



# Lower Owyhee Watershed Assessment

## Appendix K. Interviews with residents

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Ecological Services

The following interviews were mostly conducted by Michaelann Seiders of the Owyhee Watershed Council.

### A. Louise Hill and Carl Hill, July 23, 2007

1. *Please state your full name for the record:*

Louise Hill and Carl Hill

2. *Would you like to state your age?*

Louise 89, Carl 70

3. *Where do you live or where did you live in relation to the Lower Owyhee area?*

(Louise) A little to the south, in lower Owyhee. I lived a mile from Adrian but had a Nyssa mailing address.

There was a community know as New Heights

4. *How long have you lived at your current location? OR How long have you lived in the area?*

(Louise) Since 1938

(Carl) I was born in Colorado and I came here when I was one year old in 1938, my recollection was from the later years.

(Louise) My husband's father and mother bought this place and it was raw land and we came with them because it was the depression years and we didn't have a job in Colorado. So we tagged along and my husband Stanley became the hired man for a dollar a day.

5. *When did you or your family first come to the area? Please describe how you or your family came to live here?*

See previous question's answer

6. *Did you or family homestead the property that you are living on?*

(Louise) It wasn't really bare ground, part of it was in clover but I'm not sure if all of it was under cultivation.

(Carl) I think the majority was broke out of sagebrush by the time we came in '38, because they delivered water prior to that. And it had a little water on it, even though the canals and the ditch system were very new and primitive so a lot of work was being done to upgrade those facilities. My first recollection was much loose dry powdery soils that didn't hold ditches or corrugates very well so there was a lot of effort and work and time spent to just watch the water because they had so many wash outs and troubles with the irrigation systems. Tumble weeds I can recollect an awful lot of tumbleweeds because they were always stickery on my bare feet and the loose powder soil. Those are my first impressions of the types of soil and conditions that there were. Very few trees in the area. Mostly they were recently planted and new at that time, so there was very little shade available at that time. And we first moved, I think, into a basement house for the first year and then I remember the tar paper shack that was part of the dam construction camp, and I don't remember which camp it came from.

(Louise) You didn't have to worry about the dust in your house because when the wind blew it would blow the dust in one side and out the other.

Very hot in the summer, and very cold in the winter.

We lived in the basement house with his folks for the first couple of months, and we were in that tar paper shack for over two years. Because he built a new 2 room house with a screened in porch for the hired man, because he said the hired man wouldn't live in that old tar paper shack. He asked me if I would wait one more year and he would build a house for us, which he did. It was small, 2 rooms with a screened in porch and a basement, and you got to the basement from the porch.

The original piece was 160 acres, and then another 40, and another 80. And the water all ran to the north. It was marked off in 40 acre plots.

Dust down that the side road to the north. The dust was so bad that when you took a car down that road, the dust would catch on the wheels and drop off as you went around.

*If not, do you know who did, or any interesting history about your place?*

(Louise) The mailman would come up from the highway to our corner about a mile and a half and then the mailman would stop and walk the other mile to deliver the mail because the milk truck had made such deep ruts that only he could get through. So, anyone else would have to park on our corner and walk the rest. The mail was delivered every day. Closer to the highway there was a farm or two that had been dry land farmers so it was partially settled. The roads were dusty in the summer and the winter months muddy.

*Has the land always been used in the same manner that it is being used today?*

(Carl) Yes, it was fairly basic row crops and as the crops and markets materialized more different types of row crops were incorporated. I can remember early potatoes with JR Simplot. He personally came out and was the field man for my grandfather when they first started raising potatoes. Beets were always part of the rotation besides grains and in the '50s we entered in the alfalfa seed business. Head lettuce, lettuce seeds and various other crops were incorporated when the market warranted but didn't seem to last for those types. Basically, yes, it was row crops. Conservation was really a problem. I don't remember the waste water, but I know they had lots of problems with the irrigation systems and the corrugates; they took full days trying to irrigate these crops so it was really treacherous to keep the water going the direction you wanted it to and also from washing so badly. As the years went along I know that cultural practices changed. We incorporated a lot more of the crop residue so the runoff issue wasn't quite as severe in later years as it was to begin with. It was a full time job just to irrigate the fields.

I actually have seen the soil float on top of the corrugates, it was so fine. I guess it took 20 years before the ditch system was more useable. I can remember hauling rock, and concrete check boxes, and always hauled rock in to keep the ditches from washing to get the soil stabilized. I can remember my father talking about in the winter time cutting pipe, building lath little boxes out of lath to make tubes to put in the little sub ditches to irrigate each corrugate. So they finally figured out ways to irrigate besides using newspaper to stick in the soil to keep it from washing. So, they used all kinds of methods over the years.

*Have any major improvements been made on the property? Please describe.*

7. *What do you see as some of the most interesting and valuable features of the local area?*

(Louise) Well, the Owyhee Dam is the number one and the hills. My sister and her husband used to go chukar hunting, and they would take their camper and go into the hills west and they would stay for a week and we would go with them. It was 30 miles from town. That wasn't my thing. My brother-in-law stepped on a rock and down there was a rattlesnake on the same rock. If it hadn't been for his dog barking at the snake, and the snake watching the dog, he would have probably gotten bite by that snake. So you had to be on the look out all the time.

I was looking for arrowheads; no I didn't find many arrowheads near Twin Springs.

(Carl) I know there has been native use of our area, because I have found arrowheads while I was irrigating and they were small arrowheads so I assume they were hunting for small game in the grass flats. I know that the tribes were in the areas certain time of the years.

(Louise) Well on Brown Butte just west of Adrian there is a cave that has been used by the Indians and there was an Indian cemetery around there. Mr. Judd a old, old timer said that around 1910 people came in and robbed those graves. They took the artifacts out of the grave.

(Carl) I think the importance of the area is the diversity that is offered to the residents of the area, not only as farmers and ranchers but also just as a community to live in. A tremendous amount of diversity is afforded because of the desert region, most anything can be raised in this area if they wanted to. I know in the past there has been all kinds of crops from watermelon to short term crops can be raised here. It is tremendously diversified and in that it offers recreation to the land owners and residents of the area with four great seasons of weather that are available to the people who live here.

*8. Do you have any specific memories or recollections about water use within the area?*

(Carl) I think the main thing I have seen from a youngster to the present is the changes and methods of irrigation and the type of conservation efforts that are being used by most of the land owners. To begin with the very basic gravity irrigation systems that most of the farmers really struggled with now have changed to control irrigation: surge systems, sprinklers, and drips. There is just such a multitude of irrigation systems that are being put in place now to help conserve water in a lot of cases. Conserving water you reduce the erosion and you don't see that nearly as much now as what was afforded in the past. Although I don't recollect what the river looked like in the Owyhee although I fished it I guess it really wasn't too bad, to look at it now you think it was horrible although at the time I know it had to be pretty bad because of all of the return flow off of these fields, because they were really having trouble irrigating.

(Louise) The only thing I can think of that pertains to the Owyhee River besides irrigation is that the Oregon Trail alternate route of the Oregon Trail did cross the Owyhee River near its mouth into the Snake River. Just a year ago we got a monument up honoring some of the wagon trains that was ambushed and the survivors walked to the Owyhee River and stayed there and were found eating the dead when the soldiers came from Walla Walla to rescue them.

*9. Do you have any memories or recollections of fish populations within the local area?*

(Louise) The only thing I can remember as you (referring to Carl) fishing as a child is Bobby Parker took you down to the river and Bob laid his fishing pole down and a big old sucker must have took the hook in his mouth and pulled his fishing pole away and the next time he looked to see if his pole was still, it was gone.

I know the salmon went up the river because at one time I found an article that remarked about the salmon coming up the mouth of the Owyhee River.

(Carl) My knowledge was naturally in later years. I fished down on the Owyhee a lot but most of the time it was carp, sucker, and a few bass as I recall. The only thing that I can think of that may have some significance before the Hells Canyons dams were built there were some, at that time we just called them bull trout which they were not, but there were trout that migrated out of the lower Snake River system and they did come up the Owyhee River until they got up to the Dam and fishing for those was always quite an event for the fisherman because they were pretty nice trout that traveled from the lower Snake River system. Naturally that stopped after the construction of the Hells Canyon complex. That is the one thing that may have contributed to the change in the fish population and the type of fish that are residence in the Owyhee River.

*10. Do you have any memories or recollections of wildlife populations within the local area?  
Do you see populations increasing or decreasing?*

(Carl) I know when first recollection was there was no deer in the agriculture area when we moved here. I was probably a pre-teenager when I rode a horse up on Brown Butte and jumped a nice buck deer and I can remember my folks not believing I saw a deer in this area, so I know there weren't any around at that time. Since the vegetation has grown it has tremendously changed. There is great population of wildlife in agricultural areas. And the surrounding areas right now all the way from turkeys, great amounts of mule deer in various places, so I know the agricultural community along with growth of vegetation along the Owyhee River has contributed to the habitat that the wildlife really have utilized.

*11. Could you please talk about any storm events or drought periods that stand out in your memory?*

(Louise) Well yeah, the dust storms were terrible. And in one dust storm I remember, my neighbor took her car load of children to the field to give her husband a drink of water and the dust storm came up and they were turned around. They couldn't find their way back to the car and the father got off of the tractor and laid down on the ground and drew a map of where he knew they were and where the road was. And, that was the way they found their way back to the road, by laying down on the ground and drawing a map of where I was when they stopped and where they were when they stopped. I think the springs were pretty dry in mid summer, when the mid summer rain came it was usually in a storm type rain and it did very little good. It did more damage than good.

(Carl) It seems to me as a child I remember the buses having trouble traveling the routes during the winter because of the snow drifts. And, it seems like we see so very little of those types of storms anymore. But it is maybe just because I remember them and we did have trouble traveling the roads because of the canals, and the roads and everything has drifted where you couldn't get through them. I can partially remember the canals completely filled with snow drifts and we would always play in them.

(Louise) And when those rain storms were melting snow or whatever as far as the traffic could go Mendioala road was our corner which was a one and a half miles from the highway, and the mailman had to walk to the west to put the mail in and the milk truck was the only one that could get through.

