



The OSU Extension Service Centennial Oral History Collection, August 17, 2007

Title

Len Calvert - Interview 1

Date

August 17, 2007

Location

Calvert residence, Eugene, Oregon.

Summary

In the first of two interviews, Calvert describes his youth in Lane County, highlighting his experiences in 4-H. He discusses his college years at the University of Oregon and a series of newspaper jobs that he held after graduating. He speaks about his first experience working with the Extension Service, in the Office of Agricultural Information, then mentions a short stint with the University of Oregon. He discusses his return to the Extension Service and several aspects of both the history of Extension and his own experiences, focusing on how Extension has changed.

Interviewee

Len Calvert

Interviewer

Elizabeth Uhlig

Website

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/extension/>

Transcript

***Note: Interview recorded to audio only.**

Elizabeth Uhlig: Len, to get started with, can we talk a little bit about your personal background to set the stage. So, where were you born and where did you grow up?

Len Calvert: Okay, I was born in Eugene. I grew up in Lane County. I like to say that I basically grew up in Florence. We moved there when I was in the 6th grade and I graduated from high school there. My father was a farmer between here and Junction City.

EU: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

LC: None. I'm an only. Well, mother had at least three miscarriages.

EU: Why did you move to Florence?

LC: The folks bought a small restaurant and service station near the end of World War II. That's where we went.

EU: When you were growing up, were you involved in any 4-H activities?

LC: Ah, yes. I was a 4-H member for three years. I had rabbits, woodworking, health and, something else, oh, marketing.

EU: And did you show at county fairs?

LC: Not at the county fair, we used to have a West Lane Fair, and I would take my rabbit. But in some respects I think 4-H may have helped me define what I was going to do, because in marketing, the whole 8th grade was in marketing and we had to write essays. We had to write a marketing essay, and I wrote one. And I got third place in the county, and that was probably the first time I had ever gotten any sort of recognition for writing. And, I don't know if that influenced me or not but...

[0:02:26]

EU: When you went to college, you studied journalism?

LC: Yes, I went to the University of Oregon; I was a J major, as we were known as then.

EU: Did you think your interest in journalism went back to those 4-H experiences?

LC: Possibly. I was editor of my high school paper and all that sort of thing.

EU: So writing was very much a part of who you were growing up.

LC: Or it became part, yes.

EU: When you went to the U of O did you know you were going to be studying Journalism?

LC: Yes. I always thought, in some respects I was one of the lucky ones because I never changed majors. You know a lot of students do change majors. I almost did. I considered seriously at the end of my junior year doing sociology, or getting a degree in sociology because I was within, oh, I don't know, 15 hours or something like that, but I didn't, and I think that was for the best.

EU: What was it about journalism that attracted you?

LC: I don't know, really. I was just something I wanted to do. I guess because I thought I was fairly good at it, maybe.

EU: When did you graduate from the U of O?

LC: 1955. That's when I got my Bachelors and then I got a Masters in Journalism in 1976. Long time.

EU: At that time you were already with the Extension Service?

LC: I was on sabbatical that year or two or three years before.

EU: When you got your Masters, what was your specialty? What did you study?

LC: Journalism. I was not going to do something related to my job, but then I did because it was easier. Sometimes one does what one needs to do.

[0:04:45]

EU: So, after you graduated from the U of O, what was your first job then?

LC: My first job – I was news editor of a weekly in Coquille over on the south Coast, then I worked for, went to Roseburg News Review for one summer. I didn't like Roseburg so I went back to Coquille. I was in Coquille for three years, four years and then I moved to Ontario, Argus Observer, and then interrupted my journalism career – I had always been interested in politics, or had become interested in politics and a friend who worked in the Chancellor's Office of the State System of Higher Education called and said why don't you come work for me - there's a ballot measure, a statewide ballot measure for a bond issue for student housing and, you know, similar facilities. And, I said, "Oh, that sounds like fun." So I did, and knowing it was only for seven months, it wasn't a full time job, but it was a fascinating experience and I think I learned a lot. And part of my job was organizing the students to help – to get out to vote.

Then I went to Tillamook for the *Headlight Herald* and was there for about a year when Arnold Ebert, whom I met during the campaign. And Arnie was head of the office what was then called Agricultural Information for the Extension Service. And, he called and said we've got a job – this was all in the days before Affirmative Action – and they wouldn't have hired me now. So why don't you come talk to us. So I went to Corvallis on a Saturday morning and talked to them and met J. W. Scheel who was the assistant director who was in charge of our office, or we reported to him. And finally broached the subject, "How much would you pay?" And it was 50 percent more than I was making. And my wife was pregnant with our first child and so we went to Corvallis.

