

FRED and DORIS THURNHEER

TAPE 1, Side 1

August 26, 1996

M.O'R.: This is Michael O'Rourke for the Washington County Historical Society beginning an interview on August 26th with Fred - how do you pronounce your ...

F.T.: Thurnheer.

F.T.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: Okay. ... and his wife, Doris, who's also sitting on the sidelines here, and we might get around to asking you a few questions, too.

Anyway, why don't you tell me first, Fred, where you were born and when?

F.T.: In Bannock, Switzerland on the 2nd of January in 1907.

M.O'R.: Okay. And then how long did you live in Switzerland?

F.T.: Till I was - we came across when I was six years old.

M.O'R.: Okay.

F.T.: And we went to a place in Sandpoint, Idaho and lived there for four years, and then in 1917 we came to Oregon.

M.O'R.: Okay. What did your parents do in Switzerland?

F.T.: Well, my dad was mostly in the dairy business, but he also - he hauled logs down the mountain on a sled to the sawmills where they made the lumber out of it. And over there, they peeled the logs before they hauled them to the mill, and then they sawed them up for lumber and sold it.

M.O'R.: So your father did some of the peeling, too, or did he just haul the ...

F.T.: No, he hauled the logs down with horses. They put the front of the log on the sled and then dragged it down the mountain to the sawmill and cut it up for lumber, then.

M.O'R.: And your mother, was she a housewife, then?

F.T.: Yes.

M.O'R.: And what were your parents' names?

F.T.: Well, my mother's maiden name was Colbolt [ph].

M.O'R.: And her first name?

F.T.: Elizabeth.

M.O'R.: Okay.

F.T.: And dad's name was Lawrence Thurnheer.

M.O'R.: Do you remember Switzerland at all yourself?

F.T.: Not very much. I - well, I remember the last place we lived was in an apartment house, and there was kind of a railing on the outside, and the Zeppelins come over from Germany and flew over. It was just like an air show, you know.

And there was a fellow that stayed with us, and he wanted to set me up on that bannister, and I wouldn't allow it because I was afraid I was going to fall. So I watched it from that deck.

M.O'R.: But not on the bannister?

F.T.: Not on the bannister, yeah.

M.O'R.: And what town was this in Switzerland?

F.T.: Well, that was when I was about five years old.

Get that picture.

D.T.: I will. But you also want to tell him you have a sister.

F.T.: Yeah, I've got a sister, but she is in a nursing home, has been in a nursing home for about six years. She's 93 years

old, he 94 in - the 13th of November. And that was taken - I had an uncle that was a photographer, and he took that picture and gave it to me. That was when I was five years old.

M.O'R.: Oh, yeah. So somewhere around 1912 or something?

F.T.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: That's a great picture. And your sister's name?

F.T.: Alice. Alice Alt, now.

M.O'R.: And so she's your older sister, then?

F.T.: Yeah. I have a sister that died before I was born, and her name was Bertha.

M.O'R.: So do you remember anything of the trip over here?

F.T.: Oh, I sure do. I remember the Statue of Liberty coming into the harbor in New York. And when I was 80 years old I went back there and climbed clear to the top of it, 340 steps to the top.

M.O'R.: Well, that's good. Were you tired by the time you got to the top?

F.T.: Well, when I was 80 I was in real good shape yet, but in five months I'll be 90.

M.O'R.: Well, you still look to be in pretty good shape.

F.T.: Yeah. Well, I still do a few chores around here. I like to hoe in the garden, and we raise our own vegetables, and she cans a lot of beans. She's just canning peaches today that we picked someplace now.

M.O'R.: Oh, that sounds good.

M.O'R.: She's a good cook.

D.T.: Do you want to tell him that you remember going by where that ship sunk?

F.T.: Oh, yeah. We went by where the Titanic sunk, just the year before we came to this country. And they told us about it when we went by, off the coast of Newfoundland.

M.O'R.: So this was on your way over here?

F.T.: Yeah, that's on the way over here.

M.O'R.: Why did your parents decide to come here?

F.T.: Well, my mother had a health problem, and they told her to take an ocean voyage, and that's the reason we came to this country; otherwise, I guess we'd still have been in Switzerland. And it helped her, too. I don't know; it probably had something to do with the death of one child. Anyhow, the ocean trip helped her. She lived to be 73 years old, and then she died of a stroke, right here in this place.

M.O'R.: Right here?

F.T.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: And did your father, then, have any idea of what he would do once he came here? Did he plan to farm?

F.T.: Well, the first job he had in Idaho was milking cows on a dairy there. They wanted to sell the place to us, but we didn't have the finances to buy the place then.

So anyhow, the fellow that owned it, I guess he was a banker, and they lost the place to the mortgage company.

M.O'R.: And how long were you in Idaho, then?

F.T.: We lived in Sandpoint, Idaho for four years before we came to Oregon. And then done a lot of moving around before we came down here. Went from Sandpoint down to Salem. A doctor had a place there that they advertised in the paper, and they put us in kind of a dump to live in. They had advertised that there was a

house that we could live in, and when we got there, they didn't let us live in there.

