

VOICES FROM THE PAST

**HISTORY OF MUD LAKE**

By Mildred Stayley  
&  
Joe Hartwell

June 2, 1982

**Tape # 26**

Oral Tape by Harold Forbush

Transcribed by Louis Clements

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Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society

## INTRODUCTION

The Library of the Upper Snake River Historical Society in the Teton Flood Museum contains over 600 video, cassette, and reel-to-reel tapes. These oral interviews have been gathered to over the past years from individuals throughout the Snake River Valley. I had the opportunity to catalogue this collection over the past couple of years and was amazed at the information containing therein.

I decided that it was unfair to the public to have all of this historical information on a tape and only available to a few who had the time to come to the library and listen to them. The library does provide a service in which copies of the tapes can be made, and during the past few years, many have come in and obtained a copy of a particular tape. The collection has a lot of family stories, some pioneer experiences, a few individual reminiscences of particular parts of history, and some recorded individuals have a personal knowledge of a historical event.

I spent a lot of time trying to come up with a name for this series of stories that would describe the overall text of the message contained herein. Since they are transcribed from the actual voices of those who experienced the history the name, Voices From The Past seemed appropriate. The oral history in this volume of Voices From The Past has been taken from the interviewer with it being recorded on tape. Since Idaho's history is so young in year, the oral history becomes greater in importance. Eyewitness accounts rank high in reliability of the truth of events, although the reliability suffers as they interviewee ages or the time between the event and the interview grows. As the age of some of the cassette is progressing into the time period of deterioration of tapes, all are currently (2002) being copied onto audio discs (CD's) for preservation.

I have selected this event as one that occurred in Eastern Idaho which was experienced by the person or persons being interviewed. There was such a vast amount of information available in the library; I had to reserve many of the tapes for inclusion in future volumes. The tapes are being transcribed in order of importance according to my thinking.

Transcribing from a tape to written word is a new experience for me. I have done this on a very small scale before but to attempt to put the contents of a conversation down on a paper requires a great amount of concentration. I have taken the liberty of editing out the many "a's" that occur in an interview as well as other conversational comments. Then comes the problem of the book a challenge from the point of view of making a correct transcription and yet an interesting story. I have made a few editorial changes in view of this problem.

I would like thank the many people who have taken the time to arrange for the oral recording of an individuals story. The information obtained in this manner is, in many cases, not available from any other source. One of the pioneers of oral history in Eastern Idaho is Harold Forbush. Despite the handicap of being blind, he travels around the whole Snake River Valley visiting with people and taping their responses. He began his career of taping while living Teton Valley and serving as the prosecuting attorney there.

His lifetime interest in history got him started and since then he has been a major contributor to the collection of stories in the library. He continued his oral history recording after moving to Rexburg. After retiring from being Madison Counties' magistrate, he moved to Idaho Falls for a time and now has returned to Rexburg to continue as occasional taping session. He is to be congratulated for his lifetime commitment to the preservation of Idaho's history.

There are many others who have done some taping including several Madison High School students. Most of the student tapes are not of the same sound quality as the professional oral history collector, but the stories they have gathered over the years have provided a special look at the Depression, war experiences, farming experience, and many other subjects which can't be found anywhere else. Many thanks to them.

There are some tapes in which the interviewer did not identify themselves. These unknown records have provided several stories which have helped make up the overall history of the Snake River Valley and I thank them even if I cannot acknowledge them personally.

I hope that as you read the following stories you will be inspired to keep a record of your own either in written or tape form so that your opinion of what has happened in the world or in your life can be preserved. Many think their life has been insignificant and others would not want the years and find each other to have its own contribution to my knowledge of what has happened. Idaho is an exciting place to live and is full of stories which are unique to our area. Share them with others.

Louis J. Clements.

## History of Mud Lake

Interview with Mildred Staley & Joe Hartwell on June 2, 1982, by Harold Forbush on their views of the history of Mud Lake in Jefferson County.

