



## The OSU Extension Service Centennial Oral History Collection, September 8, 2007

**Title**

Jack Ross

**Date**

September 8, 2007

**Location**

Ross residence, Corvallis, Oregon.

**Summary**

Ross discusses growing up in Arlington, Virginia and working odd jobs in Washington, D.C. after graduating from high school. He goes on to describe working as a clerk for the FBI, both in Washington, D.C. and in Brazil, and mentions a short stint in the Army. Ross then speaks about moving to Oregon and going to school at Oregon State College, starting a job with the Extension Service as a seed certification specialist, and then going on to become a County Extension Agent and a farm crops specialist. He describes a Job Corps-like program for women that he and several colleagues worked on, but were unable to put into place. He also discusses his other positions within Extension, first as a supervisor and then as an assistant director. He rounds out the interview with a description of a volunteer program with the University of Gorky in Belarus.

**Interviewee**

Jack Ross

**Interviewer**

Elizabeth Uhlig

**Website**

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

## Transcript

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

**Elizabeth Uhlig:** This is an oral history interview with Jackson "Jack" Ross for the Extension Service. Today is September 8, 2007 and we're in Jack's home in Corvallis. My name is Elizabeth Uhlig and I'll be interviewing.

Jack, to get started with, could you tell us where you were born and where you were raised?

**Jack Ross:** I was born in Washington D.C. in an area of Washington known as Georgetown, which is an old section of Washington D.C. on July 31 1920. And shortly after I was born my parents bought some property in Arlington, Virginia right across the Potomac River from Washington, where my dad built a home for us there, so I spent my first 21 years in Arlington, Virginia. I went to first two years in high school in Washington and Lee High School in Arlington, and the second two years in Central High School in Washington D.C. where I graduated in 1938.

**EU:** What did your father do?

**JR:** My father was an accountant in the budget bureau in the government in Washington D.C. and didn't like the work very well, he basically enjoyed building homes. He ended up in his spare time building homes which we lived in and enjoyed. And then I graduated in 1938 and, from high school, and had no particular interest in college at that time and I worked in some odd jobs around the Washington D.C. area for a year or so and then I went to work in the FBI as a clerk; started off as a mail delivery clerk in the FBI, and then was, after a year or so I was given a job as a clerk in one of the offices and known as a confidential file analyst of all things—a very fancy title for a clerk. So that was in 1939.

**EU:** Did you actually have to analyze I mean for secret information?

**JR:** Well it was a fun job. I went into the files, they'd give me a name of a person or a firm and I'd go up into the archives and dig up all the information I could find on a particular person or firm, business. And then I would prepare a summary of all this information and give it to the FBI supervisors that I worked for, and they would use this as part of their data for their cases against, you know, individuals and companies. Very interesting job. And then the war came along, World War II... Pearl Harbor came along, the 7th of December, 41, and J. Edgar Hoover issued a decree that no member of the FBI could join the military forces. They had to stay with the FBI or they would be fired with prejudice... pretty severe edict. And he did that because the agents were quitting like flies and going in big fancy jobs in the Counter Intelligence Corp and the Naval Intelligence with high ranking positions, so he was losing staff pretty fast. So we were frozen in our jobs in essence. And I had 2 brothers who went into the service, one in the Air Force and one in the Merchant Marines and I felt pretty guilty about all that. And so I had an opportunity to go to Brazil as part of what they called the Legal Attaché's office in Rio de Janeiro which was really an FBI office. And so I worked down there for a year and a half.

[0:04:29]

**EU:** When did, when was that?

**JR:** That was in 1942. So then Edgar Hoover issued another proclamation out of the goodness of his heart, saying that anybody who wanted to go into the services could go into the service. So I resigned and... well didn't really resign, I was given military leave. So I came on home from Brazil and went into the Army.

**EU:** What kinds of things did you do in Brazil?

**JR:** Clerical work, same type thing. Except that there... was mostly gathering information about subversive activities as the Japanese and the Germans in South America. It was sort of a central intelligence gathering place. Mostly they zeroed in on transmit... or radio transmitters that the local people were... some of the Germans and Japanese were doing their notifying submarines about shipping going on, and the submarines then would sink the ships that were leaving the harbors. A very serious deal, very interesting work but I felt guilty being down there having great fun on Copacabana beach. [laughter] But all my friends were in the service. So anyway, came back for a very inauspicious military career.

**EU:** Where did you serve? Did you go into the Army then?

**JR:** Yeah, I went into the Army went into the army and when I got into the army they said, "Oh boy you got a pretty good deal. You finish basic training and then we'll see... get you in Counter Intelligence Corp since you could speak Portuguese and that would be very valuable." And so when I had 6 weeks of military training instead of 8, they... I got shipped overseas and I kept screaming, "Hey this can't be! I'm supposed to go to Counter Intelligence Corp" and all this and they said, "No you got to... you never finished basic training so you can't qualify." So I ended up in an army unit in southern France and ended up spending the war in the 60 millimeter mortar section during World War II. Got in on the most exciting part I guess was, we were on a station on the south edge of the bulge, you've heard of the Battle of the Bulge. We were on the, right at the south extreme of that bulge and in the middle of winter, so that was the most excitement we had. So... then when I came back from the Army, you know the government people were obligated to give you a job when you got back. And so when I got back they gave me a job but it was a terrible job. Just a make due kind of a thing. They stuck me in an office in the corner and there's not much to do and they didn't really welcome us back very well. So about that time I heard that my father-in-law had bought a little farm in Oregon and he was struggling, and so I moved my wife and my daughter to Oregon in 1946.

**EU:** How did you meet your wife and what was her name?

**JR:** I met her in Washington D.C. when we were still in high school. So we were married in the twenty... matter of fact we had a... we had a wedding rehearsal scheduled for the 7th of December and we canceled that and were about to cancel our marriage but we decided to go ahead and get married so we got married the 22nd of December, '41.

**EU:** And did she go with you then to Brazil?

**JR:** No, wives weren't allowed to go. She was... she worked for a Metro Goldwyn Mayer office in Washington D.C. as a receptionist. But anyway her father had, was a Tangent, Oregon native and he had bought a little 80 acre farm in Tangent that he was going to spend his remaining years on but he was in ill health and about to lose the farm so we decided to take our chance at farming, so I came out to Oregon, brought my wife and child and we farmed for about 3 ½ years and I enrolled part-time at Oregon State and finally decided... said I couldn't do farming and school at the same time so I decided to sell the farm and finish school, which I did. And graduated in 1951 in farm crops.

**EU:** Farm crops, okay. Did you study on the GI bill?

**JR:** Yes I did. If it had not been as the GI bill I'd have never made it. Never. That time I had two children when I enrolled at Oregon State and without the GI bill we'd have never made it.

[0:10:09]

**EU:** So your major you said was food crops?

**JR:** Farm crops, yeah. Used to... some universities called it agronomy which was a crops and soils combination. But at that time at Oregon State farm crops was one major and soils was another, and I was in farm crops. So then I, when I finished school I went work for Oregon State in the seed certification department, right after I graduated and I don't know how much more detail about my Extension career you need.

**EU:** Well could you talk a little bit about seed certification? What seeds were involved and what was the purpose of your work?

