

BEAVERTON ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with

ALBERT ROSSI

At his home in Beaverton, Oregon

INTERVIEWER: SHIRLEY TANZER

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INTERVIEW WITH: ALBERT ROSSI

BEAVERTON ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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(Where unknown, phonetic spellings are used.)

INTERVIEW WITH ALBERT ROSSI

for

BEAVERTON ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Second Voice: Mrs. Albert Rossi

Place: At their home in Beaverton, Oregon

Interviewer: Shirley Tanzer

SHIRLEY TANZER: Mr. Rossi, where did your family come from?

ALBERT ROSSI: My mother was born in Nebraska and her folks came through San Francisco. There wasn't a railroad from Nebraska out to Portland at that time, so they went to San Francisco and then came up on the boat to Portland. My mother's maiden name was Wolf.

Her folks settled in Woodburn first and then they came here to Beaverton. Her father was a section foreman on the Beaverton-Portland Railroad (the Southern Pacific) and they lived at Hillsdale, which is Bertha now. It's called Bertha up there. Then they moved down here where Carr Chevrolet is. That was what we called the home place. That's where the Wolf's lived.

TANZER: Did they have a house there?

ROSSI: Yes, there was a house there.

TANZER: Is there anything standing?

ROSSI: No. Walkers owned it. The house has been torn down now. It was actually right next to Carr's Garage, just east of it. Where Carr's Garage is now was our property at one time. The property was sold to Carr.

TANZER: Where did your parents meet then?

ROSSI: Well, my father lived right close to my mother on Canyon Road. But I don't know how they got acquainted. But they met here in Beaverton.

TANZER: Now tell me where your father's family came from.

ROSSI: My father came from Italy when he was 14 years old; his father came here about ten years earlier and he came to San Francisco first, my sister tells me. And then he had a brother in Olympia. He went up there and then he went with his brother from San Francisco, I think, came up to Portland, and he came down to Portland and then they were in farming here together. Then they split up and his brother went to LaCenter, Washington and stayed there.

TANZER: Let me ask about your dad. Approximately what year was it that your grandfather came?

ROSSI: On my father's side, about 1870, I think. I think he came here to Beaverton in 1871. I think that's about as close as I can tell you.

TANZER: And your dad came ten years later?

ROSSI: Yes. He was 14 when he came here.

TANZER: Your Grandfather Rossi came to Beaverton and bought the land?

ROSSI: Yes.

TANZER: I see. And they lived close to your mother.

ROSSI: Well, here on the Canyon Road, yes. Where the Safeway Store is, was a house where my father lived.

TANZER: I see. Now how much land did they have?

ROSSI: The farm property was 24 acres. And my dad owned quite a bit of property in Beaverton where the Masonic Temple is. Where the U.S. Bank is was owned by him at one time, and where Stipe's Garage (or where the Honda is now), he owned that property clear on down across the highway down what was Beaverdam Road at that time. Then he owned the property where the Safeway Store is. That's where we were born, right there on that property. There's seven acres there on that property.

TANZER: How many children were there in your family?

ROSSI: Four. I'm the youngest. I have a sister, Elva, left now who lives in Beaverton. The other two were boys; they're dead now. Frank was 80 when he died about four years ago, and my other brother was about 56, I think. He died in 1958, Raymond.

TANZER: So your parents then met and were married in Beaverton and they lived in the house where the Safeway Store is.

MRS. ROSSI: The little house; then they built the big house.

ROSSI: That's where they lived first. There's a house there.

TANZER: Where did they build the large home?

ROSSI: Well, it's there where the Safeway Store is right now. There's been two Safeway Stores built there. The first one was tore down. And then they built a bigger store.

TANZER: And the big house was just where the Safeway Store is now? When was it torn down?

ROSSI: Well, let's see, Elva moved the same year -- it was 1962.

TANZER: Tell me about your father. What kind of man was he?

ROSSI: He was quite a patriotic man. He believed in this country. He come from the old country and things were so much better here than there, that

he taught us kids we should love our country. He always put the flags out on the Fourth of July and Flag Day. He didn't have too much of an education, but he was a good businessman. Of course, in those days people didn't get to school too much. He invested in properties a lot. He'd buy this and that as things went along, which were good investments.

