

C: Let's see, how many years was I hear, '86 to..ah '86 to '99, how's that? Thirteen?

I: Yup

C: Six, nine is three, so thirteen...do you want the days or just the years?

I: Just the years

C: What do they mean by "leader?"

I: Whether you were like 4H Leader or...but you were director

C: Yeah, executive director...OK

I: Can I get you to sign the bottom, just saying that you...we're gonna use your information

C: that's really legal.

I: OK, you were executive director, were you executive director for all thirteen years?

C: Yes

I: Oh that's right, Cal...Wade? Cal Wade...alright, what do you remember from your fair experiences over those years?

C: Well, a lot of things happened, unfortunately, the thing I remember the most was the probably worst day I ever had while I was here and that was when we had two people killed during the fair...1992. Umm one employee of the carnival fell off the top of the 80-foot tall Ferris wheel and then two volunteers, shuttling people in horse-drawn wagons had a runaway, and the wife...well it was one of the owners, a man and his wife owned the thing, she got tossed out and got killed. And then that same year we had seven, unrelated, separate incidents that people got in the hospital. None of it was attributed to the fair, it was all just... I mean that is the one thing, it is not my most fond memory but is the one I'll never forget, yeah.

Every time I'd hear an ambulance, I'd just cringe...but there was so many things that happened, it's hard to come back and say just exactly...but we had...I had such a great staff of people. We had a gal by the name of Sue Oxendine that these people out here will all remember that was actually the fair manager that put on the fair and everything, she was fantastic.

And then we had a gal by the name of Patty Po, that um...kept the place busy year-round. We uh... and she did a great job on that.

I: So who would you say had the most influence on you and the job you did with the fair?

C: Here?

I: Either here or in your previous experience that led you to become a executive director.

C: Hehehe, well here it was the fair board, the combination of fair boards. I was blessed with really good fair board members. And my background I... I had a diversified background...um...ex-banker...and uh, I graduated in agriculture from Fresno State, 4H member for 13 years, I guess it was.

Um...but my previous boss, um at the bank, the Southern Oregon State Bank in Grants Pass, Oregon, Kyle Hampton was probably the greatest influence on understanding business and how it works and how you involve people and how you gave service...service was the most important thing, not only to the public but to your employees, too. You gotta have happy employees. If you don't have happy employees...happy employees transfer out to the public...uh, you know yourself, if you are somewhere and you deal with a person with a chip on their shoulder, you don't go back. And that is because you got an unhappy employee.

And I advocated...Howard Hampton was the person who really influenced me.

I: He taught you that?

C: Yeah.

I: Do you have a favorite...you've already shared a sad story...a favorite positive story like an event that happened at the fair?

C: Well, it didn't happen during my time, but, Dick Joseph told me one time...now you guys excuse my French here just a little bit.

I: mm, K

C: Dick Joseph, who was the manager before Addie Hessi, told me that one of the funniest thing that happened to him at the fair was that when they built totem, and they put a totem pole out in front and they laid it out there on the ground for two or three years while it was being built, it was the entertainment for the fair one year, and Campfire girls came out and painted the totem pole and the whole thing and somebody got up at one of the meetings, they got ready to erect the totem pole...I laugh about this so much... and Dick says one of the guys got up and told...at a public meeting, said if you come out Friday, you'll see the biggest erection in Washington County.

I: Oh, no

C: I told that story so many times...but...

I: I'm writing that down...any other good stories?

C: Oh, I dunno, gee, you are pinning me down

I: Sorry

C: ...it is really hard to think. We had so many neat things happen out here, you know, with the rodeo we had going at the time, you know, the draft horse people were always such a positive sight.

There was always funny things happening with them. Such a great group of people. One of the things during the fair that we would always enjoy was after each...after each draft horse performance at night, George Horner, who was very active, you might even say the leader of the draft horse people, he used to buy pie and coffee for all the participants and they always invited me to that. In fact there is a picture out there that I brought that was before I'm sitting there having pie and coffee with the draft horse people.

But there were so many things that was continually happening and without somebody here to banter back and forth with it's really hard to remember everything, you know how that goes.

I: What would you say is the purpose of the fair?

C: The purpose of the fairgrounds is for public use. And just as a facility that belongs to the people and should be used by the people and that means 365 days a year.

You should put a good fair on...so many people... And I realize this isn't as true today as it was 20 years ago or whenever it was when I first came here, but it is still important, so many people had a history of agriculture in their background because they had an Aunt Sarah or Uncle John or somebody like that the kid would go see in the summer time. The nostalgia that is associated with that is so great... and it is also a tremendous learning tool for parents and their kids and so forth, and that's what the fairgrounds is for. It is for the people, it's to bring back memories, it is to educate people it survived year-round use. Umm, you wanna have a picnic, come out here, sit down have a picnic. You know, that's ...in a long-winded statement that's kinda the mission statement.

