

NELLIE VANNICE  
APRIL 11, 2002  
TAPE #1  
Interviewed by Eugene Smith  
Transcribed by Micheal L Minthorn

Side 1

I: Now you said you name is Nellie Vannice?

NV: Yes.

I: Is that your married name?

NV: Uh, yes that's my married name.

I: What was you maiden name?

NV: My maiden name was Falk, F-A-L-K.

I: F-A-L-K. Did you have anything or did your family have anything to do with Falk's department Store in La Grande?

NV: As far as we know, not. I've thought about that, too. Um, my family came from Germany. My dad's family. My grandfather came over on a stock freighter from Germany when he was three years old.

I: Now would that have been in the late nineteenth century?

NV: Yes.

I: Uh-huh.

NV: And uh, they settled in uh, Iowa. And my dad grew up to 12 years old before they came to Oregon.

I: And how did they get to Oregon?

NV: Train.

I: I see. And do you know about when?

NV: Uh, nineteen-two. Dad was born in '89. He was one of ten children. Seven boys and three girls.

I: And do you know exactly why he decided to come to Oregon?

NV: Well, grandpa came out. I suppose land. It was a big family. Land was the attraction and he came out and somehow bargained for a section of land for the boys and uh, one of the girls. But uh, the other girls got \$3,000. And the boys came out and lived on this at uh, in uh, nineteen-two. Grandpa was out earlier than that. And I believe that Uncle Fred, the oldest came out earlier than that.

I: And where exactly was this land?

NV: Uh, in the Willamette Valley. I suppose, I would say now between Albany and Eugene.

I: And have you seen it? Or did you live there?

NV: Yes. I lived, uh, there until I was married. Mm-hm.

I: Between Albany and Eugene was it? Was there a little town nearby?

NV: Yes. Halsey. H-A-L-S-E-Y.

I: Oh yes. I see.

NV: We were a mile and a half east of the old Highway 99. Of course that went in later.

I: Then your farmed the land, did he?

NV: My father farmed the land. And then my uncle. Dad's brother, there's one boy between dad and his...but Keith (he?) had always lived with dad on the home place. And uh, all my life at home he was with my folks.

I: And what crops was your father raising?

NV: Uh, oats, wheat, barley, wheat was only upper part of the- good soil. And uh, a little culvert and quite a bit of corn because we fed it to the cattle.

I: Did you think he made a pretty good living doing that?

NV: We had a real good living. But not much money. And on top of that, when I was probably between four and six, I had a very, very serious illness. No one knew what it was. No one ever found out what it was. But uh, dad had five doctors out at the house. I thought they were business people and kids didn't ask questions on

those days. So I didn't know until after I was over all of this that they were doctors to see me. And four of 'em said, "No use." One of 'em said, "Where there's life, there's hope." So the doctor from Albany said, "I will see that the nurse gets out here." So, it's the country doctor took over my case, and the nurse came on the train the next day. Was picked up, she was with me eight weeks.

I: Do you remember what the symptoms were?

NV: Uh, like a summer complaint, you know? Stomach flu and that kind of thing. Uh, just went from bad to worse. High fever, extreme illness. But, somehow I made it.

I: Did they ever get a diagnosis for what it actually was?

NV: Never, never did.

I: Um-hm. What do you think now it might have been?

NV: I have wondered if it might have been something on the paralysis. I can remember crying and crying and screaming. And the nurse would bathe me in olive oil, put cotton all over me, and they turn me on a sheet.

I: So you were, you were really hurting?

NV: Yes. Mm-hm.

I: Was it a inflammation of the skin?

NV: It seemed to be an internal sort of thing.

I: Do you remember the medicines?

NV: Uh, it was folded like a piece of gum. A powder.

I: A white powder?

NV: A white powder put in a teaspoon. Sometime a little dab of syrup was put on it. That was just about all.

I: You took that several times a day?

NV: Yes.

I: What do you think that might have been?

NV: I don't know, something like aspirin maybe. I don't know.

I: Were you able to eat during that time?

NV: No. That was part of my big problem. Part of the big problem.

I: So you got very weak. Mm-hm. And this went on for two or three months?

NV: Oh until the next year. Came down with it the morning of uh, Halloween. Just suddenly. And my two sisters had it, also. But they rallied and came out of it. And uh, I evidently was old enough to realize that all of these doctor appointments by horse and buggy. Sometimes stopping at one side of a mud hole to have to take the horse and buggy without a- pick up the doctor, bring him back, take him back to the mud hole. He'd put on the boots and go on his way. Sometimes in the night. Not many doctors in this day would do that sort of-

I: Right. And I'll bet this doctor had a little black bag with him.

NV: Yes.

I: Yes. My grandfather was a doctor in a small town in upper New York state. And, he died when I was 10, but I did, um, I spent enough time with him to realize what a country doctor was like. And how often he went out on house calls.

NV: Yes. Yes. He was- most of respect for that doctor.

I: But I'll bet he was a timely sort of person, too?

NV: He really was.

I: And he gave you hope?