But then I left again; I worked for Extension for four years and then the University of Oregon called and said, "Would you like to come do something with the war on poverty programs?" which the U of O was really involved with in the '60s. And, that sounded really interesting, so I came to Eugene. And then went back to Extension in 1969.

EU: Did you go to work for the Extension Service, I mean was that the main goal or was it just a job?

LC: No, it was just one of those things. I'm always very interested in people who say they planned. I was never sure what I was going to do when I grew up. It just sort of happened.

EU: But you said, you know, when you went to work for the State System of Higher Ed at first, you were interested in politics. Was that a continuing interest?

LC: Oh, sort of. It wasn't very political in some respects. I think one of the things I did, I think about 1963, the White House Fellow Program was brand new. And that was the first year, and I applied, and I was a finalist for this region, but I didn't get selected. That would have been fascinating I think to have done that.

EU: Probably opened up a whole different...

LC: People in Extension were very supportive, I mean, they knew what I was doing and they were very ...

[0:09:38]

EU: So, what was your first job, your job title when you started working for the Extension?

LC: I was called an Information Specialist.

EU: Okay, and what were your duties?

LC: My duties primarily were to write. Primarily news releases. We were considered – the rationale for these jobs was that we used the mass media to educate.

EU: To educate about Extension programs or ...?

LC: Subject matter. We did stories about how to do pesticides, how to use..., what varieties you should grow, how you should manage your household, whatever Extension was involved in. We tried to extend that beyond the face to face sort of things.

EU: So these were, what you were writing were brochures or papers or handouts that people

LC: No, I didn't do publications. Subject matter specialists did publications. Not us. Our office processed the publications, but we didn't write them. We edited, well, we had a publications editor who did that.

EU: Maybe this is a time to talk a little bit about the organization of Extension. Could you explain the difference between the specialists and the agents and how you fit into that?

LC: Ah, yes. The organization of the Extension. Extension...in those days, I think was a very strange animal, and in some respects it still is. It's funded three ways – state, federal and local funds. It's housed in a variety of departments and schools now. People have tried to draw organizational charts and they look like a Rochart test. It sort of doesn't make any sense, but it does. And it takes, I think, about a year for a new employee of the Extension Service to understand, you know, how this all fits. Because it's sort of different. It's not like a department of horticulture or something like that.

And so, there are basically three, four, well let's say three kinds of people. You have administrators, of course, you know the director, assistant directors, area supervisors, whatever, however, whatever the structure is. Then you have what is called subject matter specialists. And the specialists, when I was hired, it was drilled into us, and it was drilled into all the specialists for many years was that the only reason you existed was to support the county agents. And the subject matter specialists were hired because of their expertise in a particular area. You had an entomology specialist, you had a farm crops specialist, you had a livestock specialist; these were people, I mean their job was to be expert in these fields, to keep up with the research, to know what was going on. And so, even though, officially they were not part of the departments at that time, when I first started, they were all housed with the departments.

EU: When you say departments, that's the academic departments?

LC: Yes, Horticulture, the academic departments.

EU: Okay, so the subject area specialists were within the academic...

LC: Yes, there were housed there. They weren't supervised there, but they were housed there. And I think this worked really quite well. They were next door to the researchers. The rationale for Extension, one of the rationales for Extension from the beginning was that ... oh, I should finish...

Then the county agents – the agents were the people who had the greatest, well I think the greatest impact on people, programs, society if you will. They were the ones who had daily interactions with the people in their county.

The specialists, including me, I always felt a little bit like a traveling salesman. Others may not agree with that, but if I were a plant pathologist and I wanted the agents to do something about plant disease, and I would do my agent training, the workshops for the agents to bring them up to date and so forth and so on. You come off like this is the most important thing you can do is to do plant disease work. When I did agent training about news writing I probably came off like saying this is almost the most important thing you can do because you need to tell people what you are doing, so forth and so on. And the agents then had to sort of pick and choose what they were going to do, what their programs were going to be and ideally, it was based on the needs of the local people, counties... and so Extension activities varied from county to county depending on what they needed. Does that make sense?

[0:16:25]

EU: Yes. One thing someone said and I don't remember who said it, but they were talking about the Extension Service and OSU and said that the Extension Service was, for most people in Oregon the public face of the University.

LC: Oh, that's a fairly new comment.

EU: Oh, is it? [laughter] So when the agents, then, were working, did the people out there all over the state realize that this was an OSU program or just Extension Service?

LC: Probably both. Probably both. Because we always talked about Oregon State. It was labeled, so forth and so on. The University, I think now, sees the county offices somewhat differently...the public face of...sort of stuff like that. We talked about education.