TANZER: What business was he in?

ROSSI: He had the 1900 Saloon in Beaverton. You've probably seen the picture of it.

TANZER: Tell me about that. Tell me about the saloon. Because it was a very famous landmark in Beaverton.

ROSSI: Yes. The name of it was the 1900. It was built in 1900. He farmed. They were farming and it was pretty rough making a living at farming. They had to haul all their vegetables into Portland by team. I don't know the year but it must have been 1898 or 1899. They had a frost on the night before the Fourth of July here on the beaverdam and it froze all the beans and all the vegetables and so he quit. I think that's how he happened to start in the business. That's the way I hear it anyhow. I don't know too much about it but I remember that part of it. So when Prohibition came in in 1915, he more or less semi-retired. We were in the chicken business for quite a number of years, raising chickens right here where the Safeway Store is.

TANZER: So the saloon was open for about 15 years, from 1900 to 1915. Where did you have the chickens?

ROSSI: Right there. We had a barn and cows there at one time.

MRS. ROSSI: It must have extended across Canyon Road there, Albert.

ROSSI: Well, the chicken house and the barn were right where the Canyon Road goes through there now. You see, that didn't go through there. We moved the chicken house once. And the barn had to be tore down. The highway went through there. They didn't take the barn. It was awfully close to it. But the chicken house had to be moved toward where the Safeway Store is.

We had seven acres there and we had six or seven cows at one time. We had a milk route here in Beaverton. Us kids used to peddle milk. One would go in one direction and I would go the other and we had carriers and we'd carry it. I used to walk up here to right here where Bob Hahn used to live there. Hahns, you know them? By Ruby Elanks there, down below. That's when we were going to school.

TANZER: And how much did you receive for peddling milk?

ROSSI: Well, we didn't get anything for it. It was our board and room, I guess. But we used to peddle the milk for 10¢ a quart with lots of cream on it.

TANZER: So the cows were milked, and who took care of the milking?

ROSSI: Well, my brother and I and my mother milked the cows. My mother was a good milker. She could milk two cows while my brother and I were milking one (laughter), but then we'd cool the milk and bottle it and we had routes in

the morning and routes in the evening. Most of it was in the evening, though.

TANZER: That was from about 1915 until when?

ROSSI: Let's see, I was going to school. It was right after that, I guess, yes. I started some time after that, a year or so, but I was still in grade school.

TANZER: After the chicken business and the milk business, was there another business?

ROSSI: No. My father retired. We built the building there where the Resale Shop is. I just took a picture of it. My father started that in 1926 and we just had the foundation laid when he died of a heart attack. So my brother and I and my sister went ahead and had it finished.

TANZER: How old was he?

ROSSI: Fifty-six.

MRS. ROSSI: He was a big man. Albert doesn't look a thing like him, but he was a very big man.

TANZER: Tell me about your mother.

ROSSI: She came from a big family. Her mother died when they were young. There was 12 or 13 in the family; some of them died when they were younger and Mother had to take care of a lot of the younger kids.

TANZER: What was her name?

ROSSI: Hattie Wolf. And my father's name was August. Everybody called him Gus.

TANZER: What was your mother like? What kind of person was she?

ROSSI: Well, she was small and a very hard worker, real sweet person and we very seldom ever saw her mad. She'd get mad at us kids once in a while, you know. She had a good temperament, though. She was, of course, sick for a long time before she died. She died at 89, I believe. She was more or less down in bed for ten years before she died.

MRS. ROSSI: But tell about how gentle she was and how her sisters came here and how she always had big dinners ...

ROSSI: Oh, yes. Well she was generous and had big dinners and we always had big times at Thanksgiving and Christmas, you know. She liked to cook and was really a good cook, too.

TANZER: What kinds of foods did she specialize in?

ROSSI: She learned to cook Italian food. She was German, of course, and we had spaghetti and my grandmother lived with us. My father's mother lived with us for quite a number of years because his father died in 1906.

