

Gathering Our Voice

Interviewee: Carleton "Cot" Rice

Interviewer: Nancy Warner

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NW: This is Nancy Warner and I'm here in Leavenworth with Cot Rice, and we're going to talk about. What I'd like to talk about today is basically to get some background on you and this area and talk about your ranching up in the Chumstick and what's happened since then with you in terms of with irrigation works in Icicle Valley. So if we could just start out with some background on how long you've lived in North Central Washington.

CR: We've been here about--we moved here in 1963. So if you figure it out, a little over 40 years,--what 40, 45--almost 45 years.

NW: So, where'd you move from?

CR: I lived in the Seattle area. My job--I had a teaching job at Bothell High School. And I was there for 13 years.

NW: So what was your area of expertise in teaching? What was your specialty?

CR: Well, my specialty was coaching. But I taught history and a whole lot of different things, math and that type of thing but I really wanted to get into administration. And so after a few years in Bothell, 13 of them, I decided to look for an administrator's job. We liked Leavenworth, 'cause we came over here hunting and fishing and camping; and my girls liked it over here. So, when a principal's job opened up, I applied for it and got it.

NW: That's great. So where did your family--a little bit on your family's background before you came to Seattle, like your parents. Were your parents native Seattleites, or ...?

CR: No, my mother was Canadian, and my dad was born and raised in Seattle. And somehow my mother--think my mother migrated from Canada and attended Broadway High School. That's where my Mom and Dad met. And, of course, they got married; and that's how those things happen.

NW: So is Rice a German or English name?

CR: It's German. (It) used to be - it's a derivative of Reese. And my Grandmother was what she called a "dark" German. They came from Southern Germany. And my Dad was kind of dark skinned. And my Mother was very fair and English, of course, coming from Canada. Her folks had migrated from England. Yep, that's how it got together, some of our background.

NW: All right. Well, I've been interviewing people about food systems, about land management in terms of ranching and farming, and how they produced food and how they processed and stored food. So with you I would like to talk more specifically about the work you were

involved in the Chumstick Valley in raising hay and so on, specifically what you might have learned from your neighbors, people who had been here before you.

[3:20]

CR: Well, I was very fortunate because I bought this ranch at the Chumstick, and it was a hay ranch and cattle ranch, and ya know you could raise cows. And I also raised horses, and then sheep. Whatever else came along we just threw out in the pasture so to speak. But I was lucky. My neighbor was a dairy farmer, so I worked with him. And between us did a lot of hayin' up in the valley. And we raised, or he did, and we baled dairy quality hay. And that was what I did in the summertime, was working for him and with him. And between us we got along good together. And he had a dairy farm. And I can't remember exactly how many cows he milked, but he taught me a lot about the dairy business.

And I will say this, people don't realize this, but in Leavenworth, back in the sixties and early seventies, there was I think 12 dairy farms around here. They, the farmers, worked together and they had their own production plant, their own bottling plant, and they had a delivery system. And they also delivered milk to the schools, and that included Wenatchee, Cashmere, Leavenworth and Peshastin. And between all the dairy farms they got along good. They produced a good product and, like everything else, a big, large company came in and underbid them and they lost the school bid and when they lost the school bid. Then of course, they went out of business, 'cause they couldn't compete with the price of milk. So, it was kind of a sad thing, and I remember Chuck Baumann was my neighbor and he hung on. I think he was about the last farmer, dairy farmer. No, there was one other out in the Icicle Valley. And then he passed away. But Chuck used to try to haul his milk from Leavenworth clear up to Omak, and get it bottled and processed up there after the other plant shut down, down here. But it didn't work out. It was just too much travel and the money wasn't there, so he finally got out of the milk business as well.

[5:52]

NW: So what were the names of the other families, do you remember, besides the Baumann's?

CR: Yeah. You know it's funny, but I can't think of the names right now. I think the Smith farm was up on the Blewett Pass. I think that's where the processing plant was. Baughy, people named Baughy, had their dairy farm out on the Icicle Road. In fact, it was right across from my place. And they had--I can't remember exactly how many cows they had, what they did there towards the end of their career. They would sell their own milk, raw milk, and they had a setup so you could walk in their back door and they had milk sitting in bottles. And you pick up your milk and leave the money in a can and go home with your raw milk. It was good milk, and they were very careful about what they were doing. But when Mr. Baughy died and his wife tried to keep it going for a while; it just didn't work out. Then there were the Stegeman's up Eagle Crick. And I'm just trying to think of some of the others that there were. But I can say this on my place, my ten acres place out on the Icicle, they had cows out there. In fact most of these ranchers who lived around here, they all had a few milk cows, and they could sell the milk. You know, it supplemented their income. It was a pretty good little business for them, but when the big outfits came in, and then it drove them out.

