

Olga S. Freeman

SR 9042, Oral History, by Linda S. Brody

1981 September 17



FREEMAN: Olga Alfreda Samuelson Freeman

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Tape 1, Side 1

1981 September 17

LB: Mrs. Freeman, how did you and your family come to Oregon?

FREEMAN: That's rather interesting. We lived in a little place in Nebraska what was originally called Sweet Home, Nebraska, and for some reason, there were a number of people from this little place who moved to Oregon. They were relatives of my father so I take it that my father got an itch to come to Oregon, too. He suffered a great deal from asthma in Nebraska and he thought maybe it would be better [in Oregon]. So, one December he came out to Oregon and he came back and said that he had bought a 120 acre farm out in Colton, Oregon, and that we would be moving in March of 1910.

LB: Where did you attend school in Colton?

FREEMAN: Well we had a little rural school where I first went to school. All eight grades were in the one little rural school. My brother was in the eighth grade and he was one of these very orderly people. One day the teacher announced — incidentally, the teacher wasn't much — that from here on out, everybody had to put their books in their desk at night and there was only one student in the room who always put his books away and that turned out to be my brother. Having been singled out, of course, that night he left a book

out, which was her book, that he was using for one of his courses because he was the only one in the eighth grade. The next day when he came to school, her book was no longer there and he never did have that book or that subject the rest of the year.

LB: How many did you have in your family?

FREEMAN: There were five of us. There were two boys, the oldest, and three girls. I was the youngest in the family.

LB: Did you complete your education in Colton?

FREEMAN: Yes. After a couple of years, the new school was built up at Colton proper. We first went to school back of what was a sort of big gymnasium-type thing that had been built out there. For two years we went there and then the new school was ready. Then there were two rooms. The first four grades were in one room and the other four grades were in the other room. About that time some of us were getting ready for high school and my father, along with a lot of others, started agitating that we ought to have a high school in Colton. So, when I got ready to go to high school, we had started the high school. My sister was in the first graduating class from the high school and I was in the third one.

LB: What kind of work did your father and mother do?

FREEMAN: They were farmers. We had this 120-acre place, which is a fair-sized place. We had about seven or eight cows all of the time so we sold cream, and eggs, and various things.

LB: What did your family do for recreation?

FREEMAN: We had a church out there, a Lutheran church out there, and my family was active in the church. We had a young people's society, and we had a literary society at school, and we always had parties for the various young people around there. We seemed to keep busy.

LB: What did you do after your graduated from high school?

FREEMAN: When we graduated from high school, my folks also sold their place out in Colton So they moved from Colton and I went to Oregon State [University].

LB: What did you major in there?

FREEMAN: I majored in the school of commerce.

LB: Would that be finance today or business?

FREEMAN: Yes.

LB: Why did you choose that for a major?

FREEMAN: That I'm not quite sure. At one time I thought I was going to go to the University of Oregon because my favorite teacher in high school was a graduate of the University [of Oregon] and I thought I was going to go to the University. Somehow or other, I changed my mind. My brother had gone to Oregon State. That may have had something to do with it. But anyway, when I got ready to go to school in the fall, I finally decided to go to Oregon State.

LB: Those were kind of hard times to go to college, were they not?

FREEMAN: I was lucky in fact that I was the youngest in the family and so my older brothers and sisters were already working and they helped me out. I borrowed money from them and I finally paid them back when I got out of school.

LB: What did you do when you graduated from Oregon State? It was Oregon Agricultural College then.

FREEMAN: I went to teaching and I taught up in a little town in Eastern Oregon called Moro, which is about 40 miles from The Dalles. Incidentally, that's the home of my husband. [Laughs] So I take it eventually I got a husband out of the deal, although we were kind of slow about getting together.

LB: What did you teach in Moro?

FREEMAN: I taught mathematics and commercial subjects.

LB: Now was this high school or elementary?

FREEMAN: High school.

LB: How long did you teach there in Moro?

FREEMAN: I was only there two years.

LB: Then what happened? You met Mr. Freeman?

FREEMAN: No. Well, I really knew him a little bit. He went to Oregon State when I did, too, and I knew him a little bit, but I went with him when I got up to Moro. I decided that I was going to go to California to teach because the salaries were much better in California

and I knew a lot of others who were going there. So, I went to California and taught for a year, but, unfortunately, I got sick and had to come home before the year was out. I had a very, very bad case of sinus trouble. It wasn't until I had some infected bone taken out of my nose that I finally got over it.