He wasn't too old, either. He was about 60, I think, or something in there. My sister can tell you that better than I can. She knows all that. There were some German things she cooked, too, and there was a pudding us kids used to like, called Amsterdam Pudding. I don't know whether that was the name of it or not. I think she always made it at Thanksgiving and Christmas. She had a sort of cream sauce and she cooked whatever this was in a can and steamed it some way, you know, and it was sort of a chocolate, more like a cake, but it was solid. But it was a round thing and then she'd cut that and put the sauce on it.

TANZER: Like a Christmas pudding.

ROSSI: Yes, but chocolate.

TANZER: What community activities was your father involved in?

ROSSI: My father served on the Council here in Beaverton, I don't know how many times actually. I know in the early 20's he was on the Council and he was on before that in the early years. I don't know what years it was but he had served a couple of times.

TANZER: Was he active politically?

ROSSI: Well, he was a staunch Republican. And he believed in The Republican Party. But the politics, about all he got into was city business.

TANZER: What was your family's church affiliation?

ROSSI: On my father's side, they were Catholic. And on my mother's side I don't know, Lutherans, I guess.

TANZER: Did you go to church?

ROSSI: When I was a youngster I did, St. Cecelia's Catholic Church here in Beaverton.

TANZER: Did you go to parochial schools?

ROSSI: No. No. I went to the public school here. I was just trying to think before you came that the old grade school right here by Merle Davies, you've seen the picture of that. I thought I went the first year that was built but I guess it was the second. It was Beaverton Grade School, back of Merle Davies up there. When they built the new school up here, I went to school.

Mrs. Stipe and Iva Sommers (the van Blaricom girls) came here from Nebraska to teach. Ivy taught the 1st and 2nd grades, Dora taught the 3rd and 4th; and then Merle Davies taught the 6th & 7th.

MRS. ROSSI: What about Earl Fisher? Did he teach you, too?

ROSSI: Well, he didn't teach me. But he was teaching at the school when I was in the 6th & 7th grade, at the Beaverton Grade School. He was teaching 7th & 8th Grade.

TANZER: What do you remember about Merle Davies?

ROSSI: Well, Merle Davies was a good teacher and she meant business with the kids. There was no fooling around. I got shook up a few times. Then I'd get shook up at home when they'd find out I was into something. I can't remember what things we were doing but we had to be pretty careful when we were in class that we weren't talking to somebody behind or in front of us. Merle wouldn't tell you she was coming. She'd just come up from behind and give you a good shake. (Laughter)

TANZER: What about Earl Fisher?

ROSSI: Earl Fisher, well. I didn't go to school to him, but he was a terror for discipline in the school. He didn't stand up in front of the class. He stood in back of the class so he could see what everyone was doing, you know, and they couldn't watch him. He used to shake the kids up really a little too much. He was real rough with them. I know that Ralph Stipe was in his grade and I don't know what he was doing, but Fisher drug him up and down the floor, I guess. His father was the blacksmith and when he heard about it, why he was raving mad and went up to school and asked where Mr. Fisher was and nobody could find him. So I guess he would have beat him up if he'd a gotten a hold of him. Cause he was a pretty strong man.

TANZER: What did Mr. Fisher look like?

ROSSI: He was a fairly tall man and sort of a rough, hard-working man. He was bony and real strong. He used to work in the rock crushers in the summertime when he wasn't teaching school and that was hard work. And oh, he used to sweat -- I was hauling rock when I was a young fellow, out at the Corey's over here and he was working there and he used to feed the crusher and he had a big sledge hammer and if the rock was too big to go in the crusher, he'd have to break it. The weather would be hot and he'd be just a-wringing wet from sweat from working so hard.

He never owned an automobile; he walked to where the schools were that he taught. He used to walk from near Sherwood and back every day to school. It was called Cipole -- it's actually an Italian name called Chi-pola (onion). There's a lot of onions raised over on those onion flats.

TANZER: Did he have a family?

ROSSI: He never was married. He was a mayor of Beaverton twice.

TANZER: What about Merle Davies? What do you remember about her?

ROSSI: Well, of course, she was a large woman, very tall, and she was a little conscious of it, I think. And she'd never married. Her father was a tall, slim man. They lived there on Farmington Road. In fact, we lived across the street from them, when my father was still alive.

