They came out before my folks did. I think...oh, they came by train. They shipped their...rented everything \_\_ box car to ship their belongings out to La Grande.

ES: That must've been in the late 1800s.

AP: Probably was, yes.

ES: That would make them almost pioneers in Island City, anyway.

AP: They... They were, I thought, ancient when I was eight or ten.

ES: Of course they were forty-five years old they were ancient, weren't they?

AP: But my mother's youngest of twelve and they...they were old. But it was a treat for me to stay overnight with Grandma and Grandpa.

ES: I should think so.



AP: I would ride my horse sometimes into school and...[end tape]

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AP: When they first came out they rented the two-story house...that's about three-and-a-half miles east of Island City on the Cove Road and it's the one that has two front doors. And the reason it had two front doors my uncle had it built for his two daughters. Each was to have one-half of it. So it was two houses, literally. And it's an interesting place. When you drive to Cove pay particular attention to that house with the two front doors, no porch, just a two-story...

ES: It's still there?

AP: Oh yes.

ES: Which side of the road as you're going to Cove?

AP: Right side.

ES: I don't think I've ever noticed that.

AP: The people have, oh, made changes around the yard and the fence and so on, they paint the house.

ES: Now you told me earlier that you lived in a one-story house so...

AP: That was after that.

ES: You must've lived in this other one for just a short time.

AP: Yes. My mother got so homesick that she wanted to go back \_\_\_ so back we went for a while. I don't remember how long it was and then we came back and that's when we moved to the one-story, the farm.

ES: I see. She wasn't as homesick the second time?

AP: No. And it was more...there was...two of her brothers were here and a sister in the area.

ES: And her parents?

AP: Yes.

ES: Practically the whole family.

AP: Uh-huh. So things were a lot better for her.

ES: Yes, yes. Let's return a bit to the school in Island City. The building's no longer there, of course.

AP: Oh no.

ES: Where in Island City was it, do you remember?

AP: Same place where the school is now.

ES: The present...I see. Was there anything memorable about the school building itself?

AP: No. Well, the entrance...just inside entrances, I believe on each side, just a little alcove where we would hang our coats and things. But other than that I don't remember anything.

ES: Did you have any reason to be aware of other one-room schools in Union County at that time? It was Willow Dale near Hot Lake and there was the Red Pepper School and the Shanghai School and on and on and on. There were more than eighty of them.

AP: No. We didn't get around very much so I wasn't aware of it. I enjoyed my days there. May Pole winding.

ES: Oh yes. May Pole dance.  
AP: May Pole dance, yes.  
ES: Sure. Sure. What did you do about lunch most days?  
AP: Most days brown bagged it, occasionally go home to Grandma and Grandpa, but mostly brown bagged it.  
ES: Mother made the lunch for you?  
AP: Mm-hmm.  
ES: What'd she usually give you?  
AP: Probably an egg sandwich for one thing 'cause we raised...  
ES: Plenty of eggs. That's hardboiled and then made into an egg salad?  
AP: Maybe fried egg sandwich. That's the kind I liked. And we had the...not the typical round...what do I want to say?  
ES: Bread?  
AP: Typical carrier.  
ES: Lunch box.  
AP: Lunch box. It was a...about that long, that wide.  
ES: That's about eight inches long and about...  
AP: A little longer than that, about ten.  
ES: Ten. Metal?  
AP: Metal, yes. And a hinge top for a top. It would hold enough lunch for both of us, my brother and I. Let's see, he was four years...four grades behind me all the time.  
ES: Could you get some kind drink in the box, too? Milk or water?  
AP: My memory's not very good for that.  
ES: I know. We don't all remember specific things. I can distinctly remember some things that happened to me in kindergarten.  
AP: Oh really!  
ES: I don't know particularly why, but it's always, I think, useful to at least ask the question about some of these details...  
AP: Oh yeah.  
ES: ...because it's remarkable how many of them do stick in one's mind. I remember how my kindergarten teacher looked, how long her hair was and it covered her ears and for a long time I thought she had no ears.  
AP: Oh!  
ES: She seemed to be very tall. She always wore a perfume. I still remember the fragrance. What sort of eighth grade graduation ceremony did they have at Island City?  
AP: I don't recall they had any.  
ES: There must've been something.  
AP: I don't recall.  
ES: They wouldn't just say, "Good-bye, you're off to high school" and not...  
AP: We got a diploma.  
ES: Yes.  
AP: But I don't recall there being a ceremony for it.  
ES: Sure there wasn't an evening program someplace in Island City, maybe in the school, with a class valedictorian and songs and prayers and all that?

AP: No. I don't recall any that.

ES: That surprises me.

AP: Any...oh, like Christmas program was our any program the whole school would put on would be held in the...I think it was the Methodist church down toward the river. Everything was held there, but I sure don't remember anything about graduation.

ES: I happen to have on loan a copy of a book that's a history of the Island City School, eighty-nine years of Island City schools, and it seems to include pictures of virtually every class that went through that school. I think I'll bring it here and see if you can identify yourself. See, eighth grade you would've been...that would've been 19...late 1920s.

AP: Which grade?

ES: When you were in the eighth grade.

AP: Eighth grade, oh. That'd be about '24...no, let's see...

ES: You were born in...

AP: Oh, eighth grade...

ES: You were born in 1916?

AP: Yeah.

ES: \_\_\_ figure '29...

AP: Yes.

ES: Yeah, maybe we can find you in one of those pictures.

AP: I think there were pictures that I remember. I was small just till I was thirteen. I was small for my age. And Beulah Hagey was about my size and they would put us at each end of the front row and it seemed like I was always on the slope standing a little awkward.

ES: What sort of preparation do you remember for going to La Grande High School did you get? Did you get any preparation at all? Did you simply finish eighth grade and say, "Well, next year I'm going into La Grande" and that...

AP: Yes.

ES: You didn't make a visit to La Grande High School or get any information from the school?

AP: I don't recall it. I was very timid.

ES: That sounds... That's a little strange for a tomboy.

AP: Until I was about, oh, I...gosh...all through high school I was shy. I lived the furthest...had traveled the furthest so I drove the folks car and picked up the kids at Island City.

ES: From the first days that you went to La Grande High School? You learned to drive when you were about fourteen?

AP: Oh, probably younger than that.

ES: Is this because your mother needed your help on delivering milk? Driving?

AP: No, I didn't... She didn't need me to help.