**JR:** At the time I joined the certification program had begun in Oregon and the fellow named George Hislop was the head of the farm crops department and he started this program. And basically what it is they get some selected crop like a grass seed crop or a wheat variety or barley variety or potato variety. And they would certify this particular variety at Oregon State and they would make seed available then to the farmers. And the farmers would plant this seed, and then representatives from Oregon State would go out and inspect these fields to be sure there was in fact a field there. And then they would identify other plants that are growing in the field, other weeds and things like this, and write up a little ticket to certify that that was in fact the right crop.

Then when the crop is harvested, a representative from Oregon State would go out and sample the seed and then they would take the seed sample back to Oregon State to the seed laboratory and they would manually go through the seed and

count the actual seeds and the weeds and other crops and things that we didn't give a percentage of these various seeds and then they would certify that this was in fact that crop. So it was a great sales procedure so that somebody in North Carolina, if they wanted to buy some certified rye grass seed, they could call, they could call or by mail they could order so many tons of certified perennial grass seed for example and they would know that it was in fact perennial rye grass seed and they'd know what percent the seed was pure, what weeds were in it if any, and this kind of thing. And they were always free noxious weeds. You know there are certain weeds that are recognized as noxious weeds...I'm trying to think of one off-hand... well, like Canadian Thistle, for example. Well nobody wants to buy seed that has Canadian Thistle in it. So this would certify that there was no Canadian Thistle seed in this crop, so the buyers could be sure they were getting a first class product. And it's done all over the world now and still going. It's still a viable program far as I know.

**EU:** So here in Oregon, was that important for getting the grass seed industry started here in this state?

**JR:** Well it had started, it just made it more pure, made it a better marketing. They were already selling grass seed here for years, back in 1900's, cause it's an ideal place for grass seed, this area right in here where we live, up and down the valley. But then they expanded it to include wheat and barley and oats and potatoes, and now they even have it in, I think it's all the nursery crops are certified also. That's beyond my field but the certification thing, as an aside, in today's newspaper Ken Munford's article in the *Gazette-Times*, it mentions certification program. I'll show it to you. Anyway then I was in that for a couple of seasons and then I was sent to Madras as a county Extension agent in Madras.

**EU:** Did you travel much when you were working with the seed program?

**JR:** Oh every county in the state.

**EU:** All over the state.

**JR:** And that was good, that was very good for me as a Virginian here. I learned a great deal about Oregon. Knew more about Oregon counties than I did about my Virginia counties. It was very good.

**EU:** What was your job title? Were you a...

**JR:** Seed Certification Specialist they called us. Then I went to Madras in 1952, or 53, 53 I guess it was.

[0:15:44]

**EU:** That was in Jefferson County?

**JR:** Jefferson County, yes. And I was there until '56 and then I came back to Oregon State as a farm crops specialist working with E. R. Jackman and Rex Warren and I was there for a couple years and I became known as a kind of a weeds specialist. And so I traveled quite a lot in eastern Oregon working on problems with Russian Knapweed and Morning Glory and some of the obnoxious weeds that are in the counties, working through the county agents as a specialist. That just doing... we put plots out with chemicals and things testing different chemicals to see which ones would work to control weeds and so on. Then I guess in 1957 I was asked to be a supervisor. At that time Oregon Extension was divided into four supervisory districts they called them, and they had a man and a woman in each district as supervisor, and I became a supervisor. Worked with a young woman named Evelyn Funk mostly, and our territory was from Astoria to Gold Beach to Medford and up to Roseburg and Eugene. Kind of like an "L" shaped area. So I was supervisor there for I guess about seven years, seven or eight years anyway. And then I was asked to be assistant director as a supervisor of the supervisors. So we had four districts and then I was supervisor, assistant director in charge of those four supervisory districts. And then I had always interested in early retirement and the more I got involved in personnel work and budgets and stuff like that which I got to dislike, I filed for early retirement, so I retired in 1975.

**EU:** So it seems you were able to see both sides, I mean from the Extension Service here in Corvallis and then out in the counties.

**JR:** Right, right.

**EU:** Let's go back to Jefferson County. What type of work... then you were a county agent.

**JR:** Yeah, I was responsible for the crops, the farm crops there. They had a huge crop of Ladino Clover they called it, and it was subsidized by the federal government for a crop that was used in the south for erosion control and pasture work and so on. So about 80 percent of the land was planted to one crop which was Ladino Clover. But then that subsidy was cut off so they went into peppermint and they went into potatoes more heavily, and a lot of other crops, a lot of grains and things like that. And we had an agent there who was responsible for livestock work and then a 4-H agent. We didn't have a home economist, which most counties had but we used to borrow the home economist from Deschutes County who was Jane Schroeder at one time, and I think you met Jane.

**EU:** Well I will meet her, yeah.

**JR:** And Jane came down and helped our ladies in the county there. That's where I got acquainted with... and Gene Lear who was the county agent in Deschutes County same time I was in Madras came to Corvallis after I did. I came over as crops specialist and supervisor then Gene came over as supervisor and ended up being the director of Extension for a number of years until he retired. Gene Lear, L-E-A-R.

**EU:** So when you were... how did... could you talk about your work with the farmers? I mean what exactly, I mean, not that there was a typical day. What kinds of projects and programs did you work on?

[0:20:41]

**JR:** Well probably the biggest one there in the county was the certification program where the farmers would come into the office and they would sign up. There was a fee for them to pay to sign up so many acres of Ladino Clover which was being certified, and other crops, but mostly clover seed. So they'd come in and sign up for certification programs and then the representatives from OSU would come and I'd sometimes go with them but most of the time not. And they'd go around inspecting all these fields. And whenever farmers had problems, insect problems or disease problems, they would come right into the office and we had literature, publications and we had books that explained to us what the recommendations were which we got again from the specialists at Oregon State. So we relied heavily on the specialists to keep us posted on the latest agricultural information. And so we had a lot of specialists come through the county working on various diseases and insect problems, fertilizer problems, and... both in clover and in potatoes and in grains, wheat and barley, mostly wheat and barley. I think I mentioned earlier in our discussion about one of my concerns about the Extension Service was that as a county agent I was accustomed to almost instantaneous response from the specialists at Oregon State. If a farmer came in with a problem that we couldn't handle, we could call on the specialist on the phone and say "Hey, come give us a hand with this. Come on out and let's go out together and we'll work on this problem." And at the time I was county agent that was, that was very important to us, a nice tie. But I understand that over the years as things changed at the administration level here, there were more and more demands put on the specialist time to do other things, other departmental things and research and some of the other things. They weren't available to come out to the counties, and I think that was a very serious break down in the system.

**EU:** What do you think, or what did you, at the time, what did you think was the mission of the Extension Service as a whole?

**JR:** That's a good question because when I was a certification specialist I got a call from Mr. Ballard who was our director and he said, "I want to see you." Well I was petrified to go see the head honcho Mr. Ballard. He was kind of a domineering sort of a person anyways. So I went into his office, he says, "I want you to go to Madras and Jefferson County and be a county agent." Well, we visited a little bit and finally I said, "Well can you give me an idea of what I should do?" In a sense what is my mission, you know. He says, "Help the county, help the farmers." That's basically what he said, "Help the farmers." So that's what we tried to do in everything. If the farmers indicated they had a problem with the cattle we referred them to the livestock specialist, if they had troubles with the insects we'd get an entomologist to come out and help them with their... we were sort of in a lot of ways the rangers and the facilitators if it was something we couldn't handle ourselves. No matter how much training you can have at a school like Oregon State you can't know everything there is to know about farming for heaven's sakes. You know, you can know certain things but there's a limit to what an individual... so you knew where to turn...