TANZER: What type of relationship did she have with the other teachers and with Mr. Fisher?

ROSSI: Mr. Fisher was the principal at the time she was teaching. I think they got along all right. Merle Davies was the oldest person born here

in Beaverton when she died, but she wasn't born quite in the city limits. It was on Watson and Allen Avenue on the southeast corner. Did she tell you about that?

TANZER: No.

ROSSI: I talked to Merle here a couple of years ago or so and got some pictures from her. I got some history of Beaverton from her.

TANZER: What did she say at that time? What can you tell me of what she told you?

ROSSI: She told about her father's sawmill business when they came here. They had several sawmills -- one right here off of Canyon Road on Beaverdam Road there, and then they had another one just south of town. I don't know the name of that area in there. I believe it was on Davies Road. They had a hard time making a go of it in the sawmill business. She said her father went broke in the sawmill business. She also said her father had some kind of uniform, could have been Civil War, but he was in one of the major wars, I'm sure.

TANZER: Where had they come from?

ROSSI: I really don't know. She had brothers and sisters, but I don't know how many. She could have given you a lot of information on Beaverton. Talk to my sister. She knew Merle real well. My sister taught school here in Beaverton, too, and she can tell you all about that family.

TANZER: What do you remember about the 1900 Saloon?

ROSSI: Well, of course, I don't remember too much about it because I was born in 1906 and I was pretty young yet when the saloon closed. But when we were kids, we used to walk uptown on the board sidewalks barefooted. We'd stub our toes and get slivers in our feet (laughter) and, of course, the streets weren't paved or even rock when we were little. The dust was 2 or 3 inches, or 4 inches thick and flying everywhere. We liked to walk in that. In the summertime, why we'd walk in the street in the dust. In the wintertime of course, we had to wear shoes. There was a certain time in the spring when we could go barefooted -- not just any time we wanted to. Mother said, "Well, it's too early yet." So we'd have to ask her when we could go barefooted.

TANZER: That was predicated on how warm the ground was?

ROSSI: Yes. (Laughter)

TANZER: So, did you go to the saloon or to visit some of the stores? What were your activities in the summer?

ROSSI: We used to work (from the time I was 10 years old) on the beaverdam, as they called it, where they raised the vegetables. They raised a lot of horseradish. There were Chinamen that were farming, raising carrots and lettuce and spinach and that sort of thing. It had to be weeded in the summer, you know, and we used to get down on our hands and knees and do that.

Mr. Stitt had the farm over where the C.E. Mason School is, over in that area,

and we used to work for him, weeding onions or whatever vegetables there were, for 10¢ an hour, ten hours a day. You got paid every day. When I went home, I'd usually go up to Mr. Thyng's ice cream parlor and have me an ice cream soddy or a big sundae for 15¢. And we used to go swimming down in the creek. The farmers used to dam the creek up and we'd go swimming.

TANZER: Now which creek was this?

ROSSI: This is the one that runs down where the outdoor theater is, in back of Damerow Ford, back through there.

TANZER: What is the name of that creek?

ROSSI: Well, the Beaverton Creek!! I see the city has a different name for it now, what do they call it? There was another stream that took off that came from the springs. It came through our property, our farm there, and it was Wesinger Creek.

TANZER: Who were the Wesingers?

ROSSI: The Wesingers were people who owned part of the Elitz Weinhard Brewery in Portland. They came out here after they lived in Portland. I can't tell you what year they came out here, but where the spring is -- it's still there on Walker Road. If you'll notice, there's a house right close to the road if you were going that way, on the right hand side -- got an arch there, you remember -- you notice that?

TANZER: Oh, at Walker, just before 217. Yes, with the copper door.

ROSSI: Yes, the copper door.

TANZER: Oh, sure. That's very close to where I live. We call it the castle. That's the Polsky house, is what it was.

ROSSI: Polsky had it after Wesinger.

TANZER: So that was the Wesinger house. Oh!