So we didn't stay there very long, maybe about three months, and they wouldn't let us live in that house, so Dad went to see about another job in Oregon City in a paper mill, but they couldn't - we couldn't find any housing in Oregon City, so we moved to Portland, and he worked there in the sawmill in Portland.

M.O'R.: In Portland?

F.T.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: And then you moved out here after that?

F.T.: No, no. We moved from Salem - I mean, from Portland we moved to Tillamook for a short time, and from Tillamook we moved back to Portland, and from Portland we moved up to Scofield, and from Scofield down here. So I done a lot of moving around during the time I was going to grade school. So I went to five different schools just to go through the eighth grade.

M.O'R.: And your father was taking whatever jobs he could find in all of these places, then?

F.T.: Yes. Yeah, he was a hard worker, and he could get a job most anyplace. But he kind of liked the dairy business, and we was in the dairy business ten years up there, and from 1929 to 1970 here, and then ...

M.O'R.: For ten years up at Scofield, you mean?

F.T.: Yeah. Ten years up in Scofield.

M.O'R.: And that's near North Plains, you said?

F.T.: No, it's north of Banks.

M.O'R.: North of Banks.

F.T.: Ten miles north of Banks. Up in the hills.

M.O'R.: Oh, yeah.

F.T.: And I helped milk cows there, and I worked in the woods as what they call a whistle punk when I was 15 years old. I worked in the woods for a while, and ...

M.O'R.: Doing what?

F.T.: Well, you pull on a wire to send a signal in for them to go ahead or back up with their lines, and then you give the signal on the wire. That's call a whistle punk.

M.O'R.: Okay.

F.T.: So that's what I did for a while.

M.O'R.: And this is when they're logging, you mean?

F.T.: Yeah, logging in the woods. And then I worked in a trimmer pit there in the sawmill where the lumber comes down and they cut it off in different lengths. And I worked in that for a while. And I also worked on road construction with the horse - well, my dad - I drove the horses, and he'd hold the slip scraper to pick up the dirt and move it. And we helped build that road that goes from Buxton towards Vernonia with horses. At that time they didn't use - they didn't have the machinery then like they have now. That was back in the 20's.

M.O'R.: And now, when you were - the ten years up at Scofield, then, did you have your own dairy farm then?

F.T.: Yeah. We bought a place up there, Dad bought a place - 70 acres for \$1200.

M.O'R.: Sounds like a pretty good price today.

F.T.: [laughs] Yeah. And there was some timber on it yet then. And there was a big two-story house up there, and it had a chimney fire in June - the 26th of June in 1926 they had a chimney

fire and burnt the house clear to the ground. I was delivering milk with - over in Camp, and when I came home the house was burned clear to the ground.

M.O'R.: Is that what precipitated your move, then, down here?

F.T.: No. There was another house on the place, and we had renters on there, and they moved out so we could move in. But it was a small house, and they had to build onto it. And the sawmill Dad worked up for up there, they donated the lumber for us to build onto the house?

F.T.: Oh, yeah? So that helped you?

F.T.: Yeah. That helped us to get started. And then the sawmill run out of timber in 1929, and so all the people moved out so we didn't have anyplace to sell the milk because we was delivering milk by the bottle up there at that time. So that's when we looked for another place and come down here in 1929 and bought this place; my folks bought it.

M.O'R.: And did your folks ...

F.T.: For 12,500 in 1929. But then we went through the Depression, and we had an awful hard time trying to pay for the place, because that was hard times during - 1929, we had just run into the Depression.

M.O'R.: Yeah, I'll bet it was.

F.T.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: Did your father sell the place up in Scofield, then?

F.T.: Yeah. We - well, we made a kind of a deal with the company we bought the place from, and it was traded in for - so we could make a payment on this place.

M.O'R.: I see.

F.T.: They paid \$1500 down on it and took the rest on a mortgage.

M.O'R.: And the sawmill that closed in '29, where was that located, exactly?

F.T.: That was up at Scofield there.

M.O'R.: And it was on ...

F.T.: And they run out of timber so they had to close down.

M.O'R.: And was that - I'm not totally familiar with the geography here. Was that on a creek or was it on the Tualatin up there?

F.T.: Well, it's close to Dairy Creek.

M.O'R.: But the sawmill itself wasn't right on the water, then?

F.T.: No. Well, they had a mill pond there where they dumped the logs in, and then the logs would go in and they was lifted up to where they cut the logs into lumber. And then that goes through to the planer to plane the lumber, you know. And then - I worked on the planer for a while, too, while I was in the mill. And then they stack it out in the yards. And they'd sell lumber at that time for \$12 a thousand, loaded on the car. That's a little different than it is today!

M.O'R.: That's for sure. And what was the name of the sawmill, or the name of the family ...

F.T.: Standard Box and Lumber Company was the name of the place.

M.O'R.: Okay. And another thing I was going to ask you, just backtracking a bit here, I assume that English wasn't your first language, then; is that right?

F.T.: Yes. When we came to Sandpoint, of course, they had a German church there. See, the German language is spoken in the Eastern part of Switzerland, and we went to that German church there, and we met some other people there, some Swiss friends, and they went to the same church. And we used to be together practically every Sunday. One Sunday they'd come to our place, and the next Sunday we'd go to theirs.