**Voice:** I see you already have something for dinner.

[0:25:25]

**JR:** Yes I think probably a better answer, I hadn't thought about that too much, but we were really facilitators and organizers, like... we had... we had field days you know. We would set up a time when all the locals... I remember one of my favorites we had every year was a field day for farm equipment operators so we would set it up in a farmer's field there and we'd have all, we'd arrange to have all the local farm implement dealers come with their particular tools that they had and show them off, like a plow or a cultivator or disks or harrows or harvesting machines of various kinds. So we would organize that as a field day and the farmers would all come out to that field day. Or if we had some particular plots, chemical plots showing weed control, or fertilizer plots showing which fertilizers were best on which crops and so on. We'd have field days and we'd invited the farmers to come with us and we'd tour around in caravans and visit all the various fields and to... again let them have the benefit of the latest information we had on a particular crop or problem. And that was great fun... This is an aside I guess but I've always felt that certain kinds of people are drawn to Extension. They're very outgoing, social... socially comfortable individuals, to this day. The Extension people are always involved in community affairs and so on. I see it in my local Kiwanis Club here, we have about eight or 10 members of our Extension Service are all in the Kiwanis. And we're involved in community affairs, volunteering, and this kind of thing. It goes on your whole life, and I think that's why so many Extension people are recognized as senior first citizens and junior first citizens and recognized as... John Landers for example, has been senior first citizen; he's an Extension livestock specialist. I was senior first citizen, Extension person... Glenn Klein was a senior first citizen; he was an Extension specialist also. A lot of the Extension... and Duane Johnson, and Harold Kerr is very active in our Kiwanis club... there's certain individuals that seem to be drawn to that profession.

**EU:** So service was very much a part of the identity...

**JR:** Very much. Like Mr. Ballard said, "Help the farmers, help other people," and I think that was pretty general throughout the... all the people I ever met in Extension, I never met a person in there who wasn't outgoing and eager to help and make things better. You know like the 4-H slogan, "Make the best better," or something. [laughter]

**EU:** Could you talk a little bit about the planning process? I mean, how did you work... how did you determine which programs or projects you needed to work on in the counties?

**JR:** Very good question, very good question. My first exposure to a county planning committee was in Madras, and we had a planning committee there. It was very typical in most counties... maybe 20 to 25 of the key people in the community, not just farmers but business people and farm people, who met usually a couple of times a year and they would basically sit down and around the table... At our invitation we would invite them to come in and basically review the work of the agents for the year, what major things we'd been doing, how many hours we spent doing whatever, some of the problems we'd run into. So we'd share with them our experiences for the year, and then we'd look ahead to the next year, how should we be spending, what things should we be working on in the coming year? A very crucial part of the program was the planning process. Glad you asked that. But in addition to that we also had sub-groups like I remember, again in Madras. We had a weed committee and they met fairly often, maybe they met at least quarterly, and they would monitor the program that was going on in the county to control noxious weeds, which was very critical in a seed growing area. They wanted everybody involved in controlling weeds, and so we had a very active weed committee, which is sort of a sub-committee of the overall planning committee.

[0:31:11]

And then there was always the 4-H leaders committee that got together and discussed the youth program. We didn't have a home economics committee there because we didn't have a home Extension agent. But most of the counties did and they again had very strong home economics programs, planning. And pretty much planning... the agents didn't plan the program; the people decided what the program was to be. And most of them weren't very shy about criticizing the agents; you know if they weren't doing certain things, they'd point out that they needed more home visits or they needed this or more of that, more information... they needed quite often, I remember one... from the first year I was there they said they missed a newspaper column. They liked to have the agent write a column in the paper telling them about what the latest developments were in certain things, so I started a column that I wrote in the weekly paper the whole time I was there. And that came about a result... not a recommendation, but a request by a number of the people in the community. Very important, the planning I think was a real strength in particular. Mr. Ballard was a great pusher of long-range program

planning. Conferences, we had them all over the state for years. Each county would have a planning conference and then there would be a big culmination of a big one here in Corvallis, and that was done for many years. I think they finally gave that up for some reason.

**EU:** When you were in Jefferson County, did you have any programs on the reservation, at Warm Springs?

**JR:** Yes, we had a strong 4-H program there. That was probably the strongest. And at the time I was there they had a dairy at the reservation, and I was called there a few times to help them with their pasture program and I helped them put in quite a few acres of pasture. But that dairy didn't last too long; it kind of went out of business. And then in later years, after I left Madras, they actually put an agent in who was stationed at the reservation and he worked very much like a regular county agent with the rancher, with the Indian population, and the 4-H program continued strong. (Cough) Excuse me, for a long time. I guess the... I don't know if there's still an agent there or not, but there was an agent there for many years who was a resident agent, and I think they... the first one they had they made an honorary Warm Springs Indian out of him. He had been, had lived in The Dalles and had lived in that part of the country for a long time. But he fit right in to the... and they liked having a resident agent there rather than being served from Madras.

**EU:** Okay this is the end of Part one.

**JR:** Okay.

[0:35:07]

**Elizabeth Uhlig:** This is Part 2 of the interview with Jack Ross.

Jack, after you were in Jefferson County, in 1957 you moved back to Corvallis. What was the position you had here? You were a farm crops specialist?

**Jack Ross:** Yeah. As I mentioned before, I spent some time as a farm crops specialist and then a supervisor, and then I think it was in the mid-60s, the federal government had a big push on work in the poverty... they called them poverty programs. Various programs aimed at helping the disadvantaged and the poor throughout the United States, and Extension got heavily involved in that program. And Gene Lear was the director at that time of Extension and he asked me to head up kind of a little branch of community resource development for Extension and to develop some programs as a part of this national effort against poverty. And one of the first things we did was we prepared a grant proposal to the federal government and to... as part of the neighborhood youth corps program. And that turned out to be quite an extensive program for several years in Oregon, where we got sufficient funds to allocate to each of the 36 counties where they could use these monies to hire disadvantaged and low-income family youth to work with the Extension agents in the counties helping them in a variety of ways. You know, working in the office and working out in the field with research projects and research plots, those kinds of things. But the agents in each of the counties came up with a variety of ways that they used these kids to give them kind of some extra income. And that program went on for quite a while and was, I think was an eye-opener to a lot of people in Oregon, the extent of poverty in Oregon at that time, how many low-income families there were. Again, some real heavy community involvement.

Then that was also a period of time when the federal Extension people got after us because we didn't have minority staff members, we didn't have any Black workers or Hispanics or anything like that. So I was involved in... actually went to Jackson, Mississippi Alcorn A&M and interviewed a number of student potential workers down there and we ended up hiring probably a half a dozen over the next two or three years, Black... young Black agents to work here in Extension in Eugene, in Marion County, and in Hood River County we employed them. But as we feared, they didn't last very long. We were pleased with the work that they did and the reception we thought was good from our clients in these counties. But they went on to other things and didn't continue working for us. But at least we... it was an obligation that we met and I remember that was a pretty valued effort we made.

