

LUCILLE HAGG

TAPE 1, Side 1

February 27, 1997

M.O'R.: This is Michael O'Rourke for the Washington County Historical Society beginning an interview with Lucille Hagg today on February 27, 1996, and the interview today is taking place in her home in Beaverton.

First of all, I wonder if you could tell me where you were born and what your parents did?

L.H.: Oh, I was born right here in Portland, or out in St. Johns. My father was a doctor, and my mother owned several little restaurants down the valley, down in Lane County, and she was always very active in many things, belonged to Eastern Star and Rebeccas, several things like that, and that's about my family. I have one brother, had one brother. He passed away several years ago, and Oscar and I were married in '64.

M.O'R.: Now, you told me that you traveled around here and there in the northwest. You worked for a while as a travel agent in Tacoma?

L.H.: Yes, I worked as a travel agent in Tacoma, and then I came down to Corvallis with a travel agency in Corvallis, and that's when I met Oscar.

M.O'R.: And can you tell me about how you met him?

L.H.: Well now, that's a long story. I was staying at the hotel because my apartment wasn't ready that I had rented, and Oscar was living at the hotel, and we just happened to meet one time, and I came in from my cousin's at Junction City. I came in and went in the dining room, and he was in there eating, and we got to talking, and that was just the way we got acquainted. We became very good friends, and we enjoyed lots of the things, the same

thing, and liked to do a lot of the same things. We had a lot of fun together.

M.O'R.: Why was Oscar in Corvallis?

L.H.: Oscar was dairy marketing specialist for the university at that time. He was with the extension in agriculture, and he had graduated from there, and when he had cancer, he couldn't go back to work on the dairy farm, so he sold out to his brother Henry, and he went into extension because he had graduated from there and they needed someone, so they put Oscar in as dairy marketing specialist.

M.O'R.: I see. So he and Henry worked the dairy farm together?

L.H.: Yes, after his father passed away, the three - well, first the three of them had the dairy, the father and Henry and Oscar, and then when Oscar got cancer and he was in the hospital for almost a year before he could get back to doing anything, and he sold out to Henry, the dairy to Henry, and then Henry run the dairy for several years.

M.O'R.: What kind of cancer did Oscar have?

L.H.: Colon, prostate.

M.O'R.: But he recovered from that?

L.H.: Oh, yes. And he traveled for the dairy industry. He was all over the state, and he went back east a couple times, and then he was with the FFA boys. He traveled with them and went back to two or three of the big meetings that the boys were always invited to, and so he was active in many things around the school and all.

M.O'R.: And then you both lived in the same hotel in Corvallis?

L.H.: Uh-huh, and that's how we got acquainted.

M.O'R.: What kinds of things did you talk about in those early days?

L.H.: Well, I was with the travel agency, so I was always talking travel, it seemed like. We'd go down to my cousin's in Junction City, and visit with them. Oscar was a person that really liked people, and he liked to be around people.

M.O'R.: Did you do much traveling yourself in your job?

L.H.: Well, with my job, I traveled. I traveled all of Oregon, Washington and northern California with the Fraytex Fashions.

Muggins, get down. Push her down. Muggins, get down.

And I was the manager for the state, and all I did was train and hire.

M.O'R.: The manager for what, now?

L.H.: Fraytex Home Fashions, and I really enjoyed the work because all I did was hire and train people and hold sales meetings.

M.O'R.: Now, this is before you worked in the travel industry?

L.H.: Oh yeah, it was before I was in the travel agency.

M.O'R.: When you started working in the travel agency, did you ever get to take any trips yourself?

L.H.: Well, no, I didn't take many because I had two daughters and I had to be responsible for them, and I couldn't be gone that long at the time, and I wasn't making enough to be able to do like they could nowadays, it seems like they make so much more than what we did then, and I couldn't afford it.

M.O'R.: So when you and Oscar got together, it was his second marriage, right?

L.H.: Yes.

M.O'R.: And it was also yours, then?

L.H.: Yes.

M.O'R.: What was your first husband's name?

L.H.: Ernest.