ES: Is it because you lived on a farm?

AP: I think so. You learn to drive tractor. Everything in those days were simple tractors.

ES: Sure. Was it a normal...a natural thing to do and there weren't very many regulations saying you couldn't, were there?

AP: No. I picked up a whole car load going and coming.  
ES: And of course you didn't have any insurance.  
AP: No, no. [laughs]  
ES: Who ever heard of insurance!  
AP: One winter snow was real deep and my brother and I had started to head to school and a road was drifted...well, several places drifted shut so we didn't make it.  
ES: This is while you were still at Island City or when you were...  
AP: It was...  
ES: ...when you were at La Grande?  
AP: This was \_\_ La Grande.  
ES: You must've been dropping your brother off at Island City School on the way.  
AP: Uh-huh. So...[tape interruption]...it drifted in behind us. We couldn't go anywhere. And the wind was blowing so hard and it was so cold.  
ES: This was about seven-thirty in the morning?  
AP: Uh-huh. So, the phone lines were down...we had awful winds...the phone lines were down, there was... Mom delivered the milk, she covered it over with a big heavy comforters to protect it from the cold. So my brother wrapped that comforter around me and tugged me along to one of the houses...I don't think it's even there anymore...one of the friends and we stayed there until they got the road opened. They couldn't call my folks, the lines were...phone lines down. But you get used to that sort of thing. That was the only time we had...had trouble like that.  
ES: Was it common then, as you recall, for students to drive to high school? Especially if they lived out in the country?  
AP: Yes. Yes. They would carpool it for sure.  
ES: I suppose in all cases it was parents' cars they were driving.  
AP: Oh, I'm sure.  
ES: None of these...nobody was rich enough to buy a car for a kid.  
AP: No. Oh no. No. And some of 'em walked miles...several miles to school.  
ES: Can you remember your first experience, or experiences, at La Grande High School? This would've been the old high school at Fourth and 'M'. It must've seemed, as the La Grande Hotel seemed, huge after Island City School.  
AP: Yes. And I was so shy I dreaded going...going into new classes the first time. So many kids I didn't know.  
ES: How did you manage that?  
AP: I was...wasn't a loner exactly, but I...I didn't need close friends. I got along okay by myself.  
ES: Was it your habit to try to find a back seat in a corner and kind of scrunch away so that nobody'd notice you?  
AP: Yes. If the teacher would call individuals from the class to say something and it came my turn my heart came up in my throat and I could hardly talk. It took me several years to get over that. I'm a kid from the hicks.  
ES: Did you lack confidence?  
AP: Yes.  
ES: Both socially and academically?  
AP: Not academically.

ES: No? That's important.

AP: Yeah. I studied hard and got good grades, made the Honor Society. Didn't have any... I didn't get to participate in school functions...after-school functions like the football games or so on.

ES: That was true of most of the farm kids, especially during the winter season.

AP: Yes, but I had to get home, get the car home. So I missed out on a lot...most of the functions.

ES: And it wasn't...wasn't really practical to come back in in the evening for events, I suppose.

AP: No. Couldn't afford it, really, folks...

ES: Yes. So there were...

AP: We were poor. Everybody was poor. Didn't know any different.

ES: There were dances in the evenings.

AP: Yes. I never...never did any of that.

ES: Did any...any boy ask you to do that?

AP: Not to do that, no.

ES: To come in for a show? A movie?

AP: On Saturdays occasionally Dad would take both of us to the show, the Tarzan Shows.

ES: You could do that in the afternoon on Saturdays, of course.

AP: Yeah. But it was a rare occasion when we did that. That cost money, too.

ES: It sounds as though dating, then, wasn't part of your thinking at that time at all.

AP: No. No. But I regretted later on having missed those functions.

ES: Yeah. They're a very important part of high school for most kids.

AP: The only thing that I ever came back for was something the orchestra was going to do.

ES: Let's get into the orchestra part. You were aware, I suppose, right from the beginning of La Grande High School that there was an orchestra.

AP: Oh yes.

ES: What, at that time, was involved in becoming a member of the orchestra?

AP: Just showing up.

ES: Didn't have to have an audition?

AP: No. That was a class. In fact, orchestra for me took place of the gym class, which I was glad of.

ES: Daily, then?

AP: I can't remember. Probably was, but I don't remember.

ES: Do you remember the conductor at that time?

AP: Yes. I can't tell you his name, but I do remember him.

ES: Was it, by any chance, Andrew Money?

AP: He was the band conductor. I can see him, but I can't say his name.

ES: What... What sort of music do you recall the orchestras playing any of the time that you were in the orchestra?

AP: I think mostly it was pieces that would...were familiar to at least people who had a musical background. Definitely classical.

ES: Parts of symphonies, perhaps? Overtures? Tone poems?

AP: I just don't remember.

ES: When... I remember playing when I was in the school orchestra was \_\_\_'s Valse Triste. Do you remember that?

AP: Yes. That could've been one we played.

ES: Playing in an orchestra was, of course, rather a different musical experience for you.

AP: Yes.

ES: What do you recall about how you reacted to the sound that an orchestra produced, especially when you were sitting in the middle of it?

AP: I don't recall any impression.

ES: Did it... Or maybe feelings that you had? Was it exhilarating? Or were people making so many wrong notes that you were horrified? [laughs]

AP: I don't recall.

ES: Okay.

AP: I was still shy.

ES: Were you playing in the second violin section?

AP: First.

ES: First.

AP: I always had first chair.

ES: How did the conductor find out that you were good enough to do that?

AP: By listening to us as we played.

ES: Individually?

AP: No. I think \_\_\_...I don't know how they do it in the symphony now. You were assigned chairs after a few sessions.

ES: He could pick out the people who played well.

AP: Yeah.

ES: Yes. And then by first chair you mean you were concert mistress, or what we would call the concert mistress now.

AP: Yeah.

ES: How did that make you feel?

AP: Oh, good, of course.

ES: You realize that that was a distinction, surely?

AP: Oh yes. But being shy I...it was just...it was nice.

ES: Having a position like that usually means that you're expected to exert a little leadership within...at least within the violin section.

AP: I don't recall that we did in high school like in symphony. I don't recall that we did. We had quite a nice string section...string section both first and second. It's a shame that strings have...maybe they're comin' back a bit.

ES: We'll see. We'll see.

AP: But it's a shame.

ES: There are certainly more outstanding solo violinist than there were in your day.