And he was a butcher, and he lived to be 99 years old, and his wife lived to be 100 years old. Their name was Albert and Pauline Senn.

M.O'R.: This was in Sandpoint?

F.T.: Yeah, this was in Sandpoint.

D.T.: Tell him how you learned the English language when you got over here.

M.O'R.: Now, German was your first language, then?

F.T.: Well, the Eastern part of Switzerland speaks the German language.

M.O'R.: And is that the first language that you learned?

F.T.: Yes. And then we came to this country, and we landed in New York - no, we left France on Dad's 40th birthday, and it took us seven days to come across the ocean to New York, and then we rode by train from New York to Spokane, Washington. And then from there we went to Sandpoint, and we lived in - oh, kind of a small house, and our furniture didn't come for two weeks. I don't know why, but we had to make the meals outside until our furniture came.

And then from there we moved into a log house and lived in a log house for several years until we moved to Oregon.

M.O'R.: And do you remember much about the train trip from New York to Spokane?

F.T.: I sure do, because we was - I and my sister, we was hungry all the time, and we said, "If they're not going to feed us back here, we're going to go back to Switzerland."

D.T.: You went the Southern route you said?

F.T.: Well, not exactly. It started in New York, and it went up to Buffalo, and then Chicago, and then from there down to St. Louis and Pocatella, Idaho, and then up to Spokane. And from there we went to Sandpoint, Idaho.

M.O'R.: And then how did you first learn English?

F.T.: Well, that was a kind of a funny story, too. There was only about two weeks of school left, and so they told us just to come in and set to kind of understand the language, you know.

M.O'R.: And this was where, in Sandpoint?

F.T.: In Sandpoint, in the country school there. And I sat in there, and I couldn't understand a thing, so I just walked out of school and went home. But my sister, she stayed for the full two weeks.

And then I kind of learned the language by just playing with the other children around. And then the next year I started school there.

M.O'R.: And then once you were in school, I suppose you really speeded up your language learning?

F.T.: Yeah. Well, one thing, it's hard when you move from one state to the other because their system is kind of different - that is, moving from one state to the other, you know. So school

wasn't easy for me because we done so much moving around all the time.

M.O'R.: You mentioned moving here in 1929, and that you assumed that 11,000 or 12,000 mortgage for this place?

F.T.: \$12,500 mortgage, and we paid \$1500 down on it.

M.O'R.: And your dad then went into dairy farming here?

F.T.: Yes. Yeah, we milked cows here from 1929 to 1970.

M.O'R.: How many head of cattle did you have in the beginning?

F.T.: Oh, we started out with about 22 head and ended up with about 30 head of cattle before we sold out in 1970.

M.O'R.: You mentioned the Depression was a tough time ...

F.T.: Oh, it sure was. One time in 1933, we lost 22 head of cows on the TB test. They come around and test your cows for TB, you know? And the funny part of it was there was only one cow that was infected, and all the rest of them were sold for meat. Now, I don't think there's anything fair about that, but that's what happened.

M.O'R.: So the local authorities came to test your cows for TB, and then you had to destroy them all?

F.T.: Yeah. They had to be sold to the stockyards. And all but that one animal was used for meat. So that don't sound fair, does it?

M.O'R.: No. So the other animals, the other 21, weren't infected, then?

F.T.: No.

M.O'R.: And what was the Depression like, in terms of not only your own family but just ...

F.T.: Well, I'll tell you, being as we lost them cows, that was in 1933, then I went to work in the CC camp up at Zigzag, and I stayed there for a year to help the folks out, and then come back and we had to start all over again in the dairy industry.

M.O'R.: So you bought new cattle, then?

F.T.: Yeah, we bought new cattle and started all over again.

M.O'R.: But you always managed somehow to scrape together the money you needed?

F.T.: Well, I tell you, I worked all my life for my parents without any wages until I was 43 years old, when I married her. And the folks never paid me a dime for working all that time, but I got the place, so I guess it come out allright in the end. But I never got a cent of wages all the time I was working for my folks.

M.O'R.: And what did you do at Zigzag for the CC?

F.T.: Well, I was mostly on trail work. They have mountain trails going up to the lookouts, and we had to - there would be trees fall over the lines, and we had to cut them out. And there would be slides where we had to shovel the dirt off for the trails going up to the lookouts, and that was the kind of work I did up there for a year. And I got a dollar a day and board and room. And not only that, \$25 had to go home, and I had \$5 to spend.

M.O'R.: So you sent most of it home? And was your dad working a job besides the dairy farm then, too?

F.T.: Yeah. I don't remember just what he did during that time.

M.O'R.: When you were living on the place - well, first of all, how did your neighbors around you fare during the Depression?

F.T.: Well, some of them lost their places because they couldn't pay the mortgage. We had a mortgage through - oh, the federal government had a deal where you borrowed money from them, you know, to - you had to pay the interest. If you couldn't make the payment, as long as you paid the interest they let you keep the place. So it took us from 1929 - it took us 15 years to pay the place off.

M.O'R.: Well, that's not too bad. Many of those years were Depression years.

F.T.: Well, like I say, see, I never got no salary all the time. All I got was my board and room and clothing while I was here.

M.O'R.: It doesn't sound like you had too much leisure time as a kid?