**EU:** Why did you go to Mississippi? Was there a connection between...?

**JR:** There was an agricultural school there. It was recommended as a place we would go to find some students. One of them was a... turned out to be... well they were both home economists, the first two we hired.

**EU:** Two women.

**JR:** Two women. And one was a man who was working in 4-H and he worked for a short while but didn't last. But what was the other thing I mentioned... Oh I mentioned the Job Corps...

[0:39:49]

**EU:** Before we jump to that, how did you recruit the agents down in Mississippi?

**JR:** Well I went down there and actually interviewed them.

**EU:** Was it at a conference?

**JR:** No just... I went down there, we had arranged to have one of those faculty member was my host and he invited students to come meet with me. I went down alone the first time, and the second visit George Arscott from the poultry department went with me, so two of us went down. He was a representative of the dean of the College of Agriculture, Dean Price. And so the two of us went down and we interviewed probably fifteen or twenty potential agents, students, and... of course most of them didn't even know where Oregon was, so we started from ground zero. But we did offer jobs to a few of them and they came, but... on the Job Corp again, we put on two or three conferences for the Job Corps center that was set up here for men in Oregon and that turned out to be a pretty good program. And they came up here and we gave them a lot of instructions on leadership and recreation and we had quite an extensive program for them. And I think it was at the same time Roberta Anderson came up with the idea of having a Job Corps center for women. There were three or four of them around the United States and she thought we could have one here majoring, basically, mostly with a home economics emphasis; family management, family planning and home economics. And we were almost successful in getting one started. It was to be in Portland but being staffed by faculty from Oregon State, but that didn't materialize.

**EU:** So you had worked on that project for quite a long time.

**JR:** Quite a long while. We worked on that for two or three years and were very... I was very disappointed that it didn't go but we were not able to get financing, get approval for it. So it went down the tube, but that was a strong effort on our part to get involved in helping out the low-income disadvantaged folks as a part of the national program; the economic opportunity program or... it was all pretty strong about that time.

**EU:** You couldn't get the funding, I mean, was that a political decision or...?

**JR:** I think so. I think there was some concern by Edith Green who was the representative from Oregon in the national congress, and she was a strong Portland State University advocate and I don't think she liked the idea that here little old rural Corvallis Oregon State University was mucking around in Portland and I think that was part of it. I never will know for sure but I think she just sort of vetoed it and it went down that way.

**EU:** Was this part of a movement to become more active... for the Extension Service to become more active in the cities, in the urban areas?

**JR:** I think it was a part of it, yes. I think so. We had an Extension program in Multnomah County for many, many, many years which showed that the same kinds of services that we provided in the other 36 counties could work in an urban community and that Extension wasn't just an agriculture or aggie kind of a service. It wasn't just oriented to serving farmers. That's again I think one of the reasons why 4-H has flowered and prospered over the years. Used to be 4-H kids were handling animals, you know pigs and sheep and horses and so on, but now they're into every kind of a project you can imagine in an educational way and I think that's what happened in Multnomah County, they found out that the Extension Service worked on community problems, family life problems. They worked on all kinds of urban problems. Again with a planning committee, they had a strong planning committee which dictated what the agents... how the agents helped local people. It didn't have to be agriculture.

[0:45:02]

**EU:** The agents that you hired from Mississippi, where in the state did they work? Did they work in Portland?



**JR:** They worked in Eugene and Salem and in Portland and in Hood River, those four places. And I'm repeating again but we were very pleased with the reception that they got from the clients, because they weren't serving Black families, there were not that many Black families. They were serving the general population in Oregon which had a very low percentage of minorities. I wish I knew, were better informed right now but I think that Extension is working more with Latino families now than they used to be but there were not that many families involved in our programs when I was working.

**EU:** Do you think part of the reason... you said they went on to other jobs, they didn't stay long in Oregon. Do you think that had to do, because there just weren't... there wasn't a real strong Black communities for them to fit into?

**JR:** I'm sure. I'm sure that was a lot of it. I don't think they themselves... it was kind of like a culture shock for them, so I think it was the individuals who weren't able to handle it. It wasn't the reception that they got from the Oregonians; I think the Oregonians accepted them fine. But they just felt like they didn't fit.

**EU:** Is there a certain amount of discrimination you would think?

**JR:** Didn't detect any, no. I don't think that was a problem. It may have been even to the other extreme, almost... maybe people were maybe too possessive... not possessive, that's not the right word... but they were too anxious to make them feel welcome, you know, they overpowered them a little bit that it might have been considered sort of fakey. But... I thought... and it wasn't so much their training, they were well trained, they were both home economists and well trained at their school and so there wasn't anything about the subject matter, they were quite good at that.

**EU:** When... when you... Could you talk a little bit about your work with... as a farm crops specialist? You said before there were four districts and you were in charge of...

**JR:** No that was the supervisory work.

**EU:** Supervisory work. And that was in the coast and into...

**JR:** Yeah, as a farm crops specialist, I was like many of the other specialists. When I went into that job, my first job was to respond to the requests from the county agents in the 36 counties. If they had a particular crops problem that they couldn't handle, they would call us and we would go out, actually physically go to the counties, go with them out to where the problem was and try to help them solve the problem. That was the basic set-up of Extension as I grew up with it and I thought that was very, very strong. Even to the point that... this is where again as I mentioned earlier, my concern later was that the Extension specialists were continually being asked to do other things at the seat of government here, at the base, which took time... which they couldn't spend time out in the counties. And I think that was a beginning of the breakdown of this nice smooth, overly simplified, where a researcher at Oregon State in the school of agriculture would come up with some new products, some new procedure. He would tell the Extension specialist in that field about this new procedure which had been approved. Then the Extension specialist would convey this information to the agents. It was just a one, two, three setup. Then it came reverse; the Extension agents would identify a problem, they would tell the Extension specialist they had this problem, the specialist if he couldn't handle it would tell the researcher "We need some research on this problem," and so that's the way we would go. Just one, two, three, one, two, three, it went back and forth. Well as soon as there was an interruption in that, where if the agent said to the specialist, "I'd like some help on this," and then the specialist say, "Well I'm sorry I can't help you on that right now, I've got this and this and this and this demand on my time," And so that sort of broke the chain of communication here.

[0:50:33]

**EU:** When did that change happen and why do you think?

**JR:** It was a pure administrative decision... when the decision was made that the department heads were to be responsible for the Extension specialist and be administratively responsible for these Extension specialists and so...

**EU:** It was the department head of the academic departments at the university?

**JR:** Yes. The department heads then, as often was the case, they were short-handed and short of funds and short of this and short of that, so they would reach out everywhere they could to get a staff to work on various things, and they brought

in the Extension specialist to do what I consider to be non-Extension functions, being real blunt. And that's when we had a breakdown of this communication. That was from... from my position, cause I was getting complaints from the agents as a supervisor that they couldn't get the help that they used to get from the specialist, and they wanted me to do something about that so then I would run in to that problem. I'd go to the specialist and say, "Hey, how come you aren't helping the agents more rapidly, more expeditiously like you used to?" Well they would tell me their problems, their being pulled away from what they considered to be their primary.