EU: So that's another question, when you started what did you think was the main mission of the Extension Service?

LC: Well, we had three I think. It was very clear for many years that you had agriculture, home economics and 4-H. Those were the core programs. There were a few other sorts of things around like community development a little bit. Then starting sometime in the '50s there was another program called Great Decisions, which were small neighborhood discussion groups. And this was done with the National Council on Foreign Policy, the Foreign Policy Association, and Oregon had one of the largest programs if not the largest at one point in the nation. [telephone rings]

The goal was to help people live better lives. I really think that's true. I've always thought in some respects the early county agents to a great extent, my generation to a somewhat lesser extent and I don't know about now, were sort of like missionaries. They had this information, they could help you if you would just listen. We could help the farmer manage his fields better, make more money, solve whatever problems. The same thing was true with the homemakers. We would teach you how to sew, we taught you how to can, and we taught you how to manage your money.

Youth, with 4-H – I always thought 4-H was an interesting program in that I always felt that if you really wanted your child to learn how to, say, how to work with an animal for instance or how to cook, put them in 4-H because the projects go for a year generally speaking. Well, in the old days and you had really good volunteer leaders and they would really learn how to do these things. It wasn't just two weeks, pat you on the head.

[0:21:42]

The other hidden, well it wasn't hidden necessarily, Extension talked about it, was leadership development. It was always amazing to me because I worked a lot with Home Ec in the later years; I worked with mostly with ag in the early years. But in Home Ec the lessons were delivered in small groups called study groups or Extension Home Ec units, whichever. The women – this was the first time they had ever given a public talk or you know, stood up and presented information to a group. The first time they had ever been an officer in something. The same thing is true with the 4-H kids and to a lesser extent with the agriculturists. And so, you learn how to do things like to prepare a presentation. And this is something that I think people value more as they get older perhaps than at the time. You know, like keeping records in 4-H is part of 4-H and it's amazing how many people don't know how to keep records. The kids have to fill out their record books; or they should fill out their record books. They don't have to, but they should, you know, keeping track of how much money you've spent, how much money you take in, all these things. And what's interesting is to hear young people talk now – college age kids, students – who used their 4-H record books when they applied for scholarships – because it was all there.

EU: So, in addition to ... you were doing a lot of personal development work in addition to the ...

LC: It was an outgrowth. I mean that was not ... In the beginning that was not the primary purpose. The primary purpose is to teach, to educate. Particularly, in 4-H and home economics that if you were going to reach the number of people out there, an agent could not do it by himself or herself. And so that was when the volunteers came into being. If you had a core of volunteers and you trained them, we used to call it training...in the subject matter, in the material, then they in turn could go teach.

EU: So then, these volunteers, then, were just people out in the community who had an interest and volunteered to help.

LC: Yeah, and there were people, some of the women I knew later on who were young in the '30s say they would never have made it through their household duties, if you want to put it that way, if it hadn't been for Extension because they didn't know what to do when they were first married. We taught them how to make green salads and why you should.

EU: So then your role, specifically in communications then was to write or to edit...

LC: To write, I wrote...

EU: The information packets...

LC: The news releases.

EU: News releases and study guides and things...

LC: No. Subject matter specialists wrote study guides. There's a very clear line between, about subject matter. It's the subject matter specialist who does the publication, who does the guidelines if you want to put it that way. Because that's their expertise. Our office could help edit and things like that and make sure that they were saying what they meant; we would advise sometimes, and in fact, I will tell you a very funny story. [laughter] Can I tell you a funny story?

EU: Sure.

[0:25:48]

LC: Well, for many years there was an organization. The men and women in Extension were separate. Not really. But organizationally we were, and the men had what was called the Bull Association, and you were initiated, and we all carried canes at annual conference. And so at the banquet for the Bull Association was – and I got in on the very tail end of this – an opportunity for the Extension staff to tell the administration what they thought about some things in a sort of non-threatening way.

And, anyway, one year, this was long before my time, but the publication specialist went through this in our office and there was a home management specialist and she decided to do a series of publications about simple home repairs. Okay. That sounds good, doesn't it? She came over with this one called "How to Set a Screw". And Ralph Salisbury, who was publications specialist, worked really hard to get her to change this title. She accused him of being a dirty old man, all sorts of things. Anyway, that year at annual conference for the Bull Association dinner, an agent got up in front of the group and simply read the bulletin. And the next day the Dean and Director of Agriculture, who was our big boss, came over and said you will destroy every copy. Which was done.

EU: Because of the title?

LC: Yes. And the poor specialist was just beside herself.