NV: He, he, he certainly didn't. He just stayed right there, I rallied. But they were expecting maybe whatever I had might come back on me. So I was late starting to school. I didn't spend many years in grade school for-

I: How is it- how has it had an effect on other parts of your life?

NV: Uh, I think that it made me have an appreciation, even young that I was of what had been done for me.

I: And you still retain that appreciation? How do you feel about doctors now?

NV: Well, I have a great deal of faith in medical science. I am disappointed in some doctors, the way they handle it.

I: Yes. Have you had other illnesses and in other parts of your life?

NV: Oh, yes. I, uh, mother said I inherited all the bad things about both sides of the family. I do have lung trouble and I've never smoked a day in my life.

I: Is it emphysema?

NV: Asthma.

I: Asthma.

NV: And constrictive bronchial disease.

I: I have that, too.

NV: Not too easy to deal with.

I: No, no, it isn't.

NV: But I have a deep appreciation for what was done for. I worked hard at home but I felt like everything that dad had went to pay my medical bill.

I: And when were you born?

NV: In nineteen-nine. (1909)

I: Nineteen-nine.

NV: Mm-hm.

I: And was it there in western Oregon?

NV: Was it what?

I: In western Oregon?

NV: Yes I was born there at Halsey. On the home place.

I: I see. In uh, your school, you said you started school late. Did you go to a one-room school when you did enter?

NV: Yes. I did.

I: Mm-hm. Can you remember any incidents from that? What it was like to be in a one-room school?

NV: Well, it was just like you expected. I had a lot of cousins there. Because, uh, dad's brothers had come out. And then there was the other side of the family, too, that were involved. Uh, neighbors.

I: So you knew everybody very well?

NV: Knew everybody.

I: What, maybe 20 or 25 children?

NV: Well, yes, uh-huh. About that.

I: Do you remember the teacher or the \_\_\_\_\_? (128)

NV: Oh yeah I remember all of them.

I: Could you describe one you remember well?

NV: Oh, yes. She was not a young person. She uh, wore whatever she had to, I think. Teachers were not well to do people in those days. They worked a lot for what they were paid, that's for sure. But we got a lot of 'em. And I liked this person, a good personality. But she was, had a little bit of an afraid sort of idea.

I: She seems afraid?

NV: Yes, she uh, always to be sure the doors are locked. Somebody was at her screen door, you know. And I had a little trouble with that.

I: Now do you mean, her screen doors on her home, or, on the school?

NV: She, she rented a little place.

I: I see.

NV: And uh, she would come to school maybe with one buttoned shoe and one laced shoe. Or, different colored stockings, maybe that was color-blindness or something like that. But, uh, she was just different. We came to school, even if we had one set of clothes. We saw that they were clean the next morning to go to school. That's one thing that people were, they were very conscientious about their appearance. And uh...

I: Do you know why?

NV: I think maybe my side of the family sort of did, because uh, it was pretty well known that they were of German ancestry and that, in the community there was

probably the biggest part of them were. But you wanted to see people from the outside, and they would wonder what you were like.

I: Do you think people had, uh, negative reactions to Germans?

NV: They did because of the war. I'm sure. Folks didn't say it in that many words, but they would say, "If somebody asks you what you are, you be sure to say you're an American."

I: Uh-huh.

NV: And you could sense that they wanted to make sure that you knew what you were.

I: And did your parents speak German?

NV: Dad did.

I: But did he speak it at home?

NV: Not at our home. He- when they called the telephone, why, he talked to his mother in German. Fact, she spoke little English. German came so much easier. Uh, there, dad always told about a family in the east that sent their son over to learn to talk English with a big bunch of boys and three girls. And, instead of learning English, he learned German.

I: Did you ever learn German?

NV: No. The folks didn't encourage it.

I: Uh-huh. Did you want to later on?

NV: Yes I would like to have. I really would.

I: Now this one-room school. You'd get there, what? About eight-thirty in the morning or so? And then?

NV: Yes. We'd walk to school most of the time.

I: And then you were there until what? Three or three-thirty?

NV: Four o'clock.

I: Four o'clock?

NV: Yeah, you bet. It was four o'clock.

I: And, what lessons do you remember having?

NV: Oh, we had, uh reading, writing, arithmetic, a lot of arithmetic. And uh, in the fifth grade you had physiology. Seventh grade you had geography. You had state tests in those two items. And then in the eighth grade you took tests; state tests in everything. You just go there, the test would be open and put before you. And that was it.

I: Mm-hm.

NV: And we- I had two sisters. They- we all got good grades on our tests.

I: Did you study a lot at home?

NV: Yes I did. I liked to.

I: And at that time was there electricity in your home?

NV: No.

I: So did you study by a kerosene lamp?

NV: Yes.

I: Uh-huh. How was that on your eyes?

NV: Well, I- it didn't do them much good but I'm sure that we got the best. Uh, they had these, what they called Aladdin lamps? You know, big ones? And they made a lot of difference. Dad was pretty particular about that we had the best lamp to study by?

I: Where, where did you do your studying at home?

NV: At my \_\_\_ (196) table in the living room.