But then it... I don't know, I guess this is probably appropriate, but Extension specialists gradually got better training to where they were practically all PhDs. Back in the old days I didn't have a PhD, I was an Extension specialist and I had a Bachelors degree. Well that's...was unheard of. As it progressed more and more of the people demanded that a specialist have a PhD in that field. Okay, so as they got PhDs, in order to get a PhD they got more heavily involved in research. Most of them had to do a special research project in order to get their PhD and that made them highly specialized in their field. Well so they were just ripe for department heads to reach out and grab this PhD who's qualified to do research even though he's an Extension person, he was having to wear two hats. So I think along with the increased education was the propensity to go more into the research field than into Extension. Not a lot of glory in Extension work. Glory isn't coming up with a new product or a new procedure or something like that in agricultural research.

**EU:** Did you work with E. R. Jackman?

**JR:** I was a co-worker... I was in the same office with him, yeah.

**EU:** Can you talk about him a little bit? What was his main field?

**JR:** Well in crops we had some... in the farm crops department they had some divisions within the department. Like I mentioned I was working on weeds in Eastern Oregon, and I was working on cereals in Eastern Oregon. Rex Warren was working on weeds in Western Oregon and on crops in Western Oregon. And E.R. Jackman was an overall Extension crops specialist but his emphasis was on range management. And he... developing grasses and legumes in the arid Eastern Oregon part of Oregon. Not entirely but that was, ended up being his focus. Because he was heavily involved in establishing the Oregon Wheat League, which is an internationally famous group, and also the Oregon Seed... what was it called, the Oregon Seed... hmm. Well he worked on the Oregon Seed business, and he was an organizer but in his later years he was primarily a range management person, and that's where he... and he put on range management schools for youth. I worked with him on as a program chairman for two or three of his range, youth range camps that he held in Grant County and Harney County and Malheur County. And he was a famous author, he wrote the book called *The Oregon Desert*, and wrote several other books and was a prolific writer. He was published in a lot of national magazines and things. Interesting fellow to work with. He was my senior by quite a few years but he helped me a great deal. The first year or so I was a specialist I produced some little single sheet handouts on weeds, identification of weeds, colored publications. He helped me a great deal putting out those. [pause] But it required a lot of travel. As I mentioned before we kept going out to the agents, out to the counties all the time, responding to their requests, and the travel was pretty extensive.

**EU:** And you had... How many children did you have? You had...

**JR:** I had three daughters.

**EU:** So that... was it hard then being away from...

**JR:** Very, very hard, yeah. My wife didn't care for it too much.

**EU:** Is that part of the reason why then you moved into the being the... after you were the farm crops specialist supervisor then you moved into administration?

**JR:** Yes, as a supervisor.

**EU:** As a supervisor... and did that keep you more in Corvallis?

**JR:** A little bit, a little bit better. I still did quite a lot of traveling but I think this is... when you move from one job to another it's kind of hard to explain how that occurs, but in every instance in my case I was just asked, I didn't seek these jobs. I was just asked to do that and then when they wave a promotion and more salary you accept it. Unwisely sometimes I think because I missed... I think throughout my whole career, I missed the county agent work and the work with the farmers and the families and I missed the discipline in the crops field. And you substitute that with budgets and personnel and planning and administrative stuff which is not very glamorous. And I guess in hindsight I probably would have repeated the same thing but I don't think it was... I don't think I was as happy a camper as an administrator as I was as an agent and a specialist.

**EU:** So you were assistant director over these supervisors of these four districts.

**JR:** Yes, yes. When I retired.

**EU:** Okay, so that was in the 60's or...

**JR:** That was in 1975 when I retired. And Alberta Johnston took my place. And then they had a big upheaval and change-over and renamed positions and I lost track. [laughter]

[0:59:33]

**EU:** In my notes I have to ask you about the Extension Advisory Council.

**JR:** Well that's these planning groups, the program planning that I mentioned. Yeah, cause that's very... I think has been a... was, I don't know what it currently is, but that was a key to the success of Extension was these local advisory groups, and some of them very specific, you know. They got down to where they had horticultural advisory groups, they had nursery advisory groups, they had weed control advisory groups... well obviously 4-H leaders associations and home economics councils. Those were all part of the planning process which made Extension a people's program, and I thought extremely strong part of Extension. Always felt like if that was ever weakened, it was bound to weaken the support that you get from the state legislature and the counties and from the federal government. And I think this is reflected... somewhere along the line some of this broke down, where like in a number of counties, I don't know what it currently is now... the county budget people just cut the county budget off, they didn't support Extension at all, from the county legislative body, the county commissioners, but the people in the communities were so strong for Extension they created Extension districts, where then they fund it through an Extension district which is completely different from what it was when I was working. But that's a reflection of the good work that the Extension agents were doing.

But the overall administrative picture changed somewhere to where you don't get the... what is the right term here... administrative support from the elected officials that we used to get. And I think I mentioned this earlier, it used to be years ago when 50 percent of the legislators in the state of Oregon had farm backgrounds, or were farmers. Well good gosh, when things came up to budget for the Extension Service or OSU agriculture and all this, there was no question the budget... there's just a fly right through. Well now there are more lawyers and doctors and dentists and hardware store owners and they don't know beans about agriculture and could care less. And so the support has kind of diminished from that. And like I mentioned with the Steak and Chop Club... a lot of the members of the Steak and Chop Club were also members of the state representatives, they were representatives elected to the state government. And Mr. Ballard and all these, they were all buddy-buddies and they went fishing together and they went hunting together, all this sort of stuff. And that came right directly back to strong funding. You can't operate without funds, so there's no question to what... there has been a significant number of changes.

I might add real quickly something that might be of interest here. I think... When I... getting back to the county agent, one of the things that I used to do regularly was to have a meeting of the seed industry representatives, and what they call fieldmen for the seed companies. Well the seed companies were buying the farmers' seeds and they were selling the farmers' seeds so they had a direct contact with the farmers too, and they had fieldmen, who were in a lot of ways a lot like county agents. Well we had half a dozen strong seed companies in Jefferson County, so two or three times a year I'd call them together and we would all meet in my office and we would go over the latest recommendations for fertilizer, weed control, insect control... all the various recommendations that were currently being recommended by Oregon State. So all the field men were informed with the same information that I was getting, so it was sort of a coordinating effort.

Well, over the years the seed companies were hiring more and more fieldmen, and well trained fieldmen, fieldmen with PhDs in Agricultural efforts. And so more and more farmers then began relating to the fieldmen, who were buying and selling their products, rather than coming into the county agents. So the county agents were reaching a lot of these farms through fieldmen, and now the fieldmen began taking over more and more and more of these jobs, and then as the farms began to increase in size, more and more little farms went out and the farmers got bigger and bigger and bigger, they began to rely upon the seed company fieldmen. So the fieldmen were... I'm back on agriculture again, but the fieldmen began taking more and more responsible roles with a direct relationships with the farmers. And the agents then I think adapted some by working with the fieldmen. I think that was a kind of a major, a major change in the Extension operation. It was pretty well... pretty limited to ag, to the agricultural program. And as matter of fact, in this Steak and Chop Club again, currently there are about 5 or 6 members of that club who are agricultural fieldmen for the banks. Well if you're a farmer out here you need to borrow half a million dollars, and you go to a bank and you borrow half a million dollars from the bank, their fieldman is going to kind of follow you around... [laughter]

**EU:** Want to keep an eye on you

**JR:** ...Operations pretty closely. So there are also fieldmen for the banks who are doing a lot of the work like Extension people and they're well trained, you know. They come from the same schools, same degrees and everything else as Extension agents. So the picture has changed pretty dramatically... becoming a more urban and suburb society than it used to be, back in the old days.

