

# Interview with Anita Gann Ihnat

Conducted by Gay Beaudet & Students  
at Nestucca Valley Middle School  
April 22, 2002

**AI:** Ready?

**Student:** Yep.

**AI:** Anita Ihnat, used to be Anita Gann, and today's date is April 22, 2002.

**Student:** Um... please tell the name of the grade school you attended, and describe, if you can, the exact location of the school.

**AI:** I came to Hebo Grade School when I was, like... in March or April of my first grade... previous to that I was at, uh... Kilchis, I think it was... and it's in Hebo, right where it is now.

**Student:** If you have any idea when the school started and/or closed, please tell us.

**AI:** Oh, wow.... no, I don't... I can't remember... and it closed, when... it closed about, what? About ten years ago? Approximately... I don't remember.

**Student:** Please describe the school building in as much detail as you can, telling us about the outside and the inside of the building.

**AI:** Well, the school building is approximately the same that it is now without the two rooms that are to your right as you face it. Those were built on quite a bit later. And there was a wooden gymnasium... a wooden building... gymnasium, that was off to the right, almost abutting the, uh... DebbieKei's restaurant... had a bus barn on the right side of the gymnasium... there was a stage in there, and it was heated with a wooden stove... I... with a wooden stove.... with a wood stove... a big wood stove... and, I can't remember what year it was... it was after my husband and I got married, which we got married in 1956, somebody decided to siphon some fuel out of the bus that was in the bus barn, and they used a match to look into the tank, and needless to say, everything burned up.

The school house... I don't believe there's a whole lot of changes in the rooms... the rooms that are still there... the original rooms, except that when I was there, they had wood stoves for heat. And I haven't been in the school for years. What was the principal's office... what is the principal's office, or was the principal's office, used to be the library, downstairs to the back, which is where I think they used to serve lunch, we used to roller skate in there in recess, and one corner of it would fill up with water in the winter time, and the room that they used for the library, which was downstairs, had a dirt floor and wasn't used for anything but storing junk in, and the room off to the left that they used for the science room... I can't even remember now... had a dirt floor, and they just stored junk in it.

**Student:** Was there a bell on the school?

**AI:** I believe so. But you're asking me... that's way back...

**Student:** Do you know where the bell is today?

**AI:** No.

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**Student:** Ok.

**AI:** Oh, you're talking about a bell up on top of the school?

**Student:** Yeah... I guess...

**AI:** One that you... rang by hand... no, I don't think there was... I don't think there was.

**Student:** Please tell us from where to where the students lived who went to the school.

**AI:** Well, I lived on Highway 101 south, and actually I think our place, or the place just past ours, which was my grandparent's place, was the cutoff, and that's about a mile south of Hebo, and then it went up to Dolph and towards Beaver, but I can't remember where the cutoff was there... probably at Brassfields place... but I'm not a hundred percent certain.

**Student:** What are all of the ways students got to school while you were in school?

**AI:** By school bus and parents... no horse and buggies.

**Student:** Please tell us the time school started each day and when it was dismissed.

**AI:** Oh, man.... I'm gonna' have to say between eight and eight-thirty, and I would get out of school at... between quarter after three and three-thirty to catch the bus to go home, and school wasn't out then... I don't think school got out until, really, three-thirty... and I would catch the bus because the bus was going to the high school.

**Student:** What were the days during the year that students didn't attend school, such as Christmas?

**AI:** Well, probably Christmas and New Year's... Thanksgiving... and I believe that was all... we didn't have spring break, although they did out in the valley... uh... we didn't have very many days off... I think that was about it.

**Student:** Please tell us about a typical school day, from the moment you left home to go to school to when you arrived back home in the afternoon.

**AI:** Oh, boy... I have to stop and think about this... I think when we got there, we said the Pledge of Allegiance, and we were in a room... there was more than class in a room... more than one grade... there was one teacher.... so we would, depending upon which grade he or she was teaching at that time, we would get down and do our homework... there was a recess, in which you could go to, either to the gym and play, or was out on the playground, which had all the equipment... the swings, the giant stride, the teeter-totter, the merry-go-round, and, uh... we would play on the hill behind the school, also, it wasn't really slick... uh... lunch time, and then another recess, and then home. I mean, it was just typical school, only you only had one teacher.