EU: Okay. [laughter]

LC: That's always one of our favorite stories.

EU: I'll remember that next time I have to get out my tools.

LC: But that was part of our jobs to try to help people from making seemingly to make a really bad error in perceptions. I did get involved with one publication which had a lot of homosexuality in it. At that time we kept saying this is too much. One example would be fine but not three. And we didn't publish it, and I was accused of being against academic freedom and various and sundry things; which we kept saying we don't care what you do, if you want to publish this in a journal somewhere, do it. But, you're not, it's not advisable to do this in a popular publication that's going to be distributed to the people of Oregon. Because at that particular time I truly believe the backlash would have been severe. Society was not ready for that. For a little bit, yes, but not as much as she had.

[0:29:55]

EU: So your job, then, gave you a pretty broad prospective on all the different areas of the work of the Extension Service, but also this sensitivity to the public face of the organization.

LC: Yes, the latter really became more pronounced as time went on. We changed office heads and oh, when Arnie [Arnold Ebert] retired, probably about 1970 – sometime between 1970 and 1975 – we changed office heads and then the emphasis in our jobs – I always called them jobs – most Extension people do. I guess we should say positions or something like that – changed from being more production-type people writing all the time to what became a passing, I won't say fad, there was a movement among Extension nationwide among communicators to be something called "consulting communicators" and so we were supposed to become advisors to our program areas. I worked with Home Ec and 4-H then and not so much Ag.

EU: Did the fact that this period that we are talking about – the 60s and into the 70s with all the social changes that were going on in the country as a whole, you know, Vietnam, the women's movement, the civil rights movement, all that, did that have an impact on Extension and sort of how you did your job? The need to be more sensitive as new issues came up?

LC: How do I answer that? [laughter] In some respects, no. I worked at the U of O from 1965 to 1969. The University of Oregon was a very activist campus as was Stanford, Washington. Oregon State was not. It was considered the safe school. Send your kids to Oregon State and nothing is going to happen. Don't send them to the University of Washington or Stanford. Send them up here and they'll behave.

Extension had to respond to some things. OK. The county agent in Lane County, whose name was Duane Hatch, I thought did a simply superb job in dealing with some of the issues that came along with the back to the land movement, the organics, things like that which were outside the mainstream at that time and what Duane did here which I always thought because you know Eugene was always kind of a hot bed for this stuff, was very bright and very smart in that he established demonstration gardens. He didn't argue; he didn't engage in debates. He simply showed. And I think his background, his religious background probably helped because he could sort of empathize, maybe, a little better than some.

When the Rajneeshes were holding forth in Central Oregon there was an article in some magazine about the Rajneeshes and what their plans were. They were going to turn the desert, to grow all this stuff and everything, and they talked to one of the Jefferson County agents, Martin Zimmerman. And when I read his response, I thought, right on. His response was very good because they wanted him, the writer was hoping he would say this is stupid, they can't do this. He didn't do that. What he said was this has never been done, what they were proposing had never been done, but then nobody had tried with the type of resources and the number of people, all this stuff that they had. And so, who knows?

EU: So by the Extension Service engaging those topics not in a confrontational way ...

[0:35:27]

LC: Well, they tried...which I think was the way that almost any agency had to respond or should have responded because a lot of things that were being confronted at that time, take for instance, the pesticide thing, the DDT. I wrote stories in the early '60s about using DDT, about how you should use this. Little did any of us know that it was going to destroy the eggs. There is often unintended consequences. DDT wiped out malaria in the Philippines, which was good. But then it did some other things happened that wasn't so good. And so it's hard, I think, when you are dealing with science, in a sense, to always know that you are absolutely perfectly right all the time. Because if somebody tries to do something with deep pockets and stuff, maybe they'll have success. Everybody else has failed that because they didn't have the resources to make it happen.

There was a lot of skepticism about wine making when it started, because partly because nobody had ever done it. We weren't sure the grape would grow here the way it turned out they will. And so I think Oregon State was not necessarily enthusiastic, shall we say, when the first growers started and now they are having one or two wine institutes in the country – so things change.

EU: Do you think the Extension Service was able to be flexible and go along with those changes?

LC: Well, some of them, they have to. I mean they don't really have a choice. Well, we'll stay with chemicals. The new information that came out that has developed about the effects of some of them, and they've been withdrawn. You can't go on recommending them. [laughter] You really don't have a choice at times. But I think there was a fair amount of resistance to the movements of the 60s. Not just in Extension, but throughout the university and I think that was true almost everywhere in higher ed at that time. I remember going to a meeting at Cornell; this was after they had burned the bookstore there, and things were bubbling along at various places. And people from the South, from the southern schools like Texas A&M didn't understand what was going on. This was not part of their experience. In the South it didn't happen. Yes, Ma'am, and No, Sir. [laughter]

EU: OK. I think I'll stop here for a minute. So this is the end of Part 1.

