



The Extension Tradition in the Columbia River Gorge, August 9, 2016

Title

Extension, History, and Change in Sherman and Wasco Counties

Date

August 9, 2016

Location

Mid-Columbia Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Hood River, Oregon.

Summary

In his interview, Sandy Macnab provides an in-depth description of his upbringing in a very rural, agricultural setting; comments on his years as both an undergraduate and graduate student at OSU; and shares his memories of campus culture during the 1970s. He then details the route that he took to becoming an OSU Extension Agent for Sherman County, and likewise documents his shift to the Wasco County branch and the changes that this shift entailed. From there, Macnab responds to questions concerning his engagement with the Rajneeshpuram community during the 1980s; his research on wheat production and marketing costs; and investigations of alternative crops that might be suitable for the Columbia Basin. He likewise adds his perspective on the explosive growth of wind power in the Columbia River Gorge.

Macnab next provides notes on his family's memories of the construction of two major dams on the Columbia River; discusses research that he has conducted on wolves in Sherman and Wasco County; and describes the major damage caused in the region by the Christmas Day Flood of 1964. The interview concludes with thoughts on the roles that photography and popular writing - including a newspaper column - played over the course of his career; and a lengthy discussion of changes in Sherman County that Macnab has observed as a life-long resident.

Interviewee

Sandy Macnab

Interviewer

Chris Petersen

Website

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

Transcript

Chris Petersen: Today is August 9th, 2016 and we're with Sandy Macnab. We're at the Extension and Experiment Station complex in Hood River, and we're going to talk to Sandy about his association with OSU as a student and as an Extension agent, and also learn more about his particular region of Oregon - Sherman County. We'll begin there - were you born in Sherman County?

Sandy Macnab: Technically, I was born in the hospital in The Dalles which is in Wasco County, but that was the only hospital in the area. I was raised in Sherman County.

CP: Can you tell me about your family background?

SM: My kids would have been sixth generation Sherman County. I was raised on a farm that was actually just south of Gordon Butte, which is right above the Deschutes River, and the free bridge property crossed right at the bottom of the zone we farmed. As you're crossing the mouth of the Deschutes River, it's the last hillside you can see on the Sherman County side. So gives you a pretty good idea of how close it is to the mouth and where it is. If you've ever seen the old picture in Wasco County with the horse drawn or the mule drawn combine with the two states, three counties, two rivers - ours was just directly across the river from where that photo was taken.

CP: So your family had been in Sherman County for four generations at the time of your birth?

SM: Yes.

CP: Wow. And farming the whole time I'm guessing?

SM: Yeah. It was the only occupation there was there practically. Actually, it was more self-sufficient then than it is now. But farming was the primary one; still is.

CP: So you grew up on a pretty large wheat farm, is that correct?

SM: Not really. It was about 1800 acres. About average size for its day. Would be hard for a person to exist on today, I think.

CP: Dry land wheat farming.

SM: Dry land wheat farming, so we farmed half of it a year.

CP: Can you tell me about life growing up on this farm in a very rural place?

SM: We learned how to do a lot of things on our own because we were actually eleven miles from Biggs, ten miles from Wasco, and eleven miles from Moro where the high school was, eventually. So we went to grade school in Wasco, which is ten miles away. My dad was from a family of twelve kids and eleven of them stayed in the area, so everybody I knew at school and everybody I knew at church and everybody I knew at every picnic or reunion or whatever we went to were all Macnabs. In fact, there was forty-nine first cousins in my generation on Dad's side, so I just thought that's the way life was everywhere. Big families were good, and we had lots of them. There were eight kids in our family's. Someone asked me one time where I was in that ranking, and I said I was number one but I had two older sisters, which I thought was a good comeback. They didn't think it was quite so funny.

Did the typical farm thing; I learned how to drive when I was about six. First time I drove to town, I think I was ten. Didn't actually start working farm-type work on a regular scale until I was twelve. Just grew up doing the things; spent part of my summers during my high school years hauling hay. When my younger brother was able to do some of the tractor driving, Dad let me go and I helped some of the uncles primarily and a couple of other neighbors that needed hay haulers. Figured we hauled 165,000 bales in four summers and moved them at least once each, more than likely twice, because you've got to load them and unload them, so they got moved multiple times.

Worked with some great people, gave me a chance to explore what other people do and how they do it. Worked part of one summer with Larry Caseburg. He's on the hall of fame for OSU, strong agriculture supporter. He's got a list of who done it on his resume. Worked with him. It was funny because there was four of us. There would be two guys on the ground picking up hay bales, third guy was on the truck stacking them, and the fourth guy was driving. And then every load we would rotate around, so you went from the left side, to the right side, to the back of the truck, to the driver. Then we were talking one time about football, because the other two guys are football players in high school getting ready for the season coming up. Then Larry starts reliving some of his old days and he says "Well Sandy, you probably remember so and so, and so and so." And I say, "I've heard the names" but then I says "I was born about then Larry." All of a sudden you can just see the grey hairs popping about. [laughs] And the stupid thing was that he never got out of the cab of the truck again for the rest of the week! So it made the workload harder for the rest of the three of us; didn't get that break to drive. But that was just one of the things that happened.

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Got a lot of experience working. Did the high school thing; FFA was a big part of my life. Never really did - I think I did participate in 4-H one year, maybe two...well, we took a gun safety class. But as soon as we'd got our gun safety cards, we'd drop the class and didn't continue on. Then we had a thing called Empire Builders which is kind of a leadership development thing for high school-aged kids. We went because the neighbor kids were going and they offered to take us, so we jumped in the car with them. But never was impressed with that particular class. I think leadership is hard to teach unless you've got something that you can motivate people to actually put in the tools to use that you're trying to teach them how to use. I can tell you a list of ten things a good leader does, but if you don't have any place to apply it then it'll never make any sense or you'll never appreciate it. Kind of fits that way. That was my 4-H experience.

Went to OSU - was a valedictorian at the high school - went on to OSU, did four years there, got paroled in '75. In my junior year and senior year I won one of the - I think they gave five male and five female top student awards each year. I won one my junior year and one my senior year. And as far as I know, I'm the only person to ever have won it twice, which is kind of nice.

So once I graduated then, I came back home and went to work for a neighbor, farming. Kind of led to one of my favorite sayings, well two of them: first of all, I never let my schooling interfere with my education. And the other one is, I went to OSU for my schooling, came home to get my education. And that's where I picked up a lot of the stuff about farming - more detail on how to farm, what to look for, those types of things. That's been really, really useful. I think the idea that I came back as a valedictorian, went on to OSU, had really good grades, did all the proper things, won all the awards, and then came back and was a peon driving tractors and hoeing weeds and driving truck once in awhile, I think that helped me earn some respect when I did start.

Because at the time, there was only one other county agent when I started in Extension that was actually working in his own county. They shipped him off, and then they hired me, and then Gilliam County tried to hire a person who was there on a temporary basis. He was there for nine months while there was a gap between agents and he had his name in the application pool, but when OSU decided they were going to hire they were going to hire a guy - forget what his background was...eventually went on to become a certification specialist. But he was married to a Vietnamese gal. There was an Air Force base in Condon - this was not too long after the Vietnam War was over, so there were still some hard feelings. Then they found out the guy was also a vegetarian. There was some concern about bringing in this vegetarian that was married to a Vietnamese stranger, putting her in the middle of Gilliam County, how well accepted would they be or if they went to a cattleman's function where they were serving steaks and they wanted the eggplant soufflé or something. Didn't know how big that was going to go over.

So the county rebelled and said they didn't want him, they wanted their guy. And they were told "you can't hire somebody from your own county," and they said, "well, we're working with a guy right now and Sherman County's got a guy from their home who's a native." Oh boy. So that's what started the whole trend. I've been a trend changer here. Now it takes a three-day interview process to hire somebody from OSU; you come out to the counties, you meet the faculties there, the other persons you'll be working with, your key community leaders, you give your dog and pony spiel, try to impress them, they score you. Then you go down to Corvallis and meet with the campus folks that are particular to your areas of interest. They score you, and then they put the scores together and that's how they eventually decide who to hire. That's one of the things that has changed in my lifetime.

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I started as an instructor since I didn't have a master's degree. So year two it was, I guess, I started my master's degree. I went with the wrong attitude; I went with the idea of getting a degree, not that it had to be anything practical. So I went into Education for that, and that was a very accommodating deal. But somebody at OSU had decided that there's all these home economists, vo-ag teachers, ag teachers, industrial arts teachers, and one other core that needed continuing education anyway and probably needed master's degrees in order to keep their certificates up. So they decided that they would work with Eastern Oregon State University, which is another changer since that's the first time the two universities had worked together. And they would offer classes on the east side of the state where they would get all these tons of people coming. They'd all get their degrees and everybody would be happy. And they allowed you to choose whether you got your degree from either OSU or Eastern Oregon, so there was option in there. And they thought they had about sixty people.

I think the biggest turnout for any one class they ever had was about 12, and that was all vo-ag teachers and two county agents. So they were hard pressed for that. But we got through the program - halfway through they decided, "this isn't working, we can't get the minimum numbers we need for these teachers to come in and teach these classes." So they killed the program halfway through and said "well, you guys are kind of on your own, good luck on getting your master's finished." Which was kind of invigorating. I actually went back to OSU and talked to some people, we put together a program. I could still take some - then you ran into the rules about how much you can transfer into a OSU program. Since it hadn't really been designated as OSU or Eastern Oregon, nobody wanted to claim it, it fell into a kind of no man's land. Eventually we got through that too, but that was a challenge. An interesting experience with a professional educator in the College of Education, long since retired. I still made it through, I don't know if my master's is actually legal because she resigned as my master's professor, or what do they call them?

CP: Major professor.

SM: Major professor. She resigned because she told me - I was down there one time and I says "well, can we look at the summer schedule and the spring schedule and look and see what's on there?" And she says "well, only us educators who are advising students can get those and they haven't been printed yet, and they won't be ready until such and such a time, so you'll just have to wait and come back again and get one."

