

Gathering Our Voice

Interview: Paul Hinderer

Interviewed by: Nancy Warner

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Transcribed by: Kristi Roberts, AmeriCorps Volunteer

NW: This is Nancy Warner and I'm here with Paul Hinderer and the date is March the 7th, 2011. And we're at Paul and Lois's home on a beautiful spring day.

PH: It is nice.

NW: And we're going to talk about the "Foodways and Byways" project with a focus on the Douglas community as part of the Douglas Community Historical Association Project for *Gathering Our Voice*. So with that, I think I'll ask you again, Paul, just to state your full name.

PH: Well, my full name is Paul Norbert Hessler Hinderer. That's on my birth certificate.

NW: And you were telling me before I started the interview that for many, many, many years you were known by Paul but that was never an official name on your birth certificate.

PH: Yes that's right. So I got the name changed through the court, which was much easier than trying to change all the records that I had accumulated for the first 40, 50 years of life.

NW: Wow. So I don't quite understand how that happened. You're a twin and you said that your twin brother's name is John.

PH: Yes.

NW: He wasn't legally John and you weren't legally Paul.

PH: No. He was Norman. Ernest Norman I believe it was. Anyway, we finally got our names straightened out.

NW: Well, so why did they start calling you Paul when your name was Norbert?

PH: Well, both of 'em. I had an uncle Norbert and I had an uncle Paul. So I don't know.

NW: Oh, okay. Just one of those mysteries, huh? So how long have you and your family lived in the Douglas-Waterville area?

PH: Well, my dad came here in 1907. He came out on the Great Northern Railroad as an employee and they stopped at Spokane and then from there he came to Waterville and took up farming. That was quite a switch from what he was used to because a PK – a preacher's kid. He was a minister in Watertown. I think it was South Dakota was the first place. And then they went to Red Wing and in that area kind of. And then after that when he got to be – let's see 1907 – he would've been 20 years old I believe. So he came out here and then he was able to get some land and started farming. Then the Depression hit, 'cause he was rather prosperous and buying some

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ground helped the neighbors farming and then the Depression hit. And a little bit of crookedness through the real estate agents in the town of Waterville. He sued and won the law suit, but he lost the crops for 10 years basically, because the economy was too poor to have a jury trial. So he had to wait 8 years and in those 8 years they didn't give you damages. So he got his money back that he got for the land. It wasn't quite paid yet when the Depression hit. He got his money back, but he didn't get the benefit of the crops. 1937 the Kansas area blew out. And wheat went up and skyrocketed by standards today to one dollar per bushel. But he didn't have a crop because he didn't have his land back.

NW: Oh my goodness.

[5:00] PH: And so then he went ahead and bought... He was on NWPA, which was well [laughs], he said it was pretty hard to take. Then he – this is what I heard him sayin' because I, '37, I was only 4 years old – but he said that he was working, surveying some land and that one of the people at the bank that owned said “why don't you buy that?” He said, “I have no money.” And they said, “If you can scrape a down-payment that's all we ask and that was the [?] bank. I don't remember exactly where they were located. But anyway, he bought a section of land that was 640 acres. And got it for – I think – 7 dollars an acre. Well, it has been very good to the family. Dad had a little problem. He bought this section and it had a crop on it. The guy that was farming it stole half of my dad's share. So that would've been ¼ of the crop. And dad knew there should've been more wheat. And that fellow he told dad how much wheat there was. It was sacked so he knew how many sacks there were. But he says “I don't wanna be drug into anything like this.” So dad didn't sue on that because he had the land then. But that was a few extra dollars that, at that time, was rough to take, loosin' it. So then he went ahead and he had one quarter of land out by Farmer – 3 miles west of Farmer where the old quarry is. He was just across the line. He had a quarter there and that kind of sustained him through the Depression. He didn't have any equipment and all that because he lost all that. But he had leased it to another farmer. And so he then bought another piece of land on Badger Mountain. And he had a few cows and all that. And we all worked together and by workin' together when we got to be of an age that we would farm he had a foundation for us. Well, it wasn't enough for the three boys, myself and my two brothers, but the foundation was there so we could build on it. And so we went ahead and bought an old used tractor. Well, back up a little bit. My dad when he bought the second piece of land on Badger Mountain he farmed that 300 acres and then he had enough ground up there for 20 cows so he had a little herd of cattle and the tractor he bought was at a garage sale up on [?] flat where he had the piece of ground he bought for seven dollars an acre. And he bought an old caterpillar tractor and that was gas. And that's what I learned to drive on and it was a nice riding tractor compared to... And when we took over farming we bought an RD-4 from Louie Brandt and it was a 1937 tractor and they were not as nice of riding as that old tractor that was built at the end of the '20s or '30's, but it was a gas hog. And then, of course, when the war broke out – World War II – if you didn't really have any machinery you just practically had to scrounge around some of the machinery that farmers had quit using and use that. And this '30 tractor it did the job over on this side. Of course dad used it in conjunction with horses because during the '40s gas was hard to come by and he stretched his money as much as he could by using horses as well as

