

Hist Analysis  
LOH-78-215.4

The following interview is with Mr. Arnold Berger on June 7, 1978, at his present home outside of the city of Hillsboro. He was born in the year of 1893, which makes him 85 years old at the time of the interview. He talks of the life and times of the Swiss area of Bethany.

Mr. Berger grew up in the predominantly German and Swiss area of northern Washington County. His Father's farm was located in the area known as Bethany. During his younger years, Bethany consisted not of the sea of housing developments as it does today. Just a store, its owner, and a post office comprised what was known as old Bethany. Places such as this, along with the areas of Helvetia and Phillips were just labels for a farming community.

In the first section of the interview, Arnold Berger talks of the German and Swiss settlers and their traditions brought over from Europe. As their ancestors before them, many of the newly arrived Swiss emigrants became dairy farmers, cheese-makers and continued speaking the native language of the old country. Mr. Berger reminisces about a time when farming was a fundamental life style rather than a business as it is today.

In the second half of the tape (track LL) Mr Berger tells of the inception and operation of the Pioneer Fire Insurance Company. Organized by the area farmers themselves in 1883, it provided the members of the community with some measure of security ~~in the event of~~ against the often ~~the~~ totally destructive force of fire. This locally operated insurance firm is a tribute to the people of Washington County.

The story of the Pioneer Insurance Company points to another attribute of the early settlers of the Tualatin Valley. If one man's property was destroyed by fire ~~and~~<sup>many</sup> of the neighbors would join together to help rebuild his home or barn and provide the necessary survival items until the <sup>stricken</sup> family had an opportunity to recover. The Washington County museum has in its collection many of the papers and document from the insurance company donated by Arnold Berger himself.

Therefore, the hour long interview with this long-time county resident provides a many-faceted ~~insight~~ into the rural life of Washington County.

The following interview is with Arnold Berger. <sup>He was</sup> Born 1893 in the Swiss area of Bethany. The interview takes place on June 7, 1978 at his present home outside of Hillsboro. He talks of the history of the area, his people, and their activities.

Lloyd: Hi, good afternoon.

A. Berger: Good afternoon.

Lloyd: First off Why don't you go ahead and introduce yourself, tell <sup>ing</sup> when you were born and where you were born.

A. Berger: Well, I was born on 185th which is now Sommerset West, May 30, 1893.

Lloyd: That is now as the town of Bethany?

A. Berger: It was the Bethany area, It wasn't a town, but it was the Bethany area. It was all farm land, They had a little store about a half mile north, which was Bethany, to us.

Lloyd: That's what Bethany was then, <sup>?</sup> Just a small store?

A. Berger: Just a store, There's not much more yet. Just a little community.

Lloyd: Did anyone live in the town of Bethany?

A. Berger: No, it was just out in the country, just a store and a post office there. That's all there was. Well, of course the store keeper lived there, that's about all, I think. He lived in part of the store.

Lloyd: What kinds of things did they sell at the store, <sup>?</sup> Was it a mercantile type of store?

A. Berger: Yes, mercantile; groceries, little small farm supplies, That was <sup>before</sup> way ~~be~~ for electricity so they had to have coal oil for the lamps and things that was needed in their Times. They didn't sell any gas, They didn't need it, every <sup>with</sup> thing was done ~~by~~ horses.

Lloyd: Is Bethany itself <sup>of</sup> predominantly German ~~immigrant~~? <sup>immigrants?</sup>

A. Berger: Yes it was, German and Swiss. Probably half and half, I don't know.

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Lloyd: Was this a ~~practicular~~ German group that settled here?

A. Berger: Well, I don't think they was a group, ~~there was~~, immigrants come there, and well, if one German or a Swiss was there, they probably knew of them so it ~~(klocked)~~ them there. I think at that time they liked to be among the people who could talk <sup>their</sup> there own language and probably lived the way they did.

Lloyd: Was there still a strong German and Swiss tradition?

A. Berger: Not so much anymore because the old timers are gone, people moved in and out. There's still quite a lot of German and Swiss in there, but they don't hold true anymore. They don't congregate in any ~~one~~ place anymore. You've been over to Somerset West, you know that can't be true.

Lloyd: How about when you were a child?

A. Berger: Well it was pretty much Swiss with a few <sup>others</sup> ~~of us~~ mixed in.

Lloyd: Was the German language and Swiss Language still spoken?