"Well, can you mail me one?" Well no, she couldn't do that because they aren't budgeted for all these extra costs.

Well crap, so I called the Extension office and found out where these things are published, and I thought "they don't wait until the last minute." So I went over to the place and I says "hi, I'm here, I'm trying to get a copy, I'm just on campus for the day." And they said "sure," just opened up a box and handed me a copy of the schedule of classes. And I says "oh great, can I get one for my advisor too? She hasn't got one yet." So I went back to her office and tossed a copy on her desk and says "here's one for you, you got an advance copy, now we can work down and figure out what classes I need to finish up with."

She thought I was being insulting to her. So when I got back, there was a letter in my mailbox saying I was incorrigible and hard to work with and just wanted nothing to do with me and she was resigning as my major professor. Fortunately, I had a guy who was my sub-major professor, he was a grad student and working his way through, so I sat with him and talked it over and he said, "well, you've only got two more terms, I'll just sign off on everything. They never check them closely." So my major professor ended up being a grad student. [laughs] But statutes of limitations have gone by now; I think I'm legal. [laughs] So I got through that.

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CP: Can you tell me a bit more about your undergraduate experience at OSU?

SM: I started in General Ag and then switched over to Ag Education and stayed with that through about the end of my junior year. And then the major professor in that division made some rather disparaging comments about why it was taking me so long, and I should've been out of there in three years instead of going four. But I needed a break and I was getting burned out and I decided the breaks were better for me than trying to go through in three years. He just kept going

on, he made some other comments, and I thought "if this guy represents progressive education, I really don't want any part of it." So I went back and just finished off in General Ag.

But the Ag Education and the General Ag backgrounds really worked out well for my Extension position, because even though it was a - in my original position I did grains, or crops anyway, livestock, which I knew very little about, and then 4-H, then they gave us energy, and I was also the staff chairman. Well a couple of my could figure out - I had a co-worker that did the 4-H from the Home Ec side of things and I was supposed to do the livestock/ag side of things, so that was ok. The general background from OSU really gave me a better background than going through and majoring in one specific subject and then coming up and trying to become an expert in it. And that's all the people up there ever really required. We had specialists who did the specialty work and my job, as I understood it, was to translate what they came up with and make it available in understandable terms to the local people so they could put it to use. And they did, very well. If they had issues or challenges, my job was to contact the specialists and say "we've got this problem, how would you address this in the specialty?" Then I co-opted with them or shared a trial or experiment or did something, or they went off and did their own thing and came back with the results.

We took the local peoples' problems and took them to OSU to get them resolved. We took the OSU resolutions and discoveries and brought them back to the local area. That and a coworker that I replaced - the position's been empty for eleven months, and so when I started he called me up one time and said "you may think you know what you're going to be doing here, but it's going to take you a while to figure out the Extension portion because its new to you." And I had known him when he was county agent, but I really didn't know what he did. He was best friends with the guy I was working with, which was odd. So I knew him more on a social level than I did on a professional level, but I still really didn't know what he did. But his comment was basically that even though you think you know all the back roads, you know all the people, you know the farming, it's still going to be three years before you're comfortable answering questions. And I thought, "pfft, I know all this stuff, I've got this stuff in the bag; this will be easy for me." And then I called him up two years and seven months later and I says, "I told you you were wrong," 'cuz that was the first day I remembered feeling comfortable answering questions. but it was almost that three years.

And I've shared that information with every new agent – "don't feel bad if you don't know every answer, you won't know every answer. Find it out, get back to them, let them know, answer the questions, don't just leave them hanging with 'I don't know' and 'I don't care.'" The fact that we didn't know but cared, I think, was a long ways of building a strong solid foundation.

I also had some writing skills and I started a monthly newsletter. Monday evening I ran into a guy, and he says "are you still going to do your September newsletter so we know what varieties to plant?" And this is from a different county. So for a long time - I worked four years in Sherman County and transferred collaterally, or moved over when I got my degree finished, I could move to Wasco County and they gave me a bump in salary level...well, they said they did. But they gave me a change in title and I became an assistant or associate or whatever the lower rank is. I don't remember, never cared, never made any sense to me. But I was the lower rank of professorship on that scale, and that was a good thing. That also guaranteed me and I got through the tenure thing ok.

But the OSU thing was - I worked as a resident assistant for two years and I think that helped in some of the leadership things. I told people, "I'm no better than you, I'm a student, I got exams the same as you do." And I said, "if I walk into your room and you're drinking beer" - and this is back in the days when alcohol was banned on campus totally - I said, "you're Joe Blow and you're having a beer and you're in your room, you're not breaking any rules, I don't see it." But I says, "the minute you bring it out into the lobby or into the hallways and stuff, then you're on public property and then I see it, then that's when you get in trouble." And that worked very well for two years, except one time they had a party; I knew the party was going on, I just stayed away from that end of the hall. I went out one time to hit the restroom and here comes my girlfriend carrying the beer. So I made her dump it instead of writing her up. I took her back in her room and I chewed her out for "how can you put me in this position? You know the rules and you know I've got to do this." And I open the door and there's about fifteen faces standing there listening to see what was gonna happen.

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CP: Can you talk about what the campus culture was like when you were there as an undergraduate in the early 70s? It was somewhat different, I'm sure, from Sherman County. But just the culture of campus in respect to what was happening in the world as well.

SM: There was the Vietnam War; the draft was actually still going on my first year. In fact, when I was a freshman we'd put a quarter in a pool and whoever came up - they still did the Ping-Pong draft thing lottery - and if your number came up the lowest on the floor you won the pool. If your number came up the highest, you got tubbed at the fountain in front of, I think it still there, Kerr Library. So I'd heard that my number came up like number eleven or something and I thought, "oh my gosh, I'm going to Vietnam," not exactly what I wanted to do, because they were taking probably the lower ninety numbers or something. I went back and checked and they still didn't have my name filled in with the time or the date or the actual draft number, so I looked and we had numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10 already on our floor. We also had a 363, who was the blind kid who lives down the hall, the natural deferment, and they wasted it on him. So he insisted everybody take him off and we had to drag him off and just put him under the fountain. Everybody felt guilty, but he would have been insulted if we didn't, so we did it. He didn't get tubbed like everybody else with the same enthusiasm though.

Drugs were still there, but they were still kind of a mystic type thing. I remember I went back and we did a graduation reunion for our high school class. We were talking about who was smoking dope and who was sneaking off, and it was still so mystic that people were sneaking off and not bragging about it. It wasn't real open. It wasn't really condoned, but there was more kids smoking than everybody ever knew I think. And that kind of surprised us when we started figuring out who was - actually figured out there was maybe nine of us that were not either stoned or drunk for our graduation ceremony. So that was a little bit shocking.

We'd gone through the Dee Andros era where he had no blacks on the football team, to where they started having blacks on the football team. They had one guy named Fred Anderson who was a defensive tackle or something. He played his first two years and by his senior year he had been relegated to the third or fourth string, then got drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers and actually played in two of their Super Bowls and was the first guy off the bench the first year and was a starter the second year. And this is a guy who couldn't make fourth string at OSU. There might've been a little something to that.

Sports were a big thing. This is back in the days where you had to get there to get a good seat at the ballgames and stuff. The basketball team was kind of young and exciting. They beat UCLA for the first time in 7,000 years. That was the Bill Walton...who was the other guy, Keith Wilkes. Bill Walton was far and above the best basketball player I ever saw go through that building. He was good, and could pass like unbelievable. So that was a big draw. The student side was always jam packed and loud. The football team, they won five games my first year, I think, and they won eleven games in the four years I was there and I saw seven of them. Pitiful, absolutely pitiful. That might've been before they had the Toilet Bowl, U of O and OSU played to a 0-0 tie or something.

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CP: Yeah, that was 1983.

SM: Was it '83? Ugly year.

So anyways we still follow the basketball team, I still enjoy the basketball, never cared for the football. Was never my big thing anyways; I never played football, never really cared for it. But it was part of the culture of what you did on Saturday afternoon when it was raining and there was nothing else to do.

Oh, the other part of the culture: my senior year at high school it rained like seven-and-a-half inches of rain at home, and it was a dry year. Freshman year at OSU, we had like from the 15th of October to the 15th of March, it rained like eighty-two inches. And when it wasn't downpouring it was just drizzling, just constantly. I remember I came back to the cafeteria one time at the door, and I just looked like a drowned rat. Just everything. My hair was a little longer, beard was a little longer. No, I'd shaved my beard by then. After I gave my graduation speech, I got accused of being a wild hippy and no part of Sherman County, and I thought, "well if that's what they think of me, I'll just look the part too so they really got something to talk about." And I quit cutting my hair and quit shaving my beard and got really long haired and scraggy. Probably cleaned up after I came home at Thanksgiving. But it just looked bad, and it was too wet. So anyways I did that, but they said "ah, you're not used to this kind of rain." And I says "no, we get the same amount of rainfall you guys do."

"Ah bully, you're always telling us how dry it is on the east side of the state and this and that." I says "yeah, we get the same amount of rainfall but our rainfall has a 40% lower moisture content."

"Ah, your BS'ing."

"No no it's true, it's got 40% lower moisture content." I says "no no no, if you look at it you can even see when the raindrops hit the windshield. Our drops are hollow, like a M&M shell without the chocolate inside so it's just that shell. But down here in the valley, you can see when it hits the windshield, it's a solid drop of water. Water all the way through. So have you heard the term 'dry rain?'" Well, they've heard the term, so I just kept going on and I found out, if you can't dazzle them with brilliance you baffle them with the other stuff.

The lesson learned is that it's not so much the height of your logic but the depth of your conviction that sells the story. There was a lot to be said for that really; kept that in mind over the years. So anyways, I says it's got this dry rain and we get the same amount of raindrops, but we just have 40% lower moisture content. Groovy. So I swear there is at least half a dozen OSU graduates who think we got dry rain in eastern Oregon with a lower moisture content.

CP: Was it difficult for you to make that adjustment to a different climate?