F.T.: No, I didn't. Not what you - in fact, I worked ten years straight without taking a day off, seven days a week.

M.O'R.: Did you ever have a chance to do any, you know, recreational activities?

F.T.: Well, I always liked to dance. So I went to dances usually ...

[end of side one]

FRED THURNHEER

TAPE 1, Side 2

August 26, 1996

M.O'R.: Okay. So you liked to dance, you said?

F.T.: Oh, yeah. I loved to dance. I still dance, and I'm 89 years old now.

M.O'R.: And where ...

F.T.: We still go to dances over at Laurel - McMinnville, I should say. Laurel is where I first started dancing. And then we go over to McMinnville to the Grange dances. Still dance.

M.O'R.: And when you first started dancing it was at Laurel?

F.T.: Yes.

M.O'R.: At the Grange Hall?

F.T.: Yeah, the Grange Hall in Laurel.

M.O'R.: Was it a live band usually, live music?

F.T.: Yeah, live music. This lady by the name of Mrs. Malloy used to play the piano. And they had usually a violin and a drum.

M.O'R.: And what kind of tunes would you dance to?

F.T.: Well, we had like waltzes and two steps and foxtrots. So that was my recreation. I love to dance.

M.O'R.: What do you remember about the river from those days, the Tualatin River?

F.T.: Well, there was a big flood in 1933. We had an irrigation pump down there, and it came clear over the box where the electricity - where the meter is. Came clear over the top of that in 1933. So - and then of course the flood we had this spring, up here you couldn't even go to Hillsboro. There was water over the

top of the road. And down here, going towards Twin Oaks, there was water over the road there. So if we wanted to go to town, we had to go this way and take Jackson Road in order to go to Hillsboro.

M.O'R.: So River Road was blocked in the two places.

D.T.: We practically didn't go anyplace because ...

F.T.: No.

D.T.: ... we didn't need to.

M.O'R.: So was the flood of '96 even worse than the one in the 30's then?

F.T.: Well, of course there's more population now, so it affected the people more than the flood did then because there wasn't so much - there's more housing around now. Well, naturally they're coming in from Beaverton and from Hillsboro, so we're only about - oh - two miles from the - well, it isn't the Beaverton area, but it's the housing area, you might say, and three miles from Hillsboro here - to the city limits, I should say.

D.T.: Doesn't this flood about every 30 years?

F.T.: Yeah.

D.T.: That's about the third one you've seen?

F.T.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: That's right. There was one in the 60's, too. I remember it.

D.T.: It's the third time. And I think this one was ...

F.T.: Well, '62 we had a wind storm.

M.O'R.: Oh, yeah. The Columbus Day storm.

F.T.: The Columbus Day storm was in '62, and we lost some walnut trees. They blew over right across the porch and knocked

that thing down in front there, that little porch deal, and some walnut trees blew over right over here.

D.T.: Your machine shed blew ...

F.T.: Yeah, the machine shed blew clear halfway down the riverbank. The Columbus Day storm. And so we had to rebuild that, too. So had plenty of misfortunes in our lifetime, too.

M.O'R.: A lot of battles with the forces of nature, eh?

F.T.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: Did you ever swim on the Tualatin?

F.T.: No. That's one thing, I never learned to swim. No, I never did swim in my life.

M.O'R.: Did you go on the river in a boat?

F.T.: No. I went fishing once in a while, but that was my extent.

M.O'R.: Just one time?

F.T.: Well, I went fishing several times, but I never did learn to swim.

M.O'R.: I'm wondering what the river was like back then in terms of its water quality and just the amount of water in the river. Can you tell me?

F.T.: Well, you see, when they put that Scoggins Dam in, that helped hold a lot of the water back. But now this last storm we had this spring, in May, they had to let some of the water loose, and that helped flood the road up here, I think, because if they hadn't have turned that water loose, they might have lost their dam. And the dam is right by Stimson's Mill; you probably know that. And that would have probably washed that mill off of there.

M.O'R.: Right. So that's why they had to let the water go?

F.T.: Yeah. They had to let the water go, so I think that probably caused some of this area to flood more, then.

M.O'R.: And back when you first came to this place, I imagine the river would get pretty low in the summertime?

F.T.: Yes, in fact it's pretty low right now. Of course, we had all that hot weather, you know, and that made the water go down. We use water out of the river for irrigation. They're watering the corn out here now. We rent the ground to [indiscernible], and he raises corn on the place. He'll raise corn two years, and then the next year he'll raise wheat, and they plow the stalks under for fertilizer.

This is very productive land, and that's why I don't like to see it go into housing, because we had wheat that went 100 bushels to the acre, and the corn goes ten tons to the acre of corn we get. So I don't like to see good farmland go into housing, and you can see the reason why.

M.O'R.: Sure. And a lot of development's been taking place out here lately. A lot of farmland has gone into housing.

M.O'R.: Yeah. If we wanted to sell the house for a development, we could probably get a big price for it. I don't want to see that myself because it's too good of farmland for that.

M.O'R.: Now, let's see. When - I guess by the time the war broke out, you were already in your 30's?

F.T.: Yes. I was 35, yes.

M.O'R.: So did you ...