I: And you said before that your _____ is the most important thing, so in terms of providing when you were executive director for those thirteen years, um, do you feel like you were successful in providing that?

C: Well, I really do, we had a very, very successful fair. Very, very successful. We operated at a profit. I feel that we were, I mean, you know it could be better... you can always do a better job. But I think that we did because, uh, the door was always open. When I said a minute ago, if you want to come out and have a picnic...I can't tell you how many days we had mothers come out with their kids where it was cool in the summer time.

So I feel that we did accomplish that. I always felt we could do a better job. Uh, the one thing that I really feel that I failed at when I was here was getting the new facility built and...uh there were reasons it didn't happen but I always felt like it shoulda happened during that period of time I was here.

I: Why didn't it? Just finances?

C: Well, finances is always the problem and it is the big problem, but we got sidetracked the last three years that I was here, we got side tracked on a improvement that they...they wanted to put in shopping

centers and the whole thing and maintain the fair. And I honestly feel had that not happened, that we would've got the main exhibit building...another, a second. I don't wanna say replaced, because that wasn't in the plan. It was gonna be another building to work alongside the present, main exhibit building. And I've always felt that uh, we shouldn't have let ourselves get sidetracked that much.

I: Well that's the hard thing, um... and do you feel... you said one of your biggest influences while you were here was the Fair Board and you've always been blessed with a great board...and...how, um, how much of a turnover was there while you were here.

C: It was pretty much at a constant, yeah, it was pretty much at a constant, I couldn't tell you numbers, uh, I am certain, by the time it was over, there was none of the original still on the board.

I guess my true feeling is deep appreciation is of the original fair board that hired me because they were so cooperative and so good and that carried on, pretty much, it wasn't quite as good the last two or three years, but up until the probably first ten years, that the volunteerism and that dedication to the fair and the county carried forward....

If it wasn't for that original fair board, nothing would have happened, I don't think!

I: Yeah, well, when the fair is going on what were some of the challenges, were you here every single day?

C: I was here 'til about two o'clock every morning and I got in at five in the morning. My thing, I'm a delver here, and that is why I want to emphasize the fact that I had such good people working. And I felt like, that during fair time, I probably shouldn't have anything to do. I should be available for crisis and put out fires and things like that, and that certainly bore true in 1992 when we had those death, because I can't tell you how many interviews we had with the press. And we kept the press on our side. Nobody printed the death there, that's what we were worried about. Nobody did that. Every news article that was written, the Oregonian and right on up, uh, they all had articles because that kinda hurt us to have two deaths in the same year, it is just unheard of to have a death at the fair, period. And they had two in the same year. In fact, I ended up on the national circuit talking about it. The National Organization for Fairs and also the PRCA Rodeo had me in to talk about...

I: How to handle a crisis like that?

C: yeah, a crisis like that.

And it was kinda strange, I don't know if I should say this because it sounds like I am patting myself on the back and I don't mean it that way, but...when this first happened, we had hired a public relations firm that year to help us out with different things, when this first happened this public relations person came up and handed me a printed thing that I was supposed to say, and I said "No, you don't do that, you speak and tell the truth and just tell the press exactly what you do know what you don't know and what is going on and that's what we did. And uh...the staff and the fair board, we didn't hold back anything we knew was a fact, and honestly you just gotta be honest with the public.

I: Getting back to your day-to-day activities during fair time, what did you spend most of your time doing? Would you walk around and make sure everything...

C: No, I feel like if you have to check on people you need to get rid of them. Uh, what you do is go by the results not how they are doing it or what they are doing and I gotta say, as a staff, we didn't have anybody sitting in the corner.

One thing I did for the fair, uh, that actually I would say was actually for the fair was entertainment. I hired all the entertainment. We had big night entertainment every night. We had Charlie Daniels we had Charlie Pride, we've had Lee Greenwood. He was our first one, by the way. Tanya Tucker, Tanya Wynette. We had a lot of big name entertainment and that was my job for the fair and uh, it wasn't my job to make sure they were comfortable, I had somebody else doing that, but I hired 'em.

But my year-round thing was public relations. I served on the Chamber of Commerce, I was president of the Chamber, I was active in the Forest Grove Chamber, I served on the Washington County Visitor's Association and you do all this to get people on your side, that's why you're doing it. I go to a lot of different member meetings. I was always available to give speech, to give talks to, like the Optimists and we involved people in the fair like the Optimist Club, the local Optimist Club used to do our garbage for us...and that was a project that they looked forward to, believe it or not, was hauling our garbage.

And we did things like this all the time and that was really my all-year job was public relations.

I: What about your family, was your family involved in the fair, too?

C: Yeah, no, they really weren't, uh, the kids are all older and my wife worked full time at Intel, so she is an ex-banker also.

I: Do you miss it?

