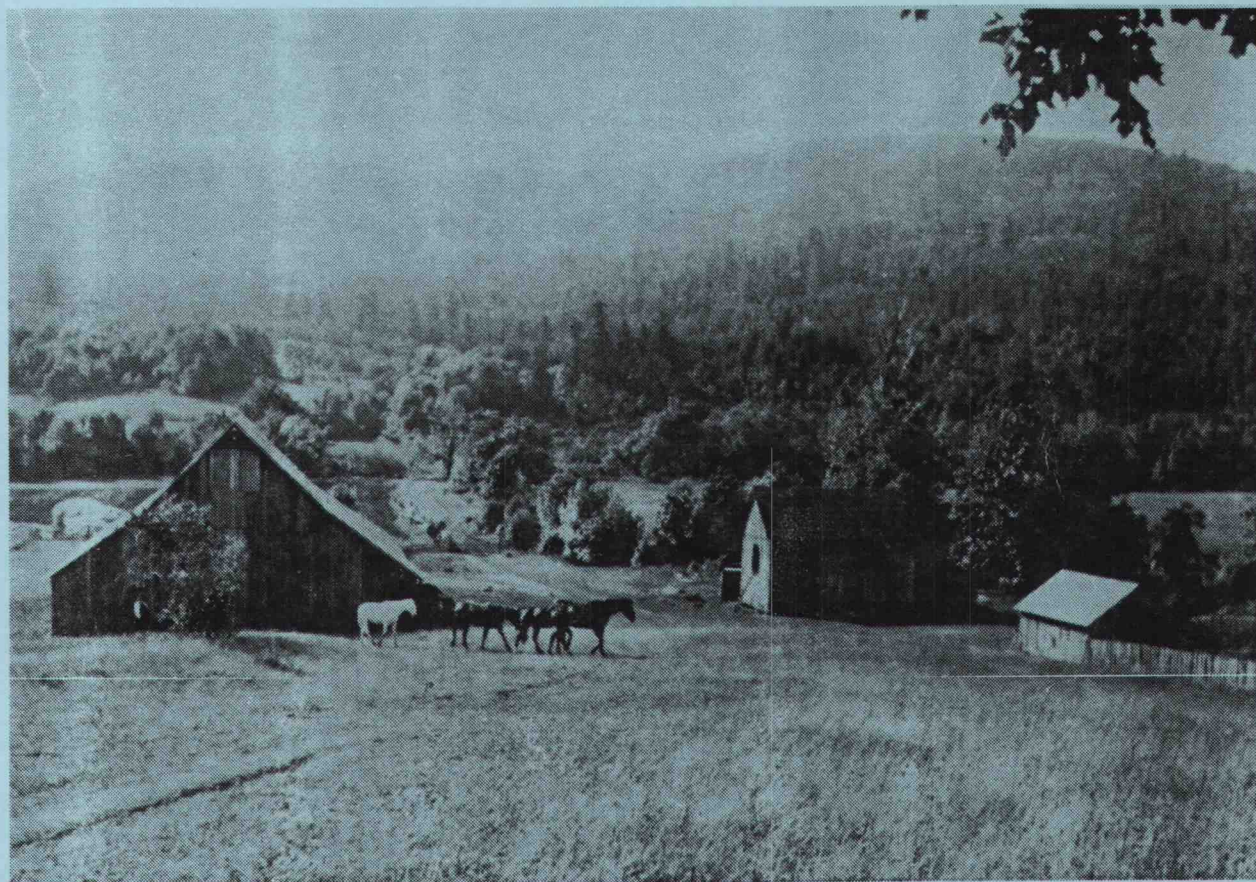


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LORNA GRABE

Family History and the Story of the
Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation

Interview by Bob Zybach
December 22, 1989



Soap Creek Valley, 1899. Photo by Samuel H. Moore

Soap Creek Valley History Project
OSU Research Forests
Monograph #1



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INTERVIEW BY BOB ZYBACH

DECEMBER 28, 1989

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OSU RESEARCH FORESTS
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Soap Creek Valley History Project was authorized by, and is under the direction of, Dr. William Atkinson, Director of the OSU Research Forests.

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This interview was transcribed by Bonnie Humphreys of the Horner Museum staff. The excellent quality of her work has been instrumental in bringing the oral history portion of this project to its current level of completion.

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INTRODUCTION

The Soap Creek Valley History Project was undertaken by Oregon State University (OSU) Research Forests in 1989 for the purpose of better understanding the history and culture of an area impacted by OSU forestry and agricultural practices for nearly sixty years. An important part of the project has been the locating of recorded interviews with individuals who have had an influence upon the valley's history. Additional interviews have also been made with significant individuals who were not recorded previously, as well as "follow-up" interviews with a few people who have continued to contribute to our understanding of this area. The publication of these interviews as monographs is being undertaken in an effort to make them available to researchers, educators, and resource managers.

A comprehensive cross-indexing of the individual monographs is an important part of this project. The index will allow the interviews to be systematically edited in order to provide accurate references for a scholarly history that is being written of the Soap Creek area. So far as possible, that history is being assembled from the spoken and written words of the people who made it and lived it.

It is fitting that the first monograph to be printed concerns the history of the Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation ("the foundation"). It was partially due to the foundation's concerns and efforts that this project was undertaken. The interview that follows provides a good record of the foundation's past, and gives some insight into its plans for the future.

For the past 15 years, Lorna Grabe has been central to the foundation's plans and activities. This interview was recorded in her home on Soap Creek Road during the afternoon of December 28, 1989 (the date printed on the cover is in error). The transcript of the recording was then proof-read by me, by Mrs. Grabe, and by other members of the foundation. The proof-reading was performed in order to correct errors and to determine if important facts or observations had been overlooked. This monograph is being distributed in its present form to select libraries and historical organizations as a method of making it more readily available.

A personal biography of Lorna Grabe is included as an appendix.

*Bob Zybach
Corvallis, Oregon
June 11, 1990*

Do you want me to call you Lorna?

Yeah, Lorna is fine.

Lorna, why don't we start with your birthplace.

I was born in Iowa City, Iowa.

Do you know your mother's maiden name?

My mother's maiden name was Elsa Caroline Hopp, H-o-p-p.

Do you know her mother's maiden name?

It was Meier, I think.

And her father do you know what he did for a living?

They were farm people, my family were farm people.

How long did you live in Iowa?

My mother and father, they were on the same farm for over fifty years and so they lived all their life in Iowa. They were born in Iowa.

Is either one of them alive now?

No, my mother and father both passed away ... in Iowa about ten years ago ... fifteen.

The same time?

About a year apart.

Buried near Iowa City?

Yes. They're buried at Iowa City.

Do you know when their families came to United States?

No, I don't know that, but my brother's just starting to write up the family history and my mother's grandparents lived with them on a farm near Oasis, Iowa. They were from Germany, both grandparents came from Germany. And then my father's family also came from Germany, but he's ... part of his family is from Czechoslovakia.

Okay, if somebody were interested in your family history, your brother's working on it now, how would they get in touch with your brother?

My brother lives in Missouri, and I'd have to look up his address.

What's his name?

Donald Dohrer, D-o-h-r-e-r. (address available for research and educational purposes through OSU Research Forests)

How come he has a different surname than you do?

My maiden name was Dohrer, but my mother's maiden name was Hopp.

I didn't ask that ... your father's name was Dohrer?

Dohrer.

Okay, how many brothers and sisters do you have?

I have two brothers and two sisters.

Are they all still alive?

Yes.

Do they all still live in Iowa?

No, one brother lives in Florida; Merlyn Dohrer lives in Fort Pierce, Florida.

How come you came to Oregon?

I came to Oregon because my husband is in the Agronomy Department at Oregon State University. We were living in Mississippi and they offered him a better job and so we moved here. He does research on seed; he's a professor.

When did you get married?

We were married in 1950.

Where at?

Iowa City, Iowa.

And then his family, do you know his mother's maiden name?

His mother's maiden name is Meier, too. And she's from Holstein, Iowa, and his family is from around Pierson, Iowa which is about thirty miles east of Sioux City, Iowa.