[0:39:31]

Elizabeth Uhlig: This is part two of the oral history project with Len Calvert. Len, let's talk a little bit about the history of the Extension Service. Could you talk about maybe some of the differences between the Oregon Extension Service and Extension Service in the Midwest and how they developed?

Len Calvert: Oh, my, we'll try. Extension in Oregon, really, OK. Do you know about the Smith Lever Act of 1914 which was passed by Congress, which established the Extension Service, nationwide, made this all possible. And, it was a partnership between the Land Grant universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In the beginning, Oregon, how do I want to say it, foreshadowed the Smith Lever Act in 1914. In 1913 when the Oregon Legislature passed the authorization to establish the Extension Service, even before that, in anticipation that Congress was going to act. So, the way the Extension developed here was, as far as I know, we've always had academic appointments – county agents and specialists always were part of the faculty at Oregon State. This was not true in all states. States handled it very differently. In North Carolina, for instance, a friend was telling me that all the county agents were instructors, unilaterally, it didn't matter how long they had been there, what degrees, they just had this blanket thing. You could go from instructor to assistant professor, to associate professor, to full professor.

One of the things, that there were some fights in the beginning as I understand it from Mr. Ballard's book. There was a longstanding, I won't say feud, but tension between the Extension Service and the Soil Conservation Service, for instance, over who was going to do what. And they didn't really co-exist terribly well in USDA for many, many, many years. This was still true in the 1960s because Extension was seen by USDA as the educational and informational arm of the department. Okay? The Soil Conservation wanted to do that. And so there was always this tension.

In Oregon, the early leaders of Extension, and I'm not sure by design, I think it just sort of happened, began to work with the growers, the farmers, in what we call commodity groups. All the strawberry growers, so you develop the Oregon Strawberry Council and you have county associations and things like this. Or livestock producers. Western Oregon Livestock Association was started by Extension. The Oregon Wheat League was started by Extension. And so what developed over the years, as the agents and specialists worked with these groups, were very strong commodity groups and fairly weak statewide groups like the Grange and the Farm Bureau were not as strong here as they were in some other parts of the country. Particularly in the Midwest where the Farm Bureau was very strong and actually controlled the county agents in some respects, for several years in the beginning. In fact, I think it was Indiana and maybe Iowa, I can't remember, I'm pretty sure about Indiana, the county agents were sometimes housed in the Farm Bureau offices – and so became sort of agents of the Farm Bureau.

And that did not happen here and Mr. Ballard - apparently the Farm Bureau made a run at this in the teens, according to Mr. Ballard and it was not successful. And so I've always had the theory that you have like the Farm Bureau and the Grange here are not quite as strong as they are in some parts of the country because of that. I mean, the Wheat Growers were much more interested in what their association was doing...sometime you should do a thing about the Wheat Growers. They are incredible – just incredible. They developed the Asian Markets, they did just so many things. They are just amazing. So anyway, that's sort of the way it went.

[0:45:46]

In the early days, Ag was the first one, that was the first program. In fact, I have a copy of a county agent's handbook. I made copies of various pages and it was fascinating...published by the USDA and including lists of frequently asked questions and answers to and things like this and it's fun to read.

In fact, the term agent comes from our appointments. We had joint appointments with Oregon State and the USDA. We were considered USDA employees and Oregon State employees. In fact, I still have my USDA identification card, which we were supposed to turn in, but I didn't. [laughter] And so that's partially where the term agent came from. You were an agent of the Department of Agriculture. The running joke is sort of, "I'm from the Government and I'm here to help you." [laughter]

In fact, one of the things I always found fascinating because by and large I think you would say that, I don't know about now, but back then, the Extension staff was fairly conservative. This was not a flamingly liberal organization. And I used to get so amused because the county agents would sit around and denounce the government – they didn't like this program or they didn't like that or something and I just chuckled because in their billfolds were there USDA ID cards.

EU: So basically, you had the Extension Service, you had the University, you had the USDA. I mean, three different masters, obviously it didn't always work smoothly?