HF: It is a real opportunity for me to be in the home of Mrs. Mildred Staley – S T A L E Y. Her husband is Roy. She has invited Mr. Joe Hartwell – H A R T W E L L to be here present with us as we cover the subject of this particular interview. It's the afternoon of Saturday the 5<sup>th</sup> day of June, 1982. Just six years after bursting of the Teton Dam which is somewhat of a coincidence? I first would like to ask you, Mrs. Staley, a little something about your personal background. First of all why don't you state your full name that includes your married name, your occupation and your present residence?

Mildred Staley: I'm Mildred Rose Jackson Staley. I was born in 1918 and I always said the community grew up around me because there wasn't much out here when I was born. My mother was one of the early school teachers and my father was one of the early settlers out here. I've lived in Mud Lake practically all of my life.

HF: You're somewhat of a writer, are you not?

MS: Yes, I am.

HF: That would be your occupation?

MS: That's my real occupation. I'm a news correspondent and I have been working on a history of the Mud Lake area since I was in high school really. I started collecting material for it. I have a quite a bit of background on it.

HF: Now your maiden name is Jackson?

MS: Yes.

HF: And your parents were early settlers?

MS: Yes.

HF: What was your father's name?

MS: Earl Jackson.

HF: Is he a farmer?

MS: Yes, he was. His father had been a miner in Butte, Montana, and when they started settling out here, he was old enough that he had to retire. He heard of the Mud Lake area through Bill Owsley and Jim Abbot. He came out here and settled next to the Lake. The Staley's also came out here and they settled next to the lake.

HF: Now this was your husband's people?

MS: Yes.

HF: Now Mr. Hartwell, what about your background? First of all what is your residence, your occupation and something about your personal background.

Hartwell: I live at Montevue, Idaho. I am in the cattle business and general farming. I have been here since the 5<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1918.

HF: And that was the day of your birth?

Hartwell: No, no. I was born in 1907.

HF: You're kind of an old timer.

Hartwell: I am 75 years old.

HF: Your voice certainly doesn't suggest this. In fact, your voice, to me, suggests that you would be a good 20 years younger than 75. That's interesting. Now people were here to cover a subject matter. I would like to focus as much as possible on that subject and that is Mud Lake?

MS: There are several reasons for it as I have found. No one can say for sure. Different people had different ideas. M.D Beal, when he wrote he said, "There seems to be no definite time when the name became officially Mud Lake although it was referred to as the muddy lake by some members of Brigham Young's party in 1875." There are also conflicting stories of how it got its name. Beal said, "In the middle of a desert of lava beds, sand dunes and an occasional crater is the remnant of an ancient lake. Mud Lake is a large, shallow sheet of murky water. If the waters were not naturally cloudy they would become so by the churning given by thousands of wild mud hens, ducks and geese." The later Judson Henry Stoddard of Parker, a rider for a large cattle company, felt it was named Mud Lake because when the cattle watered the first dew cattle to reach the lake got water, the rest only mud. Early settler's insisted the name was the only appropriate one because the almost continual wind kept the water always muddy.

HF: Now in size, how much area are we talking about? Do either one of you have anyway to describe the size?

Hartwell: I wouldn't know the size of Mud Lake.

MS: Let's see. Mud Lake had practically dried up. When they began to irrigate on the Egin Bench country in 1895 Mud Lake started again. It was an ancient lake and it had practically dried up. A government survey in 1889 showed that it covered 2000 acres, and it had been practically dry before that. The entire area was popular with stockmen for pasture. In 1901 Horace Jacket and his son, Frank, came to Mud Lake. They were the

first men to settle in the area. They had brought some sheep with them and chose the place because there was so much grass there. When they came the lake was dry. Frank said, "When we came up here there was no Mud Lake and no Camas Creek." They were able to get a little water from the shallow holes they dug in the ground, but as it was not too clean, they drained the juice from cans of tomatoes to use as drinking water. They built a dugout to live in, but that was so damp they had to put boards down to walk on. In the years immediately following their arrival the lake started to come up as the irrigation on the Egin Bench continued.

HF: Now Egin Bench would be what direction from here?

Hartwell: Northeast.

HF: Northeast, about how many miles?

Hartwell: I would presume it's in the neighborhood of 50 miles.



**North Side Mud Lake**

HF: Fifty miles from here?

Hartwell: Yes.

HF: Now the lake bed itself, it has been suggested here, 2000 acres?

MS: That was in the 1800's but it dried up after that and then it spread out again.

