

Interview with Laurretta (Corky) Smith May 12, 2000
Interviewed by Eliza Buck, Lily and Gordon Hevern

Born 9/11/29, born in Lakeview Oregon, folks lived in Bly. Parents were mother Grace O'Neil, father was Lawrence Oswald Griffin. Others: Lawrence Neil Griffin, Gilbert Lee Griffin and Janet Louise Griffin and Terry Nelson and T.J. Nelson half brothers.

Tom Thumb was Lawrence Neil.

Raised half brothers and Janet' boys, Eddie and Rusty.

Parents were married in 1928 and Corky was born in 1929. Grandfather had a ranch and father worked for him. Janet died in a car wreck. Grandfather was called Griff. Had a ranch this side of Harry Obenchain. House was burned father Harry bought. Grandfather came here in 1900, 16 years old. Worked on the BK ranch for Ernie Paddock. Grandfather died December of 1961. Father was killed in the 2nd world war in France. He was 45 or so.

Always lived in Bly. Mother's dad and mother had the Jack's Place bar and restaurant in Bly. Jack and Amy O'Neil. Corky's mom and dad divorced when she was 5 years old. Lived with my grandmother until she was 10 and back with her mother

Jack O'Neil died in 1953 or 4. Grandma still had bar and restaurant.

One time Bly had 4 sawmills. Lots of loggers and lots of people. Weekends were spent in the bar. Had dances, Bly had 3 hard liquor bars and 3 beer bars. From 1939 or 40 went on for quite a while. One bar had a 2-lane bowling alley. Both Corky and Wayne set pins in the bowling alley for a penny a line.

Wayne moved to Bly when he was 9. He was born in Lakeview. Doctor was Leafhead.

Corky and Tom Thumb were out in the yard playing Liquor store across from the bar. Heard commotion from across the street. Corky and Tom were about 9 or 10 years old. Drunk wanting liquor, owner was the Justice of the Peace, Bill Titus, had a hook for a right arm. Told guy to leave because it was Sunday. Had rooming house in back of the store. Drunk came back again and threw a rock through the door of the store. Bill Titus hooked the drunk with his hook arm under the jaw. Could hear the bones cracking. Killed him dead. Grandma hollered at us kids to get back in the house. Tom Thumb would laugh later and say "By God, they never did call you and I for witnesses." Streets were quiet. Could have been the only witnesses. Titus later killed his wife by shooting her with a shotgun. Then they did something to him, jail time. In between Titus and the Liquor store was the only telephone in town.

Phone switchboard office had the police in there when the people were killed at Mitchell monument. Wouldn't let them say anything. People who had the switchboard had two daughters around Corky's age. Were good friends with them. Could not get in where the switchboard was. Was very hush, hush, did not want the Japanese to hear that the bomb had killed anyone. The Patzke kids were the youngest in the family. The Shoemaker boy was the youngest in their family. Other 2 boys were only children. Kids were around the age of Corky. Went to school together. Kept very quiet so there wasn't a service at school. Was a few days before the word got out. Bombs were supposed to start fires and burn the forest.

Corky's dad mother is buried in the cemetery. Grace Oswald Griffin. Buried 9/11/11.

Grandfather killed a 300 lb deer. Played cards and drank hard. Was very honest. Would stand by his word. Came from Jackson County. His granddad Beryl Bell Griffin came to Jackson co in 1852 with the Calvary. Had army base at Jacksonville were to control the Indians. Griffin Creek is on Hwy 66 out of Keno. Have a Griffin Creek grange and cemetery. His dad's name was John Bell Griffin. Must be buried in that area. Cousin in K.Falls named Bill Bailey. Cabin up there on Griffin Creek where they would have family reunions. Denise Corcoran is relation to Corky on mother's side.

O'Neil came in 1928. Granddad O'Neil came out of Hornbook. Broke horses for the Army. Older brother piddled everything away. Griffin was here in 1900. Ruth Obenchain came in the 1920s. Corky's family probably one of the oldest. Sis (Owens) Rental came to the area in 1800 and something.