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A. Berger: Oh <sup>yes</sup> ~~yes~~, Not <sup>In</sup> ~~like~~ the church the German language was spoken there until the '20s. When ~~a~~ my folks come there in about 1880, the country was pretty much undeveloped. They had a little piece of ~~land~~ and mostly stumps and timber and brush. Their idea was to clear off the land and raise some hay, and ~~milk~~ some cows. It was mostly a grass field. At that time my Grandpa was a Swiss cheese maker so as soon as they had enough milk he was making Swiss cheese. Which we held a part of it and sold a part of it.

Lloyd: Did a lot of the other Swiss families make the cheese?

A. Berger: Quite a few of them, yes, quite a few of them. Until we got another market for the milk, there wasn't no other market for the milk at that time. Then the condenser in Hillsboro come in and started her off so they sold it to the condenser, ~~for condensed milk.~~

A. Berger: (cont.) Then , oh, about 1910 they started selling the milk to the Portland Market.

Lloyd: Was that quite a time honored tradition, the making of Swiss Cheese among the ,among the Others ?

A. Berger: Among the Swiss. Oh yes.

Lloyd: ~~Do you remember~~, Is that a fond <sup>memory</sup> ~~memory~~ in your child hood, making the Swiss Cheese. ?

A. Berger: Oh Yes, I helped my grandpa make <sup>it</sup> ~~it~~ . Not ~~to~~ much, but I was just a kid. <sub>too</sub>

Lloyd; What was it like making cheese back then?

A. Berger: What was it like?

Lloyd: What was the process?

A. Berger: Well , of course you have to go ahead and take your milk and heat it to a certain point and... well, I don't know just how to tell you how to make it. Heat it to a certain point then you had to stir it and you put in the rennet to give it the curds. When it curds <sup>it is then</sup> and put ~~it~~ in a block or a round cheese. Put it on <sup>a</sup> the press and

→ get the weight on it and then I aged it.

Swiss cheese you had to kind of work to get and kind of salt it every day. Then let it sit about four to six months, until it got what they called ripe. Some of them they got away with two months, but I don't think it was as good as when you ~~age~~ <sup>age</sup> it.

In making Swiss Cheese it's important that you have a good celler, I tried it here my self, but I just had a concrete basement and it was a little too dry , The Tendency was <sup>for The</sup> cheese to get hard. Tasted good, but it wasn't like grandpa made.

Lloyd: Did he bring the recipe over from the old country then?

A. Berger: Yes, him and when they came over they settled in Ohio for five years during that time grandpa was right away making his Swiss cheese, ~~and~~ when they come to Oregon, when he come here, he brought a solid copper kettle from Ohio to make cheese here, which the family, I think, still has. Last I knew it was still there. I remember when I use to help, I use to think it was a great big kettle, ~~and~~ I saw it here about three years ago it wasn't near as big as I thought it was, but it was still a big kettle.

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Lloyd: What are some of the other traditions that were brought over from Switzerland, from the old country? That people clung to or held on to?

A. Berger: Well, of course the Swiss people mostly tended to dairy ~~and~~ <sup>At</sup> least the people who I know. <sup>The</sup> They mostly all lived in the country and they were dairyman. Of course there were a lot of Swiss in Portland. <sup>What</sup> What all they did I don't know. I have a uncle who was a saloon keeper.

Lloyd: ~~Did every family own there own little farm out there in the area?~~  
Did every Swiss family own their own farm?

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A. Berger: Yes, they did here, ~~as~~ <sup>As</sup> far as I know in Switzerland there wasn't any opportunities for them and that's the reason why so many of them come to this country. There was lots of good opportunities here, there was, oh, different ones come here earlier than that and they, <sup>The</sup> new people from Switzerland, they'd come to them. There was one man <sup>in particular,</sup> ~~in particular~~ Sam Siegenthaler. He was a one of the old timers ~~and~~ when they come over they all looked up Sam Siegenthaler ~~and~~ <sup>He</sup> He was <sup>instrumental</sup> instrumental in locating a lot of the <sup>Swiss</sup> first families farms or homes and places. You could hardly call them <sup>Swiss</sup> Swiss.

A. Berger: (cont.) farms at that time, <sup>but</sup> it was a place to live. As far as

I believe he kind of looked out for them, ~~see~~ that they found a place

and helped them out. That's the <sup>way</sup> it went.