NW: What year was that, they went under, they lost the local plant?

CR: Let me think, I was in the school business this year. And it seemed to me it was about in the early sixties, somewhere around sixty five or sixty six, something like that. They also had the little creamery downtown, and ice cream parlor, and all that kind of stuff. So they had a pretty good business going until the big outfits underbid 'em.

NW: That is exactly the kind of thing people would like to see come back.

CR: Yeah, yeah.

NW: So, this is exactly the reason I'm doing these interviews. So who would I interview about (?)

CR: I would talk to Chuck Baumann. And he has a shop down here in town. I don't know the name of it but it has to do with wood toys and wood carving and that type of thing. But Chuck was a good dairy farmer and he had good milk—my girls grew up on it—and so did all the rest of the neighborhood kids. But no, he did a good job; and he's still in the hay business. But he doesn't do it like he used to. But he still makes out good hay.

NW: So tell me what you mean by dairy quality hay.

CR: Why, that's alfalfa. Basically, weed free, its grass free, as much as ...they keep the grass down. And when the cows go after it, they want those leaves... and so when it's baled, it has to be baled just at the right moment, so when that baler packs that alfalfa into the chamber the leaves don't fall off. Sometimes if you're not careful, and this happens with a lot of people who don't know what they're doing with hay, they'll bale it when it's too dry. Then when it's too dry, the stems crack and if there's not moisture in it, the leaves fall off.

NW: So then essentially you have straw.

CR: Yeah, you got straw. And that doesn't produce milk.

NW: So how, what did you learn from your neighbor about the timing on doing that baling?

CR: Well what we did--and this is what I learned from Chuck--that is we could walk out there into a windrow, and we could stick our hand into the middle of the windrow. And if it crunched it was too dry, and if it didn't crunch maybe it was not quite ready. Or if it was too dry you waited until the next morning when there was a certain amount of moisture in the hay. And that way you'd keep the leaves in the bale, so when the cows ate it they had something to eat besides straw.

NW: So you'd cut it in the morning when the time was just right?

[10:42]

CR: Well, we'd bale it. Yeah, most of the time it was in May. Sometimes we'd have to go out at four o'clock in the morning to get moisture. And they do this down in the basin, down there. It's very critical down there when they bale this hay that they get those leaves in the bale and not back on the ground again. And so they watch that temperature gauge and watch that moisture gauge. And sometimes they bale--they start out a lot earlier than that. But Chuck and I we'd start out whenever we felt that the hay would be ready. And you'd just kind of guess it away, you'd guess in the morning after feeling it in the afternoon.

NW: Kind of part of the art of farming.

CR: Yeah. And Chuck was good at it. He produces good hay. And as far as I know he still produces good horse hay, right now--more than he does dairy cow.

NW (inaudible)

CR: Yeah, yeah. I think he...he was good at it.

NW: So, that's when you'd bale it. When would you cut the hay? How would you know when to cut the hay?

CR: You cut the hay, like alfalfa for example, you'd watch the bloom. And, when the flowers start turning purple... Now you don't want the whole field to be purple. You watch your bloom, then when it starts to turn into the bloom, then you bale...or cut. Then you bale.

NW: So, what is the reason for cutting it right at the beginning of the bloom?

CR: It's just reaching the mature stage. And you don't want it into the bloom because it's too mature. And it's good hay, but it's not as good as it would be if you just It's an art.

NW: So it's got like a higher protein content? Before it's invested so much into sugar?

CR: Yes, it's the protein and the value. And you just want it to the point where the cows will eat it and get some benefit out of it.....and produce milk.

NW: OK. So you cut it at the right time of the bloom, then you bale its certain moisture content. And then how did you bale it versus how your neighbor grew up baling it. Did he tell you anything about that?

