

Washington County Museum
Oral History Interview with Janet and Ralph Holland
At the home of Janet and Ralph Holland
October 25, 2011

Informant: Janet and Ralph Holland
Interviewer: Beth Dehn
Transcriber: Lauren Scher

J= Janet
R= Ralph
B= Beth

B= Okay this is Beth Dehn with Janet and Ralph Holland in their home on October 25, 2011 and can you say your name please Janet.

J= My name is Janet, it was Jones, Holland, and I've been in this family for almost 55 years.

B= Great thank you.

R= My name is Ralph Holland.

B= Perfect. So can you tell us where you were born and your relationship with Washington County also?

J= Well I was born in Vancouver, Washington and grew up in north-east Portland. I met Ralph at Oregon State College at that time and we got married our senior year in 1956 and we've been together ever since.

B= Great. When did your family come to this area?

J= Ralph's family, do you want me to go ahead? (To Ralph) Ralph was born and raised in Beaverton. His mother was born on Shells, what's now Shell's Ferry and 125th in Beaverton and has lived here all her life. She was born to Ernest and Ida Height and the Height family was a large family. The majority of them lived in the Sherwood area and Ernest was over here in what's now Beaverton. At that time I think it was Tigard, or just part of Washington County and when Evelyn and her sister were Ernest decided he should have a school for them. So he built a little one room school house on his property for the neighborhood type kids, which everybody lived on farms. And they had their teacher and their teacher Miss Yoder lived in the Height home and actually on my mother in law's 80th birthday, Miss Yoder was there. She was almost 100. Evelyn went to the Height school and then she went to Girls Polytechnic in Portland. She walked or rode a horse to Progress and took the Oregon Electric Railway into Portland to go to high school.

B= And what year was this?

J= Well she was born in 1908, so she went...

R= This would have been in the 20's.

J= Early 20's? That she went into Portland and then she eventually came back and worked at Yaeger's Bakery, which is now Beaverton Bakery on Broadway. So she's been a part of the community for, she's been a part of the community for her whole life. I don't know what else I could say. That was her beginning. His dad, Robert Holland, was, his parentage is really not known. He was born in 1903 and in approximately 1910, I think, we're not sure of the dates, he was brought to the Beaverton area. No, to Portland.

R= To Portland.

J= With his father only, from Seaside. Robert spend many years, or lots of time, getting private detectives and trying to find his family, his original family, and was never able to do so. He was in North-East Portland. His father became a chef or a cook for a boarding house that was run by Anna Birthold. And Anna Birthold and her husband, Charlie, were immigrants from Germany. And in about 19--, I would guess about 1915/1917, they moved out here to the Beaverton area. Charlie started a...

R= Feed mill.

J= Feed mill in Beaverton, approximately on what would be Hall and Farmington Road in that area. Anna was the go-getter in the family. She started the Heidelberg restaurant and bought property, she bought quite a bit of property in Beaverton and she raised her foster child because when she had the boarding house, Robert's father was a drinker. And Anna had absolutely no...she didn't like drinkers. So she kind of fired him and so he asked her if she would keep the boy and he'd send her \$5.00 a month for his care. He sent \$5.00 once and that was the end of it. So she raised Robert and her own daughter. Charlie and Anna had a daughter and built a house on Ericson Street and she must have bought property there cause the street, just off of Ericson is called Birthold Street which was their last name.

(Janet discusses a picture of Charlie and Ann)

J= Anyway, she was a go-getter and Charlie ended up going broke during the depression and he died in 1939. They built the house on Ericson Street which is still there and then she had the Heidelberg restaurant and during the war she did really well. A lady, a Beaverton lady by the name of Emily was her cook and they made, I think what she was really known for was making five chicken legs out of one chicken (laughs). Anyways it was very popular, she had this nice restaurant with a player piano and there were a couple of cabins out back. And she also bought the property across

the street. And the Heidelberg was on, is on, where Black Bear is, on Canyon Road and, I'm trying to remember, Black Bear diner is there...

B= Yeah I've seen it.

J= Well it's a small road but it's on Canyon. And then she also bought, I'm not sure whether she built it, or whether she bought it. Beaver Court Apartments, which are caddy corner from the Beaverton High School Auditorium, on the west side of the high school, and she ran those apartments forever, until she died really. She had her New Year's Eve parties. She had her wonderful tenants and two of Beaverton High School's, who were his teachers, also, lived there. I think for a long, long time. Amarett Barnes and Bea Connoly were very popular teachers in Beaverton. So that was actually Robert's background. But he made things go for himself. He was very bright, very calm, a very unassuming man and just the sweetest thing in the world. I just adored him.