LC: It worked better than you might think. The Dean of Agriculture was called the Dean and Director in those days, until I think sometime in the '80s and he was the Dean of the School of Agriculture; he was Director of the Extension Service and also Director of the Agricultural Experiment Stations. And so, the School of Agriculture became the umbrella within the University. So everything went that way which is standard procedure. USDA was never much directive. There were a few times. In the early '60s I can remember because I had to write the news releases with Ag Economists; there was a wheat referendum, on I've forgotten exactly on what. But anyway, it was very important and so partly as our role with USDA was to tell people what was at stake, and you were trying not to tell people how to vote, but if you vote yes, this, this, this, and this; if you vote no, that, that, and that. So occasionally, you would get involved with things like that where it became very important to the growers that they understand what was going on from the feds.

[0:50:01]

Where the USDA people came in, and I think this has largely been dismantled now in USDA, I don't think much exists anymore, but they used to have specialists...sort of the counterparts of the subject matter specialists in the universities. And so, for instance, in food preservation, it was the university's and the researchers in the Department of Agriculture who developed the recommendations on how long things should be processed and things like that. We had counter parts in Information and I remember a couple of times a USDA radio station specialist came and did training for our office.

When the community development, except that wasn't what it was called in those days. It was sort of part of the War on Poverty stuff where you were to organize the neighborhoods and somebody in Chicago did this better than anybody else, but we had, I remember having a specialist from USDA come to Corvallis and we all went to some sort of training session on this and how it was to work. And that seemed to be their primary role was to support the states when the states didn't have the answer. There's a major USDA research facility just outside Washington D.C. at Beltsville, Maryland, which is a big deal.

EU: Maybe this is a time to talk a little more about funding and money.

LC: Well, yes. In the olden days, [laughter] Mr. Ballard, as I understand it, was always very proud of the fact that Oregon got more state funds than most states. The balance was predominately state. There is a formula for the federal funds and I can't recite it. I know it exists and it's based partly on the number of farms in your state. Oregon always spent its money differently than many states. In Oregon the federal and state monies were basically co-mingled, I think - my perception. So, they were used for salaries for the specialists and the agents. Unlike some states which I didn't realize for a long time, because I would look in the directories and Ohio would have all these people in their information office – 15 or 20 people and we had five! And - how could they do this? Well, it turns out that they used all their federal money and I think most of their state money for state staff and the county agents were paid by the counties. That wasn't true here because the county funds were seen as or local funds, whatever you want to call them, but it started out to be part of the county budget and

that was to be used to support the county office. It was to pay the secretaries, travel, rent, if there were things like that, equipment – to be used in the county.

[0:54:41]

EU: But the salaries for the agents themselves....

LC: Came from the state and federal. And so the county support, the local support is very important and the policy of Oregon State, which I think is good, is that there is no county office if there is no county support or local support. We close down.

EU: And did that happen frequently?

LC: It did in the '30s. If you go back to Mr. Ballard's manuscript you will find that there was an agent in a county or maybe two agents and then there's a gap and then it starts up again. And the gap basically is in the '30s when the local governments didn't have the money, and so it did happen. Well, it has happened recently. I mean, just two years ago, three years ago when Multnomah County withdrew its funds, and so there is no Extension Office, county office in Multnomah County. There are some Oregon State activities still going on, but if you want to be in 4-H in Multnomah County you have to go to Clackamas or Washington.

EU: Why did that happen? Was it strictly budget?

LC: It was budgets. And it may happen again because the timber-dependent counties, particularly in Southern Oregon, are in a real crisis in some counties and so who knows what will happen? One of the things that happened, I think .. I was going to look this up before you came but couldn't find it...about 19...late '70s, early '80s was the next time that something like that happened, I mean after the '30s. Crook County decided that they couldn't support Extension through the county government. And so this became a real issue. And the agents there, the three agents did not want to close the office. They were trying really hard to hang on. And so what they did, I think for two years they lived on contributions – people gave money to keep the office going.

Then the Legislature passed a law which enabled us to form what are called 4-H and Extension Service Districts. The title is strange, I mean 4-H and Extension because 4-H is part of Extension, but that's the way it got passed. It was done primarily because of the situation in Crook County. And then so the people in Crook County then voted to form a district and they taxed themselves, the district has its own tax base and so they go on.

[0:58:41]

So, what happened then later Several counties started having problems with their budgets and so off we went forming the Extension Service Districts. And Crook was the first one, and then I worked on campaigns and drives, etc. etc., in Curry, Lincoln, Clatsop, Tillamook, Grant, Lake. I didn't help with Deschutes. About six, seven, eight counties. What happened was that then each county became a district and the district covers the county except in Clatsop County. Under the law, incorporated cities have to pass a resolution saying that they want to participate in the district. Cannon Beach decided they didn't want to, and so they're not part of the district in Clatsop County, and neither do they receive services from the Extension Service. They can come into the county office in Astoria and get bulletins, I'm sure and things like that, but we will not organize, we will not have organized groups there. No money, no services. Sort of like no shoes, no shirt, no service. [laughter]

EU: So even within a county there were...