F.T.: No, I didn't serve in the Army.

M.O'R.: So you sort of watched the war go by from here on the farm?

F.T.: Yeah. Of course, we had all the cows to milk, and so they didn't force you to enlist when you were dairying like that, or had a farm operation of any kind. They didn't force you to. They didn't draft you, in other words.

M.O'R.: Were there any inconveniences here on the farm during the war? Any shortages or anything like that?

F.T.: Well, there was shortages in a way. Oh, I don't know just how to explain it, but there were some kinds of shortages, all right.

M.O'R.: How did you feel about - how did you and your father both, I guess, feel about the war, since ...

F.T.: Well, you know, Switzerland is a country where - they have military training there, but they don't believe in wars.

M.O'R.: Right.

F.T.: In fact, at one time the Kaiser said, "If we came over here to Switzerland and wanted to take the country over, we've got twice as much population as you have." And the general said, "Well, we'd just shoot twice."

Well, they was always noted to be crack shots, so that was his answer.

M.O'R.: The Swiss army, you mean?

F.T.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: Were there concerns about relatives back home or anything like that during the war, or did you have relatives still in Switzerland at that time?

F.T.: Yeah, all my relatives were over there because we was the only part of the family that come over here. Of course, I was only six years old, so I didn't know too much about the relatives

over there. I know my mother had - she had three sisters, and she had a brother, and he was in the army, and I don't know - they had some kind of a maneuver up in the mountains, and he got pneumonia and died at the age of 25. And he was the only boy in the family.

And Dad had two brothers and a sister, and Dad was the youngest one in the family. Mother was the youngest one on her side of the family.

And my sister, she went to school four years over there, so she would write to the relatives over there.

M.O'R.: When you were dairy farming here in the early days, where did you sell your milk?

F.T.: It went to a coop in Portland.

M.O'R.: Did they come in and get it, or did you have to bring it into town?

F.T.: No, they picked it up. They first started, then they used to pick it up in ten-gallon cans, and then afterwards they put tanks in, and they picked it up with the tanker.

M.O'R.: Did you often make the trip into Portland back in those days?

F.T.: Well, not too often. We didn't like to drive in the traffic.

M.O'R.: Was traffic bad even then?

F.T.: Well, it wasn't bad then, but Dad never drove, and I was the one that had to do the driving. So we done most of our shopping in Hillsboro and Beaverton, so we didn't go to Portland too often.

M.O'R.: But you had a car, the family had a car?

F.T.: Yeah. We had a car. We bought the first new car when we lived in Scofield, a Chevrolet touring car, for \$695, brand new Chevrolet touring car. And we took a trip up to Sandpoint and up into Canada with that car. And I drove it.

M.O'R.: And you drove it, huh?

F.T.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: That must have been sort of exciting.

F.T.: Yes, it was. Of course we had friends in Sandpoint that we stopped to see on the way up to Canada.

And I - we sold the cows in 1970, and then we done a lot of traveling since. Before that time I couldn't travel because of being tied down with the cows, you know. So I've been to Europe three different times. Been up and down the East Coast, and I've been up and down the West Coast. Been up to Canada and down to Mexico, and all along the coast. Been back to New York and down the coast there as far as the Carolinas. And so I've done a lot of traveling since I retired from milking cows, because I couldn't do any of that when we had the cows. So I've been around.

M.O'R.: Well, that's good. I'm glad you got a chance to do that.

F.T.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: Now, do you remember - there was, I think right around 1950, the Army Corps of Engineers came in and they were going to do some work on the Tualatin? I believe they were going to straighten it out in some places and ...

F.T.: No, what they did was remove the debris that went into the river. And they got as far as our place, and they ran out of money, and they never did anything anymore after that.

D.T.: You ought to see it now. It's so full of trees and stuff.

M.O'R.: I'll bet. Especially after the flood this year. When you say they got as far as your place, were they working up from the mouth or were they ...

F.T.: No, they was coming from Hillsboro out this way.

M.O'R.: Okay. I see.

F.T.: Yeah. And they run out of money when - well, I think they got down as far as the bridge, and then they run out of money. The bridge that goes across Farmington Road.

D.T.: Tell him about the time that you could go down there and step across the river.

F.T.: Yeah.

D.T.: It was so dry.

F.T.: Yeah, that was - gosh, I can't remember.

D.T.: Before they put the dam in.

F.T.: Yeah. The river - oh, I remember now. It was in the 70's. The river was so low that you could step across it. And of course everybody - not everybody, but a lot of people were irrigating, and that took - they had to cut some of that down.

M.O'R.: Now, you said you have irrigated with Tualatin water, too?

F.T.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: Did you have water rights with this place?

F.T.: We got a water right sometime back in the 30's some-time, and so we've been watering ever since. And now the renters, they've got the sprinklers going out in the corn there now.

M.O'R.: And that's river water?

F.T.: That's river water, yeah.

M.O'R.: Now, when Scoggins went in they started charging farmers for river water, I understand. Did they come and talk to you about that?

F.T.: The only ones they charged is they put a pipeline out towards the north of town, and they have to pay for the water there in order to pay for that pipeline.

M.O'R.: I see.