**Student:** Tell us about the regular curriculum or just the subjects that were taught.

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**AI:** There was math, and spelling, and we had penmanship, um... geography, and English... oh, man... reading, and that was about it... we didn't have all the... well, there probably was some science...

**Student:** Tell about any extracurricular activities like sports, clubs, etc.

**AI:** We had a boys basketball team... period. That was it. No girls... no organized girls' sports... girls did play basketball with the boys in the gym... uh... but as far as competitive sports with the other schools, it was just the basketball. Um... played pretty much the same games that they do now... dodgeball.... uh... there was no volleyball... tag... and I think that was... oh, I'm sure there was more, but that's all I can remember.

**Student:** How were the students taught? Was everyone taught together in one group, or were there smaller groups of instruction? Did the teacher mostly lecture, or did students study books?

**AI:** Well, as I said, you would have... let's see, there was school rooms, so there would have been... school was from first grade through eighth grade, so in some classrooms, or one classroom, there was more than one... there was more than two classes. Um... the teacher would teach whichever class she was working with, whichever grade... he or she... and, uh, while they were working on whatever they were working on, you were studying in your books or doing your homework or class assignment or whatever.

**Student:** Was there much homework?

**AI:** I don't remember. I mean.... I'm sure there was sure there was some, but not like what they have nowadays.

**Student:** If someone misbehaved at school, what were some of the punishments, and if possible, tell about any incidents that you remember happening in regard to students being disciplined.

**AI:** That, I... I don't remember. I'm sure there was some that misbehaved... probably went to the principal's office, but what happened in there, I don't know.

**Student:** How were parents involved in discipline for school behavior?

**AI:** I couldn't tell you that, either, 'cause I never got in trouble.

**Student:** Please tell about technology in the school. In other words, was there a telephone, and what did the students typically write with?

**AI:** I don't remember about the telephone. That would have been in the principal's office, and we used pencils, like everybody else, tablet paper... notebook paper... very seldom ever had... used pen... and that's... there was no computers, no typewriters....

**Student:** What would happen if a student was hurt at school, or if there was some other emergency? Please tell about any emergency you remember.

**AI:** One... and I don't know as that I remember this, but it had to have happened while I was there... I have twin brothers, and they were in the first grade, or the second grade... I'm not quite sure... and one of 'em,

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and I think it was Richard.. their names was Richard and Robert... ran out onto the road after a ball, and was hit by a logging truck, and he was taken to the hospital, but I... you know, I don't know if it was an ambulance... I doubt if it was an ambulance... I think it was one of my parents... and he ended up having a fractured skull... and that is why at the Hebo Grade School... which was the Hebo Grade School... there is the fence across the front of the school... keep kids from running out in the highway.

**Student:** Yeah. Was the community involved in the school, and was there a parent support club? Tell about programs held for the public and tell how the building was used for community functions.

**AI:** There was a school board, but I don't think there was a parent-teachers club... not that my parents were involved in it... the building... the school buildings were just used mostly for school work... teaching... we had plays... there was always a Christmas play... and I think that was about it... there wasn't a lot.

**Student:** Please tell us the names of any teachers and administrators.

**AI:** Well, one teacher... I remember her name was Mrs. Vogel, and she lived down, uh... just north of Neskowin... and her house that she lived in is still standing... uh, Gwen Scherzinger lives in that house... and then, the other teachers are just kind of a blur, except the teacher that we had when I was in the seventh and eighth grade and his name was Delbert Long... and he lived in Salem, actually, and he commuted every day... maybe he stayed once in a while with some friends or relatives in Hebo... um... he was a big man... rotund, as they say... bald-headed, and he had the most beautiful handwriting, and he taught penmanship... the rest of the teachers, I just... I don't remember.

**Student:** What were the games you played at recess?

**AI:** Like I said... tag, basketball... I don't think there was ever any baseball or softball, 'cause there wasn't any field to play 'em on... just typical kids...