AP: Yes. Oh yes.

ES: So in areas, at least, the violin is very strong. Can you remember some of the concerts the orchestra gave?

AP: I'm a total blank.

ES: Perhaps they were during school hours so that you didn't have to make a special trip in?

AP: I just don't recall any concert as such.  
ES: Do you remember being asked to dress in a certain way when you played in the orchestra?  
AP: No, I don't remember.  
ES: If you had that would've been a concert probably.  
AP: Yeah.  
ES: White blouses, dark skirts. White shirts, dark pants for the boys.  
AP: I don't recall that.  
ES: No?  
AP: I have a couple pictures taken in high school orchestra. No, I don't. Those are symphony pictures. No, I don't think that we were supposed to have any particular style or colors or anything.  
ES: I'm a little surprised that...because orchestra, seemingly, was a very important part of high school for you that there weren't events in your memory focused on the performance of the orchestra. Certainly all orchestras in schools do make...do public performances. That's what keeps them going.  
AP: Yeah. I sure don't remember.  
ES: Did they... Did the... I'm sure that...or probably the orchestra performed for when operettas were staged.  
AP: Yes. And for graduation and that sort of thing.  
ES: Do you remember participating in operettas?  
AP: Not operettas as such.  
ES: What would you call them?  
AP: In fact, I don't...I can't remember...other than graduation things.  
ES: I think it was standard at La Grande High School to have at least one operetta, perhaps two, and then a couple of plays during the school year.  
AP: I'm kind of gettin'...  
ES: The Grande Ronde Symphony, yes.  
AP: ...mixed up with when I joined the symphony.  
ES: That's okay.  
AP: Of course they played for everything.  
ES: Some of this I'm drawing upon an interview I did with Eve Scott. Do you know who she is?  
AP: Yes.  
ES: She's ninety-five years old now so she was in La Grande High School before you, but she told me about some of the events. She was especially active in the yearbook production.  
AP: Is her memory better about high school than mine?  
ES: About...some...some aspects of it, yes. [laughs]  
AP: \_\_\_ gone.  
ES: She was quite gregarious, I think, at the time so maybe she was more actively involved in high school activities and therefore remembers them better.  
AP: Yeah. Too about it, I lived in the country, couldn't participate in things...not participate actually, but attend these things.  
ES: Yes.  
AP: I really didn't have too much of a touch of what was going on.

ES: You mentioned that you were in the Honor Society. By the time you were in your junior or senior year were you thinking about going on to college?

AP: [tape interruption] Down in grades I had in mind I wanted to go to Gem City Business College in Quincy. Why that...

ES: Quincy, Washington?

AP: Quincy, Illinois.

ES: Oh, Quincy, Illinois.

AP: And why that I don't know, but I had that in my mind from the beginning.

ES: Is this something your mother might've mentioned?

AP: I don't know. I really don't know.

ES: When you were in La Grande High School were you still thinking that you might like to be a secretary?

AP: Mm-hmm. And I still wanted to go to Gem City and I did.

ES: What made you think you were...you should be a secretary?

AP: Typing was one of my good classes, so was short-hand. Of course they didn't short-hand too many years after that. And I liked figures, I liked \_\_. Leonard Huffman...not Leonard Huffman, Eldridge Huffman taught our bookkeeping class and I loved \_\_ so I reinforced my idea of wanting to go to business college.

ES: Do you think that you were influenced at that time about widely held beliefs that women shouldn't aspire to anything professional? That if they weren't going to get married immediately about the only thing they...other things they could do would be to teach school or be a secretary?

AP: Now what was your question?

ES: Do you think you were influenced in what you thought you could do by common attitudes about women?

AP: No, I don't. I don't think I was influenced at all. I had my mind set and that was it.

ES: Was there anything available at school...information available at school about other possible careers for women?

AP: There possibly was, but I didn't go after 'em.

ES: Were you aware that some La Grande High School graduates were going on to Eastern Oregon Normal School?

AP: Oh yes, several.

ES: Did that enter your mind?

AP: No. Folks couldn't afford very much.

ES: Oh yes. We're at the money barrier again.

AP: Yes. So I could stay with relatives and go to business college so that worked out financially.

ES: But you did go to a business college in La Grande?

AP: No.

ES: Where?

AP: Illinois.

ES: You did go?

AP: I did go.

ES: I didn't realize you had actually made the break and went.

AP: Yes.



ES: Huh.  
AP: And I rode the train...oh, I was just little kid from the hick town going alone!  
[laugh] It was quite a...  
ES: That was quite daring.  
AP: Yes, it was for me. And going into that business college it's quite a step for me.  
ES: Did you finish your course?  
AP: Seemed to come out of my shell.  
ES: Oh yeah? Did you finish the course there?  
AP: Yes.  
ES: A year?  
AP: It was a year course and I finished it in nine months.  
ES: This was standard secretarial practice?  
AP: Yes.  
ES: Shorthand, typing, bookkeeping? Anything else?  
AP: Letter writing.  
ES: Letter writing.  
AP: Yeah. Which they should teach now. [laughs]  
ES: I'm afraid that's hopeless. E-mail writing.  
AP: That'd be right.  
ES: And then back to Union county after that?  
AP: Came back to La Grande and jobs were scarce, terribly scarce. I put an application in here and there, was in at what was called Eastern Oregon Light and Power at that time. And put it in at Montgomery Ward. I don't recall anyplace else. And Dad took me down to Salem, had letter of recommendation from Senator Kittle, and...  
ES: That's Kittle of Island City Pioneer Flouring Mill?  
AP: Uh-huh. And another local...well-known local...I can't think of who it was now. Anyway, took those letters with me, go down to Salem, was knockin' on doors. And, oh, no luck. Slept in the car, couldn't afford a motel, and slept in the car. Of course we were only down there a day then over night. Came back and I got...[end tape]

6/11/03, T2, S1

ES: Alright, the...it was in numatic system, wasn't it? Operated by air?  
AP: No.  
ES: No? Were they on a wire?  
AP: Uh-huh. Mr...you pulled it.  
ES: Okay. That was the earlier version, I think.  
AP: Yeah. It was...as I remembered a little metal cup not very large...  
ES: Maybe six or eight inches long? Sort of a tube shape?  
AP: Seems to me like it, as I remember, was just kind of a bowl-like.  
ES: Oh. With a lid on it?  
AP: Oh, it must've had. And it went to the mezzanine..  
ES: Now it went from various places in the store, didn't it?