F.T.: I don't know just how much they charge, but naturally they had to have money to help pay for that pipeline. That goes out to Hillsboro.

M.O'R.: And then what about - you still don't pay for irrigation here?

F.T.: No. No, we don't pay for any water.

M.O'R.: So you - because I understood also that the farmers were paying partly because - to finance the Scoggins Dam, also.

F.T.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: And I thought maybe that you might have had to pay, too, because you were taking water from the river after the dam was built?

F.T.: No.

M.O'R.: Okay. Did you - were you involved at all in any of the meetings or planning that went into building the dam?

F.T.: No, not exactly.

M.O'R.: I guess there were some farmers here that were somewhat active in that, Oscar Hagg and ...

F.T.: Yes. Well, Henry Hagg. The dam was named after him, after Henry Hagg. And shortly after that time he passed away. But

Oscar Hagg, he had cancer. They was running a dairy, him and Henry Hagg were running a dairy on that road - what's the name of that road that goes by their place?

D.T.: You mean the one that comes out at Reedville.

F.T.: Yeah.

D.T.: Isn't that 209? I don't know. I know where it goes.

F.T.: Yeah, I guess it would be 209. Yeah, that would be 209, that's right.

M.O'R.: Well, did Henry Hagg ever talk to you about the dam, or did you have any ...

F.T.: Well, they had meetings about it, yeah. Used to attend some of the meetings over at the Laurel Community Hall. And Oscar, he - I think he lived to be up in his 90's.

M.O'R.: Yeah. He just died a couple years ago, right?

F.T.: Yeah. He had to wear one of them bags, you know. But he outlived Henry.

M.O'R.: I talked to Oscar Hagg's wife, Lucille, here about two months ago. So she told me a little bit about that story of how Henry, and then later Oscar, sort of - you know, organized the effort to get Scoggins Dam built.

F.T.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: Did you go to the opening ceremony for Scoggins Dam, by any chance?

D.T.: Didn't you and Fritz Morris go up there when they dedicated it or broke ground for it or something?

F.T.: No, I don't think so.

D.T.: Yes, you did.

F.T.: Well, after all, after you get my age your memory isn't so good anymore.

M.O'R.: It seems to be in pretty good shape.

F.T.: I think so, for my age.

M.O'R.: Another thing that happened around the same time as Scoggins Dam was that there was a building moratorium here in 1970 or '71 in Washington County where they wouldn't allow people to build anymore.

F.T.: Yeah, that's right.

M.O'R.: And I guess that didn't last too long, but it forced all of these little sewer districts to get together and form the big Unified Sewerage Agency that's out here now.

F.T.: Yeah. I know we have some friends that live out ...

D.T.: Yeah, but that has nothing to do with that.

F.T.: No. But anyhow, they live right along the road there by where the park used to be.

D.T.: No, they live out in Gales Creek.

F.T.: Out in Gales Creek, yeah. And they wanted \$10,000 just for a hookup.

D.T.: For water, not sewage.

F.T.: Yeah. For water. Just to connect for water coming from the Gaston area, wasn't it?

D.T.: I don't know.

M.O'R.: Well, one of the reasons I guess that they put the building ban on was because they were concerned about the water quality in the Tualatin, and they ...

F.T.: Well, I don't think the quality of the water ever was too good, as far as that is concerned. Not for drinking water, you know what I mean.

M.O'R.: So have you seen much difference in the quality over the years, do you think, or has it always been about the same?

F.T.: No, it's about the same.

D.T.: Well, people used to swim in it, which they don't anymore. Because when I was a kid I used to swim in it down by Scholls.

F.T.: Yeah, they used to swim down there where we have the pump setting.

M.O'R.: People would just come and ask you if they could swim here?

F.T.: They didn't ask.

M.O'R.: And then when they - well, are you on a septic tank system here, or have you hooked up to the sewers?

F.T.: No. We've just got our own septic system.

M.O'R.: Still, huh?

F.T.: Yeah. It's up the road here not very far, but we still have our own septic system. It hasn't come out this far.

D.T.: It probably will.

M.O'R.: But you were never forced to hook up to the sewer, then?

D.T.: There's no place to hook up to it because it hasn't come out here.

M.O'R.: Then I guess it was in the 1980's there were some lawsuits about the water quality in the Tualatin and the sewer

district out here got into some trouble, and they wound up in court.

F.T.: Oh?

M.O'R.: And there were some other events, too. Did you remember any of that when it was going on?

F.T.: No, I don't.

M.O'R.: Oh, yeah. And you've raised - besides dairy cows you've also raised some crops for your cattle here?

F.T.: Yeah. We always raised - well, we raised alfalfa for quite a while, and then we raised corn to put in the silo for silage. And then we used alfalfa for silage at one time. And of course we had alfalfa down on the place where she used to live.

D.T.: You had most of your place in pasture for your cows.

F.T.: Yeah, we had most of our place in pasture and let the cows graze on there. And then after we sold the cows, the Jackson brothers, they rented our ground for potatoes, and we got 20 tons of potatoes to the acre. And then the next year they put it into wheat, and there happened to be a shortage of wheat that year, and we got \$5 a bushel for the wheat. So we got \$10,000 for our third. So that was pretty good.