HF: But its drainage is it not, for Camas Creek?

Hartwell: Yes. Camas Creek, Beaver Creek and Medicine Loge drain into Mud Lake.

HF: Now Birch Creek doesn't do it?

Hartwell: No.

HF: But those three and then the effects of the irrigation over in the Egin Bench area all have an effect in bringing water and causing it to surface over here in this depression?

Hartwell: That is correct.

HF: When it reaches its maximum amount of water, I suppose that's true right now, is it not?

Hartwell: It's about its peak now.

MS: It hasn't got as high as it does other times. Walt Speelmon says that he doubts if it will reach the seven foot level now and he would like to have nine feet in it.

HF: Now when you say seven foot or nine foot level, is that depth?

MS: Yes.

HF: You have commented that the Reclamation Department or the Carey Act had developed the area for irrigation purposes by excavation canals. Is that so?

MS: They didn't start the Carey Act out here until after the first settlers. The first settlers were not effected by the Carey Act. For instance, Horace Jacket made a water filing in 1906. He filed on some springs that he saw coming up, and they dried up again so his filing was never proved up on.

HF: As far as history then, that perhaps is a priority date, an early priority, of 1906.

MS: There was water in the lake because Earnest Bowerly in 1907 files on a water right which still exists out of Camas Creek. He files directly on the water out of Camas Creek. That is the oldest filing in the lake.

HF: Now it's your understanding that the early pioneers didn't necessarily rely on any water coming from the lake? There was none there.

MS: Oh, the early settlers had to use water from the lake but they got it by gravity flow.

HF: So there was water, the early settlers did find water in that depression, in that lake?

Hartwell: Yes, I'd say that's correct.

MS: In 1901 it was dry. That's when Jackets first came out here and it was dry at that time.

HF: So the early settler didn't antedate 1990.

HF: When would you say, Mr. Hartwell, the main settlement of Mud Lake occurred?

Hartwell: Well, when we came here in 1918, it was very small. It's grown to its size since that time. It was very small.

HF: And there weren't too many settlers here at that time?

Hartwell: No, there were very few settlers around Mud Lake.

HF: Do you know anything about the ethnic background of the early settlers, who they were, where had they come from: Were they Germans or Swedes or what?

MS: There was one bunch of Mormons who came through here. The Staley's were among those who had been down in Mexico and were run out by the revolution. They came up here. That was a group of Mexicans.

HF: Some of Poncho Villa's, chased by him?

MS: They were chased out by him. There were quite a few Swedes who settled out here. They were mostly in one location... My father used to say the Jackson's were the dividing line. There were Swedes to the north of us and Mormons to the south of us.

HF: When did your father settle?

MS: He came out here in 1912.

HF: Maybe the Mormons and the Swedes settled on each side of him because 1912 would be kind of early wouldn't it.

MS: Well, transportation was poor in those days. People had to travel by foot or horseback, so each little cluster was kind of separate. There was quite a collection over on the east side of the lake.

Hartwell: Jackets and Barleys.



MS: There was a John Sizley, a William Owsley, Gardener and Louisa Pease, June Hicks, Jim Potter, Barney Barnard. These were the ones on the south and then there were the Lakes, who were among the earliest ones, I don't have much on. But each little group was kind of separate. There was one little group on the east side. Then there was a group on the south side of the lake, and there was this group on the west side. Then there were others out toward Montevue who were not that involved with the lake.

HF: Now did these little groups sort of come together and form maybe a townsite or a community.

MS: It was a separate community for each little group. They had schools and post offices and things for each little group.

Hartwell: They gradually put their efforts together to form canal irrigation companies.

HF: Now Owsley is a name after which there's a large canal built.

Hartwell: Yes.

HF: Now would that be where, on the east side?

MS: Yes, on the east side.

HF: A diversion was made from the lake taking water to the farmers of that particular area?

