

J.C. and Stella Dunn

Interviewed by Mildred Davy on February 12, 1968

Retyped by Dean Bones, December 2019

Mildred Davy - "Mr. John Clarence Dunn, who is fondly known to his many friends as Clarence Dunn - he and his wife Stella have come up this afternoon, and we're just going to visit.

Clarence, it's a little hard for me to call you Clarence, because I have called you Mr. Dunn all of my life but I'm going to try to do that this afternoon, and we're just going to visit a little bit about you, about your family about your life here in Tillamook County and we are going to start out and ask you just how long you've been in Tillamook County."

Clarence Dunn - "Nearly 81 years."

Mildred Davy - "And 81 will be what day?"

Clarence Dunn - "Thursday the 15th." (February 15, 1968)

Mildred Davy - "Clarence is telling us that he was born right here in Tillamook County almost 81 years ago, and you were the son of which Dunn?"

Clarence Dunn - "Jerome and Elizabeth Dunn"

Mildred Davy - "Before we started to tape here in earnest, I was asking Mr. Dunn, and I guess that is what I am going to have to call him, because that's what I have called him for so many years - just how it happened that his people came to this country in the first place. I think it was so very, very interesting, as most of these stories are, that I am just going to ask him to retell a little bit about what he told me about why the Dunns came to Oregon."

Clarence Dunn - "Possibly it was because they started out from the East - I think is the best _____ for the answer to the question. They came from Kansas to here and originally from Virginia."

Mildred Davy - "Was this a family that started out from Kansas for Oregon, or was this just single men, or what?"

Clarence Dunn - "All of the family except the father and a - my grandfather - and one grown daughter and they came in 1877."

Mildred Davy - "Now when was it that the Dunns actually did come into the Oregon Country and down into the Nestucca Valley?"

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Clarence Dunn - "In the fall of 1875."

Mildred Davy - "Clarence told me that his - it would be his grandfather's people - were Virginians and this I thought was quite interesting; you know we think about war the way it is now, but surely war on our own soil must have been something too, and Clarence, tell the little story about where they lived and what happened to their worldly goods."

Clarence Dunn - "They lived practically on the dividing line between the North and South in Missouri, near Independence, _____ somewhere along Independence and St. Joe, and the Union soldiers then would take what of their stock they wanted and then bushwhackers would come along - the bushwhackers were mostly Rebels, but they worked independent of an army group and they'd steal what they wanted and when they got down to where they didn't have anything left, then they pulled out and left the country and went from Missouri to Kansas that year and stayed 10 years in Kansas - then from Kansas to Oregon, and they got into the Nestucca Valley area in 1875."

Mildred Davy - "How many children were there in your family, Clarence? How many brothers and sisters?"

Clarence Dunn - "There were eight - 4 boys and 4 girls - 5 of us are still living."

Mildred Davy - "Just exactly what did they have in the way of property down there in the Nestucca Country when they came in there in 1875? What was the first thing they did?"

Clarence Dunn - "Well, they looked for land. They homesteaded. They squatted, because the land they chose was 'unsurveyed.' They squatted on their first homesteads and they were so hard to get to - they had to make a water trip by canoe and then wade through the swamps and such to get to them. Both my father and grandfather homesteaded on the Big Nestucca River and left them and went over on the Little Nestucca River. In fact, my grandfather was moving out his family - his original homestead was where the grade school is south of Cloverdale - and he was on his way out and he stopped at a homestead and - he had sold what they call his 'rights', that's the improvements made on his land - and they stopped at this house overnight and on their way out this man said, 'Why don't you buy this place if you like the country here - I've got to leave, I've got consumption' - he called it TB; and in the overnight conversation, my

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Grandfather bought him out. He bought the place there in the neighborhood. He bought the 'rights' and father homesteaded there adjoining it."

"He 'preempted' then - he had a 'Preemption Claim' and a Homestead Claim then."

Mildred Davy - "Now what do you mean by a Preemption Claim?"

Clarence Dunn - "Well, I don't know if I can explain it exactly, but a homesteader could exercise a right to another 160 by paying, I think, a dollar and a quarter an acre or something like that, and you didn't have to live on that if it adjoined his original homestead. He couldn't make final 'proof' on the 'Homestead' and the 'Preemption' both then."

Mildred Davy - "How much property, then, did they have, Clarence, altogether?"

Clarence Dunn - "My father had a half section of land. That's 320 acres, and my grandmother had 160 acres."

Mildred Davy - "When did you start to school, and how old were you?"

Clarence Dunn - "When I started to school, I was in the 3rd grade. My father was a school teacher, and there was no bridge on the river. And I couldn't go to school 'till I was past 7 years old. The school was right by Clem Hurliman's house. There was no way to get over there until they built the bridge. They opened the bridge in the spring of 1894 and my brother next younger than me - we started to school then. This was a one-room school house, and there wasn't a piece of lumber in it. It was all - the people there hewed it out of the woods. They split shakes for the roof, siding and everything else. They had a big ol' box stove in it for heat. There was as high as 44 youngsters attending school with one teacher in the one room. Most of the time the teacher was a woman - very seldom had a man teacher. Usually, she got paid about \$30.00 a month."