Do you know if the Meier spelled the same, M-e-i-e-r?

I think it is, I would have ... I think it is. His family history has not been written up, but his family is all Germans too. There's a large German settlement in that area of Iowa.

His family is all German?

So am I.

Two different generations ... do you know about when your family came over to the United States?

No, I don't.

Do you know about when his family came over to the United States?

I don't know that either, in the 1800's, mid or late.

Both families are descended from German ancestry?

Yes.

How many children do you have?

Myself?

Yes.

We have three children.

And the name and birthdates and birthplaces?

Our oldest boy's name is Ted Martin Grabe, and he's about 37; I don't know his birthdate (January 4, 1953). And our other boy's name is Timothy Wayne Grabe, and he is one year younger than Ted; and our daughter's name is Ann Kathryn Grabe, and she's two years younger than Tim. She's about 35 ... 34.

Do they all live in Oregon?

No, Ted and Tim both live in Portland, and Annie lives in Lyon, France.

What does she do there?

She teaches cello at a private music school in Lyon.

And your family came out ... your education, where did you graduate from high school?

Iowa City, Iowa.

Did you go to college?

I went to college two years at Iowa State University.

Your husband must have a degree to be teaching?

Yeah, he got his degree from Iowa State University; Ph.D. degree at Iowa State.

Where did he get his Master's?

Iowa State.

And undergraduate?

Bachelors there too.

Is that where you met?

Yes.

Got married in ...

1950.

... 1950, then to Mississippi, when did you get transferred to Oregon State?

Well, we ... our first job was at Mississippi State University, and we lived there for about two years. And while we were there, we went down to Mexico City for a short time to work for Rockefeller Foundation. And then came back and he also had ... they had a program where they worked in foreign countries. Then we came back and lived at Ames for ... Ames, Iowa for about eight years, and then we went back to Mississippi with the Agronomy Department again and lived there for about another year, and then we came out to Oregon.

What year was that?

We came to Oregon in 1968.

And he's held the same position at the University ever since?

Right.

Did you move to Soap Creek Valley at that point?

We first lived in town for a couple of months.

Corvallis?

Yeah, in Corvallis.

Then you moved here?

Yeah.

This location?

Right.

Built this house at that time?

No, this house was here; it was eight years old. It was built by the Hollisters.

Hollisters ... that's the same ones that are your neighbors now?

Right, they moved next door.

Can you describe this valley at that time in general?

There were probably twelve, approximately ten or twelve families living in the valley. We knew everybody that lived here and by name. And families knew each other because when they would have big snows or something, you know, you'd have to help each other out ... to get out of the snow drift and other things. There were no houses on Sulphur Springs Road up from where Soap Creek meets Sulphur Springs Road. Going

up the hill there weren't any houses up there. There was just Ed Hollister at the corner, and then going down Sulphur Springs Road, Erma Lee Featherston lived down at that end and Dick Nordahl's parents -- I think it was Dwayne Nordahl -- and then coming up this way . . .

There weren't any houses on Moss Rock Road and Moss Rock Road didn't exist then, but there was a path through there. The only house there on that road was at the other end ... It was Barb and Dick Foster, that house there. And then coming this way, Yates' house was there, and then Jack Dolan and then the old red house was there, and Bessie and Dick Nordahl lived in that, and then our house, and then Hollisters built their house; and then going down the road, Rices ... there wasn't any other houses between here and Rices which are on the corner of Writsman and Soap Creek. There were none of those houses up in there on Writsman, none of them and then going down the road, Woodcocks' house was lived in by somebody by the name of Pool, and Shirley Deardorff. I forgot Doc Schell was there, and then there was somebody in College Farm, I don't know who it was, and then somebody in that old house, and then no one else until you get clear down to the corner. So like an end to our family.

What did most of the families do for a living?

A few of them farmed, like Doc Schell and Hollisters, and Deardorffs had a few animals, but most of the people were

like high school teachers, and some worked at the University.
Had other jobs.

It was like hobby farms?

Right.

Wasn't sustenance?

Right.

Most of the people out here were educated?

Right.

And there was only about a dozen families?

Right.

What brought in all these other families, were they educators, developers or what ... outside investors provided additional housing?

Well, Hewlett-Packard came here about ten years ago, and so we had a big influx of people ten years ago. And it just gradually ... people just started coming in, and we've had a lot more recreation ... people coming out, people jogging, riding their horses. And I was asking the boys what they noticed that was different. Ted said when we first moved out here there were almost no fences, just Hollisters had a fence around the little pasture and ... everybody had horses and you could ride your horses everywhere on the trails, you

know. He noticed that was different now that you can't ride your horses because of gates and houses and things.

Main recreation activities was ... community recreational activity might have been horse back riding?

Right.

How about hunting?

There was hunting in the fall when it was permitted.

How about bird hunting?

I never did see anybody kill birds.

How about fishing along the creek?

Yeah, our boys fished in the creek and ... the kids would fish in the creek, but I never did see men fish in the creek.

Was there ever beaver in the creek?

Yes, there were beaver dams down by Sulphur Springs along the main road and also going up towards Oak Creek, there were beaver dams there.

Would they fish in the beaver ponds?

Yeah.

Swim there?

They didn't swim there, I know, kids took their horses to swim ... Jack Dolan built a small dam across Soap Creek for their own swimming purposes, and I know Jean Yates took her horse in there swimming. The kids would take their horses there to swim. That was fun too.

Would people pick berries around here or go picnicking?

I don't recall too much picnicking, but a lot of people came to pick berries.

From town?

You'd see people out picking black berries. Not a lot of people, but you would see people picking berries and we picked berries.

What did you think about as more people started moving into here, did you like that?

No, we moved out because I like privacy, quiet; and I am sort of a naturalist, I'm a bird watcher, and I like wild flowers, and I think you're more creative if you're living in the quiet environment; and so we like to be where it was quiet. Our neighbors ... we have very good neighbors, and we liked the people that we've met.

On bird watching, have you noticed any particular ... notice eagles at all?

I haven't seen any eagles, no, there's supposed to be some up by Camp Adair. Some have been reported up there.

Bald eagles?

I think so.

The other day, I saw ... heard several different types of owls, saw two of the owls, saw red tailed hawk, saw four white birds almost the size of red tail hawk, grey with white band across the head, do you know what those are?

A grey bird?

Pretty much grey with the same wing span as a red tail hawk, we saw them just at Tampico intersection with another person, unidentified, there was two of them.

They weren't swans?

No.

There are American egrets that have real long skinny legs that are the size of a hawk, there's the American egret.

Grey with a white band across it?

No, there's a Sand Hill Crane that's grey.

These were built more like a hawk, and wing span about the same as a red tailed hawk.

There's an Osprey that's white but they hang up more ... they're more up in the higher elevation like mountain lakes.

I've still got to keep checking it. How about . . you say wild flowers, any particular types of wild flowers that you noticed in this area that you consider unusual?

Well, we moved here from Iowa and most of the wild flowers, a lot of them there have been destroyed, for instance, the trillium. I belonged to a nature study group there, and we ... we spent a lot of time looking for red trilliums or trilliums, and we never could find any. Coming here the hillsides are just covered with trilliums, and it's a great thrill to see these trilliums blooming in the spring. And there are a lot of fairy slippers, the little wild orchids, right by our house. I mean there's just banks of them. And that's a very rare flower back in Iowa, so I think these are a great natural resource that should be preserved in our state. I think people should be aware of this wonderful treasure that we have here and try to preserve these wonderful things. Because if you don't, the same thing will happen here that happened in Iowa; it will just be wiped out.

Do you think that more people should be out enjoying the wild flowers, or do you think by having more people looking at the wild flowers that's infringing on your privacy?

If they are on a marked trail and are educated about the history of the valley and the importance of wild flowers, I

think that's a good thing. I think it's educational.

It'll be more people coming to Soap Creek Valley and parking on areas and following trails, interpretative trails, getting an education.

That's important.

That would be worth giving up a little privacy?