Lloyd: Did you know this man before?

A. Berger: What?

Lloyd: Did you know Mr. Siegenthaler?

A. Berger: Not too well, I knew him a little bit.

Lloyd: He must have been quite a generous man then?

A. Berger: Oh, he was. I don't know whether I mentioned to you the Pioneer

~~Insurance~~ <sup>Insurance</sup> Company. He was really the one that started it. It

was a group of German and Swiss that got together for mutual

protection of the farmers ~~and~~ <sup>Down</sup> through the years that the

company was in business it was a kind of carry over from the old

families. ~~When~~ <sup>Yes,</sup> the old man was gone the son took over. <sup>Yes,</sup> he

was a wonderful man. He lived more over in the Cedar Mill area.

Lloyd: Were all the ~~three~~ <sup>all</sup> communities fairly ~~related~~ related; like Bethany,

~~Helvetia~~ <sup>Helvetia</sup> and Cedar Mill? <sup>Cedar</sup>

A. Berger: Well, In away, yes. Because all that area had a lot of Swiss <sup>People</sup>

in it, Swiss and German, so they visit back and forth. Naturally

they ~~were~~ <sup>inter</sup> married and so there was all kind of relationship here.

Lloyd: Did the different families know ~~various~~ <sup>a</sup> families in the area? <sup>?</sup> Were

they rather a close knit group?

A. Berger: They were. A lot of those who was not only one family but maybe

two, three, four families, a lot of relation come all at once. My

grandparents they lived up in ~~Helvetia~~ <sup>Helvetia</sup> and ~~There~~ <sup>T</sup> were three brothers

come and they all brought ~~there~~ <sup>Their</sup> families with them. There ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> still

some of them up here but the most of them passed on and the young ones

scattered here and there, I don't know where they all are.

Lloyd; Do you have much contact with some of the older original people that lived in this area or the Swiss?

A. Berger: Oh I did, yes I had a lot of contact with them. But now there's so few of what I call the old "thimer" I still see them once in awhile. *+imer"*

(40)

Lloyd: What was it like for you growing up on the farm as a young child? Did you have a certain amount of chores? Or was it a care-free life living out on the farm?

A. Berger: Well no, I'd say that when ever there was a family everybody had to do something, everybody had to work. I started milking cows when I was eight years old. My sisters they had to help in the house and some in the fields too. It was different than today, because all we had for power were horses and muscle.

Lloyd: What was it like plowing with a horse?

A. Berger: Oh, I enjoyed it, you didn't get much done, but I use to like to plow. It was relaxing to go out and plow with a team of horses because the horses could only go so fast and you plowed along behind them ~~you'd~~ *you'd* get out to the end and stop and sit down, take a little rest. There was none of the pressure there are ~~nowadays~~ *nowadays* go, go, go.

Lloyd: How would you compare *Team* sitting behind a horse and sitting on a tractor today?

A. Berger: ~~Well~~ *well*.

Lloyd: Which one would you prefer?

A. Berger: Well, today I would have to say I prefer a tractor. In the old days it was a easy, peaceful way of *livin'* ~~live~~. We never had to work more than ten hours a day. *They are* ~~nowadays~~ *nowadays* when ~~their~~ busy with a tractor they work day and night. They haven't got a day anymore. *We*

A. Berger: (cont.) always had a day, we always had a quiet<sup>ing</sup> time. We

Lloyd: always had breakfast time, noontime and an evening time and it was

A. Berger: regular that we had our meals. Now <sup>days</sup> they eat any<sup>time</sup> they can catch some. I'd say with your modern things the way they are now you can't compare it the way it was, to the way it is now. I don't know how to compare it, it's just that different.

Lloyd: How about sitting on the back of a horse team ~~was there~~, you mentioned it was more relaxing. What was the sound you would hear, <sup>?</sup> would you be able to hear the horses <sup>AS</sup> compared to the engine?

A. Berger: Well, actually, there was no noise, just a little creaking or so, but talk about the noise pollution, we didn't have none.

Lloyd: Horses wouldn't make as much noise as tractors.

A. Berger: They didn't make any noise. No, just before, oh, like in the evening, you would get out and the sky would be so clear you could see all the stars and as far as noise was concerned you didn't hear anything except maybe a cow mooing, <sup>a</sup> dog barking, maybe an old wagon creaking down the road, it was peaceful.