I: Everybody around the table?

NV: Mm-hm.

I: You and your sisters?

NV: Yes.

I: Yes. And, um, do you think that, um, you were really concentrating on it, or was it partly social?



NV: Oh, we didn't talk very much when we were to be studying. Because we were on different levels.

I: And the books that you used. Were these books that you needed to buy?

NV: Oh yes, we had to buy everything.

I: So, after you finished one year, you still had the books from that year?

NV: Quite a lot of 'em, yeah.

I: Um-hm.

NV: Yeah, I have too many books I find out now. (chuckle) I like books.

I: Good. I'd like to talk to you more about that. Uh, you said you did arithmetic a lot. Um, how was that like- was that, uh- did the teacher stand up at the board and write a problem like: 6 times 4 and then you write that down, and, give...?

NV: Sometimes. Sometimes it was oral. When she'd call on somebody or point at somebody. And, what I was- I read the first and second grades I think the first day. I don't know.

I: You mean in the reading books?

NV: Anyway, I, yes I-

I: You started reading early?

NV: Yes, I knew how to read before the rest of 'em. And dad was real good with math, although he only got to the fourth grade. He wanted to see that we got more than that.

I: Yes.

NV: And I got to the fifth grade, the teacher sent a letter home with me- dad was chairman of the school board. And, I delivered the letter. I delivered the answer back. And uh, she said, uh, "Did you know that you're to go into the sixth grade today?" And I said, "No." It was- came out of a blue sky. And, she said, "You didn't know what uh, what the letter was I sent home?" And I said, "No." I said we just didn't ask questions. If, we just knew what we were told. Anyway, I was in the sixth grade. And she had a cousin of mine- he was a year older and in a, in uh, the same grade. To help me with fractions and then it just...

I: And I suppose you were put in the sixth grade because you such a good student?

NV: Well, I don't know why, I never thought about it. Just never thought.

I: I suppose, though, being in the sixth grade in a one-room school wouldn't feel very different from being in fifth grade, would it?

NV: I guess not.

I: Did you have a different teacher? (?) (240)

NV: Had different books.

I: Different books, yes. But, same seat?

NV: I can't remember about that. Probably.

I: I've often wondered whether teachers in one-room schools had the children in each grade sitting in little groups? The first graders here, the second graders here and so on. Did they or were you all mixed up?

NV: Uh, I think usually they fit the desk to the student because they were small desks, some that were shorter and longer this way. And they had you sit to see what was most comfortable. And then, for recitation- you know, it wasn't all that big. She had a special row of desks up front where she was.

I: I see.

NV: Mm-hm.

I: So, she would call, what, three or four children up for recitation?

NV: Yes.

I: Would it be, say, all the sixth graders? Or, a mixture?

NV: Yes. Well, usually be all the same grade.

I: I see. And, what were the other children doing while that group recited?

NV: Supposed to be studying.

I: I see.

NV: And I don't think you found very much cheating, or, uh, not keeping busy.

I: Discipline wasn't a problem?

NV: Yes, yes, there was quite a bit of discipline. Um-hm.

I: It wasn't a problem, though?

NV: I don't- not very often. I saw one little fellow spanked 'cause he got out in the middle of a mud hole. (chuckles) There, the teacher, he would get in lined and mark in. (?) (263)

I: Uh, do you- would you say that, uh, most children came to school and obeyed the rules most of the time?

NV: I think so. I really think so.

I: So that- the teacher didn't have to be, uh, going around with a ruler slapping people on the hands or anything like that to keep discipline?

NV: I didn't see any of that.

I: That's good.

NV: And I'm sure that that one time is the only time I saw her get riled up and she put on her galoshes, went out in the middle of the puddle to get him.

I: It sounds as though you enjoyed very much being in that one-room school then?

NV: Yes.

I: What did you do after that? Did you go to a larger school?

NV: What did I do?

I: Well, another school?

NV: When I graduated from the eighth grade, um, dad asked me if I would work for him. I was the boy in the family. The oldest. Dad needed help and I liked to be outside. I guess I was kind of a renegade. Growing up, climbing.

I: (284) the usual girl things?

NV: Uh, no, I didn't have any time for dolls. Uh, anyway, he asked me if I would work a year before high school. And, 'course I was disappointed but I could see that he needed my help. So I said sure, I'd do that. But I'd like a promise that I could go to high school the next year. And that was the way it happened.

I: So what kind of work was it?

NV: What?

I: What kind of work was it?

NV: Oh. It wasn't anything I didn't do, if it had to be done, or needed to be done. I milked the cows. I fed the pigs. Pulled down the hay for the cattle. Spread the bedding for the cattle. Uh, I didn't take care of the chickens. Mother did that. But uh, I, I did about everything else. I could plow a field. I could plant crops.

I: I can see why you say you did- you were the boy in the family.

NV: That's right. We had tractors and...

I: You got very strong then.

NV: What?

I: You got very strong.

NV: Yes. Yes I really did. I- it- it well I was really surprised myself what I could do.

I: Especially after that serious illness you had.