SM: No. In fact, I went from a graduating class of thirty-nine to a freshmen class of about 4,000, and everybody thought that would've been a huge adjustment. No. In fact, as I looked around, it was the farm kids from the small communities had an easier time getting around campus than the kids, even the geniuses from the big schools in Portland or Salem or Eugene or someplace. They were so out of place and they were so lost and they were so on their own and mama wasn't here and they couldn't do this and they couldn't do that. They had to go home every two weeks to get their laundry done because they didn't know how to run the laundry. I thought, "this is pathetic." But the farm kids, the eastern Oregon kids, knew how to cope, knew how to adjust, and just cruised through it. It wasn't any different, just more people.

The big culture shock I think I had was adjusting to the number of kids from broken homes. We just hadn't seen a lot of broken homes, most of our families had been married for years. There had been a few scandals here and there, but nothing really tragic and they didn't talk about it a lot, so it was kind of interesting. Just didn't have kids from broken homes, with the split parent thing; it was weird.

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CP: Did you develop much of a connection with Corvallis? Or do you have memories of Corvallis from those years?

SM: Spring was pretty. Probably the best connections are the people I met my freshman year. Then a few more friends my first years as an RA, because then my job was to get out and actually - in fact, my room for awhile my freshman year became the place to hang out until kids got associated. I had a popcorn popper and a record player. We were on the quiet floor and we figured out we had more stereo speaker wattage than any other floor in the building. So that was kind of amidst. But I've got no love for Corvallis. In fact, the OSU president asked me when we changed something one time, "what's the difference now between when you started?" And I says, "now we go to Corvallis a lot less frequently", but I said, "sometimes I even go because I want to." It wasn't a command performance-type thing like it had been for a long time. And he kind of laughed at that but I think he understood what I was saying too.

CP: There has been a tension with a lot of Extension branches, it sounds like. There seems to have been a tension with Corvallis with a lot of these branches as far as expectations of physically being there or the communication or whatnot.

SM: There is and there has been. I'm not even sure who we are anymore. We're no longer the Extension Service, were now the...

CP: OSU Statewide.

SM: Well, the Statewide. But so is the Experiment Stations are statewide, and so is the forestry thing except for Sherman County. I guess I got labelled down at campus too - I was known as "Sherman County" because I had a couple of old baseball shirts out of the trash pile that I wore all the time that either had Sherman County Braves or one that just said Sherman on it. Another one, it was a laurel of somebody or another's. But they were uniforms that were old, old, old.

Once a week, put one on and wore during baseball practice at home. They were gonna burn them, so we just picked through the piles and kept the ones we wanted. That was my college wardrobe.

I became known as "Sherman County" and people knew there wasn't a town in Sherman County - you were from the county. You still ask people anywhere, they're not from Grass Valley or Moro or Wasco, they're from Sherman County. It's a feeling, it's a community. Still has their north or south considerations, there's still some battling there once in a while, but I think it's waned away. And they just merged the grade schools into one grade school now, back at the central campus where the high school is. So everything is more centralized now. I think that's probably going to eventually break down almost all the north/south; it's not near as strong as when I started. But there's been some changes there too. So anyway, what was the question again? That I was off track on?

CP: I want to trace your career a little bit. You finished at OSU, you worked as a ranch hand for four years, and then you started as an agent in Sherman County. And we've kind of touched on this a little bit but I'm interested - you've talked about it taking three years to get comfortable, take me a little bit through the process of becoming an Extension agent for you.

SM: I finished up Sunday night working for my ex-employer, finished up rod weaning [?] a field, greased the rods, fueled the tractor, had it all set to go so it was ready to move, and I was done with that particular field. I finished up at 7 o'clock on Sunday night, 8 o'clock the next morning I walked into the courthouse, they gave me a key, and I was the county agent and I was the expert in all these matters important to farmers. I had no clue what I was doing.

It was announced that I had been hired in February, I didn't get to actually start because of the paperwork shuffles at OSU until May 7th. The secretaries had saved all the mail and I had three piles, at least that tall [indicates pile up to eye level] of all the mail that had come in. So I spent the first day just trying to clean off that, trying to find my desk, trying to figure out what was important. If something had a date for April 5th and it was already May 7th, into the garbage it went.

I missed a key training for leadership development that a guy named John Keeso had put together, so he came up to the office and spent an afternoon. He went through this four-inch notebook of all this stuff he'd accumulated and put together; it gave me everything I needed to know out of that. When he left, my co-worker Joanne Cook came in and she was just miffed. I said "Joanne, what did I do?" and she says "not you, it's Keeso." They spent the whole week at some exotic location like Coburg or someplace and they all had to do this as a mandatory training thing - you had to go through this leadership development thing. It took them the whole week to go through that notebook, and he went through it with me in three hours, maybe three-and-a-half. And she says "we could've done that." She thought that was kind of a waste, and like she'd been shafted, which it had been.

But then I went to my first staff chairman's meeting. I wrote down another agent, we met in Redmond, We had a regional meeting down there. They said, "well what are you learning there?" I says "I got a question." I says, "I just had this guy come through," gave him his name, "and he gave me this four-inch notebook on leadership development stuff." And I says, "He went through it in like three hours and Joanne was mad because it took them a whole week to go through the same stuff." And I says, "who is this guy?" It's like they paid him and his job is based on how many pounds of paper he could generate and not that there's anything else." And all these other staff chairmen were just howling and the poor regional director was like, "my God, what has gone wrong?" type of thing. The look on his face is just... The guy I just wrote was just "I didn't tell him any of this, I didn't do any of this, this is all on his own." So the other staff chairmen around the table liked me immediately because they figured out I'd have some common sense. The administrators were just kind of bizarre.

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Another big change I went through is that one of the first papers I came across was a publication - they used to sample publications for everything that got published and they'd say "how many do you need to order for your office?" And one of the first ones that came through that I looked at was what to do when you lost your job. Well the 80s were just starting, the economic malaise President Carter talked about was really starting to hit the fan. Interest rates were up to twenty-two, twenty-four percent. You couldn't afford to buy anything because you couldn't afford the payments on it. It was just unbelievable crazy. This paper was what to do when you lose your job. But I thought, "well, this should be good, it should have some stuff on common things you'd want to do if you're losing your job or if you know you're about to lose

your job." But it said "no, you go down to this agency, you apply for this benefit, you go over here and you apply for this benefit. Then you apply this form and you can get two of these benefits here," and it showed you how you can become a liberal moocher and live off the good conscience of people who work for a living and not feel guilty about it because the government owes you this. That's kind of the whole gist of the matter.

I says, "I don't want this. I don't want any of this in my office." I says, "I figured it would have something about this is how you reevaluate your skills, this is how you put together your resume, here's some questions to prepare for." And she says, "well, if you can do it better than you re-write it." So I went through and rewrote it, and I sent it to her. I thought it was just between her and me, but it came up in my first performance appraisal that I had the nerve to re-write someone else's paper. I said, "she told me to." I learned in a hurry that there's no secrets on campus when someone's ticked off at you, that's for sure. But she and I became good friends after that too. I don't think she ever put out another publication like that. I should've published the one I'd written though, I should've done that now.

Anyway, it was different and it was just a difference of attitude. And I found Corvallis was kind of teetering on conservatism when I was there as a student, and it hasn't taken it long to go over the deep end into liberal and the dark world of political correctness. We've got more institutes for every minority or every group that feels different. I'm surprised we don't have a Nosepickers United because that's a dirty evil habit that people do - you can't write about it but you sure don't put in on your resume either. One of those things - we almost lost a good agent several years ago when we were told we need to look at this and this and we need to write our job descriptions so that when they re-hire for the position, or if they're hiring for somebody else, that they make sure they include all minorities and everything and what other skills. One of the guys asked, "are we looking for the best candidate or for the best minority candidate?" which I thought was a legitimate question, and Corvallis blew up at him. He came pretty close to losing his job, and he was a darn good agent. But they just didn't understand what he was asking or they just thought he was being challenging.

We've gone way too far into political correctness. And every time they come up with that, I often repeat and remind them it was Martin Luther King that said "I want my children to grow up and be judged not by the color of their skin but by the character of their hearts." I don't think they understand how to do that. It's not our diversity that makes us strong, it's our unity that makes us strong.

[0:40:42]

CP: You talked about the shift from Sherman County to Wasco County for you, was that a significant shift in the sense that you were dealing with different issues and had different resources at hand? Or was it a smaller change?

SM: It was a bigger office and in a way it was a bigger change because the secretary that was there had been there for like thirty-four years. And my predecessor was also staff chairman and he thought they'd been trying to get her off dead center to get her to move, to get her to do something. So he gave her a glowing evaluation in his last time out and then the next year she just thought "well, I've got this glowing evaluation, I don't have to do squat anymore and I've got it made." Then I inherited her, and she had some alcohol abuse issues. She would be there early in the morning at seven o'clock but after two o'clock, 2:30 maybe at the latest, her desk was cleaned off and there was nothing you could get her to do. I gave her a piece of paper one time at 3:30 and I said "could you type this for me?" And she says "yeah" and she puts it on her In pile and she'd do it in the morning. I says "well, can you do it now?" and she says "well, it's late in the afternoon." And I says, "well it's only a page it won't take that long to get it done." And she says "no, I've got to have such and such." So I says, "hold on, I want it done now." She finally rips out the paper and gets out the carbon and she could go. In fact, one of the other guys in the office told me one time she could - they had an "I" that when you hit it, it would put a little hole in the top copy of the original, which is one easy way to tell the difference between that and a carbon. But she could do six sets of carbon papers and put that hole through about the fourth or fifth copy pounding that key so hard when she hit that I. I was getting one with that - it was almost completely punched out when I got my copy back. It was pretty amazing.