(50) Lloyd: Then most of <sup>the</sup> your farmers up there were dairy farmers, or did they also grow grains and things like that?

A. Berger: Well, ~~it was gradually to begin with, you might say that~~ most of them started with a few cows, the ones that made butter sold butter and back about the turn of the century there wasn't much they could do otherwise. Maybe they raised a little grain but very little. As far as recreation and entertainment was concerned <sup>There</sup> was really only two places where the people went much. First of all there was the church. Everybody went to church, and the school was the other, programs at the school and any little doings, that was about as far as people could get with

A. Berger: (cont.) a horse. So we centered pretty much on the church and the school.

Lloyd: Was the area a pretty strong religious community then?

A. Berger: I think so, I would have to say more so than it is now.

Religion

Religion plays a big part today too, but you get so many more

people. I think it use to play an important part in peoples

lives.

Lloyd: Was there main church in the area of Helvetia, ~~that the farmer?~~

A. Berger: No, there was not really any lack of churchs they had the

church in Helvetia, ~~and~~ The Helvetia church and the Philips church were really one congregation, but they had two church buildings.

It was too far to get without the horses so they had <sup>two</sup> buildings,

Not far away was the Methodist church, not far away was <sup>Presbyterian</sup> Presbyterian

church, the Babtist church and over in the Cedar Mills Area was

the Catholic church. There was church<sup>s</sup> there. I believe them

church<sup>s</sup> are all oper<sup>e</sup>ating today, except one over <sup>the</sup> Cedar Mill

area <sup>that</sup> used to be a little Congregational church, I think they

eventually went to the Congregational Church in Beaverton.

Lloyd: You mentioned that the school was a part of the entertainment or recreation, <sup>was</sup> there different events going on ~~at~~ the school?

A. Berger: Yes, <sup>was</sup> there a couple times a year <sup>that</sup> seems they had a play

or a program and at Christmas time always a program and at the

end of school <sup>that</sup> was a program. If there was anything doing in

school everybody went. Probably mainly for your own school but

sometimes you went to the neighboring school too, mostly to

your own school. They had basket socials, its called, <sup>going</sup> so let

your baskets raise a few dollars.

Lloyd; Other than, let's say, the churchs and schools ~~was there,~~

what did the children or young people do for just fun during

Lloyd: (cont.) <sup>Their</sup> there free time? ~~would they?~~

A. Berger: Well, when they got old enough to go to school of course they had ~~there~~ <sup>Their</sup> play time at school and the boys always played ball and the girls, oh some of them played ball too, ~~different~~ things ~~children.~~

Lloyd: Was there like a favorite fishing ~~whole,~~ something like that or a favorite ~~hicking~~ <sup>hiking</sup> trail?

A. Berger: Nope, they got all the ~~hicking~~ <sup>hiking</sup> they wanted when they had to ~~hike~~ <sup>hike</sup> to school. I think families visited other families alot. Get to gether and have dinner, sometimes alot of people would get together. ~~Sometimes~~ <sup>Sometimes</sup> they'd sing or in their homes, they wasn't always gone, it was ~~usually~~ <sup>usually</sup> around the home some place. I think alot of the entertainment they had to make themselves, none of it's furnish<sup>ed</sup> for you much. We use to make our own balls <sup>and</sup> ~~even~~ our own bats. Everybody lived to help themselves.

(60) End track I

Lloyd: Was that?

A. Berger: Because the German and the Swiss the language kept a going and probably a lot of these pioneers couldn't understand any English. Even I wouldn't when I was a little kid, and was born here when I went to school I couldn't speak a word of English, so I spoke Swiss. The company kept growing.

Lloyd: Mr. Stegachaler was the driving force behind the formation of the company then?

A. Berger: Yes, Jacob Wimmer, Oelke, Simpson and Higgins here was the five men that was on the board, the first board. They were the ones that got the company started.

Lloyd: Do you think it was because of their concern for their fellow farmers

Lloyd: You mentioned the a Pioneer Insurance Company, I'm interested in that, especially since the museum has many of the documents from the company. Maybe you could start out by just giving a little history of how that began and why it start and the need for ~~for~~ for insurance companies.

A. Berger: Well, I think it started when your insurance companies started. At that time it was called the German Insurance Company and it was started because of the need for farmers to have insurance. It catered altogether for the farmers, and ~~had there been some major fire that precipitated~~

Lloyd: Had there been some major fire that precipitated the founding of the insurance company?