CR: Well, actually what I did, I baled for him. And he would tell me when I first started doing for him; he would tell me when the right time was. And I learned from him. And then when I moved back into town I leased a baler. Then the people I baled for---some people didn't worry about it too much, others did. And they would call me and tell me I want my hay baled now. And so I would go bale it for them. Others, I would tell 'em from my experience when I thought the hay should be baled. It was mainly--when I moved down to Leavenworth--the hay I was baling was primarily, well some of it was dairy hay. The people sold it to the dairy

farmers...over the coast, or whatever. And others, it was mainly, it was generally for horses and beef and anything else that they had, sheep...whatever.

[14:20]

NW: Now is milk or dairy considered the highest grade hay?

CR: Exactly. And when you see these big hay trucks coming in from out of the basin, most of that's dairy quality hay. And they try to get it before it gets like rain on it. And they like to get it so that the leaves are in the bale. And, in fact, if you run up the bale that's been baled properly, you can see the leaves. Every leaf, almost, is in place. It's beautiful. I love it!

NW: Yeah. I'm going to have to go look for a bale and look for that. From now on I'll be lookin' for those leaves. So (inaudible) those questions in my mind. Were you doing those rectangular bales that one person can handle pretty well? Is that how you did it?

CR: Yeah we were dealing with bales that were 75 to 85 pounds. The average person, now you get into the big stuff, like down in the basin, they roll their hay. You see these great big round bales, and a lot of those go for silage, where the hay will break down and the cows will eat that too. But, what we did was, we did what they call custom baling. And the people would tell us I want a 70 pound bale or a 60 pound, or I want 100 pound, whatever they felt comfortable with handling. Yes, we dealt with the rectangular bales.

[16:09]

NW: Okay, now...so how would you store these bales then? In covered barns or tarps over them?

CR: No, in my case I had a barn and I could get 45, 50 tons in it. And so all my extra hay went into the barn. Chuck had a big barn, and Baughy's had a big barn. These are the ones I'm familiar with. Stegemans had a big barn, and we'd get 'em, as much as we could, in the barn. So when the winter came we were ready and had dry hay.

NW: So did people ever store their hay in open piles around here?

CR: Not so much, no. Some of them do with tarps. They don't have a barn they'll put a big tarp over it. But most of the people I know, that we sold to, all had their own barns. Or something. Some kind of covered storage form. Like with horses, you don't want their hay, particularly, to get wet, where it gets moldy, and it's not good for all horses. And the same thing is true with cows. You got to keep that hay under control so that when you feed it, it's in good shape. In other words, the idea is that when that hay is cured and baled, that hay is going to stay that way. You don't want it interfered with, so to speak.

NW: Do you have to rotate the bales at all during the course of the winter?

CR: No, not necessarily. If they're stacked right, basically they'll dry a little bit in the barn and cure it a little bit more. But basically it will be the same. In fact you could just open up a bale of hay in the winter time, and you can smell the summer. (laughter)

NW: So, would you take bales from a particular side from what was stored in the barn or just take it from the front?

CR: Oh, I know what you mean, rotation. Yeah you always in the springtime for example, if you had any hay left over, you'd bring it out to the front. And you'd put your new hay in the back. Yeah. And then you'd try to get as much off the bottom. And sometimes you had to rotate the hay as you brought your stacks down and bring out some of the bottom hay. You'd move it out to the side so that...and turn it over. (?) And they, they collect moisture. You just have to be careful. And you learn by experience.

[18:51]

NW: Right. You learn about your own shelter, and about the hay crop. And what you need to do to rotate it and keep it dry.

CR: Right.

NW: OK. So let's speak to a question I've always heard about. These explosive situations - fires. Could you talk a little bit about that?

CR: Well, if you're not careful, and if you bale your hay too quickly, there's too much moisture in it. And it will, what do you call it, combust...be combustible. And yes, it will not explode, it will catch on fire. It'll heat up. And yes, every once in a while, you'll hear about a barn burning down. And a lot of it will be that the hay was just not baled properly--too soon. Or say it got wet in the field and you didn't get it up properly. And yeah, that hay can be explosive. It can do some damage.

NW: So did you know of anybody around here who had a problem like that?

CR: Now you caught me off guard. I can't think of any, no. But you read about it in the basin once in a while, a haystack burning down. Of course some of that is probably started by human beings, could be. But you know, I can't think of a guy. A friend of mine had some hay that he baled improperly and, in fact, he hired my grandkids to go up and redo and restack that thing and get that hot hay out of the barn, and move it out so it could dry out, finish out a little bit better.