ROSSI: Yes. They were there. It's a long time ago but they had a big swimming pool -- well, it's still there, I guess. But that's where the water comes from. It comes down through this Wesinger spring and down back of Beaverton here. When we were kids, we used to walk over there to that spring and get a drink of that water. It came out of a pipe there. There was quite a flow of water. It was COLD. Real cold. And we drank out of the creek when we were working in the gardens weeding, why we'd just drink out of that creek. Of course, you couldn't do that today (laughter). But it was just as clear and nice -- no septic tanks or anything at that time. Nothing overflowed into the creek, you know.

TANZER: For whom did the Chinamen work. Did they work for someone or were they independent farmers?

ROSSI: The first ones I can remember was when my father quit the farm business. There were Chinamen that run the farm, but there was a Chinaman in

Portland who was the boss, that actually rented the farm. He hired these Chinamen to do the work. I don't remember ever seeing him myself. When we were little fellows, the Chinamen lived in the house there. And there was another Chinese family. These were all men that worked on this farm. There were no women. But right where the old sewer plant is the Chins had a farm. It's right in where Watson comes together there where the Plush Pippin Pie and the new bank are. The new bank's on that ground there.

TANZER: So that's the Chin's land. I had heard a story that there were a number of Chinese men who lived in one house on Canyon Road close to where Carr Chevrolet is.

ROSSI: Yes. Right next to it. I knew them. But I was quite young when they were there.

TANZER: I would be curious as to how they had gotten to Beaverton. They were there without families. I know they were single men. I wonder whether they spoke English.

ROSSI: Well, I don't know. I guess they came over here from China. I'm sure they did. And this boss I was telling you about rented the farm and hired these fellows to run it for him.

MRS. ROSSI: Your dad must have negotiated the rental.

ROSSI: Well sure, yes. He negotiated the rental with the boss. He called him the boss, But I didn't know who it was. They were there until about 1924, and then Father leased out the farm to George Angeles, a Greek. They raised celery; nothing but celery.

TANZER: So what happened to the Chinese?

ROSSI: Well they left; I know one of them went back to China. I remember when two of them came up to our house when we were living by the Safeway Store; they greeted us and told us they were going back to China. I don't know where the others went and I can't remember their names. Of course, most Chinamen were Charlie or John or ...

TANZER: They didn't use their Chinese names?

ROSSI: No.

TANZER: What happened to the Chin family?

ROSSI: Well, they moved into Portland in later years and had four daughters, I think.

TANZER: I was interested because I saw one Chinese girl in a graduation class at Beaverton, and so I didn't know how many children they had. Do you remember any Japanese families who lived here?

ROSSI: Yes, a Japanese family lived and ran the farm where Shakey's Pizza is there on Canyon Road. That ground was all low ground in there. It's been filled in. The house they lived in is still there. Isn't there a house right next to it?

TANZER: Right next to it, yes. The Stereo place, all kinds of small businesses, yes. That was their house?

ROSSI: That's where they lived.

TANZER: Do you remember their name?

ROSSI: No, I don't. But Mr. Keller owned that property and they lived in the big house that sits where Rodgers Store is now; he owned that ground. Mr. Purser died long before that. Of course, the Chinamen and the Japs couldn't buy ground. They had to lease it, rent it, in order to farm the ground.

TANZER: Do you remember any other people who would be racially different or religiously different in Beaverton? Did you know that there was a Ku Klux Klan in Beaverton?

ROSSI: Did I know that? Well, yes, I guess there was, yes. Mr. Springer that run the Springer grocery store and butcher shop was a Ku Kluxer, yup. We used to trade there and I know that when they found out about it, my father quit trading there and went to the other store. A lot of the Catholics did because, you know, they were opposed to that. About Mr. Springer and the store, a lot of the people quit buying. Well, I know my dad did, because they were against the Catholics for some reason or other. At that time I was pretty young and didn't pay any attention to it. But today I can't understand why there'd be a Klan, because that was in the South more, you know, where the colored people were. This closing of the school was something I can't remember. My sister could probably tell you about that.

MRS. ROSSI: My father (of course, he wasn't Catholic) worked as a grain elevator operator in Portland, and he lost his job because of the Klan, because his family were Catholic. So there must have been some Klansmen in the city of Portland as well.

TANZER: There is a very strong anti-Catholic feeling in this area. There weren't enough people of different racial characteristics. But the Klan, historically, even in the South, aside from being anti-Black, was anti-Catholic. And then if there were any Jews, they were anti-Jew. Were there any Jewish people in Beaverton?