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the tractor. And then the piece that he over on Shin Flat, he had leased that to my uncle. And my uncle and dad had bought a tractor together and then they kind of split up their partnership. So my uncle took the tractor and my dad bought that 30 Cat then. And the tractor was about a 1940 TD9 International. So we used to go up there and we'd shock hay. He had a hay patch up there that was to provide the hay for the cattle. It was very difficult to cut because it grew so lush and rank.

NW: This was on Badger Mountain?

PH: Yeah.

[10:00] NW: And where abouts on Badger Mountain was that? Was it close to John Ruud?

PH: No. It's up McGuinees canyon. Right now they call it Badger Mountain Road. It was about a mile off of Badger Mountain Road, west of that. And right now... Then we bought from a neighbor – he and his wife were getting divorce – and so my older brother says, “Well you know, money is easier to divide than land. You wanna sell it?” And he said, “Yeah. I'll sell it.” And so my brothers and I bought this piece and right now there are some white navigational domes that track different satellites in the sky and if you've got their chip they say they can tell ya within 15 feet of where you are. So anyway, now we actually come up against Badger Mountain Road.

NW: I know where you are. Yeah. I can picture that. So that land on Badger Mountain was owned by your uncle Paul?

PH: No. Uncle Paul never owned any land. He leased all the time.

NW: So that was owned by your dad?

PH: Yeah.

NW: So then there was that out at Farmer that he owned. And then there was this land that we're on that's close to Waterville? It was this land the he was not able to show that it was his for 10 years?

PH: No. That was the piece of land that he had out by Supplee. So he went to church at Withrow. He was about 6 miles from Withrow and about 6 miles from Douglas. And then in 1915, I believe it was, they built the Douglas church and he helped build that.

NW: Oh, okay. I want to talk about that, too. But can we back up a little bit? I want to make sure I understand this chronology right. First of all, could you tell me – your dad came here in 1907 from Watertown, South Dakota and you said that were you born in 1933?

PH: I was born in 1933, Labor Day. I'm a Labor Day baby.

NW: Oh, okay. So September the...?

PH: Fifth.

NW: Okay. 1933. And when your dad came here he was a preacher's kid, a PK. I've never heard that before. A Lutheran PK. And so he came with no experience in farming, but why did he come here. Was it advertisements that he saw?

PH: I don't know. I think it was that he liked the country and he came out with the Great Northern and I think somebody said that you could land in Douglas County, so he came on out.

NW: And was he married then or did he meet your mother here?

PH: No. My mom taught school at Douglas and she – of course the church was right there – and she met my dad at the church. So they hit it off and they got married. I think they got married around 1925.

NW: And what was your dad's name, Paul?

PH: Emmanuel Paul.

NW: Manuel?

PH: E-mmanuel. God be with us.

NW: And then your mom?

PH: Was Melinda. I don't think I know her middle name. Melinda Hintz was her maiden name.

NW: Hintz?

PH: Hintz. H-I-N-T-Z.

NW: Oh, okay. So she was a teacher at Douglas and that's where they met and they met because he was helping to build the church at that time?

PH: No. The church was already built. It was built in 1915 and she only taught there a couple of years. In fact, one of her students just died here I think two days ago. It was Glen Rinker. And Harvey Rinker still lives at Douglas, which is a brother to Glen. And my mom I can remember as a kid because as we got to be teenagers Glen worked on our equipment, repaired some of the engines and stuff. And my mom would always say, "He was the nicest kid I ever knew." She just... I don't know what took place or all that but he was a small kid there. And she said he was just such a good kid.

NW: Just early on he could tell he was just always going to be a really nice person.

PH: And he was.

NW: How old was he when he died.

PH: 95 I believe.

[15:00] NW: Oh good. So he had a good, long life. Okay so you came into the world on Labor Day in 1933 and then you have made a living over the years. I know farming. Are there other things that you did? Were you in the service?