NV: Yes it took a long time to get out of that. And they were very careful with what I did. I had two sisters milk the cows. Sometimes mother would send one of them out to stay with me. But it was more trouble to get them to milk the cow, than it was for me to get it done. (chuckle)

I: (chuckles) \_\_\_ saying that. (314)

NV: I guess maybe I just aggressive or something, but...

I: Sounds though as it you were- exactly what you wanted.

NV: Well, anyway, this year during, uh, when I was not in school. The school had a basket social. You know, old fashioned, where the gal cooks up a meal and packs it and decorates a box and they sell it? For some kind of school projects. And uh, my husband to be bought my basket.

I: Mr. Vannice. What was his first name?

NV: Kenneth.

I: Kenneth.

NV: He was H. Kenneth. Anyway, uh, I didn't think much about that. But it was just somebody to buy a basket. But, lo and behold, he came over to see me. About the following January 'cause this other was just before Christmas. Anyway and I got to know him much better.

I: And how old were you then?

NV: What?

I: How old were you then?

NV: 18.

I: So, had, had you gone to school again in the meantime? Between the year that you were working-

NV: No, I uh, that year I was working for dad, but I started to school then in September following that. And I went in to Halsey for high school.

I: So what- when you met Kenneth Vannice right after you graduated from high school?

NV: Mm-hm.

I: Yes.

NV: He was in college.

I: I see. Where?

NV: At Willamette University.

I: Oh. That sounds promising.

NV: Mm-hm.

I: Is that what you thought, too? "Hm, is an ambitious young man?"

NV: (chuckle) Yes.

I: Uh-huh.

NV: And uh, he taught school two years. Uh, year- in fact, he taught- when I graduated from grade school he taught the grade school that I graduated from. My two sisters and a whole bunch of my cousins and neighbors. He had- he had enough education to teach so he wanted to teach to pay for his college.

I: Right.

NV: Which he couldn't quite do.

I: Had he been teaching n this school when you were a student there?

NV: Yes.

I: Oh. So you already knew him?

NV: No, I didn't know him. I just, uh, met him that, uh, first year. I knew that a family had moved over there, but I was like everybody else. Mispronounce the name. "Venice," and, oh I don't know what all we called it.

I: So he came to see you after he had bought the basket. And, what developed from there?

NV: Well, he kept coming every once in a while.

I: You got the idea that he liked you?

NV: I guess he must have. 'Cause I went to school for the four years, he went back and finished his college. And uh, got his degree, and uh, I graduated from high school when he graduated from college. So, the next week we got married.

I: How did he ask you to marry him? What did he say?

NV: Well, I guess like most anybody would?

I: He just pop it out of the blue, or did you kind of suspect it was coming?

NV: Well, I- it kind of surprised me because of, you know, it takes some money to get off on your own. And, we just didn't have it. But we had- it's- we must wait 'til he finished school; he had a job coming up. Teaching. So that first year we went to uh, the Yakima area. And worked in the fruit. I worked like a trooper to make \$10.40 a day. (chuckle) But, I did it picking cherries.

I: Now about what year would that have been?

NV: Oh, prob'ly it'd been '30, '31.

I: Yes.

NV: The summer.

I: And those were hard times for everybody.

NV: Yeah. Depression. Anyway, we worked and uh, I got along pretty well with the picking. We worked for Senator Whiteside in Washington. The Yakima area. And uh...

I: Was he a state senator?

NV: Yes.

I: Or, United States Senate- United States Senate?

NV: Yeah. Anyway-

I: Which? Which one?

NV: I think it was Washington.

I: Washington.

NV: Anyway, uh, when the last day came we thought, "Well, that was it." He came by and he said, "Hey. I'm looking for somebody that could climb around in these trees and top these trees for me. I wanna' send my cherries back to Wisconsin and want the stems on 'em, and I don't want my trees ruined." And he said, "It looks like that you could monkey around enough at the tops of these trees..." (chuckles)

I: Talking to you?

NV: Yes! So I got a bonus. And that was a big help to me.

I: By the way what kinds of clothes, clothing did you wear when you did that work?

NV: I wore, uh, overalls. Striped overalls.

I: Bib overalls?

NV: Bib overalls.

I: With some kind of a shirt, Long-sleeved shirt underneath?

NV: Yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah.

I: Boots?

NV: You have to have a jacket on hand if you needed a jacket. But uh-

I: Did you wear boots?

NV: Well, yes, laced ones. 'Cause you have to climb ladders. And he said he would set the ladders for me. So, I had it made.

I: And, your husband was doing what?

NV: He worked at the cherries also. And then uh, the men could pick peaches. They didn't let the women work on those. But anything that showed much color they had to pitch out. It was on plowed ground. So, being economical times, kind of hard, I asked if I could pick those up and trim 'em and can 'em. So we had tents for camp, camp stove, so I canned peaches to take home with me.

I: And now when you said showed color, you mean they were a little too ripe?

NV: Yes.

I: And they wouldn't ship well?