Right. We had ... usually at our open house, at our Spring Open House, the whole school yard is just covered with wild flowers. Beautiful, the cat's ears and buttercups, and we usually put out just a little cardboard sign that says, "Thank you for not picking the wild flowers," and people respect that. And last spring I don't like to put up signs there because I think it destroys the aesthetic beauty of the building ... or the site, so anyway I forgot to put the sign up, and we were surprised even the people who'd been out there with exhibits were out there picking wild flowers, and almost everybody came in with a handful of wild flowers. So it's important to tell people "Do not pick the flowers" and tell them the names of them. We have now made cardboard names on stakes to stick by the different flowers so the people know what they're seeing. And when they see that, then they respect that.

Do you know Bessie Murphy?

Yeah.

Do you know Phil Hayes?

No.

I'm going to talk with Bessie Murphy more about wild flowers because . . . that's a big topic for me so.

She's great, oh, she's wonderful.

Is it the Soap Creek School House Foundation?

Yeah.

When did that start?

We have an old scrap book here that was left to me, and the first letter was started in January 22, 1965, and it was sent to the Benton County Rural School Board at the County Courthouse. It was sent by Mrs. Warren Bacon and Mrs. Dick Nordahl, and they were neighbors living on Soap Creek Road, and they said, "Dear Sirs, we are interested in finding out what is to become of the old Soap Creek School House on Sulphur Springs Road. We live near this old school house and would like to see it preserved in some manner and not just left to deteriorate into a pile of rubble which will happen soon as the roof is in need of repair." And so that's . . .

That's kind of the start of the Foundation at that point?

Yes, well not exactly . . . yeah, it was really the instigation of the preservation in that first letter, I would say, in 1965. And then the next clippings in the scrap book are . . .

lot of them don't have dates on them, but August 18, 1967, it says that "the school house is now open to the public," and they are going to have the school needs, and they are going to have a gift shop and a museum and sell handicraft items, and neighbors are invited to sell things like painting, needlework, drawing, woodwork, pottery, ceramics. They are going to have a white elephant sale, and they were going to have a box social to raise money. Here's what they need to do ... "the immediate project to be done is reroofing the building which will require 14 squares of wood shingles, also new glass panes approximately 30 panes of 8 x 12 inch and most be put on the windows." And then there's another clipping which says that it was a good success, and they made enough money and that they put shingles on the school.

Would it be possible to get copies of these articles here?

Yes. If we could get something that would take a big enough picture of them.

I can do that at school.

Okay.

At the bookstore, what they can do is reduce them. Do you have the dates and the newspapers that these came from?

No, this was given to me like this. The only date that I have is this one 1967, in August and September 28, 1967 and then this one.

Who made the scrapbook?

Apparently, Bessie Nordahl. She and her mother, Pearl Bacon, started the Foundation.

Are they still members?

No they are not members, but they're still living. Bessie lives up near Monmouth. And I have her phone number. And Pearl Bacon lives in Redmond. You could get in touch with her.

So the people who started the Foundation, don't live here anymore?

No, right.

So you've kind of inherited the job from them in a way?

Right.

When did they move?

It was about ... I think Pearl Bacon moved first, it was about 1973 or '74, around in there. And I was going to tell you ... one of these clippings is rather interesting because ... well, two of them really are ... we wondered, we asked numerable students, that have come out, when the electricity was put in, because we wanted to know if the electricity was in the school when it was in operation. And right here in this one where it tells about the box social which was in 1967, it says "proceeds from the sale will be used to install electricity and to make other improvements."

So the electricity has been added since the Foundation was started?

Yes. Now these ladies didn't know that it was destroying the historical integrity of the school. They just thought they were improving it, you know, and that was ...

And at that time it probably was?

At that time, they probably thought so, because they were going to use it for other meetings and then no other meetings were held. And then there's another place in there ... we'd wondered if the school was originally red or white and here this clipping says "Mrs. Nordahl said that to date the red paint can has received nearly twice the amount of money as the white can, during the sale the two cans were set out with persons to put donations in to the can of the color they wished the school house would be painted." See, they wanted to preserve it, but they didn't know about puritive historical preservation.

And at that time probably the standards were more important to get it roofed, and to get electricity, and get some paint on it. A lot of the things about the purity of preservation are fairly new concepts. I think these articles point that out. Maybe in a University environment, they'd be a little more sensitive. So, do you know what the original color was?

Well, I think it was white, from these pictures it appears to be white.

Is there any sentimentality to restore it to a white building?

The subject hasn't been brought up, but I think it would be a good idea, except that everybody in the whole county knows it as "the little red school house." I mean, people all over that state, we might get static from people if we change it, but ... The inside also has ... was originally white above with green below and when that was repainted, probably in the seventies after I started in the Foundation, the board, other people other than myself wanted to paint it tan, because that would be a better background for our displays. And so even then, painting it to be historically preserved perfect was not the most important criteria for a color choice.

You're working with Dave Brauner right now to get this on the National Register?

Yeah.

What is his discussion concerning the paint, is he in favor of restoring it to a certain era?

I didn't talk to him about that, actually.

What's your preference?

I think it should be preserved exactly as it was when it was used here, even though we're showing slates. We're becoming more and more purists; I don't want reproductions of anything. And I think it should be ... I love the red with the white trim, but I think even the electricity should be

taken out. I think we should ... right now we have it turned off because we don't want to pay the ten dollars a month whether we use it or not, and we were just using it for making coffee for our open houses, you know. Now we're serving punch or something instead, and it's working out just fine.

And you always use wood heat or from the generator?

Right. A generator was suggested.

Are there other members right now ... the purpose originally was to get electricity in, reroof it, and get a coat of paint on it.

What's the purpose of the Foundation now in 1989?

The purpose is still exactly as the constitution says, and we print that in every membership letter we put out. "The purpose of this Foundation is to maintain and improve as a public building, the Soap Creek School and its grounds, and to preserve and restore it as a historic site." I would say the biggest change that we've made from the original is that in the original they said that it could also be used for a picnic area. I think the old picnics that people used to bring fried chicken and bring a basket of stuff out and sit down on a blanket and eat it were the concept of a picnic. Now it is to bring your barbecue with a fire. Since Oregon is so dry here in the valley in the summer it would be a real fire hazard if people started having fires there. Also there is so much throw away litter now, that there would be such

a mess of garbage to pick up, so we've taken out the picnic. We don't use it for picnics except our one controlled picnic in July, we invite the old students. Also at the beginning, someone said people could use it for community meetings, and we don't permit that now because ... my personal feeling, and some of the other members on the board too, that as soon as the building is used by other groups that they tend to move in their equipment and destroy the personal ... the historical integrity of the place ... they would like folding chairs and lights and telephone and clock and wall to wall carpeting and big lights outside and so we have kept it strictly as a historical site without club meetings; that's the way it is now.

Also the ... wild flowers, is that kind of an official function of the School House now to preserve and enhance the surrounding with wild flowers, or are you enough of a purist to want to go back to school yard where there may have been a May pole or other play ground equipment?

Well, I'm a purist enough that I wouldn't want people to come in and landscape it with exotic species. I want to keep exactly what's there, the flowers ... not exactly, the flowers that are wild flowers that are growing there, and to do this, we have just let the man ... asked Jim Neidig that mows the grass, just once a year. He mows the grass in the summer, because some of the people thought that if we didn't mow it, it would look like nobody cared about it. And we do

care about it, but we don't want to destroy the flowers, and as soon as you mow it, you're destroying the seeds, you know. And so no matter when you go down there, even in the middle of summer, it's full of wild flowers. Some of the bigger grasses like this tall fescue are moving in now and that may give us some problems. This year I had to dig out a couple this es, and Bessie Murphy suggested we dig out those clumps of fescue even, because pretty soon those could move in and just completely squelch out the wild flowers.

There's one reason for the wild flowers are Indian burning practices, any talk at all about maybe for fire safety and for maintaining the wild flowers and controlling the grasses by using a small controlled burn.

Since Dick Green is on the fire station; he's on our board, and he's also in the fire station volunteer group, and he's very ... he would die if we had a fire there, I think, on that property anyway.