*12. Please describe what the Owyhee River looked like in the past as compared to today?*

(Louise) Well today it is over grown with willows to a point, and cottonwood trees have sprung up farther to the west.

(Carl) As a child there was mostly I can only remember was a few willows, because we would use the willows for fishing poles. So I know there were a few willows, and occasionally a few cottonwood trees. But other than that you could walk any of the bank and the shoreline and get to the river in those years, and now it is virtually impossible to reach the river in a lot of places. I would call a older friend who had a automobile. I was quite young then and he would take his car and drive from the house

down to the river to a little gravel bar. He would wash his car in the river and that's how he was able to. I guess the water was available and rather than use well water he would use the river water. So I know the shoreline was easily accessible in those 30s and early 40s years and since then it has constantly grown up with under growth. There is lot's now, I think there is some wild roses in places and just all types of vegetation that has grown because of the control of the river. There is no washing or scouring of the river occurring since the Dam was constructed.

*13. Do you have any memories related to the construction of the Owyhee Dam that you would be willing to share?*

(Louise) No because we came after the dam was being built

(Carl) That is the reason why a lot of the tar paper shacks were available to the local community because as they removed and tore down the old construction sites, those buildings were either torn or moved. I don't know if the were sold or given to the local community. There were a lot of tar paper shacks around for people to use.

(Louise) In fact that was where my house came from, somewhere up at the dam. It was already on our property.

*14. What changes did you see in the area following the construction of the Owyhee Dam?*

*15. Pasture/Range Conditions?*

*16. When did certain weeds show up and where did you first see them?*

(Louise) Well yes, I can remember that the tumble weeds were cut and put on a slip that would be used to haul hay on. They were huge, as large as a house. Let's see, your dad put one of those on a slip and bring it to a certain place and burn it, and now the tumble weeds are just little weeds now.

(Carl) What were some of the first things you saw growing that was maybe a weed or?

(Louise) Well those tumble weeds, where we came down in September and the frost hadn't hit yet and all down the canal were these huge big tumbleweeds, and even down the hay fields occasionally there would be a great big one. I remember they said they could only get one on the slip and I don't recall where they disposed of them. They must have burned them somewhere.

(Carl) I know there were some, probably because of irrigation, there was some willow patches and they where pretty huge willow patches when I was quite young. So I am guessing they must have gotten started after the irrigation, probably provided the irrigation for them, the seeds and the starts must have come from the river. In the irrigated lands I know that a lot of the waste ways have willows in them. Naturally since then there have been a multitude of weeds that have invaded the areas starting with Canadian thistle, salt grass which may have been there prior to agricultural lands, but they consume large lower wet lands that wasn't being farmed. A lot of new annuals have shown up between sandburs, puncture vines, a lot of grasses. I think some of the original grasses where started by some of the farmers because of trying to stabilize some of the ditch banks. I know a lot of the blue grasses, and I understand in the older part of the project across the river some of the Boise project they brought in quack

grass to hold the ditch bank which was, naturally, the wrong thing to be done because later it became a problem. But I believe a lot of the grasses were brought in for that purpose to stabilize the ditch banks.

*17. What are some of your biggest concerns for the future of this area?*

(Louise) Well I hadn't thought about it because my future is very short. Well I hadn't given it much thought. I guess as long as there is water we will survive.

(Carl) Well that is my concern that we are able to maintain our water rights for the land, and also all of the acts by congress that deal with conservation. The clean water act is all being driven by those laws. There are things we are going to have to live with and do. And that is a great concern to me because it always relates to cost to the land owners, and it is going to take a vast amount of effort and money to meet those requirements from the acts and laws. Hopefully in the future there is some tool or method that can help that be accomplished. I see it is as being a great challenge and a great cost to land owners.

*18. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your life in this area?*

(Louise) Yes, it was a great place to raise my children in the Adrian area. I really can't think of anything.

(Carl) Only it has been a great rural area to raise a family as has been done for a number of generations. Three of us anyways, the fourth generation is here but has elected not to be a farmer. It has been a great place to raise our children and educate them. It has all been available to those that wish to utilize it. The life has been great and looking back, I don't think I would change anything that we have done as a family and I as a business person. I am sure that there are some places in there that you would like to have done a little better, but the life has been great. Everything that is available has always created a better part of a families life, from recreation to community events it is just been a great rural setting to raise a family and complete a life.

(Louise) I would just like to say there was a grade school already in our Kingman Colony and when the influx of people to the new land came, it made a burden on the school district, where to put all of these children. And I know they dug a basement under the Kingman Colony school to expand and Carl Lee started in the first grade in that dirt basement underneath. So it had to have a floor in it of course, but that is where he started the first grade. And then in Adrian they built a one room brick building for the eighth graders and didn't have a high school. They had to come to Nyssa, and of course they had been coming to Nyssa for years. And the school bus they had was a old pickup that had a board length wise on each side for the kids to sit on and of course no heat in there. Until they got the new grade school built, and it is older now and they are replacing it. I know when Nancy started the school in the first grade, she started down in our church. They had to dole the kids out, there was class in our legion hall, until they could get a school built.

(Carl) There was a consolidation of a number of small schools around including Owyhee, Kingman Colony, Wade, Big Bend, and then the last one I believe was

Ridgeview. All of those small schools eventually consolidated to make the Adrian system.

(Louise) There was man that lived in Ridgeview who said “we were the smart ones over here because we didn’t join in with you at first because of the taxes. We let you build the building and then we consolidated with you.”

(Carl) My memory, as I remember, it has been a wonderful community that has provided for living in it, all the way from education to community events. It has just been a great place. Even with all the changes, we try to make things better. I think that will continue in the community even though we have lost some population. I still think the community and rural interests are still there. I think and hope it will continue to be that way.

## **B. Helen Turner Lowell, June 26, 2007**

1. *Please State Your Full Name for the record:*

Helen Turner Lowell

2. *Would you like to state your age??*

101

3. *Where do you live or where did you live in relation to the Lower Owyhee area?*

Well I’ve lived here since 1929. (25872 Hwy 18, Parma Idaho)

4. *How long have you lived at your current location? OR How long have you lived in the area?*

1929 lived in Caldwell before here and that is where I taught high school. I taught there for three years and then got married and moved here. I was born in Boise, Idaho. I am a native.

5. *When did you or your family first come to the area? Please describe how you or your family came to live here (what did you/they do for a living, where did you/they come from, and where exactly did you/they live within the area?)*

I lived here in this area because I got married, and this is where my husband decided he wanted to farm. He had been a high school coach and I knew him in college. We both taught/coached in Caldwell before we were married. Blake liked coaching. He didn’t like all the records that he had to keep and he decided that was it! We built this house when we were young, and we didn’t realize all the stairs would be a problem. I advise that all build a house on one level!

6. *Did you or your family homestead the property that you are living on?*

Oh no, we didn’t homestead. This was in orchards when we moved here. This whole area was in orchards. We had Italian prunes, pears, apples. The dairies are moving in, you see all the corn in the area.



7. *What do you see as some of the most interesting and valuable features of the local area? (What are some of your favorite places and/or what are some of your favorite things about where you live)*

Well, I don't know what you mean by interesting information. Well I don't know. I am a former teacher, and I went to Boise High School. I was in Albertson College. I got interested in our area history and in collaboration with a friend wrote a book, *Our First 100 Years*. And, we had major success in selling it. We didn't keep any of the money from the sale of the books; we turned it all over to the historical society of Parma to build a museum. We put up the money, \$3000 at the time, to buy building supplies. The Marsing Job Corp built the museum, and then we left a trust fund to fund improvements. So that is where our profits went, the Fort Boise Museum. We had to have the books reprinted. The books are available at the museum, City Hall, and I think the library has copies to sell.

Wide open spaces of the hills and the country are the most interesting features of the area. The road to the Owyhee Dam is very interesting, and Succor Creek is picturesque. Boise is too crowded.

One time, when we went up to Succor Creek it had rained and there were two car loads of us. One car load had to get out and push the other car out of the mud, and then we would have to go back and push the other one out of the mud. We were young then, we didn't mind.

8. *Do you have any specific memories of recollections about water use within the area (changes over time)? Please be specific.*

Methods of irrigation have changed. Deer Flat Reservoir has enabled many areas of land to have water for crops; Congress changed the name when my father-in-law died. It was changed from Deer Flat Reservoir to Lake Lowell. It was my father-in-law's [Lowell] dream to bring all of this area into irrigation, so we could have crops.

9. *Do you have any memories of fish populations within the local area?*

n/a

10. *Do you have any memories of wildlife populations within the local area? Do you see populations increasing or decreasing?*

The deer eat raspberries and apples, and they should be good meat because of their diet! They like apricots too, every morning you can see their fresh tracks around the trees.

11. *Could you please talk about any storm events or drought periods that stand out in your memory (please be as specific as possible about locations and dates)?*

No that is asking too much, I don't remember that I guess.

12. *Please describe what the Owyhee River looked like in the past as compared to today??*

When I got acquainted with the river, the dam was being built, and the river depends on the water. We used to have interesting trips because we were newly married when the dam was being built and some of our friends were involved with the engineering of the

dam. The tunnel engineer was a man named Charley Whipple, and he was a friend of ours. He was very much in love with a teacher up in Boise, so he would go up on the weekends to see this teacher. He would get back rather late so he always stopped by our house, and we would get up, there would be Charley. I don't know if it is of interest to you or not, but Owyhee was really a trial for Hoover Dam in that they piped refrigerant through the concrete to cool it off faster and it was so successful that the Hoover Dam used it. Otherwise it would take a long time to cool off.

*13. Do you have any memories related to the construction of the Owyhee Dam that you would be willing to share?*

Well I know when it was dedicated my father-in-law gave the dedication speech. That was July 17, 1932. He primarily was responsible to get the money to get the dam built. He went back to lobby congress for money to get the dam built and he made several trips to get that done. He was on the survey team to locate the dam in the first place. He was primarily responsible in getting Lake Lowell and Arrowrock built. At the time Arrowrock was the highest dam. He worked with the Bureau. It was the government who advanced the money to get this project started. We can thank the government for advancing money so that all of this could be opened, because without the Owyhee Dam think of this area. This area would be pretty slim pickings without water.