NV: They wouldn't ship well. Anyway, that's what we did. Uh, some friends went with us. There were two couples of us for that. And then, we all got into teaching after awhile, uh, my family being the time that it was. When they grew up for school- college- we had moved to uh, around as teachers have to. Uh, we were at Harrisburg- well; really we were at Rendale (sp) in southern Oregon when my first boy was born. And then uh, the next boy was eight months old when we moved to Harrisburg. That's nine miles from home. From where I was born. And uh, kids got through school. We went to southern Oregon then for my youngest boy to finish. And uh, he had two years of school left when I decided that it was most important to get those kids through college than it was for me to work on college. I started this uh, correspondence with extension, and, you know? The extra classes they gave. Night school. That's how I did. Anyway, uh, two boys in college at the same time. Somebody had to, if something- at home. So we bought a little farm in the Willamette Valley. When we were at Harrisburg it was only nine miles down to where the farm was. It was a farm that the older people were losing because they couldn't pay the mortgage. So, I don't remember just how we got interested in that, but somebody told us that they were losing it. So, with a family of boys, rather than having them in town just to run around, we bought this little farm on 163 acres. And uh-

I: Doesn't sound so little to me.

NV: -the boys to be. But it kind of turned out that it was kind of a place for me!  
(chuckle) Uh, you couldn't get help that would be any help in those kind of days. Or that you could afford to pay. So, I took care of the farm---

End of Side 1



Side 2

NV: I heard on the radio that there was one family that decided they would, uh, save some money. So uh, she saved dimes. You know you dealt with coin then. Now you don't do that. (chuckle)

I: Not much, no.

NV: Anyway, uh, after telling the family about what I had heard on the radio, they laughed at me. You're gonna' have every dime this family gets! So I took 'em up on it. And then I had hundred dollars collected before too long. And I saw an ad in the paper for 10 sheep. \$10 a piece. So I said I'm going up there. So I went up and they were- uh, 4-H sheep. So I bought them. And he said, "Here's grandma, so hurry and she prob'ly won't make it through the year, but, here's grandma." So, anyway I had 11 sheep. And, everybody got interested in my sheep. So dad took them down to pasture on his rye grass. And he- he lived only a mile from where we were- where the farm was. And uh, pastured my sheep. That first year the whole 10 had twin lambs. And grandma had one black one.

I: All 10 were female, how amazing!

NV: Anyway, it turned out-

I: Who, who was the ram? Where'd you get the ram?

NV: Yeah, yeah. That was taken care of before I got 'em.

I: Oh I see. Did you know they were pregnant when you bought them?

NV: Yeah, mm-hm. So uh, that's the way my sheep venture started. Then I had, uh, uh, 'course those lambs grew up and I sold what would somewhere for Easter lamb. And some, uh, 'course were a little later, but then, they was wool coming out, too. So, anyway dad advised that it's wise to sell your lambs and then just keep your wool from the others and buy some more sheep. So that's what I did I bought some more sheep. And I would stay on the farm, takin' care of the farm and the sheep, too. Some winters were pretty bad on 'em. Have sleet storms, you know? And the lambing time you had to get out there and take care of 'em. But then I didn't mind they were dumb sheep. But we had names for most of 'em, the kids got interested, too.

I: Now, where was your husband by that time?

NV: He was peaching.

I: But not nearby.

NV: Uh, uh, at Harrisburg and then I just come down to take care of the sheep.

I: Oh.

NV: Anyway, summers we spent on the farm. 'Cause we could put in the crops then. And I did what we- what I could during the day and, it was kind of tough because sometimes they'd work at night and made my day kinda' long. But I got through it. But I went on with sheep 'til I decided that was enough sheep, and, so... Kids were in college; we had two boys in college at the same time to Oregon State. And uh, it was just impossible in even those days for kids to work enough in the summertime to put themselves through school. So, the crops from the farm got our kids through school. They brought their laundries home on weekend. And take it back. Another thing that needed to be done. But I decided it was more important that they get their education. Then I'll think about mine. So, the younger boy was six years younger than his next brother. And uh, so there was a little leeway between the others' graduating. But, they turned out to be teachers, too. So, here's the youngest boy. And uh, we were in Prospect at that time. And uh, then I had had some private music lessons that I was giving, piano and organ. And uh, I got drafted into taking the school music. Of course, music teachers were scarce. Very scarce. Anyway they had just started by a fellow that just came up missing. And uh, just didn't show up. So he was reported missing and they never did hear what they did about it. Evidently, they found him. Well, I kinda' discovered why he made a getaway. Uh, his vodka bottle was in his bottom desk drawer. So, anyway, I took the band and the music for the school. And uh, next summer I went to school. 'Course my youngest boy then was a sophomore in high school. And uh, he finished school there. Then he went to Southern Oregon in Ashland, to go to school. So he was farther from home but could get home, which he did often enough for me to get the laundry. And the fact that I was filling in the music department helped with getting him through school, too. Which was a big help. But uh, when there was anything to do we all pitched in to do it. Because the- Tyler's (?) (076) relatives were working at home. He just sit \_\_\_\_\_. (077) School didn't take- it took first place on everything. And uh, eventually he graduated. And uh, teacher, too! So, his teacher had told me that she uh, came in to the room one day while she- well, he was in a school at uh, senior at Prospect. And they were making these airplanes, paper you know, getting 'em balanced and see how far they'd fly. And she stepped in the door and one of 'em hit her. (chuckle) Of course, it was my son that made it. She said she pointed her finger and she says, "Well, you'll give a report tomorrow on aerodynamics for this class." So I thought it was sort of funny that he uh, uh, was looking up aerodynamics when he came home. But nothing more was said about it. And I said, "Well, that's good." It's something instructive and you should learn something from it. So he gave the report and she said that he gave the report, he started to take over the class and he opened it up for questioning. And she said they got so interested. He was interested and the kids were interested, that he took