PH: I was only in the Army Reserves. My brothers, John and Mark, they each did 2 years active duty. And then when they went in the draft board was real good. They said, "Now we won't take you all at one time." Because Dad was quite a bit older and he couldn't handle the farm and all that. So they took one at a time. And I thought, oh I'm next. I might as well get a little longevity so I joined the reserves. They never drafted me. I took my physical for the Korean War and my older brother went in then, but he didn't see any fighting. And then my twin brother went in when he came home. Then I figured I'd probably be going in then, which was the '60s, early '60s. And they didn't ever draft me.

NW: And so you've been here in Douglas County your whole life?

PH: Yeah, other than going to college.

NW: And where did you go to college?

PH: Pacific Lutheran.

NW: Oh good. I didn't know that. Oh that must've been wonderful.

PH: Well, yeah. I was a little too much of a redneck for city life, though. We pulled some stunts as students that was stupid, but...

NW: Memorable.

PH: Yeah [laughs].

NW: Were you part of a corps, part of a group that was from eastern Washington?

PH: No. I was there by myself.

NW: Oh, okay. Well, that's neat that you were able to go.

PH: Yeah, my folks wanted me to go and I think the whole college experience for one whole year was \$900 – room and board and books and tuition. Look at it today.

NW: Yeah, it's such a reasonable number, isn't it? Oh, gosh. Everybody could go. So did you tell me, are you in the middle of your brothers? Are you the oldest?

PH: No, I'm the youngest. 30 minutes younger than my middle brother.

NW: Right! Who lives here in the area?

PH: Yeah, he lives just a mile from me.

NW: Oh, okay. So it'll be nice to meet him sometime.

PH: Well, he was down at Douglas sittin' across from you that night.

NW: Your brother? Oh! I didn't realize that. Okay.

PH: Yeah, and when he was in the service he met a gal over there and then she came over here and they got married. So he got married about 5 ½ years before I did.

NW: Oh, okay. So I want to talk a little about farming and how your dad learned to farm. What did he tell you as you were growing up and he was teaching you about farming? What did he tell you about how he learned?

PH: I don't think... I guess trial and error was the main thing, but I don't think he ever did err too much. He was quite a conversationalist really, for his time, because he would not burn the stubble off the land when that was the thing to do. And I think he said the state college recommended that you burn your stubble. Well, then you get erosion so bad. And the field that he had during those years that he didn't burn the stubble – they're still some of the higher producing ground out in that area. And that was the field that he lost. And we had bought some ground out in that area and you can just about tell who didn't take care of the ground because the production.

NW: Who burned and who didn't. Well, that's interesting. That was a long time ago.

[20:00] PH: And it even paid off, because it was in the – I think – late '60s, my wife and I were sitting at the table eating supper and we had an awful wind. And you could just see the soil up in the air out there by Farmer. Finally I said to Lois, "I gotta get out there. I want to see how bad our ground is blowing." And that year was kind of dry too, drier than normal. And we had used our crawler tractor to farm the ground rather than the wheel tractor because a crawler didn't pulverize the soil near as much. And you went slower and you didn't break up the soil. So we went out there and it got worse and worse the further east we got. We got to our field and it was just like the wind had stopped, no soil comin' off it.

NW: That must've been gratifying.

PH: It was. Yeah. And then we went about another mile east and we could hardly see the road.

NW: So that's because you dad never burned it so it had more organic matter in the soil?

PH: Well, dad had never farmed this piece but he taught us you don't burn your straw. And we even had the chance to sell the straw. Somebody offered to bale it and we said no. Yeah, we could use the extra money but that straw protects the ground. And so you gotta be prepared for these types of events. You can't fix 'em while the wind is blowing. So by keeping the straw on the ground and the careful way you farm it and, later on, a couple years after we bought it, we built 3 dams on it. It's a major drainage ditch. And I like to teach people. I say, "Yeah the trouble with that dam is we lost our ditch, because the neighbors filled it up with silt."

NW: It was sediment trap. That's what you build.

PH: Yeah. That's what the dams are for. They call 'em debris basins now. At that time they called 'em dams. And then the benefit is the creeks aren't full of silt. You don't get your estuaries at the bottom of the creeks by the river where you don't want the silt anyway.

NW: Oh okay. Good for you. Can we go out and see that sometime when the weather is nicer. I'd love to do a field trip with the group. It'd be nice to go out there to see it.

PH: Oh yeah. It's right on the road, the big dam out there. We got a 3 foot culvert through there and one year the runoff was pretty heavy. Well that's the year that our ditch got filled in and it went through the culvert and the county has a bridge that's maybe a couple feet from the dam. And if that dam hadn't been in there that bridge would've washed out, because the dam backed up enough water and only 3 feet of water could come through at one time, but it backed it up quite a ways and that water was just right underneath the bridge. And then, of course, by the time evening came that freezing weather and that, the pond area backed it and the bridge was okay.