LB: Then what did you do? Did you go home to your parents at that time?

FREEMAN: Yes. I was there a year that I didn't teach. When I got over it, I taught again in Clackamas County at Estacada.

LB: What did you teach there?

FREEMAN: The same thing: mathematics and commercial subjects.

LB: What kind of students did you have? Were they interested in business careers or was this a required course?

FREEMAN: They were really quite good. We had some good students. Clackamas County had a commercial contest every spring and they added a bookkeeping contest to it. My students won the first year, and the second year, and the third year, so they got to keep the cup. And we also won the typing contest and then Oregon State started a shorthand contest and I took my four best shorthand students down there and we won the state contest. So, I guess my kids were pretty good.

LB: How long were you at Estacada?

FREEMAN: I was there eight years. That was really the Depression years so I stayed through the Depression. They were not too hard hit because much of their taxes came

from the Portland General Electric Company. They had several power plants in the Estacada school district. So, we were not too bad off.

LB: You were not married at that time?

FREEMAN: No.

LB: What about Estacada then? You said they weren't affected that much?

FREEMAN: They were affected a little bit, but not nearly as much as many of the schools were. I think just once that they didn't cash our warrants but the bank took them and paid us interest on them. So, we were in good shape.

LB: What happened after you spent your eight years in Estacada?

FREEMAN: Well, then I decided that I should get my master's degree so I went to the University of Washington for four summers in a row and got a degree. Then I took a job at Vancouver, Washington, in the high school at Vancouver. That was a very nice place to teach. It was an extraordinarily good school, good faculty, and I really enjoyed it there.

LB: How long did you teach in Vancouver?

FREEMAN: I was only there two years and that's when I got married. [Laughs] I told you it took me a long time before I got around to it.

LB: That was quite a while.

FREEMAN: And then we came to Eugene.

LB: That would have been — when did you say?

FREEMAN: We came to Eugene in, 1937...

LB: What brought you to Eugene then?

FREEMAN: My husband worked for the Farmers Home Administration and he was working out of Portland and they wanted someone for the Southern Oregon area. They decided they would ask him if he would take this area. That's how come we came to Eugene.

LB: When you arrived here in 1937, what were your impressions of Eugene?

FREEMAN: Of course, it was much smaller than it is now and we liked it when we first came and we liked it that we could park out in front of the [J.C.] Penney Building downtown, which isn't the Penney Building anymore. But it was easy to get around and we thought it was real nice and we used to go to all the interesting places in and around Eugene, which we never do anymore.

LB: Those things depend on time. So, when you came to Eugene, did you start teaching again?

FREEMAN: No, There were four years when I didn't really teach although I did sign up as a substitute and I did substitute some at Bethel [School District], Willamette High School, and South Eugene High School, which was the only high school at the time. Then the war came on and I found that I was getting calls. "Would I go to take a job at Creswell? And would I do this, that, and the other?"

I decided maybe I ought to get a job of my own liking. One of my friends had told me that they were looking for somebody over in the mathematics department at the

University of Oregon. So, I went over and applied. Then I didn't hear anything for a little bit and the night before winter term classes were going to start [Dr. Moursand?], who was head of the mathematics department, called me up and said, "Well, you've got three classes tomorrow morning."

LB: So how long did you teach at the University of Oregon?

FREEMAN: I taught there from 1943 to 1949 — six years.

LB: What courses did you teach?

FREEMAN: I taught the range of algebra courses plus mathematics and finance.

LB: What kind of people did you have for students?

FREEMAN: When I first went over there, the boys were all going into the service and so they were leaving and maybe wouldn't finish the course. Then I stayed there long enough until they were coming back. The fellows that I had when they came back were very nice to have in class because they were perfectly willing to take anything that you gave them in the way of assignment and never complain. Prior to that time, sometimes you had some of them who thought you were — I remember one time in particular ... There was one fellow that was always griping about the assignments and finally I guess I got annoyed with him and I said, "You know, you don't have to be in this class. You don't have to be at the University." After class some chap came up and said, "We were sure glad to have you tell off that guy because we thought he was due to have that done to him long ago."