MS: In 1908 John Sidley, William Owsley, Garner and Louisa Pease, June Hicks, James Potter and Barney Barnard all filed on land just south of the lake. These were the first filings in that area. They were actually only a few miles from the earlier settlers. The lack of roads, as well as the rough uncleared land and their slow transportation, made them feel very isolated. Their filings were not on the Carey Act land but as the government grant had been approved, Owsley, Sidley and Barnard and also a Mr. Peterson, began work on a canal for their project. They made several starts on different unsuccessful routes and finally a state engineer helped them lay out the one that they finally developed. This canal was the first really large business venture in the area. It was built the hard way with Fresno's and provided employment for a number of people.

HF: Was that quite a lengthy canal?

MS: Yes.

HF: Many miles? It brought water from the lake to the farmland to the south of the lake?

MS: Yes.

HF: How about to the east or to the west? Were there other canals excavated?

MS: William Owsley also had a filing west of the lake. He had a little private canal through here. The Jefferson (Canal Company), I don't think was on the Carey act, was it?

Hartwell: No.

MS: It was private.

HF: Now to both of you, were there canals excavated that proved to be really a fiasco? They were dug, excavated but never used.

Hartwell: Yes.

MS: Definitely.

HF: Now why was that? What do we have as a background of historical significance for this?

Hartwell: As far as I know, they just started to big a project and couldn't carry it out, couldn't develop as large a project as they started. It fell apart, went broke.

MS: Also, partly was the fact that because the lake fluctuates as the lake kept growing and growing people thought it was just going to keep on growing. They thought there was just going to be an endless supply of water there.

HF: So part of it was because of failure of a resource or water supply. Now was this done primarily from government help or from the resources of the community?

Hartwell: Basically the resources of the community, I think.

MS: As the lake continued to grow in size it attracted more attention. William Kirk filed on a place southwest of the lake which is presently owned by Lavere Park. He was a Civil War veteran, and he was able to prove up on it with a very short residence and soon left the community. Tim Kearny, George Hex Monroe, Keith Birchum, George and Frank Lake, Isabelle Smith, and George Lufkin, also a Civil War veteran, took up claims near Kirk's place. Merritt Staley, Roy Patton and (Mr.) Patton filed on claims by the lake, but they're flooded out before they were able to prove upon them. All of these farms were watered by gravity. The owners built dikes to control the lake and ditches to carry the water to their land. At about the same time John Hansen, , Jim Abbot, Charles Nordstrom, and Eric Holgrum filed on land on the far west side of the lake. By this time the growth and development of the Mud Lake area was becoming so well known, that John Hansen sold his farm near Idaho Falls in order to file on land in Mud Lake. He also built a fine two story log house on his place. At that time it was quite a mansion. Hansen, Abbott, and Nordstrom built the Hansen reservoir, the first small irrigation project in order to prolong their irrigating season. They were soon followed by several others whose farms were watered by gravity flow. For a few years all of the early settlers felt they had

really found the land of milk and honey. However, in 1914, the first settlers began to realize that it's possible to get too much of a good thing. Their low dikes failed deceptively mild and gradual with a relentless increase of water. As the water first came to the top of the small dikes, farmers went out with shovels to build up the low places. Then as the water oozed over the tops of the first dike, neighboring farmers hastily built new dikes to save their farms. One after the other lost their battle with the water. Darleys lost their battle early. From 1912 to 1918 they spent summer running a dry farm near Dubois. They journeyed to their homestead in the winter so they could be there enough to prove up on it. Owsley, Sidley, Bernard, and Potter built shovel dikes to try to hold their land, but they too lost out. The Owsleys and Potter's took up claims at a safer distance. The Sidleys Island. They, too, finally had to take up a claim farther from the lake. During this time the work on the Owsley-Carey Land Irrigation Company Canal continued. William Owsley had become discouraged and sold his interest to his parents. As the lake continued to spread out the Kirk place was flooded along with others who left the country permanently.

HF: The impression I get is that here we had a water resource that changed. It was variable. The farmers couldn't rely on that water resource being at a permanent level. It was either low or it was high. Because of that variableness, they couldn't foresee just how high they had to build their dikes to keep out the water from invading their lands or not to have them too high so they could get the water on to their grounds. I guess that has been the problem. Now you have indicated that a lot for them were forced to leave their homesteads. In this modern day have homesteads been re-taken up and are they being utilized?

MS: Now they have gone in and diked around the lake so they can control it better.

HF: Have they used cement and so on like this? Have they used sprinkler systems in some instances?