Mildred Davy - "Clarence, how long did it actually take to come to Tillamook when you can first remember coming to Tillamook?"

Clarence Dunn - "I remember very well when I first came to Tillamook - I was 18 years old, 1905. I came with another young fellow to drive a horse, and it took about 7 hours from Cloverdale and that was a good, fast trip. With a team, it was a long day's drive, and you usually stayed overnight in Tillamook."

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Mildred Davy - "Where did people buy most of their supplies?"

Clarence Dunn - "Woods was the main trading point in the south end of the county for a good many years, but for the staple groceries, main groceries - payday, most of them only had one a year when some cattle would be sold or the end of fishing season - most of the business from our part of the country was transacted in Grande Ronde, Willamina or Sheridan. It was easier to get there - there was a better road - not so many rivers to cross and better transportation in that direction, and then a great many of them had relatives in that part of the country. Then in the provision line, a good many of them would go out in the fall and pick hops and prunes. Some of the men took part in the grain harvest to gather up a few dollars. It didn't take many dollars then and for the necessities; our needs weren't near as great then."

"I only served as president of the Tillamook County Creamery Association twice, but was associated with it for many, many years. I served on the Board in 1925, and then I didn't serve again until in 1948 and stayed there then, with the exception of 1951, until 1960. 1960 was the last year I served there - 14 years all told."

"The Dunn family first sold milk for cheese in 1897 or 1898. People in our neighborhood first hauled milk to the Oretown factory - Peter Mackintosh had established the Oretown factory. Transportation was a hindrance. The first milk we sold was to the old Red Creamery on the Big Nestucca over there where Burns' cabins are. That was the first commercial manufacturing plant in the dairy business in Tillamook County. Mackintosh and Townsend, I think - T.S. Townsend, I believe he was the one - he established the Tillamook plant here - was the first one and was a privately operated plant for many years. I think that was about 1894 or 1895, 1894. I believe that that Red Creamery run then. They picked up milk in boats and those that weren't close to the river would put a can of cream on their back and pack it down to the river. And everybody had a little 'crow's nest' where a boat came along and picked it up and hauled it up to the Red Creamery. I think, according to the county history, that that was the first manufacturing plant of the County in the dairy business."

Mildred Davy - "Some of the families, some of the youngsters you went to school with, some of the relatives that you have down in that part of the county - tell me a little bit about some of them."

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Clarence Dunn - "Well, Mollie Fox was a Craven, and then her brother Lyle - John Craven runs his ranch. Lyle sold his ranch to his son, John. The Cravens came to Nestucca Valley in 1884. Ol' John Craven came west in 1865 from Missouri."

Mildred Davy - "Who else down there in that area that has been there a long time that you think of that you went to school with or probably fished or hunted with or did all the things that boys do together - are there any of them left?"

Clarence Dunn - "A lot of them got headstones. Lyle Craven and Mollie his sister, in that area, are the real old settlers - they're all that's left. Now, Arthur Coffee and his sister, Mrs. Rosey Coffee Fox, lives up the river there - they came there in 1900. Somebody had paved the way - they didn't have to go out in the woods and cut the logs and build them a house because somebody had already paved the way. But the real . . . what you wanted was those that had to build from the beginning. Let me add one family, and that is Ralph Sutton's brothers and sisters - they belonged to the early old timers. They were in and out of the country quite a bit, but they finally, well, Ralph and Mrs. Mamie Scherzinger are all that's left of them now in this part of the country."

Mildred Davy - "Now, I want to know a little bit about your own family, Clarence. How many years have you and Stella been married?"

Clarence Dunn - "I think about more than 56 years."

Mildred Davy - "How many children did you have? What are their names?"

Clarence Dunn - "Four children. There's Roy and Don and Wilma Hagerty and Audrey Knotts, and they all still live in this part of the country here. Roy has a part of our old home place, and Wilma is across the river on the ol' Fenner place, and Audrey lives up the river on part of the old Job Foster claim. Don's family is in Kodiak, Alaska.

Mildred Davy - "Now, how many grandchildren do you have?"

Clarence Dunn - "There's about 15 or 16 grandchildren and just about as many great-grandchildren."

Mildred Davy - "Looking back upon about 81 years, is there anything in particular that you would like to share with us?"

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Clarence Dunn - "The one thing that I think that has been lost is the neighborliness. In the old days, it was a case of survival, and they shared their thoughts, their goods to a great extent and their services to each other. It was a much more friendly atmosphere. I think the neighborliness is one of the great things that we have lost."

Mildred Davy - "This is J.C. Dunn from Cloverdale, and this is February 12, 1968, and Mildred Davy visiting with Clarence Dunn because he is going to be 81 years old on the 15th of this month. Born and raised and lived his entire life in Tillamook County."