NW: That's neat.

PH: And we've done a lot of dam work. In fact the place we live on now had a ditch about 600 feet long and the place where the culvert came along the county road, I couldn't even touch the culvert when I stood in the ditch. Now when I stand in the ditch, I got to bend over to look into the culvert. And so, I lost a good 600 feet of ditch there. And now I can farm the field in one piece instead of having to go into this little 2 acre corner and turn around and farm that and come out. I can just farm right up to it.

NW: And you're referring to the land right out by the house here?

PH: Yeah.

NW: Do you have different names that you use to describe different pieces of your farm?

PH: Oh yeah.

NW: What do you call this place?

PH: This is the Ogle Place.

NW: Ogle Place. Okay.

PH: And if you could interview Lloyd, he could probably tell you quite a bit about this place.

NW: Lloyd Ogle?

PH: Yeah. He had a three brothers – or two brothers, and three sisters. There's six in the family and right – I think you can see it – there's a cistern. You gotta look just to the left of that gap in the trees. You'll see a little mound up in the field and that's where they used to pump the water from the field. And you can look right there and see the windmill.

NW: Oh, sure.

[25:00] PH: And one day I was working on the well and I saw his older brother. He says, "Well, what are you doing?" And I said, "Oh, I'm pulling a few mice outta the well." "Oh!" he says, "for the joys of country living!" And they just had a bunch of boards over the top and he says, "But you're lucky. When I was a kid we had to pull 'em outta the well then we had to go up to the cistern and pull 'em out."

NW: So you call this the Ogle Place and this is what you and Lois bought when you first got married?

PH: Actually before we got married, but we knew we were getting married. So I think we bought it in May. And we moved in next April. And we were married November 18th of '65 and we moved in April of '66 because I had a job on the coast. I worked for her cousin in a bakery.

NW: Oh! What bakery? Do you remember?

PH: Seattle English Muffin Company.

NW: I just recently met a friend of Walt Marilyn's – a guy that spent his career working for the Gai Bakery?

PH: Well see, Gai's bought them out. They weren't union – and this gets into politics I guess you could say with the way the unions are striking right now. Lois's cousin hired me in September with me to go to work the 10th of October. Well, then they had a vote. There was agitation with them becoming union. They became union the first of October. Then I got over there. "You can't work here. You don't belong to the union." I went to the union. "You can't join the union. You gotta have a job first." I said, "Wait a minute. I had a job. The boss hired me to go to work the 10th of October. You didn't go union till October 1st but I was already hired back in September."

So I said, "You gotta take me." And I guess they agreed with me because then they let me to join the union and I could work at the bakery.

NW: Oh okay. So you were over there. Did you and Lois meet at school? At Pacific?

PH: No. I had a cousin that lived across the street from them. And I asked her out one time. I don't know if this should be part of the record or not [laughs].

NW: It's up to you.

PH: And I asked her out. I wasn't too good with talking to young ladies. I think I was about 26 and she was just too good looking to keep that date. We don't use that other word which has nasty connotations. So I didn't show up for the date. So I called her up the next day to apologize and that was like running into a buzz saw. So then about 4 years later I heard she was single. So I thought I'd ask her out again and this time I kept it. And I think the only reason she went with me the second time was she wanted to tell that Claude off in person.

NW: Oh that's funny! That's a different kind of a courtship. Worked out though, worked out fine. So let me ask you this – when you and Lois came here in the 60s and this became your home, were you then out on the farm at Supplee?

PH: No. That was lost in 1930.

NW: Okay, so where did you actually grow up farming?

PH: Well, I grew up in town but we went out with dad.

NW: Okay.

[30:00] PH: And we could pick up rocks in the field. And we didn't mind picking up the rocks. And dad didn't make us pick up the great big ones. He took care of them. And yeah, we did quite a lot of work. I got kicked off the football team when I was a freshman because I had to help dad get the seeding done, fall seeding. The coach he says, "Well, you're missing a lot of practices." And I said, "Yes." And he said, "You miss anymore and you're off the team." I said, "I have one more day that I have to work." He said, "Turn in your uniform."

NW: Oh my! That was hard. So this land then, you lived in Waterville and then you would go farm out at Supplee?

PH: No, not Supplee because Supplee was lost.

NW: Oh, it was lost. The whole thing was lost in the '30s. Okay. So where was the land that you were working growing up?

PH: Well, we didn't work on Shin Flats until 1949, so by that time I was 16 years old.