B= Now were they German? Is that why the Heidelberg...?

J= German. Yeah, they emigrated from Germany. Anna and her husband emigrated from Germany, as did my relatives, which is on my mother's side. So anyway then back to Robert, he didn't go past eighth grade but like I said he was very smart.

R= He went through eighth grade.

J= He went through the eighth grade?

R= Yeah, went through eighth grade and then he went to work for his step-father, or guardian, Charlie in the feed mill in downtown Beaverton and worked very much in the milling area, ground wheat and different things. And there was dust and contracted or whatever, emphysema, which coats the lungs and you can hardly breathe, which from a young man, I'd say probably in his thirties, he lived with until he died.

J= He got really bad in the 50's and then basically had to retire from the feed store but he met this young lady in Beaverton and he ran around with people like Guy Carr, and they were all young bucks in Beaverton and they kind of ran the town. And then he met Evelyn and they married in 1930. And I think she had a dowry of \$100.00 and so he started going into town and picking up feed from a mill and bringing it out and selling it to people and he just kept that up until they had enough money put aside and I don't know whether the building was there but he started a feed store in Beaverton and it sat on, it faced Broadway, and it sat kind of in front of where Infinity is.

R= Actually, yes. It was an old livery stable. That's what he started in.

J= And then in 1949, built the new store.

B= Now this is separate from the other family...

J= The feed mill. Well it's separate because he went out on his own. Charlie, by that time, Charlie got broke.

R= He lost the mill in '32 during the depression.

J= So he had to be on his own. Anyway then, Robert and Evelyn, bought a little house. Or did they build it? (To Ralph) On 6th street, right behind where Beaverton High School is. The house is still there and it's been kind of upgraded on the outside. Then in 1945, they bought kind of a farmhouse and almost five acres on Denny Road, where they lived their whole entire life. They never left there. They raised their three boys. They had the three boys. Robert was born in; Rob Jr. was born in 1931. Richard, who we called him Chuck, was born in 1933. And then Ralph was born in 1935. And they had fun on the farm and they learned to drive cars early. They rode bikes and they were just part of the Beaverton group.

B= Do you have stories of what that group was like at the time?

(Janet and Ralph burst out laughing. Janet goes on to discuss several class reunion photos)

J= Anyways, they drove cars, Ralph's favorite thing has always been cars. He's got several old cars. Fewer now than he used to have. But anyway, Ralph was president of his graduating class for one term.

(Janet pulls out several class photos and identifies students.)

J= Anyway, but Robert and Evelyn loved their whole lives. They had a group of friends in Beaverton, obviously, in their lifetime has changed dramatically. Even in his lifetime it's changed dramatically.

B= So what kind of things do you remember as a young person in Beaverton? Can you describe businesses or things that were downtown?

R= Well I think Old Beaverton, as I put it, was a complete little shopping center on Broadway where you'd have a Men's Shop for clothing, and also Walker's Department Store and Whitey's shoe store Mike Pianovi had his shoe repair shop on Broadway which is still there. Now it's Man X, across Thrifty market was across the street.

J= Thrifty Market was on the corner of Hall and Broadway.

R= There was just the Beaver Theater, the bakery, you just went into Beaver and you could get whatever you wanted right there in one little area.

J= And Beaverton Pharmacy was there on Broadway and....

R= West Street.

J= West Street. They were there forever until Lanfair took over and Smith Jewelers was there. Now it's Bevels, Smith and Bevel. So you had everything right there and then for awhile there was Miller's Grocery Store, on the corner of Farmington and Watson and you could charge there, which I did when we were young. And then there was Dean's Drugs next to that.

R= And then Dr. Mason's office....

J= There was Dr. Mason's office and Dr. Zartman's when we were there that we went to.

R= But I guess the biggest thing was Beaverton was just very close knit. Everybody knew everybody and you shopped right in a small area.

J= There was the hardware store which was on First and Watson. They even had Beaverton Paperbacks which was on First and just off of Watson. Ernie Masters was the accountant in town. It was just this nice little close community. Even, in 1949, Ralph's dad bought that property that the feed store was on at that time. And then of course Ralph, they started the store 1942, and Ralph closed it in 2001.

B= So what was the family business like then?

R= Well it was basically a feed store where you sold animal feed for large animals, for chickens, hay and straw for bedding and what not. And after the city grew after the Second World War, then we got more into pet supplies; dog food and small animals and the parents, mom and dad, all of us had a strong interest in gardening. And for years they sold specific seeds for gardens and in the middle 40's, we got into plants, bedding plants, vegetable starts, flower starts. And actually after dad moved, we opened a new store in '49. We started handling some nursery stock. So we had a little bit of anything and everything.