LB: Are you saying that maybe the people who were on the GI Bill were more serious students?

FREEMAN: Yes. They were really a joy to have and moreover, they were interested in you and they wanted you to be interested in them.

LB: I'm sure a lot of them had experiences they were recovering from – that they had been through — and then wanted to start up a career that they could to pursue at that point in their lives. Maybe the war forced them to make some decisions. How did you become interested in politics?

FREEMAN: That's kind of interesting too. When we first lived in Eugene, I picked up the paper one time and I read where the Democratic women in Lane County were going to have a speech contest. It was to be on some phase of the New Deal. I read this and I said to my husband, "I think I'll enter this." [Laughs]

I had done quite a little bit of speechmaking in my day. I was on the debate team at Oregon State [University] and so speechmaking wasn't too difficult for me. So, I called up the woman and she came over and gave me all of the dope that there was to have. I entered this contest — I think there were seven women who were making speeches that night. I think they were only five minutes long or something. I talked on soil conservation and I won the Lane County one so I went to the state contest and gave my speech again. I didn't feel very badly that the woman who defeated me on the state level was Edith Green.

LB: What year was this?

FREEMAN: It was probably 1938 or 1939, someplace along in there.

LB: That was a nice introduction.

FREEMAN: Well, then after I had done this, then this woman said, "Well, why don't you run for precinct committeewoman?" I did that at the next election and got defeated. And then I filed again in two years later and was elected. When we went to a precinct committee

meeting, it was very pathetic. There was only a group of real old men who were at the meeting. It wasn't until Dr. Hicks came along as county chairman that they really started having a lot of the "pep" put into the Democratic party in Lane County.

LB: How long were you precinct chairman?

FREEMAN: Oh, I was that for a good many years. Even after we moved over here, I was. Then when I decided to run for politics I decided somebody else should do it — one of our neighbors, [Marcella Toner?], filed instead of my being precinct committee woman.

LB: So, your first office that you sought was as County Treasurer?

FREEMAN: No. I actually ran for the legislature first. In the meantime, I had joined the League of Women Voters. In fact, I'm a charter member of the Eugene League. If you belong to the League and get really interested in things, you can't help but get interested in politics. So, I did run for the legislature first in 1952 and I didn't make it.

LB: I should have backed up because I forgot to ask you why you decided to join the Democratic Party in the first place?

FREEMAN: Well, that's an interesting story. My parents, in fact my father — My mother never did vote, which is kind of interesting in view of the fact that I was interested in politics. But my father was a Republican and when I first registered, I was a Republican. In Vancouver when you register, you don't name any party politics so I really hadn't been named in [anything].

Then when I got married, my husband was a Democrat and his family had all been Democrats. They came from Arkansas, which also explains why they're Democrats. So, I decided that maybe I should become a Democrat and my husband tells this story. He said,

"She took my politics and I took her religion, but she works much harder at her politics than I do at her religion."

LB: What did you think after you lost the election, the campaign for legislature?

FREEMAN: It didn't really think too much about it because I wasn't too well-known and moreover the Republicans still had the majority in the registration in Lane County over the Democrats so I wasn't too surprised. But it was good experience and it got me around the county.

LB: Had there been any women elected from you county before then?

FREEMAN: You mean to the legislature?

LB: Yes.

FREEMAN: Not that I know of.

LB: So, that was in 1952 and in 1954 you ran for county Treasurer?

FREEMAN: Yes, and the reason I decided to run for County Treasurer was the legislature had changed the retirement bill and you see; I had been under state retirement. Then, if you had a five-year interruptible period, you lost anything that you might have gotten from retirement. The legislature restored that and said that even if you had an interruptible period, you could go back and pick up this — providing you went back to work. So, I decided that I better go back to work and then I needed to take some kind of a job that was a paying job, you see.

So, that's when I ran for county treasurer. I felt that this was a pretty good place because the county treasurer had been in the job for 30 years and this was a time when

the Republicans were always saying it was time for a change, you know. I used this "It was time for a change, particularly after 30 years" and I got elected.

LB: Then you had a lot of support during that campaign, didn't you?

FREEMAN: No. I really only beat the incumbent by about 900 votes which wasn't very much. Considering the fact that she'd had name familiarity for 30 years, I thought I did pretty well.