up the whole class time. And so I asked him afterwards, "How did you like it? How did it go?" He said, "You know? That was fun." It kind of made me decide that I'd like to be a teacher.

I: Very good.

NV: So, anyway, he turned out to be a teacher.

I: Are both sons still teaching?

NV: They have all retired. Except our son in Canada. He went to Canada in the 60's...along about '66. Teachers were scarce up there. So he went up with another couple of teachers and they got jobs. So uh, the next year the district sent him down to Oregon to recruit teachers. So they took quite a few Oregon teachers up to Canada on that. Seems they were better qualified they said and of course they got better pay.

I: Did his going to Canada have anything- did that have anything to do with what was going on in Viet Nam?

NV: I don't know. I really don't know. There's quite a few Americans up there now.

I: Was he of draft age at that time?

NV: No.

I: Older?

NV: Uh, the youngest boy spent his time in the Army. But he had a teaching job before he got out. So somebody evidently knew him or knew about him. He did well in the Army. He took it like it was a job.

I: It sounds as though you have admirable sons.

NV: Well, we have. Really never caused a stink. Never caused us any trouble.

I: Wonderful.

NV: And uh, I was uh, just wondering how many years our family put in in the teaching field. I thought I started out with a little paper where I had written it down. Oh if I can't find- I know what it is. Um, my husband taught 45 years. Uh, my next son taught 41 years. This is the first year he is, uh, teaching. Uh, the next son was administrator, as was my husband. Uh, for 35 years. He retired before he had to, age-wise. And uh, Donnie has just retired and he had 36 years. And I have 17 ½. I got to school, got my credits in, uh, had enough for a major in music. And uh, came up to Eastern Oregon for my last term. Because my husband and I had

been apart so much of the time with my fooling around with school. And when you're in school business, you don't have much time together, either. So, uh, I thought well I'll just get my degree there. Lo and behold, I couldn't get it in music. They gave a major in music, but I had had everything that they had on their list. I said, well can I take some of those over? And they said no. And I'd have to go to University of Oregon, but, I didn't wanna' leave him for another summer because he needs to be there for the job, you know. One of those year-round ones. So I just finished up here but I had to shift education major. And I did that. I thought, well, I could teach in that field and still teach music. So it's been that way. And uh, one of the years I got drafted was at Culver. A young fellow had the job in the music department when I went to University of Oregon. And he was up there. And he found out that I was going to be at Culver so he asked me if I would accompany for his music. So I said okay, that's fine. 'Cause that's what I was planning to do.

I: Where's Culver?

NV: Uh-huh.

I: Where is it?

NV: Culver is between Madras and uh, Redmond. In the Metolius area. Anyway, uh, he started. I played for him for about a month. Meantime I had private students, piano. And uh, then he came up missing one weekend. Didn't come back. And uh, so my husband reported him missing. They finally found him in Montana. And he said, "I'd rather feed pigs." So I had his job. And then, 'course then I struggled then and got my degree business finished up. But the kids had theirs and everybody was happily married. And we have taught, the family years, 174 years of teaching. Collective.

I: Really? That's remarkable. I was a teacher for most of my life, too.

NV: Oh.

I: I started teaching fifth grade in Milton-Freewater.

NV: Oh. Uh-huh.

I: Um, what was, I'm not sure you remember many things about teaching, uh, in schools. What was one of your most satisfying experiences?

NV: You mean about teaching?

I: Yes.

NV: I think probably my uh, uh, programs for the community with my students. They turned out well, everybody seemed to be pleased and every student was in something.

I: Now this was band, orchestra, and chorus maybe?

NV: Yes. I loved all of it.

I: Can you remember what you might- what- what musical selections you might have on a program?

NV: Depending upon the season a bet. Uh-huh. And I had from little kids on through. Little kids tried to get something that they- everyday life type things. I had one little girl; her second grade teacher came in. She said, "Don't expect anything from Christi. She hasn't said a word to me since she's been here. She doesn't say a word, so don't expect anything from her." So, all right. It was fall, and everyone was going fishing, going fishing. Nothing better than I like. You know how it goes and all of that. And this is about hunting season. And I said uh, uh, "Is there anybody going hunting?" Oh, yes! We're going hunting. So we sang we're GOING HUNTING. To finish that up. Pretty soon Christi stood up. She said, "We went hunting!" And uh, she said, "We ALL went! And dad had a gun," she said. "And we walked a long ways, we saw this little hill and there was an animal up there. Dad saw it, dad shot. And we all went up there. And it was a horse!" And the little kids, oh, I had about 42 in there. And the little kids, "a horse?" Christi said, "A horse." And we couldn't even eat a horse. That was some of the funny things that...