So anyways, I inherited that, so that was something to deal with. I probably blew it the way I handled it, but it worked out. We got her retired, and that was back in the days when we had to go up for budgets every year if you exceeded six percent of what the base was. So we had these bases and then we ended up - Oregon had this whole system of A and B ballots; I don't know if you remember those. The A ballots were the things that were mandatory, the Sheriff's Office, the Clerk's Office, the District Attorney's Office, those were things you had to pay for. But you could vote on their budget and you could pass the tax levy that would fund those. The B levy were the good things, the ice cream desserts; the Extension

Service, the libraries, the swimming pools, whatever other function that was on the sidelines there that was popular and fun. But you had to pass the A before they would let you pass the B. So even if the B had more votes and passed, if the A didn't pass, neither of them counted, so you had to go back to the deals again. So we did a lot of campaigning for the budget. That was kind of fun; learned a lot about campaigning.

And then, Wasco County itself has about half the wheat that Sherman County did. On one regard it was kind of a downward movement but on the other hand they have a lot more livestock and they have livestock activity plus they had the Wasco County Bull Tour, which I inherited then. And like I said, I still don't know much about livestock but I did know how to run a range ground, and I knew range was just a grass, grass is a wheat, wheat was a grass, and the same ideas and principles on cutting it. You leave half - graze half and leave half. Put together a lot of things there promoting that.

The conservation reserve program came into play about 1985. In fact, I was gonna write my next column on that one. That changed a lot of landscape, made a huge difference. So we did a study, actually, on when the stuff comes out in ten years, ha ha, how do you handle the CRP on that time and what's the best way to graze cattle on it, 'cuz after about five years cattle wouldn't graze anyway 'cuz the old plants were too wolfy and too stiff and dry and had less production than what you wanted. A lot of things happened with that. That was a good deal though; made hay with that one. Not on the CRP 'cuz you couldn't hay the CRP.

Worked with a bigger staff, that was good. Didn't have to do the 4-H at first either, had a 4-H agent. That was good. 4-H is a tremendous program but the 4-H people at the time were the worst in the world in thinking that if you'd got a .2 FTE 4-H in your assignment that meant 150 hours a week dedicated to 4-H and there wasn't any cutting in the middle. And they just had their expectations and that's the way it was. I don't know how we survived those days ever passing the 4-H grade, but we did. So anyways, there was some interesting things going on in life.

[0:46:18]

CP: Well, speaking of which, I'm very curious to hear your recollections of an unusual chapter in the history of this state: Rajneeshpuram.

SM: Oh, I worked with those guys.

CP: Can you tell me about that?

SM: That was interesting. In fact, it was - one time they ran a lottery raffle drawing thing and they're gonna raffle off some of the Rolls Royces, twenty dollars a ticket. And I thought "wow, that would be kind of cool if they drew your number and you won the darn thing." But then I thought, "where in the heck would I drive it between Wasco and Sherman County?" They didn't know where it came from. And even if word got out that I put down twenty into a raffle that supported the Rajneesh, I'd still get shot. So they were an interesting breed of people.

In my opinion, the time I was down there on their campus - and it was kind of a campus - was about as close as you can get to a college campus as I've ever seen anywhere. You had a lot of smart people, you had a lot of guys that were in their late 30s, mid-40s. They're professional people - engineers, doctors, mechanics. Brilliant people. And then you had a lot of women that were in the 18 to 24 group and I thought, "well gee, what other kind of recruitment tool?" You've got this free love going on, you got a bunch of guys hitting middle aged, and you got these young babes running out there with nothing on and I thought, "that could be attractive." And eating healthy stuff, so gee, my gosh, what more could a guy want? But they had their own communication system that was enclosed so they controlled the media of what was heard. You go down to Corvallis and I see the same thing there - KBVR doesn't give you the world news, they give you the OSU view of world news and it's gotten politically correct. *The Barometer*, if that's your only source to what's going on in the world, you in some pretty deep shut, I tell you.

But they controlled all that on Rajneeshpuram. They pushed the letter of the law and everything. If there was a grey area, they could find the grey that edged closer to the black side than the white side. They just knew how to push those buttons. Ma Anand Sheela, for as much as everybody disliked her, was right - it doesn't make any difference as long as they spell your name right. And as long as they use your name it's advertising, and it's all free when it's in the press. Whether it's

good or bad people, they know the name. It probably did more to help recruit them because it's so easy for them to switch a couple phrases here and there and say "here's what the local folks think of us," but saw the good side of it, "here's what we're doing" and saw the good side of that.

They did some amazing things. I was in a room one time, we're trying to pick out a Conservation Farmer of the Year out of the wheat growers. Well they had, I don't know, maybe 300 acres of wheat out of 6,400 acres of the Big Muddy they bought. And actually, they had gone through and they made a bunch of - they reduced the junipers and used the juniper thinnings to make check dams all the way down the creek to the Big Muddy so it wasn't flowing quite as muddy, 'cuz it trapped out mud. Steppes all the way down the canyon, they put up a big dam, they were doing irrigation things. They actually improved the irrigation delivery system that was there. They did a whole bunch of really good things, but a whole bunch of it was brand new.

[0:50:01]

I took my dad down there one time and he says "so who's in charge? Who decides what they're gonna do?"

"Oh no, we're all equal, we all decide what to do."

"Well, who makes the actual decision on who gets to do what then?"

"Oh, we're all equal, we all do this together."

The guy finally admitted - he got along real well with Dad because Dad had served in Australia part of his four years in World War II and this guy was an Australian, so they knew some of the same places and they'd been some of the same places and appreciated the same things about Australia. It was funny listening to the dad talk to him and finally getting to admit, "well, everybody is equal but some are a little more equal than others." It was so much *Animal Farm*-istic that it was funny.

But the Rajneesh never hassled me. I got invited down there, I got subpoenaed to speak on the Rajneesh's behalf one time, and I thought, "there's a terrible spot to be in." But the defendants then put out a deposition for the Rajneesh - and this was back when he wasn't speaking - and they either had to make him honor that or they had to decline it, so they dropped the whole suit, which got me off the hook that way. But I still got a couple of letters that are signed "Dear Sandy" and "blah blah blah, and blah blah blah. Love Swami Prem."

Nehardt was the Australian, they had another guy who was from Switzerland, but they worked together and just did their things. But like I say, it was very much like a college campus. The alcohol was there, the sex was there, the drugs were probably there - they didn't share those with anybody - and it's a very closed campus. They only told the members what they wanted them to know, filtered their news for them. So when they rebelled and went berserk, it was kind of funny when the head honcho took off on a plane and tried to escape. And the poor old sannyasins just couldn't figure out why he was leaving, what was wrong. Must have been driven out, because I was just reading a book right now about the war in the Pacific again - the lies that the Japanese people were telling their folks about the victories could've fit right in with the Rajneesh. "These are the victories we've had, these are the things we're scoring, we're doing all this good stuff." And then all of a sudden, the head guy is out the door, gets captured. It was a really interesting time, led to some really interesting discussions.

Actually, after the bioterrorism outbreak on the salad bars, they said, "well, Extension needs to be in there doing something." And I said, "well, we got the National Center for Disease Control in our offices, which are just below us, but no one told us what we're looking for." So we went up and looked it up and I just wrote a news release saying, "if you've experienced these types of symptoms after eating in The Dalles on a local salad bar, any salad bar, it may be this salmonella poisoning and go see your doctor and get it checked out." The hospital did announce they had a big surge in visits after that came out because some people might've just thought, "well, is this indigestion or just had a bad piece of egg in my salad?" went and got it checked out and found out they've been part of the poison crew too. My uncle Bill was the county judge at the time and he was one who had been poisoned, specifically targeted. One of his county commissioners at the time was poisoned with him. But the third guy who tended to vote more often than not with the Rajneesh drank the same alleged water and came out totally unscathed. So, interesting times. Still talked about a lot.

[0:54:19]

CP: Yeah, for sure. I have some questions about some of the topics of your research and teaching that you've engaged in over the years. It looks like one of the major topics that you've written on is analysis of wheat production and marketing costs. Can you talk about that a bit?

SM: Gordon Cook actually started the annual cost production thing when he was in Sherman County. And so when he left and went to La Grande, I inherited his role on that because they didn't figure they had dryland wheat up there. And we just continued that until it got to year twenty-five, then we did a major publication on comparing the charts and showing all the different changes in fuel costs and fertilizer and whatever else changed over those years. And then we did a thirty year, three decade analysis from beginning to end. The key thing we found: over thirty years, in twenty-eight of those years the cost production exceeded the value of the product, and if it hadn't been for the government farm subsidies, farmers would've been out of business. So the government subsidy program at that point helped the growers.

So there's been a move to get away from the government subsidy program, CRP was part of that, but they still want to have some control. Basically, one of the things they really found is that the government doesn't want Joe Population paying five dollars for wheat, but they don't want the farmer to get less than five dollars for wheat. So the only way they can do that is to somehow make sure that the payments don't come directly from Joe Consumer, but they come from some other source. So that's why a lot of it – and if you ever look at the USDA's Ag budget, it's such a miniscule portion of it that goes into ag production and making sure ag subsidy type systems, whatever they be. And the majority of it goes into food stamps, child welfare things and whatnot; it's the only way they can get the guy from New Jersey to vote for a budget that impacts Sherman or Wasco counties. So it's kind of a tradeoff of all things, it's just part of the big picture things. Would be interesting having a fair market. Somebody emphasized that if they took all the subsidies away, the price of production would soar by so much and it would take so long for the prices to catch up with it. It's a pretty interesting article, I don't think I kept a copy of that.

CP: You've written on alternative crops for the Columbia Basin as well?

SM: We've done a lot of works in alternative crops. So, we've tried a bunch of different crops; we probably had nine or ten in a trial at one point. Other people have tried more. But the thing we're seeing is that if you want to grow an alternative crop, it's never going to equal the income you get from wheat, so you gotta have some other overriding advantage for that crop to make you plant it before you plant wheat. Canola and camelina come close because one of things you do is that - if you can find a market for them and get rid of your seed once you've harvested it - is that, as they break down, they tend to sterilize and clean the soil and eliminate a lot of diseases that would typically impact your wheat. So if you've had a long term average of fifty bushels just growing wheat, fallow, wheat, fallow, wheat, fallow; you put in a crop of canola, you might lose – even if it only comes at the equivalent of forty bushels, the next year going back to wheat after the fallow would be closer to maybe sixty-five. It just gives you that much boost in your yield. So if you can live off that increase for two, maybe even three crops, you can get your money back from what you lost on the first year growing that alternate crop.