*14. What changes did you see in the area following the construction of the Owyhee Dam? Please describe.*

It has made more farms possible. More people moved in because water was available. If you stop and think, it is mind boggling. The people were able to come in and have farms and irrigate. It just goes on and on. Schools were built, churches came in, and just think of the progress that was made.

Making money never mattered to my father-in-law. He just wanted to raise his family. He was a man of dreams and vision. He was the one who said it was possible to take this sagebrush land and get water to it. He knew this would be good farm land if they could ever get water to it.

My father-in-law was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts. His parents died when he was four years old and an aunt raised him. They came west and he taught in Los Angeles. It was there he got interested in water. He designed water systems for local towns. He moved to Montana for a while and then moved to Caldwell. It was there he envisioned Deer Flat Reservoir to conserve water.

*15. Pasture / Range conditions changed?*

n/a

*16. When did certain weeds show up and where did you first see them?*

Puncture weed appeared in our area a few years ago.

*17. What are some of your biggest concerns for the future of our area?*

It is a concern to me that when people have a right to vote, they don't use it. Our whole system depends on people voting as intelligently as they possibly can. I don't care if it

is a school bond or legislation, if you have a chance to vote, do it, use it! Be intelligent about it. If you don't use that privilege, then you don't have any right to complain. I think it is our duty to be a good citizen, and it requires taking responsibility.

*18. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your life in this area?*

It is a good life. We have good people, excellent schools and churches.

**C. Mary Lee Turhune Chadwick, June 27, 2007**

*1. Please state your full name for the record:*

Mary Lee Turhune Chadwick

*2. Would you like to state your age?*

71

*3. Where do you live or where did you live in relation to the Lower Owyhee area?*

Well my grandparents and my parents (they helped my grandparents) they took it out of sagebrush - the farm out there (761 Enterprise Avenue, Nyssa Oregon). We moved up from California after the war [World War II]. My dad was a cat skinner. He worked on the San Francisco road project. After the war they decided to move up here. He worked in the shipyards during the war. After the war he was able to buy Cat equipment, and he decided to move up here. He has leveled a lot of this land around here, but we only lived out there for about two years (ranch). We moved into town, but my grandparents stayed and worked the ranch. They raised registered white face and hay. They passed away, and my father inherited the ranch. And then when my father passed away, it came to me. My daughter currently is living on the ranch. It has been in the family since 1939 or around that time.

*4. How long have you lived at your current location? OR How long have you lived in the area?*

1939 or around that time

*5. When did you or your family first come to the area? Please describe how you or your family came to live here*

1946 my father moved here, but my grandparents around 1939.

*6. Did you or your family homestead the property that you are living on?*

80 acres, yes it was taken out of sagebrush. My grandparents raised cattle and sold them throughout the USA. Hay was grown on the property to support our cattle. They also raised row crops.

*If not, do you know who did, or any interesting history about your place?*

They used to have ruts from the wagon trains, the wagon train path came through our place. Late 50s they had a reenactment of the wagon trail and they came down Enterprise Avenue. Came from back east and went through our place.

*Has the land always been used in the same manner that it is being used today?*

Daughter and family are living in the house, which we added on to. The farm ground is currently being rented to other farmers.

*Have any major improvements been made on the property? Please describe.*

My grandparents only had an outhouse when my father first moved here, and he built his parents a bathroom. Grandpa had a huge barn and the first house was only a one room attached to the barn. That is where they first lived until they had the other house built across the ditch. My dad built a shop to work on his Cat, and during the Korean War you couldn't buy parts for the Cat; you had to make them. He had to make his own parts. Then they added another house. They had grainery storages. Since we have had the place, we rebuilt the shop and storage for equipment. The house just about doubled. The first part of the house is original and we just added on to it. There used to be a cellar, but it has been torn down. They kept jars and fruit and what not down in there. The barn is totally down due to a microburst wind storm. Up until then it was standing. The shop fell down about a year ago, and we had to rebuild it.

*7. What do you see as some of the most interesting and valuable features of the local area?*

Well I graduated from high school here and both of my girls graduated, and we had a hospital here in Nyssa and both of my girls were born there. I guess it depends on your age, I like a small town but when you are younger it isn't always easy to find jobs here. It isn't a high priority with Oregon. Our whole school is on free lunch, we have qualified for the last two years or better. Large amounts of population that is below poverty level which is what qualifies us. It is tough for the ones coming on to try and find a job that can support a husband, wife, and kids. It is not easy.

We used to have a theater, three to four grocery stores, two to three service stations, clothing stores, and that is no longer here. We had a lot more here, we have lost a lot. I don't mind going downtown, I like a small town.

*8. Do you have any specific memories or recollections about water use within the area?*

The price keeps going up! I don't know about all of this ecology stuff they keep coming up with, the fish, the snail. Now that is important too, but the only thing that is keeping this area alive is the dam, the water, and the fact that people can irrigate their crops. Now some people can get their water from the river. That is what is keeping it going. You have to have water for the crops. Otherwise you don't have crops and you don't have people.

*9. Do you have any memories or recollections of fish populations within the local area?*

Crappies, trout, bass, I don't really fish. I have heard many complaints about there not being as many fish.

*10. Do you have any memories or recollections of wildlife populations within the local area?  
Do you see populations increasing or decreasing?*

You used to see lots of rattlesnakes at the farm. I remember in the 60s some friends of ours found a rattlesnake behind the house, on Thompson Avenue. That was the last

time I even heard about a snake. You would see them around the dam, I don't know if there are any now.

They didn't have so many deer. There are deer at the farm all the time. Young bucks still in velvet on the farm now. We have always had foxes, and the coyotes cross through our place. Wild rabbits! The deer seem to stay much longer, not like they used to.

Cougars in Boise, but we haven't seen them here.

*11. Could you please talk about any storm events or drought periods that stand out in your memory?*

We didn't actually farm ourselves. My grandparents might be able to tell you. We did have a micro burst that caused damaged. The water has been down pretty low in the past, but if we don't get a good winter it could be bad next year. Last year everything was very full, so we had carry-over from last year.

*12. Please describe what the Owyhee River looked like in the past as compared to today?*

I can remember it flooding at the Owyhee Corners, around the store. I can remember around that area people can have problems, but not at our farm. I can remember one time in school a canal broke and my dad took his Cat up there and there were other people with tractors trying to get it stopped. The river flooded in Vale one year. It can flood often around Adrian.

*13. Do you have any memories related to the construction of the Owyhee Dam that you would be willing to share?*

I wasn't here around the time of construction, but I remember ditch breaks that my dad worked on. Anyone who had equipment would help with the repairs.

*14. What changes did you see in the area following the construction of the Owyhee Dam?*

The dam has brought a lot of growth to the area. Added a lot of farm ground to our area due to the fact that ground can now be irrigated.

*15. Pasture/Range Conditions?*

Grandpa's cattle were primarily in feedlots which is why we grew hay.

*16. When did certain weeds show up and where did you first see them?*

Goat heads! You can't get rid of them.

*17. What are some of your biggest concerns for the future of this area?*

The dam is a big one. Without the dam we would be lost. That dam is pretty. A dam right out of the rock. I can remember hearing a little about it. It would take quite a bit for that to break. I don't think anything is impossible, I never say never. That water is basically, this is classified as desert, and without the dam probably 90% of your farmers would be gone. If you don't live right on the river, you don't have water. You would have to have a lot of money to survive without the dam. You have a lot of family farms,

and then they rent, and you are trying to make a living on the land. I can remember my grandpa cutting the hay and bringing it in by horses. We have to have the dam!

*18. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your life in this area?*

Well, your life is where your home and family are and we live here and my parents have lived here. My kids graduated and went on to college and both of them wound up back here. My grandkids are here, high school and grade school. This is where my family is, and this is where my heart is.

We need something here to keep our kids here and provide an income. A lot of kids aren't wanting to farm, and it is expensive to start up. It is frustrating when you are younger and you want bigger things, and you want to be around bigger things. When you are older, it is fine not to be around all of these things. I hate to see big outfits coming in and buying up places here, when their interests aren't really here. I do like the smaller schools, and I love the small towns.

#### **D. Garrit Timmermann and Virginia Timmermann, July 18, 2007**

*1. Please state your full name for the record:*

Garrit Timmermann and Virginia Timmermann (Husband and Wife)

*2. Would you like to state your age?*

88 (Garrit)

*3. Where do you live or where did you live in relation to the Lower Owyhee area?*

(Garrit) Well I have been around here most of my life. I was born in Nyssa, Oregon, and we resided in Nyssa for several years until I was 10 years old, and then we moved to what they call the Big Bend country over here [south east of Adrian] . And, I don't know how many years I was over there, but anyhow in the mean time this project come under water and my dad bought this whole 60 here. That would be about, let's see, about 1935 and it was bought from the Holly Brothers, and these Holly Brothers were uncles to my wife Virginia. Oh no, dad bought 200 acres at the time. And, at that time you weren't allowed to have more than 160 acres, and my neighbor over here had 120 acres; so dad sold these 40 acres over to the neighbors.

*4. How long have you lived at your current location? OR How long have you lived in the area?*

*5. When did you or your family first come to the area? Please describe how you or your family came to live here?*

(Virginia) I grew up in the area, across the river in the Big Bend area. We met here in the area.

*6. Did you or family homestead the property that you are living on?*

(Virginia) No, sagebrush just like the hills over there, the whole place. No houses and no well.

*If not, do you know who did, or any interesting history about your place?*

(Garrit) I am not positive, but at one time this whole area belonged to a gentleman by the name of John Reese. But I wouldn't swear to that. That is what I have been told. I guess the Holly brothers bought it from him. I think the Holly Brothers bought for an investment. And another thing, this 40 right below here, it was partially cleared [of sagebrush], and the reason it was cleared was her uncles run a store and they had some people that had bills and the people came over and cleared some brush to pay off their store bills. The store was here in Adrian.