M.O'R.: That sounds pretty good.

F.T.: Clear back then, during that time. Of course, now the wheat price is up there, but everything is higher now, so that meant a lot more then than it does now.

M.O'R.: Right. Yeah, a dollar was more valuable then.

F.T.: Yeah. A dollar went a lot farther than it does today.

M.O'R.: That's right. Were there any other stories that you can recall about farming here or about the river that we haven't already talked about?

F.T.: Well, only the high water, of course.

D.T.: Well, one time - years ago they logged, and the logs went down the river.

F.T.: Well, I sold some timber off of the place here, just last year.

D.T.: No. I was talking about other times when the river down here, they logged someplace - and that was before you came here - and the logs went ...

F.T.: Oh, yeah. Yeah, that was before we came on the place. That was when Zimmermann was living here yet.

D.T.: Well, that's something about the river.

M.O'R.: I have a note here that your family bought it from Joe Zimmermann.

F.T.: That's right.

M.O'R.: That was the original owner's name?

F.T.: Yeah. He had lost his wife - I don't know - a year or two before. And then he passed away about six months after we bought the place.

M.O'R.: And what was the story about logs on the river, then?

F.T.: Well, I guess they used to raft logs down the river at one time, from what I understand.

M.O'R.: And when did your parents pass on?

[end of tape]

FRED and DORIS THURNHEER

TAPE 2, Side 1

August 26, 1996

M.O'R.: This is Michael O'Rourke for the Washington County Historical Society continuing the interview with Fred Thurnheer on August the 26th.

So you were saying your mother passed away in ...

F.T.: ... passed away ...

D.T.: March the 13th, 1951.

F.T.: Yeah. And Dad died the 29th of February in 1960. How's that for memory?

M.O'R.: That's good. And that's when you took over this place, then?

F.T.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: Or had he already given it to you before then?

F.T.: Well, we kind of took over when Doris and I got married in 1950.

M.O'R.: Well, now, that's a subject, too. So you met Doris at a dance down here at Laurel?

F.T.: At Laurel.

D.T.: No, it was down at the Kenton Grange Hall.

F.T.: Oh. Kenton Grange Hall.

M.O'R.: Okay.

D.T.: But you'd known who I was before. He was bashful.

F.T.: Well, I didn't get married till I was 43, and I've been married 46 years now.

M.O'R.: And so you knew who Doris was before you hooked up with her at the dance?

F.T.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: And then how did you decide to get married?

D.T.: I guess he thought he was old enough.

F.T.: Well, of course her folks were in the farming business, and so were we. And she knew a lot about farming, and so did I. And so that's why we hooked up, I guess.

M.O'R.: I have to probably go in about ten minutes - I've got another interview - but before I do, maybe I'll ask you, Doris, to come over and sit on the couch for a minute, too, and I'll ask you a couple of questions about ...

D.T.: What are you going to ask me?

M.O'R.: Well, I was going to ask you some of your memories about the Tualatin from your folks' place and swimming there, et cetera.

[interruption]

M.O'R.: So you said that you swam in the Tualatin?

D.T.: Down by Scholls.

M.O'R.: And this was when you were a kid?

D.T.: Well, and grown up times, I guess. I learned to swim in our little creek down there, and then we used to go over to Scholls, just past the church down there there was a swimming hole, and people would go there swimming. And I suppose I was 16, 18. I don't know. Teenager.

M.O'R.: So it was a popular place to swim, then?

D.T.: Yeah, there was a lot of them swam down there, yeah. I remember this Perry Meyers, he would dive off of the diving

board, and you never thought he'd ever come up. After a while he'd be way down there, and he'd come up. He swam underwater.

M.O'R.: So what was it like swimming in the Tualatin?

D.T.: Well, I'm not a very good swimmer, but I just swam in it. But never up here.

M.O'R.: And your folks, what kind of farmers were they?

D.T.: Just grain farmers.

F.T.: Well, you had dairy cows, too.

D.T.: Well, they had a few cows, but not like you did here. Mostly grain, hay, stuff like that.

M.O'R.: And what was your family name, again?

D.T.: Heaton was my maiden name. And my mother died when I was four - and what else?

F.T.: Your dad was 75 when he died.

D.T.: Yeah. Well, he died after we got married. In 1955 he passed away.

M.O'R.: So you never really knew your mother very well?

D.T.: Never did, no. I was four years old. Oh, I had a few little things I remember about her, but that's all. My dad never remarried, and I had two brothers and myself. And that's the way it is.

M.O'R.: How did your parents come to this farm?

D.T.: Well, my mother's maiden name was Hesse. Do you know any of them?

M.O'R.: No.

D.T.: Okay. Her maiden name was Hesse. And my - brother and sister married brother and sister there. My dad married a Hesse, and my aunt, she married a Hesse. So brother and sister married

brother and sister. And they lived in the Scholls area, and that's how they, I guess, got acquainted. And the Grandpa Hesse, he bought his wife - I mean, his daughter this place on Tile Flat Road. So that's where they lived.

And my dad helped take care of his wife's parents until they passed away, which he wasn't supposed to, but he did. That would be another story, and that's beyond ...