Alternate crops by themselves in a dryland area – and we're talking eleven inches of rainfall, so it's not like you got a lot of options to start with; we're never going to grow bananas commercially out here. If you go off that dryland aspect, you're already limited in the number of crops that can grow. We put together a textbook on a manual of crops that do ok in certain areas, but most of the dryland areas even in the United States - South Dakota for example gets like nine inches during June. Man, if we knew that, it would ruin our week; it would kill the cherry crops. But if we had nine inches in June, we'd be flooded. We've got different types of soil, the crops handle it differently, and that's growing season for the crops. So as the temperature is warming up, man, that's like putting irrigation outside; it just makes it grow like crazy. So they should be doing good.

The thing we have been seeing in the last couple of years in particular, it's not so much one crop at a time but growing a cover crop of at least four or five varieties and then blending them all together and just letting them sit there, and then taking them out by grazing them as a first option and then spraying them as a second option. I've got one guy insistent that they be grazed, another guy is growing a similar mix, and I thought he had some cattle lined up for this year but he decided at the end to go ahead and spray it all. I'm not exactly sure why. But that's had a better impact on the subsequent crop that allows them to go back in. There's some crop insurance issues, because now if you do a spring cover crop, take it

out in June, you let it go fallow, then basically sit fallow for July and August and you come back and seed in September. Then the USDA considers that a continuous crop and they change your insurance rating so you get less insurance back on your subsequent wheat. So you got less protection on your wheat crop after that, which is not really fair. You're not really growing a crop, you're growing something else that's out there but it's taking up moisture, I guess. That's the impact they're saying that has.

There's some people that are farther up the food chain than I am that are working on getting that changed or corrected. Or, if nothing else, we'd at least like to see a certain percentage of your acres can be used as a trial without punishment. I think that would entice a lot more people to give some different things a trial. Make sure they work, make sure they get their dollars back for sticking their necks out. And if they do, I think more people will expand more of their acres and try some different things. Right now you gotta really have an alternative funding source to keep you afloat to do that.

[1:01:31]

CP: What is your perspective on the explosion of wind power in this area?

SM: Personally, I think it has been a good thing. Last place I lived in Sherman County we had, I think, twenty-six towers we could see from our front yard. And they were all around us; we couldn't see any neighbors but we could see wind towers like crazy. My kids come up for hunting season during the summers sometimes and they all profess to hate the wind towers because it's changed the landscape. And I've argued with people from the Portland area that it's given an artificial landscape, a skyline. And my argument is "oh, look at this postcard of Portland that shows your artificial skyline. And yet that's a pretty picture enough to put on a postcard but you're grouching us out."

So it's a deal that's been treated unfairly except that the controlling medium and population in, say, the Portland metro area will let you do anything you want as long as it doesn't interfere with their perceptions of what their leisure recreation areas should look like. And their leisure recreation area does not have wind towers on it. I remember seeing an argument where some group had argued vehemently - and it was a green group against having wind towers in their area - they were ok for somebody else but not in their area, 'cuz they didn't want to look at them. And I thought, "how two-faced and hypocritical." But it rang so true.

So anyways, they can accept one type of artificial skyline but they couldn't accept the towers out there. But I've seen some art around Sherman county - Cathy McCulland has got a collection of stuff that's just fantastic. I've seen some in a couple houses, where guys have taken - just from the angle and the black and white and the size of the pictures - fantastic, awe-inspiring pictures. They've got them framed and nicely presented. But I guess not what's kosher.

The problem I have with the wind towers is that they don't put 'em in unless there's a BETSY - Business Enterprising Tax Subsidy type deal. And I don't think that the wind tower energy, if you had to pay for it full board without it being subsidized, would be near as popular as anything coming off the hydro dams. The other thing on the political side is that Governor Kitzhaber decreed that hydro plants or hydro dams are not natural and not renewable, could not be considered renewable, they had to have other sources of renewable energy - coal fire, solar, or wind power. So I really think they're kinda missing the boat on that one. As long as it rains, as long as it snows, as long as ice melts and stuff, there should be waters in those rivers and those waters should be considered renewable energy, and we should be meeting our goals.

So I think that has been kind of somewhat artificially pumped up. Same as with the gasoline having the ethanol added. Hasn't really added anything necessarily to our - it's been great for the corn growers - but hasn't really cleaned the air up all that much. In fact, they found out that it's putting up extra poisons and stuff that they would not want you to know about. It's just gains, gains, gains, gains, gains. Political correctness again.

[1:05:30]

CP: Did your family intersect much with the dams as they were being built? The history of the dams in this area? I mean, they've been around for so long.

SM: Did they intercept with them?

CP: Intersect. I'm interested in any sort of family lore related to the building of the dams, if there is any. It's such a big change in this area and a lot of people were very affected by it.

SM: No. I know my folks watched the building of The Dallas Dam from start to finish, basically. They remember Celilo Falls. And if it hadn't for pictures - I remember we stopped there on two specific occasions. One time there had been a train wreck and some cars had tipped over, it was kind of a free picking for whatever we wanted to clean up the stuff that came out of the cars. So we stopped to look to see what it was. We didn't take anything, wasn't stuff we needed or used or could've used. And another time, I don't remember what we stopped for there the second time. But I do not remember the falls particularly. I remember the noise from the falls. I remember the stink from the flies. The stink from the fish and the dead fish that were just carcasses all around, and the way they cleaned them and handled them. And I remember the dogs, 'cuz they had a ton of dogs down there at Celilo. So I remember those points of view from Celilo Falls, but the falls itself? If it hadn't been for pictures, I don't think I could honestly say I remember the falls, 'cuz I was only four when they closed the falls and let the water flood over.

But I know they'd never be able to build that dam today where it is. It's been great for transportation, it's been great for the river. Well, I don't know if it's been great for the river, but they've managed to work around things.

The John Day Dam was a different deal, 'cuz it closed – in fact we got a day off of school in my sophomore year in high school, so we'd go down to watch the dam fill behind it, and Herbert Humphrey was there to give a big speech. And I remember Norm Goetze, who ended up being my wheat professor at OSU, we was an Extension cereal specialist for years before Russ Carroll. And he was there, and they brought in some Egyptian guy that was on Norm's field staff or something doing some research work - because he was a foreigner they let him up there. So he's up there in front on the dam by Hubert Humphrey standing there, not speaking a word of English hardly, he's from Egypt, but they had to show him that this is a good thing and they had to showcase him as being diversity. And I remember Norm telling me years later that the only thing he really remembers from the day is the guy got bumped and knocked off the platform and into the river. [laughs] Ended up damn near drowning. So what was supposed to become a photo op damn almost became an international incident.

Good ol' Norm. I had Norm for a couple of classes at OSU too and then, when I interviewed for the position, Norm was on the interview committee. And I remember we had a guy named H. Joe Myers who was the head of 4-H and he says, "well, how do we know you just aren't going to use this position to launch yourself into a different career and move up the food chain kinda?" And I says "well, how do I know I'm going to like working here?" I says, "I'm not really that familiar with Extension to tell you the truth." I said, "I think I can do the things you want me to do" but I says "I'm not really sure if I'm going to enjoy doing that my whole life. I got out of Ag Education and if this is anything close to that, I'll back off again. It may be that you don't like me and you don't want me around." I says, "I don't know." I says, "we'll both have to learn to grow into this together." And H. Joe, I could still see him, he just had his eyes big as saucer plates backed up like, "what are you saying?" And I remember kind of glancing around the table thinking "woah, did I screw up that one?" and Norman Goetze sitting there with a big grin just nodding his head and gave me the thumbs up. And I thought, "good enough for you Norm, that's good enough for me then."

I've never been really afraid of speaking my mind and I think that's one of the things that gets me in trouble sometimes. But troubles never come from the side or from those with lesser experience than I have. Like I said, that first year it almost got me in trouble because I helped rewrite a gal's paper publication. I think there's a place for that; I think there's a need for that. I think there's a fear of doing that, though. And I think that's part of the culture Extension has broadcast and has adopted. Or Outreach and Engagement or whatever we're called.

[1:10:35]

CP: You've spoken a lot on wolves, I'm interested in knowing more about that.

SM: I remember seeing a wolf when I was in high school. It was on our property, and that impressed me. That was back when - they told us - in the days when there were no wolves in Oregon. Within a year from my sighting, somebody shot one off of a large mountain and had a radio collar on it, and I thought "why would a wolf have a radio collar if they don't exist in Oregon?"

So there were wolves here, but these were the local wolves. They were not the grey wolf that they've imported – the invasive species that they've imported out of Canada that have crossed into existing Oregon. And we still get reports of wolves in the Mount Hood Forest areas in western Wasco County; they got the big footprints and everything. But they've been there, apparently, for a long time and they're pretty long-established. Not that anybody with any authority will admit that they're there, but they are there. And they've been seen, and they've done damage to the cattle. We don't have enough sheep anymore to see what they've done to the sheep, but there has been impact. Now were starting to get them to go through; ones that are coming out of further eastern Oregon are using Sherman County as a crossway and they cross in through southern Wasco County and then head on south from here. So they still pass through the area. And I guarantee you, when they pass through, they still have to eat.

We've had a guy had two of them walk through his driveway. We had another person who just this last winter was out, I don't know if they were feeding cattle or doing what, but there was snow on the ground and they saw one and they started chasing it with the pickup and had the video camera on. They got some pretty good videos of it; there's no question that it's a wolf. I don't remember if this one was collared or not, but it was going through and apparently they mark their scents across areas. So they've got like, what, 450 times the olfactory powers that people do? So they can pick up on their marked trails, which means once the first one goes through, the rest of them are gonna take the same byway - even a year, two years later, three years later - and follow that same pathway.

