

On May 23, 1978, Mr. Samuel Rich, owner of Rich and Sons Nursery, took a morning off during the hieght of the nursery season to talk about the town of Orenco, the Oregon Nursery Company, and the nursery business as a whole. His Father moved up with the company from Salem to found the city of Orenco in 1908. Therefore, Sam Rich has been associated with nurseries in some capacity his entire life and therefore is a most knowledgble person on the subject.

In this interview he talks of the Oregon Nursery Company, its founders Malcom McDonald and Mr. McGill, the town of Orenco, its people, the nursery workers, social and community activitiées, and the growth of the nursery business. The nursery industry is undergoing a treme dous expansion within Washington County and indeed the entire state. This oral history interview ggives an informative history of the industy's inception. .

In a related interview, Mrs. Julia Loehden, a woman of Hungarian descent, talks of her childhood memories of the town of Orenco. (see LOH78-210)

INDEX TO TAPE AND TRANSCRIPT
SAMUEL RICH
LOH78- 207.1,; 207.2
MAY 23, 1978

TRACK 1

- 0-10 (pgs. 1-2) Interviewer's introduction. Narrator's introduction.
"Second generation nurseryman."
- 10-20 (pgs. 2-3) Oregon Nursery Company. Growing fruit trees. The founders,
Malcom McDonald and Mr. McGill. The area around Orenco during the
pre-nursery days.
- 20-30 (pgs. 4-5) The building of the Oregon Electric Railroad through Orenco.
- 30-40 (pgs. 5-7) The growing of fruit and shade trees. The land. The
Northwest fruit market.
- 40-50 (pgs. 7-8) Mr. McGill and Mr. McDonald. Good businessmen.
- 50-60 (pgs. 9-10) The derivation of the name of Orenco. Hungarian and
Romanian workers.
- 60-70 (p. 11) Hungarian traditions.

TRACK 2

- 0-10 (p. 12) The acceptance of the Hungarian people into the community.
- 10-20 (pgs. 13-14) The town Military band. A self-sufficient town.
- 20-30 (pgs. 14-15) Transients working in the nursery during World War II
- 30-40 (pgs. 15-17) The residential homes of the president and the vice-
president. The other nurseries that followed in the wake of the
Oregon Nursery Company.
- 40-50 (pgs. 17-18) The split between Mr. McDonald and Mr. McGill. The
bankruptcy of the nursery. The gradual disappearance of the town.
- 50-60 (pgs. 19-20) The rise of new nurseries.
- 60-70 (pgs. 21-22) The growth of the nursery industry in Washington County
and the state of Oregon.

Page 1
Sam Rich
May 23, 1978
Accession No. LOH 78-207.2

(0) LM: The following interview is with Samuel Rich. Owner of Samuel J. Rich Inc. Nursery. Born in Salem in 1905, he moved to the new town of Orenco along with his family and the Oregon Nursery Company. He dealt with the rise and fall of the town of Orenco, and the Oregon Nursery and the attendant rise of the nursery industry here in Washington County.

LM: To begin I would just like you to introduce yourself.

SR: My name is Sam Rich. I am a second generation nurseryman, my father having started the working of the Oregon Nursery Company in Salem in the year 1900. In 1908 they moved up to Orenco and built the town of Orenco. So I grew up in this area and started working in the nursery at a very early age.

LM: What year were you born then?

SR: 1905. I think I was about twelve years old when I started working in the nursery. The Oregon Nursery Company went out of business in 1928. We bought an old roll top desk that the nursery had used. I was cleaning out the drawers one day and happened to find some payroll records that had slipped down underneath. It happened to be the year that I started working. I recall that my pay was 75¢ for a nine-hour day.

LM: Wow! You mentioned that you are the second generation. How did your

Page 2

Rich

Accession No. LOH 78-207.2

LM: (cont.) father become involved with nursery?

SR: Well, he had come over from France when he was a boy of about fifteen. They lived in Kansas for awhile and then came to Oregon. I guess he went to the nursery looking for work.

(This interview takes place in Mr. Riches' Nursery Warehouse adjacent to the heavily trafficked Cornell Road. Therefore, automobile noises are continually in the background.)

He worked there as a laborer for awhile. When they moved up to Orenco he was made field superintendent. So he had charge of the whole growing operation of twelve hundred acres.

(10) LM: Then before the nursery moved up to Orenco, it was a viable operation down in Salem then?