A. Berger: I can't say there was but there seemed to be a need for insurance for the farmers. I could do better by reading it:  
" It was organized 1883 , It was until about 1920 all records were kept in German language.

Lloyd: Why was that?

A. Berger: Because the German and the Swiss the language kept a going and probably a lot of these pioneers couldn't understand any English. Even I wouldn't when I was a little kid, and <sup>J</sup> was born here when I went to school I couldn't speak a word of English, so I spoke Swiss. The company kept growing.

Lloyd: Mr. Siegenthaler was the driving force behind the formation of the company then?

A. Berger: Yes, <sup>him,</sup> Jacob Wismer, <sup>3</sup> Callas, Simpson and Higgins here was the five men that was on the board, the first board. They were the ones that got the company started.

Lloyd: Do you think it was because of their concern for their fellow farmers

Lloyd:(cont) that they were the ones?

A.Berger: Yes, The insurance didn't cost much and the values weren't very big. If you had a house that was worth a thousand dollars, that was one of the bigger ones. So many of the policies were written for maybe \$500.00, \$600.00, \$800.00 and they insured farm property, cattle and horses. The rate was very, very cheap I think alot of them only payed about a dollar or two for the total insurance that they carried. In looking through some of the records I had before I think \$10.00 per years was about the biggest premium any of them payed.

Lloyd: Did your family have insurance through the company also?

A.Berger: Oh yes, yes my father was on the board of directors for many years, too. It was a kind of hand me down affair, the old man couldn't do it any more <sup>so</sup> the son took over and it went that way until the end. The insurance <sup>would</sup> continued until that October storm,

Lloyd: You mentioned you insured horses and cows, in the event of what? Them running off, or what?

A.Berger: In case of fire, this was pretty strictly just a fire insurance. In the winter time the cattle were in the barns and some of those barns burned and if there's nobody there to turn the cattle out the cattle burnt too.

Lloyd: Well, were there times when, do you remember any particular times when there was a big fire and some ones' barn burnt and the insurance company came to help them?

A.Berger: Oh yes, I was <sup>always</sup> ~~always~~ one of the lucky ones, I never had any fire. There was many people who lost a house or barn and they would give them some money to go ahead and rebuild <sup>again</sup> ~~again~~. I know when you picture rebuilding <sup>now</sup> ~~these days~~ things are so costly <sup>nowadays</sup>

A. Berger: (cont.) that when you think about a feller had to build a house that cost a thousand, fifteen hundred dollars that was a place to live. It wasn't all that good but it was a place to live.

Lloyd: They could build a house, a new home on the money they received from the insurance?

A. Berger: Well, probably not quite ~~but~~ because the insurance company never payed more than three-fourths the value. So they couldn't completely rebuild a new home with what they got. In that day money was scarce, you just didn't have money to play with.

Lloyd: Do you remember a particular time when a families home and barn burnt and that the money they received from the insurance really helped them out, that set them back on their feet?

A. Berger: Well, I think that happened lot of times, I don't recall any one where they lost the house and the barn at the same time. I remember a lot of houses that burned also a lot of barns that burned.

Lloyd: Was that quite common then, for barn or houses to catch on fire?

A. Berger: Well, yes it was because of heating, they all heated with wood and they'd have wood fires and bad chimneys and first thing you had a fire. No fire department and also no cars to run around with. If you saw a fire two miles away there it was luck to get on time to get there. But it is true if anybody saw smoke or saw somebody had a fire everybody went to see whether they could help. Sometimes they could help and sometimes it was too far gone, They couldn't do nothing. That was a pretty common practice. When ever you saw a fire you went to help.

Lloyd: How about during the rebuilding, Did the neighbors also help in the rebuilding?

A. Berger: Quite much so, yes. I remember different times people go and help rebuild together. Probably not in money but in labor, lot of labor was donated. If they lost a house or if they lost a lot of <sup>The</sup> contents people kind if shared with them, gave them a little bedding, a little furniture, some kitchen ware or something.

Lloyd: Do you think that was because the Swiss were such a close knit community then, <sup>?</sup> The Swiss and Germans were so well known among each other?

A. Berger: Well, I wouldn't just want to say the Swiss and German only, because they would do it no matter who was there, It was like somebody had the hard luck, the house burned down they didn't only help the Swiss and Germans, they helped those too. That was just part of living in those days.