NW: What was the name again? Flat?

PH: With Shin Flats. They had most of the land back in there.

NW: Oh okay. And then you had that land back up on Badger Mountain?

PH: Over at this end. Shin Flats is part of Badger Mountain too but that is the east end and this is on this end.

NW: I'm sorry if I'm getting a little confused about the sequence of these things, but earlier you started to talk about the church and Douglas and your dad's connection to that. Could you tell me about that?

[30:00] PH: Well, I just know that he helped build it and that's where he went to church and when he went to Waterville he went to the... Well, they didn't have a Lutheran Church back in Waterville when he first moved in. And then they organized a Lutheran Church here in Waterville and so we went there. And we would bounce. But the Waterville Church and the Douglas Church had the same minister, which meant that one would be earlier than the other so he could preach at both places. And we'd sometimes go to Douglas and they were still pretty much intermingled.

NW: So what kind of things did he tell you about building the church at Douglas?

PH: Well, a guy by the name of Puffert, I believe it was, built it and I don't remember too much about it. Everybody pitched in and worked. And, of course, they had horses to dig out the basement, which then I guess they had rocks. The basement is about 4 feet down and the windows are from there up. And you're familiar with the basement, so you know about what I'm talking about.

NW: Kind of a low ceiling. It's a little bit close, but not bad. So it's built on solid rock. The church sits on solid rock.

PH: I think pretty much so.

NW: Wow. Okay.

PH: Then since my brothers and I have been farming we bought a quarter that sits about a ½ mile from that church up there. The Nelsons farm it.

NW: The Nelsons out at Lamoine?

PH: Yeah.

NW: That's the main Nelsons in Douglas County, in Lamoine? I think there are some others.

PH: Yeah, I think so. The land actually belonged to a minister and I don't know exactly how he got it. I remember him very well, Reverend Brighman. And he owned that land and when it came up for sale I don't know why the Nelsons didn't buy it, but they didn't.

NW: So you did.

PH: Yeah.

NW: So that's pretty close to Douglas Creek then?

PH: The beginning of it.

NW: Oh, nice.

PH: In fact, I think a little bit of it runs through the corner of it.

NW: Oh, great. So what year did you say the church was built in?

PH: 1915.

NW: 1915. So your dad came here in 1907. He helped build the church in 1915 and then it was a little while later when he met your mom, when she was teaching at Douglas.

PH: Yeah.

NW: And so, had she come from the coast? I know you told me that.

PH: No, she came from Minnesota.

NW: Oh, she's the one from Minnesota. Okay.

PH: She grew up in Keister, Minnesota, which is 5-7 miles from the Iowa border.

NW: Oh, so way, way east. And what was her maiden name?

PH: Melinda – and I almost think – Melinda Hence.

NW: Hence. I wrote that down. So that's German?

PH: Yes. Well my dad, when he wanted to make her mad he'd call her a *Pole*.

NW: Oh, that's right. You mentioned that one night down at the church. He probably didn't want to do that too often.

[35:00] PH: No. I think he learned.

NW: [laughs] So back to the church – could you tell me about some of your favorite memories of the church?

PH: Oh, we used to walk from Waterville to Douglas for Sunday school. And we enjoyed the walking. There was a lot of beer bottles along the road and we tried to see who could hit the beer bottle first with a rock. That was the main thing, I guess. And they had a little lake there, it's a hay field now. It was drained years later, but that was a little shallow lake, maybe a couple feet deep if that. We used to have church picnics out there. And then we had what they called Luther League. We'd go ice-skating on the lack and stuff like that. They had a ball field out there. It's just your social stuff was so much different than what we know today. So you got acquainted with the kids that were close. Of course, you had a few fights, but that was just part of the culture.

NW: Tested yourself against each other a little bit. So how many kids would walk from Douglas to Waterville each day?

PH: Not too many. I guess my brother and I. I don't remember if Greg Whitman walked with us or not. We'd just walk. It'd be a beautiful day and instead of waiting for Waterville, we'd walk to Douglas.

NW: Good for you. It's a good 3 mile walk, isn't it?

PH: 5.

NW: Oh 5! Is it 5? So you'd get up early!

PH: I guess so.

NW: So what kind of things did you see on the way besides beer bottles?

PH: Oh, you'd see a few pheasants and a few Hungarian partridges and once in a while a deer. But it was just such a nice walk. And if we'd dilly dally and miss Sunday school there'd usually be a couple we knew, Bill Dalky, which is one of the older couples in town, he'd stop and pick us up so that we'd at least get part of the Sunday school and our parents would see that we made it. [laughter]

NW: Because how would they be getting there? Would they drive?