Wayne's granddad lived in Barnes Valley and delivered the mail on horseback to the ranches. Lived in Bly and was the black smith. Ended up in Bonanza got killed by a bull dragging him around for 3 days. Had one piece of pant around his leg. Had cuff of the shirt left. Drove down there, bull weighed 1600. Bull would moan and swell up, hair stood up on his back. Cork was scared. Wanted the bull killed, butcher shop would take him if early in the morning. Never cut any of his cattle. Would throw them a can and have them butt it around. Neighbors told him to sell the bull. Grand Father's name was Raymond Ripley Utley. He was 67 when he died. Around 1955. Wayne used to ride horses. Liked to hunt deer, riding a colt up above a rim rock. Shooting down horse fell over backwards and fell on him, broke his leg and arm, crawled 5 miles to his house. Got in his pickup and drove through the gates to a neighbors. Took him to hospital.

15 lemons, 10 sodas and 10 carrots were 35 cents for all of it. Leather bound ledger, 1.5 pounds of beef was \$0.40. Year was 1920. O'Neil Mercantile, in Mt Hebron.

Found person at Andersen Cabin, staying in his cabin for the winter. Next spring went to look for him. Harry Obenchain and Griff went and found him dead in his cabin. Next to Long Creek. Name was Anderson, called the Andersen Cabin. Ran out of groceries snow too deep to get out.

Was not one of the Indian Andersen. O.T. Andersen, called him Buck, lived up by Andersen filed. Weyco had guys come out and homestead, build a cabin and live on it five years. To get timber. Weyco pay them to come out and stay there. Weyerhaeuser got most of their land this way. While country full of cabins. Man lived and wife lived back to back. The Forest Service burned most of the cabins down. Only one left standing that Wayne knows of. Had a patio built on. Roof came off the cabin like a porch.

How got nickname? When 10 days old. Mary Gordon gave her the name and also called Neil Tom Thumb. Mary Gordon lived for years in Bly. Big building was called the Bucket of Blood was a bar, (behind Lura Hunter mobile) Played cards, danced. Also had the Highway Inn. Bucket of Blood burned. Found pieces of burned glass that melted together. Corky was only 5 or 6 when it burned.

Granddad went to jail for bootlegging. He was at McNeil Island for 18 months out of Portland. Grandma had tall ceilings, see her light moving at night, took in laundry while he was in jail. He couldn't get bar license but she did. He called it Jack's Place. Corky has the licenses. Didn't set well with him that he couldn't get a license. License was under Amy O'Neil. Came in and found the sink in kitchen had booze under. Came to Bucket of Blood Mary Gordon poured booze in with the laundry water so they wouldn't find booze at her place. Don't think Granddad made the booze. Was a still at Yaden Flat. One of the sand hill up on Ivory Pine there was a couple of brass tubs that were used for making liquor. Wayne remembered Corky's Granddad talking about ordering a still through the mail.

Remember the trains? Used to park and walk up town and have dinner. Hauled logs out and gas in to Bob Clark's distributor tanks. Behind the ODOT's building is where the stockyard used to be. Wayne used to drive cattle from Bly to Barnes Valley, Horsefly, Lapham, Callamus Butte,. Worked for lots of the ranches around. Had two kids come up one time had mustaches, took them down and dry shaved them. Had a Frenchman at the ZX couldn't speak English very good, St a bucket of water, jump up every morning and took a bath in the snow. Wrote a book called Over the Rim in 1943.

Hunting used to be really good. When they bought the reservation you could run out 12 or 14 big bucks. Came all the special hunts. Indians did not kill off the deer like people say. Friend Betty and Leo Olett came from Sutherland Ore Buck tag last three days you could kill a doe. Had three more doe hunts. Killed 2200 does and 1800 does in the next hunt and people wonder where they went.

Winter of 1999 Wayne saw 20 elk swim the river. Elk tore up Mike O'Brien's fence.