So that was never seriously discussed?

I don't think he would want any fires there, because he's real cautious about fire. He's concerned that we don't have fires around there for the protection of the school property, the house and stuff, it's so old and tinder dry that they could go up in a minute, I think.

Of course, that's one of the arguments for having controlled burns is that you burn everything away from the building and removes all the flammable ...

Yeah.

And it's also a method of maintaining and encouraging wild flowers.

Yeah.

So, to summarize the transition from the start again, and then I want to go kind of gradually through who the members are and that. You can say that's it's gone from a community activity and from just preserving the structure itself to now historical re-creation of the building and an emphasis more on native plants...

Well ...

... from picnics.

The outside. Yes, we have a very ... about two years ago, we discovered a very rare wild orchid back by one of the toilets, and this year I saw five of them back there plus one by the north side of the school house, so I think we have a real treasure there, and so we're cataloging our wild flowers and documenting them, I mean, and making pictures and labeling, Bessie Murphy is helping us with this. And so, we're trying to write down our plants, we haven't done our trees yet. We're working on our wild flowers.

Is the tendency to find these rare plants and show them to people and educate them about them or find these rare plants and hide them away so nobody disturbs them? Or have you got that far yet?

It depends ... when we have our open houses, we put up our signs and tell people what the names of them are and also for our picnic in the summer, so we tell people what the names of them are, in fact one of the pictures in this scrap book is of a display Bessie Murphy had of wild flowers which I don't know if this was a good idea or not because she dug them up out of her own yard and then brought them out and displayed them and told people the names of them and then apparently replanted them back which this was done back in about 1969 or '70 or somewhere in there that she did that.

Bessie Murphy has been involved with the School House Foundation... Yes.

... right from the beginning?

Right. Well, she hasn't ...

From early on?

She's brought out displays. She's come out quite a few different times, we've had her ... she's quite a great historian. She knows so many things about the early valley, and she also has a collection of old buttons; we've had her display her old buttons and then another time, she has come

out and showed spinning and weaving. And she just is a very knowledgeable person. And wild flowers.

So she's been more involved from the aspect of putting on displays and assisting the Foundation rather than as a member?

Right. She was a member, we made ... well, the group (end of side of tape)

The School House Foundation started in '67, by '69 the electricity in, they opened up to the public and they had a meeting and you moved here in what year?

In '68.

Okay. And when did you become interested in this School House Foundation?

I started my work in 1974, but the Foundation functioned for about 2 or 3 years with open houses ... like they would be open on weekends during the summer and then in the fall they would have ... in the scrap book it said they had like bake sale, they'd have a white elephant sale like in December. And then after about two or three years, the attendance just dropped ... at the open houses ...

Talking about the first two years of pretty good attendance and then it started falling off.

Then as attendance fell off and some of the people moved away, and I think some of the open houses, one of the last

couple that I remember that didn't work very well, is Bessie tried to have an antique sale and almost nobody came and another time she tried to have a circus. I mean these things are really kind of far removed from the historic site thing, and so people just didn't come and at that time this was considered a long ways from town. It's like as if now you moved thirty miles from town, ten miles then was considered really quite a long way.

So in the functions they had in the '60's when they were first trying to get things going, then those were pretty well attended?

Yeah, I guess so, I mean they ... they'd maybe get twenty-five people ... maybe that was considered ... that was considered pretty good attendance.

So then how many people came to the antique show?

I think there was just a couple people came; I don't think there was very many, but anyway they just kind of gave up. And then also some people that had been in the Foundation moved away and I think Bessie Nordahl's mother, Pearl Bacon, moved away and then Bessie and her husband moved up to near Monmouth, moved out of the neighborhood. And at that time there was a 4-H group that had horses in the neighborhood, and so when the Foundation disintegrated, this horse group started to meet at the school house, and our kids were in this horse club. They met there just a few times for about two years and they ... during those years from about '71 and

'72, the horse club put new shingles on the school house and repainted it. So they really kept it up even though their main focus wasn't historical exhibits like it is now.

It came from being an abandoned building to being restored because of Bacons and Nordahls and then Bessie Murphy was active then, and they tried to have events and kind of went through an area of failure, and then this horse club came in ... kept the building up, but had nothing to do with the school house other than it was a structure?

I don't ... no, they didn't have any open houses or anything, but they kept paying the taxes because the building ... the Foundation leased the building from the North Corvallis Farmer's Union. And they had to pay the taxes each year and the taxes amounted from about \$38 to \$51 a year. And that was a lot of money, so any money that they made from bake sales, almost all of it went to taxes, so they didn't have much left over to buy furnishings, but in the mean time, these newspaper articles say that they were encouraging people to make donations of school bells or textbooks and desks, and they were starting to collect things already then.

So there was some interest in historical aspects of the ... when did people start moving back in the valley after World War II?

That's before my time, I don't know ... I don't know about that era.

Would Audrey Brenneman down the road be a good person to talk to about those years?

Probably, yes, I think they would.

Okay, so when you moved here about dozen families and some interest in preserving the school house, how many other old buildings were here at that time that aren't here anymore? Not counting the Glender home?

Yeah, the Glender house, okay. The real old house, Robsons lived in that real old house that's down there off the right by the beef farm now.

That they call the stage coach house now?

Yeah.

And the Robsons lived there?

Yeah, Stan Robson, he's on the ... with the police department now ... sheriff's department. He lived in that old house, and then another what I would consider a really visual historic building was an old barn that is down where Dailys are now. That was there just ... just fell down about five years ago. It was just gorgeous, beautiful barn.

Was there any effort to save that by the people that were trying to save the school house?

No, our ... we rented that barn for our horses for about five years, the Dailys ... that was the Dailys property, and they

wanted to move out and build a house, and they didn't want to put money into the barn and so it just fell down. But it was just beautiful ... as you came down the valley, you'd see this ... first this old house up on the left, you know, where the Robsons lived. And then you see this beautiful old barn, it was just beautiful. And then the only other old houses I know of are the old red house down here.

Is that the house that's supposed to be haunted?

Yeah.

Can you tell me fairly ... I got the same story from Wanda Cook, and she heard it from her mother and ... I keep hearing this haunted story. First I was ignoring it because that's not history, but now the story is history so ... can you tell me what the story is on it?

You'd better talk to Louise Hollister, she's just great, she lived in that house for awhile while they were building their house, and she swears ... she's a very good Mormon and she swears that ... this is true, and she and Ken have both seen this ghost. And she says it's true and you have to talk to her. She can tell it better than I can.

So she used to live in the house?

Yeah. And she's seen the ghost so ...

Did she hear the story from anybody, or was that a matter of talking to her?

She must have heard it from somebody, somebody told her the story when they moved in and anyway, she swears it's true and Ken ... Ken died just a year ago, so he's not living anymore, but he'd seen the ghost too. It's fun anyway. I don't believe it but ...

Well, I've heard the story from somebody that lived here in 1905, so it's not a new story.

Really! Oh!

So she's got company that predates her. Then the School House Foundation, how did you get involved in it?

Well, I saw that this saddle club that was using it was also just falling apart because our daughter was president of it at that time, and whenever she'd try to call a meeting together, nobody would show up or if they'd have a trail ride the kids ... people just didn't come anymore. Some of them moved away, and they just weren't interested. And I saw this school house sitting there, and I was just really concerned that what was going to happen to it. And so I had been collecting pre-1900 elementary school textbooks, and I had this collection, and so in the fall of 1974, I put a notice in the paper and sent flyers up and down the valley to the families and had an exhibit of my old textbooks, and then we served refreshments, and we had a really pretty good

attendance. I don't remember what it was, but it was thirty to fifty, somewhere in there. And so I decided well, there still is an interest in the historical aspect of this, and so in the spring ... and then in January, I think it was, that I called the neighbors together as many as I could get to reorganize the Foundation and so then we have ... this first secretary's book starts in July, but I think we organized in January ...

January of 1974?

'75.

Can I get copies of this also?

Yes. Sure.