PH: Yeah, at that time they had an old 1946 Ford pickup, because you didn't... When the war started, that's what you had. And it's just like I said, everything stopped for 10 years. The first refrigerator I can remember my mom having is in 1950, because a lot of things became available in that year. And dad was able to buy a new car, a Chevrolet power [?], automatic transmission in

cars then. And we were farming then, so my brothers and I bought a new Ford pickup, 1700 dollars [laughs]. And then we also bought, my brothers and I, a brand new combine. Because 1950 was our first crop. I mean, we paid for that stuff. You can't do that today.

NW: Right. You paid cash, you mean.

PH: No, we didn't pay cash. But when the harvest was over we had enough money to pay for the equipment. Dad paid cash for his car. But it was a good price and in '52 we bought a piece of ground that dad had on the mountain. We bought a piece that guy was getting a divorce. Well that brought us out in the road then, because that piece laid between the road and what dad had. So we bought that for \$10,500 and the first crop paid for it.

NW: Nice!

PH: Yes. So we've had some good breaks in farming. Of course, my dad always said you farm for the breaks. Another saying he had was: you live poor and die rich.

NW: So you were saying – and I'd like to look at the photos when we're finished – but you were making a point about your dad's place at Farmer was set up, the whole harvesting rig.

[40:00] PH: Yeah, right there. So they'd set it up on each 40 acres and there'd be a stack like that and for – oh, I'd say 1970 and this was in 1918 when this picture was taken – you could still see where those stack bottom was in each one of those 40s.

NW: Until when? The 1970s?

PH: Yeah. You could pick it out. When you farmed, you could see that spot.

NW: Wow. Interesting. Well, before I had my coughing fit... Excuse me. You were saying something about what your dad would say about farming. He had a couple sayings about farming. What was that again, because I'm afraid I coughed through it.

PH: Oh, let's see. What was it? Well, one of the things was – you take care of the land, it'll take care of you. That was one. And another is – you know, the lord provided the land, so we are only leasing it so it is up to us to return it when we're done in better shape than when we got it. And that's where the conservation came in. Yeah, all of us were very much into conservation. And the quarter he had near Farmer, one year we had a hellacious amount of straw on that. And it was the variety of wheat that didn't break up very easily. And I was working out there and one of the neighbors said, "Why don't you throw a match on it." He saw me in town. "Why wouldn't you throw a match on it? I wouldn't fight that." No. You don't burn your straw and take a chance of ruining the ground by it blowing. And we never have had any trouble with our ground by blowing.

NW: That's great. So I wanted to ask you a few questions about your family's food. You said your dad kind of learned by experience how to farm. So he probably learned by experience to leave the stubble there.

PH: Well, he was a great reader.

NW: Oh, he was a great reader, too. Okay. So he was reading agricultural? But the information that WSU was putting out said to burn, so he was reading other things?

PH: Well, that's true. And from the practical aspects and that.

NW: Did he have other farmers that he leaned on? Do you remember him talking about how he learned some of his practices from people he respected?

PH: I don't remember him saying too much about that. I do remember him saying that he helped quite a few others get started.

NW: I can imagine he was that kind of guy. He had some rough breaks himself there, getting started on farming.

PH: Yeah, he did.

NW: So where did you get most of your food when you were growing up?

PH: Well, dad loved to garden. He always had a big garden. And we raised our own meat and chickens. And I always loved to – I didn't mind to – clean chickens. I loved to eat chicken. And I loved to shoot. And so when I would say, "Mom, when are we going to have chicken for dinner?" "Well, you go out and get it." So I'd pick up my 22 and we were only allowed to hit 'em in the head. And those chickens they run all over and if you didn't hit that chicken right away, if you missed, they'd just disappear. And then maybe a couple hours later they'd come out from hiding [laughs].

NW: You must've been a pretty good shot!

PH: Well, I got to be.

NW: Yeah, 'cause that chicken head is not that big.

PH: Well, you're only maybe 30-40 feet away from them. So it wasn't a long shot, but we had to hit 'em in the head. And we had goats.

NW: Oh, you had goats?

PH: Oh, yeah. Kids, you know. We had about everything. We had goats, we had geese, we had turkeys. And chickens and rabbits.

NW: And this was in town?

PH: Well, we're right on the edge of town is where we grew up. And Waterville was a rural town then.

NW: It's still pretty rural.

PH: Well, I know. But you can't have chickens in town because they crow.

NW: Oh, I didn't know that. You can't have chickens in Waterville?