M.O'R.: And Oscar's first wife died; is that right?

L.H.: Yes, she passed away in 1963, I believe it was because we were married in '64, and I made him wait a year before we got married.

M.O'R.: And what became of Ernest?

L.H.: He passed away, too. He went back to California, and he got to drinking a lot and I divorced him, and well, he turned on the girls a little bit and I wouldn't stand for it, so I kicked him out and got a divorce and went my own way for several years.

M.O'R.: Until you met up with Oscar?

L.H.: Yeah, until I met up with Oscar. He was my downfall.

M.O'R.: Well, did the two of you stay on in Corvallis then?

L.H.: No, we had the branch up here. You see, Oscar, the last couple of years before he - about three years before he retired, he had started a tree farm up on Chehelem Mountain and he 126 acres up there and we had a house on it, so we moved there.

I came up there first before he retired, and I stayed because I got the job in Hillsboro with Hancock Travel Agency, and in fact I started them there because I had the experience and could get the license and all, and so I got them started.

And I came on up to the ranch about two or three months before Oscar did, and I stayed up here and went back and forth on weekends to Corvallis because we had an apartment down there, because my youngest daughter was going to school and she had to have a place to stay. So she and Oscar stayed in the apartment that we had, and so that gave her a place to stay and Oscar a place to stay, too.

M.O'R.: And so then you moved ...

L.H.: I moved up to the ranch.

M.O'R.: And that was because you were both planning to move there soon, anyway?

L.H.: Yeah, we were, and we moved there as soon as Oscar retired. We moved to the ranch, and we've been there ever since.

M.O'R.: Let's see, this was before the dedication of Hagg Lake, and you said that you attended that ceremony when it was dedicated.

L.H.: Yes.

M.O'R.: Before we talk about that, though, can you just tell me about what you know about the history of Henry and Oscar's lobbying to get the reservoir built up there? I guess it started back a long time ago.

L.H.: Oh yes, it did. Gee, I don't know the year it started. I think you'll find it in those clippings because it tells in one of my notes when Henry went back to Washington D.C., and I'm sure the year and everything's in there.

M.O'R.: Why do you think that Henry and Oscar decided - I mean, I guess it was Henry first and then Oscar helped him out?

L.H.: Well, it was both the boys because both Henry and Oscar were very conscientious of the things that needed to be done as far as farmers were concerned, and they knew they needed the water for the farmers - because there's something like, I wish I knew how many acres that covered, that they irrigated from that. It was way up in the thousands of acres that that dam or that lake irrigates in the summertime here. So it's been very useful for the valley. Plus there's water that it serves for Beaverton and Hillsboro.

M.O'R.: And I guess back in the old days, the river would get pretty low in the summertime?

L.H.: Oh, you could walk across it, just step right across it.

M.O'R.: Do you remember the river yourself from those days?

L.H.: No, I don't remember it at that because I wasn't out here at that time. But it was low in the summertime when I first

came out here, but it wasn't ever clear down like they talk about how it was, because Oscar has said many times how they'd be down the river and the boys would step across it. In fact, he's got one picture someplace, but I couldn't find it. Might be something in there about it, where they're straddling the river.

M.O'R.: Right, I've seen that picture, I think. Back in those days, too, was before they really tried to keep the river up.

L.H.: They just didn't think anything about irrigation and all like they do now. They weren't conscious of all of that.

M.O'R.: One thing I was going to ask you is why do you think it is that both Oscar and Henry had this vision of what farmers needed and why did they step out and try to do something about it? I mean, most people just don't do that, put themselves forward like that.

L.H.: Well, that was Oscar and Henry's makeup. They were always thinking about the other person and what they should have, and they used to always think about those things so much, and Oscar was very conscientious of it and Henry was, too, and Oscar, well, what do they call it for the Legislature? When you go down and ...

M.O'R.: Testify?

L.H.: Testify and all in the Legislature, and he did an awful lot of that. Henry didn't so much of that, but Henry stayed at home and worked on the farm and worked here for Washington County, and Oscar was the mixer, went around all the time.