Good.

And so then we just used the same constitution and we read it over at each of our January meetings when we have our general meetings.

So that constitution was written by the previous members?

Yes, right.

Do you know who wrote it?

Well, I presume Bessie Nordahl and her mother; there's Shirley Rice.

Has the constitution changed at all?

No. It was amended in 19 ... October 11, 1976. We got the deed from the North Corvallis Farmer's Union, because if we had the deed, we would not be able ... we would not have to pay the taxes anymore. And so we wanted to be able to use that money for furnishings and restoration rather than taxes. And so they, Farmer's Union, was disintegrating at that time, and so they came out and liked what we were doing with it, liked our exhibits, and so they gave us the deed.

Who was the person from the Farmer's Union that ... ?

That was Clifton C. Kaster, K-a-s-t-e-r, was president, and he lived up there in that little green house by Lewisburg across from the Grange. And then I have the names of two other people from the Farmer's Union that one ... that Shirley Rice gave me that says knows about the Grange, Vesta Steiner, and C. Lloyd Anderson was treasurer of the County. I have his phone number here, and then there's a Mr. Casson that's mentioned in this book.

C-a-s-s-o-n?

Right.

I've seen that name some place else, I think it might be a pioneer family or something.

I couldn't find it in the phone book, so apparently he's not

living, and then Mr. Kaster has died also, but C. Lloyd Anderson ...

Maybe Mr. Casson has moved, but not necessarily have to die.

No, he died, I cut out his obituary from the paper, I have it laying around here somewhere.

When did they get title to the school house?

They got it shortly after it closed, and they got for a dollar. And we 're told this by Mr. Kaster and then also by several open houses we've had, people from the Farmer's Union have stopped in and told us that they got it because they wanted to sponsor a boy scout troop, and they wanted to use it for that purpose and that actually they didn't use it for that purpose. One lady told me that they never held meetings there, that they would going to but didn't, and so no meetings were held there. (I have learned that the Boy Scouts used this building for less than three months during 1959 or 1960. They started making wood shakes for the roof but left because of vandalism of their materials.) They just hung onto it because they thought it was a valuable old building, and they didn't want to see it fall down, and so they just kept it. And so I think they were really an important group in preserving this building.

They were based in Corvallis?

Well, I think it's up by Lewisburg. I think it's that grange building on 99. I think that was their ...

So the Lewisburg Grange was where North Corvallis Farmer's Group ... Union was located, and the names and phone numbers you've got here are kind of the principal characters in preserving the building.

Well, yeah, they were in the Farmer's Union when it was ... the property was transferred. There was only about four or five that I know of ... maybe three that we knew ... everyone just kind of dropped out and so . .

Is this Farmer's Union still ...

No, it's not in existence anymore. (the North Corvallis Farmers Union has merged with the North Albany Grange Group)

So kind of its legacy is the School House Foundation?

Right. So, there's just a couple people left that would know about that, and I've been meaning to call them and I haven't.

So anybody writing the history of the school?

Well, I've got kind of a history that I've written ... put up on the ... in the school house we have big posters in the back, two in each of the little cloak rooms in the back and then I have this history that I've written up, and this history I've gotten from interviews with former students, and with information from the old registers that were left in the

school when it closed. And after I started in the Foundation in 1974, Louise Hollister and I went down to the school house and cataloged all the original books that were there, and we brought them to my house because we were afraid that they might be stolen.

With no thought of adding them to your collection?

Right. So, we have ... so those are still at my house, and then when we have open houses, we take a few of those each time just to exhibit so people can see the original ones.

These minutes you have those are for ... did you write those yourself?

This history.

Not the history, the minutes?

These minutes were written by the secretary at that time.

I need to let that dog in.

Sure.

Treasurer ... the secretary.

Do you have minutes from the earlier group ... ?

These are the earliest.

So these minutes here ... you just inherited from the 1969?

No, I don't have those. This one starts in 1975. I don't have the minutes of the earlier one.

So are those dated?

Pretty well, yes.

And they list all the people that attended?

No, most of them ... usually most of the people that attended.

And have those been kept from 1975 to the present?

Yes, but I don't know whether I have the last one, but I will need to ask the secretary if she has the other one.

Did the person who wrote these sign them?

Yes.

So they're signed, dated and got a fifteen year history of minutes. This history that you're writing, did you just start doing that recently?

No, I did this about ten or fifteen years ago from our old record books from the early ... clerk's record books. We have five clerk's record books, and they list some of the earliest students and some of the earliest teachers and their salaries. And also gave information on who went out to

select a site for this school and the date and when very ...
how much money each family donated to build the first school.

So it would have all the families names? Like the Moores, I think
the Moores were the one that donated it?

Right.

And then you read your history from that?

Yeah, right.

Pretty complete.

So, well, there could be some things wrong with it. I see
I spelled a teacher's name wrong, I think, but it's kind ...
it's just ... what I thought written the way I thought people
would ... that come out would want ... in a simple language.

Is there any plans to elaborate on this history or continue it?

We wanted ... we talked last year, and we had a new person
move into our group that's really good in art and graphics.
Rudy Bischof, and he thought he could make up a flyer ...
that we should be passing out a flyer. We've been talking
about that for a couple of years so that when we have an open
house, people would have a flyer to take back with them with
the information about the history, so that should be done,
but we haven't.

Volunteer program?

Well, anyway he ... I was going to tell you one thing about the bell. The bell in the school house ... we didn't know whether to put in a bell or not, but in these old minutes, I was just looking up in them this morning that said, Sergeant Martinette from the Crime Prevention Lab told Barb that they had an idea where our bell was, that's the old bell, but would be hard to prove, about the same time our disappeared, Albany Union High advertised for a bell and paid two anonymous men forty dollars for one.

So you think Albany Union High might have the bell from Soap Creek School House?

Right.

Has anybody approached them about that?

No, we have a bell there now. I bought one at auction.

Have you thought about maybe trading for ... to get the original back?

No, but I just read that this morning, so I didn't realize that. And there was one other place in here I was looking at the minutes too, ... this is in about 19 ... well, this one isn't dated, but it's probably about '76 or so.

Was there any thought of bringing this bell mystery up at the next

meeting or anything?

To get the right bell?

Yeah.

Yeah, we could.

You value authenticity and school ethics.

Yeah, keeping it right. Here somebody ... this is interesting that ... this is before we had the deed yet, but somebody moving the school house ... "someone phoned Mona," that's Mona Luebbert, "and requested to move the school house to the Salem State Fairgrounds for a Bicentennial Project. Lorna suggested that we check the constitution to see if there's enough protection to keep something like this from happening." So we've had ... in fact, it was mentioned at one of our board meetings recently, that people are still requesting to buy this school house, you can't believe that people still think that it's available. That it's not, it is a historic site so we still have to tell people that this place is not for sale, it's a historic site. So it's important that we continue with this work of educating people on the historic value of this property.

And so the registration process certainty should accomplish that?

Yeah.

Once that's completed, it's going to be just about impossible for anybody to do anything to it without ...

Consulting the state ... the owners and the state.

How many people now are members of the Foundation?

It's between twenty and twenty-five, the last time I talked to Louise, she said it was eighteen and she'd gotten several notes, several more memberships. Approximately twenty to twenty-five.

How many members were there in 1975?

When we started? Let me see ...

Can you just read a list of them?

Well, Barb Foster, Dick Foster, Marge Chandler, Archie Chandler, Lorna Grabe, Mona Luebbert, Louise Hollister.

How many of those people are still members? Just you and Louise?

Just myself and Louise, now Mona Luebbert still contributes to bake sales and stuff; she still lives in the neighborhood. Fosters have moved over to Fossil, Oregon. Chandlers have moved up to Washington. They're very elderly. And I think Jack Dolan, he's been a member ... not since he left the ... moved out a couple of years ago, but he's been a member of the Foundation almost continually.

Probably you and Louise and Jack Dolan would be the some of the ... and Bessie Murphy would be some of the original people who are still heavily involved in the Foundation?