I: All because of that song.

NV: I suppose it just got her loosened up so she would do it.

I: Did she talk more after that?

NV: Yes, she did. She seemed to be one of the group.

I: A good example of what music can do.

NV: Yeah. Uh, in college I wrote a quite a long detailed thing called Music Therapy. And uh, I don't know, I guess on that uh, I don't know how that happened. Maybe I dad just gotten it back from school. And one of the parents was there. And uh, she read it. And she was interested in it. Wanted her daughter to read it. So I said uh, "Ellen," your- it was the next day at school- "Your mother wanted you to read this." So, I gave it to Ellen. She read it. And uh, she is still working in music therapy. In California. Napa.

I: What was one of your ideas about music therapy?

NV: Oh, sort of it that it's a universal language. That everybody understands it. They get something from it. It gives them a feeling. Moods. Can change moods.

I: Almost as necessary as food?

NV: Hm?

I: Music is nourishing.

NV: Yes.

I: But are you still involved with music in some way?

NV: Well, I don't know whether you call it involved. I'm accompanying for a lady here that plays violin.

I: Good.

NV: And I play for church. I guess I grew up doing that.

I: Do you have a piano here you can practice on?

NV: I have my piano.

I: You do? In your apartment?

NV: Yes.

I: Very good.

NV: I put it in instead of a second bed.

I: Wonderful.

NV: It's just something to do like, a grand daughter wants my piano awfully bad.  
(chuckle)

I: Is it an upright?

NV: Yes, uh-huh.

I: A grand piano would be nice but it wouldn't fit in there, I'll bet.

NV: Yeah, yeah, no it wouldn't. I have an organ, too.

I: Where is that?

NV: Just because I- it's down at my house in North Powder.

I: Oh, I see.

NV: I thought about selling it. But, you know, there's so many organs on the market nowadays. Most people are wanting something in the quick. They can turn off most of it. Play with one finger.

I: Electronic organs.

NV: Yeah. Uh-huh. So, I may just end up bringing it up here.

I: Now, how did you get to North Powder?

NV: How did we get there?

I: Yeah, how did- how did you happen to go there?

NV: Well, let's see, how did we happen to? Went there from southern Oregon. My husband was born at Dayton, Washington. And he always had kind of a feeling that he wanted to get back to the dry country. So he put out some applications, and he said, uh, he came down one day. I was working with music. And uh, he said, "Well, I've got a contract for Huntingdon if I want it." And I, the cement floor, I felt like I was about to go through it. (chuckle) Anyway, I said, "Well, fine, if that's what you think you want." He says, "Well, we'll think about it and then I'll let 'em know."

I: Is that for- to be superintendent there?

NV: Is there what?

I: Was that to be superintendent in Huntingdon?

NV: Yes. Yes. Anyway, we went there and uh, I don't know how I happened to get the job there. But I did. So I had to let my students- private students- I just couldn't keep up on both of it.

I: What job did you get there?

NV: What?

I: What job did you get there?

NV: Music.

I: In the schools?

NV: I've always had music. Seemed like there just were not music teachers.

I: And so you taught there for several years?

NV: Eight years. I thought I couldn't stand it when we first went there. It was a- got there on July the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and, moved into a place where the former superintendent had lived. Never had seen it. But uh, we met him at a restaurant and uh, on a napkin he drew a pattern of the house. And I thought, "Well, it surely can't be too bad." Well, I needed another think. It was- I got up to the back door when we got to- backed up the truck to the back door- was on a hillside. Steps about the front been against a hill. And waded through the thistles above my head, got the back door open- started to open it and looked down. There was a snake skin about that wide and yay-long across the step. With diamonds in it. Well I kinda' had to scoot that thing out the way. Make myself get it unlocked. But I was less than comfortable. Opened the door there was halladin over the walls.

I: There was what over the walls?

NV: Halladin.

I: Halladin?

NV: Yeah. A horse.

I: Oh, you mean a picture?

NV: Wall paper.

I: Wall paper.

NV: Uh-huh. Great big pattern about as far as from here to that wall when you opened the door. So that had to come out. We redid the house. Made it presentable. But I had trouble getting used to black widows and scorpions in the house.

I: I should say so.

NV: Turning the cups- plates upside down.

I: And eight years of that.

NV: Um-hm.

I: Well when you left there you went to North Powder?



NV: Yes.

I: And that was into retirement?

NV: Yes. Uh, I said, um, after we had done a lot of looking in different places. Uh, he had said he would like to go up to Lewiston to retire. And I said, "No way." I said, "I'd go to the Willamette Valley," and he said, "No way." So, uh, at breakfast I said, "Well, why don't we buy some of this sagebrush? Get it cleared off and get us a double-wide?" We built one house in 50 and 60, \_\_\_ (338) for my dad. And uh, why don't we just get an easy way out this time. So that was what we decided to do. And we're perfectly happy with it.