M.O'R.: You said he liked to talk to people.

L.H.: Oh, he loved people. He was a people person.

M.O'R.: Was that one of the things that attracted you to him?

L.H.: Well, I suppose it was because I was always around a lot of people, and probably it was partially what attracted me to him. We talked right away. We seemed to find things to talk about all the time.

M.O'R.: Well, when you first moved up here in 1964, of course, Hagg Lake wasn't yet built, right?

L.H.: No, they were working on it. Let's see, when was it when they had the dedication? Wasn't it '69 or '70? It was right along in there someplace. It might say out there on the picture; I'm not sure.

M.O'R.: That's okay, we can get the date.

L.H.: Yeah, because it's in a lot of things around here.

M.O'R.: So you say that Oscar was sort of the more outgoing of the two of them?

L.H.: Yes, he really was, although Henry was very likeable and had lots of friends and everybody liked Henry. But Oscar was the one that was the go-getter and always doing things, and Henry didn't like - oh, like lodge work and the Grange and everything like that, Henry didn't like that. Oscar was master ...

Muggins, get down, come here, get over here.

M.O'R.: I had a cat that looks like Muggins here.

L.H.: Well, she thinks she's the kingpin around here. She and Oscar were very good pals. They were together all the time when he was home.

M.O'R.: So, Hagg Lake was named for ...

L.H.: Henry.

M.O'R.: Henry, and why do you think that he got his name on it?

L.H.: Well, because he made all the trips back to Washington and talked to President Roosevelt about getting - not Roosevelt, to get the appropriation for the building of the dam and all, and Henry was back and did all the lobbying for that in Washington D.C., and so that's why they named it Henry Hagg Lake.

M.O'R.: And what else can you say about Henry? You said he had lots of friends, too?

L.H.: Oh yes, both of the boys were very popular with people.

M.O'R.: And were they fairly close as brothers, too?

L.H.: Yes, they were very close, and Henry's wife was - and I don't know about she and Bernice, Oscar's first wife, how they were or anything because I didn't know her.

M.O'R.: But you did know the farm?

L.H.: Oh yeah, I was at the farm many times.

M.O'R.: And Henry was still operating it then?

L.H.: No, he had sold off all the cows and all by the time Oscar and I were married. Just the year before we were married, he sold them all off, and they were just living there on the farm, and they had a big farm sale when they got rid of all the cows and everything. I was there for that.

M.O'R.: Henry figured it just wasn't worth farming anymore at that point?

L.H.: Well, no, Henry was getting old and he wasn't too well, and I think he just felt that he had to give it up. So I think that was all. I think that was the reason they quit.

M.O'R.: Then after you moved up here with Oscar, since the dam wasn't still quite dedicated yet, was there still some work or organizing that Oscar did around the dam?

L.H.: Well, he was on the Board out there, and then Henry was the first president of the Board, and then Oscar was the next one, and then I don't remember, I think Delaine Fry was the next one, another dairy farmer that lived out in Washington County. So Oscar was on the Board for quite a number of years.

Palmer Torvin was the manager that they had that worked down there for many years on the dam. He's now got ...

M.O'R.: Alzheimer's?

L.H.: Alzheimer's, uh-huh.



M.O'R.: Yeah, I wanted to talk to him, but his wife told me he really wasn't wasn't capable of doing it anymore.

L.H.: No, he can't.

M.O'R.: In the end, was the final plan for the dam what Henry and Oscar had wanted? Were they satisfied with it?

L.H.: Well, as far as I know. I never heard either one of them say anything about they would have rather had it any other way than what it was. They seemed to be very pleased with the amount of irrigation and everything that they were getting.

M.O'R.: Now, you did a little bit of work helping out when you'd have meetings or get-togethers, right, for the organizations out here?

L.H.: Oh yes, we used to have. I organized their dairy wives out here and, because I was working at the Dairy Commission at that time, and I was the coordinator for the Dairy Princess program.

M.O'R.: Right; we just saw that photo a minute ago.