AP: Went from the cashier's cage to the mezzanine and...

ES: Oh, we need to talk a little more about the layout of the store. Here's a store with displays over quite a wide area. One cashier's cage in the center or somewhere...

AP: No, this is upstairs.

ES: \_\_\_ but didn't it go from the sales floor upstairs?

AP: Yes, up to the cashier's...

ES: Okay. I'm wanting to focus on the sales floor part of it where the system really started, didn't it?

AP: Oh yes.

ES: Now was there one wire that went from the cashier's cage to someplace on the floor or several wires?

AP: It seems to me that the only one was to the mezzanine.

ES: To the mezzanine.

AP: Uh-huh.

ES: Where, then, on the sales floor would it have been?

AP: It must've had individual registers. I...I don't think it was a carrier thing to the...

ES: I think that there wouldn't have been cash registers on the floor because the whole point was to have the money go upstairs to a central cashier's place and then the change would come back down, wouldn't it?

AP: Yes.

ES: So it must've been that a salesperson would go to a desk or a table or place on the wall or something, put the money in and what? Would a sales receipt...

AP: She pulled a thing to send it up.

ES: Yeah. But...

AP: Must've been a central... The only thing I can remember is the one going to the mezzanine, but there had to be, like you say, maybe a central one that they'd go to. But I can't...

ES: But one of the points was so that salespeople wouldn't have to make change, was it?

AP: Yeah.

ES: Would be one cashier who'd make the change and send it back.

AP: Yes.

ES: Yes.

AP: It was kind of neat, really.

ES: Yes. Do you remember the sound of it?

AP: Yes. [laugh] Kind of a grinding sound. Pull that cord and this little cup a...go down the wire...

ES: It must've been a spring mechanism that would make it go on the wire wasn't there?

AP: It was enough force from the pull-down to send it, I believe that was it.

ES: Like shooting a gun.

AP: Yeah. The mezzanine for sure was about the same level as the cashier's cage.

ES: Sure.

AP: So, but I was...I think it was just a pressure pull that did it.

ES: Yeah. Do you remember about how long it took for the little box to come back? Depending on how busy the store was, I suppose?

AP: Couldn't have been even a minute, I'm sure.

ES: Did you have a fast cashier?

AP: [laugh] Oh, I see what you're saying. How long it took for the cashier to get it ready to come back.

ES: I'm visualizing a customer standing there, made the purchase, gave in the money, off it goes to the cashier's office, supposed to come with change, how long the customer has to stand there?

AP: I don't think it'd be more than a couple minutes.

ES: Okay. I think you're probably right about that from my memory. Now we were... we were talking about that in relation to the nature of the Montgomery Ward store at the time. Were you going to say something else about other aspects of the store? 'Cause you got the job there, right?

AP: Yes. \_\_\_ tires and automotive things were all in the basement. And furniture was on the side of Fourth Avenue. Pretty good sized store, really.

ES: Yes. Yes, indeed.

AP: And our manager, at that time, Jack Farris, a real nice fella...

ES: Is that F-a-r-i-s?

AP: I believe it f-a-double-r-i-s, I think it was. Real nice fellow. And in the wintertime...one winter, anyway, he took a toboggans out of stock and skis out of stock and four or five of us young people we all went up to...what's that called?

ES: Spout Springs?

AP: No. \_\_\_ Stump Hatch.

ES: Stump Hatch, uh-huh.

AP: And had a nice Saturday.

ES: What a treat!

AP: Yeah. I was so...there were several of us on this toboggan with quite a bit of snow, but not quite as much as should've been. I think I was in front and as we came down at a pretty good rate we hit a stump and split that toboggan. Could've split us, too.

ES: Yes.

AP: That ended that stuff.

ES: Tell me more about your job.

AP: Let's see, I started as cashier and I can't recall how long I had the cashier job. But I went to...

ES: By the way, was there anything in your secretarial training that prepared you to make change quickly?

AP: No.

ES: You learned that as you went? It's not terribly difficult to learn, but if you have to do it rapidly and accurately there is quite a bit of pressure, isn't there?

AP: Well, I did...didn't think of it as...

ES: You took it in stride.

AP: Yeah, uh-huh. I don't recall how long I was cashier. And they broke me in on the books then. And one time I \_\_\_ balance on books, I was one penny off. This is debits and credits...I mean charges and everything.

ES: Was all of this being done in ledgers with pen and ink?

AP: Yeah. And was one penny off and I hunted and hunted and hunted for that. They weren't... They weren't about to let it go. I never did find it. They finally had to debit something else or credit something else. I went from that to the inventory. And these offices were all on the upstairs above the entrance. And I liked that job probably better than the books. It entailed quite a wide variety of things, taking care of the inventory in-stock and incoming stuff and ordering and so on. It was quite a responsible job, more than the books, I felt.

ES: Now was inventory at that time set up with file cards?

AP: I didn't have anything to do with file cards.

ES: How would you do inventorying then?

AP: The clerks go around and inventory...

ES: In their departments?

AP: ...in their departments. And then...

ES: Just a sheet of paper and then write ladies hosiery sixteen pairs?

AP: Yes. So many...yeah...

ES: And that sort of thing.

AP: And all departments would do that and then it was all sent up to me.

ES: Oh. And you had to compile it?

AP: Yes. And then I was responsible for the incoming...all incoming things. I kept all those records. I rather enjoyed that part. In the meantime...or during that time I had put my application in at Paul Bunyan Company.

ES: Paul what?

AP: Paul Bunyan Trailer Company, trailer manufacturing.

ES: Would you spell that name?

AP: p-a...regular old Paul Bunyan.

ES: Bunyan. B-u-n-y-a-n?

AP: Yeah.

ES: Huh. I don't remember hearing about that. Where was that?

AP: The building is still there. I can't think of what kind of a business is in there. It's as you go toward Island City make the first right turn and right again and it's the building is right up next to the tracks. A big...quite a big old metal-looking building. And they manufactured logging trailers and sold GMC trucks...some kind of trucks anyway...and Buick cars.

ES: And you had...you fancied a job there?

AP: Yes.

ES: More money did you think?

AP: Yes. And I had also put my application in at...for a secretarial job in Washington, D.C.

ES: Oh yes.

AP: So I got...

ES: By this time you were feeling pretty confident and thought you had pretty good skills, I imagine.

