

Interview with Bill Sears

Conducted by NVMS Students in 2001

The students and classroom are unknown.

Typed by Darleen CREECY Cole 2005

Student: Where do you live right now?

Bill: Right now? Tierra Del Mar.

Student: Tierra Del Mar... how many years have you lived there?

Bill: Do I have to say?

Student: No... (laughing)... Have you lived in Tillamook County all your life?

Bill: Yes.

Student: Yeah? Where did you go to school when you were little?

Bill: I went to school in... I started school in Woods, Oregon.

Student: Do you have any one significant event that occurred in your childhood that you remember?

Bill: Yeah. (showing picture) It's a bear... a black bear... I'm sittin' on this thing... I'm on top of it... I must be five years old... my brother... he's older than I am and he wouldn't go sit on it, and I got a... but that was... I can still remember that...

Student: That's neat... why do you like it here?

Bill: 'Cause I was born here, I guess.

Student: Yeah? How has South Tillamook County changed in your lifetime?

Bill: What has changed?

Student: South Tillamook County... where we live...

Bill: How much has it changed... it's kinda' hard to say how much of it has changed... even if you go back fifteen years... uh... (indistinguishable)... just like there was in Tierra Del Mar...

Student: Wow...

Bill: Tierra Del Mar...

Student: Uh, huh (yes)...

Bill: ... they used to have... I think there was three gas stations, you had three grocery stores, you had a sales (???), you had a barbershop, you had service stations... now you ain't got none of that...

Student: So it seems like it's gone backwards, almost?

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Bill: No, it's just goin'... people are travelin' more...

Student: Oh, yeah...

Bill: You can get more done... you couldn't get anything done there...

Student: Oh, I see...

Bill: (indistinguishable)

Student: Do you have a favorite story about living here?

Bill: Oh, let's see... it's a good place to be... I've been... I've traveled quite a bit in my lifetime... during World War II Uncle Sam sent me out to do a few things, and I've been (????)... the furthest I've been from home is the Persian Gulf... I've never been in... I've been in the Atlantic, but we went through the Panama Canal to get there... (????)... I've been all through Asia...

Student: Oh, wow...

Bill: Uh, Australia, New Zealand... I have gone back to Australia and New Zealand since I've been... I think all countries are like Australia... usually they're not... compare the United States to Australia and New Zealand...

Student: Uh, huh (yes)...

Bill: ... it is a... well, what people are... you walk down the streets, strangers will walk up to you and start talking to you...

Student: Wow.

Bill: You don't have to lock anything up... nobody steals anything... I mean, it's a different world... you can't hardly believe what goes on over there...

Student: That's so cool...

Bill: Isn't it?

Student: Yeah.

Other Student: Are you aware of any homestead sites in this area?

Bill: Homestead sites? Oh, yeah... uh, huh (yes)...

Other Student: Where are they at?

Bill: You know where Fishers place is?

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Student: Uh, huh (yes)...

Bill: East... there used to be a... well, they call it a road... pretty rough road now... right up through there... the guy that... I don't know if the guy owned the homestead or not... but the last guy that was on it was (???)... and he was married to a... his wife was a Rennike... now, a Rennike is a... you know where the Billups ranch is?

Student: A what?

Bill: The Billups ranch?

Student: I don't think so...

Bill: Well, let's see... you go north from Tierra Del Mar... as you go out of Tierra Del Mar, you start to go up a little hill, right?

Student: Uh, huh (yes)...

Bill: Okay. That land on both sides of the road is the Billups Ranch...

Student: Hmm... yeah, now I know where you're talking about...

Bill: That's the Rennike ranch...

Student: Okay...

Bill: Uh... he put it in his will that when he died, that this land out there on the hill would go back to (???) ... and that's the only one that I know of that directly had first deeds to the property... our property had another deed on it... (indistinguishable)...

Student: Oh, yeah...

Student: How'd people support themselves? Like, on their homesteads... how'd they support themselves?

Bill: Well, they all had... (????)... he worked for the county roads right here in the county... but he had... all the farmers had... the folks for instance... if you... you'd raise two pigs a year... you'd sell one, and eat one. And we always had cattle... we had, oh... seemed like a dozen cows... and we didn't milk 'em all at one time... and we never shipped milk to the factory... we separated it... do you know what a separator is?

Student: I think so...