MS: There are a lot of sprinkler systems out here, but the dike itself, I was told once, that it's the longest earth filled dike in the state. They call it an earth filled dam actually, and it is built completely with dirt.

HF: Does it parallel the shore line?

Hartwell: Yes, it does.

MS: The dike forms the shore line of the lake.

HF: Now I've heard that now or in the past the beaches of the lake just really been beautiful and lovely and it's a good playground.

MS: Yes.

HF: This maybe doesn't exist now?

MS: When the water is low enough there are still lovely beaches. You see the sand out there and it looks like the pictures around the ocean or something, nice, sloping, gentle sandy beach.

HF: Somebody commented that it almost paralleled Wai Ki Ki Beach in the Hawaiian Islands. Maybe that's somewhat more of an exaggeration. Has the lake provided and has it been a food resource in fish, wild life, etc?

Hartwell: There's some fish there all right, however, the supply has never been large enough to supply the communities, but there has been a lot of fishing done from the shores of the lake and with boats.

MS: The earliest settlers used a lot of fish and they also used a lot of birds.

HF: Waterfowl. So it was a natural habitat then? Somebody commented that the main variety was perch. Is this so?

MS: They used to have beautiful, big trout.

Hartwell: Trout. Rainbow Trout.

HF: How about today?

Hartwell: There are a lot of fish in the lake yet.

MS: They get so many trash fish in there now. They plant trout but the trash fish just kill them out.

Hartwell: There is a lot of trash fish in the lake all right but then there's still good fishing in Mud Lake. The government or state restocks it from time to time. Camas Creek and Mud Lake.

MS: Every so often they go in and poison all of the fish in the lake. Then they restock it with trout. They never can get rid of all the trash fish.

HF: Now in the last many years, say thirty or forty years, as long as you have lived in this area, there has always been water in that lake?

Hartwell: Yes.

HF: Both winter and summer?

MS: During the 30s there was a time when it got pretty low.

Hartwell: It got pretty low at times but there has been water there all the time. It got really low.

HF: We have a little establishment here through which we passed as we came out to your place called Mud Lake community or little townsite. Tell me what you know about the townsite. When did the settlers form that?

MS: That was formed accidentally. The community has been known as Mud Lake ever since Brigham Young's time. There was Harmer, Monteview, Terreton, Spring Lake and Lakeview. They had schools for all these places. Owsley was the name of the first post office out here. They had the post offices in the little groups. Finally Pete Kuharski started a very successful store at Monteview. So many people wanted him to move down where it would be more centrally located. He came and bought a corner of the Speelman farm. He set his store so that it was kitty-cornered so that it wouldn't be facing in any one direction. He wanted people to know that it was to serve the whole community. He called it the Mud Lake Merc. Then gradually a few people would speak of instead of saying going to the store, since there was more than one place there, they would say go up to Mud Lake. When the town became incorporated it was just naturally named Mud Lake.

MS: Camas and Harmer are the only towns. The others were not towns. There was a Terreton Store. There was a Monteview store. There were the post offices, and there were the schools, but there were not communities around them.

HF: Tell me a little about Camas. That's had quite history. Joe, why don't you tell us about it?

Hartwell: We came there on the eighth day of April, 1916. We moved into Camas but it has pretty well faded down, although there was hardware, blacksmith shop, post office and two different grocery stores. But Camas had been a lot of bigger.

HF: Now had the railroad kind of been responsible for the arising of that little community?

Hartwell: Well, I presume yes, to a degree. There was a lot of ore hauled out of Gilmore to Camas and loaded on the railroad.

HF: Now Camas is on the mail line on up to Butte?

Hartwell: Butte to Pocatello.

MS: Now it is my understanding that at one time they thought that Camas was going to be set up as the railroad center. That's what people expected that to be.

Hartwell: Yes, there was talk about having some railroad yards started there.

MS: They thought they would have the railroad yards there and then when the railroad yards were put in Pocatello that finished Camas.

HF: Didn't Eagle Rock aspire to that position at one time, for the railroad yards?

Hartwell: I presume they did.

HF: Then suddenly something happened, and everything was taken to Pocatello.