NW: So he didn't have the fire started....

CR: No, but it was really close. And he, and another problem you know if you get the wrong type of intrusive weeds into your hay. Some of those weeds like a mullein weed for example. When you bale it, if you happen to get it in your bale, a lot of moisture in a mullein weed. And they'll just ruin a bale of hay, because that moisture will permeate. And they're a problem. You

just gotta keep as much junk out of your hay field as you possibly can so that you don't ruin bales of hay.

[21:15]

NW: So how did you go about weed control when you first moved over here? Tell me a little bit about how that changed over the years.

CR: Well, I got burned a few times by myself when I first started fooling around tryin' to grow my own hay and that kind of stuff. And I learned real quickly that you either go out and hand pick your weeds out of your field, and in the springtime when you harrow and disk and bring that stuff up. You just gotta look for that type of thing. And sometimes the best thing you can do is just go out and hand pick it, and get rid of it.

NW: Did you used to hire kids or have your own kids help with that?

CR: I was lucky. I had a couple of kids that helped. And Chuck, he had quite a large family. He had three or four boys. They all worked together on it. I mean, that was their lifeblood. They had to. It was a lot of work. You know, and very satisfying work.

NW: Well how many...what was the size of the family that Chuck had that was supported by that dairy farm?

CR: He had, let's see, there was Chuck and his wife and, let's see, there was one, two three. He had maybe 5 children, one girl. And the dairy farm supported them.

NW: Amazing.

CR: Yeah.

NW: OK. So, let's see. I'll move closer to you. I think we're getting a good recording here, but it sometimes makes it a little bit easier if I'm closer. So talk to me about the dryland hay production. And how-- you did have some water up there you were using. Of course you did have snow melts and so on. But how did you---if you could walk me through your water year in terms of hay production.

CR: Well, we had--this ranch I had was, it was kind of interesting I--the lower part I could irrigate a little bit 'cause the crick had a little more water in it. But up above I didn't. What I did in the spring was I'd go out and spring tooth every spring. And what that does is create little furrows. And so if it rained, the rain would hang into the furrows. And then you could grow your alfalfa. Your alfalfa would grow. We had a great deer population. And I'm sure I raised and fed a lot of deer because I'd go up there. And I think that in about 8 or 9 years I got one or two crops off my ranch because the deer managed to take care of the rest of it. But it was fun, you know. I enjoyed it. But you have to take care of it. And I used a spring tooth and a harrow, and that way I could get my furrows and stuff to hold the moisture in the ground when it rained.

And that was the key thing. Dry farming is a gamble. I mean, wheat farmers up around Waterville, they had the same problems. And you'd get a good moisture year and you'd get a good crop. You get a poor moisture year, you get a poor crop.

NW: So could you just describe to me the spring tooth implement and how you use that?

CR: Well, the spring tooth is a... is just what it means. It's a kind of a form of a plow. You have a frame, and you bolt this curved piece of metal is bolted on there. And the metal itself has an angle on it, so when it digs into the ground. When you drag it, the metal has enough spring in it, it pops up and goes down and pops up and goes down. So it doesn't just do-- it's not like a plow. It's different. It creates little holes in the ground so to speak. I don't know if I'm making myself clear. So when you get all done you'll see little chunks of sod and stuff here and there. And that's what it does. And it creates--and then when it rains it will go into the ground that way. It's kind of like a ...a what-do-you-call it—a...

[25:52]

NW: Aerator?

CR: Yes, it's aerating. That's what. It's a pretty rough, tough thing, but you can do it on a hay field where you wouldn't want to do it on a lawn.

NW: So did you let a certain amount of alfalfa go to seed so you wouldn't have to reseed it?

CR: No, it has to be reseeded. Now, some guys do it every year. Some do it every couple of years. It just depends on how your fields are, if they're in good shape it can go a little longer. But most of the farmers that grow alfalfa, they want to get every bit of alfalfa off that field that they possibly can. So they're pretty particular about how they do it.

NW: So how many cuttings of hay would you get in a typical year?

CR: Well, up here we got two usually, and sometimes three. But down in the basin they'll go five and six maybe, depending upon the situation.

NW: Depending on irrigation.