L.H.: And I organized dairy wives and, of course, we met in different homes, different dairy homes, and then, of course, I had them always at our place. Our house always seemed like a place that everybody came and everybody was always - there was picnics in the summertime because we had such a big yard and all, and we had lots of barbecues and all.

M.O'R.: And probably homemade ice cream, too, I suspect?

L.H.: Well, some, but not as much as we did steak fries and things like that, it seemed like. They were really always hungry for steak. We had a big grill we could put 100 steaks on at a time. We had 100 people up there a lot of times.

M.O'R.: And these would be mostly other farmers, dairy farmers?

L.H.: Uh-huh, dairy farmers and Eastern Star and the Masonic Orders. We always had a lot of them around because Oscar and I

were both worthy matron and worthy patron of two chapters here in Washington County, in Beaverton and Sherwood.

M.O'R.: Two chapters of ...

L.H.: Eastern Star.

M.O'R.: And what sort of organization was that out here then? What kinds of activities did they do?

L.H.: Well, the Eastern Star is the women's organization from the Masonic Order, and we always have a patron who is a brother for the women, and we have both a worthy matron and worthy patron, and we have a lot of activities. We do lots on philanthropic things, and we give to cancer research and all kinds of things like that, heart fund.

M.O'R.: Well, Oscar and Henry must have had to rub shoulders with a few politicians?

L.H.: Oh, yes.

M.O'R.: Were politicians were part of your picnics, too?

L.H.: Oh, yeah, they were there. In fact, every July, the last Saturday in July, there was about 125 men that - I haven't got the picture here now because it fell and broke the glass that was in it - that the men always had their steak fry, they called it, on the last Saturday in July of every year, and come hell or high water, they'd have it up at our place. Oscar started that over 45 years ago, this group. Governor Atiyeh was always there, and oh gee, I can't think of all of them that were there. And McCall was there.

M.O'R.: Probably your congressmen, too; Les AuCoin, maybe?

L.H.: Yeah, Les AuCoin was there, and what was the other one, Wendell Wyatt.

M.O'R.: Oh, Wendell Wyatt. Before AuCoin.

L.H.: And the one that got in trouble and just left - we just put somebody in ...

M.O'R.: You mean Packwood?

L.H.: Packwood, he was there. So all those fellows, there must have been about 60 out of that bunch that was all - and the sheriff and all those were there.

M.O'R.: Local folks as well. Now, we'll find out the date later, but can you tell me a little bit about the actual day of dedication of Hagg Lake?

L.H.: Well, they built up a scaffolding of seats, and there must have been 150, 200 people out there for the dedication, and there were many of them that talked. I was trying to think who one of the bigwigs was there. Who was it? Was it Wyatt? Because Wyatt was one of the instigators of naming it Henry Hagg Lake. I think he was the one that proposed it. But I can't remember. I haven't thought about these things for so long.

M.O'R.: Well, we're exercising your brain cells.

L.H.: Why, we sure are.

M.O'R.: I suppose there were a number of speeches.

L.H.: Oh yes, there were lots of speeches. Oscar was one of them, of course. In fact, he was the Emcee for the whole thing.

M.O'R.: Now, was Henry still living at this time?

L.H.: No, Henry passed away the summer before that. We were in Arizona when he passed away, and they called us and said that he was gone and we came right home, and it was the next summer when they dedicated the lake out there.

That has really been a wonderful thing for this area.

M.O'R.: Yeah, it seems to be everybody agrees on that. It's really helped a lot in terms of controlling the flooding on the Tualatin.

L.H.: Well, and the recreational area they provided for young people out there.

M.O'R.: Yes, that's right, too.

L.H.: That's the thing I think of.

M.O'R.: Now, the farm wasn't on the Tualatin, but ...

L.H.: Well, it's kind of close to it, though, because at Farmington, you know, it runs right down there almost by the farm.

M.O'R.: That's right. So the farm was on the south side of the TV Highway, then. That would make it pretty close to it.

L.H.: Yeah, it was very close. In fact, I think Oscar said that some of those fields down in there would be flooded if the river got up too high in the winter.