LB: What was your platform besides time for a change? Were there other ideas that you wanted to introduce?

FREEMAN: I kept saying that I thought it was time to look over everything and maybe get better accounting methods and better ways of doing things, and so, on.

LB: You were noted for your efficiency and I was wondering in what ways you did improve the methods?

FREEMAN: I had a list. Once upon a time, I made a speech about the various things that I did and I don't know if you want to hear all of this or not. But I did do a tremendous amount of things in the Treasurer's Office to make it much more efficient and not waste a lot of time doing things that you had no business to do. One of the things, for instance, that we had to contend with: the treasurer pays all of the school bonds and pays the coupons that come in twice a year. I figured that we were paying about 25,000 coupons a year and I thought that the way that they had been handled was very poor. In fact, the treasurer kept all of these coupons and she only returned the bonds. So, I figured the coupons were attached to the bonds in the first place so why not reattach them after we'd paid them and the bond was due and then return the bond plus the coupon? So, this is what we did, although this was so novel an idea to some of the schools that they weren't sure that this

was a proper way to do it. But, anyway, we did it that way. This released just any number of file folders that had nothing but these dead coupons in them. So, we were able then to clean out the files and not have all this there. As soon as a bond was paid with all the coupons, why, we'd ship it back to the school district. Usually they came in 15 or 20 at a time that were due so this made it much easier to keep our files clean. That was one thing we did.

Another thing that we did was a report, I guess you'd call it, in which at the beginning of each bond issue, we had a whole history of the bond issue so that we knew exactly how many bonds were going to be due at a certain time, and so on, so that we'd have the whole history there. Then if a school district called up and said, "How much do I need to budget to pay for the bonds and coupons?" all we had to do was to look at this and if they had several bond issues, why we'd add them up and let them know. So, this was a big help to have this.

The other thing that we did was in the old days they had these huge bond registers that were bound volumes. Maybe School District No. four had an issue number one, and number five, and number seven. I decided that we would go to loose-leaf bound registers and then any that came in, we could put all of the ones that belonged to one school district right together. We went to this loose-leaf bond register and incidentally, they were much, much cheaper than these big bound volumes that they had been using. So, this was among the things that we did, and, oh, yes, we did one other thing.

Much to my surprise, when they were auditing School District No. four, here a big something came out in the newspaper saying, "County Treasurer Overpays \$400 on School District No. four Bond Interest." Well, they had never asked me why they couldn't reconcile. So, I went back and figured out that the auditors were the ones that made all the mistakes. In fact, I found 17 errors that he made on the sheet that he had turned over to School District No. four. I got a big splurge in the paper showing that it was all their fault and not mine. I went to the school board meeting where the auditor had come through and said that they'd made the mistake and not me. I understand that the auditor lost his job and never could get another job doing this kind of thing because of this.

Anyway, it taught me a lesson so we decided that we could keep records on the bonds that we were paying them. We had a card in our accounting folder for this district that showed exactly how much we were to pay, and how much we had paid. At the end of the year we could reconcile this sheet with the bond register. I always had all of mine reconciled before the auditor ever came in there. I wouldn't let him come in until was through reconciling. Then we never had any more trouble with anybody. In fact, I never had any more trouble after they once decided that they could trust me. [Laughs]

Oh, one of the things that saved us no end of time was that in the fall, when the tax office turns over all the checks to you, they used to run another tape to take to the bank. So, I said to [Gladys McBain?], who was the head of the tax office, I said, "Well, couldn't we run some kind of a duplicate tape so that as you give us the tape showing what you're turning over to us, I could have a copy of that?"

And she said, "Sure."

She got these duplicate tapes and then all we had to do was to make sure that these checks were on there and then we would just attach it to a little slip that said, "See tape for checks." and turn it over to the bank. Well, you can see how much time that saved us. If you're running a deposit slip where you just have hundreds and hundreds of checks listed, and since they were already listing them, it seemed to me that this was a real big improvement.

LB: You weren't duplicating services.

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

Tape 1, Side 2
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FREEMAN: Another thing that I did that had not been done was that as soon as the tax office would give us the segregation, where we would know where the money that had come in that month, where it belonged. Then I would immediately send the checkout to the various districts. In the past, they had just waited for these people to come in. So, this was a service that they liked. In fact, I think they got to the place that they pretty much trusted me because they used to come in and ask me all kinds of things, of how they could keep better records for their districts. I gave them all kinds of help and advice.