*Has the land always been used in the same manner that it is being used today?*

(Garrit) The first crops were my dad's. The first crop he had was wheat. And then he seeded down to clover. He grew a lot of clover seed. That is why they named it Clover Lane. Well, the first crop was in a 40 acre parcel and the rest was sagebrush, and then later the next 40 was put in. This started about a year after the second crop was raised, and then I was gone for about a year after that, so I don't know what [was planted] after that. I was gone for a period of years after that. The main reason I left was we had a dairy and I hated milking cows. 16- 20 cows milked by hand. My dad and my brothers. I went to go to school in Los Angeles and my brother stayed and worked. I went not quite for two years. I went to work for a mining company out of Needles [CA]. And then I went back to the service station I was working at in Beverly Hills. I worked there off and on while I was going to school. And then I was offered a job in Boise for the Sawtooth Company. I came here and went to school and worked there for two years. And then the War deal came along. The first part of the war was you served a year and then you were out, and the company I was working with, they wanted me to serve a year and come back. And the other thing, the company I worked for, the service manager knew a fellow that worked at Salt Lake Harbor, and he was sort of a manager, and he was a captain in the National Guard and he was looking for mechanics for the artillery unit. They needed some mechanics so this service manager introduced me. So I volunteered for the Guard. Plus, I knew what I was going to be doing, and then December came along and that was the end of that, there was five years. I didn't come back to this place. I took a job in Caldwell managing an implement shop, and my brother was helping my dad. And then my brother and his wife decided they wanted to move to town. And then I talked to dad, and he wanted to know if I wanted to run it (the farm). I hadn't thought about it really. So I thought about it, and then I decided that I would start farming. We had been married six months before we came here, and we have been here ever since.

*Have any major improvements been made on the property? Please describe.*

The first building that was built was a storage shed and my folks stayed in that for awhile. I don't know when they built the house, I think they built the house while I was gone; I think they built the house in 1940. The first thing dad did was drill a well. He had horses and had to have water, and then he built the house later. They built the basement first and then built on to the house.

7. *What do you see as some of the most interesting and valuable features of the local area?*

The people! I like the people around here. That is the main thing, and we have a good source of water. The dam was in before dad built the ground. Oh, the canal wasn't built yet. While dad was working on the fields down below, the drag line came along and built the canal while he was working getting the ground ready. It seemed like they got the water as soon as dad was ready. I can't remember dad waiting for water at all.

8. *Do you have any specific memories or recollections about water use within the area?*

Years ago, before we had any structured irrigation or what not, we wouldn't run short of water, but you had to make sure you were on the ball because we were getting cut down to 5/8. And if you weren't up at that time you would be behind, I never really have had any trouble getting rolling. We didn't really have short years; we just couldn't get any water down here. The canal wouldn't hold anymore.

9. *Do you have any memories or recollections of fish populations within the local area?*

Virginia remembers sturgeon in the Snake River. People by the name of Charles Purdy lived up the river from the bridge about a mile and a half, and he would catch sturgeon once in awhile. Oh yes, I have some pictures. They must have been 6-8 feet long. There is a picture of an old ice wagon, the head of the fish is at one end of the wagon, and the tail is dragging the ground at the other end. I recall in the pictures they pulled them out of the water with horses. Well it would have to be in late 20s or 30s when they were catching them.

Virginia's father had an ice house, it was just a shack thing but it had a double wall and sawdust in between the walls. When the river was frozen they would cut huge chunks of ice and store it in the sawdust. And, it would last all summer. We had an ice box in those days, and I can still see my father. He had these tongs, and he would lift a hunk of ice, and he would pick them up. We had an ice box with an insulated top and it would stay cool. The river would freeze along the banks, and that is where they cut the ice. They had an ice saw.

10. *Do you have any memories or recollections of wildlife populations within the local area? Do you see populations increasing or decreasing?*

Well, at that time there were no deer, quite a few coyotes, pheasants, not as many ducks, and I don't remember any geese. Some boys used to go goose hunting in high school. Well I don't know where they went to hunt, but sometimes in the fields or along the river.

11. *Could you please talk about any storm events or drought periods that stand out in your memory?*

Well I can't remember any really drought periods. We have always had quite a bit of water, but we have had some storms that were pretty bad. In fact we had one storm come through here that it rained so hard that Virginia said our pasture looked like the ocean. And the one too down below here there is a canal and road, and at the time there was so much water there that the canal and the road was all flooded.



*12. Please describe what the Owyhee River looked like in the past as compared to today?*

In the past it didn't have the growth, it used to be wide open now there is growth everywhere. Willow and cottonwoods historically on the bank, now we have the Russian olive. Whoever brought the Russian olive in ought to be shot. I didn't know what a Russian olive was until I run a lot of ground, years ago, and there was a place up there 80 acres and I had to make a new ditch along my fence and there were some Russian olive trees there and they have thorns, and I had a flat tire from those thorns. You get pricked by one, and it burns and hurts.

*13. Do you have any memories related to the construction of the Owyhee Dam that you would be willing to share?*

There was nothing here but sagebrush and sand. Another thing when we first started here, this road, Mendiola Road, was nothing but a dust hole. And then later they hauled some rock on it, and the first year before they improved it we blew all the tires out and broke truck springs. After we got the road fixed we didn't have that anymore. Of course the tires got a lot better too. It was awfully dusty. And another thing, when this ground was just being put in you would have awful dust storms. The whirl winds come out of the northwest towards the southeast and you would see these dust storms come across the country. They sometimes were as wide as this house. You would see them all the time in the summer. I think these winds are just as big, but not as much to pick up.

*14. What changes did you see in the area following the construction of the Owyhee Dam?*

*15. Pasture/Range Conditions?*

We used to keep around 12-15 acres of pasture. There isn't any pasture around here anymore. The neighbors used to all have a little pasture around for horses or cattle, some had sheep, but now there isn't any around. You can't make pasture pay anymore unless you have marginal ground.

*16. When did certain weeds show up and where did you first see them?*

The puncture weed or goat weed, we didn't used to have it. I think the railroad brought it in. It was first seen on the railroad. We didn't have any on this place until I started renting ground. We brought it in and it is still here.

*17. What are some of your biggest concerns for the future of this area?*

Too many people! I am really afraid of that.

*18. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your life in this area?*

My brother hauled all the red rock on that wall in. They hauled it in with a truck, and there was a spot on the canal a little ways this side of Tunnel Canyon that had a whole lot in there. Most of it is hauled off now. At that time it was practically loose, it was all by hand. That lawn down there, first they put that wall in there. And, years ago when they dug beets by hand, there was a lot of dirt on those beets. The dirt dad hauled back he would dump it in the lower yard, and some on the other side of the barn is beet dirt. You would get a truck bed high. Years ago, around the time we started farming here, there was a man who had a thrashing machine and he thrashed grain and clover seed.

When he started thrashing clover seed he charged by the hour, but if you had a lot of clover seed he charged by the bushel. That made dad mad because he usually had a good crop. So, dad bought a thrashing machine and I run that for three years. But that machine we would start in July on clover seed and sometimes we wouldn't be done until the next spring. That thrashing machine is at the museum in Nyssa. I did a lot of custom work in this area and Big Bend area. We got into a stack of wheat and we thrashed and we couldn't knock it out of the head, I don't know what was wrong with it. We just couldn't do it so we had to pull out of the job. I don't know what it was; I never saw anything like it. I had a fellow by the name of Earl run it with me. I would run it until school started. I run it for three years. We have two wheel walking plows in the museum also. There was a picture of my Grandpa and Grandma in a buggy over there. They had a trotting horse, Stan.

When dad first started farming this ground he had what he called a Model L Case tractor and it was on steel wheels and lugs. It was a dirty job. And another thing, he had to level his fields and sometimes he would get stuck, and he would take a fence post and he had to lift himself out of the hole. He would do it by himself, but he never had a hard time finding help. Clyde Cartwright would work with dad in the summer for a couple of years and then he had a sheep man come in from Weiser, Harry Sullen, he would feed sheep all winter.

**E. Clarice Notheis Poor, June 28, 2007**

1. *Please state your full name for the record:*

Clarice Notheis Poor

2. *Would you like to state your age?*

88

3. *Where do you live or where did you live in relation to the Lower Owyhee area?*

My folks homestead 1177 Klamath Ave, Nyssa, Oregon. My dad put down the well in 1936, the family moved in February 1937. We were victims of the South Dakota dust bowl. A lot of people of this area are refugees of the dust bowl of the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado.

4. *How long have you lived at your current location? OR How long have you lived in the area?*

We bought this in 1960 (1128 Klamath Ave, Nyssa, Oregon).

5. *When did you or your family first come to the area? Please describe how you or your family came to live here?*

1937, we were victims of the dust bowl. My dad was awarded the WWI Veterans Homestead Right (for the Owyhee District) and so we homesteaded the 80 acres.

6. *Did you or family homestead the property that you are living on?*

(See previous answers)

*If not, do you know who did, or any interesting history about your place?*

Well my dad cleared the sagebrush by hand. I can remember he found a lot of cactus and scorpions, and the sagebrush was as tall as he (6'0" x 6"-8" in diameter); good fertile ground that it was growing in. They used the sagebrush to fuel their house and cook stoves.

*Has the land always been used in the same manner that it is being used today?*

The land has always been used for farming, might have been used for cattle before the sagebrush was cleared. The first crop planted on the ground was 10 acres of alfalfa hay.

*Have any major improvements been made on the property? Please describe.*

It was bare ground, so whatever improvements were made had to be made by hand. We had to put down the well; the first wells were so deep. The water was very alkali and it had a lot of iron. The water was good to drink but it was horrible for laundry. It made your clothes rusty colored. Then we had to put in our irrigation ditches, which were just dirt ditches. We had to make someplace to live and someplace to keep cattle. My dad made a frame of poles and wire and then the next year he blew straw against the wire and that was our first barn. Everyone was so strapped for money you had to make do with what you had. We used that for our straw barn for our horses, and then he built a shed for the cows. After the war there were no building supplies. My dad built what he thought was going to be a brooder house for our chickens, and that was what we wound up living in "temporarily". And due to the war we couldn't get building materials and we lived there for 10 years. After the war we all built our houses. It was quite a challenge to live with pioneer conditions - no electricity, no roads - but, there were bulldozed roads, no refrigeration.

Irrigating was really a problem because this soil didn't have any humus in it. When worked, it was just like flour. It was filthy. It was really a problem. They would dig a ditch and then they would make corrugates off the little feed ditches. It was a challenge because the dirt would wash so badly. My dad took 2-inch slats and cut them into foot long sections, take four slats together and make a box; he put them off the feed ditch so the water would run into the corrugate to keep the corrugate from washing away. It was a challenge to irrigate that early torn up soil.