Lloyd: You think that's changed, <sup>?</sup> You think that's different from today then?

A. Berger: I don't know, what do you think? I think it is. There's a certain amount of help, but first of all, living out here in the country you don't know as many of your <sup>neighbors</sup> neighbors anymore. Not like you used to. <sup>(30)</sup> You used to know everybody for miles around and they knew who lived there. Now they move in and move out before you get acquainted with them. So I think it was more so in the old days than it is today.

Lloyd: Well, I think you've ~~alluded~~ <sup>alluded</sup> to this but what eventually happened to the insurance company?

A. Berger: Well, the insurance company was a local insurance company, All they had was the State of Oregon ~~and~~ they was concentrated in the Willamette Valley. Then in 1962 with that October storm come, ~~the area where the Pioneer Mission Insurance Company~~ <sup>and</sup> was, ~~and~~ all there insurance. At that time I think it was 90%

A. Berger: (cont.) of the buildings had damage from that storm and ~~there~~ <sup>their</sup> reserves weren't great enough to pay all the claims <sup>really</sup> or at least the insurance commission didn't think so. I being on the board, we went to the insurance <sup>commissioner</sup> ~~commission~~ <sup>he'd</sup> hoping he'd tell us how to get some help. So he turned right around and in two days he came down there and closed us up, started liquidating the company. But in the end even after the forced sale of all the stuff they had, in the end they still payed out 83% of all the claims. So we wasn't hurting as bad as he thought ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> was. I think if he'd played along with us and given us a little help that wouldn't need to happen, I still believe that today too.

Lloyd: What was the damage like for the members of the insurance companies on there farm and houses? Was it ~~total~~ <sup>total</sup> damage?

A. Berger: Some of them were close, they were just complete wrecks and some of them had the roofs blown off. In the houses especially, there wasn't to many houses that didn't have some damage to the roof and the barns too, some of them were completely destoryed and some probably the roof or a side caved in or something.. There wasn't only one or two there was just lot of them, everbody ~~part~~ <sup>pretty</sup> near. ~~pretty~~ <sup>near</sup>.

Lloyd: So what took the place of the ones that ~~dissolved~~ went bankrupt? Where did the farmers turn to then, the ones that belonged to it?

A. Berger: They went to other insurance companies, some ~~of our~~ <sup>other</sup> company was probably covered in several states, where they wasn't hit like we was, because we were localized ~~made~~ in the Willamtte Valley. We thought that there was other insurance companies around, mutual insurance companies; Oregon Mutual, Sublimity Company, the Butefield? Umpqua? <sup>SP</sup> ~~It was~~ <sup>ONE</sup> We was trying to get help from them, but they was also hit hard so at the time

A. Berger: (cont.) they didn't know what they could do either so consequently we couldn't find anybody to help. At first when you look back you can see the whole picture, at that time you couldn't see the thing. That way one of the bigger companies could have helped, us, if they could have seen a little far ahead. But I guess that was the way it was suppose to be. The Pioneer Company did a good service for the farmers of Washington County and the Willamete Valley for about 80 years so maybe the time ran out. Those that I mentioned, the insurance companies, not all in business anymore. They've consolidated with others which we also tried to do before the wind storm but we didn't quite get it done soon enough.

Lloyd: I would like to change topics here a little bit, you grew up in the Bethany, Helvetia area but then you moved out here. When and why did you move out to this part of the county?

A. Berger: Well, as population increases they can't all fit in the same spot, wouldn't move quite awhile, some of them had to get out some place. So anyway we bought this piece of land out here. I wanted to farm too. Anyway with Dad's help I started here. Started in here with 80 acres and there wasn't a building on the place, so we started from scratch. First, we built a small barn. Built a house and next year or so we planted trees. Oh, we raised a few potatoes, milked a few cows. We made it.

Lloyd: What year did you buy the farm? What years did you purchase it?

A. Berger: In 1919.

Lloyd: Well, what was it like when they built the Sunset Highway out here?

Was that quite a big event, quite a big construction?

A. Berger: Oh yes, it was, ~~was~~ The farmers didn't really like it. I had 80 acres here and there was really no position where it could have been all in one field. They went kitty corner from one to

INSERT  
SPACE

INSERT  
SPACE

45) A. Berger: (cont.) have been all in one field. They went kitty-corner through from one corner to the other broke the land up in triangles. We wasn't too happy about it, but as time went by of course it increased in values and made better transportation and so I guess it didn't hurt us too much.