We're expecting we're still gonna get wolves passing through the county and I hope they don't decide to stay. Again, it's more a political problem than an ecological problem. But if you think about it, Oregon's first government was when they actually met at Champoeg Park down in the Willamette Valley, and they got together and they formed a committee that taxed themselves - an agreed-upon tax on themselves - in order to raise funds to kill the wolves that were in the Willamette Valley. So if we're gonna restock Oregon with wolves, let's put 'em back in. I mean, there's several places - parks in Portland - there's places we can put 'em where there's more than your natural terrain. That was back to not being afraid to say what I think sometimes. But I'm retired, what are they going to do, fire me? [laughs]

CP: You've given several historical talks too, one is on a flood from 1964. Can you tell me about that?

SM: Oh the Christmas Flood, you weren't around then either were you? Man, you missed a lot of living. Christmas Day Flood: '64 was a dry year. I think we had like eleven inches of total rainfall that year in Sherman County. But during the month of December - and I've tracked it, we've gone back through the records and picked up how cold it was. And we had like anywhere from 17 to 26 inches of snow across Sherman County. And then, about the 23rd, a Chinook came through - at least the temperature started to come up - and by the 24th it was a real Chinook wind. The warm winds had come up out of the south and just blow everything warm. And it rained, like, six inches in December that month; I mean, half the rainfall in one month.

Record rainfall on good snowbanks, warm weather, it just all went down. And the snow melted, and the rain melted it quicker, and the warm wind melted it, and it all melted quicker than the ground was thawing out. And the worst erosion problems we've ever had in eastern Oregon - on our farm grounds anyways - have been on frozen soils. So we had tremendous frozen soils, and once it goes through - it runs to the low spot, it starts to cut - and once that water starts to run through and it warms up a bit, it starts thawing and it starts to cut that first layer of soil, and then it goes the least resistance route. Once it gets down past the frozen zone, then it's into free soil and it just starts cutting more and more of that. Then it undercuts some of the frozen stuff on top until it eventually caves in. But as it goes through it's like a lahar coming off a mountain, like off of St. Helens when it blew. You were around for that weren't you, I hope?

[1:15:45]

CP: I was little. [laughs]

SM: [laughs] Oh my gosh. Anyways, it runs like a lahar, which is like wet concrete going down a mix and everything. It just has that much more abrasion and that much more cutting power and it did millions of dollars' worth of damage in Sherman County alone. I haven't seen as many pictures from Wasco County, but I know Wasco County was as badly hammered. And it just ice sledded people. It took out roads, it took out the bridge at the John Day River which was a new freeway bridge. Fortunately, the old bridge hadn't been flooded yet so people were still able to drive around using the old bridge. Oh, there was all kinds of things and stupid things that people did.

And we were like six weeks without water at home, but the neighbors had water, so we took five-gallon jugs, had to walk down the hill and carry them back up again. Yeah, this is part of growing up on the farm, I guess. But still, three years later, Mom would still boil water for cooking with. And the banker came out one time and says "what is she doing?" I says "well, we don't drink water out of the well because it's still kind of contaminated and still kind of muddy," so we went and turned on the faucet and showed him a glass of clean water. You could see, if you let it sit for a minute, the mud settles out. Well, we drank it a lot but he didn't think that was very good, so we got a new well the next year. So that was a nice deal.

But there was just a lot of things that went on. It was a key part of the history of the county and was very exciting, the way the county came together, the things they did. I think it just kind of emphasized what communities do. We didn't have FEMA come in, we didn't have all these big agencies, there wasn't any kind of help like that. I think there was a rogue construction company that came in and did some things. It wiped out the rail line that went through the county that was used to haul the grain out. So it more or less had forced a merger then between the Moro Co-op and the Grass Valley Co-op, and they then merged into what they called Mid-County, and then eventually they merged with the north Sherman. And since the railroad was gone, they built a barge-loading facility down at Biggs to haul grain to, but they had to truck it down there once roads got back open again. There was enough impact, I guess, to change the bus routes. Did a lot of things; it just really had an impact on the county.

People talk a lot of things before the flood, and after the flood - the way it rearranged some of the objects, the impacts it's had on some of the county, in Sherman County anyway, was just tremendous. Like I say, it eliminated the railroad, and the funny thing was that the railroad was just on the verge of buying the fire department in Wasco because, with their brakes going down the hill, going down Biggs Canyon, they were starting fires every year. It was costing them so much to pay for fire protection from a 1938 Dodge - you know, you could out-skateboard that thing getting someplace, it was not very fast. But it's what they had, and what they used. Just part of growing up.

[1:19:39]

But anyway, they were just about ready to buy the fire department, so when the rail line got wiped out they were never gonna reinvest going back up there, and it saved them a lot of money. Like I say, the two co-ops merged, built a river-handling facility which is a key river-handling facility on the river for grain. Then they merged with the north Sherman a few years later, and that moved it further on. Now, as Mid-Columbia Producers, it's a whole different entity; it's a bigger entity. It's become a very successful co-op. We had a manager who was here for about ten years, who taught the growers how to make money even when the grain prices were flat. Really an institution there and he did a great job; that was Rolly Curtis. Made an impact, made a lot of money for farmers in the mid-Columbia area. Just a good thing. Changed the way they marketed grains. There are still co-ops and grain facilities across the Pacific Northwest that are just starting to find what the mid-Columbia Producers have offered. Hasn't been real technical secrets, but it's been their competitive advantage too, to not share this with everybody. Now there are other facilities starting to get into the same type of ballgame, making money for their growers without having to raise handling rates. So that's been a good deal.

Anyway, so that happened, the grain mergers there kinda helped to unite the county a bit. Took a couple of votes to get it in, but it eventually did pass. There was an argument the first time around - they had a big auction thing going on at the fairgrounds, forget who the auction was raising funds for, but they were talking. The heavy topic of discussion was you had to have everybody who was a registered voter for the co-ops had to vote on this whether to merge or not with the other co-op. And so the guys in the south end who were upset because they thought they should have more representation on the board than the guys in the north end, they got every one of their landlords that was conceivably even remotely a voter and got them to fill out their ballots and send it out, and it ended up failing by about five ballots or something. Just really close.

But they had this auction thing, and I had an uncle who was also one who was not afraid to say what he was thinking or to say something stupid once in a while. And he had a couple of drinks, which was not a good thing. He said two of the guys on the south end of the county, who had also had a couple of drinks, but who also had reputations for not taking crap off of anybody and were not opposed to engaging in fisticuffs if it helped resolve a solution or something, they said, well, they would support it if they could get more representation from the south end because we grow more grain down in the south end. And his comment to them was, "hell, we spill more grain than you guys harvest." And there are some differences between north and south about how much grain, there's a break in the soil types, there's a break in

the rainfall pattern between the north end and the south end. But it was probably not the best thing to say to these two guys. Fortunately, nobody got cold-cocked, nobody took a swing; I don't know how that happened. But they eventually did merge the next vote around and I don't think Uncle Pat was invited back to any more auctions anywhere. Word got around.

But the whole '64 flood thing also relates back to what it must have looked like when the Walla Walla, the Bretz floods came down from Missoula. They normally measure out a creek flow or river flow in cubic feet per minute, or even cubic feet per seconds, and they measured that one in cubic miles per second 'cuz it was just so huge, the volume of water coming down the river about 1,000 feet high, seventy-five to eighty miles an hour. And the lahar, there are river bars five miles south of The Dalles that are just - gravel bars that are humungous hillsides. Pretty amazing, pretty amazing. So it all kinda relates back on a smaller scale, but it still had a huge impact on us. The '64 floods - and then a couple of years ago it was the fiftieth anniversary of the '64 flood, so it was good timing to dig that out, polish off the slides. I didn't take any of them; I inherited them from a previous county agent. But we put together a pretty good show with it. It was pretty well received.

[1:24:34]

CP: That kind of segues into my next topic. You've done a lot of popular writing and a lot of photography as well. I'm interested in knowing the ways that's played into your career; the ways that you've used those tools.

SM: I take a lot of pictures 'cuz in the old days we used to do a lot of slideshows to do our talks and to colorize or to add some character to it. But I've also found out that if you're doing a talk about feeding cattle in the snow, and you're giving that talk in August, you can't go out in July and August and take those pictures. You've got to take those pictures sometime when there's snow on the ground when somebody is feeding cattle.

So I built quite a library. In fact, when I left Wasco County I kept a bunch of the slides I knew, because the other thing I found is that it's hard to go through somebody else's stuff and figure out what they were shooting unless there's something specific or unless it was identified. And a lot of times they aren't, so you're guessing who's in it or anything. So I tried to identify my pictures as I went through and I think I had over - I think I estimated one time 9,500 slides, turned out it was probably closer to 15,000. Plus I left a whole bunch of them at Wasco County and they gave me theirs, but our secretary in Sherman County, Sue Maiden, took and scanned them all in so we've got them all electronically now too. And then she took all the ones from Wasco County that they had and scanned all those in as well. So we got our history of our 4-H clubs, our 4-H activities. And you never know - I was of the age that you didn't go out and take a picture of a kid and you knew that was going to be the one used in the paper or used to publicize something. It's not until you get back and look at each one of them that you actually say "that's a good one, that one's useable."

We did a thing - the wheat growers in Wasco County at one point were feeling kinda like they were left out, really hadn't done much, and needed a reason for people to join. So we put together a slide show on wheat farming in Wasco County and the impacts - the economic impacts, the environmental impacts, what it takes to get there from here. Found out some neat facts and figures that we threw into it. And they still use that - it's now put on video - they still use that in the Sherman County Museum in one of their displays. They play that video on a constant loop so it just repeats and repeats. It's outdated now, but it's still used, and still just as relevant. But it is funny to look at the businesses and see which ones have gone, which ones are still there, which ones have changed their storefronts; see the people that are in there. Got one with grandpa, and son in law, and grandchild, and the grandchild is now 32-33 years old. They were sitting out under the shade of the combine eating lunch; little kids sitting in a baby seat. Just a good picture, and it's three generations there. I like that picture. And the grandpa was a good man, and the dad's a good man, so...

[1:27:56]

CP: And you've had a newspaper column too?