MS: One interesting thing that a lot of people don't realize, there was a good sized town at Roberts before there was anything at Eagle Rock. Roberts was an older settlement.

HF: At that time it was referred to as Market Lake.

MS: Yes.

HF: Now how far would Market Lake or Roberts be from Camas?

Hartwell: I suppose 20, 25 miles.

HF: Now Camas, of course, would be to the north.

Hartwell: That's right.

HF: And Market Lake is right on the road but to the south about 20, 25 miles?

Hartwell: Yes.

HF: Hamer, you mentioned another community or town called Hamer. Now that wouldn't have been on the railroad, though would it?

Hartwell: Yes it was.

HF: Oh is it?

Hartwell: It is right on the railroad. There is a depot and everything at Hamer, and it was there when we came in '16. That's six miles from old Camas.

HF: Six miles south?

Hartwell: south of Camas.

HF: That's interesting. Now Camas on the north, then Hamer and then Market Lake. Those would all be within Jefferson County.

Hartwell: Yes, they're all in Jefferson County.

HF: All in Jefferson County when it was formed in about 1913 or 1914.

MS: I'll tell you something interesting that I found in Getty history. If you look at a map it's quite ridiculous because here's a little corner of Jefferson County that looks like it belong in Bonneville County. That's where Rigby is and that's the county seat for this whole big county. There was some politics involved with that. One reason the people out here, my dad was one who went around with petitions, really worked to get people to vote to have Rigby as the county seat. At that time they were dividing counties so rapidly that the people out here felt they're going to divide the county again, and naturally Market Lake was the logical place for a county seat. The people who lived out here wanted to keep Market Lake for the county seat for the new county. So they all worked to get Rigby the county seat.

HF: That is interesting. I know there was a tremendous struggle in Madison County. Prior to Madison County in 1893 when Fremont County was organized these two communities, St. Anthony and Rexburg, were really contending to be the county seat of this huge county. St. Anthony won out. I don't know why because at the time Rexburg was larger.

MS: Maybe there was some funny little background back then.

HF: West Jefferson is a big area, is it not?

Hartwell: Yes it is.

HF: Now, we've talked about the communities of Hamer and you still refer to the community or Hamer, I suppose, don't you?

Hartwell: It's still in Jefferson County.

HF: You refer to the community of Mud Lake, don't you?

MS: That's an incorporated city.

HF: And to the community of Montevieu. Now Montevieu is on further north, isn't it?

Hartwell: Yes, it is.

HF: It was the last of these three communities to be kind of settled and really farmed. Isn't this so?

Hartwell: More or less.

MS: There was a lot of settlement in Montevieu about the same time as there was here, but they were hoping to get a water project through. They thought they would get the water brought down from the Snake River through there. They thought they would get

government funds to put a water project there. When they lost that, it went down to the southern part of the state around American Falls, so a lot of those people moved out. By about 1916, I think all of Montevieu had been settled on at one time. There was no way they could dry farm and no water for them, they just left.

Hartwell: They expected the project called the Dubois Project to come in there in those early days. That fell apart and then Montevieu drifted southward.

HF: Here into the Mud Lake area?

Hartwell: Further into Jefferson County.

HF: Now what's caused Montevieu to flourish in the last 15 or 25 years?

MS: Underground water.

Hartwell: Ground water; underground water supply.

HF: In other words, they seem to have a natural aquifer of water, and they have developed wells. Are those artesian wells?

Hartwell: Not artesian, they pump all the water.

HF: But there is a place in this area, Jefferson Artesian's. Artesian wells.

MS: Over around the Hamer area they had artesian water over there. Something interesting that I learned. They flow when they dig those wells with artesian water, then when the lake fills up the water stops flowing because there is so much pressure on the land that the water doesn't flow there. That is, it drops down when the water comes up as artesian wells again.

HF: What are those wells called now? Do you refer to them as what?

Hartwell: Owsley wells.

HF: Is there such called Jefferson artesian wells?

Hartwell: There's Jefferson Wells, but they're not artesian. They were at one time when they first built them, but since more well shave gone on throughout the community, they have stopped flowing.

HF: Now where were the Owsley wells?

Hartwell: North of Mud Lake.

HF: They're in the Mud Lake District?



Hartwell: Yes.