[45:00] PH: Supposedly not. We were poor, very poor. We didn't know it, but we were. So during the war anybody that could work was hired. So let's see. I forget the guy's name right off hand. But he had a meat market downtown. Well, we raised rabbits for him. We butchered the rabbits at home. And this is how things changed. We got 25 cents a pound for those dressed rabbits. Oh gee. Well, then we raised pigs. We got started raising pigs because in 1941 they built the reservoir downtown which didn't have much storage capacity and dad worked on that and he had a sow that was having babies. And he said to my brother and I, "If you take care of those babies and save 'em, you can have the money from them." And we said, "Oh, great." And then he said, "If you do the chores around here for me I'll give you a sack a feed a month for those pigs." And let's see... In '41 we were 8 years old. Well, what does an 8 year old know about how much an animal eats?

NW: Not very much [laughs].

PH: Not very much! And we thought that was great so that was his leverage on what you could say, "Oh you gotta do this now." And those pigs ate way more than a sack of feed a month. Well, then they went to market and we got – I think it was – 97 dollars for those pigs. And dad let us keep it. He didn't go back on his word. And then there was 2 acres that right across from our house and we wanted to buy that. Dad was a friend of the fella that owned it. And he said, "Yeah, I'll sale that to the boys. I don't need it." He had a service station down by Orondo and he says, "I don't need that ground anymore." And so we were 3 dollars short of enough to buy and dad threw in the 3 dollars.

NW: Oh, that was great!

PH: So that was my brother and I, my twin brother and I. We bought that 2 acres. That was our first land purchase.

NW: That's pretty great. How old were you?

PH: 8 years. Well 9 years old I guess by the time that the pigs grew up.

NW: That's great about the rabbits and taking them to the butcher shop. Did you sell cream?!

PH: Yeah, we sold cream, too. Yeah they had a spot where you took your cream down.

NW: Where was that?

PH: Well, that was I think right where the hair cutting place is. That was the spot where it was. It was right in there with the meat market and that.

NW: I think that was where John Ruud told me, too. He remembered I think it was, where the meat market was. So did you just have a couple cows, or one cow?

PH: Well, we had a couple milk cows and then dad had about 15-20 beef cows. And we, kids, usually did the milking. And dad, in the winter time and all that, he'd milk them in the morning and we'd usually milk them in the evening, because dad really treated us real good. There were things that, certain areas, that were not negotiable shall we say.

NW: Yeah, like helping with seeding?

PH: No. I think, that close to the end, he would've let me off.

NW: That's too bad that the coach wasn't a little bit more flexible.

PH: Well, it was his loss not mine. Well, it was mine, too. At a class reunion and he was there, that was about the 20th I bet, he came up to me. He said, "You know Paul, there's something I always regretted." He said, "When I kicked you off the football team."

NW: Yeah. Better late than never, huh? That's good that he realized that. Yeah. So tell me about... I'm getting a picture of the chickens, the pigs, the cattle, the dairy. And did your mom can a lot? A lot of vegetables?

PH: Yeah. Like I said we were poor. And my sister got hit with a baseball bat at school and it turned in to Osteomyelitis.

NW: It turned into what?

PH: Osteomyelitis. Rotting of the bone.

NW: Really? No! I've never heard of that. How awful!

PH: And the folks took her over to the children's hospital at Seattle and they saved her leg.

NW: Wow! Oh my. Huh. So you had – there were 3 boys and your sister – and so that was a...

PH: I had 2 sisters.

NW: And they were younger than you?

[51:00] PH: I'm the youngest.

NW: Well, that's right. You're the youngest. So the one sister that had the disease and they were able to save her leg, did she live a long time?

PH: She's still living.

NW: Oh, she's still living! That's great!

PH: She lives in Toledo. And then my oldest sister, she died at 12 of appendicitis.

NW: Oh, that's too bad. Oh man. Of course that was common, wasn't it?

PH: That year there were so many kids in Waterville that died of appendicitis.

NW: Really?

PH: The doctor just could not diagnosis it.

NW: So that was in the '30s, early '40s?

PH: Yeah, about '39 or '38.

NW: So in the family garden, did all you kids help in the garden?

PH: Oh, yeah. We were out weeding and picking peas and yeah... That was light work and mom supervised a lot, but mom did a lot of canning. We would get apples and coal apples and then we'd feed them to the pigs. And there were always a lot of good apples. And mom would make applesauce. In fact, when I was talking about my sister going to the hospital they didn't charge dad anything. So mom canned them 200 quarts of applesauce.