AP: Yeah. I got the job at Paul Bunyan. It was a little more money. I'd been makin' eighty-five dollars a month at Wards and I was gonna get a hundred dollars a month at Paul Bunyan. And that was four-entry bookkeeping and some...some taking charge of the parts department, too, not altogether, but some.

ES: By the way, did you have any opportunity at Wards to practice your typing and shorthand?

AP: No.

ES: That was getting rusty, then. Or those two skills may be getting a little rusty.

AP: Yeah.

ES: What about at Paul Bunyan?

AP: Typing a little, not a lot. A little shorthand, but not very much. And I had put my application in for secretarial job in Washington, D. C. and I've been at Paul Bunyan, oh, a year, year-and-a-half when I got notice that secretarial job was available in Washington, D.C. I'd started going with Rodey about six months before that. And this...this...mid-December, I think, when I got this notice. I'd...this Paul Bunyan sold Buick cars, I'd bought a Buick coupe.

ES: On this huge salary that you were getting.

AP: A coupe cost me \$865. And I...

ES: Now that's just about a year's wages.

AP: Yeah, on contract, and I paid it off in a year.

ES: You were living at home, I suppose.

AP: Yes.

ES: Were they charging you for board and room?

AP: No. But of course I would buy some things. When this call came, her I am, what do I... I wouldn't go without my new car, but here it's winter and driving clear across the United States in the middle of the winter...and it was a rough winter. And Rodey didn't think too much of the idea so I turned it down and we were married six months later. I never regretted turning it down.

ES: Would the job in Washington, D. C. have been in a congressional office, perhaps?

AP: I don't... I don't really know.

ES: Some government job, though, I presume.

AP: Yeah.

ES: And what... What was there around here that encouraged you to think about applying for a job in Washington, D.C.?

AP: I thought it'd be more money, but...

ES: Glamour?

AP: Not too much that 'cause I'm still kind of from the sticks.

ES: You were, in fact, naïve about...

AP: Well, yes.

ES: ...what it might be like in Washington, D.C. Were you at all...in part of your mind were you at all scared about going by yourself to a place like Washington, D.C.?

AP: Not really scared, but it was a long trip...would be a long trip and that was a big town. I wasn't really very enthusiastic about...

ES: It would've been a huge adjustment for you.

AP: Yes.

ES: Yes.

AP: In between \_\_ some of these jobs I took up a correspondence course on \_\_ it was called Court Reporting...I mean court reporters use it. And I had visions of getting big money taking notes on that. But I found out that the correspondence

course was...I just felt I couldn't finish, couldn't handle it. It was too involved. I really felt I needed instruction so I gave that up.

ES: Did you have access to the machine?

AP: Oh yes. The course came with a machine.

ES: Did you have to buy it then?

AP: I guess I did.

ES: Did you keep it for a while?

AP: Maybe...I did keep it so maybe it wasn't... I don't know.

ES: Had you talked to anyone around here who does court reporting or did court reporting?

AP: No. I don't know where I got the idea of it.

ES: You probably were right to think that you could make more money doing that than you could with most secretarial jobs. It is a fairly high-level skill.

AP: It was just above my head as a correspondence course so it went by the wayside.

ES: This suggest to me that you were feeling rather ambitious at that point in your life.

AP: Yes. I felt that I needed to pay back, and I did pay back, the relatives in Illinois for my board and room for nine months.

ES: Yes. Tell me about the kid of clothing you were wearing when you were doing these jobs at Montgomery Ward and Paul Bunyan. I assume that you had to buy some clothes that you hadn't had for high school.

AP: Yes. I bought several outfits from a firm that came through. I think they came through regularly from somewhere in Utah. Real nice...real good quality. I bought several...a couple of them...

ES: Ready-made or custom?

AP: No. Ready-made.

ES: They'd bring samples?

AP: \_\_\_ I don't recall.

ES: It might...

AP: It must've...

ES: It might be...might've been that the salesperson coming through would set up a display in a hotel, for example, and you'd go and choose.

AP: I think they came through with displays of \_\_\_ yeah.

ES: And why... There were other places in La Grande you could've bought clothes, weren't there?

AP: Yeah.

ES: What was there about this traveling thing that appealed to you?

AP: I think I had just the two outfits, but they were so nice and...

ES: Do you think they were better than anything you could've bought locally?

AP: Oh yes.

ES: Better material and better made?

AP: Uh-huh.

ES: More expensive?

AP: I'm sure they were. I never was a clothes horse. I never had a lot of clothes.

ES: You mean by that you didn't spend a lot of time or energy thinking about clothing.

AP: I didn't have a lot.

ES: But you realized that you needed to dress a little more formally than you had before?

AP: Oh yes.

ES: Were there any specific instructions you got about how you were supposed to dress?

AP: No.

ES: You just looked around and seen what the other women were wearing?

AP: Of course you didn't...didn't see anybody...any women wearing pants...slacks then.

ES: No. Was it a skirt and jacket. A suit, kind of a suit?

AP: Not necessarily. Just a nice looking dress or skirt and blouse. And at Paul Bunyan didn't want to be too dressed up there because I had to get into \_\_ parts department so sometimes it wasn't the cleanest place. And I got so I could order parts and sell parts and familiar with the different trailer parts.

ES: This was in the 1930s now, about 1936 or '7.

AP: I graduated in '34, '35 business college and Paul Bunyan would be...

ES: Montgomery Ward first, huh?

AP: Yes.

ES: '36?

AP: Yes.

ES: I thought that was about right. Were you wearing makeup at that time?

AP: Oh, probably. Not very much probably. I don't recall.

ES: Lipstick and powder?

AP: Oh yes.

ES: What did you do with your hair?

AP: My hair was naturally curly, I didn't have to do anything with it.

ES: You'd get it cut, I suppose.

AP: Yes.

ES: Where did you do that?

AP: I believe Dad cut it for...oh, no. He cut my brother's hair. It must've been downtown somewhere. But it wasn't a big deal for me.

ES: It would've been a place, I'm pretty sure, where only women went to have their hair done. You wouldn't have walked into a men's barbershop, would you?

AP: Oh, I'm sure no. Must... Must've been one of the beauty shops, but another thing I don't remember. You would say my long-term memory is not very good.

ES: Selective, as with most of us. It's alright. Do you want to take a break?

AP: Oh, not necessarily.

ES: Okay.