SM: Yeah, I used to. That was back, started in the Rajneesh days. There was *The Dalles Chronicle*, was the major paper for the region. *The Dalles Chronicle* refused to address anything about the Rajneesh. They didn't want to get politically incorrect or upset somebody, so they just kinda ignored it. So another paper, *The Dalles Reminder*, which my uncle started. had been just a shopper-type thing - nickel ads, whatever - he started that forty or five years earlier and kept it up.

And they bought that out, and decided to do a weekly paper with that, and they started doing the weekly stuff about the time the Rajneesh really started to get aggressive. So they started covering it and giving it more coverage, and their sales shot up on a weekly to where it outstripped what was written in the *Chronicle*. And I think it was outselling the *Chronicle* – the daily – at the time, and they said "well would you?" And I said, "well, we're taught we need to use our skills, expand our outreach," so I talked to both papers about writing a column.

Well, the *Chronicle* didn't want anything to do with it, so *The Dalles Reminder*, which is just starting basically, said "sure." But I says "I'm not going to do the typical county agent column, I'm going to write something different. I'm not going to tell you 'now it's April, now's the time to plant your tomatoes and cover them up with plastic cones or do this or that.'" I says, "'cuz I don't know enough of that stuff." I says, "it's not going to be your typical county agent column." So I wrote one called "Off the farm." It was well received. Eagle Press Papers owned the *Reminder*, and they had a chain of papers up and down the valley, and every once in a while I would get something from like the Hillsboro Argus and from two other papers, one down closer to Corvallis, and one from further eastern Oregon too. And I thought, "I didn't send them anything, what's going on here?" Well turned out the Eagle news was actually-

[1:30:15]

CP: Syndicating.

SM: Syndicating for me without my knowledge. And other papers were using it; I don't know if they were using every one. But I wrote about growing up on the farm, I wrote about – one of my favorite ones was "If it hits a chicken, it's a ground rule double." We had a wiffle ball game we'd invented on the farm that we played in the chicken yard. If it went to a certain area it was a single, if it went to a certain area it was a double, if it went up here it was a home run. You could hit it into the trees and that was a home run unless you caught it on the way down, then it was an out. You got one out per inning; we used wiffle balls, wiffle bats. We had a whole series of games, we had two of the kids in the neighborhood come over and we had a league going. And it was just fun, something to do during the summer to kill time. And we played a lot of wiffle ball.

But one of the rules was, if it hits a chicken then it's a ground rule double. So I like that one. I actually went out and got the measurements several years later. We had our short porch in right, just like Yankee Field. We had a big Green Monster, which is our row of pine trees at the end of the chicken yard in center field. And then Death Valley was out in left field, so it was kinda fun. I remember if you hit three home runs left handed, you did it always to the chant of "Reggie! Reggie! Reggie!" So it was kinda fun; we played that for a number of years and it was just fun.

Another guy who ran for county commissioner, works for the radio station, said he and his wife just laughed over the one about trading cards and the things we did at home growing up. And I wrote about how we were playing spoons one time and I had a sister-in-law who was pregnant, very pregnant, and had lost a baby already so she was being real cautious. And we both reached for the spoon and got knocked on the floor, so I dove under the table thing - I was gonna be safe - and all of a sudden "whoom!" she comes and lands right on top of me clawing to get the spoon. And he says he just laughed 'cuz they've played the game before and they knew that. It was just funny.

So it was not the typical county agent column, but it was well-received and it was well-read. And then OSU changed my position and I thought, "I gotta give something up," and I thought "dang it, that's the thing I enjoyed the most, but that's the thing that probably has the least amount of education value." Although I found out later, over the years, it has had more value than I gave it credit for. And it was a very positive thing for OSU because they still recognize me as a county agent. It certainly helped me, people being willing to contact me about things, because they knew I was human, knew I'd done dumb things, knew I'd played dumb games; you know, what was going on. I had an uncle that chewed me out after church one time and says "well I read your column and it wasn't very funny and blah blah blah" and he says "I didn't like this and I didn't like that." In fact, it was the same guy who made that comment at the auction yard that one time, so... I just thanked him and said "thank you, thank you" and two of my cousins were standing there, she says "why did you take that crap from him, you don't have to do that?" I says "yeah, that's fine."

"You thanked him, why did you do that?"

I says, "I had to." I says, "He's gonna read every one of them to know which one he doesn't like. He likes the funny ones, he didn't like the serious stuff, so he jumped on me for something serious, something educational. That wasn't what I was supposed to be doing.

So anyway, I gave up the column after, I think, it was six years or so? That was a weekly event; I enjoyed that. And then, within about six weeks to ten weeks, *The Dalles Reminder* folded and I says, "it's because they lost my column." And anyway, Eagle Press had done a survey of all their papers and they found out my column had a 92% readership, which I thought was pretty high numbers. So that was a good thing. But anyway, that's the story I told is that, soon as I quit writing it, the *Reminder* went out of business.

Well, Marilyn Roth, who was the editor at the time, would remind you that Eagle Press had bought *The Dalles Chronicle* and it made the business decision. They didn't think The Dalles and the Wasco County region needed two newspapers, so they cut the weekly and put their emphasis and transferred their *Reminder* staff over to the *Chronicle* more or less, and just did the one paper. But it just depends, like I say, who tells the story. [laughs]

[1:34:51]

CP: I have a few concluding questions for you. The first is about change, especially in Sherman County. This is a place that you have spent most of your life - in it or next to it. I'm guessing that people who are not from there would think it hasn't changed very much over the years, but maybe that's not the case?

SM: It has. When I was in college - Norm Goetze again - told me, he says that Sherman County was recognized because there was nothing there other than wheat. There's no manufacturing, there's no big businesses, no small businesses practically. There was gas stations at Biggs and Rufus, and a restaurant or two, and that was it. Everything else was agriculture, and we rotated around agriculture. But he said, "when people want to know what the wheat world gonna be doing in ten years, they look at what's being done in Sherman County today." And I thought, "well, that's kind of a cool thing." And I heard that before I went into Extension. I like that.

When I went into Wasco County, I was told my pay and success in Wasco County would depend entirely on getting them to convert from bottom plowing, which was the old fashioned desperate way of farming. Bottom plowing is very aggressive, very abusive, I think, in a lot of ways to the Earth and what it does to the soils and everything else. So how many acres I could get them to convert into something better, which they assumed would be more like the farming in Sherman County, which was stubble mulching. And that didn't quite work quite so well. Wasco County is now like 97-98% no till, which is a 100% turnaround, basically, from what it was when I started there. But I haven't seen that adjustment to my salary quite yet, so I'm still waiting for that to come through.

But anyway it suggested – and Sherman County has had – but there's a couple reasons for that though, and I gave credit at a meeting I did here on the history of agriculture on Wasco County, wheat agriculture in Wasco County, for the pioneer association. And I will easily credit Dusty Eddy who worked for the NACS and Ron Graves who was the first manager of the SWCD, because USDA came up with a deal that said you need to change your evil ways of farming, need to go to more conservation practices. So everybody was assuming that means we have to go to this "squaw farming," as they called it in Wasco County, and stubble mulch like the guys in Sherman County did. Well, apparently they had some issues with a lot of that because a previous county agent had been in Sherman County for a number of years then moved to Wasco County, and everything he started with was "well, in Sherman County this is the way we do this," and they got really negative about that. So I knew when I went there I could use that or say that or had to be really cautious how I said it, but try to convince them otherwise and whatnot.

Anyway, Dusty came up with the idea about "well, you're already doing this, here's twenty-two ways you can meet your new standards of erosion control by doing what you're doing." And he listed off "with this and this and this combination, you can meet this." And that just kind of took some of the wind out of their anger sales. And Ron Graves came up with the funds. We'd been doing these neighborhood meetings for about four years and each year each of the agencies got fifteen minutes to give their little spiel on what they're doing, what was going on, what was a relevant subject. We had to come up with an example for – this is when OSHA introduced that you had to have material safety data sheets for every product you use on the farm, and you had to have it under an accessible place so the employees could look at that. And I thought, "how are we going to do that?" So we went out, gathered every single conceivable MSDS sheet, put it in a

notebook, and then sold it for like sixty bucks to the farmers. So they grabbed them off the shelves. We sold a lot of those. Still see them around some shops. I said, "just be sure that, when you change products or when the products change, you update your MSDS sheet and make sure it stays current."

Well, the first guy who got inspected by OSHA and he says "well, you got this book" and they says "you got your MSDS sheet?" The guy pulls off his notebook and says "yeah, it's in here."

"Well, you got like ten of them for some other things - which one are you using?"

"Well, I could use any one of them, but right now I'm using this particular one." He had the MSDS sheet.

"Well, you can't do it like that!"

So we played the game and beat the system. It's not quite as much an emphasis anymore, but now they've changed the MSDS sheets totally, so books have now become defunct. But anyway, we've been putting together these things and Ron always asked, "what do you need? What can we do?" And they kept saying "well, we need this, this and this." And when it finally came to where the USDA said "in order to participate in government programs and get the subsidy you need to continue existing, you need to make these changes," Ron had the plan already written basically.

[1:40:10]

Took him no time at all, and he submitted it. And now, for our five county region, they had set aside like \$650,000 and Wasco County got like the first \$600,000 dollars. And I had a grower who told me few years back, he said those first early years he got \$120 an acre to convert his farming practices, and he says "that buys a lot of steel," because even then the no-till drills were expensive. And it converted him and it made them easy for him to convert. And then he realized he was saving so much on diesel and so much on oil. So we said it basically saves soil, toil, and oil, 'cuz you make two trips across the field and harvest it basically. So that was a good thing.

Sherman County hasn't had the resources funding-wise, so it's been a slower conversion. But the conversion is coming and I would say probably about 50% maybe 55% of the ground is now being no tilled. Just been a slower conversion, 'cuz they didn't have that big influx of cash and they've had to earn the cash themselves to buy the equipment. They've had some smaller programs but they haven't paid near 120 bucks an acre. And that wasn't just for one program, that was three or four programs put together that paid him that much to make the conversion. So that was a good thing. So that's been a major change.