*7. What do you see as some of the most interesting and valuable features of the local area?*

My dad thought we lived in the land of milk and honey because after living in South Dakota where you had to depend on natural rains for your moisture, now he could go out and turn the water on to water his crops when he needed it. The land is fertile and we have a good market area. We have good buildings and for some reason or another we don't seem to have the severe storms come through here. I love the buttes, and I love the area. We just like the wide open spaces. It is a nice place to live.

*8. Do you have any specific memories or recollections about water use within the area?*

As time went on people did more leveling so that their land would irrigate better, and the ditches that we put in originally began to sod in so they didn't wash out. And then after

WWII, the era of the cement ditches came in. That was an improvement. And now, of course, the move is to sprinklers because the land doesn't wash as much. This is a nice improvement. So as time moves on, things keep improving.

When we first came it was just a bulldozed road. It was like taking life in your own hands because you would go along and then "poof", you would drop into a pothole. The dust was horrible. You would have to stop and brush the dust off.

The early dust storms were horrible. I can remember in our shack, it was wall boarded, the dust would come in and Mom would have to scoop the dust off the tables and chairs.

The farmers gathered together and tried to get the town of Nyssa to put together a road district and a road improvement program. The city of Nyssa didn't want to get involved in that so the farmers put a road district together and that was the beginning of our road improvements. And, it has been a good investment. In the early days we used our own equipment and our own time to work on the roads. The next big boom was electricity. Once enough people got moved in, Idaho Power put a line in. Most of us just had one little light hanging down from the ceiling. But, we also had an outlet so we could have refrigerators. Plus we had power for washing machines and that was a godsend. Before refrigerators, people had lots of methods of keeping your food cold. We had a waste ditch that came down close to our shack so we dug a little dam and put in a box and covered it over; the water running around food cooled it. It took a lot of ingenuity to pioneer.

*9. Do you have any memories or recollections of fish populations within the local area?*

I remember after the reservoir filled and we had been there for awhile, it started to produce fish. You had some beautiful crappies, nice big crappies because there was plenty of food. Other than that, we didn't have time to fish.

*10. Do you have any memories or recollections of wildlife populations within the local area?  
Do you see populations increasing or decreasing?*

I was thinking about that. In the 40s we just loved our little bobwhite birds. They would come up sit on a fence around the barnyard and just sing. My dad would whistle out replies for them. But we have lost our bobwhites completely. We lost our meadow larks; we used to have a lot of meadow larks. I haven't seen one for years. I don't know what happened. When our equipment wasn't as high tech as it is now, we had lot of waste in the fields like shelled corn and grains. We would have mallard ducks come in droves. Nice mallards, that would feed on the grains, and we don't have them either; not like we used to.

The cacti are gone off the fields, and the scorpions are gone, and we don't have many snakes. You will find snakes up in the dry areas. After the rocks were turned away and the water was put on the land, the rattlesnakes didn't come down anymore.

*11. Could you please talk about any storm events or drought periods that stand out in your memory?*

Not especially except we have had some winters when we haven't had adequate snow fall in the watershed to fill the reservoir, and we have had to learn how to be conservative in irrigating. The farmers were limited in how much water they could have and learned how to conserve water. We have always sneaked through each time.

I don't think the summers are as hot as they used to be. July and August used to be hot, hot, and hot.

*12. Please describe what the Owyhee River looked like in the past as compared to today?*

See I can't help you on that because the dam was in when we came and the water was being controlled so the flow of the river is the same. There used to be a lot of willows along the river bank.

Later on the Russian olive trees moved in, along the river banks.

*13. Do you have any memories related to the construction of the Owyhee Dam that you would be willing to share?*

The dam was already built when we moved in, so I don't think I can help you much there.

*14. What changes did you see in the area following the construction of the Owyhee Dam?*

See previous answer.

*15. Pasture/Range Conditions?*

As soon as we could we planted pasture because we had dairy cows. There are not many pastures anymore. In the pioneer days there were three little farms on that mile just east of Norwood Drive and there were four on this side. There were a lot of smaller farms. People were living off of 40 acres, and most of them had cows and pigs and chickens and that kind of thing. So then there would be pastures but as time went on people stopped having dairy cattle. My dad was a dairyman so we planted pastures for our Holstein cows, but as time went on everything went into row crops, like hay and better paying crops.

Now people put small pieces or odd pieces of ground into pasture and put a horse or calves on the pasture. The fields that used to be hard to irrigate people would put them into pastures.

*16. When did certain weeds show up and where did you first see them?*

There seems to be no end to the kind of weeds that are coming into the valley all the time. The first weeds we really battled were alkali weeds, and now that the land is under irrigation and moisture we have sort of lost the alkali weeds and now we have a variety.

*17. What are some of your biggest concerns for the future of this area?*

The maintenance of our watershed and adequate moisture to fill our reservoir is our biggest concern because without our reservoir getting adequate runoff to fill the reservoir, this valley would go back to desert. It would be a shame. Because there is no other source of water, some farmers (when it looked like we were going to be without water for our crops) put down wells, but everyone can't put wells because that would drain the aquifer. And then there wouldn't be enough water for home use. So wells aren't the answer. My biggest concern is that we have adequate snowfall to fill our reservoir.

*18. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your life in this area?*

It has been a good life. I love this valley. It is just a nice valley. We are blessed to have it, and I am glad to have been a part of the pioneer stage. To see the valley develop, and develop into a productive community has been a beautiful experience.

*Other Information Provided by Clarice Poor*

Another affect of the Owyhee Dam on the community is in the demography of the area. Having irrigation encouraging the growing of row crops such as potatoes, onions, and sugar beets, these row crops needed hand labor and hence the migrant influx. Many of the early migrant families stayed, and now we have the third generation of Hispanic people as part of our community. When I started teaching in Nyssa in 1946 I had one Hispanic (a native Hispanic Nyssa family) now our Nyssa School is 60-70% Hispanic.

**F. Donna Bell Cleaver, June 28, 2007**

*1. Please state your full name for the record:*

Donna Bell Cleaver

*2. Would you like to state your age?*

79

*3. Where do you live or where did you live in relation to the Lower Owyhee area?*

Well I have lived right in this area since I was nine. I moved in the house on the corner when I was nine. We farmed in Nebraska before we came out here, the folks did. The dust bowl is what brought us out here.

*4. How long have you lived at your current location? OR How long have you lived in the area?*

60 years

*5. When did you or your family first come to the area? Please describe how you or your family came to live here?*

January 1937, we starved out back there. We had dust storm after dust storm in Nebraska.

6. *Did you or family homestead the property that you are living on?*

Yes, we homesteaded the property. It was in sagebrush, 200 and some acres.

*If not, do you know who did, or any interesting history about your place?*

Me and my brother thought we were planting a crop, and we wound up planting weeds. My father threatened us up to the time he died, we had planted sour dock. We planted just a little square that went to seed and then it traveled down the ditch bank. We thought we were planting Indian tobacco. We were just kids.

*Has the land always been used in the same manner that it is being used today?*

It has always been used as farm ground. My dad had livestock and we had pasture. We milked over 40 head of milk cows, plus we had beef cattle. We milked by hand for a long time. We finally built a barn with a milker.

*Have any major improvements been made on the property? Please describe.*

My folks built a basement and we lived in it for the first two to three years. Dad put a lot of buildings up there. We built the house on the place we live; we started it in '59.

7. *What do you see as some of the most interesting and valuable features of the local area?*

If we didn't have water we would be out of luck. We have a place on the Owyhee River, small acreage, it is pasture. It needs a fence; the BLM tore out the fence last year.

8. *Do you have any specific memories or recollections about water use within the area?*

I can still see the water when we first started it, after we took it out of sagebrush. My dad hadn't irrigated from where we come from, and the ditch rider said, "I am going to leave the weir to where you can turn it down". Dad said, "I will be able to take care of it," well it just flood out there and you could just see the dust come up in front of it, and it just went everywhere. The dirt was just powder. Well it took a while, but it still was flour. The kids just plowed this field, and they said it was just flour again, but not like it was then. Well they ended up taking lath like they used to lath the house with, and they would nail them together to where there was a place through the ditch where the water could go.

9. *Do you have any memories or recollections of fish populations within the local area?*

We did fish. My husband and I fish. Since they but the browns in we don't have the population we did have. Dolly Vardens [bull trout] were, now the only thing you can do is fish and throw them back in again. They have gotten rid of the Dolly Vardens, the browns have. I haven't fished in the last year. My husband died last year and I haven't fished since then, but the kids do. I have a whole passel of them.

*Do you have any memories or recollections of wildlife populations within the local area?  
Do you see populations increasing or decreasing?*

There are actually more deer in this area now than when we came here. Actually as far as animals, when we first come it was lizards and snakes and jack rabbits. As far as deer, we didn't have it, and you see a lot of deer in this area right at the moment. I

never object to the wildlife since my bunch likes to hunt, and I don't let anyone hunt our place.

*10. Could you please talk about any storm events or drought periods that stand out in your memory?*

We have had drought, we have had short water years. In the 50s there was a couple of short years and then in the 90s there were years when we didn't get anything past three acre-foot. The springs are never the same in Malheur County.

*11. Please describe what the Owyhee River looked like in the past as compared to today?*

I never saw the river when it wasn't dammed. The dam was there before I got here. Well like the one lady in Ontario said, "I don't want it to flood," and I said, "I hope it does". And she say's, "Why?" I said, "If it floods the dam will fill. You people down below in the lower ditches don't care if you run us out of water in the dam." I remember one fall we were short of water and we didn't get to water, and the people in the lower ditches got to water and water. The next spring they were bitching because their ground was too wet and they couldn't get on it, and my brother said, "Good, you did everything you could do to drain us."

I'll be real honest with you; there are more trees on the river now than there was when I came here. It would flood every year and wash the trees out. There wasn't any trees on the river when I came here. It would wash it out every spring. None of the trees were there; it was just a flat piece of ground.

*12. Do you have any memories related to the construction of the Owyhee Dam that you would be willing to share?*

I can remember President Roosevelt came out to visit the dam. That was the only time I ever seen a President. He toured through the school and then he went on up to the dam, because it was one of the first big one they had constructed here in the United States.