LC: Just that one. Just that one.

EU: Do you want to talk a little bit about the election in Morrow County?

LC: [laughter.] That's the one I lost by 13 votes. And it was my fault, well, not my fault exactly, but I'll take part of the blame. I was very concerned about the north end of Morrow County, which is Boardman, Irrigon, which is growing rapidly, lots of new people and it was felt that they didn't know much about Extension. The county seat is Heppner; we'd

been there forever and partly, I thought that the Heppner area was, quote, "safe," unquote. And, I probably didn't advise that we do as much there as we did in some other parts. And we lost and that's where we lost was in Heppner. It just really blindsided me, I didn't expect that.

But, you know, one of the things you learn when you do this sort of thing, is a lot of people think, Oh, well, working in a small county, a small population like Wheeler, Lake, it's so easy, you still have to worry about a lot of things like you do in Washington County or Lane County. It's harder, or no easier. And partly it's because they are small and people have long memories and you are dealing with something that happened 20 years ago that they still haven't quite forgiven X for doing, you know? [laughter] And so it's not necessarily easier. In some respects it's harder because bruised feelings go on for a long time in some places.

EU: One time when we talked you mentioned about the role or the position that the agents had in their counties – that they were the experts; they were the leaders and very much respected in the counties.

LC: Oh, yes, I think so, by and large. yes. I don't know about now. Because the Extension Service is organized quite differently, the agents are working differently than they used to. In the '60s and '70s I could call a county agent and say okay, I need a ... give me the names of three people that you've worked with that have done wondrous things with pasture, for instance, and they could do it. I'm not sure hardly any of them could do that now. Because there are fewer of them. My perception is that they do not make home visits and farm visits and stuff like they used to. And so I'm not sure that they could tell you all those things. Maybe in some of the really small counties, they still could. But any of the larger counties...

[1:05:01]

I think one of the things that made Extension such a force in the earlier days, Oregon was highly regarded for it's program planning. Nationally, it was considered one of our great strengths and for several years, several decades we went through the ten-year planning conferences, and people would dread them.

But what you did was you organized, say in Gilliam County, which is small, it's not a big county – Condon, Arlington. You have 200 people working on various committees to see what the needs are, and they weren't confined just to families and farms; it included education, public health - it was very comprehensive. What happened in the areas that Extension didn't work, like education and public health, they would pass the information on to the appropriate agency who could deal with that. And the results of the conferences became the blue print for what was done in that county for the next ten years, by and large. Then it was determined that ten years was too long in the modern era, and so it was five and I don't know what they do now. I mean it's sort of disintegrated. My view.

In fact, if you were to go to the Archives at Oregon State, I think you would find copies of the ten year planning conferences of all the counties. I think. Or at least certainly most of them. They are amazing documents. How many farms, how many acres were irrigated, what the future should be, as near as anybody could tell. I got in on the tail end of the very last one of those.

EU: And so did they, if they made ten year plans, did they actually carry them out?

LC: Oh yeah, it wasn't just an exercise. Because, theoretically, you see, the way Extension should work is you have the local agents working with the local people; they identify a problem; we've got a certain kind of weed or something. Then, up the chain it goes to the Agricultural Research Station where the researchers should then conduct the scientific study that says, okay, If you do this, this, and this, you will get rid of this weed and then it goes back down. But it always should come up. And that's how Extension programs, theoretically, used to be done. It was from the ground up, not from the top down. It wasn't Oregon State telling the people, this is what you had to do or should do.

EU: And do you think that's what has happened now?

LC: I think there's more top down now. That's my perception.

[1:09:21]

EU: This may be the time to work into another topic I wanted to ask you about. And that is the broader relationship of the Extension Service and the University. I think we've talked a little bit about the traditional relation. How has that changed since when you started in the '60s and '70s?

LC: Well, it's changed a lot. Part of what drove the changes, not all of it, but part of it, was the University itself. For instance, many specialists were secretaries of statewide commodity groups and would work very closely with them. At one time, I think in the late '60s, there was a study done and somebody decided this wasn't really a part of the academic role of the University, and so forth and so on, and that we should stop doing it. Which we did. The reason it was done in the first place, as I always understood, was that having Extension people in these roles helped direct the direction of the program. They would help organize the annual meetings, and they would basically determine who the speakers were going to be, and so you could have the right researchers; it could become much more educational than being just put together. So we stopped doing that and that sort of put us back half a step from the people, or at least that's my belief.