CR: Yeah. Longer, warmer time, yeah. We'd usually get two cuttings, and then the third cutting was pretty small. But it was stuff that they would eat, and you could sell it you know.

NW: So did you have any insect problems with your hay? Any pest problems?

CR: To me, I didn't notice it. I don't know. I can't tell you that.

NW: So up there in the Chumstick then, with the hay production, you were managing the soil to get more moisture as you could. And you were dependent upon the weather and the snowpack. And so that was dryland farming. And how common was that around here?

CR: It wasn't all dryland. Excuse me; I was on the little Chumstick. And if they were on the Big Chumstick they could irrigate. Some flood irrigated, some used hand lines and that type of thing. But the quality of hay that was grown up on the Chumstick was very good, very good quality. And the same way up in Plain. And we did a lot of baling up in Plain too. And they had good hay up there, very high quality. Good protein.

NW: Is it better quality hay where you have colder nights?

CR: That I can't tell you. I don't know why. I just learned it all as I went along. I couldn't tell you why, but Chuck kept telling me. We kept getting good quality hay up there.

NW: Okay, let's talk about your move over to Icicle. What prompted you to make that move? Will you talk a little bit about that?

CR: Well, what really prompted me was the fact that when people started moving on the other side of these woods, there was a -----at the back of my house. It interfered with my deer hunting. And I would climb the hill, and I had a regular route that I followed, and I would see people sitting up there looking rather mean and stuff. So I decided that--and also the water situation was getting tougher all the time. And so when the place out on the Icicle became available the people asked me if I'd be interested in buying it; we looked at it. And the thought of having water right in my back yard was pretty encouraging. So I sold my big ranch and bought the ten acres out at the Icicle. But it was primarily because of water. That was the big reason.

NW: Yeah. So, did you build the house there?

CR: No, there was a house there. They had a house, and a barn, and a garage, and a little shop. So it was pretty well equipped, you know, and it was just a question of moving my stuff down there and going to work.

NW: A good decision.

CR: Yeah, it was not a bad decision at all. Yeah, like I say, it was closer to water and it was closer to town. And I had two girls who were getting ready to go to high school. And they didn't think that boys would drive nine or ten miles up the canyon and so. But it was handier, and it was a lot easier on me. And I was able to raise horses, and I raised cattle out there. So I basically did the same thing and had water. And it was good.

[30:44]

NW: So do you raise enough beef for your family's purposes?

CR: Oh yeah. We raised for my family, my sister, and my cousin. We would raise three, four, five a year. Something like that. We got into maybe-- six or seven is the most I raised. And I was going to do a cow-calf operation. And I had the room and I had other spaces I could use, but

the price of beef at that time was fluctuating and that's about the time that people decided that red meat is not good for you.

NW: In the seventies.

CR: Yeah, and the early eighties. And it just got to be a hassle, so I got out of it. But I did enjoy it. I had good beef. I raised half angus/Hereford, and all grass fed. No grain or anything, just good red meat. And, I don't know, the market just got to the point where people just wouldn't buy. So I just decided...and we had long winters out there sometimes and couldn't get them on pasture quick enough. You know, it was fun.

NW: So do---you don't raise your own beef now then?

CR: No.

NW: You just buy it from somebody else?

CR: Yeah.

NW: Inaudible

CR: Sometimes. Sometimes. We buy mainly from the market. And we buy from people we know who raise beef. We did not like grain fed beef. We wanted unfat type thing.

[32:33]

NW: There's more and more available.

CR: Yeah. Yes, exactly.

NW: That's good. It's a good trend. So, when you moved to the Icicle Valley, you were telling me, you were telling me before I started the recorder. That really involved, you were recruited to help with the water district...the irrigation district, fairly soon after you moved there. Could you tell me a little bit about that?

CR: Yeah. It was a situation where people just didn't want to get involved particularly. They wanted the water. And people, the board of directors that were there, they did kind of recruit me to come on down. And basically, what it amounted to, when you first when you first joined the board, was that you did the ditch cleaning. In other words, you volunteered and you did it. And so that was fine. And then as time went on we could see that this water situation was getting tougher and tougher. So when the chance came, yeah I took it over and ran, like I say, when I took it over it was in not real good shape financially or otherwise. And fortunately when we did get down to the point where we really couldn't operate properly, and luckily we had some good board members and we got together and said, "Hey, we can't let this happen." So we borrowed the money to keep the company afloat and got a little more into a little better bookkeeping habit.