M.O'R.: Probably were flooded this winter, then.

L.H.: Oh yeah, they were. I have a friend that's down there that the river runs almost back of her house, and she had three feet of water in her basement.

M.O'R.: That wouldn't be much fun.

L.H.: No.

M.O'R.: Did you and Oscar ever go on the river or use the river at all for picnics ...?

L.H.: Well, Oscar didn't like water. He was afraid of it. You couldn't get him on the river. He didn't like fishing or anything like that. He didn't care for it. He said he didn't need any of that.

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

LUCILLE HAGG

TAPE 1, Side 2

February 27, 1997

M.O'R.: So Oscar was the master of ceremonies then at the dedication?

L.H.: Oh, yes. He was always being called on for a master of ceremonies for anything that was going on that was like someone's retiring or something that they needed an Emcee for, Oscar was always being asked to be, because he always had cute stories that he could tell.

M.O'R.: Good storyteller then?

L.H.: He was a good storyteller.

M.O'R.: And what are your own memories of the river itself? I guess back in those days in the '60s, it was still pretty polluted at certain times of the year, anyway.

L.H.: Yeah, it would just get green, there at Scholls, where we always crossed it to come into town, or coming down to Farmington or to Aloha where his daughter lived, we always crossed it, and it would be just green and almost smelly. It was terrible.

M.O'R.: Fortunately it's been cleaned up a bit since then.

L.H.: Oh yes, because they've cleaned it out. Now the debris goes down, like the trees that fall and everything, it seems to go down it now.

M.O'R.: Right, and also I think the Hagg Lake Reservoir helps out, too, because there's more water in the summertime.

L.H.: That's right, and they clean it out. They don't let it get stagnant like it did.

M.O'R.: Now, also, just a few years after you came up here there was at one point a building moratorium here in Washington

County. They wouldn't issue new building permits because of the quality. Do you remember that?

L.H.: Yeah, I remember that, and they asked everybody, if you're on wells, we had to be careful of the water we used and all.

M.O'R.: And that's what your situation was?

L.H.: Oh yeah, we were on a well. We had wonderful water. Oh, I get so thirsty for some of that water sometimes.

M.O'R.: I'll bet you do. The stuff we get out of our faucets now tastes like chlorine and other things.

L.H.: Well, that up there was just so perfect. It was just - it wasn't hard and it wasn't real soft. It was just wonderful water. It had a good flavor to it, too.

M.O'R.: Well, it's too bad you don't still have that water.

L.H.: I'd give anything to be living back up there, but I couldn't take care of the yard and everything there is to take care of.

M.O'R.: So it was a beautiful place, was it? It was up on Chehelem Mountain, you said; so you must have had a nice view from there?

L.H.: Oh yes, we looked all over the valley. At night we could see Beaverton and Hillsboro and - what's the other little town just past Hillsboro?

M.O'R.: Forest Grove?

L.H.: Well, we could see Forest Grove lights and the other little town there.

M.O'R.: Cornelius, probably.

L.H.: Yeah, Cornelius. We could see them all, and then the reflection of the lights from Portland, out of our living room window.

M.O'R.: Probably a good view of Mt. Hood, too.

L.H.: Well, Mt. Hood, the trees were kind of in the way for Mt. Hood because it was down a little lower. But we sat up where we could see everything.

M.O'R.: Now, when they did have that building moratorium and they asked you all to save water even if you were on the well, I guess, ultimately what happened there was that they forced all the small sewer companies out of business and made the one big one now, the USA. Was Oscar or Henry involved in any of that?

L.H.: I don't think so. I don't remember having heard them talking about that or saying anything about it.

M.O'R.: I assume that probably your place up on the mountain there was on a septic tank?

L.H.: Yeah, we were on a septic tank. We had a huge one out in the back. We had a 10-acre plot of land back of the house that we would put stock on it. We'd run a few head of cows on there for beef that we'd put out there on that, and then we plowed up part of it and put in trees. We had trees all over the place.

M.O'R.: One thing I forgot to ask you earlier, when you said you were born in Portland, what year was that?