AP: I'm doin' fine. [tape interruption] I met Robey out at the sales yard, worked the sales a couple of times.

ES: Now mention what the sales...

AP: Cattle. Cattle sale yard.

ES: Livestock sales.

AP: Livestock, yes.

ES: Which is still in operation.

AP: Oh yes. And I...

ES: And was that because he was involved in transporting animals?

AP: Yes. He was hauling from all over...to and from all over. And I worked a couple sales out there, three, I think, total. But I met him out there. And not too long after that at a dance I was in the wallflower line and he was in the stag line [laughs] and he came over and said somethin'...

ES: From what you said previously this was the first man you were really interested in?

AP: Yeah. So we were married on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. The reason it was the 4<sup>th</sup> of July...the reason it had to be on the 4<sup>th</sup> because he had to work the day before and we could have the weekend off then. And so...

ES: Did he need to ask your father's and mother's permission to marry you?

AP: No.

ES: Had they met him?

AP: They'd met him. They didn't know we were gonna get married.

ES: What made you so impulsive?

AP: He just bowled me over.

ES: Oh! [laughs] Couldn't resist, huh? Oh my! How romantic!

AP: He said...he's told it so many times I think he believes it...that he got married...he gave up his independence on Independence Day in Leap Year.

ES: And never regretted it.

AP: No. [laughs] So after we got married we bought...we bought this little place before we got married over on East 'O'. I think we gave \$900 for it. Not too old a house, but outdoor plumbing yet.

ES: Plumbing in quotation marks.

AP: Yes. [laughs] And after we were married the first thing he did was put in a septic tank and modernize everything. There was room for a bath...for the bathroom, but no fixtures in there so we did all that, made it modern. I worked about six months breaking in a girl to take my place on the books. At this time he had...was still hauling cattle. He'd gotten into a deal with the owner of a stockyard who was an old friend of his to buy the truck that he was hauling. So he was makin' payments on that. I didn't know that he had put in his application for the railroad. And when a notice came it...should show up for a job. I figured it'd be...not running...not on the train, I figured it'd be the track, workin' on the tracks, and I thought, "Oh, I don't want him doin' that" so I didn't show him the application. Sometime later, not too long after that, he found out there was an opening. He got it and start as a brakeman.

ES: Did he tell you why he wanted a job with the railroad?

AP: No, expect I suppose he figured it was more money. Better...not necessarily better hours, but he didn't...he never said anything about it. So he worked...took his train runs and then he worked...

ES: What was his first job?

AP: Switchman in the yards.

ES: Do you know exactly what that involved?

AP: Pardon?

ES: Do you know exactly what that involved?



AP: Yes. Switching cars from one train to a different one that's going a different direction.

ES: Right, but he wasn't actually on the cars or anything...

AP: No.

ES: ...he was standing there at the switch and operating it manually?

AP: Uh-huh.

ES: Yes.

AP: And writing down the numbers and all that stuff. And worked as a switchman for several years and then he went on as yardmaster the swing shift, three to eleven. And he worked that job for eighteen years. And he...

ES: Now the yardmaster job, I'm quite sure, involved a great deal more responsibility than switching.

AP: Yes.

ES: How did he demonstrate that he was prepared to become a yardmaster?

AP: I don't know that they required demonstration. I think he just applied for it. I really don't know.

ES: Do you really think that having been a switchman for that time would've given him the necessary background?

AP: Uh-huh.

ES: I see. What... do you know exactly what the responsibilities of the yardmaster were at that time?

AP: You had to keep... I don't know too much about it, but he had to keep records of everything going and coming and where to and what kind of a load.

ES: This was freight entirely, not passengers?

AP: That's right. The tonnage on the train so it wouldn't overload it, I suppose.

ES: That's one thing I have wondered about. At that...[end tape]

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AP: It was a lot of pressure on the job, but it was a good job. He didn't particularly want to get out on the road, but...

ES: You mean working on a train?

AP: Yes, as a conductor.

ES: Would that have been because of the hours to work, the irregularity of the hours?

AP: Irregularity, yeah. But then they eliminated the yardmaster job so he had to go out on the road.

ES: That was at the time that the diesels came in, perhaps?

AP: No. Diesels had been in quite some time then, I think. 'Cause eighteen years on that job would've put it in the '60s.

ES: Okay. This was after La Grande had ceased being a major hub. The roundhouse was gone.

AP: No, I think...I think it was still pretty much of a hub at that time. There again, I can't...

ES: Most of that changed, I think, at the time that the diesels came in.

AP: That could be. Then he went out on the road as a...I don't remember now whether you go out as a brakeman first or whether you could go right on as a conductor. I can't... I don't remember. He was a brakeman on the branch there for a while.

ES: That's from La Grande to Joseph.

AP: To Joseph, yes. And that ran three days a week, stayed over night and back. That gave us weekend for fishing. We did...

ES: When did you discover you were interested in fishing?

AP: Oh, right after we were married.

ES: Of course you'd done catfish when you were a little kid.

AP: Yeah, but I'd never done anything else. And in that first...first experience was in the Wallow River and I caught a big sucker and I didn't know a sucker from salmon. I thought I had a wonderful fish there. [laughs]

ES: Yes.

AP: The rocks were so slick and they're so round, I think every one of 'em was round, an I was up to almost my hips in the water and got on one of these slick rocks and I went down, but I held my pole up. [laughs] My watch got wet, but my pole didn't.

ES: As you became more accustomed to fishing and perhaps learned more of the techniques, what was there about fishing that appealed to you so strongly?

AP: The fight they give. I grope for words so much. The technique required to be smarter than the fish.

ES: I presume you went to fly-fishing.

AP: We did very little of that.

ES: Oh.

AP: It was mostly bait fishing.

ES: I see.

AP: And stream fishing. We waded...

ES: Did you become interested in getting better equipment for fishing?

AP: We got to the point where we didn't think we wanted to do much more wading fishing and so we're gonna get a boat. So we got a boat and a trailer.

ES: What's the matter with wading fishing? Too hard?

AP: It seemed like the fish supply was not really too good.

ES: Oh. Did you go on some trips and not come back with a fish?

AP: We'd get a few, but it'd get harder to get...get our fish. And it was gettin' harder for us to wade the streams, too. So we got the boat and we'd take it with us, of course, camping...on the camping trips usually...were mostly fishing trips. I think the kids got a little...not upset, but they...

ES: Bored of it?