J= One time they even carried Christmas trees. And during the years people flocked they flocked them in the back warehouse.

B= What are flocked? I don't even know what that is.

J= Flocked! You take a green tree and you put all the white stuff on it. (laughs). You'd spray it on with a....

R= Vacuum cleaner.

J= It was a vacuum cleaner with a hose attached!

R= There was a hose attached to the back of the vacuum cleaner.

B= Now Ralph, did you work in the store when you were younger? Did your brothers?

R= Oh yes.

B= What kind of work did you do?

R= Basically, the first thing I remember was laying seeds out in nickel packages, dime packages, twenty cent packages and we would do this through the winter so that we'd have to write care for specific varieties, write the price on it and put it in the bins so that when people came in you could just hand them a ten cent carrier or nickel package or something or other. Or a half pound of beans or corn or whatever, what we called doing that up. And dad started early on selling small amounts of feed at that time. Actually, I guess in the 50's, when I could remember, and I worked behind the counter, we had fifty cent packages of different kinds of grains or chicken feed or rabbit pellets.

J= And fifty cent packages were about (motions) They were that big.

B= They were large.

R= Well you got 10 pounds I think for fifty cents in those days.

J= They also learned to sweep the floors.

R= Oh yeah, sweeping the floors. There was always something to do, and working in the back warehouse, filling orders and things like that.

J= They had hay and straw and of course somebody would drive up and they'd put the 80 pound bag of feed or 80 pound bale of straw on their shoulders and out they'd go to load them up. Something you don't hardly see anymore; people loading here. He got to the point where he recognized customers. Their car would drive in or their truck would drive in and he'd go out and just pick up what they want and take it out and they'd come in and pay for it or charge it. The one time there was charging done.

R= Oh yeah you'd have to have charge accounts. We were very happy when they came out with credit cards.

J= Yeah, charge accounts were pretty tough because everything was done by hand. You wrote out the bill at the end of the month and everything. But in 19--, after he graduated, he was the only one of the three boys that did graduate. His brother Chuck had gone....went into the army. (To Ralph) And was in Germany?

R= Yes.

J= I guess in the early 50's, right after, I think he went to one term of school and didn't like it and then joined the army. Then came back and went to work in the feed store. His oldest brother Robert had allergies and couldn't work in the store, after a few years it became clear. He was... went into mechanics. He was a mechanic.

R= Machinist.

J= Machinist and worked up at Breverton and then eventually went to Panama. And he was actually in charge of one of the locks. All of the machines under the locks and we were able to go and visit him once. And we got to go through where all this machinery was. We got to go up where there was a big table and we got to open the locks.

B= Oh, how neat.

J= They had all this stuff on the table and it was all original from the 1918's.

R= A little handle that you'd turn and you could look out. There's this massive concrete door swinging open and the water rushing in or out and what not.

B= And you did it with the handle?

J= You did it with the little brass handle that was on this big table and it was amazing to see. And then he did take us out, we got to go through the locks on a freighter. But we had to take a little boat out and then climb up the ladder to get on the boat and then we took the little train back. We went to the other side of the island and then took the train back and it was pretty fascinating. Ralph's folks were able to go down several times and see them and do the site seeing thing, which was a good thing. And then in 1963, his brother had taken his dad to the doctor because by that time his dad was really not all that well. And was...eventually had to be on oxygen quite a bit of the time. So he was at home and he was a plate collector. He'd bought the stuff on, he read a lot, he did some handy work and he was also (a cough in background blocks Janet's voice) He loved kind of jumping from thing to thing. Anyways his dad loved to cook, so every Sunday morning, we would take our three little boys, get them up and go to early mass and then we'd go to grandma and grandpa's for breakfast. He'd make apple pancakes every Sunday morning until he was no longer able to do things like that. So that's one of the memories our kids have. That, and riding go-karts on the property with their cousins and going out, and our son, we were with him yesterday and he said, "I remember going out behind..." they had this big old shed/garage combination and behind there they had grapes and the best grapes I've ever had! We'd just put them in our mouth and slip the skin off and throw the skin away. And oh, were they good! So that's kind of a little memory that the kids have.

B= And you said that Robert was very special to you too?

