

Glenn Grossen

4/14/11

23678 NW Grossen Drive

Part 1

00:26: Born in 1928. He's the fifth of six boys in the family of Fred and Marie Grossen. He grew up on the dairy farm. His early memories were from before grade school. His mom thought he was too young to go all the way to grade school, so he stayed home and worked on the farm and walked half a mile down to his grandfather's house.

2:08: He would watch his grandpa- he was a genuine Swiss cheese maker. Glenn remembers a lot of the cheese making processes and equipments used.

3:38: His step grandma invited Glenn in for dinner a lot, and was always very nice to him. He would sometimes get into her box of dried cherries. Later after his grandpa was gone, he would play around home. He would ride his tricycle around in the barn during bad weather in the winter when the weather was very cold. Finally he got to go to school and his future wife was in class with him!

5:25: Starting off to school was a big excitement. West Union school was District #1. It was a small school, and there weren't many kids during the depression. The school went from two rooms to one room. When they wanted to play ball they had to ask the girls to play too. Then they had to go play games with the girls other times. They tried to get a softball team together for their school so they could challenge other schools.

10:03: They would put on a little play also. They'd take the partition between the rooms out, and put in a little stage. In one of them, they had to dress up as Greeks and he didn't like the little dress thing.

12:00: Glenn also, like Art, remembers a lot of the Midwest people coming across to Oregon to help pick strawberries and other berries.

13:00: Glenn had a cousin who handed him down lots of clothes. A lot of the kids had pretty much nothing to eat, so Glenn would share his food. They would stick a cheese sandwich on a stick and put it in the furnace and roast the sandwich to make it taste better.

14:30: Glenn's mom saw in a school picture a girl who had a dress that didn't fit her at all, despite her giant smile. So Glenn's mom brought out the Montgomery Ward catalogue, found a nice dress for the girl, and gave it to her for Christmas. It fit perfectly.

15:42: The kids from the Midwest were very welcome in Washington County. The county needed more people to help with the farming.

17:29: Glenn says all of the power on the farm when he was a kid was horses. They had four work horses to plow and plant and pull wagons. His dad then got a Model T engine and put pulleys on each side of the engine, and then it would run various farm machines one at a time.

18:53: With no electricity in the house, all of the heating in the house was generated by the wood burning range. They'd cook with it and boil water on it. Since they all burned wood, that was his first big job; carrying wood inside from the wood box. He would also feed the chickens, gather the eggs, other little chores around the farm. The job Glenn didn't like was taking the waste water from the washing and put it on the roses.

21:11: "How did you split up all of the work with so many boys in the house?" Well sometimes it would come to fighting. But most of it was volunteer. They had to do so much work every day. They had to milk the cows by hand. Roy and Glenn worked together to clean the barns and pig pen.

22:22: "That was the other thing too, was that farming was pretty much self sufficient. I mean you didn't run to the grocery store for everything. We would plant two gardens a year, and one of them was planted early and you'd grow lettuce, spinach, onions, carrots, peas, and potatoes... and the meat was mostly pork." They would also get salt out of the pig too. Glenn lists some other things they made on the farm. They still carry on making sausage and cider and wine the same way on the farm today. "And the second garden was when you grew all the beans and corn and I guess carrots and lettuce and all that stuff, and tomatoes were a big thing."

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00:00: The main commodity they sold was milk. There was a lot of land that hadn't been cleared for other agriculture, so they sent the cows out there to graze. His dad would haul milk in his horse drawn wagon all the way to Hillsboro to the Carnation plant. Later, they sold their milk to Portland. They also grew and sold wheat. But it was during the depression so they had to wait for the price on wheat to be set in Liverpool, England. It was eventually set at 30 cents a bushel.

2:05: They didn't sell cheese at the farm. His older brother rented a dairy farm nearby and they had a lot of cheese making equipment there.

2:50: There was a farm on the bottom of the old Cornelius Pass, Lee Walker's. Lots of people would go to his house and he sold wine and cheese and sold it to the Rock Creek Tavern(?) so people would drive down Germantown to get to the Tavern and in the winter time it was very muddy, and cars would get stuck in large potholes. So Glenn's dad would get his team of horses and pull the cars out and then charge them for him. In the summer time the roads dried up and the potholes became less dangerous, so his dad would go down to the creek and fill up barrels of water and keep the potholes muddy and slippery so cars would keep falling in them and he would keep charging them to pull the cars out!

5:03: There was an ambitious young teacher that came to Helvetia and taught grade school, and then he started a Cub Scout group, and then he started teaching kids to play instruments. His dad got interested in this teacher because his dad had also grown up around band people. His dad talked the teacher into making it into the community band. They bought instruments from a "hawk shop" in town. They got pretty good and started playing during the Rose Festival, a lunar festival, other gatherings and concerts around Portland.

8:48: In the summer, since they didn't have swimming pools, they swam in Rock Creek, fish in the creek, "that sort of stuff." There would be a picnic by Dairy Creek. They dammed up the creek temporarily and made a nice little pond. In the evenings at Helvetia Hall there would be community band concerts, plays, and dances.

In between this story and peaches, Glenn talks about his old mail carrier and has some stories about him, and he talks about the Rock Creek School bell also.

17: 58: Glenn talks about the years leading up to raising peaches. Originally they were dairy, but in 1955 Glenn and his wife got married and moved into their current house, unsure of what to do with the land. Her uncle was telling him to keep going with the dairy business, but he said he didn't want to because it was too much work. So they looked into nursery business instead. In 1962 Typhoon Frida hit the Pacific Coast and the wind blew around 100 miles an hour. Glenn talks about the damage taking place during

the typhoon. He had built a greenhouse recently, and a neighbor's roof came across and smashed right into his greenhouse, spraying glass all over the road.

20:30: After repairing they started growing a lot of tomatoes. In the 70's they had trouble getting a hold of oil, and suddenly the price went shooting up and it was impractical to grow tomatoes, so they stopped. They switched to Daphne flowers. They also had a few cows, and they sold the raw milk to people who would come to their farm to pick it up. The state didn't want them to do it any more eventually because cows started to have a disease that could pass to humans. After all of this frustration, they had their wide open pasture that was sitting empty, so they filled it with peaches, in 1985.

"What sort of help did you have in raising your orchard?"

23:30: Glenn's cousin Don was growing peaches on his own farm. It was a pretty popular item so he kept planting more trees. To save time and energy Glenn made the peaches "You pick" so he wouldn't have to pick and sort and sell himself.

24:56: Glenn talks about how you have to be flexible and open to farming. He talks about a family that came up to Oregon from San Francisco. They toured the county asking people how they could get started farming, and people told the dad "forget it, it's too hard." Then one person referred him to Glenn, told him that he was the guy to talk to. So the family met with Glenn a few times, and he told the man that he wouldn't be able to buy all new things right off the bat. It was a lot of hard work. Glenn says that's how things have been for his family as well.

27:15: Glenn talks about how lots of people are now buying directly from the farmers. There was a buyer's guide that his farm belonged to, but it cost a lot to get your name in there.

"Do you support / are you engaged with Save Helvetia?"

29:00: Glenn says he kind of supported Save Helvetia in the beginning but he's not too involved now. Glenn talks about how the county wanted to stick a dump right near his house in Helvetia, and they held all of the hearings right when the farmers were the busiest, but they all got together, a lot of the new people especially, and rejected the dump site.

30:31: "...Save Helvetia, I'm kind of for it, but uh, the thing is is big money can come in and take it over. But I think we'd be better off if they didn't."