C: No, I always said it is the hardest job I've ever had because you are having to please so many people. And, but you don't want somebody even mad, I mean, if you don't agree with them at least try to talk it out, that you agree not to agree...whatever the situation might be. And that wears on them, it really does. That part I don't miss.

I do miss the day-to-day activity, I miss the people, I think is the thing I really miss.

I: Did the format really change at all from the time your time 'til the end...I mean the way things were laid out...or ...

C: Oh, yeah, things changed every year. You always try to do things better...and here again I go back to the people I had working for me. We had a unique situation we had five maintenance people we had working for us at the time and I instigated a self-supervised type situation where we didn't have a supervisor. And each one of them were assigned certain areas they were responsible for and then when one of them needed help he would holler and get help to do his stuff and so forth. Uh, and in that case it worked out great. It worked good and we had people getting along just fine and they worked

together great and so the main thing, the key role I feel that any supervisor that is in charge is to get the right people. And if you get the right people, then you are gonna get the right job done. And you don't have to be very smart. All you gotta do is figure out how to get the right person.

People think it is your success so it is the person in charge is the one who did it. Well that's not true at all. The person in charge, all that person did was have the right people do the right thing at the right time.

I: Did you have a vision for the fair in the future.

C: Probably I shouldn't be talking about that point, I prefer just talking about what happened...it is not in my place, I don't think to.

I: But your goal now is to help through your work with the boosters...

C: No, well, I am a lifetime member of the boosters, they gave me...granted me a lifetime membership when I retired, but I live pretty far away. I live up on the Santiam River between Salem and Detroit Lake. If you know where Mill City is, we live close to Mill City and so, it is quite a ways away.

I: Yeah, but you came up today...

C: Well yeah, I was looking forward to it, seeing people, because I hadn't been to the fair since, I came the first year after I retired because the chairman of the fair board had gotten killed that year and we gave an award to his family and they wanted me to give it, so I came up for that. I haven't been to the fair since.

I: A lot of what we are doing today is collecting people's stories of the history of the fair. Do you know of any stories that might be interesting.

C: Well, I wrote a history of the fair before I left.

I: Can we have it?

C: Oh, I gave it to Lyle and he think he gave it to Sheila and it has been floating around. And what I did is I took the dates, I went through all the minutes from 1931, I think it was, see the last two or three months I was here, we already hired someone to take my place so I was here to help that person, but what I did to occupy my time was to write the outline of the history...and uh what I did is I...I am making these dates up, of course, January first, oh, not the first, let's say the fifth of 1932, such and such happened, OK, then you go to the minutes and see what that was, and that is what I did clear up until 1999 when I left.

I: And somebody...

C: I only had one copy left, I had given one to the whole board when I left and I had one copy left and I gave that to Lyle about a year ago and Lyle is pretty sure he gave it to Sheila Day and it sounds like they are duplicating a lot of the stuff that I had already done and they should have that out because it tells...

I: You don't have it in a digital format, do you?

C: No, by digital you mean...

I: Computer

C: Yeah, well

I: Did you type it on the computer?

C: I typed it on a computer, yes, but that computer is long gone.

And uh, it is not on the one I got at home, it is the one I got at the office.

But I used to be quite pleased by the history

I: So here is when it was outand the pavilion and the fair buildings...

C: Now they moved here, I think it was 1952 when I was....

I: Yeah, we think is the Fourth of July, and this is the picture from '54 which has it about here and it is a big ol' steak which I am gonna show you... iddint it fun?

C: Washington County is the second oldest fair in the State of Oregon. There were four fairs that were started in 1854 and I can't remember...I know it was Washington County, Yamhill County...and there were two other fairs and I can't remember who they were...and Wash....Yamhill was the first fair they started that year, and Washington County was second.

And I wish I could remember, I don't think it was Multnomah County it might have been...coulda been over in Oregon City or something, probably, what's that? Clackamas County, yeah, that was probably it.

I: Did Marion County have a fair?

C: Yeah, they have a fair, but I don't think it is that old...state fair is not that old. So I don't think Marion County was it. It might have been...I think it was a county over in Eastern Oregon, like Grant County or something like that but there was one here in the Portland area, I can't remember who it was.

I: Well I am trying to think of another picture you may like...that's some pictures, I think that is the county jail? Maybe?

C: Well it is the old log cabin that...well no, it is the jail next to it.

I: You know what that building would have been?

C: Yeah, that's the old log cabin, I think

I: Do you know what ever happened to that?

C: Should be right here...

I: Well I know that there was a jail, but it was moved up to the museum...we've got a little bit of that.

C: That's a replica if I remember right.

This is the old....when was this taken?

This is the old office building that was moved in from Shoup Park.

I: So they moved it here?

C: Here, and later during my tenure it became the Rodeo Board Office and museum and I understand it has been demolished. I don't know if that is true, but it was what I was told.

I: there is another...

C: There the Square dancing that's going on

4 mintues remaining