J= Oh yeah he was. He liked me. (laughs) He liked me. Of course he didn't like the fact that we smoked at that time. Anyway he was a very fine person. But then in 1963, Ralph's middle brother Richard, had taken dad downtown to a doctor appointment and then all of a sudden dad came out and Richard was down there and he was kind of bouncing off the walls. Ended up, he had a brain tumor. So he was, he got it in '63, he had just actually, hadn't gotten married for that long. He had married a gal with a couple kids and then were expecting a child. Anyway, he died in 1966, which was, tore my

mother-in-law up. She was actually, never the same after that. That just broke her heart. And then dad died in 1982. He finally, he fought for a long time with his illness. Bronchitis and emphysema he fought. I think nowadays we'd call it COPD. But he was a very special man and he did everything, came all on his own. He was very successful. He studied the stock market. He invested. He never owed or spent. You know, they lived in that one house forever.

B= Well it sounds like his mother might have been a key factor in how we was thinking about business. She was running things.

J= She wasn't the money person. She really didn't get into the money stuff at all. Just as long as there was money in her checking account and she could go do that she wanted to do. Buy what she wanted to buy. That would be fine. In fact, she never paid a bill in her life until, when her friend Carl had gotten sick and was living in the house. He said, "you should be paying your own bills" but dad paid them all and then he just turned them all over to me. So I paid all her bills, did her taxes and all that kind of wonderful stuff. Ralph would go up and stay with dad when he was not feeling well if she wanted to go to a business or professional women's club/meeting. She was very active in that. She was actually the city of Beaverton's first "Good Neighbor of the Year".

B= Oh, what year was that?

J= 1983.

B= So tell me about the "Good Neighbor of the Year"

J= Well, they now have the Beaverton parade. That was the first year they had kind of a parade through town.

(Janet and Ralph discuss several pictures)

J= And she just had a blast. And Carol, I can't remember the name of the gal who actually nominated her and got it started. But that's, they had their first parade and then..

R= She was nominated by the VP Deputy of the Women's Group to be the "Good Neighbor of the Year".

J= She was? Okay. And was that the year they had the first, I don't know what to call it.

R= Parade? They had it in Schiffler Park.

J= Schiffler park. And they had people that were selling things in booths.

R= Booths.

J= And food and games. Celebrating Beaverton. So that was a fun thing for the city and something that she really enjoyed. They also, as a couple, played cards and played games with some of their friends. There were the people that had the restaurant on the corner.

R= Bruce and Leena Steele.

J= Yeah, Bruce and Leena Steele. Bruce Steele kind of laid into me one day at (cannot make out name) funeral. We, her daughter, Irma, did not want anything after the service. But we said you've got to. Just a family get together. So I figured there'd be about 18 of us. We just had a small house on Berthold and we had added to it so there was a little more room. So we were going to have just family. So at the end of it the minister said "now everyone is invited to Ralph and Janet's."

B= Surprise.

J= You know, that's about 40 people and we had planned for 18! So my mother and two of her sisters were there. And they just headed for the bakery and the grocery store and wherever they could get something and then brought it in. And then we ran home and started getting chairs and tables out and stuff and Bruce Steele who had had restaurants his whole life said, "you would have thought you were ready." (laughs) He said, "you think you'd be ready for this." You know, it just astounded me and I thought, "Okay." And off we went. And it was quite a time. But anyway, they did have fun with their friends and a lot of little get togethers. And they loved to have picnics in the backyard. And first time I met the family, it was at a picnic on the Denny Road property. And there were, I don't know how many desserts on the table, but my family, we'd have one dessert. You'd have a family meal and you'd have one dessert. Possibly two. But I think I went home and said, "Mom, there were 10 desserts on that table!" There was so much food. Then the next time, I think I was out there, I learned how to make applesauce. They were peeling apples. And so, did all that good stuff. And she loved gardening. Evelyn loved gardening. She raised pumpkins and then at Halloween time she would have one of the teachers from the younger kids. I don't know whether it was kindergarteners or first graders.

R= First graders.

J= First graders normally. They'd get to come down and pick out their pumpkin and learn how things are grown. She loved...she thought everybody should garden and have corn and beans and peas and whatever else you could find to put in. I always said, you can't take her shovel and her wheelbarrow away from her. She had to have those. In fact, even when she was not well, before she had to go to Merryville, she went out. She was determined. But she fell out in the yard and she actually crawled back to the house. So, she was determined. And she didn't like us much. We tried to move her into assisted living and that did not work out. And she got her meds all mixed up and so she ended up in Merryville for 9 years. My mother was there for 5 ½ years. Another aunt who was there for two or three years and another one two or three years. That was a

sad time. But Ralph went every morning to make sure she was eating her breakfast and talk about something and I went every evening to feed my mother dinner. So like I said, Beaverton's been, it's grown, it's changed.

R= I remember Bernard's Airport which is now Beaverton Mall. Actually when they first started it they felt it would never really catch on because it was so far from downtown Beaverton.

B= Not anymore.