Bill: It's a thing that you crank and you take the cream out of the milk... okay... that's what we did... that was my job... (indistinguishable)... then you had the skimmed milk... we'd feed that back to the pigs, feed it to the calves, feed it to ???? ... and then you would raise chickens,

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you'd raise ducks, you'd raise everything else... you were just like MacDonald's farm... that was what started the whole thing in the first place... 'cause if you didn't have all that stuff, and not be raising it, you'd barter... you got a dozen eggs or two dozen eggs and you'd go to the store and you'd buy something that you'd need...

Student: Yeah...

Other Student: Okay... um... what kind of crops were grown on these homesteads?

Bill: You mean, like, hay... in Oregon that was all you had besides trees...

Student: Okay... what did the early homes look like... were they log...

Bill: Oh, no... some of 'em was pretty nice homes... you know, it's amazing, that... you know where Thousand Trails is?

Student: Uh, huh (yes)...

Bill: Okay... right now just east of them is Fisher's place... ???? there was a big barn, there was a couple big houses... two-story houses... uh, they had a cheese factory there and stuff... the only thing that, I guess, my folks... we had... I can never remember using candles or anything else back then... we had a generator that generated electricity, and it was just like downtown, really ...

Student: What did people do for entertainment?

Bill: Oh, they had a lot of shows... shows they had, like at the grange, to go to... and they had ???? and records, and they had a lot of picnics in the summertime... there was always a picnic... ????

Student: Okay... do you have any personal family stories about homesteading in this area?

Bill: Well, not really...

Student: How have the businesses changed? Like, you said that lots of them weren't... the ones that were in Tierra Del Mar aren't there any more 'cause you can get out and go to more places... do you remember how they've changed any where else?

Bill: Well, I think they've changed all over. You take now, you can get stuff in Tillamook that you used to have to go to Portland to get, or to Mac to get... and now you can get all the groceries you want, just go to Pacific City... then you've got a vehicle, then you've got roads to get there too, see.

Student: What kind of businesses were around when you were younger?

Bill: Well, uh... there in Tierra Del Mar there was quite a few businesses... restaurants, taverns... you name it, they had it there.

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Student: Any of those places still around today? None at all?

Bill: None at all.

Student: Did you do anything else, other than serve in the Army?

Bill: Well, I wasn't in the Army, I was in the Navy...

Student: Oh, whoa... sorry...

Bill: Then after I got out of the Navy, I joined the Marine Corps, and I was in Korea with the Marine Corps.

Student: Did a lot of people do that?

Bill: No, I don't think they were as dumb as I was! (Everybody laughing)... No, after World War II, everybody that was in the service was not... you had ten years you could be called up afterwards. So then's when they went and they took these... the Army, the Navy, and the Marines and all this... they started the Reserves, and if you'd come to a meeting once a month, you can keep you up and you could get your pension. So that's how I got into the Marine Corps.

Student: Oh, I see...

Bill: Then once a year we'd go to Camp Pendleton, and I was in the engineers... we'd go down there and we would... they'd set a bridge here and we'd launch from there... and that was our job... ???? ... but it would work out that way... I ended up being a truck driver, but ????... but it was interesting...

Student: Yeah, it sounds like it... Was there anything that made you come back here, other than being born here, after the war?

Bill: Well, everybody I grew up with...

Student: Yeah...

Bill: ... and you could go anyplace after the war and get a job...

Student: So, family and friends were just the main thing?

Bill: Yeah...

Student: Yeah? Hmm, let's see...

Other Student: Did you ever wish you could live somewhere else? Or did you always want to live here?

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Bill: Well, the only places I've really.... I have thought going back to Australia one day... I didn't want to... when I was over to India... ????? I haven't been to China in my life, and I've really been trying to get my passage to China now... this year we went down to Bolivia and... when I was serving in the service... Just can't believe these other countries... but they did hundreds of years ago...

Student: How has farming changed? Like...

Bill: What?

Student: Farming. How has that changed during your lifetime?

Bill: I... I didn't get all that...

Student: How has farming changed during your lifetime? Not very much?

Bill: No....

Student: Really?

Other student: Well, you brought in a bunch of pictures today... would you like to tell us about some of those?

Bill: Well... I said I had some about the dorys... these few pictures are pretty old... about 53 years old... and all over the... about the Cape...

Other student: They're very nice...

Student: Did your family have a dory built?

Bill: Yeah, I had one... well, my family didn't have one, but we had a boat on the lake... do you have a library here?

Students: Yes, we do... Yeah...

Bill: Do you know anything about the Panama Canal?

Students: Not a lot.. I know a little bit about it...

Bill: I'd like to give this to you, and you can put it in to your library... this is all the Panama Canal...