AP: Bored and tired of going fishing.

ES: Yes. "Oh, do we have to do that again?"

AP: Yeah. We started out camping with a bale of straw for our mattress and each of us had a mummy bag which we bought at...can't think of those places.

ES: At Boardman...

AP: Boardman...

ES: ...Ordinance Depot?

AP: Yes.

ES: This was Army surplus goods?

AP: Uh-huh. And the kids...they were down-filled. Of course a little...some of that would come out. The kids just hated those mummy bags, get feathers in their hair and mouth. But those were...took care of our sleeping equipment. A bale of straw made a good mattress. And we had a portable stove to cook on, gasoline lantern. And we were just pretty well fixed for camp. We never got rained on anytime on our camping until the first time we went out in our first trailer and it just poured that night. But we went from a trailer to the camper on a pickup and then to the motorhome.

ES: Increasingly high budget camping then.

AP: Uh-huh.

ES: Mm-hmm. Was this partly because other people were doing that also? Part of the style of camping?

AP: No. It was just...we felt we could afford it and more comfortable.

ES: More comfortable, yeah. I could see that. When you get down to the essence of camping, though, you don't need all that fancy equipment, do you?

AP: Oh no. [laugh] We roughin' it. You're roughing it.

ES: Yeah. You said fishing was the main motive. Was part of the appeal of these trips to you being away from civilization? Being closer to nature?

AP: Yes. Get away from telephone and cars and...yes.

ES: And by this time you were into your marriage a ways, were you feeling more daily pressure from various sources?

AP: No, I don't think so.

ES: A phone, cars, other things that go on in cities.

AP: I didn't feel that was pressure, but it's just nice to get away from it. And we both always liked the outdoors, mountains especially. It was made to order, setup for us.

ES: Were you doing anything at the time to capture those memories? Any means of saving them and partly reliving them?

AP: He took a lot of pictures, but I never kept any records of what we did and where we went.

ES: Did you do any writing about the trips?

AP: Oh, maybe some of the relatives at Christmastime or something when I would write a long letter, but I never... I enjoyed it, but that was...was it. We both enjoyed the outdoors.

ES: Maybe we should put in here...I think this happened a little later than the period your talking about now, but somebody telling you that there was a community orchestra forming in La Grande.

AP: Yes. I hadn't played the violin since I got out of high school.

ES: You just put it away and never took it out of the case.

AP: Right. And I don't recall who mentioned it to me know, but I can't \_\_\_, I can't play anymore. And I didn't join until the second year that they were going.

ES: I think the first year of the Grande Ronde Symphony was 1944 or maybe 1946.

AP: I don't know that.

ES: If you joined the second year that makes it about ten years after you had gotten married.

AP: I'd lost quite a bit.

ES: Oh, of course you would!

AP: Quite a bit of technique.

ES: Yes. What did the person who talked to you say about this orchestra? Do you remember anything at all?

AP: No, just that I...she...I think it might've been Florence Miller.

ES: It's quite possible. She was a charter member of it.

AP: And she had taught me...she'd been my teacher for a while. I think it was Florence. And thought I should be in there playing. So I decided, well, I'll try.

ES: Was it just the fact that she asked you or was there something else about the orchestra that appealed to you?

AP: No, I think that was the push when she asked me. I enjoyed it.

ES: What did it take to get yourself back to the point where you could play reasonably well?

AP: Oh, it didn't take too long.

ES: Did it take some additional lessons?

AP: No. Just practice at home on the music we were working on. I always did that.

ES: What was your reaction to the first rehearsals?

AP: I must've decided that I could do it.

ES: Did you find yourself feeling shy again?

AP: I think I pretty well overcome some of that anyway.

ES: Did they put you in concertmistress position?

AP: I can't remember. I don't think I started at...no, Dick Lindsey was the concertmaster. I sat next to Dick.

ES: A lot of people referred to Dick Lindsey. Just give me a little impression here of this man. He worked for the railroad, too, didn't he?

AP: I don't know about that.

ES: Yes, he was Leo Miller's assistant.

AP: Oh.

ES: In the yard clerk office.

AP: I didn't know that.

ES: But that's not what he was mainly known for around here.

AP: Oh no, it was his dance orchestras, dances that he played for.

ES: What sort of a man was he?

AP: Very friendly, I'd say a gentle man...I don't...not gentleman, gentle man. And he loved his music, really loved his music. He lived for them. He made a remark one time, "When I die I hope I die with a violin in my hand."

ES: Did you feel confidence in his ability to play symphonic music?

AP: \_\_\_ was alright so... I don't remember why he quit.

ES: Did the community orchestra was just forming sound better or worse to you than the high school orchestra?

AP: Oh, better.

ES: Really?

AP: We had some pretty good players that played in big orchestras, a couple of 'em.

ES: Uh-huh. Were they all from Union county?  
AP: Uh-huh. Well, not originally.  
ES: No, I mean were they all living in Union county?  
AP: Yes.  
ES: At one time I think players have come in from other places.  
AP: Yes. The \_\_ came from Wallowa, I believe. Names just escape me. I can't think of her name.  
ES: Don't worry about that.  
AP: But I enjoyed the symphony.  
ES: Now surely you do remember the concerts that that orchestra gave?  
AP: Oh yes. And we had to have our black dresses or skirts.  
ES: You performed in what is now Inlow Hall, didn't you? In the auditorium on the second floor?  
AP: Yes.  
ES: How many concerts a year? Two to start?  
AP: No, more than that. Three or four and then we...once or twice we went to...we went to Baker one time, I think, Pendleton one time...goin' up the branch. But the kids were small, I had to hire a babysitter. That's the only time I ever hired a babysitter was for Wednesday night orchestra practice.  
ES: What turned out to be some of the satisfactions for you playing in that orchestra?  
AP: Playing the good music...  
ES: Beethoven, Mozart...  
AP: Music that people...people were familiar with. Good classical music.  
ES: What sense did you have of community response to the symphony?  
AP: I think the response was very good.  
ES: How did they express it?  
AP: By turning out, showing up.  
ES: You'd have a full auditorium?  
AP: I think we did, at least part of the time. Then a little of string groups that played for...at plays like Fiddler on the Roof we had, oh, I don't know, maybe a ten-member little group that played for things like that.  
ES: They call it musicals.  
AP: Uh-huh. And my youngest daughter...this is the oldest one...old enough to stay home alone and I didn't think the youngest one was and I brought her with me and she had to sit in the front row where I could keep my eye on her. I heard about it, oh, a few years ago about how she resisted...resented havin' to sit and listen through that all the time. [laugh]  
ES: You were with the orchestra then for how many years?  
AP: Twenty-nine.  
ES: Twenty-nine. What... Is there anything else you could mention about what you think the contribution of that group has been to community life?  
AP: It's certainly a cultural thing and La Grande doesn't have much of that. That's what I missed in Yuma, didn't have any so I was, gosh, twenty...twenty-eight years maybe that I didn't play at symphony. We \_\_ goin' down there 70s. First we had to go join again \_\_ I lost too much, which I had.