NW: Wow! That's neat! This was at children's hospital in Seattle?

PH: Yeah.

NW: Oh my!

PH: Well just think of the day, them being allowed to take something like that. Today it might be contaminated.

NW: 200 quarts of applesauce. That's a wonderful story. I bet children's hospital has some neat stories like that. I know Wenatchee Medical Center has stories like that.

PH: I gotta get my [inaudible] all winter.

NW: Yeah, my husband has a problem with that, too.

PH: It gets a little irritating after a while. Yeah she did a lot of canning and canned out of the garden. She had a pressure cooker.

NW: She felt confident in doing that. Did she can meat at all? Like chicken?

PH: Yeah, meat was canned, because we didn't have a freezer so then later on we rented a locker down at the meat market and we put frozen meat in there. Well mom always liked, and we liked it too, canned meat because she said "whenever company drops in I can just go to the basement and get a can of meat and make a meal."

NW: Yeah, it was fast food.

PH: Yeah it was fast food [laughter].

NW: I had some canned beef out at Mary O'Brian's place for lunch and it was wonderful, so tender.

PH: Yeah it is good. Yeah we ate goats.

NW: Yeah, I was gonna ask you if you ate those goats.

PH: Of course, during the war meat was a premium and so you sold the beef and ate the goats and they were good.

NW: Oh, goats are wonderful.

PH: Of course, we learned to eat kidneys and we learned to eat liver and we learned to eat tongue and oxtail soup, which is all good food.

NW: Yeah, you didn't waste much. Did you make sausage? Did your family make sausage?

PH: Yeah. Dad was a good sausage maker.

NW: So, did your family hunt?

PH: We did a little bit, but not too much.

NW: Where did you get those coal apples? Did you get them down around Orondo?

PH: Yeah.

NW: So you'd get coal apples and bring them up in the truck and feed them to the cattle.

PH: Yeah. There used to be a spot just about – oh, let's see – I don't know if you remember when Billie Joe had his truck down on Pike Canyon.

NW: I don't know. I've only been here since 2000.

PH: Oh no. It was before that. But anyway it was about ½ a mile from the bridge, from the lower bridge there and they used to dump them right along the creek there and dad would go and scoop 'em up and bring 'em up to the pigs.

NW: And that's what your mom would make quarts of applesauce with?

PH: Mmm-hmm.

NW: Oh, wow.

PH: And like I said, we ate good. My mom was very much into nutrition. And there would be a salesman – oh, there comes my boy – there'd be salesmen that would come through the area and they would be selling grapefruit and oranges. He would always buy a case of grapefruit and a case of oranges. And they kept good in our basement. Our basement was cool. So we had plenty of fruit – you might say fresh fruit – grapefruit, apples, and oranges for the winter.

NW: Did you keep potatoes in your basement?

PH: Yeah.

NW: And so you grew potatoes. Where'd you get your flour? Tell me about your flour.

PH: They always bought it, 50 pound sacks. They bought it at the grocery store.

NW: Just in town? In Waterville?

PH: Yeah. By the time I had came along and knew anything, the flour mill had burned down in Douglas. So that was not part of my history.

NW: There was one too in Waterville, right? A flour mill?

PH: I don't know for sure. But then, like I said, during the war if you were willing to work... You know where the Odd Fellow's Hall is right down in town?

NW: In Waterville? I can picture it right by the library.

PH: Yeah. Well, John and I would carry wood up those steps for their fire and I think we got like 5 dollars a cord for packing it up there. Well those were long steps, but... We did that and we stacked wood over at the hardware lot because so many people burned wood. And it was there sitting. That was where the bank is now, Sterling Bank. So we would stack the wood in cord lots,

because that's how they sold the wood was at a cord. And then, let's see... We'd help unload some coal cars every now when they came in and I mean just all kinds of stuff like that. We didn't, in those years, have too much to spend our money on. Of course we were trained that you gotta save, save.

NW: Sounds like you stayed busy.

PH: Yeah, we were always busy. And this is what I think is so wrong with our political system. At times, maybe there was a little bit of abuse with kids working. But what are we worth? "Oh I'm so bored." There's always so much stuff to do. And of course, some of the stuff we did, they call 'em juveniles now. Or run 'em into juvie court.

NW: Right.

PH: Hi Hun!

NW: Well, I guess we can wrap it up. I think I could visit with you all day.

PH: Well, we probably could.

NW: We can wrap it up, Lois, if you promise to talk to me again sometime.

PH: Sure.

NW: So we'll call this the end of phase I. Thank you, Paul.

PH: Yeah, this is nice...