Lloyd: Did the traffic noise bother you much when they built that?

A. Berger: No, I 've gotten use to it, although I do notice it if I get someplace where it's really quiet, you don't hear any traffic noise, I do notice.

Lloyd: How long did it take them to build the highway then?

A. Berger: Well I think that they were, It was about 1940, I think is, when they first started the surveys and said they was going to build a highway and I think it was about 1945 or 1946 they actually started building it. The two lanes were open to traffic in 1948 and they just made it four lane I think about 1965, Im not sure about that, but I think it was in 1965. looking your

(50) Lloyd: Over ~~lookin~~ your land, here are the "five oaks." and you were explaining a little bit here before I turned the recorder on, about them. Maybe you can tell the story about them, What <sup>was</sup> the significance of those trees ~~and~~ <sup>were</sup> and what they were used for?

A. Berger: Well, ~~the~~ them oaks are even before my time, During my time there's been nothing much about the Five Oaks except the <sup>Historians' interest,</sup> ~~story of them.~~ <sup>oaks</sup> They marked the oak, the back of one of the ~~oaks~~ with a historical <sup>marker</sup> center. In the old pioneer days when the old pioneer were there, that was kind of a simple meeting place for them. I guess they use to call it the "Old Rocky Mountain Retreat"<sup>a</sup>

A. Berger: (cont) ~~Am~~ They'd get together there for all kinds of meetings and the Fourth of July celebrations. There was one Fourth of July celebration, I was told, they had two hundred whites, but they also had a thousand Indians.

Lloyd: Where they the only Oak trees in the area then?

A. Berger: They were the only big ones right in the area. Of course there were other trees around but for some reason that was the ~~central~~ meeting place. ~~They used to go to~~ <sup>Central</sup> when they had to take anybody into Portland, and go to Portland to get <sup>their</sup> ~~there~~ supplies with <sup>with</sup> ~~there~~ horses and wagons they use to come as far as Five Oaks and then stay over night there. That was from out in Banks and that ~~area~~ <sup>area</sup> out that way and then the next day they would go to Portland and sell what they had or buy up what they ~~ne~~ needed. Then they would come back as far as the five <sup>oaks</sup> ~~oaks~~, stay over night and then the next day go <sup>The</sup> rest of the way home.

Lloyd: How about when you were young? Did people have any kind of celebration?

A. Berger: Not here at the <sup>Oaks</sup> ~~Oaks~~, I can't remember any celebration under the <sup>Oaks</sup> ~~Oaks~~ any of the time I lived here.

Lloyd: <sup>Again</sup> ~~Again~~ the Columbus Day storm did a lot of damage to a lot of different things, Did the big storm destroy alot of these trees then, <sup>?</sup> ~~or some of the trees?~~

A. Berger: In alot of areas it destroyed a lot of trees and plants by uprooting them, some just by <sup>braking</sup> ~~brakeign~~ them off and some of them by just <sup>breaking</sup> ~~brakeing~~ all the limbs off. There was an awful, awful lot of timber damage.

Lloyd; To the Five <sup>Oaks</sup> ~~Oaks~~ especially was there some damage?

A, Berger: Well not any more so than otherwise, I don't think. There

A. Berger: (Cont.) use to be a grove of Ash down along this swale here the full <sup>length</sup> ~~length~~ of the fence which ~~is~~ a half a mile and they were up, oh, I would say as high as 150 feet and when that October storm come, I stood out there and watched. It was just like some <sup>one</sup> ~~one~~ come there and just like that, layed them down. But the first gust only took the upper half and so I thought well at least I've got half them left. <sup>A</sup> few minutes later another gust come and took the rest. They were on the brittle side and wasn't able to stand it. It just really took them. There was alot of them. There was nothing to do but get in ~~their~~ <sup>there</sup> ~~and~~ and salvage what wood we could out of there and clear it up.

(40) Lloyd That's about all the questions I have unless you would like have any closing remarks on farming or the communities in general compared with yesterday and today. Have you enjoyed your 85 years ~~on~~ on the farm?

A. Beger: Oh sure, yes I had a good life, we worked hard and we had lots of good times and I wouldn't change them all.

Lloyd: Thank you for your ~~contribution~~ <sup>contribution</sup> to the Oral History program.