ROSSI: Well, in the early days, not that I know of. Cashlund was Jewish.

TANZER: Was that the same Cashlund who went to San Francisco?

ROSSI: Well, I don't know. He owned quite a bit of property around here. But he was sort of an outcast. Wasn't he related to some of the Meier & Frank's? He was some relative, wasn't he? Yes, that's the one. Somebody told you about him already.

TANZER: No. Nobody told me about him. But the name came up just once, but I know the name from my history work in Portland. But tell me about him here, did you know him?

ROSSI: Oh, yes, yes. He was quite a troublemaker in the early 20's, I guess it was, yes. He was fighting the Council and Mr. Thyng was the Recorder

and he was always stirring up something. He didn't like the way they were running the city, I guess. He was like a concerned citizen. I shouldn't say that, but (chuckle) that's kind of what he did here.

Otherwise, nobody knew too much about him. He never worked and the understanding I had was that he was relatives of some of the Jewish people in Portland. It seems as though they were connected with Meier & Frank, whether it was on the Meier & Frank side but maybe on the other side, and THEY gave him money to get rid of him. He was sort of a black sheep in the family or something, but he was a good citizen as far as otherwise, I mean.

TANZER: Did he marry? Did he have a family?

ROSSI: No. No, not that I know of. He bought property here. How he got it, I don't know, up here where the Shubacks are. He had quite a lot of property at one time.

TANZER: What happened to the property that he had?

ROSSI: Well, the Shuback boys bought most of his property. They're natives, too. They'd be interesting to interview. Shubacks were all Swiss. They lived over here on Center Street and the father used to make cheese. Then they moved from there to 141st and lived there. Then the boys started buying up some of this property that Cashlund had. Most of it was either woods or hazelbrush; hardly any of it was cleared, I don't think. They started clearing it and raising potatoes there. Fred lives up on Cooper Mountain now and they've sold practically all of their property, I think, except where he lives. His brother died here a few years ago. It was a sad situation, but they had a lot of valuable property. Four Seasons is all property that they sold.

TANZER: So you went to Beaverton Grade School and then you moved on to Beaverton High School. You mentioned that you had not finished high school. Did you go to work?

ROSSI: Yes. Went to work.

TANZER: Where did you work, Mr. Rossi?

ROSSI: When I got out of school, I worked for Harrison Houston in the garage. He had a garage here repairing Ford cars mostly and he worked with Guy Carr and Otto Ericson, so I worked with him one summer. Then I worked for a while with Bert Hawkin, a contractor who built a lot of the early buildings and houses in Beaverton.

Then I went to work for Lewis Brothers; they had the livery stable here. Originally it was the livery stable and then they got trucks. I drove a truck for them for about ten years. Then I got married in 1932 and the wife and I bought a restaurant in Beaverton called the Greyhound Restaurant. I was in the restaurant business for about ten years, worked for the Southern Pacific for about ten years, and then I retired.

TANZER: Tell me about the restaurant.

ROSSI: The restaurant we bought was owned by a Mr. Allen and his wife.

His wife actually run it. He was a station agent with the Southern Pacific and the Southern Pacific Depot was right back of where the restaurant was. The restaurant was right there on Broadway, across from Holland's Feed. Actually, the Beaverton Pharmacy is right across the street where it was, where the restaurant is now. Holland's was just another door or two down from there but fairly close.

(Looking at pictures and some discussion) 1933, I guess it was beer came in '33.

TANZER: What did you do for the Southern Pacific?

ROSSI: I fired engines. I was a fireman for the Southern Pacific.

TANZER: Do you know about the Red Train?

ROSSI: Oh, yes.

TANZER: Tell me about the Red Train aside from it being transportation.

ROSSI: Well, the Oregon Electric. See, the Southern Pacific had a steam train that came right up 4th Street in Portland and out here and up to Hillsboro. That railroad came in 1871. Of course, I don't remember that, but we used to ride to Portland. Mother used to take us to Portland and we'd go on the steam train; there was one in a day and one out.