**EU:** And also like you had mentioned too, the change from small family farms to larger corporate farms...

**JR:** Corporate farms, you betcha. A big influence on it.

**EU:** Okay, this is the end of part two.

**JR:** [laughter] Okay.

[1:07:46]

**Elizabeth Uhlig:** This is Part 3 of the interview with Jack Ross.

Jack, you've mentioned talking... you've talked about some of the people that you've worked with, and I wanted to ask you... you talked about E.R. Jackman for example, and you said that Roberta... you've mentioned Roberta Anderson a number of times. She followed you as the supervisor?

**Jack Ross:** No, no, no. No, she was a specialist in Extension in home economics. And I think she was in home management section of home economics, and when I was involved in this neighborhood youth corps program and the technical services act and several of the Job Corps kind of programs and things like that, she came to me one day and said that she had been following this national program for Job Corps for women and thought that maybe Oregon State had something to offer there, and so together we worked on a project to establish the women's Job Corp center to be in Portland. But in working with Roberta I found out she brought a viewpoint on a lot of things, issues relating to women that would not have occurred to us as men, working heavily in agricultural kind of programs. But I found her to be very creative and very helpful and just a wonderful co-worker. When I first started as a supervisor, as I mentioned earlier, there were four districts and in each district there was a man and a woman, they'd call them teams, supervisory teams. And they... we traveled together quite a lot to the counties where we'd try to make fairly regular visits to each of the counties and find out what kind of programs they had going on and any particular problems that they might have. And the women worked with the home economics agents pretty directly, and I as a... for some reason the men supervisors seemed to work on the county budgets and some of the personnel problems and so on. But the women would work pretty directly with the home economics agents, and I think were a great help to the home economics agents. They again have a kind of a family oriented attitude in doing Extension work. They usually encompassed or showed a lot of interest in the 4-H youth programs as well as home economics. So they were kind of the strong leaders in the... well, family affairs. Exclusives of a particular specialty like crops or soils or livestock or something like that. Even though they demonstrated interest in this, they had a strong family orientation which I thought was helpful to the Extension effort.

[1:11:21]

**EU:** It seems that the Extension Service provided jobs for women, professional jobs for women, you know in the 50s and 60s when it wasn't really that common in a wider society.

**JR:** Yes. Yes that's very true. They also were much like... I mentioned earlier again that, when we first... Extension first started it wasn't so much emphasis on academic degrees and things like that. We all, most all of us had just bachelor's degrees, so they were being employed directly right out of college, first entry-level jobs with a bachelor's degree in home economics for example. Now the tendency is to go on for advanced degrees; master's degrees and PhDs. I think Roberta had a PhD, did she not? I'm not certain.

**EU:** She had a Master's.

**JR:** Masters, yeah. I think most of them at least went in the master's programs, but now days they are pretty much PhD oriented, which shows the heavy academic...But it is a marvelous opportunity for women to... for jobs and it's still going strong.

**EU:** Did you yourself... you went on to graduate school? Did you take a sabbatical?

**JR:** Yeah, I went, I took a sabbatical. I should have done it much earlier than I did, but I took a sabbatical in 1959 and went to University of Wisconsin and got a Kellogg scholarship to go there... and I got a Masters degree in what they call Extension Administration. Again, not oriented to crops or soils or anything like that, but it was in the administration. And it was not specifically required but I was almost ordered to go. They were basically telling me that in order to maintain – to keep my job I needed an advanced degree. And so I went up there with their children which was not...

**EU:** You took your whole family with you.

**JR:** Took the whole family and it wasn't an easy thing to do. But in hindsight I think it was good for me, I learned a great deal there about administration and personnel and budgeting and so on. And so when I... we were being encouraged to go on for PhD's but I was not inclined to go farther. I had figured that I was about at the level I was going to be in Extension anyway. But I was a supervisor at that time.

**EU:** Another person you've worked with, we've talked about before was Jean Scheel.

**JR:** Jean Scheel.

**EU:** Could you talk a little bit about him and what his position was?

**JR:** Jean Scheel was an assistant director when I was first in Extension. And he was from the mid-west and had a strong journalistic background, and was hired by Mr. Ballard. And he headed up in a position that was responsible for a number of specialists. He was in charge of the community... of the Extension Communications office where Len Calvert worked and Arnold Ebert worked, and he also was responsible I think for the Extension specialist in agricultural economics and I'm not sure which others... but he was a great advocate of program planning and I think that's what encouraged Mr. Ballard to hire him. He was a great one on planning and long-range goals and objectives and this kind of thing, and he used to write most of the Extension annual reports for the state, which was submitted to the federal government. And extremely talented writer and a good solid thinker... I think Gene was... I can't think of what other specific responsibilities he had, but he was an integral part of the Extension Administrative team when I first joined. One that was easy to talk to and gave good advice on things that came up. I strongly recommend you talk to him.

[1:16:46]

**EU:** You've talked a little bit at different times about the different reports and... could you talk a little bit about the reporting system. I'm thinking of the SEMIS? State Extension Management Information System.

**JR:** Now that... The reporting system... I don't know what it currently is, but all the years that I worked there, each county agent was required to write a monthly report, and that's pretty heavy, you know? But the agents were good at writing monthly reports. They reported every manner of thing that they were involved in for that month, including some statistics. You know, number of farm visits that they made, number of visits farmers came into their place and news articles that

they prepared... various statistical information that was all compiled then here in Corvallis and then sent on to the national to be presented to others on up the line about how many contacts they'd made and so on. And it was pretty vital. So then each county was required to submit an annual report, which was a compilation of the highlights of all of the monthly reports that had been written by the agents. And that was a pretty rigid requirement for many, many, many years. And so the supervisors were required to read these monthly reports and glean from them whatever information they could about problems or opportunities for improving the Extension programs, and that turned out to be a pretty heavy burden. If you have nine counties and you have four or five agents per county, or you say four counties... that's 36... [laughter] 36 monthly reports to read each month in addition to the nine county annual reports you were supposed to read, and you yourself were required to submit a report for your district for the nine counties, and so a lot of reporting going on. And that information was supposed to be stored some place and be of value to somebody but I don't think we did too much reviewing of the old reports, I think they just went into the archives, or went into some place.

But at one time, we were required to participate in a... what was called a State Extension Management Information System, called SEMIS, S-E-M-I-S, I never will forget it. And it was a monstrous statistical project, computerized. It was foisted on us by the federal Extension Service. We had no choice but to participate. And Gene Lear was our director at that time and he asked me to take over the responsibility of getting that established for our service, and it was a monstrous affair. And very, very, very, very complicated and not very popular with anybody; it was just detail after detail, everything you did you were supposed to record, so that at the end of the month you could submit this SEMIS report. And we had tons and tons and tons and tons of paper coming out, consolidating all this information which we were supposed to get information from and it was a monstrous failure as far as I was concerned. But it took up months and months of my time, trying to put on a happy face and convince the agents and specialists that this was a good thing to do. [laughter] Even though I myself was not fully committed to it, but it was not something of our choice, it was a requirement, one of those distasteful jobs that you have in your life and that was one of them.