J= But the airport was great. That was another thing we were very active in, was Junior Chamber of Commerce. And isn't that what it was called? (To Ralph) JC's? The Beaverton JC's.

R= Junior Chamber of Commerce.

J= Yeah, you had to be under 35 and usually it was, oh, I don't know, the guys that had a meeting. And then the women had also had the wives of...

R= The auxiliary.

J= Yeah the auxiliary and it was a fun time. They had conventions. One convention I remember, was up in Pendleton. And Irene Navia(?) was our leader and we had a parade and we all dressed in flapper stuff. And up there, every group in Oregon competed for prizes and that kind of stuff. Our was, the music *The Saints Go Marching In* and we carried it off and I don't know what else. And then the gals all wore flapper dresses and we made floats for the parade. The Rose Parade every year and we were actually, around the airport there were all hangars. One year we built it there and then about 3 or 4 in the morning we'd take the float into the coliseum and get lined up. And one year we were in the Americana parade, which is now, it was Americana parade..

R= The light parade.

J= Now it's something else, it's something nice now. (laughs) But then it was Americana parade. And the Portland Rainmakers put it on. And it was on the Saturday before and there were lights on the floats and the parade rainmakers had their upside down umbrellas and we had a float. That was the year of the Pendleton thing and we had a float and we were on the float. And everybody was...there was a lot of drinking that went on in those days. And throwing candy... (laughs) and oh my gosh...that was a very wild time. But on the other end, the JC's were very active in the community and every holiday that required a flag they had flags and there were little holes in the city. They'd get up at 2,3,4 in the morning, 5 in the morning and go down and they'd have the cart and they'd go around and put flags all over town. Then they'd have to go pick them up later in the day, anyway it was really nice to have all those American flags in the city and then when seatbelts got to be popular, before they came naturally; we had seatbelt

clinics. Out in front of Beaverton High School and the gals would fix food and the guys would, the people would line up with their cars. We'd take the money and...

R= Install the seatbelts.

J= Install the seatbelts in cars.

B= So who did the installation?

J= The JC's.

B= The JC's.

J= They learned how to do it. A lot of very clever people in that group. One of the very activist members, John Beatty, from Beaverton Foods, and his wife at that time, entertained a lot also. And we had a lot of our parties up at their house. Oh and then Jeb Springer was a very active member and he had the Pike Baxton Springer Chapel/Mortuary (?). Who also? Well Bill Rose who lived in the area, still lives in the area. Not very many of them still do. Denny Petacourt, he had The Oregonian distributorship and he was very active in JC's, and his wife Liz. Oh, Jim Moore. He was a very well thought of attorney in Portland and he and his wife Donna were very active. He's gone now. All of these people are gone. But it was the movers and shakers of Beaverton, late 50's early 60's.

R= Yeah, late 50's early 60's.

J= And I think they went through and after, we had to kind of drop back everything because Ralph was still an army reserve and he had to quit that when his brother got sick. And we were pretty well....wasn't a lot we can do then because the family came first.

B= So when was the family business passed, was it passed to you, or all three brothers? How did that work?

R= Well actually my brother really took over, when we went into the service in '59.

J= But it was split between the 3 of them.

R= '59. No, we went in '57 and spent 2 years. Got out in '59. And then I also went to work in the business with my brother and since he'd been there longer, he was being the boss and what not. Then in '66 when he passed...

J= Well '63 is basically when you took over.

R= Well on that part. And just stayed on for the next 4 years, or whatever it was.

J= But Ralph ended up with it. We bought it. Chuck's widow didn't feel that she should have a part of the business. So we bought her share of the business and then his oldest brother still had a third of it. And then the property was also split at that time cause the...that was all together at one time. And then the property was split out for....reasons. And you know, there was a percentage, he had the majority because we had bought his brother's share.

B= Now were a lot of the clients farmers? Were they also townspeople? You said that you were selling a lot of gardening products after awhile.

R= Well basically in the 60's, we were more into pet and garden and it would be householders I guess. These more suburban type people.

J= That's about the time when all the building was going on. But there were people in this neighborhood, who, there's a few that still live here. This was a neighborhood that would go to the feed store and buy for their pets.

R= Well at that time I think we had Fred Meyers somewhere in the area.

J= Well, that's Freddy's built, down here. The Fred Meyer's, the original Fred Meyer's was down on/next to 217.

B= Okay.

J= Then this one was built later.

R= But actually, we were one of the few areas, places, of businesses in the area that sold a lot of fertilizer and garden supplies and chemicals, things for home owners to use. And, as I put it, any of the older established, we had a lot of customers from those areas and what not.

J= Yeah this was one of...and then across the street where Jesuit is...

R= That was **Iswalan** Dairy.