Students: Thank you... that's very nice... Whoa! That's great... We appreciate that... a lot...

Bill: That tells you everything that went on... that was quite a job... an undertaking to build that...

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Student: And it's also in... different pictures are in Spanish... is that?

Bill: That's all the Panama Canal...

Student: Wow...

Bill: Either of you ever seen that... picture of that? Do you know where that is?

Student: That's the Blimp Base... Yeah... is it?

Bill: Yeah... Diamond Lumber Company... when we got out of the service we were working... I was one of the first ones who worked there for Diamond Lumber... there's fifteen hundred people in that picture...

Student: Wow...

Other student: I was thinking that there's a lot more people in there than you see now...

Bill: Yeah... but there are very few of these out... now here's a picture of... that's Pacific City...

Student: Do you know what year this is?

Bill: Noooo.... I don't....

Other student: Wow, that's Ferry Street? ... it looks a lot different...

Bill: Look where Haystack Rock is...

Students: If it wasn't for that, I would know... I wouldn't have believed you.. Wouldn't know it was the same...

Bill: Here's another picture of the Cape...

Student: Oh, yeah... This was in 1900... jeez...

Bill: This was the last year... it was taken at school in Woods... that was taken in Woods the last year I was there...

Student: Do any of these people still live around here?

Bill: Well, not too many of 'em, really... that's my brother... he's passed away... that's a Hurli-man... he used to teach here...

Students: (chuckling)...

Bill: This is ?????....

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Student: Oh, yeah?

Bill: This is me...

Student: You were very good looking...

Bill: There's John Hurliman... that's a Blackburn... I believe he's my neighbor... yep... that's my neighbor...

Student: There is a Blackburn that's my neighbor... it looks like him... so...

Bill: It is?

Other Student: That's neat...

Bill: I didn't want to take these pictures... oh, there's my bird...

Student: Oh, wow! That's pretty cool.

Student: ... so did he just come in your field, and you... or...

Bill: No, they shot him there...

Student: Wait up, bear! Wait up!

Bill: Okay... this hill, right here, at the top of the picture... do you know where that's at?

Student: My guess is....

Bill: How many trees do you see on that?

Student: Nine...

Bill: Where does that taken at?

Student: The dunes... uuuuuh.....

Bill: The where?

Student: The dunes...

Bill: The sand dunes...

Student: Yeah...

Other student: There's cracks on it...

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Student: It's black and white... you can't really tell...

Other student: I don't know...

Student: Where is that at?

Bill: I was born right down here at Tierra Del Mar...

Other student: Really?

Bill: That's the hillside at Tierra Del Mar.

Other student: Wow...

Student: That's like totally covered with houses now...

Bill: No...

Student: It's not...

Bill: ... this is the hill here at... all these hills here... like, when we were small you could see a jack rabbit run across these, 'cause this was all pasture... there's not a tree on that...

Other student: Now there's a lot?

Bill: Now it's all... I've logged mine off... all this land here I've logged off. My son is building a house right there... but, there's no trees... now, a guy... if he went back into a... engineer surveyed all of that Tierra Del Mar... he was down on top of that beach hill down there, and you could not see a tree...

Other student: Wow...

Bill: See that about ten years ago all month... but that is... just how it has changed, as nature has changed...

Other student: Yeah...

Bill: It's kinda' hard to understand... that's Haystack Rock...

Other student: Uh, huh (yes)...

Bill: This here was taken from our pasture... or from... over here...

Other student: Oh, yeah... wow...

Student: Do as many people come to the beaches as when you were young?

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Bill: Lots of 'em...

Student: More than now?

Bill: Well, probably not, because there's more people in the world today, and those people... I don't know... Tierra Del Mar was a goin' town for a long time...

Other student: Are there... I'm not really familiar with Tierra Del Mar... but are there a lot of people that live there now?

Bill: There's a lot of homes there...

Other student: Oh, yeah?

Bill: There's probably over two hundred homes... but then.... they never come down, because it's all second homes...

Other student: Yeah... summer homes... things like that....

Student: Okay... anything else you'd like to tell us about Tillamook County that we might not know about?

Bill: Oh, I don't know...

Other student: Do you have any suggestions to make Tillamook County better in the future?

Bill: Oh, I don't know what it'd be, really... uh... the only thing that I can say is that it used to be when you had a piece of land, you could do what you wanted to do with it...

Other student: Uh, huh (yes)...

Bill: Now you can't even... it's... you gotta' go through so much rigamarole... you know... no matter what you do...