I wouldn't say Bessie Murphy is heavily involved anymore. She's willing to bring an exhibit but she said she can't drive to come to board meetings and she came to one or two of them and some of our people smoked. In fact we had about four people on the board that smoked and it just about drove her out of the room, so now that most of them have moved away or quit so she could probably come. She was a member for just a couple years actually. She's exhibited a lot of times.

She's been involved in here, but not always necessarily as an member.

Right, as an active member.

What was the circus? Maybe I should ask her that?

I didn't come to that. I don't think she came to that, you could ask ... Bessie Nordahl could tell you that but I think it was like pony rides and donkey rides and that sort of thing. And actually Bessie Nordahl is involved in that now, I think she takes ponies around to the ... she's kind of an artistic person and just different and she takes ponies with her son around to fairs now and gives ponies rides. She likes horses, you know.

From 1975 until the present, were there any points in time where you think the Foundation did something of particular value or had a particular problem or any events that kind of stick in your mind that you had a crisis or had a particularly successful event?

I just found this one this morning that I thought was one of the best open houses we ever had and that was back in 1975. I guess it was one of our first ones, the second one we had in the fall and we had an alumni tea and we invited the old students and then the people from town. Very few people from town came but we had ... I think it says in the next one, we had seven old students come and of these seven old students about four or five of them were from 1900 or 1905, like Merle Moore, Myra Moore Lauridsen, and Myra had two sisters visiting here, one from the East and another sister. So we had about four of the Moores, and Charlie Olson, and then we had two others and I think. It was a rainy day in October when you'd think nobody would come, but we had a fire going in the stove and we served hot spiced tea and cookies and everybody just had a great time. So I would say that was one of the best ones.

Now this last one you had, you said there was a hundred or two hundred people at it?

There was a huge attendance and the exhibit was antique dolls, and we've had exhibits of antique dolls before and a lady from ... this time was from Corvallis, but before we had

an exhibit of antique dolls and the lady was from the coast.
And we also had a huge attendance.

These people coming more to look at the antique dolls than they are just for the school house?

I think this time we had a big attendance because we had a full page ... a quarter page picture in the Albany Democrat Herald, Margaret is our publicity chairman and she took ... she went over and asked them if they would put in an article, I guess, because we needed to raise money for our foundation, put a new foundation under our school house and would they be interested in taking some pictures. So they came out and took some pictures of she and I putting up the flag, and so they gave almost a quarter page picture with information about saying "would you like to come and relive your days in the old times and see the old desks, slates," and so a lot of the people who came were from Albany. And many of them had attended rural schools, and they come and it's so much fun to just see the expression of their faces when they come in because this school has a different feeling than any place I know. You just come in it ... because of the oak wainscoting and the windows facing the sun, and it's just a beautiful experience to come in and feel how it feels to walk into an old school house.

So the atmosphere of the school is ... part of what's selling it?
... special, yeah.

That's one reason you don't want it?

Right, right, it would destroy it. We don't know if the stove is the original or not. It's not the one in the pictures of the second. We don't have a picture of the inside of this school when it was functioning. It might have been added by the Farmer's Union, we don't know.

You said you are a bird watcher, have you noticed any difference in the bird population in this valley since you've been here? Are there more hawks now or less owls or ...

I'm not too good at owls, we have great horned owls in our oak tree occasionally.

Any idea how old that oak tree is, between you and the Hollisters there?

Well, it's supposed to grow an inch every ten years. That's what I think we read somewhere, and it's probably three foot thick, so that's 360 years old.

It would look like it's taking up a lot of space, you said when you moved here, all these fir trees have grown up since you've lived here, is that similar for the rest of the valley are most of these young fir ... groves we're seeing, have those grown up in fields or have those grown up from old logging?

I think it was more clear in earlier days because Charlie Olson said where he lived down there that that was clear, I think, more clear meadows going over towards King's Valley.

And now when we are ride the horses up in the woods behind us, we see evidences of old fences, so I think people used this for pasturing and so I think there weren't as many trees back in the old days.

Do you have regular horses trails that you follow?

Yeah, there's paths. Logging paths up through here. We follow them.

Do those go pretty much on your property or do they go on Dun Forest, OSU property?

Starker's and OSU.

Has there ever been any problems with Starker's or OSU for ...

No.

Would there be problems with local land owners if Starkers or OSU started having those trails developed for riding?

No, I think people would ... if they ... there's a conflict of interest here I suppose, if they were used strictly for horses it would be just wonderful, but you have the problems of three wheeled vehicles and motor bikes, people coming in with noise. And then you really have trouble.

Is that a big problem here?

It hasn't been, no, but ...

How about mountain bikes, is there a conflict between them and the horse users?

Yes, definitely ... no, mountain bikes don't have motors, the ones with motors are the problems, mountain bikes are just the heavy ...

Peddle bikes.

No, there's no problem with mountain bikes.

Somebody suggested it, so I'm asking this.

I haven't seen any problem there.

Are there many people that use motor bikes or it's just occasionally, they use it, whenever they did, basically?

Yeah, occasionally they did and when they do it's a problem. When they're ... there are certain teenage kids that when they get to a certain age they have motor bikes, and they want to play and have some fun. But if you created, I think, horse trail would be a good idea but they're already using a lot this land around here for horses.

The local residents, you mean?

Yeah, I think a lot of people ride ... well, it's hard to ride up through certain areas now because they've been ... gates have been fenced off, we used to ride across Hollister's pasture and up the hill over there, and then we used to ride down through Jack Dolan's property and the

people there have now put up gates, and you see there were no houses up on the other side of the Moss Rock Drive and now there's a lot of places up there that say "private property keep out."

Do you think it would be good if The School of Forestry put in horse back riding trails?

I think that would be great.

So how I'm involved in this ...

I think it would be wonderful, yeah, if there's a way to keep the motor and the three wheeled motorized bicycles off.

Do you know ... there's talk now that the people using horses then, and I didn't realized there was so many people here locally, residential users, but there's talk that they could share those with regular logging roads are used now, do you think that's true?

Yeah.

Do you see a conflict between regular motorized traffic and horses?

On the logging roads, no. I don't think there's that many logging trucks coming out that often and I think the people that are doing the riding are usually doing it on weekends. And I don't think ... I think there ... it would be on a main highway, I mean on this main road now, when we moved out here, there would be maybe one or two cars go by in a whole

day. Louise Hollister and I agree on that, we've talked about it earlier. And now one or two cars go by in a minute maybe, five minutes, maybe three cars. So you see it's very heavy traffic on this ... what we consider heavy on Soap Creek Road. So if you're riding horses along there, that's quite a few cars to dodge.

How about the old logging roads you use, those have been ... people were using mountain bikes on those roads because of erosion or because of their moving so fast does that create problem with horses or are those pretty compatible uses? I know there's an incompatible use between horses and hikers because people are stepping on the ground ...

Stepping on the horse dung, huh?

Yeah.

I'm not a biker so I don't know what their feelings are towards horses.

I'm just curious from the horse back rider?

I don't think a horse back rider would mind a bike, except that their horse might spook. You know if you round a bend, like one time I was coming back with Jalin and we rounded the bend just before we came down through the forest and here comes a bike and the horse, you know, lunged quickly to the side and there's more opportunity for spooking a horse and having an accident but it could happen, but I think because

of the noise difference and there's not that many of them, if it became a lot of either one, I think it could become a problem.

You work with the School House Foundation, have you seen any other projects in the neighborhood that would be compatible ... for instance ... (end of tape)

The Foundation, has it been involved entirely with work with wild flowers ... in the school house, has there ever been discussion about picnicking in other areas or work on Sulphur Springs or anything of any related recreational nature or historic nature?

I think just because we're so small we've just confined our efforts on preserving the school house and having exhibits and we haven't tried to preserve any of the other historical old buildings along the road, and we probably should be.

You can see that as a function of the Foundation if they had a larger community interest?

Yeah. I think we should be involved in preserving some of the old houses and photographing them and documenting them and ... it was mentioned about ... doing something at Sulphur Springs, but a lot of people didn't ... some of the people on the board didn't really want to develop that into a huge park with thousands of the people there, so I don't know how ...