HF: Are the Jefferson Wells in the same area?

Hartwell: Well, they're north and west of the Owsley wells, several miles.

MS: They're only a few miles apart.

HF: Sprinkler irrigation has become quite predominant, I suppose, in the Montevue area?

Hartwell: Oh yes, very much so.

HF: Is that somewhat true in the Mud Lake area?

Hartwell: Well, to a degree, yes.

HF: How about the Hamer area?

MS: That's almost entirely sprinkler because it's so much lava that they can't level that land. In this area, around here, they do a lot of laser beam leveling, and with that type of leveling they can flood irrigate very economically.

HF: You've mentioned there were other little settlements along before Mud Lake where they had a post office, a school, and so forth. Why don't you name some of those early settlements?

MS: Before they had a school even at Hamer, they had one, I believe, known as West Hamer. They called it the Morning Glory School. They let the oldest lady in the community name it and that was the name she chose for it. But people called it the West Hamer School. That was about 1910, I believe. Then there were schools developed at Hamer. Camas had one of the early schools.

HF: Now talking about early schools in the various communities you might comment?

MS: The first school at Camas was established in 1892. There were eight students in the school. Cynthia Parker Stoddard was one of the first students, and later her daughter, Mrs. Kenneth Groom, taught all eight grades in 1933 and '34. That was the last year there was a school at Camas. Transportation was so poor; they all had to travel by foot or horseback so they each had separate schools. There was a group of settlers west of Camas. They joined forces and they built a large, log building. That was at time when it was growing so fast in the Montevue area. They were able to hold classes in that school in 1912. They didn't have a name for it at that time. Shortly held a public meeting to decide on a name of the new post office. They narrowed the selection down to Mountain View or Lake View. They weren't sure which one they wanted, so they went to school

and let the students choose which one it would be. They chose Mountain View. When they sent in to apply for that name for their post office, there was already a name similar to that so the post office department changed it to Montevue. That's how the community got its name.

HF: And that was about 1912?

MS: Yes. Also about 1912 there was a school built six west of the present town of Hamer. That was the one the oldest resident was given the privilege of naming it. She called it the Morning Glory School. People thought that was a little too fancy, and so it became known as West Hamer.

Hartwell: A lot of people called it Scodie School too.

MS: It was Mrs. Scodie who named it. There were two other early schools near there. One was Centerville.

Hartwell: I went to school at Centerville.

MS: That was located northwest of Hamer. Woodrow east of Camas. By 1913 there were settlers moving to the west side of the lake. They wanted school. So they had a small, one room log building down on what is now the headquarters of the Mud Lake Wildlife Management area. That was called the Level School because the first post office here was named Level. The ground was so level that they chose that name. This was about the time that the lake started to come up, and later on they were flooded out and had to move to a different location. They chose three men to serve as trustees. One of them wasn't married and some of the parents objected to having a bachelor serving as a trustee so they had to replace Joe Potter. In 1914 there was a one-room, frame school built at Hamer. There hadn't been any schools at Hamer at first. There were schools on all sides of it but none at Hamer itself until 1914. There were twelve students that went to school that first year at Hamer. In 1916 they built a two-room brick building at Hamer. Then they combined the West Hamer the early settlers had been disillusioned and had to move away, and they didn't need that large log building anymore. So they took the small building that they use, a teacherage they called it, for teachers to live in. They moved that down south of where the original was.

Hartwell: Right where A. V. Ball's house sits now.

MS: Oh, it is where his house sits? I had understood it was his sheep sheds.

Hartwell: His sheep sheds is where it is.

MS: Later they moved it further south. You may be more exact on how the schools were around the Montevue area.

Hartwell: They called that the new Montevew School when they moved it down there. Then they moved it down consolidated the schools they called it the New Montevew School.

MS: The people were not having enough water up there, and they started having too much water on the south end. By 1915 they had to move the first Level school building. They moved it west to the Jernburg farm, and it was known as the Jernburg School for a while.

HF: As a matter of fact, Mrs. Jernburg was a school teacher, wasn't she?