And so we did. We saved the company and now we're financially secure. And people have water, and they're very happy with it. In fact, to be honest with you, the first thing a real estate agent will do when they call and people buy a piece of property out there—first thing they say is “is there irrigation water?” Irrigation water is very, very important.

NW: If it's for a lawn or small farm?

CR: It doesn't make any difference. They want to keep their lawns nice. They want to keep their property nice. And it's a fire protection. Basically, when we had this fire in '94 it was the...I maintain that the fact that our valley was very well irrigated, and it was a very, very hot day. And people had their irrigation systems going. And when that fire blew out of Icicle Canyon I feel very strongly that the air was cooler in our valley. And, instead of letting it come towards the houses and so forth, it forced the fire to go up over Mountain Home. And I feel very strongly that that's what it was, the fact that our valley was irrigated. And it had cooler air, and the air—I can't remember exactly how hot the air was on that day, but it was almost like you could go out and light a match and it would explode. It was that bad. The temperature was, I forget, the Forest Service has the numbers but it was very explosive.

[36:00]

NW: It must have been so scary. But could we go back to the ditch cleaning a little bit? Because this is one of those things that interests me. And it's like a behind the scenes activity that most people don't know about, particularly if you're an irrigation user that's an urban irrigation user. So, in Colorado the water masters were paid. It was their job and ... maybe not in all the irrigation districts, but in the bigger ones. And then I suppose the board members would rotate cleaning certain stretches. So, was it based on, you didn't have to clean a whole lot of the ditch as a board member, would you? How'd that work?

CR: No, what we did was, each board member would take responsibility for doing a certain section. Well, that was all right up to a point. But what we did is we developed a system. Of, excuse me. We got our finances in order, and then we did start to pay what you call a water master. And then we also contracted with the Leavenworth Lions Club for four or five years to do the ditch as one of their community projects, and we paid them a flat rate. And they did it all basically in one day. The last few years we have had a water master, ditch walker, or whatever you want to call it. And it was a girl, a young lady and, my daughter, for example. And she did it on her own. And she contracted with the company. And she spent the whole month of April getting debris out of the ditch, trimming the thing, and cultivating the trees so it made kind of a canopy over the ditch to keep the water cool—and did minor repairs. And then we contract out any major repairs, like a broken line or stuff like that. We contract that out.

NW: So if you wanted to go and develop a new water source, if you had a major repair or if you were trying to develop a new water source to convey run off or something, that would be something that you would also contract out?

CR: Yes. We don't do much of that. Well we've got--we're organized a lot better now. And we run it on a businesslike basis. So if we have a major problem we contract it out. And if we have minor problems, like a little line that leaks that's to us. And, if we feel we can do it ourselves, and real easy, and get the water shut off and back on again real fast we'll do it ourselves. But basically, no, we contract it out.

NW: So, you were a board member and then you took on the leadership role, leading the irrigation company which is called again the...

CR: Cascade Orchards

NW: The Cascade Orchards. And so, could you tell me a little bit about the history of that company?

CR: Well the company, we were very lucky 'cause the original people that did the planning out there, the ten acre plats, they were able to get a diversion point of diversion on the Icicle River. They filed a water claim or filed a claim for water, and they got permission for a water right. And they built this canal along the base of Icicle Ridge. And they basically set up the rules, the ground rules, and the by-laws. And they did a very good job, excellent job. And we still follow, basically, the same by-laws. And we're just in the process now, of what-do-you-call-it, of updating and making our by-laws a little more realistic. For example, our by-laws say we have an annual meeting in King County. See Chelan County, it was not in existence then. And this was back in, probably back in eighteen-ninety-something. And the company was incorporated about in 1910 or 1907, somewhere in that area.

NW: So you're coming up on your one hundred year anniversary.

CR: Yes, Yes, in fact, we're the oldest, continuous business in the valley, in the whole area.

[40:36]

NW: Are you really?

CR: Yep, yeah.

NW: So, who started it? Were they ..