One of the things that I thought was particularly interesting was that we had quite a group around here who were very anti-government. They used to call me up and ask me for information and they always acted so surprised when I'd give it to them. Pretty soon, you didn't have this feeling that they were opposed to government. And I thought this was very helpful.

LB: You mentioned several times that there was distrust, or that they trusted you. I was wondering if there was this atmosphere of distrust?

FREEMAN: Yes. I had to earn their trust and after they once found out that I knew what I was doing, and I could even be helpful to them, they were good friends of mine. After they turned over to the county home rule where they have the appointed finance officer, a number of these districts — these were particularly the small water districts, and fire districts, and so on — told me that they no longer got this kind of help from the county. So, I think they were very appreciative of what I used to do for them. I always tried to do everything I could for them.

Then after I got to be county clerk, we did a number of things that I thought were very helpful, too.

LB: Now, you ran for clerk in 1956?

FREEMAN : In 1960. I was county treasurer. See, I was reelected in '58 and it was kind of interesting. When I was reelected in 1958, I did have an opponent but she only carried three precincts out of all the precincts in Lane County and I carried all the rest of them. So, this was also an indication that they had a pretty good feeling toward their county treasurer.

The reason I ran for county clerk was because the county commissioners always had the idea that the county treasurer wasn't worth much despite the fact that I started this business of investing all of the surplus funds and during the time I was county treasurer I earned the county two-thirds of a million dollars in interest, which had never been done before at all. They'd never had this kind of money. You'd think that the county commissioners would think this was pretty good.

I remember old McNutt [Earl McNutt?], who was mayor of Eugene one time, was on the budget committee and he made the statement in my presence that any old bookkeeper could be county treasurer. So, I asked the commissioners, I told them that I wanted to come up and tell them what the county treasurer really did. They let me do this and I came home and told my husband that was the best speech I'd ever made. [Laughs]

LB: An impromptu.

FREEMAN: Well, I pretty much had it all laid out on what the treasurer was doing and how much you could do to help things. That happened.

One of the things that we did after I became county clerk, they again had these huge bound volumes that were so difficult to work with. The girls at the clerk's office where they took in the various instruments for filing, and so on were recording these by hand in these big books. I said that's nonsense. We again went to a loose-leaf book and we bought a wide-carriage typewriter where they could make their daily reports on this typewriter. We did this with some of the records up in the criminal court, too, that had been done by hand. We went to a type written record by having the wide typewriter. So, we did this. I thought it was time to get out of the handwriting part.

At that time the county clerk was in charge of all of the support payments and they were doing all this by hand. I resurrected an old bookkeeping machine from upstairs someplace and brought it down and we started doing these on the machine so that we could have loose leaf things and do them. Then, later on we got a machine for it although I'm not sure that it was much better than the old one that I resurrected.

When I was county clerk, as I said, the county clerk was the bookkeeper for the county, and I had belonged to the Municipal Finance Officers Association, which is a national organization. They had a program to upgrade the accounting records. So, if someone sent in their statement for the year and it conformed to their standards, they gave you a certificate. This was considered quite a bit to be able to do this. The first year that I was in there, I experimented with one and did one, but I didn't send it in. The second year, I thought I was doing pretty well so I sent it in and I got a certificate of conformance from the Municipal Finance Officers Association of the United States. I was kind of interested because the recorder over at Springfield had said that he sent his in several times and he'd never gotten any certificate for it, so I thought I did pretty well to get one. The interesting thing was that these were always entered in the journal that they got. I got quite a few requests for it. This what it looked like.

LB: This financial report must have been a big project for you.

FREEMAN: Yes, it was a pretty good-sized project. Oh, you wanted me to mention the fact that I tried to get a raise for the head of the bookkeeping department.

LB: Well, yes. I was going to ask you that question and I'll phrase the questions and then you can give me the answer. I asked you earlier if you had noticed any difference in the way men and women were treated in politics, or if you had noticed any difference being a woman in politics.