**Student:** Please tell us any stories you remember about things that happened at school, or concerning school... we would appreciate hearing any stories you remember.

**AI:** Oh, Lord.... that's hard... I'm sure that if there was other people around that I was talking to they'd jog my memory, but I just don't... you know.... don't remember.

**Student:** I'd like to change the subject a little and learn more about you if I could. If it's ok to ask this, when and where were you born?

**AI:** I was born in Tillamook in the building that is now known as the Buell Apartments... it was the hospital... and I was born there on November 11, 1937.

**Student:** What is your ancestry?

**AI:** What do I do? I'm retired. I play in the yard, and sew, try to keep house...

**Student:** Please tell us about where you lived. Did your family live in one place, or did you move when you were growing up?

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**AI:** We lived in Tillamook for a little bit... very little bit... out by my grandparents' place, which is out on the Kilchis... we lived in a one-room building... I won't call it a shack... building, right on the slough, when... a slough is a place where tidewater comes in.... and, I went to school there at the Kilchis Grade School for a small amount of time, and high water would come in so high, that it'd be all around the house that we lived in, and we'd have to get into a boat, step out the front door into a boat and then they'd row you out to as far as the water went, and then you'd get out and you'd walk the rest of the way to school. Prior to that... I forgot... that we lived in California for about nine months... my dad worked in the Mojave Desert on a... he was a heavy equipment operator or drove truck, can't remember which... we lived there and then went... that's when we came back to Tillamook, and then when we... went from Tillamook to the Kilchis, and then we moved to Hebo to what is known as the Brautten place, which is down Fletcher Road... the house is no longer standing, but the place is still known as the Brautten place... and then moved to the place where my parents live now, which is south of Hebo.

**Student:** Why did your family or your ancestors move to this area?

**AI:** My mother grew up in Tillamook... so she and her family had been there for quite some time... my dad's family came from a combination of Arkansas and Oklahoma, through California and then up to Oregon, where, um... my grandparents... my grandpa worked for John Craven... um... on the Craven farm, which is down on Meda Loop... my dad worked there... and, then he married my mom, and I don't know... then that's when... but he always rode like... drove dump truck... drove truck...

**Student:** Describe any significant events that occurred during your childhood.

**AI:** Oh... I got married... had... no, that wasn't my childhood... um... wow... I... that's hard... I'd have to... you know, it's like you need something that jogs your memory, so I can't do that.

**Student:** Ok... When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

**AI:** I don't think I ever had any thoughts or aspirations... um... just wanted to grow up.

**Student:** Tell about your chores and responsibilities as you were growing up.

**AI:** Well, we lived on a farm... and farms usually mean helping with feeding the cows... when we moved to the house... the place where my parents live now, um... I used to milk the cows, feed the rabbits, clean the barn, wash the milking equipment, um.... chop tansys, help build fence... just typical farm work... do dishes, wash clothes in the old wash machine with the wringer on it... um.... just things that you did.

**Student:** What were your favorite games, sports, books, hobbies, etc?

**AI:** When I was growing up?

**Student:** Yeah...

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**AI:** I had a horse...loved to ride my horse...um... I liked to work in the garden and with flowers... and that was probably about it... loved riding the horse, though... we would take off and go back in the hills... the dog and I and the horse.

**Student:** What do you remember most about your mother and father?

**AI:** Well, they worked really hard... my mom pretty much ran the ranch, 'cause my dad was running his dump truck, and he would be away on jobs a lot... um... when I was small I think he worked for Tillamook County on the road department, but my mom always was a stay-at-home mother, and just run the ranch... she raised chickens, and we raised geese and we raised ducks, and.... and she was the one that whacked their heads off, and I helped pick chickens after you scald 'em in hot water and you pick the feathers off, and... which is something you guys never even thought about... is how the feathers got off from 'em... um... you did all of that stuff... they... they butchered their pigs, and cattle for the meat, and... we didn't just buy it at the store.

**Student:** What was the best advice your mother and/or father ever gave you, or what were good lessons you learned from them?