ES: When you use the word “cultural” in connection with La Grande can you be in anymore specific about what that means to life in Union county? [pause] Is there something about live classical music that brings...that you think contributes something to life here that nothing else does?

AP: At least to those who have had some touch with classical music in their lifetime. I think that it is a great addition to what La Grande has to offer to people and anyone who has ever loved music or had any touch with any music.

ES: What is it... What is it that a live orchestra gives to people’s experience of music that they can’t get from recordings?

AP: Maybe partly expression on the players’ faces when they feel certain phases of the music, ‘cause you do. Not like the piano player that goes up like this with his hands, but you can still...certain places you give a little more thrust to ‘em.

ES: Certainly brings you in closer connection to the making of music, maybe a little less passive than listening to a recording?

AP: Yes. I got to the point I missed the music, missed playing. We were down in Yuma I thought surely...I took it with me...I thought surely in the park there’d be some people who played piano all their life and they could play my classical stuff. Well, I didn’t find that...that played hymns or sing-along stuff, but that wasn’t my classical stuff. They couldn’t handle it. They didn’t even want to try. So, there again, I put it aside.

ES: Do you attribute your interest in classical music mostly to the experience with the La Grande High School orchestra?

AP: That was probably the start of it, yes. I just plain like classical music. I didn’t like... Didn’t used to appreciate piano...to the point...

ES: I think I heard you say, however, that you don’t like chamber music.

AP: That’s right.

ES: Now that, for many people, is the essence of classical music.

AP: Oh yes. It’s too somber.

ES: Somber? Not always.

AP: Well...

ES: I could site many compositions that are very joyous and bouncy.

AP: Somehow I just didn’t like it. There’s no point in doing something I didn’t like.

ES: Maybe it’s too bad that you weren’t involved in the string quartets around here.

AP: Well, we had one, like I said, before for a while. I don’t recall playing for any group or anything, but just for our own enjoyment.

ES: That’s much more...generally, much more difficult to play well than orchestral music. All your mistakes are exposed. [laugh] There’s not way of escaping that.

AP: Yeah. You only got one of each.

ES: That’s right. Has reading been a major part of your life?

AP: Yes. I got to the point my eye wouldn’t allow to much of it. I do like to read.

ES: Have you been a major user of the public library?

AP: I used to use it quite a bit, but got the computer and you know what that does to you.

ES: What?

AP: Changes your lifestyle. I do a lot of searching on the computer. I don’t e-mail \_\_\_.

ES: What do you search for?

AP: A lot pertained to strokes since he had the stroke. And lookup...\_\_ medicines. I, myself, went to Mayo Clinic at Scottsdale and I get their...subscribe to their weekly...I want to say newsletter. There might be something in there that I want to research. I do a lot of researching.

ES: So...

AP: I start out here and first thing you know I'm over here.

ES: So computer for you, it sounds like, is principally a tool for a getting information?

AP: Yes. I do e-mail, of course. That's...

ES: How did you become comfortable using a computer?

AP: Both my daughters insisted I should have one. I thought, "I'm too old to start to learn." "Well, we'll teach ya." So I started out with their help and some others', why...

ES: I presume you now agree that nobody's ever too old to learn to use a computer?

AP: Right.

ES: I hear people say that, but I've never believed it.

AP: Oh, there'd be so many of 'em here get just enough that they could e-mail, but...

ES: \_\_ a basic function. You lived in one house on Washington Avenue in La Grande for quite a number of years.

AP: We moved there in '51 and sold in '91.

ES: What were some of the pleasures and difficulties with owning a home, the same home, in La Grande all those years?

AP: I don't say there were any difficulties. We always enjoyed the home. It was an old place built in '24, but literally hadn't been lived in 'cause the husband...yeah, husband...the couple we bought from was a railroader, I think he was an engineer, and they...railroaders always had...every trip he had all different clothes on, all clean clothes. And that...for a railroader that's a little unusual. And he...he never got dirty.

ES: That sounds like Eve Scott's father.

AP: This is...no, not her father.

ES: She told me that her mother washed his overalls everyday and he had on a clean shirt and a clean pair of overalls for every trip. Maybe... Maybe several engineers did that. Engineers were rather proud of their position, weren't they?

AP: Yeah. And they didn't...their work wasn't as dirty like the others, really. They didn't have to get up and down the train and so on. Can't think of the name of the people we bought from!

ES: That's alright. Don't need it. What determined that you should leave that house?

AP: He had his stroke five years ago, almost six years ago now. And he took care of the lawn and things for a while. It got to where he couldn't do it anymore and we were hiring a guy, which was fine, but then I was doing things...lifting things that he couldn't. Being raised on a farm I was used to doing everything and I had a brain aneurism and I think I brought it on myself. I'm sure I did. I was stupid over so much, digging rocks out of a...I mean boulders almost...put in a bucket and carrying that bucket to the alley, dump it. I'm just sure that brought it on. I became real dizzy, just door to door I couldn't walk alone. This went on for about three weeks, but I had gone to the doctor after a couple days and he said...well, he sent me to Walla Walla. He said, "You had a brain aneurism, I'm sure." I had a

CAT scan here and sent me to Dr. Kamp. And Dr. Kamp checked things and he said, "Surgery is no option. The break in the aneurism is deep in the brain and the blood flow had gone down the back of your head. If you're dizzy that will be resorbed...I'd never heard that word before...and he said, "You'll get over the dizziness in about eight weeks," which took about that long. But when the kids found out that had happened without our knowing it they put our name in here and they thought we would just blow up, not want to move. So when they mentioned it to us, why, we were both in favor of it. I knew it was the thing...not him...for him particularly, but for me that I didn't go ahead and do things that I shouldn't and get to the point where I couldn't take care of him so...[end tape]