Business-wise, there's probably fewer businesses than there were back in the 1960s, but we also had the 60s and 70s - early 70s anyway - was when they were building the John Day Dam. They've got plot plans and everything for a town of about 2,500-3,000 people, and there may have been 2,000 people living down there at the time. I know that the high school had 378 students in it when my sister was a senior. I think that was the first year they built the new wing on it that has the library - the old library. So the high school now, it doesn't have 200 kids from K-12 hardly, and they think they're too cramped in there now. It's all a matter of attitude, I think.

We've got a better ambulance system, we've got a better firefighting system. They're more coordinated, they've been through some trainings, they've got better equipment. They replaced the 1938 Dodge for the firetruck. They've made some major changes there.

The wind towers brought in - you asked my opinion on that - I think they're being subsidized and I don't think they would exist without the subsidies. They have changed the landscape, but the other thing they've changed is that the geese don't fly there. The east side of the county, where the wind towers are, used to be the place where the geese would fly in. And there was this one guy who had a goose hunting business and did very well. He would cater to his core group and he'd take them out to where the wind towers now sit. But once the wind towers started coming in, the geese would fly over it and move on and go elsewhere. So he's had to rearrange where he takes his goose hunters, and it's cut into his business a bit because some of the geese have gone to Wasco County and he doesn't have the same connections there, and some of them have gone to Gilliam County. So it's interesting, some of the quiet effects those wind towers have had.

But they paid a lot of money and the county court was smart. Mike McArthur, who's now the chief executive officer for the Oregon Association of Counties, OAC, one of the things he decided is that they declared enterprise zones. So once we got the first sixteen zones and people saw what they were, and that they weren't necessarily evil - that was based off of a 1980 survey we started when I first started in Extension and had an Energy Agent title in my name too. But the results were kind of - we had a meeting at the fairgrounds in Moro to talk about wind power and alternate solar uses and stuff, and these poor guys from the wind survey thing reported that there just wasn't a consistent enough wind at Sherman County to justify putting up wind towers with the technology they had at the day. Of course, the day he's saying this, we had sixty mile an hour winds that were just about ready to take the roof off the building we were in, and it was rattling. Everybody was watching like this [looks up at the ceiling] the whole time.

But what he said was accurate, with the technology they had at the day. Once they improved the technology thirty years later, those numbers came out of proprietorship 'cuz they had worked with another company to put the numbers together. And we got the research information and they got the main group, but they kept the numbers under the quiet. And once they became public numbers, people took a second look at them and thought, "with this technology we can make this work."

[1:45:25]

So anyway, Mike had the idea that they'd set up the enterprise zones, which would give them some tax credits. But instead of just forgiving them taxes, they would put up - one of the first ones they did requested that the money requested would go to a nonprofit organization in the county that could then use the funds to manage the county. Well, that turned out to be our Sherman Development League, which I was on the initial founding board for that one too in 2000. So before the first wind tower came in, we had this vehicle that was a nonprofit organization that was supposed to do good for the county. And all of a sudden we got these windfall dollars coming in that did a remarkable job, so that's done a huge amount. We helped build a couple of fire halls or helped fund a couple of fire halls, we've been the seed money for a lot of things, in some cases the sole support of what they've done. It's helped our pre-school classes, it's helped our health district which formed, they've done some expansion, they've got some new equipment, they've rearranged the rooms so there's more privacy, 'cuz they took an old office that at one time started as a flower shop and expanded that into what it is today, and that's really helped the county.

They do a lot of good things there. They put up funds to help build our new building in Sherman County for the Extension and the Experiment Station. The Experiment Station, in about 1984 - so, when OSU was going through some budget cuts and they were going to start cutting places, small places like the Sherman Experiment Station, which had one employee there, not even a manager, kind of a local field operator type person, that was an easy target. But on the other hand, we argued it covered 85% of the dryland wheat production in the Pacific Northwest and therefore should not be cut. It was more valuable than the one in Pendleton, which has all the bodies in it. So they put together an endowment fund and they've raised over a million dollars for that, and it really helps support a lot of the things that go on at the station. Helps to purchase some of the equipment, helps rearrange and make some of the roads safer, makes it more accessible, more all-weather roads. Just made huge improvements up there at the station.

Plus they kicked in some funds, as did the Sherman Development League, into our new building which helped get us - we were living in a double wide trailer that I had a truck tarp that I would pull over my desk every night to cover my computer. I had four or five gallon buckets on my historic wooden desk, because the water would leak in through the lights every night, and I could get a quart of water out of the fixtures themselves and still have water in the buckets down below. We finally had a safety committee went through and says the place was not only unsafe, it was dangerous. Her recommendation was that we treat it as if the place had burned down in a fire last night and needs to be replaced immediately. That was the impetus that finally got the county to agree that maybe we should invest some funds and build a new building, and it has worked out great. Our county weed district is up there now; planning office is up there. There's an office for the Experiment Station guy and there's basically three areas where the Extension people sit. Plus we have a conference room that sits probably seventy-five to eighty people comfortably. It's just been a good deal for us in a lot of ways.

It's used - we got turned down by two grants, I think the Meiers Foundation and Collins Foundation. Both of them said that they've been to Sherman County and "they've already got more meeting space than you need." So we kept track and I think the meeting room was used - I think out of 365 days it was used probably about 300, and it was just starting to get

recognized as a good place to meet. Almost all our 4-H meetings meetings go on up there anymore, Girl Scouts meet in there. It's just amazing what types of things go on in there now. It's been a good deal for the county and it's a nice facility.

And they recycled a lot of wood from the old Experiment Station building which was the most interesting place you ever saw. They had built the building years and years ago, then they decided they needed to place a single oil burner down in the basement, but they didn't have a basement so they dug a hole out from under the floor. Didn't shore up the flooring, so the floor kind of sagged. So there was two doors on either end of this laboratory going back into the office spaces. And once the building sagged, there was that much difference [uses fingers to indicate distance] where the floor had dropped down. So rather than shoring it back up, they just took and trimmed off the bottoms of the doors so the doors still fit. I don't know what happened to those doors when they took them out, but I wish we'd have kept those. And then on the ceiling upstairs, instead of going off the 16 inch centers, they could be 12 inch centers, they could be 32 inch centers. And if they needed an 18 foot two by four and only had a 14 footer, they would just nail five feet on and stretch it on up. And that's all there was to hold that roof on. How it stood as long as it did... So people asked if it was historical, and I says, "no, it's more hysterical."

And there's some other controversy about building our new building, 'cuz it was kind of a different design and it didn't follow the architectural designs of the rest of the county. Fortunately, we had a contractor and he said "the architectural designs in this county, things were either built in the 1930s or they came in on wheels." And that's basically how the county's been there. There's fewer buildings that are occupied, I think, in downtown Wasco and Moro and Grass Valley, there are just some buildings that are completely gone, so that's changed. You can't buy fuel except at Biggs or Rufus if you're Joe Public. You can get it if you're a key lock member, a member of the co-op at Grass Valley, Wasco and Moro, and now Biggs, and now The Dalles, and now Goldendale. They just expanded to CFM type things.

What else has changed there... There's fewer kids. Still bright kids, fewer farm kids. My son was playing basketball, and on the JV team they had nineteen people listed on the roster. And I was going through that and I think I counted three kids that were associated with farming, and I counted my son even though we didn't farm, we lived on a wheat farm. But I counted him 'cuz his connection; he was working on a farm. So I counted him as having an agriculture connection. Other than that, there was two kids whose parents were involved in production agriculture. Out of nineteen. When I was in school, even with the dam workers, it was still highly agriculture kids who were involved in everything. So our percentage of kids in 4-H has stayed pretty much the same, we're still about the 75 to 80 percent of the kids that are eligible or have participated in 4-H. Still a strong program. The traditional programs that've been kinda shuffled off the side at OSU, and they don't give them the credit they do anymore - OSU again wants to play the numbers game, so they're changing the rules on how their played. So comparing numbers from 1950 to 1980 to 2016 is really not the same - Sherman County, this is amazing, you've been to Sherman County?

[1:53:46]

CP: I have.

SM: There's no trees in Sherman County; there's no natural forestation. It's the only county in Oregon without natural forestation. During the 1930s they had six clubs that involved 130 kids, and they were forestry clubs, 4-H forestry clubs. You're thinking, "what the heck did they do?" They planted trees around the conservation project part of the CCC or they assisted with the CCC and the WPA as part of that work assist program. And they just did things like that and the kids learned about trees.

I took my dad one time down to Maupin for Father's Day and I says, "you want to go back the scenic route?" 'cuz we were heading back to The Dalles then.

"Ah, let's take the scenic route."

So we went around through Tygh Valley, went up on the hills and came down, and came back in through Friend, which is just west of Dufur. And he starts looking around like this and I says, "what are you looking for? Did you see something?" And I thought, "turkeys? Elk?" And he says, "no," he says, " I think I've been up here before." I says, "when were you here?" He says, "well, when we were in 4-H we planted trees up here." I never had known he had been in 4-H and I never knew he had been in a forestry club, 'cuz I had never heard of it at that point - did some more investigating later. And I

says, "planted trees?" He says, "yeah, they had a 4-H club, and they planted trees up there. We got to go up here and it was easier to plant trees than it was to stay home and hay." [laughs] So his motivations might have been different but he had reasons, I guess, for being in 4-H. So that was his involvement in 4-H.

And like I say, I really didn't know what my predecessor did as county agent. I knew the name of his predecessor, and then the other guy who worked in the office at the time was basically a weed sprayer. But he was under county employment and under OSU employment, so it was kind of a cool deal. Gordon was the guy that gave me the information about "it'll be three years before you're comfortable answering questions." And he's retired, just living down here by the museum now too. Still see him quite a bit.

What else is going on? What else has changed? The highways are all better paved.

CP: Well, we've covered an awful lot that's for sure.

SM: There's a lot to cover.

CP: I want to thank you for this Sandy, it's been a very valuable contribution to our project. We've learned a lot about a part of Oregon that not many people know much about and I'm very glad I had this chance to talk to you.

[1:56:38]