*13. What changes did you see in the area following the construction of the Owyhee Dam?*

*14. Pasture/Range Conditions?*

We have to irrigate it. Oh, we have always been the same. It all depends on the year. I have cows on pasture, and I have cows out in the hills. I have cattle on the Cow Hollow place, next to Adrian, and next to Snively's. Right now they are in Adrian, and the 15th of July we have to move them to the west side. I think we have good grass this year, but there have been some short years, especially when it burnt off, caught it on fire.

*15. When did certain weeds show up and where did you first see them?*

The Scotch thistle, it was started by the highway department. They planted along the edge of the highway between here and Vale. The first time I seen it, I was going to Vale, and if I would have gotten my pocket knife out and cut that patch down, which was just a small batch of it, we'd be ahead. They were planting grass along the side of the road and it was in the seed.



We have weeds; I can name all kinds of them. A lot of them came in on sheep, not necessarily the herds you have now. My father-in-law would bring in herds of sheep from Burns and Bend, and he lambled here. We have weeds on this place that nobody else probably has because they came in on the sheep. He was taking care of his surplus grasses and his beet tops and that stuff with those lambs. Well he would bring two to three bands of them down.

*16. What are some of your biggest concerns for the future of this area?*

Well, where we are going. I think they are going to restrict us to where you can't even run water off of the place that you got. I don't know how we are going to do it. I don't think it can be done. I think you have to have drain ditches or some way. We all use the water and the fact that if you irrigate, you are going to have to have some way to get rid of excess water.

*17. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your life in this area?*

Well, it is a big family. My husband's family was a big family. It has been a good place to raise my children, especially boys, which are basically what I had, was boys. I had six boys and one girl. They all are local; all my children are within the Nyssa and Adrian area. They all have occupations that rotate around farming.

#### **G. Kenneth Dwight Price, July 30, 2007**

*1. Please state your full name for the record:*

Kenneth Dwight Price

*2. Would you like to state your age?*

77

*3. Where do you live or where did you live in relation to the Lower Owyhee area?*

I lived in Sunset Valley area, my dad moved there and farmed there. I don't remember what year it was right now but it was in the early part of, because I remember some of the sagebrush that was out there.

*4. How long have you lived at your current location? OR How long have you lived in the area?*

I lived there up until I got married and I was married in 1950. I started school there at the Owyhee school, in between first and second grade, and at that time there were three rooms, three different class rooms. There were about two or three, four, and three classes, and each teacher had that many.

*Did you move from that area to your current area?*

No, we moved to what they called the Foster place but it was still green, not much there. My dad took part of the ground out there. I can't remember my age at that time.

5. *When did you or your family first come to the area? Please describe how you or your family came to live here?*

We were in drought in Nebraska; the drought pushed us out here. We came out here in '37, my sister and I and my dad and two other men came out in a Model A Ford and one little trailer on the back, that was all of our possessions. Dad had heard that this was a good country, my uncle had come earlier and then my mother and the rest of the girls came out on the train. It took a long time to get out here. We didn't stop too much, we didn't stay in a motel. I think we drove straight through. The road was narrow, I remember that. It was paved, it was a small highway. It was the old 30, Highway 30.

6. *Did you or family homestead the property that you are living on?*

They bought it from a fellow that hadn't gotten it in. They went ahead and worked it out, we worked out so anybody could make a few dollars, and we all pitched in, even the small kids. We took part out of sagebrush, part of it was started to be put in.

*If not, do you know who did, or any interesting history about your place?*

No, just that it was ground he had bought it for a 100 dollars a year or something like that, that was the payment on it and we kind of worked it out as a family working in the fields.

We are living on the Deer King place now, I moved here in 1950, I married Jean Deer King, we were high school sweethearts.

He started (Jean's dad) in '39, and it was what he came here to do was to raise alfalfa seed. We had some pretty short years and then we had some longer years. When I came in '50, there wasn't too much here. There was a basement house and a wooden garage. Then we built this house, we lived in the basement and then when we started having kids. He didn't want to listen to the kids, so we built this house where I live now, and we have added on since. James McGinnis built it in '52 or '53. James was a carpenter. His dad had been on the project and had worked on the project. He helped build this house. They were local from Adrian. He was good carpenter.

*Has the land always been used in the same manner that it is being used today?*

*Have any major improvements been made on the property? Please describe.*

It started with a little house on the home place, I think it was 16 X 24 and that's what our family lived in. Seven kids and we all lived in that little house, and he built that house by himself. The neighbors helped him. Built an old barn and milked cows.

7. *What do you see as some of the most interesting and valuable features of the local area?*

Well you know this is good country and we do have a good dam. We have a dam that will hold a three year supply of water when it is full. You don't get many dams that will do that, and you have the opportunity with the dam of getting water for two years even if you only get half as much as you should coming in, you just about figure you have a three year supply, what comes in besides what you use, and it is a good system. And we have not had many years that you couldn't make a crop. There isn't any years that we couldn't get a crop. Sometimes it was a little short. I can remember when I come

here when the Bureau was running the districts, and then the farmers took it over and they have made a nice project out of it.

*8. Do you have any specific memories or recollections about water use within the area?*

Lots of changes, first we started with dirt ditches and wooden checks. There wasn't any siphon tubes, you set it out by hand. With the others it would wash. You had to hold it, especially on sandy ground. People knew how to irrigate then. They had to irrigate and they didn't use the tubes. And then we went to the cement ditches. That was quite an improvement. You could use siphon tubes: you had control. We now are getting into the pipe and pressurized systems. All that deal is quite expensive to get it done that way, but it is a good system. I put in a lot of pipe on my own before, but now we have a new system here where we are. I had my system before. I had it, so that I could sprinkle using gravity. And this gravity is a good thing. It will always be there, once they irrigate a year or two to get all of the bugs out of it. They are getting to where they know how to get the bugs out and sometimes you have to do without water, but once they get it going they get it going good. They're putting in a line up here that goes about two miles or so, and it will all be under pressure. They have done away with the canal. It comes out of the big canal out of the South canal and it goes clear through where the underpass used to be. It is about two miles and they have one of the systems in; it is the first phase and it is looking very well. They have two more phases to go. They have one phase this coming winter and then the next winter they will do the other [next] phase. I have only one gate on this pipe. Next year it will go clear to all the people clear on. The next year they will put another phase in that will finish me up, and the neighbor there. You are always going to have problems. You aren't always going to get everything just right. This year we had one leak on it and one joint that slipped a little bit. It is working fine now.

*9. Do you have any memories or recollections of fish populations within the local area?*

The frog, the bull frogs. We used to have a lot of bull frogs on the Owyhee River over here but you don't hear them now. I think it's more or less control of floods that have pushed them out or something. I don't think it is insecticide because I remember when they used to be up by the dam, and there isn't any insecticide up by the dam. You don't hear the bull frogs. That is just one thing, but who knows.

But as far as the fish, I am not a fisherman.

*10. Do you have any memories or recollections of wildlife populations within the local area?  
Do you see populations increasing or decreasing?*

Very much, when I first came here where I am today, I never saw a deer. The first deer I saw we had a little orchard. Now we have a lot of deer, people say there aren't any deer but I see them every morning and every night. They live here. Of course right now we are dry out in the hills and they're coming in. But if we didn't have all of this green feed down here, then they aren't going to live up in the hills; they didn't before. I hear people say "oh we don't have the deer we used to". We do we have more deer. They are in the fields, quite a bit. They cause quite a bit of damage now. But the Fish and Game works with us if they get too bad. We aren't venison eaters; I used to enjoy the hunt but not anymore, you get older and you don't.

*11. Could you please talk about any storm events or drought periods that stand out in your memory?*

Yes, we had times when we didn't get as much water in the dam as other times and the dam was emptied a time or two. We emptied it to the point where you could go down and see in the tunnel. We always had enough to grow a crop; you might have to be a little more careful, a little more conservative. But there is never any waste water. If you call waste water, waste water, there is no waste water. If it is going on the field it is irrigating for crops. If it goes off then it is used again in the river. So there is no waste water. That is my opinion.

*12. Please describe what the Owyhee River looked like in the past as compared to today?*

When we first went up there, there were no trees on the Owyhee River. There were some willows and stuff like that but there were no trees. Those trees came after the dam, which they grew trees up at the park and stuff and I suppose that is where they got seeded down the river, but they weren't there before the dam. There might have been a few, but I think that is where they came from was out in that park the little seed droppings. There weren't any trees on the Snake River when I came here. They have dam control now, in the spring there didn't used to be control of the river. Our dams are real important for electricity, irrigation, and recreation. I think everyone has worked together on the recreation fishing. We have all worked together well, I think. Everyone thinks they should have more. The fishermen feel they should have more, so do [?], and the electricity and if we didn't have electricity we wouldn't have anything.

Mostly willows, but I don't remember the trees.

*13. Do you have any memories related to the construction of the Owyhee Dam that you would be willing to share?*

Just one thing that I do remember when I was younger, I was probably 20 or 21 years old. I was talking to Mike Zamore, and he was telling me that he was a powder monkey. He said he worked on the tunnel that goes through to the dam on the railroad. He said he worked there blasting. He said he worked above our place here on the tunnel up here. He was talking, and he said "you know we got back in there and we dynamited one time and the water just run, it just poured out of the hill". I said, "yeah Mike", and I agreed with him. But I always thought, "Mike you are telling me a story!" So I got some pictures from the Water Board and here this picture was and there he was, he was in there, in this tunnel up here and the water was just coming down out of it, just running off of the top, like a big rain. And the picture shows it there so he didn't tell me a line. That was the story. I never ever believed it until I saw the picture. I was up at the dam celebration and they had a video of it and I saw it again. He could tell some really good stories about the project.

That is why I say it is too bad we didn't do this [these interviews] 10-15 years ago. Those are the people who really knew the thing. That would still know, so when you called and talked to me or wanted to have this interview, I thought, "you know there are people older that put in the projects, old guys." And I got to thinking, and I couldn't think of any of the old guys. The only one I could think of was Jim Langley. He is about the only one I can place right now.