Still though, I'm sure... Excuse me, but the narratives, the written annual reports I think would be great, great resource to go through. A lot of reading but there'd be some marvelous information in there, the narratives. The statistics I'm not so excited about, but the narrative reports of some of the programs would be tremendous. Should be kept forever.

[1:22:24]

**EU:** Did you... these were the early years of computers. How did that impact your work in the 70s for example?

**JR:** Well that was, that was before the current system where everybody has a computer. This was all just information that we mechanically, manually put together which was fed into computers and then it came out with just gobs of stuff. It really was, we weren't really into the computers as you know of the computers now days.

**EU:** So it was more of the data processing...

**JR:** More data processing, yeah. And it was very cold and very... I think I told you the quick story about Bob Every who was an entomology specialist who just was a real clever guy. And I went to his office one day about some other things and we got, and I looked at all these little pint jars. He had a whole row of pint jars on his desk, and each pint jar had a label on it, which was one facet of the SEMIS reporting system, like the number of phone calls, the number of phone calls he'd made, the number of things that came up in his daily activity. And he had a whole bag of little beans, white beans, and every time he'd get a phone call he'd take out a bean and throw it in the phone call pint jar, so he says so at the end of the month he could count the number of beans he had in each one of these jars. The only way you could keep track of these statistics. I loved that; it was very, very funny.

**EU:** And the other people you worked for, or worked with, that were memorable?

**JR:** Oh golly... Not a very good answer but I'd say all of them. As I... I think the Extension people are a special breed kind of. And they're just outgoing and helpful, congenial people and would naturally flow into the Extension kind of work. If they enjoy working with people, enjoy being helpful, enjoy being productive and see the results of your efforts and so on, that attracts those kinds of people. I can't think of a single lemon in the bunch. [laughter]

**EU:** You then decided to retire in 1975?

**JR:** Yes. I... I don't know where I developed this attitude but I've always been an advocate of early retirement. I feel like after you work for 30 some years in a position you've earned your right to do other things that you don't have time to do in your normal growing up period. And I've seen too many of my friends who've worked, and worked, and worked, right up to 65 and died at 66 and I thought what a terrible waste, they never got a chance to enjoy doing other things that they might have enjoyed doing. So for all my adult life I always thought I'd like to... there's some things I want to do that I'm not able to do now and I'd like to retire early and get them done, and I did.

**EU:** So what are some of the things you did in retirement? I know you've talked about the Kiwanis.

**JR:** Yeah. Well I... First project I had was I built a house. I built a vacation cabin over in Deschutes County. Took me 6 years, but I enjoyed doing that, built it from the ground up. Always wanted to do electrical work and plumbing work and carpentry work and I did that, got that done. And I've enjoyed playing golf and doing a lot of recreation things that I didn't have time to do when I was working, so I've enjoyed... And this is kind of personal but as it turned out it was a good thing. My first wife was... contracted cancer shortly after I retired and I was able to take care of her for about 6 years, which if I had been trying to do and work at the same time would have been difficult. So I was able to be a caretaker for 6 years. So that worked out good and well. And we did some traveling that would not have been possible if I had waited too long. I was able to travel, physically able to do a lot of traveling. Went to Hawaii and went to Europe and went to various places in the United States, took several trips around the country visiting state parks and things like that, went to some elder hostels. So I've fairly enjoyed retirement.

[1:28:19]

**EU:** What are some of the projects you've worked on in the Kiwanis club? Because you said they're... in talking about the service ethic that so many people have in the Extension service.

**JR:** Oh gosh, the one that's most popular right this minute that I've been heavily involved in is installing safety bars, or grab bars in elderly people's homes; in their bathrooms and showers... People have operations, hip operations and so on, the therapists call us and arrange for us to put bars in people's homes when they can come home and have support that they carry. And then been heavily involved in delivering meals on wheels. Our club has 2 days that we work meals on wheels and I coordinate the drivers and do also do driving for the meals on wheels program. Takes quite a lot of effort. And we... for several years... I guess I had an occasion to check it just the other day. Starting in 1977 I've been doing a lot of volunteer work with what's called the Old Mill Center here. It's a school for preschoolers and for kids from abused families and disabled kids, autistic children and so on. Been doing a lot of work for them. I've built a lot of their classroom furniture and in addition to that our club has been doing land, cleaning up their landscaping at the school for years. And also I was on the board of the Vina Moses Center here, which is a center which collects clothing and all kinds of things to be distributed to disadvantaged families in the community. I was on the board there for about 8 or 10 years and have since retired. But I still work with them... heavy financial contributors to their program. Never a dull moment.

**EU:** And this biography you wrote... you said in 1994 you were named Corvallis Senior First Citizen? Why did they honor you? Was there a specific...?

**JR:** Well that's an annual affair that's been going on in Corvallis for years, and the various clubs and so on in the town nominate different people for it, and then there's a committee which I've since served on, a committee that meets and goes through all these nominations and then selects a winner. But I think it was largely due to my work in Kiwanis. A lot of community... and that's what they look for is a lot of community service as a volunteer and I think I showed you my plaque even. But that was kind of fun. You don't do that volunteering work for that recognition, it just kind of sneaks in when you aren't looking.

**EU:** Can you talk about your work with... Voca? V-O-C-A, Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance?

**JR:** Oh yeah, this is a program that's still going on, and it's sponsored by the A-I-D, the Federal Agency for International Development, A-I-D. And VOCA is a... Volunteers Overseas...

[1:32:33]

**EU:** Cooperative Assistance?

**JR:** Cooperative Assistance, yeah. And... what they do is... it's not, it isn't entirely agricultural but it's heavily oriented to agriculture, where a developing country will apply to AID for assistance in helping them with some phase of agriculture. And so if they approve it then AID, the VOCA people find people all around the country to go to this country and spend anywhere from three weeks to six weeks working with their representatives in their country, helping them with various agricultural projects. And the country of Belarus had a school at Minsk. It's an agricultural school and they were... had heard about the Extension Service in other, like in Poland and two or three other European countries had heard about the, how well this Extension business was, like the United States, was working in Poland, which they had never had before. So Steve Besse and I went to Belarus to this college in Minsk, or in... not Minsk... a mental block... Anyway, we went there and spent three weeks meeting with the administrators of the college, explaining to them how an Extension Service works and what's required in getting an Extension Service going. And then we wrote a report for them to follow. And I guess the end product was they don't have any money. They were enthusiastic about the idea; we went around and talked to several of the leading co-op managers in the country and met with a lot of faculty members at the university. They all thought it was a great idea; everybody thought it was a wonderful idea. But they didn't have any money so it never came to fruition. I mentioned Minsk. Minsk is the capital of Belarus... why can't I think of the name of that... Sorry, it just left me here. That was about seven years ago and... it was quite an experience.

**EU:** Okay, this is the end of Part 3.

[1:35:38]

**Elizabeth Uhlig:** This is Part 4 of the interview with Jack Ross.

Jack, you checked... when you were in Belarus, what was the name of that...