MS: She taught later, quite a bit later. In 1916 was when the first schools were built by the school district. All these others had been built by the people themselves. The school district built three one-room schools to use the area. People laughed about it. They said they couldn't be called 'little red school houses' because they were blue buildings. They were little blue schools. One of the three was known as the Owsley School. They had a post office named Owsley and that right there where the fair building is now. I have a special interesting in that because my mother taught there. But she just taught until Christmas. During Christmas vacation she and my dad got married. It was ten miles from where they lived up there, and that was just too far. No one could think of expecting her to travel that far back and forth to teach, so they closed the school and it was never reopened. She was the only teacher in the Owsley School. They also had one they put down here for the Level School at that time. Now I understood that the other one was put in the Montevew area and was known as the Wagner School. Was that right?

Hartwell: Yes, it was south of where we live. I went to school there too.

HF: Now these would be real small, you know, three or four...

MS: One-room schools.

HF: I guess they would from the first to the eighth grades.

Hartwell: There were eight children there the fall of 1918.

HF: Representing all eight grades?

Hartwell: Pretty much so.

MS: This is one little story that I thought was cute was how the Wagner School got its name. When people in the Montevew area didn't object to having a bachelor as a school trustee, Tom Wagner lived near there and was clerk of the school board at that time. When he got an application from Florence Mitchell to teach there, he said if she could cook, she could have the job. She could cook, so she got the job. He told everyone that was his teacher. So that became known as the Wagner School.

Hartwell: He married her later on.

MS: For a long time the farmers out here said that they didn't let any school teachers get away. In fact I think we have a larger proportion of school teachers in this area than they have in most places because most of the single women didn't get away. They married, settled down to live in this area.

HF: That is something special.

MS: It wasn't until 1918 that there were enough people south in what is now the Terreton area that they decided they had to have a school there. The first little Terreton school was a small, log building on the west side of the second Owsley Canal. That's down near the Terreton Store. There wasn't any bridge across there so the students had to, even though some for them lived close to the school, go a long way to get to where there was a bridge so they could cross this canal and get down to where the school was. Till 1920 they abandoned that one and they built the first one-room frame house up where the Terreton School is. In 1923 they decided they needed another school because there was too much difference, so they built the Lake View School which is east of the Terreton School down on the place where Larry Lee lives now. As far as I know that was the list of the different schools they had out here.

Hartwell: That school soon faded out, and they moved the kids up to Terreton.

HF: Well now, to this day, 50 or 60 years later, the Terreton area has become quite a central place for the high school and the elementary school.

Hartwell: Churches and everything.

HF: How about the early churches? Do either one of you have some information about the early churches?

Hartwell: Churches were the church/school house for a long time.

MS: The first LDS churches were held in the homes. The first Mormon people would go around letting the neighbors know and meet in the homes. Then after that they were held in the schools. Everything was held in the schoolhouses. Those were the only public buildings.

HF: The LDS people were somewhat of a minority out in this area, were they not?

MS: Oh, no.

Hartwell: No, they were in the majority.

HF: Have they always been in the majority?

MS: Oh, yes.

HF: From the very earliest settlement?

Hartwell: Wasn't, maybe, at the very earliest settlers who came in here. They soon arrived and outgrew the rest of them. Some of the very earliest people who came in here came out of Butte and the Butte mines.

HF: What other churches were represented in the early days?

MS: They had a Mennonite Church out in the Montevue area. I believe it was a Mennonite group that was responsible for that first log building, as I understand.

Hartwell: Seems like that is the way I remember it too, but that soon faded away.

HF: Now in the Mud Lake area did you just have the Mormons, the Mormon Church?

MS: For a long time, that was the only church. I know my parents were strictly non-LDS but still, because there was no other place to go, they allowed me to go to the Mormon Church.

HF: Now at a later date there must have been established a Catholic Church?

MS: That was established after, quite a long time afterward. John and I both were in on the start of the Community Church. At first it was not the Community Baptist Church. It was a community church for all faiths. That met in the Level School for a while, then in the community hall for a while, then in what they called the 'Old Blacksmith Shop' and finally they built the Community Church that was later made into the Community Baptist Church. Then they had the Catholic Church later but there are very few Catholic people in the area.

(There are several more minutes on this tape listing the prominent families of the pioneer period. It is available for listening at the library of the Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society at the Teton Flood Museum.)

