

Person Interviewed: Elmer Grossen

Interviewed by: Winn Herrschaft and Juliane Schudek

Other people present: Roy Hofer

Location of Interview: 9553 NW Helvetia Road Hillsboro, OR 97124

Date: 3/1/2011

Special Conditions:

General Description: farming practices in the past and present, his involvement in 4-H programs, family history

:45 – 1:30 Elmer gives biographical information on place and date of birth etc. Lived in Helvetia all his life.

1:50 – 4:30 talks about childhood, horses as main source of heavy labor, lifting, transportation, getting first model T Ford in 1924 and other early cars, lack of noise pollution during childhood compared to today

4:40 – 9:55 talks about education in one room school house with only two teachers, gender-based chores at school, teacher salaries, reading ability of students then versus now, serving on school boards and hiring new principals and the issue of phonics and student literacy

10:00 – 13:50 talks about leading Rock Creek 4-H Dairy Club for 17 years, meaning of 4-H, what kids learn in 4-H

14:04 – 19:00 talks about growing up in rural community without radio or TV. Recreation and games. Talks about the beginning of the Helvetia Band and importance of music education. Elmer played alto horn in Helvetia Band and Washington County Band

20:05 – 21:30 talks about inception of Swiss picnic in Helvetia, used to be potluck not anymore because of permits required.

21:35 – 25:48 talks about family history, grandfather was Swiss immigrant, Kansas and moved to Oregon, homesteading in Nehalem, farming and working land and selling produce to Portland.

26:00 – 28:10 talks about cooperation, working and connecting with neighbors especially during harvest time, sharing threshing machines, work of women, sneaking wine as kids

28:15 – 30:00 talks more about threshing and combine, WWII and disruption of farming

30:20 – 31:50 talks about strawberry farming, didn't use immigrant or day-labor, quits planting strawberries because legislature made berry picking illegal. Increase in dependence on immigrant labor in berry farming.

32:00 – 33:15 early years of farming wheat, potatoes (cash crop prior to strawberries), pervasiveness of potato farming in early 1900s Washington County

33:20 tape ends

**Tags**

Rock Creek School, Helvetia School, Helvetia—Oregon, the Great Depression, Shutè Park, Washington County Fair, 4-H Club, Helvetia Band, Washington County Band, Education, Portland Rose Parade, Nehalem—Oregon, Portland—Oregon, strawberry farming, potato farming