They realistically see thousands of people going to the park when they can't even get thousands of people to a baseball game? Is that a realistic assumption?

I don't know ... if you had a rock concert.

Special major event type things they were talking about.

Well, when we ... last spring, we were wanting some suggestions for ideas for raising money for replacing our foundation under the school house, someone suggested a blue grass concert. And so they were looking for a place to have it and they said, how about Sulphur Springs Park. And quite a few, some of the other people on the board thought our getting a couple of thousand people at a rock concert down there might be a negative thing in the community, you know, so we didn't have ...

So the discussion was about not getting too big?

Yeah. People are concerned ... are you going to just destroy the status quo. There's some people who want to really develop, we have certain people in our community, I'd mention a person but I think ... who are really developers, they make good chamber of commerce presidents, I mean, they really like crowds and people and they want big ... they want everything developed. And then there are some people in the community that don't. They want it not developed.

Has there been any question about why these developers moved out here? Is it solely so they can develop their area?

You mean like which developers?

When you say some people are real development prone, and then the other people that are here really aren't too interested in development?

So you get different kinds of people. That look at their community in a different way.

How about the zoning out here, when LCDC (Land Conservation and Development Commission) went through was that a big issue to keep the zoning or discourage development or encourage development? Are there any particular discussion among ...

Let's see my husband was on that. There are people who want to subdivide and have real small lots, you know, and then there are people who think that twenty, I think when we moved out here it was a twenty acre minimum. And now I think it is five or ten, I'm not sure, but there are one acre places around here, so ...

Did the people who put in the one acre places, did they get resistance from neighbors?

Yes, definitely. Things for water, septic tanks space, and water.

How about concern for types of building, is there ... community pressure say against mobile homes, against Swiss chalet styles or is it pretty much people out here have the attitude that ... ?

You can do your own thing.

Your own property is your own property and your own business is your own business.

Right. See, like Ted works as a builder in Portland and he said that the communities there ... that every house has to be a certain shade of a certain color and your boat and your cars have to be parked in the garage and ... everybody's yard has to be mowed, nobody can have something sitting out in front of their house if it isn't like all the other neighbors. And so there's a very standardization of people in your community, where here so far it's probably changing fast, but people have mostly been individualists, more rugged, and more do-it-yourselfers. They want something done and they go do it themselves. They don't hire somebody ... to do it, if you know what I mean.

So if I wanted to move in here with fifteen close members of my family from Oregon State campus with a giant geodesic dome and rainbow colors, the community would say, "Well, he pays his own taxes."

Right. I think you could get by with it.

That's reassuring. Not that I'm planning on doing that.

There was a family down here that were just trying to build ... putting in a big stables that drew a lot of resistance. Extremely a lot of resistance because they have a very small property, it's down very close to the school house, and they want to put in this gigantic stables and so it will bring in ... we didn't go to the hearing, but it's going to bring in a lot of traffic right down there by the school house. So I see that area and the property right next to the school house was for sale. Doc Schell's place which was, I'm not sure the size of it, twenty to fifty acres was for sale this summer and the county should have bought that and made a park out of it.

Did anybody recommend they do that?

No.

Oh.

I guess it's my weak ... my failing.

Oh, I see, so you think ... it's your personal opinion that the county should have ...

Yes, I think it should have been made a park because it was right next to the school house and I heard it was for sale for \$150,000. And I was trying to get my husband to buy it, but he didn't think we could afford it and we don't have parking space on the school yard, the parking lot was not a

parking lot at the time that the school was being used, it was a ball diamond and people parked along the main road. And so if we ever need a place for buses to turn around or to park, there is not room, we can't get into that driveway.

You'd like to see the School House Foundation maybe develop and expand?

I would have if we could have afforded that property, it would have been perfect right next to the school house. So I don't even know who bought it. And then there was another property which is right across from where that horse barn, which is across the road, that was a two acre place that was just bought this last year, too. It would have been very nice for picnic area, to help with the school house. It takes a lot of money and we don't have, we're trying to get money together for fixing the foundation.

Is there any chance that the Foundation members will discuss money raising efforts in an effort to expand the property or maybe just in an effort for a donor?

We haven't looked beyond our borders is our trouble. We just worry about keeping the place from falling down.

How big is the property that goes around the school?

Just one acre.

So that doesn't really leave much for expansion or even to accommodate the present attendance?

No, because we're accumulating things like we really need a ... I would be very much opposed to building any other structures on the property because I think that is why it's still beautiful as no other big signs or structures have been built on the property. But we're accumulating all sorts of furnishings like desks and these books and things that should be stored in moisture controlled environment and that someday we're going to need a space for the building.

Has there been any discussion to work out an agreement where Horner Museum where you could archive the materials and then simply pick them up during display periods and put them back into moisture and fire proof ... ?

We never pursued that. We tried to get an exhibit from them and they didn't want to loan us anything so ... we really didn't ...

So your dealings with Horner haven't particularly ...

... been that great. One time they gave us carpenter's tools and then after that they ... that was when a different person was in charge, and they didn't give us anything so we thought ... their reception was cool, so we thought we'd better ... we'll take care of our own things.

You're not the only one getting a cool reception from Horner Museum.

You are too. Well, we keep most of the things in my house and then Margaret keeps a lot of the things in her house. The reason I didn't keep some things, so their spread around, but it would be nice if they were kept in a building someplace, a storage building by the school house, but I would not want a building erected on the property, because I think we should keep that property ... that one acre in the whole valley set aside for historic preservation and it never be changed. It should just be ...

Is there a way to develop parking off site, maybe at a neighboring land owners where people could walk to the school or take horses to the school?

This place, Doc Schell's, depending on who got it, they may be willing. It would be great, but ...

It sound's like the Foundation has more work and more project that are possibly there for the years to come.

Mrs. Daily owns the barn across the road ... and we've had to keep a sharp eye out because at one time the school property was part of the Moore ... apparently her property was formerly the Moore's and so she has claimed a couple of times that some of the local citizen advisory meetings that she has the deed and so Dick took our deed to his wife and she looked it over and said, no she doesn't have the deed and

so anyway she's given us a little static on that she thinks that maybe that acre could be hers and so we have to be ... we don't keep our historical stuff going that we're worried that this property could revert to her property. So she owns the barn across the road and so far she's been friendly to us but every once and awhile she kind of gives us a hard time.

She's not a member of the Board then, I take it?

No, she's not.

Are there any deed restrictions on the property that say that it has to be maintained for school or educational or spoken purposes? Or is it just a free and clear title? You don't need to look it up.

That's ... it's says it's supposed to be used ... the original deed said that the property was to be used for educational purposes, the one in 1900.

Did it have any restrictions that it would revert back to the landowner?

No, I don't believe so.

Did Camp Adair, did they own that property during World War II?

No.

So that property was given to the school and then after it stopped being a school it went directly into the Farmer's Union and the Farmer's Union transferred it directly to the Foundation?

Right.

It's only had three owners?

Right.

Since the Moores?

Right.

That's ... and as far as you know there's no restriction on the use of the property and the Foundation can do whatever they want with it?

It's restricted to historical educational uses. It is, because the Farmer's Union let us have the deed if we would continue using it the way we were using it when we leased it, and we were having historical exhibits with old desks and slates and we'd show spinning or historical craft or wild flower or what ... one time we had the Heart of Valley show the development of the Willamette Valley. And so we got the deed with the condition that we continue to use it as a historical educational purpose.

Would that allow you to sell and take the money and buy a bunch of history books and give them to the college? All I'm curious about are the restrictions as people have transferred this

property and there's a neighboring landowner that might be able to change the use or the Foundation members that come after your time that might alter the intent or the purpose of the Foundation, is that possible?

Not if we get it on the National Historic Register, I don't think.

I don't think so either, but I'm just curious.