The people that did put in the projects, the people now that are living off of it, are living great from what those people had to live under.

You would put the little set ditch and then you would put the corrugates and then put the paper in there and that would keep it from washing out, they used catalog papers. Now we are going into sprinkler systems, and we are going out into circle and stuff.

We do have some wheel lines and we would like to put in some circles now with the new project and put in a couple circles. Most of our [irrigation] is siphon tubes and all gravity sprinklers that I put in 25 years ago. We would put in a little pipe and then a little more pipe. Pretty soon I had enough to plug into the line. It is well worth it.

*14. What changes did you see in the area following the construction of the Owyhee Dam?*

*15. Pasture/Range Conditions?*

We don't have any pasture or range ground. We have alfalfa seed and rotate with grain and then back to alfalfa seed. The length of the [alfalfa seed] crop depends on the variety. The variety has a lot to do with it, we have several varieties. We don't have any cattle.

*16. When did certain weeds show up and where did you first see them?*

The puncture weed, the first time I saw it was on the railroad. They brought in some rock gravel from somewhere else and put it on a fill on the railroad. That is the first puncture vine I saw, and now it is everywhere. We do have the bubbler, where it bubbles and screens a lot of weed seed out. We still get them.

*17. What are some of your biggest concerns for the future of this area?*

I just hope that we can keep the young farmers on the farm. It is getting to where it is harder to keep these young farmers on the land because there is too much out there that is so much easier and better than the farm. It costs so much to get started unless they have someone to help them get started. It is not that easy. They can go to school and get a better job and make more money than they can on the farm. Forty hours a week and farmers have work until his work is done.

Well there have been three generations been on here, two more coming up, four generations here right now, my grandkids, and great grandkids here on the farm. We had to specialize; we have a grain plant and alfalfa seed plant. We clean it [the seed] and it is all ready to go to be planted back. We do have some contracts but we have a lot of open that we sell to the grower. We ship our seed out to Montana, Nebraska, the Dakotas, and around Idaho. They get to know you and then you have a lot of return [buyers].

We built the plant in 1955, and the first seed went through the fall of '56. We have hired men that work here year around. One is going on his fifteenth year, and one for 16 years, one 13 years, and one 10 years. And they are all friends, they come and see us. We haven't had any troubles.

*18. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your life in this area?*

I have two sons and I have a good wife, and Jean and I also have a daughter. The two sons took over the farm 15 years ago, and I help them but I am not the boss. I don't make any decisions, but I am still in the seed plant. Our kids have been married 32 years and have been farming together ever since then. They farmed before but they were in school. They finished up college and came back to the farm. My daughter lives in McCall.

I have always been a farm boy, and I always will be. I didn't care about anything else.

I remember when the CC's were at Cow Hollow, and the next thing I know they were gone. They were young boys from the city and they would come out and poison mice in the brush. It was a federal program, like the job corp. I think it was a great thing. And then when the war started, all of those boys were at the age that they just picked them up and put them in the service. There was a little streak I remember going there when there wasn't anybody there, and then all of a sudden we had the Japanese there. I would ride my horse over there. The Japanese would work, and they were brought in from the coast and they were American citizens the same as we were. But, it was a bad thing that they did this. But you didn't know who was who, probably. They always worked. I remember they were working people and they were people that wanted to get ahead. They probably were when they came here.

The CC's had army barracks. They were long. There would be another one here and there with beds in them. They used it for the CC's and then when they left, it was ready for the Japanese. They just moved in. There weren't any fences or anything around the Japanese. I think they were probably on curfew. I don't know. The people weren't really nice to the Japanese people. It was a tough time. They were American citizens just like we were. After the war they worked for different people. Maybe three or four years they were there, then the camp just separated and they sold the building off. It was perfectly clean. They had sand and rock around there walkways. There was an entryway at the park. It is all gone. I was over there a couple of years ago, and there is one building up in the back, but I don't know what they used it for.

Another thing we see here, now we are going to build a new school in Adrian. They are starting that right now. There was no high school there when we first come here. What built this high school was the Owyhee Dam because people had to have a place for these kids to go to high school. I rode on the bus one year. They were going to Nyssa School, [so] I rode on the bus to go to home from Nyssa. I rode on what they called the cracker box too. It was a truck. It had a wooden box on the back, a piece of plow board with little square windows along the side, and there were benches clear around us and through the middle. That was the first bus. I went to Kingman Colony. When we first came here, we were living down in Kingman. Jean went to Napton Sidings. It took care of the families around here and on the flats. Then when you went up the hill that was Ridgeview. It was a very small school up to 8th grade and there was only one person in each grade.

The road here was all McLaughlin camp. When they built the tunnel, McLaughlin camp was right here where the barns are and clear across there. They lived up here by the

tunnel. There was a bunch of houses up there when they were going this way to the tunnel. McLaughlin was the one that was coming in through this way, and the old pumping, where they pumped the water from the Snake River to where the tunnel is right there by the barn. It is still there, the concrete is still there. That is where the pump was. They had a pipeline that is how they would get the water to use for the tunnel. The tunnel was on the other side and the camp was on the other side of the canal. The tunnel is 4.5 miles through and it was started at both ends and they came together. Her (Jean's) dad helped those railroad ties and rails all set right. Here the other side of Larry's house, her dad helped mold it out. (There was a train that ran up). That was still there when we came here.

The Deer King place had 70 original acres; he traded 30 acres off to have somebody put part of it in. Somebody put part of it in for 30 acres, Bob Davis. Bob and Helen Davis lived in the garage when they were first married. They had the little girls. He put in the ground and then grandpa bought this 30 back and Bob went down to Succor Creek.

There is a lot of history in this area. When Jean and I before we were married and I was going with her, this was a gravel road here. This was a state road so it was gravel. In Sunset Valley it was nothing but a dust bowl, when we got the gravel road that was really something.

I am glad I didn't have to put in the project. Of course I lived there. We were poor but we didn't realize that I was poor. Everybody helped each other out. When someone died we all went down and dug the grave at the Owyhee cemetery, all the neighbors would.

There was a period of time there, that places changed hands. Some of them [went] to Washington. Some of them went to Madras, to new projects. They were following the new projects. And, some families did stay in the area, just like us. We don't plan on moving. We have been here for 57 years. It is a good area. I feel this way about America. In America we can be wherever we want. It is up to you and it is not up to other people. I may want to go to California and they may want to come here. This is America and that is the nice thing about America.

You are looking at 125,000 [irrigated] acres. The towns of Nyssa or Ontario wouldn't be very big if it wasn't for the Owyhee Dam, or Vale, or any of them. Vale is a different project but still it all falls into everybody. That is our county seat; it does still take in Vale. If you don't have water on the ground you haven't gotten anything; it is just dry ground and it won't grow. You look out and see all the green grass, flowers growing; you just couldn't have it without the Owyhee Dam. And how they ever figured out how to get all of those ditches clear on through the whole project they didn't have the machinery and instruments that we have now. We have had a lot of breaks. In the early years we would be out of water because they didn't have the equipment to fix those breaks like we have today.

A lot of people think that is has always been like this, and it hasn't. It was quite a job for those old people. I just can't think of anyone that might be around that worked on the project. That generation is gone. They have shared, because look at what they have

done for the country. Of course the younger people, the ones that are here now, are building it up too. It is not just the older generation, but they have built it up too. But, now it is still hard work. But now a lot of it is stress. There is a lot of stress on people that farm. Farmers have a job just like ordinary job guy. He can lose what he has too; he can lose his job if he doesn't work right. There are times when we living out here and all the work are laying out there for God to help us. If he doesn't help us, and he wants to take it away from us he can take it away. God has a right to do what he wants to do, but he will provide another way. That's all I can think of.

#### **H. Richard D Davis, July 16, 2007**

*1. Please state your full name for the record:*

Richard D Davis

*2. Would you like to state your age?*

75

*3. Where do you live or where did you live in relation to the Lower Owyhee area?*

I lived in Ridgeview. I was raised there. My dad got a homestead there in 1937, and we moved there in 1939. Sagebrush and jack rabbits that was all that was there. We made a farm out of it, 120 acres. I remember there were a lot of ditch breaks in the early days (seven years old to 21 years of age).

*4. How long have you lived at your current location? OR How long have you lived in the area?*

We currently live in Adrian. Four or five years ago we moved in to help my mother-in-law.

*5. When did you or your family first come to the area? Please describe how you or your family came to live here?*

We moved from southern Oregon to Kuna in 1929, and then from Kuna to Ridgeview. Dad wanted a bigger farm and he got tired of the rain, lots of rain.

They farmed what they could in southern Oregon. He packed mail with a horse and pack for several years. He picked up people's cream cans and he would return them to the grocers and take the money. Then they had sheep. He and my grandfather both had sheep. They would cut down saplings and feed the sheep in the winter, and the sheep would survive on that during the winter. They didn't bring the sheep to this area.

They traded furniture when they moved here sight unseen. My mother was so disappointed. The house was full of bed bugs and they didn't know it. That was a common thing in those days. There were five boys and one girl.

*6. Did you or family homestead the property that you are living on?*

Yes, we homesteaded the place in Ridgeview. It used to be Route 1 when we lived there.



*If not, do you know who did, or any interesting history about your place?*

We farmed with horses. Dad planted clover seed, kept money a coming that way, and in 1939 we moved from Kuna to Ridgeview. The moving was done with horses and hay wagons. It would take one day to get here. Dad had a tent down by the barn and there was a little trickle of water. And he had an old five gallon kerosene can with the top cut out and kept his butter and meat in it, and that stream of water kept it cool. He had a big cook stove outside of the tent to cook in. It worked pretty well.

*Has the land always been used in the same manner that it is being used today?*

Pretty much, we used to raise beets and spuds. We always had a bunch of cows. When we moved down there, we all milked five cows apiece - no barn and by hand. We had a big separator bolted down to two ties buried in the ground and that was my job, crank the separator for the cream truck to come. Twice a day, morning and night milking.

*Have any major improvements been made on the property? Please describe.*

Two houses set there now, and granaries, and an old style milking barn where we used to milk about 35 cows after we got growed up there a little. Always had hogs and a few sheep. Dad had two neighbors from Kuna come down and help build the house, but he was pretty handy. We hauled red rock out of the Owyhee tunnel and that was laid around the house and it made it cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

*7. What do you see as some of the most interesting and valuable features of the local area?*

Interesting, well, the Owyhee Dam takes the cake. I think because it is just what made this country grow and made it what it is today.