J= That was **Iswalan** Dairy.

B= Oh okay.

J= And Ernie **Iswalan** actually graduated high school with Ralph. And the sister was one of my sorority sisters at Oregon State. And then the brother, lived in Corvallis and married a lady golfer (laughs). Anyway that was big and it hasn't been all that many years since they sold the property. Well I guess it's been probably been 25 or 30...(laughs)

R= Yeah 25 or 30.

J= It seems like not very long. And actually the dad lived practically til he was 100 I think. And Ernie came back and he was a football player and manager/investor in Texan. And he came back to take care of his parents and then his mother died and all that property over there was at one time Izwalen property, even on the other side of Laurelwood and they had a sister and her house was on Laurelwood and then she came down with MS or something. She ended up at Merryville for many, many, many years and Ernie finally had to put his dad in Merryville. There was a father and daughter in Merryville at the same time. Kind of weird.

B= That is weird.

J= Very weird.

B= So I'm not from this area and I'm curious if, I know Beaverton has its own identity, but at what point did it sort of being merging with the large Portland area. Did you notice that happening?

R= Well....yes actually. I think probably the biggest thing when Portland started their numbers change on the streets or whatever and came out and Beaverton adopted and kept going on the street numbers and then we became known as a suburb of Portland I guess,

J= Harold Fries had, you go up Canyon Road and then Dells was out in the country, which is now, he had a Shell station and Art Holman had a Shell station. Harold had a service station at...

R= On Canyon.

J= On Canyon.

R= On a 117th.

J= Was it 117th or was it 100...on Walker.

R= (responds back to Janet...inaudible)

J= Well that's Walker Road. A 117th is down in Beaverton. But Guy Carr started his business and I think that's probably what started up Canyon Road but there was still a lot of empty space. There was a Chinese restaurant; it was kind of almost buy its self for awhile. And then you'd go down and there was a big old movie theater, a drive-in theater in Beaverton off of 117th.

R= The drive-in theater where Fred Meyers bought and built.

J= That's where Fred Meyers was. I thought it was on the other side. But what do I know actually. And well down on Broadway there was, what was the name of the restaurant? The restaurant down on Broadway?

R= Aerie's drive in?

J= No, the one where we could take the kids. We could take all three of our kids.

R= The Show Boat.

J= The Show Boat. It started as kind of a small place. Kind of across from Bed Bath & Beyond in that area. And then they built on the other side of Canyon a larger restaurant. And when our kids were little we could take them to the Show Boat for dinner and it cost us \$5 bucks for all of us to eat. (laughs)

B= Wow! That's a good deal. Was that a good deal at the time?

J= Well it's the only thing we could afford at the time. Let's put it that way. That was another change. And then of course Guy had started his car dealership and that kind of made a lot of things grow.

B= So what challenges and opportunities have you seen Beaverton really face in the last, I don't know, 40 years or so?

J= What challenges and opportunities? Well, unfortunately, what we think is not what other people think. And I think that a lot of the problems that Beaverton's had was because of leadership in the city thinking that they knew better than everybody else. It's like they want another urban renewal and they thought that the round, the amount of money they wasted in the round and I just, they got mayors in. And there was one gal, we were all behind her husband for Mayor of Beaverton.

R= Jackie Olson.

J= Yeah, well I'm not going to name names there.

R= No.

J= I talked to her several months later or a year later after they had gotten a divorce when he was married to her and hanging around with his assistant. And she said to me, "you know, the night of the election when he won, I looked at him, and he changed. Right in front of my eyes. He thought he had the power." It's like he got this powerful thing and he ended up to be a terrible mayor. And before that he was a worker you know, and just a really nice guy I thought! Just, I don't know, what can I say.

B= Power.

J= Yeah it's a power thing and that happened with several. We had another mayor who, when the family went to, I guess a husband and wife. The husband went to a meeting about something, I don't know what it was about. And the mayor looked at him and this guy was a very good Catholic, he and his wife had what, six or seven kids. This mayor looked at him and said "we should have birth control".... And I'm trying to remember how to put it; he basically said you shouldn't have all those kids and you should kill them. Something like that! It was just awful! It's just we haven't been able to have a really good, we haven't had somebody who really, really cares. Who doesn't get these grandiose ideas like building a baseball field on a small piece of property and taking someone else's property to do it. You know, it's just, no matter what you might think of the owners.

B= What do you think of the downtown area now? Do you think it's retained some of its history?