FREEMAN: My favorite story was this one where I decided that I should get a raise for the woman who headed the bookkeeping department because that was a big job. I thought that she was grossly underpaid. They had a man out at the road department who did a certain amount of bookkeeping for the road department and he got more money than she did. I made an effort to find out what the head of the bookkeeping department in Clackamas County and Marion County, which were both smaller counties than Lane County, and they were getting more money than Molly [Molly McGee] was getting. I went to the budget committee meeting asking for a raise for her. One of the commissioners said to me when I quoted Clackamas County and Marion County, said to me, "Well, were those jobs held by men or women?" I was so annoyed I would have liked to have really said something nasty, but I didn't. I kept my temper. Fortunately, one was held by a man and one was by a woman so I finally got the raise for my head of the bookkeeping department.

LB: When you were in the county clerk's office what kinds of issues were important. Were there any political issues that affected your office more than others?

FREEMAN: No, I can't say that there was much in the way of politics, especially when I was county clerk because they had already gotten used to me and my ways and had gotten to the place that they knew I was going to do it my way anyway. I think at first there were a few people in the clerk's office who weren't too sure what the new county clerk was going to be like. I really didn't have too much trouble. One of the things that I did that the attorneys around town liked much, much better was that we did a much faster job of getting the instruments that they bring in, their mortgages and everything that they bring in. See, these are all recorded and pictures taken of them. I speeded up this no end, so they got them back [sooner] where they [previously] hadn't been getting them back for 10 days. They'd get them back in two or three days. They really liked this.

LB: So, this was the efficiency aspect again of your term in office. Why did you leave office, the county clerk's office?

FREEMAN: I didn't leave office. I got fired.

LB: How were you fired?

FREEMAN: Well, Lane County adopted the home rule [county home rule] and the clerk's office was made appointive by the county commissioners. I don't know whether this had anything to do with it or not, but it was supposed to have been on the ballot in the primary election as to whether Lane County wanted to adopt home rule. I discovered that the committee which was supposed to be putting this on the ballot, that the terms of all of these commissioners or all of these committee people had expired. Here they were certifying this to the election.

When I put this out to the newspaper, of course, the commissioners were a little annoyed because after all; they were the appointing office. It didn't get to be on the primary; it got on in the general election. They had to reappoint these people in order to [Laughs] have it legal for them to put this on the ballot. Well, anyway, it passed in the November election making the county clerk appointed by the commissioners. I had two years to go on my county clerk's term because I'd only been in two years.

So, in May I got this very nice letter from the county commissioners telling me what a wonderful job I had done and everything, but that my services would no longer be required.

LB: Did you know that the commissioners would replace you if the measure passed?

FREEMAN: No. I did not know that at the time. I had an inkling that they might because they didn't like me too well.

LB: Were they behind the legislation, do you think? Did they support it, the home rule?

FREEMAN: No, I don't really think they were. No, in fact, one of them at least was very dubious over that.

LB: You said initially that you favored home rule, too.

FREEMAN: Well, I favored the county manager plan, which was the original plan in which the commissioners would be policymakers only and would not be fulltime people like they have now, and I'm still not sure that this is good.

Oh, the other reason, I suppose that the commissioners didn't like me too well was I also exposed the fact that we have a law in Oregon that if you use gasoline and aren't using your vehicles on the road, you don't have to pay the gas tax. You pay it, but then the state reimburses you. For some reason, the commissioners, as I said before, were very jealous of the road department. They never wanted the county clerk to have anything to do with anything that went on in the road department. So, the road department would send this in claiming this refund for gas taxes and they didn't do this for two years so they lost \$30,000 and they couldn't get it back because the time had expired for them to come back. Well, when I called attention to this and this got in the newspaper too, of course, that didn't make me very popular with the commissioners either.

LB: You saw something that you felt obligated to report.

FREEMAN: Oh, I suppose I could have gone and told them and not told the press but I thought that was a pretty good thing to tell the press.

LB: What happened after you left the county clerk's office then?

FREEMAN: I finally decided not to go back to work. I was 60 years old then and I thought that it would be fun not to do anything for a while and so I haven't worked since at a fulltime job. And then I finally decided to start doing this freelance writing, which I have done.

LB: Earlier when we were discussing your activities you said that you were active in county politics. Did you have any other jobs besides precinct chairwoman?

FREEMAN: Oh, yes. At one time I was treasurer of the Lane County Democratic Central Committee.

LB: Did that involve fund-raising activities?