Other student: Yeah... so, it's your land, but it's not your land, too...

Bill: Yeah... it's just a... it's everybody's land...

Other student: Yeah...

Bill: It's kind of a hard thing... like, my dad came here in 1919, and my son can't do what he wanted to do on the property... and... ??? is still in my name, I could never even use it...

Other student: Yeah...

Bill: But, uh.... I don't know what the outcome is gonna' be... somewhere along the line

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there's gotta' be a breaking point...

Student: So you...

Bill: If you're going to... you see, this picture here... that is just one company in Tillamook...

Other student: Uh, huh (yes)...

Bill: They were run out... they up and sold out because they could not keep up with what was expected of them... and this was in the '60's...

Other student: Wow...

Bill: See, uh.... I don't know how to really say it... but it's... a lot of it's gonna' be you kids' idea of how to make this...

Other student: Yeah, that's why we want your suggestions, so that we can help it for everybody...

Bill: Well... it's gonna' be kinda' hard (chuckling) for you guys to do it, because of... it's a... I don't know... it's like a snowball going downhill...

Other student: Uh, huh (yes)...

Bill: And it's going pretty fast... right now they talk about all of the birds in Lincoln and Clatsop County... ????? all the property they want to set aside... but in the meantime, what are we going to do for the people that are livin' here? ??????

Other student: Yeah...

Bill: I don't have any answers for that...

Other student: Did you get in trouble at school? Like when you were a kid?

Bill: Did I get in trouble at school? Oh, yeah... I...

Other student: What did you do? Like what kinds of things?

Bill: Oh, I told Brown where to go one day in school, and I walked out, and he says you can't do that... ????? but what I was... he didn't know it... I'd already got my parents consent to go into the service, and ??????

Other student: Yeah... what kind of discipline things did teachers and staff members use?

Bill: Well... if you did something real bad, you'd get kicked out of school...

Other student: Really?

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Bill: Yeah.

Other student: 'Cause we... I was interviewing a man and he said that he had to sit in a corner, and then another lady said she had to sit under a desk, and I was like... HMMMMM.... so it seemed like in different schools, they had different policies...

Bill: They probably did...

Other student: Yeah...

Bill: Well... what.... Brown used to do... he'd send a note home, and you had to take this note home to your parents... which was about you and how you was caught smokin'...

Other student: So then it was just kind of a parents' discipline, kind of thing... okay...

Student: Did a lot of the kids in your school smoke?

Bill: Most of 'em...

Student: At what age did people start smoking back then?

Bill: About... oh, I don't know... well, I don't know... when I was in the first grade, probably...

Other student: Wow... how many people did you graduate with?

Bill: Well, you see, I didn't graduate... like our graduating at Sandlake, and there was six of us.

Other student: Oh, yeah...

Student: Okay... um... was there a lot of homework when you were a kid? Not at all?

Bill: When you left the school, it was all... you'd just leave it...

Student: I like that policy... (laughing)...

Bill: (laughing)... well, I don't know, but this... 'cause here's something else... when you came home, you had work to do...

Student: Yeah...

Bill: Do you have anything to do when you go home?

Other student: Oh, yeah...

Student: I watch the Blazer games...

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Bill: Oh, you like to watch...

Student: Oh, yeah...

Bill: Hey, they did pretty good...

Student: Last night... yeah...

Bill: And I can't believe... they're doin' pretty good... maybe they'll change their attitude, huh....

Student: Need to beat those Lakers...

Other student: So, do you have any stories... just to pass time, or...

Student: Well, what do you like to do now?

Bill: Fish...

Student: Fish...

Bill: We're gonna' start doing... we're gonna' do some traveling...

Student: Yeah...

Other student: I think it's neat that you guys travel so much and you always just come back to this little small town...

Student: You have to go to some of the nicest places in the world, and you come back to us...

Bill: (chuckling)... Well, no, you gotta' put your roots down some place, you know...

Other student: Yeah...

Bill: Gotta' have someplace to call home...

Other student: Yeah... well, thank you for talking with us...

Bill: Okay...

Other student: Do you have anything else... like... that you can think of... at any time... about the schools or anything...

Bill: Well, I can't think of anything right...

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Other student: But thank you very, very much...

Bill: Okay...

Student: If you're hungry, we have some cookies over there for you, if you'd like...

Other voice: All done?

Students: Yep...

Other voice: Oh, okay...

(end of tape)

Transcribed by Darleen Cole

March 18, 2005