**AI:** To be yourself, and to be happy.

**Student:** Tell us about any of your occupations and accomplishments throughout your life.

**AI:** Well, let's see... used to work at the bank... did that for about four years, maybe, and then I had kids, and babysat... at lot... raised a lot of kids, umm.. that was probably my accomplishments, was raising children.

**Student:** Please tell us about your own family.

**AI:** Well, let's see... I have five kids... the oldest one is Joanie, and she lives in Siletz... um... she has two children... one still in high school.. a sophomore in high school... the next one is Michael, and Michael lives in Cloverdale on Jenck Road... not Jenck Road, Misty Drive... he has no children.. he works for Maxweld Boats... the next one is Debbie and she lives right next to us, on property abutting ours, with her husband Andy Heathershaw, who owns Maxweld Boats... (they have three children... Lacey, Houston, and Hillary) um... the next one is Blaise, who lives below me on Mt. Hebo Road ... he also works for Maxweld Boats, he's not married and has no children... and then there's Lori, who uh... is Lori Chitwood, is married to Mike Chitwood, and they own a farm on Old Learned Road, and they have two children, one of which is Emma, that goes to school here as a seventh grader and the other one is Spencer and he's a sixth grader at the Middle School.. she's the head volleyball coach at the high school... and I think that's about it...

**Student:** What special skills and interests do you have?

**AI:** Oh, I make quilts... love to sew... and I like to cook.. I don't do that very often... I like to bake... I don't do that very often, because we don't need to eat it... um... but the quilting is perhaps what I like the most.

**Student:** Are there community and/or religious activities you'd like to tell us about?

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**AI:** I'm not really involved in any of 'em... I'm just busy with my own life, and watching high school sports... which takes up a lot of time... and then watching my grandkids and their sporting events or whatever it is that they do.

**Student:** We're almost finished. Please share some thoughts you have about what it was like living in this area.

**AI:** It's a great area to live in. Um... we're not that far away from Portland... I mean, we're two hours away from Portland, about an hour and a half away from Salem... we're not isolated... we have a lot of great things going on here... um... you may think that we're out in the boonies, but we're really not. When you grow up and think about what it's like here, you'll appreciate it more than what you do now. During my time of growing up, I think about the only thing that kids ever did to get into trouble was to smoke a cigarette, maybe swipe a bottle of beer and drink that... um... nowadays I realize there's a lot more going on, but pretty basically, it's a good place to be.

**Student:** Again, we are very interested in stories and particular incidents you remember. Pretend you are sitting here with your grandchildren. Tell us some stories that you would like them to hear about your life experiences, or life experiences of your parents and family.

**AI:** Well... some of the things that we did when I was a kid... no television... so we would go to relatives houses... we would have dinners, we'd have picnics... um... my grandma and grandpa, who lived most of the time right in or about Hebo, um... were like what we know as... would call the matriarch and the patriarch of the so-called clan, and when my... my grandpa loved to have everybody around him, and he would say, well, we're gonna' have a picnic, or we're gonna' have a wiener roast... and we would go to Three Rivers or we would go up to Mt. Hebo, or we would go to the beach, or anyway.. and this is something that I don't think families do a lot of, because everybody is going in so many different directions, and there's so many different things to do... um... but that was a lot of my childhood... when I was very young, my grandpa liked to drink... maybe I shouldn't say that... but he would get a bottle of beer, which was a quart, and he would buy me an orange.. I think it was Nesbitt... a bottle of orange pop, and we'd go for a drive... and he'd drink his beer... which wasn't illegal then, but it's illegal now, I know that... and I would drink my orange pop... and we'd just drive and go places... um... they fished and we would fishing, we'd go clam digging, we'd go crabbing, um... just a lot of family oriented stuff.

**Student:** Thank you very much for visiting with us. We will type up your comments and stories and send a copy to you. We hope you can come to the Gathering 2002 on May 29th, beginning at noon.

**AI:** Ok!

**Student:** Now we'd like to show some photos we have, both for you to enjoy them and to see if you can identify any of the people shown in them.

**AI:** Oh, ok.

(end of tape)

Transcribed by Darleen Cole  
November 17, 2002