I: And you put it in North Powder?

NV: Yes, it's at North Powder. And we just started- it was just- city put the water and sewer in and, we just started from scratch.

I: Now, you say you still own that house?

NV: Yes.

I: Why are you here?

NV: My husband was not well. And uh, he had a open-heart surgery. And, well, it did him a lot of good. It wasn't perfect. And uh, he had to come in to the doctor two and three times a week. And, while I don't mind driving and I'm not complaining about it that canyon is not a very good place to negotiate in bad road conditions.

I: That is right.

NV: And uh, I lucked out for several years that I did that. And then I came in one day and there were four wrecks over there. One who came out of a whiteout and trucks were just flipping. Three of 'em before they got into Ladd Canyon. Just as you started into the whiteout, and I was coming out of it. And I said, "Kenneth, look, I can't look." So he says, "Well, there's three wheels straight up." And I heard that there was one that had got into the canyon before he left. And uh, that day I said, "Well." Said to the nurse, "Uh, I, I think the highway will be stropped when we get ready to go back." So after Kenneth was treated, we decided to go back through uh, Union. And before I got to Union, there was a big station wagon down off of that high grade. And then over here was a UPS truck and a small black car. Just within feet of each other on the other side of the big grade. So I crept through that and got home after a long drive and decided well, it was just not a pleasant trip. So, doctor talked us into coming down here.

I: I see.

NV: And uh, it's, it's a good arrangement for somebody that needs to be closer to town. I lost my husband just about a year ago. But it was, it was good for him in that I could get him to the doctor much easier.

I: You enjoy living here?

NV: Yes I do. I didn't wanna' give up my home. And I still don't want to. I planned to live down there. But my husband didn't want me to. And uh, the boys don't want me to. Being alone is- I can see it- it isn't good for anyone to be alone.

I: But you- you still have a hope that you might live there again?

NV: No. We're going to sell it. The boys are coming down, either the week before Mother's Day or the week after. I expect both of 'em. Knowing what there is to do down there. But there's enough there, it's even furnished so, we can sell it furnished, or- I guess that's what we'll do.

I: And what do you like about living here?

NV: It close to town.

I: Yeah.

NV: People. There's some awfully nice people here. And there's some that- you know, you just, you just visit with them.

I: Yeah. And quite a number of activities if you want them?

NV: Yes. Much more than I can take in. I play pinochle, but I could do a lot of other things that are offered. But uh, the same things are offered week after week so you can kinda' string 'em out if you want to. I'm not- I like to sew, but I'm not a person that thinks that stuffed animal types things- and so much of our sewing nowadays is that sort of thing. I didn't- a lot of my youngsters have that. I felt like they were not very sanitary. This is my opinion, of course.

I: I think you're right. Sure, sure. Would you rather be sewing a shirt or a coat? Something useful.

NV: Oh yeah. Yeah. Or embroidery, crochet. I gave away 11 afghans this last Christmas.

I: Wonderful. Are you still your car?

NV: Yes I am.

I: Mm-hm. It sounds as though your health is quite good?

NV: What?

I: Your health is quite good?

NV: It really isn't!

I: Oh.

NV: (chuckle) I-

I: You seem fine.

NV: I've inherited uh; asthma and I have constrictive bronchial disease. Very little lung capacity and diabetes.

I: Do you use an inhaler for asthma?

NV: Yes and I take uh, nebulizer treatments three times a day on my own. Insulin.

I: The uh, asthma treatments work fairly well, don't they?

NV: Yes. I think it really is what keeps me going. I am subject to pneumonia. I've had it twice since I've been here. I just seem to pick it up somehow.

I: Do you have to go to the hospital then?

NV: I'm 16 days in the hospital. Last April. There- I was only there a couple of days and they let me do my own medications at- at home this time. Works out fine for me.

I: Good. Apparently, you don't have any financial difficulties?

NV: Well, no, but I don't want it to have.

I: Right. You're- you're very careful with your money?

NV: Yes I am.

I: But I'm sure you learned to do that throughout your life?

NV: Yes.

I: It doesn't sound as though you ever- were ever in a situation where you had a lot of money to spare?

NV: Yes. Oh, we could have spending money like kids have now. It's too bad. Uh, Depression, uh, we got along fine. But I question how some of our young people today would get through a situation like that.

I: I feel the same way about it. I was, uh, I was- my main growing up was during the Depression years. The 1930s. And I remember very well how we- how we scrambled for money.

NV: Well, bad thing about that- when banks closed. We lost money in the Glendale Bank when we were there. Some of our first years. I never- it – bank didn't open. We never got our money. We got- uh, pay was something like 90 dollars a month. We managed to live on little because I can pretty much make do with what I have or could get. People were good about saying I've got extra berries n the bush, you wanna' pick 'em?

End of Side 2

End of Tape #1

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