Went to Lee Decker's funeral, Bill Hamilton said he remembered when he lived in Bly said Lee Decker

was part of the Wild Bunch. Wayne, Gordon, Virgil Berry and Lee Decker. Just kids, didn't stay at home Wayne left home at 14. Lee's folks moved to K.Falls and Decker stayed out here.

Mattie Cross Green was here when Corky was born. Was gone before Corky got very big. Doesn't remember her being here.

Ethel Fairchild (Bannister) owned the ranch across from the River springs ranch. Banisters are from Paisley. Ethel wore furs and then lost it all.

Laboree house, Cork has picture. He married a dance hall girl in N.Y. when he died down where the trees are down low. House set up on the hill house burned that was below. She lost the place, ran out of money, house was never finished. When Corky was 7 years old a family name of Savage ran the old hotel. All the kids played an instrument. Lived in the house out there. She would stay the weekend with June Savage. House inside looked like? Inside the front door there was a big furnace, wood but send the heat to the first level. Front room was big and narrow, had French doors to family room, dining room, kitchen all the bedrooms was upstairs. There was a big old staircase. Slat on the walls with chicken wire would put stuck over. The house was never finished, didn't have any carpets just had wood floors, and very few people ever lived in it. The one down where the trees are burnt and they built a new one on the hill. Used to be dumbwaiter in the house. He died and she had the place, house burned in the trees she built the new house but ran out of money. Sold the place and left the country. Lowery bought from her. Liskeys bought from Lowery. Totsi Liskey lived down at Swan Lake she inherited from her Dad and she sold to Lorenz.

Did you know the Bloomingcamps? Gone before Corky can remember. Cork's Granddad worked for them. Bell had a ranch here for years. Gloria Buchanan lives in Bly. Her grandma came on a covered wagon. She with the bunch that came to the Blue Bucket mine. Found gold and non-one could figure out where they found it.

Corky can remember the sawmill burning. About 3 different times. Devastating to the community, nobody would have job. Weyco was cutting a million feet a day for about 30 years. Wayne worked for Ivory Pine mill in 1949. Wayne tried to go to work at the mill but was too young. Burned in the 40s. There was a house of ill repute on the Ivory Pine road in the 40s. Didn't have a name. Wayne and Corky was too young, house finally fell down. Holly Brown built a cabin beside the house. He had a bad back, could not straighten up.

Jack's place like? Inside was big room that was the bar, tables for poker games, walled off part of it for storage. Other room was bedroom. Door on the end of the room that went into the house. Had 12' ceiling, bedrooms off and kitchen and dining room off of that. Had a big dining room table that was only used once or twice a year. Had a washer and dryer. Bar had 8 or 9 stools. Had two bathrooms. Restaurant on the other side. Called Yours and Mine Café. Grandma didn't drink, kept everyone in line. Granddad like to drink. Got picked up for playing Blackjack. Had friends that had been to Reno. 6 or 7 was playing for nickels and dimes. Arrested them wanted to go to Wood River Court. Had a good friend for \$100 represented all 7 of them. Got a jury, first guy told them they didn't have any business picking people up. Went to trial, had everything in notebook, no money out for bets. One bag had \$0.25, one \$0.98 happened in 1964. Guy came in to the bar, seen him watching them, went outside and came in with another person. Wayne was tending bar so he got arrested too. Found them not guilty.

Hunting deer during the Colu mbus Day storm. Hail came down, Went to Ida Lee's place and got under a loading ramp. Hail the size of golf balls, hurt the horses. Looked like it had snowed, mother had filled a bowl and kept them in the freezer. Bet the roof off of lots of houses. Corky and Wayne lived in the house where Homer Green now lives. Roof leaked and bed was wet. Water shot up when you pushed on it. Blew a lot trees over. Roads were blocked. Logged blow down for several years after the storm.

Wayne's mother lived at Corning California. Road washed out before we got to Beatty. Had to go through Lakeview. Had to go almost to Sacramento and then come back to Corning.