J= It can't mostly when it was all Bob Lanfeers. I mean, Bob Lanfeers been great for the area. I can't deny that but it changed the downtown because it put all these cars there. That's another funny thing where Ralph's dad had his original feed store. Well there's a building right next to it. And this guy came in and he had motorcycles. He had all his motorcycles and stuff and didn't have any money. The big deal was when they bought a 6-pack of beer, the guys on Saturday night and they'd have their beers. And all of a sudden they put in these cars, that were nice little cars, that wouldn't cost people too much money to run and to buy. So he talked dad into letting him buy this piece of property from him on time and dad thought that would be a good deal and he gave him a decent price and a decent interest. Well he brought in the first Hondas. It was Bob Lanfeer that brought in the first Hondas and everybody, you know, downtown, "how's he going to sell those things? They're ugly little cars!" Well obviously they weren't and the sad part about it is he paid that bill off to my father-in-law and dad was really kind of unhappy because he wanted that check coming in every month for maybe five years and he paid it off in two. But that's what Bob Lanfeer did for it. And of course the Wibies and the Sitteroos they got older and nobody wanted to buy a men's store when you had Washington Square going in, when you had Fred Meyer's down the street. So it's been a change and it's been sad.

R= Well the biggest thing is probably from service oriented stores or businesses to the self-serve Fred Meyers, Target, large chains. And pricing or what not, literally forced a lot of the smaller businesses out, where you knew your customer and gave the service and what not on that.

B= Now can I ask how you ended your store? What was the story behind that?

R= The what?

J= When you closed the feed store. He wanted to retire.

B= Oh okay.

R= (in audible) since '66. And I could see, well I did try very weakly to sell it. I listed a couple of commercial real estate people/ business people and what not. And the only 2 people I found, one person had money and absolutely no knowledge of the business. The other person had some knowledge of the business. One had money but no knowledge. One had knowledge but no money. And so I just, I think I came home one night or whatever and I said "I think the only thing we can do is just close it."

J= He was trying to keep it open as long as his mother was alive too. But it just got to the point where we couldn't do anything. You know, we were 66 years old and we couldn't do any travelling. We couldn't even go to football games.

R= Because every time we'd planned, somebody would come up sick or something or other.

J= Or there's a wedding in the family or they just didn't want to work on Saturday.

R= So anyway, I just decided to close it.

(Janet shows pictures/newspaper articles from when the store was closing.)

B= Was that a difficult time when the store closed? Or were you ready for that?

J= He was ready.

R= Oh I was past due. And the biggest thing you miss is of course the customer interaction and things like that. The other things, of dealing with hired help, and things like that. Although I had several very nice ladies who worked for me for years, were very good. But most of my male employees were not.

J= In one case I guess his brother at one time had guns and Ralph remembered somebody had hidden the gun up, someplace. They had balconies and warehouse and just a lot of stuff up there. And I guess one of the employees that didn't stay very long found a gun hidden up behind something. I don't know whether he'd put it up there or whether Chuck had put it up there or just your dad put it up there.

R= But it was gone and the employee was gone.

J= And then all of a sudden he got a call once from the police department.

R= Beaverton police.

J= It wasn't Beaverton. Wasn't it somebody back east? Yeah it was somebody back east or mid-country. You may want to take that book as long as I get it back.

B= Okay. We can look through it. Is it okay if we make some copies?

J= Yeah I was going to say and then you can make copies because that does give a lot of the history.

B= Yeah that's great and I don't know how much of this we have in our library.

(Janet discusses some of the photos in the book)

B= That sign is really neat. Did you keep any of the old objects from the store?

R= Very few. Very few.

J= We can only keep so much.

B= Right. Yeah if you don't mind me taking this (referring to book) I think this would be really neat.

J= Now there's another kind of funny picture. There's a cute picture of our youngest son in her someplace. Ralph was also on the fair board. In the seventies. (To Ralph) In the seventies you were on the Washington County fair board. And had a really good time out there.

(Janet discusses photos again)

J= See that cute little kid? That's our youngest son. And he actually was the bookkeeper at the fair grounds...at the museum when John Smith was in charge.

B= Oh fantastic.

J= It was when everything was kind of new. (Discusses photos again) He got a lot of publicity when he retired. And there's some duplicates in there. Anyway, if you'd like to take that...

B= I would. And I can get it back to you soon.

J= Here's a picture of his cars.

B= Oh are these ones you still have?

J= Yup.

B= What is that? The green one?

R= '51 Ford convertible.

B= And is that what she rode in? I saw the Evelyn...

J= No she rode in the red truck.

R= Well that was in one of the parades. Actually the one where she was Good Neighbor of the Year. Yeah I've had that. The Model T Touring.

J= These are all family pictures. These are all from his retirement.

B= Oh so there was a party in the store?

J= Yeah, they just had a cake.

R= We had cake and coffee.