CR: They got started with land developers. And these people, they were smart people. And it's a little bit confusing about who did what, because of the loss of records and different things of that type. One name that sticks out is a guy named Peters. In fact, Icicle Road is on the plat maps of the county as Peters Road. So, but anyway, they were smart. And they did a good job and they set up their guidelines that are appropriate even by today's standards. Like, for example, no stock watering in the canal. That and you had to be back so many feet from the canal to avoid pollution. No, they were very, very good. They had good lawyers or something. And they tried to predict things. And we still use basically the same by-laws as when we started.

We have a few amendments, but we still use the originals as a guideline. That has been successful. A hundred and some odd years staying in business. Can't knock that.

NW: No. And so, in line with this theme of this series I'm working on, good practices, you know, agriculture, food processing, knowledge we need to hang onto. Are there any things about the irrigation structure? And the guidelines for using water that you think...that have been really time tested and should be carried forth?

[42:48]

CR: Well, what we do—number one, first thing that's happening in our valley—of course our small farms basically are gone. But we still have some people raising horses and a few cows too. But basically it's very small, so it's primarily residential. And we encourage people to put in automatic watering systems. They're much more efficient and so--and they do. And as a result--and also we tell them that we don't want any flood irrigating, and we don't like it if they have a setup where they leave their water on all the time without changing. But we encourage conservation. And we encourage people to keep their sprinkler systems updated. And we patrol our canal, and we patrol our laterals in such a manner that we try to pick up leaks or breakage. Tree roots will get into the lines and snap 'em. And people are good. They call us and then we get on it right away so that we do not--I can't say we don't have leaks, but any leaks that we have are unidentifiable. And if it's identified we go after it. And that's been a real, real critical thing. And so we make an effort to do the right thing as much as we can.

NW: So, do people notify you pretty readily if there's a leak that they're aware of?

CR: Yeah, they really do. In fact they panic. (laughter) "We got a leak down here; you've got to take care of it." , you know that type... And that's good. They're becoming much more aware of it than they used to. They read the papers; they know what's going on. They know how important water is. And if you drive out in our valley in the summertime, it's green. And it's fire protection as much as anything else. Plus it's beautiful.

NW: Yeah, right. Well, in terms of fire, just to go there for a minute 'cause it is, no pun intended, but it's always a hot topic, and it's not going to go away any time soon.

CR: No.

NW: And, are there...were there special sort of special guidelines in the irrigation district for dealing with fire—anything in particular that was set up where people could store a certain amount of water on their land? I'm just kind of probing for anything related to fire in the irrigation district over the years. It might be something we'd want to think about going forward.

CR: Well, what we do is, we have a big sump, for example, about half way down. During that fire in '94, and other fires that we've had, we don't say anything about it, and the fire trucks

come in there and fill their tanks. During that '94 fire, when we had all the fire trucks along the hillside on the upper side of the canal, they all had pumps going. And we took out all our trash gates and got a valve opened up at our head gate, opened it up about as wide as we dared so that it wouldn't flood anybody out, and so that the fire fighters had all kinds of water. And it paid off. Yeah, they were very, very appreciative of the fact that we gave them a full head of water. And they could pump it. Yeah, I think it helped save a lot of property. And so we're very cognizant of it. So we try to do it if we can. And then most of the people on the ditch itself all have pumps as well. And so the fire fighters did use some of our pumps. In fact I have a fire hose fitting on my pump too. No, they used it and that really helped out.

[47:14]

NW: Oh, so that's something people could do is put a fire hose fitting on their pumps?

CR: Yeah, if they have a big enough pump they can. And you can put a fire hose fitting on it real easy.

NW: Okay. I wanted to ask you, before we turned on the recorder, because of all your years with the schools and everything, you had something in mind...you were talking about the kids having been involved in learning about the history of the area. No? I was wondering if you could tell me a little bit about that. I just wanted to make sure I didn't miss anything here.

CR: Okay. When I was principal—the Chamber of Commerce—I worked real close with them. And when they were getting ready to do this changing over to the Bavarian theme for the town itself, with the idea that I kept explaining ...we worked this over. And my teachers were real good about it too. And we talked to the kids about the values of community service, and the fact that this was their home. And even though they didn't stay here when they got out of high school they eventually would come back. And so we talked to them a lot about that and about the history of the community and the fact that it was important to pay attention to these things. So, one of the things that happened, and we made the national news on this one.