*8. Do you have any specific memories or recollections about water use within the area?*

Oh yes, many changes. The soil was very light and would wash bad, and you didn't have anyway to control it. Except, sometimes we would use the catalog pages to make a corrugate stay the same corrugate so it wouldn't wash. And then we would make splines they called them, so they wouldn't wash - pieces of lath nailed together and then you built them in each corrugate, and then the lead ditch. And finally, after we got the land use to it, then we would use cow manure also; it would help. There was lots of work.

Oh gosh yeah, a couple of years it (soil) was so different. They have come a long way with gated pipe, what a difference. If we had that in them days, it would have been so wonderful.

*9. Do you have any memories or recollections of fish populations within the local area?*

There used to be a lot of smaller farms than today. Some people made a living on 40 acres. Now there is no way, so we have lost people. Takes fewer people to farm, shrunk our population.

*10. Do you have any memories or recollections of wildlife populations within the local area?  
Do you see populations increasing or decreasing?*

Early days there were very few deer around, and now they are quite common. Pheasants come in with the crops – brought about more hunting. Ducks, when my dad was still homesteading he still hadn't moved down, he drilled a well, and he built the first little building up and the ducks came in his hay field. It was late in the fall and it was just a terrible amount of them. The well driller was "baching" with him and asked if he could borrow dad's shotgun. He wanted to just get some of those ducks. So he went and he shot three times and he picked up 29 ducks. They were so thick and it was just black on the ground. You couldn't see anything!

*11. Could you please talk about any storm events or drought periods that stand out in your memory?*

I remember some bad thunderstorms that would come in occasionally with the hot weather. One caught my dad up at the weir on the canal one time, and it just drenched him. It was two to three inches deep on top of the ditch bank and it was falling so fast it couldn't even runoff.

*12. Please describe what the Owyhee River looked like in the past as compared to today?*

In those days there wasn't much there. There wasn't much trees because every spring they had a lot of runoff and washed everything clean. Then the dam came in and controlled the water, and now it is quite a mess. That is why we have such bad troubles when we do have a flood and have to turn water out.

*13. Do you have any memories related to the construction of the Owyhee Dam that you would be willing to share?*

I don't. It was done when we moved there. There was part of the pump house on my dad's old property, on the bottom of the place. It has 1937 on it so it was built the year he started what they called "proving" up on the homestead. You had to get so many acres in before you get to prove up. And, you had to live there, I am thinking a year and a half, 18 months. Then you were given what they called an early deed signed by the President of the United States. I still have that, President Roosevelt.

My wife (Joyce) and I have a lot of relatives that lived on ditches and rocks. Two of Joyce's people, they run three wire drive lines. One dug the south canal, and one dug the north end. They worked at nights, night shifts.

*14. What changes did you see in the area following the construction of the Owyhee Dam?*

There are lots of changes. Methods of farming have changed tremendously. See the big equipment farms, lots of land. Irrigated easy, so much leveler and nicer than it was in the earlier days.

*15. Pasture/Range Conditions?*

When we were first here, you could turn out cattle on the range. The Turner Grazing Right was in at the time and a young neighbor by the name of Johansson lived next to us. He always turned out a bunch of his young stuff, young cows/calves. After a few

years he got a second deed to graze cattle, a right for so many head. He turned out, but they didn't do so good. It was by the sheep camp today (Succor Creek Road).

At the early time it was wasn't as good, it is better now. The BLM controls the number you can turn out and they monitor it. You used to be able to run horses out there too, but the BLM came along and put cross fences in, then those days were over. That was in my teenage years. Us and the Shenk boys would go out there. Those days are over now!

*16. When did certain weeds show up and where did you first see them?*

You always had small patches of white top, and we always thought the sheep had carried it in because it used to be grazed off by the sheep. White top and Canadian thistle were major concerns.

*17. What are some of your biggest concerns for the future of this area?*

Biggest concern for me is to control our water and not let it be taken to California in the summer. It can happen because we are few in numbers. Yeah, by far that is the biggest concern. I think sometime we are going to see small turbines, and all of this will be piped. No more open canals. We will save more water, and the turbines will be placed wherever there is enough water to adequately provide the water it takes to turn them.

*18. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your life in this area?*

I happen to be chosen one time when the big turbine went in to the main tunnel of the dam to watch the people who where in the tunnel for two winters. That was a very interesting job, because of the possible changes in pressure in the tunnel itself with the turbine turning off and on. That is what made it possible to strengthen the walls. So I watched as they went through to drill holes to put the tubes in to pump the grout into those holes. Every 10 feet there were three holes. And then I watched them pull in the grout machine through the tunnel, and then they used a stone in there to foam in their grout. It made it more affordable because it took less grout, it was light. The only way to test it would be to take some in my hand and crunch it down so it would stay together. There was a stream of water running down the middle of it that was from when they shut the water off all of the time from the dam. If it flowed through that, then it was pretty close to the right texture. I was the eyes of the farmers! I was representing the local farmers. I drove up, depending on where they were at in the dam. Rather, I drove up to the dam and go down the drain or else I would go up through tunnel canyon and walk in. The tunnel is 3.54 miles long and it is 16 feet in diameter and big enough a Peterbilt truck could back in there and dump cement and then off load into the tank and that was on wheels. They would just pull that along. The first winter I had a heck of a time. They had a guy that wanted to cheat us really bad, and everyday I had to come home and write my diary of the day. The next year they got another boss and he was good to work with and things went well. That first winter was tough, somewhere around 1982, when that big turbine went in. It barely went through the tunnel it was so high. I took a lot of pictures when I wasn't busy. We built the gates that slide up and that controls the water because they had a flood gate on the end of the dam into the tunnels.

They rerouted those and rebuilt them. Very interesting job, I liked it. I love the country. That is about it.

### **I. Thoughts and Memories from Delma Tayer, Selah, Washington**

Some pictures in my mind are clear and accurate, some are vague and hazy. I will try to relate some images that remain, and you do what you want with them.

First, I very vaguely remember our first home near where you live (Klamath Avenue, Nyssa, Oregon). At that time we were still able to herd the sheep to grazing land in western Idaho and eastern Oregon. The sheep sheds were at our first home. When the sheep came in for lambing that is where they were housed. On the farm land we raised food for their winter stay over. It seems to me that we irrigated long before the dam was built. Where did we get the water? Wasn't the Owyhee River near the ranch? It seems to me there was either a big ditch or a river that turned from west to south at about where our house was. I remember walking along the ditch bank. Mother and I visited neighbors and it seems to me a pair of ladies she liked lived on the (river, ditch) before it turned south. I vaguely remember hearing or reading that the Ward Brothers were innovators in irrigation. (\* Note the forming of the Malheur County. The Ward brother came from Quebec. Mal-heur means "bad hour" in French. I have always wondered whether they had something to do with the name.)

I don't know how long we lived there before we moved in to Frank's house near the S-curve, two miles SW from Nyssa. I remember in the first grade the teacher used me as an example to a crying student for I had come miles and miles on the bus and was happy to be in school. I think we moved nearer to town at about that time. I think I remember getting on the bus at Frank's house about the time Conley started school. The incident I remember was some kid taking exception to Conley's "mouthing off" and I had to ward (pun?) him off with my lunch pail as I had probably been told to watch over him.

I know we had some fields around us in the Owyhee, but it seems that everything beyond us was sagebrush. It was probably most convenient to keep the sheep there but I believe soon after we moved, sheds were built in the field just east of the house and the sheep thereon were wintered there. I think we must have had irrigation there too as we raised mostly alfalfa and some grain. I remember the irrigation ditches running around the fields as we swam in them. There was also a large water ditch on the hillside just west of the ranch where the hired hands, Mother and Daddy, and us kids swam after a hot day of work. When was that ditch built? I think Mother divorced Daddy in about 1934-35 and we kids moved with her to Morrie's house in Nyssa by the railroad tracks. We had a large tent in her backyard where we slept. Mother went to work for a lawyer in Nyssa. I think she met Earl soon and he moved us to Parma while he drove to a construction job and came home weekends. That was about 1936-37,

I was with my dad during the eighth grade and what was memorable about that year was the number of students in the class who lived on the newly irrigated land in the Owyhee. We were amazed about the structures they lived in. Most built the basements for the homes they would have one day lived in them. Some lived in shacks put

together with discarded wood and tin. We all wore overalls as that was the costume of the day and all most could afford.

I lived with Mother in the Midwest during my freshman and sophomore years. I returned to live with Daddy and Laura in the house Bonnie lived in for my junior and senior years. It seemed to me that by then the immigrants were well settled in and were beginning to become prosperous. The sugar beet factory was in full swing by then and the affluent folk brought in from Utah to run it were living in the lovely houses built for them and the children had become a very important part of the community and school life.

I remember the dedication of the dam ceremony for some reason. I remember the platform and all of the dressed-up people. That is the day that Conley and I dug up dinosaur bones. Would I have been nine? It must have been before Mother left. While Mother and Daddy were busy with friends, Conley and I dug on a hillside. We dug up some bones that we were sure were dinosaurs. A week or so before we had dug a huge hole in the vacant lot next to my Grandmother Ward's house in downtown Nyssa. We were sure we had dug to China as we hit Chinamen's hats. They would be upside down of course since they were on the opposite side of the world. Isn't it funny what we remember?

I also remember the day President Roosevelt came through Nyssa on his way to see the dam. School was let out and we students lined the streets. I was very close to him and remember him well. He was East Coast glamorous, dressed in a suit, sitting in the back seat of an open convertible. He waved his cigarette in its long holder to the children and smiled and smiled as he relaxed in the back-seat.

After graduation, I worked for a year at the sugar factory, and lived with Morrie to earn money for school. I had a scholarship to Boise Junior College where I attended from 1943-44. When I ran out of money I went to live with Mother and Earl in Tucumcari, New Mexico where I became a dispatcher on the Southern Pacific Railroad. That is where I met Harold who was with his parents on leave while his destroyer that had been shot up was being repaired. The rest is history.