(Beth and Janet discuss more photos, mostly the cars)

J= Those are what he played with after he retired. Ralph's dad, you know, not getting past grade school, he was a Mason. And they had to do all sorts of good stuff.

B= (looking at photo of Mason) Oh neat. The top hat. What is that?

J= Well that's the thing they get for the Masons. I don't know. Masons are a secret society almost.

R= 32nd.

J= His 32nd degree. Whatever that meant.

R= He was the oldest one in the state of Oregon for years.

B= That's a neat photo.

J= Yeah it is. Special man. Yeah, there's a bunch of stuff in here too. That's better.

(Beth and Janet discuss articles in a box and more photos.)

J= I found something the other day that was quite good. That's an abstract of titles in the city of Beaverton and I don't know why he or how he's got it. That's from something that Beaverton was.

B= Paul and WM Lockerman (?) Oh these are the claims.

J= I don't know what they are. And that's...his dad had it.

B= Hmm. But this is not related to the store at all.

J= Well it's for downtown Beaverton.

B= Yeah I was going to say it's for Hall and..

J= Yeah this is what dad must have looked for. Something about titles. It was in 1939.

(Ralph talks in the background and is out of scope of audio recorder)

B= Interesting. Well I will let our collections manager know.

J= Then I found ration checks for St. Cecilia's school.

B= Oh that's interesting. So that was during World War II?

J= Well that's '45.

B= Processed foods and sugar. So they're for the school?

J= St. Cecilia's school.

B= How would you have ended up with those?

R= Mom was treasurer of the Mothers club. I think that was during the 2nd World War.

J= Somehow or another she had a deposit for this. Probably that should be in a collection out there too.

B= Yeah I'm going to write this down so I can tell Adam.

J= Ask him if he wants us to haul some of this stuff out. An abstract of tiles for downtown Beaverton and we've got, I think this is for when people charges.

(Janet and Beth discuss mementos in the box including a book of charge accounts and payroll documents from the store)

J= (Referring to books) Dad did all this by hand.

B= Isn't it amazing how those things have changed?

J= Well anyways, that's Joe Flint. That would be Evelyn's brother in law. He died pretty young. His parents kicked his wife and daughter off of the farm. So they had to come to Beaverton. She came to Beaverton broke. I mean, she had nothing. And her dad bought the old house on Menlo for her.

R= Grandpa Haight.

J= Grandpa Haight bought that little house on Menlo for her. His daughter and grand-daughter. So anyway, that's just another sideline. (flips through book) But this is just all names. These are all old Beaverton names. Well I don't know whether...

B= Well I will ask Adam.

J= Tell him we got more stuff if he wants to come in. We can bring out more stuff. But anyway, this is the way dad kept the payroll. Roy Haines was another good friend. Actually, he and his wife had a house, they had a house on Hall? Yeah it was Hall. Hall street; just above Denny Road.

R= Just past Denny Road.

J= Just past Denny Road and had some property down back. There was a sheriff in town, well police chief in town. The only policeman in town was named Henry Mayville. SOMEBODY who's standing at this table, drove cars fast. So, Henry would start chasing Ralph in his car. Ralph would pull into Roy and Betty's house and go park down behind their house and get away from Henry. Henry and his wife were good friends of Bob and Evelyn. Well anyway, something else again.

B= So anyways, is this payroll again? Yeah, compensation. It looks like there's payroll and the charge accounts and that was the deed to...

J= We have no idea.

R= Actually I think this was the deed, the original property dad had on Broadway... (mumbles in audible)

J= Yeah this is inventory, this is when you kept inventory by hand.

B= What years would that have been?

J= '62. Those aren't very old.

B= That's okay, it's records.

J= It's records. Well anyway, I don't think our kids are going to want to keep any of this..

R= I doubt it.

J= I mean, we've got too much stuff. We've even got my mother-in-law's little tea set from when she was little girl.

B= They might want that.

J= That's not going anyplace!

B= Great, well I'll show this to Adam.

(Janet discusses more items that might be shown).

J= Did this give you what you needed?

B= Absolutely. Is there anything else? I can turn it off. I was going to say thank you very much. There's always more but...you can just keep going.

KEY TERMS:

Beaverton, Tigard, Forest Grove, Washington County, Automobiles, Building, Celebrations, Children, Cities and towns, Civic Architecture, civic centers, civic improvements, civic leaders, communities, community centers, community newspapers, community organization, County fairs, County officials, Couples, Department stores, dry-goods, Education, Families, families-history, family recreation, farm supply industries, Freemasons, households, nostalgia, Oregon, Parade, Parade floats, parades, parks, picnics, School children, Work.