So, the Chamber came up one day and wanted to know if we'd be interested in having a junk drive. And I said, "A junk drive" and you know, if you looked at the river banks around here and the alleys and all the old cars, refrigerators. People used to just dump an old car over the side of a bank along the river. They still do it in other areas. So, they came up and they said, "Okay, what we'll do is we'll divide the...we'll have some competition between the seniors, the juniors, the sophomores, and freshmen. And we'll give them four prizes." Then the one who got the most junk would get the top prize, and so forth. Well, we talked to the kids about it and got 'em all excited, and they did.

And what happened was this. Where the city hall was located there used to be a depression, a little league baseball field. We had four sticks out there. The freshmen defining each one's area. Well what happened, when this thing was done, and they did this all in one day, they finally had

to stop the kids 'cause the seniors went out and got some log skidders. And they were able to drive and they had access to this equipment. And they finally had to stop the kid at about 2'oclock in the morning because they were dragging these old cars and stuff and throwing them in the pit. Well, what we did in one day at the high school took six months for the city to clean up. That was one of the deals, that if we got this junk the city would clean it up and get rid of it. It took them about 6 months to get rid of it. And then, the funniest thing was the Chamber looked at this stuff and, of course the stakes had been all covered by then, so I forget exactly what they did, but they gave each class a very substantial amount of money. Instead of giving a big chunk to one class, they spread it out so each class made money on it. It was...they had a great time.

NW: Well that's neat.

CR: And it was done in a snow storm.

NW: They worked until two in the morning?

CR: Yes.

NW: Gosh.

CR: The seniors did. They were the ones that really got into this thing. Like I say, they had these log skidders, and they had a tow truck, and they had all kinds of vehicles and they did. They went out, and I tell ya what, they probably invaded some areas of people's property that they shouldn't have trying to get junk. But they did, they just really cleaned the area up.

NW: Did anybody try to claim the junk once it had been hauled off?

CR: Yeah. The city came in there and found quite a bit that they just stored in different fields throughout the area. And a lot of people came down and got their stuff that had some value to it and took it back. But it was fun; they had a great time. And we made the national news on that.

NW: So that was in the mid-sixties? That was the sixties?

CR: Yeah it was about the mid-sixties

NW: Interesting. I know there are a lot of stories about the whole transition in Leavenworth.

CR: Yeah, that was a key area. And actually how it got started was we had an editor in the paper editor named Russell Lee, and he went through, before it got started, he went through and took pictures of all this junk. You know junk here and junk there. People kind of got mad at him because he took a picture of their back yard, so to speak, and their back alley. And then it grew from there, then they turned it over to the high school kids. But it really did a lot of good. A lot of good, and now the city has a new pick up where they pick up a lot of this stuff. The county does too. See, so people can unload this stuff I guess, and out of their back yards.

NW: So how—does the city still have those pictures, you think?

CR: The what?

NW: Those pictures, do they have those pictures that were taken by the newspaper? Or does the newspaper...

CR: I assume The Echo might have it back in their files.

NW: Oh yeah. That'd be interesting to look at.

CR: Yeah.

NW: Then and now perspective.

CR: Yeah. And I think the stuff we had at the high school probably got burned. They had a big fire in one of their storage buildings. Oh, I forget what it was. Seventy or eighty, and I think a lot of that stuff got burned up. But there's still stuff around, pictures and stuff.

[53:40]

NW: That would be interesting to see.

CR: Yeah.

NW: I've always kind of wanted to see pictures of Wenatchee too, before the Loop Trail and (inaudible). Well, what I'd like to do is—I think I'd like to ask you one more question today and that is, is there anything else I didn't ask you about hay farming or to water management that you think personally would be important information or that you'd just like to comment on.

CR: Well actually, not really. I think—they got to realize that I wasn't a real hay farmer. I learned a lot from good people. And there still people around that still do it. I think Chuck Baumann is probably about as good as any. Water management - very important. And the interesting thing was the University [of Washington] was attempting this Dusel project, thinking about it up at the Icicle. When the time came the people responded very, very well - people that we didn't know. We didn't ask for volunteers. But they were concerned. It's the town's watershed. It's the watershed for the whole valley, the Icicle is. And so they did their homework, and we were real pleased whenever they had a big meeting. At the meeting the people came forward and said, "We don't want it. Go home. Stay away." (laughter)

NW: So, that was pretty encouraging to see that kind of community response, that they were paying attention.

CR: They did pay attention, yeah. And so, it worked out real good. Very good.

NW: Okay. Good