But anyway, that's where they came. My dad came from Kansas in - I don't know - years before. He was born in Kansas, and the family came to Oregon. I wouldn't know what year it was anymore.

And my mother's side, they come from Illinois, and they lived in Forest Grove, and then they moved to the Scholls area. So that took care of that.

M.O'R.: And you knew Fred a little bit before you ...

D.T.: Oh, yeah. I had seen him. Saw him on the street once, and I said "hi" to him. Yeah, I knew who he [was], and I guess he knew who I was, or whatever.

M.O'R.: And then you - the two of you worked here on the dairy farm?

D.T.: You bet your life. I helped him.

M.O'R.: What sorts of things did you do on the farm?

D.T.: Well, in fact what year did you have your back operation?

F.T.: In 1968.

D.T.: And I milked all the cows myself, night and morning. Yeah, that's right.

F.T.: With the machine.

D.T.: Well, of course you had a milking machine. I guess the cows survived. I did.

F.T.: Then I took a trip to Switzerland when I retired with my sister because her husband wouldn't go with her - I don't know, I guess he didn't want to spend the money or something. So I went with her over to Switzerland.

D.T.: Well, you went for her health reasons is what you went for. Left me here on the place.

F.T.: So she took care of the stock.

D.T.: Well, I didn't milk that many cows. Then we just had a few.

F.T.: Well, wasn't what-you-call-him here then?

D.T.: No. Just Walter, Bonnie and I. I was working in the potatoes. So that's the way it went.

M.O'R.: And you have children?

D.T.: Two adopted ones, a boy and a girl.

M.O'R.: And that's Walter and Bonnie?

D.T.: Yes.

M.O'R.: And are they still here on the farm?

D.T.: Walter lives across the street, but the girl, she married somebody in the Army, and he's retired from the Army now, or he got an early retirement, and they live in Lake Oswego. And she has three children, a girl - what? - 17?

F.T.: Yeah.

D.T.: And two of them that will be - well, they'll be 12 and 13 in November. So that's the way it is.

M.O'R.: Okay. It's nice to get a little bit of background.

How long did your courtship last before you married after meeting at the dance?

D.T.: We started to go together in March and got married in September. 1950. He's got to live to the year 2,000 to celebrate your golden wedding.

F.T.: Yeah. I don't know whether I'll make it or not.

D.T.: Well, you'll make it.

M.O'R.: Yeah, you've got a ...

D.T.: ... good start.

M.O'R.: A good start, that's right. You're within striking distance.

D.T.: Yeah, we have to have a big blowout on his 90th birthday. First birthday party he ever had was when he was 80.

M.O'R.: Really?

F.T.: Yeah. That's right. And she made it up for me.

D.T.: Well, we had this group of people our age, you know, and so we had a pot luck and played cards and so forth on his 80th birthday.

M.O'R.: Pinochle?

D.T.: Yeah. And then we had somebody came in and - I don't know - she cut up for a while. It wasn't a stripper. Didn't think that would work. But anyway, so all the people got - well, there was about 30 of us here. Can you imagine putting 30 in here? We did. We used one of the rooms in there, and the kitchen, and pot luck, and they got along fine.

M.O'R.: Sounds like quite a party.

D.T.: Every year for Fourth of July we have a Fourth of July picnic because people don't like to get out on the road, and this is the first year that I couldn't have it.

F.T.: Because she was sick.

D.T.: And so everybody enjoys coming. So it seems like every year there's more added to it. Well, it started in about 1982 because we had strawberries, so we had strawberry shortcake, and it just rolled in year after year. So that's it.

F.T.: Yeah, it's mostly our dance friends.

D.T.: It seems like the neighbors don't neighbor around here.

F.T.: No, they don't.

D.T.: You go and visit with people further away. So -.

F.T.: Yeah, it isn't like it used to be. People don't neighbor anymore like they used to years ago. You know, when we used to thrash, all the neighbors helped each other with the thrashing. And then ...

D.T.: Haying and thrashing.

F.T.: And then you would serve dinner at your house and feed all the people that helped, see. We did that years ago, but you don't do that anymore.

D.T.: I think when they took the schools away and made them consolidated, that took your community away.

Well, he said he has to go, so -.

M.O'R.: Oh, that's okay. I've got another minute or two. I was just going to ask you, in fact, if there was anything else that we - any other events or stories that come to mind that we haven't talked about so far?

F.T.: Well, you might say - this used to be a single-story house. It had porches on three sides. And we used to have ten-foot ceilings, and we cut the ceilings down to eight feet, so you had two foot of wall there, so we put the upstairs in.

M.O'R.: Oh, yeah. So you remodeled it?

F.T.: Remodeled it. And then we had room for the kids upstairs, the bedrooms up there.

D.T.: Yeah, and you changed these windows, too. I don't remember what year that was now.

M.O'R.: Did you do this work yourself?

D.T.: Oh, no.

F.T.: No. We had it done.

D.T.: All he does is milk cows. Not a carpenter.

F.T.: No. Well, I made a good living.

D.T.: Well, I didn't say you didn't.

F.T.: I think I done pretty good for just having the eighth grade education.

M.O'R.: Well, I'd like to thank you both for talking with me today.

D.T.: You're welcome.

[end of side one; end of tape]