Then this Oregon Electric came out here. I think they finished their railroad in 1908. We lived right across from the Oregon Electric Depot -- on Broadway there, where the Safeway Store is. Of course, we could see it all the time, trains coming every day and who was getting on and who was getting off, right there, and the Oregon Electric was doing a better business, I guess, because of the electric cars.

But the Southern Pacific, when they came into Beaverton with their railroad, they came through the towns (like Beaverton here) right through the middle -- Aloha and Huber and Hillsboro and Reedville and Forest Grove -- they came right down the main street. Well, when the Oregon Electric came in, you see, they took off of Carden Home and came through more farming areas where there wasn't any population and they came into the east end of Beaverton, not really what you'd call downtown and then they took off and went out here to Orengo and swerved north of here and then back in to Hillsboro. THEY went down Washington Street which wasn't the main street in Hillsboro. But the Southern Pacific, when they got their red electrics in 1914, they dashed up and went right up and down the main street -- and it hurt the Oregon Electric.

Then the S.P. done more business than the Oregon Electric did. Of course, Oregon Electric stayed there in business a long time. I think they quit before S.P. I'm not sure. About the same time. I think the S.P. was the last train in 1929, I think, Red Electric. But they were nice, plush trains and fast and saved time. It took them 35 minutes to go clear to Portland, though, but it was kind of slow after they got down into Portland where the blocks were, you know, right down 4th street where they couldn't go very fast.

TANZER: But how long did it take to get into Portland when you drove the wagons in?

ROSSI: Oh, well, it was an all-day affair to go to Portland and back with the wagon.

TANZER: Do you remember the trip?

ROSSI: Yes. I made one. My older brother used to go with some of the fellas. But I took one trip in with the wagon that I can remember with Mr. Desinger. Mr. Desinger was a contractor here in Beaverton. He built quite a few buildings and his boys were carpenters and they used to go into Portland to get their lumber at Jones Lumber Co. on 4th Street. He'd take the wagon down there and they'd load up the lumber and come home. And it was an all-day deal. But we thought that was something -- to go to Portland in the wagon.

TANZER: Now what do you remember about Canyon Road?

ROSSI: Well, of course, it's been made over so many times. I can't remember when it was a board road, a county road, because that was before my time, but I can remember the old Horseshoe Bend, as they called it, coming down from Sylvan. It made a big loop around and took the old Canyon Drive, and that was all filled in. I helped fill that in. I worked one whole summer there, when they made the big cut this side of Sylvan there -- we dumped all that dirt down in that big canyon that cut right across where the Canyon Road is now instead of making that horseshoe loop around there. Yes. That's when I was working for Lewis Brothers in the latter part of the 20's.

TANZER: Do you remember the accident with the Red Train.

ROSSI: Yes. That was the Red Electric, Southern Pacific. It was down at Hillsdale, or Bertha -- they used to call it Bertha, and it's Hillsdale there now. It was in the 20's sometime, but I don't remember what year.

TANZER: Were you all there? Did you see the accident?

ROSSI: Well, I saw it not too long after it happened. We heard about it here in Beaverton and my father, we had our Mitchell car then, we drove up there. We could drive pretty close to where it was and then we walked across the field or something there. I remember one thing about it more than anything was the engineer got killed and his arm was still sticking out of the window where the engineer run the train. But it was really a bad one. I know the section foreman was riding in the front with one of the engineers and he got killed on the train. I remember some people got hurt, but I can't remember who they all were any more.

TANZER: So you worked ten years as a fireman for the Southern Pacific? Which line?

ROSSI: I worked most of the time out of Timber, Oregon. They had helpers there helping these trains over the hill that was hauling logs from the Tillamook area and out of the Tillamook Burn. And we were stationed at Timber. They had eleven engines there and some of those trains had five engines on them to help the trains up the hill. It was quite a grade coming up from down at Salmonberry. So I worked out of there most of the time and I worked out of Portland some.

TANZER: Where did you meet Alice?

ROSSI: Well, I knew Alice quite a long time because I lived here and knew the Benson family. Alice used to come into the bus depot where I had the restaurant and buy tickets. She was working in Portland.

MRS. ROSSI: I borrowed 50¢ from him.