Bly had terrible forest fires, 1956 or 57. There was five going at once. Couldn't see the sun. Smoke was

terrible. Didn't have to evacuate, thought they may have too. Deming Creek, Round Mtn. Guy on a caterpillar was killed on a cat on the Deming Fire. Forest Service would bring in big metal containers with lids would fill with roast beef, gravy and etc. Bigger than 5 gallon. Make sandwiches 250 at a time. Apples, oranges etc. Mother would buy all the food. Now they have catering service that goes to the fire camps. Fought the fires for a bout one month. Mother made enough on the fires (long time getting the money) bought herself a new Ford automobile. Jim Haven, Pete DeGarus worked in the restaurant. Lot of work, Marge Fitzpatrick had it for a long time.

Harry Obenchain lose ranch in a card game? Heard he came close. Corky's granddad almost lost his ranch by gambling it all away.

Why do they call the Laboree house haunted? Nobody bothered the house for year. Teenage kids saying they seen a light in the window. Told them not to go in. Windows got broke. Messed up the inside of the house.

Remember the CCC camp? Ed Patzke was in the CCCs when he came to Bly. Maybe not. When Corky was 12 went fishing, borrowed a guys pocketknife to make a sling shot. Told me to be careful, cut myself. Had Japanese doctor, didn't give anything but sewed it up. Cork Squalled and bawled. Orville Bowmen came here with the CCCs. Wayne's step dad worked as a diesel mechanic in the CCC camp. Got married in 1947, Wayne was 20 Corky was 17, Got out of school in June and married in July.

Corky and Gloria Buchanan owned the store that Protsman built. Bought it from Ed and Opal Patzke. Everyone liked Corky all the kids liked her. Lily's granddaughter would go behind the counter and get change out of a dish that Corky kept behind the counter. Lots of people owed them money when they sold the store but she got her money. Helped Lily when she needed help. Really miss the little kids. Store was called the Bly Country Store, sold groceries, boots, clothes and penny candy. Owned the store from 1979 to 1991.

Wayne and Virgil Berry had a race in logging trucks on Hwy 97. Trucks were empty.

Wayne and son Wayne still rope cows. Son-in-laws and grandsons all rope. Mac has won 10 silver belt buckles. Won his first at 2 ½ years old. He is 6 now. Can't dally but he can throw. Daughter Billie is married to Jeff Wessel.

Rodeo grounds at Parker Flat and by the Weyco water tank. Beatty had a rodeo grounds. Caught a horse thief here and was going to hang him in a barn. Dally Givens and someone cut him down before he died.

A good friend, Bill Sylvester, rodeo came here in the late fall with Bud Linderman, Stayed in Beatty with George Anderson. Anderson had 3-400 head of horses. Would take the yearling colts when they rounded them up. Four gates would open, if Sylvester got to drinking you couldn't sober him up. He was an alcoholic. Was supposed to open the gate and he was passed out on the ground. Horses got away from them. They were so mad they put Sylvester on the pulley with his legs up. Hanging by feet and Linderman came to Bly to the bar. Said, "I fixed the SOB. I hope it killed him." Wayne and Virgil went out and got the man down.

Bud Gunn crashed his single engine airplane. Was living at the ranch where Butch and Lee Hadley now live. Watched the airplane from the hill make a circle and practicing landing. Was a dirt airport. About 1-½ hours after we got home Jim McGilvery said the plane is going to fill with dirt and dust and conk out on them. About ½ hour later Phil Menges's wife came in and said we need an ambulance, the motor conked out and the plane came right down on the nose. Both had their legs broke and burnt. Gas was leaking, guys were trapped. Gunn has a wooden leg now. Other fellow later killed himself. Always walked on crutches. Probably in 1964 or 65.