SR: Oh yes, it was started by a couple of Scotchmen. Their names were McDonald and McGill. I have some old catalogs here that might give the original date, I forgot just when that was. 1867 they started their operation and their principle production at the time was fruit trees because it was about this time that the fruit industry became a major factor in the Northwest. Oregon and Washington, Idaho, and Montana. They grew fruit trees by the millions for this market. Their downfall is possibly because of they over-extended about the time the market dropped off. So they were left in a sorry financial position.

LM: They began in 1867? How did they come about picking Salem to begin

LM: (cont.) their operation? Where were they coming from before?

SR: They were Canadian. Why they picked Salem I don't know, it might have been the soil that attracted them. However, I think they ran into certain problems down there like peach tree Bolers that were in the soil. They moved up here to this area because it had somewhat heavier soil. We didn't have that problem.

LM: Now this will probably be on mostly hearsay or what you heard, but what was this area like before the company moved up here to this particular area, what is now Orenco? Are you familiar with that?

SR: Oh yes. Well there were no railroads. When the Oregon Electric which is now Burlington Northern was considering putting a line out here, they were instrumental in having it swing up through Orenco. The shipments all went out by rail in those days, carload after carload. And also the express depots piled high every day during the shipping season with bundles of trees. They didn't wrap them in burlap or paper like we do nowadays. They grew rye straw, six feet high or so and they would use that to pack around the trees so they wouldn't get damaged in shipping. They built a two acres warehouse to store the trees up and grade them for shipping out. They had one man who did nothing all year around except make crates and packing boxes. These boxes were usually about eight to ten feet long by thirty inches square. The area around here was considerably more

SR: (cont.) timbered then it is now although from here on out to the Northwest it is as the plains. There were more forests when we came into this area, they started here and went Eastward. So a good deal of the land has been cleared during my time. The roads were a pathetic thing. They were dirt roads almost impassable during winter months. The worst sections were made passable by laying maybe eight or ten feet long planks cross ways in the road. You can imagine riding over that in a buggy or wagon with steel rimmed wheels. Sometimes planning was used. It was not uncommon for these planks to be floating around during the bad winter months. Of course Hillsboro streets were like that at the time, too. The railroad was built about the same time the nursery came here and then this line up this way was put in, in 1912 (line going from Beaverton and Orenco north over hills near Cornelius Pass Road to Lower Columbia Line at Linton (Burlington)).

(20) LM: Was that the year that the nursery came to this area then 1912 or thereabouts?

SR: No, it (the nursery) came in 1908.

LM: You mentioned the railroad, was the railroad put through this area for the nursery, was there some kind...?

SR: No, it extended on to Forest Grove, I think maybe it might have gone down farther (to McMinnville and Corvallis). There was a lot of

SR: (cont.) competition between the Southern Pacific and Oregon Electric at the time. I think there was a race to see which could get to Corvallis first and the Southern Pacific apparently won out. As long as I can recall the Oregon Electric Service stopped in Forest Grove.

LM: What do you think would have happened to the nursery business if that line hadn't gone through this area? Would it have hurt the nursery business then as far as getting the nursery stock out to market?

SR: Well, I think they would have had to put the warehouse somewhere else. It would have been an exceedingly great handicap for them to haul everything to a railroad line that would have been built somewhere else.

LM: When the nursery moved up here did the owners buy it from the farmers that were living here at the time?

SR: I'm sure they did.

LM: Do you think they were just shopping around for any open space or was there a particular reason they chose this area here?

SR: I really don't know why unless it was because of the large open space. I don't know of any other reason. I think it was part of the old Hawthorne Estate and part of the Issac Butler Estate. I don't know who all the original owners were. Their horse power was horses. I think they usually have about forty or fifty horses perhaps even more to do all

SR: (cont.) the farm work. Trees were dug with a digger, a v-shaped blade with four steel wheels on it. There were anywhere from six to twenty horses to pull the digger depending on the size of the trees and the condition of the ground at the time. It was a pretty rugged affair. I used to feel sorry for those horses wallowing in the mud and stumbling and falling, constantly getting whip lashes to keep them going.

(30) LM: Was that what they were growing mostly at the beginning here were fruit trees when they made the move?

SR: Mostly yes, but more and more they got into shade trees and some shrubs. But the main line was trees of one sort or another.

LM: Did these nurseries require quite a bit of acreage to operate at the beginning?

SR: This one?

LM: Yes.

SR: Oh yes. I think they started with six hundred acres and rented other land around, and bought more until they were running twelve hundred acres at the time I was working for them.

LM: And this was all planted in fruit trees then at the beginning?