FREEMAN: No, it didn't. It just involved taking care of the money and paying it out. I think I was also once alternate chairman, too, if I remember right. At one time, if the chairman of the central committee was a man, why then they had an alternate chairman that was a woman. I don't think it works that way anymore, but I was an alternate chairman one time, too.

LB: You've had a remarkable career and certainly a lot of preparation for your activity in county government with treasurer and clerk's offices.

FREEMAN: One thing that I thought was very nice, despite the fact that I was the person that insisted upon getting all of this interest on our money, the bank wasn't getting it anymore and yet I had one of the bankers tell me — and he had been in Lane County a long time — he said, "You're the best county treasurer that Lane County ever had." I thought that was a pretty good coming from a banker who had been losing out on all of this interest that the other treasurers had been letting him have.

LB: Did you not run for county commissioner ?

FREEMAN: Yes, I did run for county commissioner, -That's probably another reason why the commissioners didn't like me. Yes, I did run. I ran in 1962 and, unfortunately this was

when they were electing two commissioners at one time. So, there was two of us running for the two spots. I had a little hard luck. The man who was running for the other spot — and you see, you ran in a field — the man who ran with me wasn't too good. And, you see, if he's not very good and the second vote goes to a Republican, then this means [Laughs] that your vote is going to be last because he's getting not only Republican vote, but he's getting a vote of the Democrats. This was one thing. Then the other was that a man ran as an Independent and he was more nearly aligned to the Democrats than he was the Republicans. He siphoned off some votes. If somebody voted for him and then voted for a Republican, you see, this lost me a vote, too. I really had two things that went wrong or I might have made it.

LB: Were the voters accepting women? You mentioned that a woman had run as commissioner, or had served as commissioner earlier than that.

FREEMAN: Not in Lane County. This was in Washington County.

LB: Were the voters receptive to a woman in that position, do you think?

FREEMAN: Some of them were actually, it seems to me that I had more trouble with women not wanting women to hold these offices than I did with men. I would often, when I campaigned have some woman tell me that she didn't think that women ought to be in these offices. Then I'd explain to her that I had no children and, therefore had the time for it. But I did have quite a few women who would sometimes say this. I think women are better than they used to be. Nancy Hayward was the first woman who got elected county commissioner in Lane County.

LB: That was in the 1960s, too, I believe, wasn't it? Seventies?

FREEMAN: When Nancy first ... Probably not until 1966, I would imagine, if my dates are right.

LB: How would you summarize your career?

FREEMAN: One of the things that I have enjoyed — there are two kinds of people. There's the kind of person who can stay with one job all through their life, and seemingly, be perfectly happy doing it. I've never been that kind of person. I like to have a variety and so I've had a chance to have a variety. I've had quite a variety between teaching in high school and teaching in college. And then, I didn't tell you that I worked for the census bureau one time. So, I've had a lot of variety and I enjoyed the variety of being in politics and being county treasurer and doing all the things that I thought was good for the county. The county clerk was a little different again. I've really been more successful than I've had any business to be on this freelance writing.

LB: That's your next career.

FREEMAN: I've had it long enough now that I think I'm about to decide that I think I shouldn't do anything for a while.

LB: It's something lasting that you can keep doing without having to feel like it is -

FREEMAN: Oh, yes. And I don't have to work at it any harder than I want to work at it.

LB: I want to thank you for taking the time to record your oral history memoir for the Oregon Historical Society. Is there anything that you would like to add to the permanent record?

FREEMAN: The one thing I think I really enjoyed, as far as this freelance writing is concerned, is that I did a story one time on my husband's father and sold it to a Western magazine. I called it, "J.C. Freeman — Horse and Buggy Sheriff" because he was sheriff in Sherman County when the two competing railroads were building up the Deschutes Canyon. One of them was on one side, and one on the other. All sorts of things went wrong. He was the sheriff that had to get in and do this and I had heard these stories all the time. I decided one time that I was going to do this. I went back and read all of the newspapers, too, of this particular time, and so I did this story. Unfortunately, Neil's father was dead at this time. But he and his relatives were all very pleased over this story that I did on J.C. Freeman.

LB: And the Hill-Harriman battle?

FREEMAN: Yes.

LB: I want to thank you again for taking this time.

FREEMAN: You're perfectly welcome.

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[End of Interview]