Mexican got knifed in the bar. Corky was in the kitchen about 1:30 in the afternoon and heard a shot. Went in the bar and front door opened. Henry Miller came in the door and crawled under the sinks. He had been

at the Halfway house. Corky looked out and a guy was straddled another guy cutting his throat. A women was saying that's enough don't do anymore. The Mexican gets up and the blood is flowing, throat was cut but not deep enough to kill him Locked the front door of the door and ducked down. Raised up and looked out and oldest daughter was standing on the curb. Just got her in the door and he tried to get in. Came around to the side door, jumped the fence and went through the alley behind (Pit Stop mini Mart). Red West lived on the corner. Had the faucet turned on was lying there trying to stop the bleeding. The ambulance came and got him. He had stabbed the guy in his back first and broke his blade off so it was too short to cut his throat. Went to car and got the gun and shot his buddy. Knocked the gun away and was stabbing him. Caused over a women in the bar. James Quinton Anderson. Had killed three or four people before that. Everyone was afraid of him. Went to jail. Lived at Hermiston until he died. Wouldn't let him come back to Klamath County. The last guy he was supposed to kill he was so drunk Wayne didn't think he could have done it. Thinks someone else did and blamed him.

Normal

Normal

Default Paragraph Font

Default Paragraph Font

Leda HunterYC:\WINDOWS\Application Data\Microsoft\Word\AutoRecovery save of Interview_Corky_Smith.asd

Leda HunterYC:\WINDOWS\Application Data\Microsoft\Word\AutoRecovery save of Interview_Corky_Smith.asd

Leda HunterYC:\WINDOWS\Application Data\Microsoft\Word\AutoRecovery save of Interview_Corky_Smith.asd

Leda HunterYC:\WINDOWS\Application Data\Microsoft\Word\AutoRecovery save of Interview_Corky_Smith.asd

Leda HunterYC:\WINDOWS\Application Data\Microsoft\Word\AutoRecovery save of Interview_Corky_Smith.asd

Leda HunterYC:\WINDOWS\Application Data\Microsoft\Word\AutoRecovery save of Interview_Corky_Smith.asd

Leda HunterYC:\WINDOWS\Application Data\Microsoft\Word\AutoRecovery save of Interview_Corky_Smith.asd

Leda HunterYC:\WINDOWS\Application Data\Microsoft\Word\AutoRecovery save of Interview_Corky_Smith.asd

Leda HunterYC:\WINDOWS\Application Data\Microsoft\Word\AutoRecovery save of Interview_Corky_Smith.asd

Leda HunterYC:\WINDOWS\Application Data\Microsoft\Word\AutoRecovery save of Interview_Corky_Smith.asd

Leda HunterYC:\WINDOWS\Application Data\Microsoft\Word\AutoRecovery save of Interview_Corky_Smith.asd

Leda HunterYC:\WINDOWS\Application Data\Microsoft\Word\AutoRecovery save of Interview_Corky_Smith.asd

Leda Hunter5C:\My Documents\bly history\Interview_Corky_Smith.doc

Leda Hunter5C:\My Documents\bly history\Interview_Corky_Smith.doc

Leda Hunter5C:\My Documents\bly history\Interview_Corky_Smith.doc

Leda Hunter5C:\My Documents\bly history\Interview_Corky_Smith.doc

Leda Hunter

Leda Hunter

A:\Interview_Corky_Smith.doc

A:\Interview_Corky_Smith.doc

Leda Hunter

Leda Hunter

A:\Interview_Corky_Smith.doc? ?

Unknown!

Times New Roman

Times New Roman

Symbol

Symbol

2Interview with Laurreta (Corky) Smith May 12, 2000
2Interview with Laurreta (Corky) Smith May 12, 2000
Leda Hunter
Leda Hunter
Leda Hunter
Leda Hunter
Interview with Laurreta (Corky) Smith May 12, 2000
Leda Hunter
Normal
Leda Hunter
Microsoft Word 9.0
Interview with Laurreta (Corky) Smith May 12, 2000
Root Entry
1Table
1Table
WordDocument
WordDocument
SummaryInformation
SummaryInformation
DocumentSummaryInformation
DocumentSummaryInformation
CompObj
CompObj
ObjectPool
ObjectPool
Microsoft Word Document
MSWordDoc
Word.Document.8