SR: Fruit and some shade trees.

LM: What would they do would they plant seedling and then grow it for what, how long would they nurse it along?

SR: The seedling at that time were I think imported from Europe mostly from

SR: (cont.) France, having grown one year in seed beds. Then the roots would be pruned and the tops cut back; the seedlings then planted out in rows in the fields. The first summer after planting in the spring or they were budded (budding is a form of grafting done the growing season). Then they had to grow either one for two years before they were marketable. Orchardists planted mostly what they call whip trees, one year old fruit trees and the retail market preferred the larger 2-year branched trees.

LM: What were the markets like when they first started here in Orenco? Were they local, national, or international?

SR: Well the fruit market was mostly in the northwest. It was difficult to grow enough trees to satisfy the demand from the orchard country which was being developed.

LM: Were there other nurseries here in this area at that time?

SR: The only other one I know of in Washington County was the J.B. Pilkington nursery was over in Durham near Tigard. I'm not sure when any the nurseries started east of Portland. There was one which later developed into the Portland Wholesale Nursery which was quite a large operation. But they really many nurseries developed rapidly from that time on. A lot of them had their start right here in Orenco after gaining the knowledge and skills necessary. There was the Settlemier nursery in Woodburn, which was quite a large operation, too.

LM: Joseph Senko also got a start here, is that right? The man out in Cornelius?

SR: Yes, I think he worked here as a young fellow. He went into azalea and rhododendrons production.

LM: What was your father's involvement in the company then? What kind of work did he do for the company?

SR: He was field superintendent. He gave orders what to do, which field to plant trees in and where to put the wheat, and the oats, and rye fields. They had an excellent field management program, when trees are harvested, they would usually plant a grain crop and then plant red clover in it or some kind of rye or mixture which was plowed under for a green manure crop. Of course all the barnyard manure from the stables was spread out in the fields. So the quality of the trees that grew was very good. Sizeable considering they had no irrigation.

(40) LM: What kind of men were Mr. McDonald and Mr. McGill? Could you describe their physical characteristics and their attitude toward business?

SR: Mr. McDonald was quite a large man, quite a tall fellow. A very serious type person. Very community minded. Mr. McGill was a more personable character. Both of them were of Scotch Presbyterian stock, so the first thing they did was to build a church in the community. I don't know if they built the schoolhouse or whether it was built with tax money, but good schools were built immediately. A deep well was dug, not really a

SR: (cont.) deep but a huge well with a lot of water capacity which was the source of water for the town they built. They laid out the town site and planted trees on all the streets; built a store, and a hotel, so it was a bustling little town of about three hundred people. They sponsored, I think, probably the first Washington County Fair which was held in their buildings. They promoted those kinds of things. They were very community-minded men.

LM: They must have been quite rather good businessmen too, to start a new venture up in this area that was relatively new.

SR: They were very aggressive and good promoters as evidenced by the catalogs they put out and all the other literature that they had. I really don't know what their training as young men was; either it was horticultural training or whether they picked it up on their own possibly working for good nurseries. They must have had a good background because even their original catalog was well done botanically and in composition.

LM: Did you know both of them personally?

SR: Oh yes, in those days 25¢ was a lot of money and Mr. McGill tried to get me to talk. I wouldn't do it even for 25¢. I was a timid kid.

LM: Were these two men well known among the people living in the town then?

SR: Everyone knew them, sure they were the town.

LM: Was that their original plan then to come and build a nursery and then build a town along with it when they first began?

SR: Oh yes, that was done immediately.

LM: They had plans for the city then or the community?

SR: I'm sure that was all done before they moved up here.

LM: Then everyone that lived here in Orenco was associated with some way with the nursery.

SR: One way or the other. Either as employees of the company or running stores or providing other services or schoolteachers, that sort of thing.

LM: How many people are we talking about? You mentioned three hundred people living there?

SR: There was about three hundred in the town itself. I am not sure how many employees there were in the winter but I would think somewhere between fifty and a hundred. During the summer they would hire lots of kids to wrap buds, do weeding and that sort of thing. Kids would come from Hillsboro and Forest Grove and elsewhere on the Oregon Electric and hike out to the fields to work.

(50) LM: It was quite a place for summer employment for young kids then. Maybe you can explain how the town got it's name?

SR: It got it's name from a contradiction of Oregon Nursery Company, or O-R-E for Oregon N for Nursery and C-O for company, quite simple.

LM: Is that something Mr. McGill and Mr. McDonald thought of?