Part of it was driven by the addition of additional monies and programs. Such as Sea Grant. Oregon State is a Sea Grant institution. Part of Sea Grant is an outreach program. The first Sea Grant director, no he wasn't the first director of Sea Grant, he was one of the key figures when Sea Grant first started and he had been an Extension agent and his goal, successfully, was to incorporate Sea Grant, the outreach of Sea Grant, into the Extension Service because we had the existing structure and offices, and so forth, so they didn't have to re-invent the wheel. It makes a great deal of sense, but it introduced a different element. It was not state-wide. It could have been, I shouldn't say it wasn't state-wide, but it was primarily concentrated on the coast and Portland with the Port of Portland. And then you had specialists in a different school – Oceanography.

For a long, long time there had been specialists in Forestry – one or two, not many. Then, at some point, I've forgotten when, the Legislature decided we should have more. So they appropriated money, so forth and so on. So all at once, we had foresters. We had five or six specialists, we had probably eight agents, or maybe more. That was their job was to work with the foresters and the forest industry. We hadn't had people who worked with mill owners on modernizing their mills; now we did. And so because of the variety, I guess, it was felt that Extension, we being Extension in the School of Agriculture was not valid anymore. And so, they took us out of there, or we went out and then we became, I don't remember who we were reporting to, I guess, the Provost. Anyway, we became much more of a university arm then. Then everyone became members of an academic department, which gave the department heads much more control.

[1:14:36]

EU: This was the area specialists and the agents were also now part of an academic department?

LC: Yeah.

EU: How did that change things? Was that a good move?

LC: I don't think so, bluntly. [laughter] I think what happens is if you are a young academic and you are concerned about tenure and all these things, they used to have to please the Extension Service. Now, you have to please your department head and that's a whole different thing, I think. It's much more academic, it's not that Extension wasn't academic, but we were not academic in the usual sense. We weren't necessarily being judged on how much grant money we brought in. Or how many publications or articles we had in juried journals. I always thought it was so nice because we were judged on what we did. [laughter]

And then they also, there's more with the specialists on campus, there's a lot more split appointments now. They have joint research and Extension appointments, and some have three-way spits with teaching, research and Extension. So Extension does not get their full attention. It can't. So the culture changes.

And I think one of the biggest things that has happened and maybe it would have happened anyway, who knows, Extension, the Extension staff used to be fairly cohesive. And I don't see that as much anymore, I don't think. They are much more oriented toward the department and less toward the whole. And why shouldn't they be? That's their future. And so it's made a big change, in my view.

EU: And then, there was a more recent ... Oh, go ahead.

LC: Well, I was just going to say the other difference is they no longer have federal appointments. This occurred not too long ago – about 2000 maybe. And apparently some people have said that they thought what drove that was affirmative action in a sense because USDA had no say over who was hired at the state level. Universities hired people, not USDA. And apparently, some of the government lawyers and people like that were very concerned about this that they could be sued if somebody was unhappy. Now whether that is true or not, I don't know but that was supposedly one of the reasons.

EU: So what are the ties then with the Federal?

LC: Only the money, as far as I can see.

EU: The Extension Service now is part of Distance Education?

LC: I guess, I'm not clear on that. Except that the Director now is Vice Provost for something or other.

[1:18:56]

EU: So it seems since the '60s when you started, there has been quite an evolution.

LC: Yes, yes. And I think one of the saddest things – my perception again – is the stepping back from the people. I don't think Extension is as close to the people as it used to be. I think that's really too bad. We were very important; I think we are less important now. And maybe that's partly society, too. The changes in society. You could always have...

I used to have really fun discussions with one of the program leaders about staffing. We traveled together a fair amount at times and you could sort of play games a little bit. Because if you wanted numbers, H. J. Meyers was the 4-H program leader and if you wanted numbers in enrollment – you know, you say you worked with x-number of youth; obviously, you were going to put your staff in Washington, Multnomah, Clackamas, Lane, Marion – the big counties and that was okay. But you could also argue that if the role of 4-H was to truly have an impact on that young person and you were really going to make a difference in what happens in their lives, you really should put more emphasis on staff in places like Gilliam County, Sherman County, Morrow, the Eastern Oregon counties with small populations, but also very few services. Because in some of those counties, I obviously don't know currently, but it was the only thing that the kids had was school and 4-H. There were no Scouts, there was no Campfire, Boys & Girls Clubs, things like that. It was us and the schools. And so if you really wanted to make a difference, I think now of a significant argument that you should have people there. That they will make a greater difference than they would in the Portland metro area. [laughter] You won't get the numbers, but you may make a bigger difference.

EU: OK, let's take a break. This is the end of Part 2.

[1:22:26]