L.H.: 1914.

M.O'R.: And do you have any memories of Portland back from those days?

L.H.: Oh yes, I can remembering going to town. We lived in St. Johns, and I was born in my grandparents' house there. And I can remember, I was about three years old, and my mother would take me town, and I remember - I don't suppose you know or even knew anything about when they had the big explosion, underground explosion in Portland when the gas blew up and the manholes flew, went up, and ...

M.O'R.: No, I don't know much about that. I've heard about it, of course.

L.H.: Well, that was about 1917 probably because I was just a little tot. But I remember it because mother and I were on the streetcar coming in from Portland, and we saw them bringing one of the men up who'd been burned badly, and the flesh was just hanging. I can still see that. Of course, I probably imagine it worse than it really was.

M.O'R.: Things like that can really stick with you.

L.H.: Oh, I can remember that, and mother was so shook up about it, and I was crying and just feeling terrible, and I'd just been down to J.K. Gill's and mother had bought me a big teddy bear, just almost bigger than I could carry, and we were on the streetcar with that teddy bear, and I was afraid somebody was going to take it from me because they were just so excited and so much going on around us, you know. But nowadays, if we'd been like that, they wouldn't have let a person with a child on the streetcar like they did then.

M.O'R.: And then did your parents move away from Portland. Is that what brought you away from Portland?

L.H.: Yes, my father opened an office in Coos Bay. Well, he was in school when we were living down here with his folks - not only Coos Bay, but we were living out in Cherry Grove, too, when he was in school.

M.O'R.: Do you know anything about Oscar's and Henry's parents? Were they dairy farmers, too, out here in the Valley?

L.H.: His father was a dairy farmer, and he came over in - I don't remember the year. It's in there, his death and all, the clipping of that, his birth and everything is in there, and it mentions something, I'm sure, about the farm and all. It was what the obituary was in the paper.

M.O'R.: Did you know Oscar's parents at?

L.H.: No, I never knew them at all. I knew his sister.



M.O'R.: Was that farm out there at 209th, was that the family farm then?

L.H.: Yes, they built that, his father.

M.O'R.: And you knew Oscar's sister, you said?

L.H.: Yes, his sister and brother. And he had another brother, but I didn't know him because he'd passed away before we were married.

M.O'R.: What was his sister's name?

L.H.: Edith.

M.O'R.: And what was she like?

L.H.: Oh, she was a darling person. She was a very small person like Oscar, and she was just vivacious and a lot of fun to be around. She was always happy.

M.O'R.: Did she live in the area, too?

L.H.: She lived in Portland out on Madison.

M.O'R.: What did she do?

L.H.: She was a housewife. Her husband was in - oh gosh, what was it Art was in? Some kind of lumber, something in lumber, I think.

M.O'R.: A housewife can be a full-time job.

L.H.: Yeah, that's right, and she had two or three sons, and she was busy all the time with them.

M.O'R.: And she's passed away now, too?

L.H.: Yes. In fact, the family's all gone now. Oscar has a daughter that lives out in Aloha that lives on - well, it was the first house that Oscar and Bernice built that's on the farm out there.

M.O'R.: And that's where she still lives?

L.H.: Mm-hmm, she lives in the house.

M.O'R.: Well, you know, I'm thinking that what I should do now is take this folder that you've given me and take a look at it,

and if I have any other questions, maybe I'll come back and talk to you some more.

L.H.: Okay, do that. Just take it and just go through it, and then when you finish, I'd like it back, though, because I think that there's probably things that his grandchildren would like that are in there, you know.

M.O'R.: I'll be very careful with it and make sure I don't lose anything, and I'll get it back to you in a couple of weeks.

L.H.: Yeah, that'll be great then. Well, there's no big hurry about it.

M.O'R.: Okay, well, good, it's been a pleasure meeting with you.

L.H.: It's been a pleasure visiting with you, too. I hope I could help you some.

M.O'R.: Well, you have already.

L.H.: I hope so.

M.O'R.: Thank you very much.

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]