**Jack Ross:** Gorky. It was the University of Gorky. That's where... it was a good exercise for me and for Steve both where we had to start from ground zero and just explain to somebody who had never heard of Extension, what Extension was, what it's mission was, and get right down into the nitty gritty of how to get it started and how it operates and how it should operate; it was a very good experience for us to do. And we got a marvelous, marvelous reception from some real, real typical kind of communist sort of thinking. Maybe this is a little bit of humor that might be of interest... we had an interpreter with us who was an English language instructor who went around with us, and one time we went to a bazaar where they were very, very poor people, they were in terrible financial straits. She got 10 dollars a month as pay, as a university English professor. Anyway, she pointed out some people in a van that were selling shoes, all kinds of shoes, and she said, "Jack, can you imagine, those people?" And I said, "What?" She said, "They went to Poland and they bought those shoes, and they brought them back here to Gorky and they're selling them for more than they paid for them." And she thought that was terrible. Now that was the mind-set of the people we were dealing with and trying to get something like the Extension Service across, and they were so involved, but she thought that was just awful.

**EU:** It was too capitalistic for her. [laughter] [pause] Well when you went there, it must have been a good exercise like you said, of just thinking about the Extension Service and what is involved in Extension service. With the Extension service now coming up to their hundredth anniversary, I wonder if you have any thoughts about that, about what the legacy of the Extension Service is and how you can sort of put your experiences into some kind of perspective?

**JR:** Well I think it's a great thing to do to... to celebrate the hundred years, and I think it's also a good time to look back and look at some of the real contributions that Extension has made to the economy as a state. Well, economy nationally actually, which I think has been substantial. As we mentioned earlier though, significant changes over just the period of time that I worked for Extension there'd been a lot of changes. The whole change from the basically rural orientation to a more urban, suburban orientation I think has been pretty severe and has required that the Extension Service make a lot of changes in how it operates. I think the basic principle is still marvelous.

[1:39:46]

Again as I mentioned before, we mentioned this to our friends in Belarus, in Gorky and they seemed to understand this concept of how good it will be for the economy if you have researchers who are working hard to develop new crops, new animals, new variety, new breeds, new procedures and all this sort of thing. They're busy in the laboratory. This is what we used to tell the folks in Gorky, "Here, you were in the laboratory, you come up with all these marvelous discoveries..."



Well how does it get applied? How is it utilized out in the community?" There has to be some sort of mechanism to get this out. You don't want the scientists in the laboratory to get on their horse or buggy or car and drive out in the country and tell people about it, there has to be some way to communicate this great wealth of knowledge, which started back in the George Washington days. He did a lot of agricultural research on his farm in Mount Vernon. Well to get this, he used to write to his friends about this. Well, the Extension service then provided this link to get this marvelous information out to where it could be applied and then that helps the economy benefit. So I think that's the legacy really of Extension is the marvelous development. Now there've been some bumps along the way, but the basic philosophy I think is still sound. And I might add real quickly, it just occurred to me... You know, the universities and Oregon State is a good example. Actually, have borrowed now the whole Extension concept, which they don't call Extension, they call it advanced learning and extended learning and all this kind of stuff, where all the other schools, not just the College of Agriculture, but the Engineering College, the Pharmacy College, the Forest— the... Veterinaries and all these people, they're extending this information out and having it adapted out in the community, and they're calling it a different thing, but it's basically the Extension concept. So I think it's still strong, it's still a viable part of our economy.

I mentioned the Steak and Chop club to you a number of times, and this goes back to the 30s, when heavy... was it, heavy agriculture orientation in the state legislature... for example, so the Extension Service, the ag interest at OSU and so on, they didn't have any trouble getting their budgets to the state legislature, it was just hold on, they submitted their budget, it passed, no big deal. And at that time, a lot of the Extension administrators and the College of Agriculture administrators were real buddy-buddies toward the power legislators, and they were social friends as well as professional friends. So they used to get together regularly in Portland, they'd meet at the hotels up there and they'd have dinners and parties and poker games and things like this, to be acquainted and keeping track of each other, what their various interests were. And they actually started a club, they called the Steak and Chop club, where they used to meet twice a year and fix the big dinner and did a lot of socializing and they were real close friends as well as being professionally associated. And that had a lot to do with how the Extension Service developed here in the state. But over the years that's gradually diminished, where the orientation is more urban from the legislature and I don't think that ties are as important as they used to be. The current Steak and Chop club of which I'm a member is closing its doors this month, after many, many years of operating because of people, members are less oriented toward the same goals that they had back in those old days, budgeting and that kind of thing.

[1:44:48]

**EU:** You've showed me this big scrapbook that you've inherited and kept up with the Steak and Chop, and how it has some photos and the agendas, but then the signatures... Frank Ballard and all the different members of that club.

**JR:** Right... Well I talked to somebody in the archives at OSU and the club members agreed... I presented this to the club... suggested that we turn this over to the archives. And they were all in favor of this, thought it was a great idea, which I intend to do probably at the end of this month, which is September, '07. So it should be in the hands of the archivist and they can make something of it. They may need some help in identifying some of the people, and the pictures are sometimes... people have thrown photographs in there without identifying who they are. So with some help of some others I might meet with them and help them identify some of those people if they're interested in that.

**EU:** Because I think it's just an excellent record of the... you see this combination of the Extension Service and legislators and just of the whole history of the state.

**JR:** Yeah, they'd be a way to record it. This is where Jean Scheel may come in handy too, he has a little more experience with that group than I, and as I say he's 93 years old, he's been around a little longer, so while he's still lucid and active and interested in things, he could be a big help in doing that. I think it's a marvelous opportunity to celebrate 100 years. It's well deserved. Made lots of friends as an Extension worker, all over the state. Friends that I still have that I treasure these friendships, which I would never have had had I been involved in some other type of work.

And the... one of the things that's not talked about very much but I think is pretty significant about Extension's work throughout the state is that Extension agents are OSU, you know, or Oregon State. And people recognize them as Oregon State and so they're representing the university and they have a great influence on the support that the people in the state give to Oregon State in their various programs. I think a classic example of this is this program where people can donate property or their ranches or whatever to Oregon State, you know, with a living trust sort of thing. And I'm sure that several

of these donors who maybe don't have close relatives who are living or so on are donating this... their substantial property holdings to Oregon State, is a direct reflection on some of the early contacts with OSU through Extension. I know I've had a lot of friends, farmer friends in Madras for example who were strong supporters of 4-H; couple of them served on the 4-H board, the 4-H foundation... well their early association was through the county agent's office, and there's been an indirect support of Oregon State through Extension programs and personal contacts and whether they personally like the agents, the agents like the farmers and the farmers in turn convey the support to OSU.

**EU:** So the impact has been quite significant.

**JR:** Very broad, yeah. Very broad impact I think. And I'm sure it continues. I don't know the agents as well now as I used to of course, but the ones, the new ones I've met are in the same ilk, you know, they're the same go, go, go kind of people and that's encouraging to me to see that continue.

**EU:** Anything else you'd like to add to the conversation?

**JR:** Nothing comes to mind at the moment. Been a pretty broad spectrum here.

**EU:** Okay, well thank you very much.

**JR:** You're welcome.

[1:50:06]