I think that National Historic ... we're still working on it, but Louise's husband, she's doing the typing of the significance narrative and her husband had a stroke and so she was just starting to type it and so she said she needed a month or so to get ... and so after Christmas. This last deed that we got from the Farmer's Union said that if we ... let's see ... if we didn't keep the property it would go to the Benton County 4-H Association or a similar youth activity or other non-profit organization. So that we were talking about that at the last board meeting, and said it would be like the Benton County Historical Society because that's the closest that we ... to us.

So if your Foundation disintegrated you would probably be your last act of the Foundation to donate it to the Historical Society?

Right.

I see.

In our constitution bylaws, "upon the winding up and dissolution of the this corporation after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of their organization, the remaining assets shall be distributed to a non-profit fund, foundation or corporation." So that would be like the Benton County Historical Society.

So you could amend it or if you decided to keep your ...

And one of the first amendment, "this corporation is organized exclusively for historical educational purposes, or within the meaning of this."

Such things as this tour, would count ...

I would say so, it is historical education.

I've gone through all my questions and covered all the way from 1900 on the school and before 1900 on your family and we up to the present and gone into the future what could happen. Do you see anything in your notes that to talk about at this time? After it's transferred, you'll have another opportunity to go through this and add and amend.

Well, I can't think of anything, we're still planning to go ahead with maybe the fun run again this year. We need to raise about \$4500 more for the putting our foundation under the building, so we're still moving forward.

So your main purpose or short term objective, I should say, is right now is to get a foundation under the building and for that will need to raise four or five thousand dollars. So that's kind of the focal point at this time.

We need, actually we need about \$8500 and we have almost \$5000, and that's from donations and fund raisers the last couple of years.

Come full circle, the Foundation got organized to put a roof on the building and put electricity in and now you're trying to put a basement under the roof and take the electricity out.

Right. Yeah, it's a fun project to work on, I think it brings the community together, you know, that you won't know all these people if you weren't working on the Foundation. And a lot of people ... if people are stopping there, they'll check in and see if they're going to damage it or something and so ... I don't know what's going to happen when a whole lot of people start using it and I don't know what we'll do because so far it's just a few people using it, like once in a while an art group will come out and make a painting of it or something. One time ...

You don't want it loved to death, then?

Right. I think there's such a thing as ... tromping ... too much tromping ... the floor ... the two school houses I visited back in Iowa when we were there three or four years ago that were set up as historic sites did not let you go

into the school house, you looked in from the outside and because if you take hundreds of people walking through all the time, bit by bit it will just ... the floor will just be ground to bits. And I thought so far ... I mentioned this at several board meeting ... so far we're letting people walk through it, we were wondering if we would need to restrict the number of people in there at a time particularly like if you have this large group that comes out maybe just ten to twelve in there at a time and then have them go through and then another group, because we may someday have to be at the point where we can just let people look in the door, you know, not walk through it. Maybe it will be so disintegrated ... these Oregon rains, you know. Things don't last forever.

I know ... covered bridges and that's the problem we have here is the weather. It's a problem everywhere. Cultural resource management ... everything has an end at some point. Seems like a lot of what we're doing is to delay that end as much as possible. I know that you've made detailed drawings of the rafter and the different structural elements and you're trying to recreate the paint, has there been any discussion perhaps of having school group such as the Oregon State College that study management to make recommendations or to work with the Foundation in developing management funds?

No, we haven't tried that, everybody's kind of do-it-yourselfers so they always say "we can do it, we don't need them. We can do it." So, a lot of people are inexperienced

but they're willing to volunteer and so we haven't really tried any long philosophical plans with what are we going to do ten or twenty years from now. We just say, well, "can you paint next Saturday" you know, or "can you come down and help clean" and we called a bunch of people we know to help come and clean. It's kind of a basic do-it-yourselfer thing. You do ... things don't move as fast, I think, when you have volunteers like we have to wait for Louise's husband to get better so she can type this. Louise Hollister, she's got to have a cataract operation so we have to wait a few weeks until she can help, you know. So you kind of move a little slower, I think.

Maybe that's one of the better things after volunteers, is that people are putting out what they can and there's not the pressure.

Yeah, and they care about it. Things aren't as structured, you know, as in the bigger more organized museums probably. Maybe we should be getting more professional. Bill Lewis says the more professional you get, you know, the better ... we don't have a training, like up at Aurora they train their hostesses that show people through, training social ... we just have a neighbor who comes down there, you know, you just kind of pour the punch or something and we're not polished professional people, we just kind of ... neighbors just kind of doing it because nobody else has done it. We think it's a beautiful spot and we want to save it and so we just do it.

I guess that's the last question I can think of ... When you moved in, it was mostly people from Oregon State, most of them and then Hewelett-Packard came in and there was an influx of people, professionals from Hewelett-Packard. Have you notice any other trends of population, would that still pretty much characterize the background of the present population, high educated, well educated people from campus or Hewelett-Packard?

Well, there aren't a lot of campus ... well, there are a few campus people but there are a lot of like high school teachers and I'm not so sure Deardorffs are with the Bureau of Mines in Albany and ...

Fish and Wildlife?

Fish and Wildlife, and Woodcock is a sales ... works in office for an oil company, his wife is an insurance person.

Lot of government, a lot of educators, a lot of well educated people?

I would say most of them are pretty well educated. I would say we've seen fewer like old rancher types.

Are there any operating ranches?

No.

So this valley we : from an agricultural background to then a military base and a large share of it is now a lot of rural, well

educated professional ... so the demographics ... that was a real change.

Big change. Maybe John ... Bruce Johnson down here owns a lot of property and has cattle, but he also works at Hewelett-Packard. So it's still a sideline.

His main income, his main professional focus is Hewelett-Packard rather than cattle ranching?

Right, but ...

That's interesting.

He does probably have the biggest spread of anybody in the Valley.

How many head does he have?

I don't know, but his property is Dolan's and Hollister's and now he's renting Daily's and his ...

Does he have dozens or hundreds?

No, he doesn't have hundreds. Probably between fifty and hundred.

Have you noticed any trends or changes in wildlife population, I know I gave you an article on a cougar that have spotted here, are there black bear in the area?

There was once just shortly before we came here. Louise Hollister said her husband shot a bear out here ... I don't

know why he shot it, but there was one out here in their yard.

Opossum or raccoon?

We have lots of those.

More or less or just about the same? Do you think it's a fairly stable population, wildlife population?

I don't know since they come out at night, but everybody has them. We've seen porcupine, we see a lot of deer, and squirrels.

More deer now than before or about the same?

I couldn't compare, I think there's still a lot of deer.

How about beaver, are they still ... have they been trapped out of the creek?

I haven't been on that section of creek up there, I should have asked Ted because he went last Sunday, but I think they built a dam along the main road and then people got worried, that moved in down there, that it was going to flood the road ... Sulphur Springs Road, so they may have been moved.

How big were the fish the kids caught?

Oh, six inches.

Ever get any over a foot?

No. Little.

That covers just about everything I can think of, how about you?
I sure appreciate it.

Thank you.

APPENDIX: PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY

I was born on a farm in Iowa, attended country school for nine years, graduated from Iowa City High School, and then attended Iowa State College, studying textiles and clothing. In my early years I helped with farm work, milking cows, gathering eggs, driving horses on the hay wagon, hand shelling ear corn, etc. We made clover leaf chains, dug for crawdads at our creek, climbed in the hayloft, and hung May baskets for fun. I attended Sunday School and 4-H Club during my childhood.

I taught in a one room rural school for two years and a small town school one year.

At college I met Don Grabe. We married and had three children.

We moved out West in 1968 to Oregon. We now live on a wooded acreage in the beautiful Soap Creek Valley with our collie dog and two horses. Many birds and flowers add distinctive charm to this hillside homesite.

I have studied art for many years at LBCC (Linn-Benton Community College) and have done watercolors and calligraphy. I have also studied Spanish, Portuguese, and piano.

Living a short distance from the old Soap Creek School #32, I became interested in historical restoration, and have helped collect old photos, histories, early school text books, slates, and desks since 1974. Saving this precious heirloom (the school, its grounds, and contents) for future generations is an important goal in my life.

*Lorna Grabe
Soap Creek Valley
May, 1990*

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