SR: One or the other, I'm sure (according to some accounts the railroad company originated the name).

Page 11
Rich
Accession No. LOH 78-207.2

LM: You mentioned the workers. Now I understand there was a group of people of Hungarian descent here in this area, could you tell me a little about them?

SR: I don't think they all came over at once but it was about this period that quite a community of Hungarians came via Cleveland, Ohio mostly. How they heard about Orenco I don't know unless the nursery put out an announcement of some sort, advertizing for laborers. They mostly lived in the southeast portion of Orenco, across the creek. As time went on they built their own little church over there. They didn't have any stores and shops but they had their church, which was sort of a community center for them. Some of them went into business successfully. One of the most successful was the Holmason family. They could neither read or write when he came to this country, in fact never did learn to. He didn't know how to spell his name so one of the women of the town created a name for him H-O-L-M-A-S-O-N (which sounded vaguely like his Romanian name).

LM: He had a Hungarian name before that then?

SR: Either Hungarian or Romanian, some of the people were Romanian. When World War I came along the nursery couldn't get seedlings from France, so Mr. Holmason started growing seedlings for them here on contract. And this grew into a tremendous business for him so he ultimately became the largest seedling grower in the United States and shipped them over the country.

Page 12
Rich
Accession No. LOH 78-207.2

LM: That must have been quite an accomplishment?

SR: He and his family developed a huge nursery Pacific Coast Nursery on Sauvie Island and also in Sunnyside, Washington. They have made a fortune several times over. Motz and son up on Skyline Boulevard was another family of Hungarians who have been successful nurserymen. The Sabo family down the road is another one. Sabo's son didn't follow along in his father's line, but went into the cabinet business. He has done very well at that.

LM: How many Hungarian families did come over or did come from Cleveland or that area?

SR: I could only guess. I think probably fifteen or twenty families.

LM: Fifteen or twenty families? But they were originally from the old country then before they arrived in the United States?

SR: Some of them when they got here couldn't speak any English.

LM: Did they maintain their traditions from the old country then?

SR: Well the older generation did, but the younger ones of course changed. The Holmason family changed dramatically. When they became successful in the seedling operation they built a big modern house and bought cars and motorcycles. The oldest boy was killed in a motorcycle. I think he hit a slick spot in old Canyon Road. So they had tragedies among them.

(60) LM: What were some of the traditions that the older generation clung to or

LM: Held on to that were different or unique in comparison with the rest of the town?

SR: Well I don't know if I can be specific other than their food. My dad had to work quite closely with them in his job, so it was not uncommon for us to be invited over for some Sunday festival or something. Their food was quite different. I don't know what they called the different things. Oh they had pies made out of cottage cheese with spices of different sorts added. I know they used poppyseeds quite freely. Beyond that I can't say too much about their way of life. I had supper with a family that lived down the road from us one time. I remember they all ate out of one bowl in the center of the table. One fellow who was quite a burly fellow smoked the strongest tobacco that I had ever experienced. I never quite knew how to take him. He insisted that my older brother go home with him one evening. He was trembling not knowing what in the world was in store, when he got down to the house and followed him into the bedroom. He thought, "What in the world are you taking in the bedroom for?" The fella got down on his hands and knees and started rolling out watermelons. He gave him a whole bad of watermelons, small ones from under the bed they brought from Hungary. They were yellow inside, not red but yellow.

BEGINNING OF TRACK # 2

LM: Then the Hungarian families were accepted by the rest of the community?

SR: Oh sure. Baseball was the thing at that time, some of them fellows were really expert baseball players. I think the Orenco team really dominated the areas like Beaverton, Aloha, and so on in baseball.

Here is a picture of the nursery office building they put up and landscaped and the president's house was equally large. His estate is now the Orenco Golf Course. And the vice-president house is about the same size which is about 3 or 400 yards east from the office. Owned for many years and currently by Doctor and Mrs. Pitman.

LM: They must have been impressive looking houses, they must have taken quite awhile to put to build these houses then?

SR: I am sure it did. This is the hotel that they built which was operated by the Borwick family. This was quite an establishment.

LM: I am just curious, you were mentioning about the baseball team. You mean the Hungarians just picked up the game then just like anyone else? Are there many Hungarian families left in this area? You mentioned a couple.

SR: The Sabels settled down here and the Motzs' up in the hills. The Sabo family settled on 216th Avenue. John Motz on Quatama Road. The Ted Motz family on Skyline and several brothers and sisters of of the Csergei family in the Aloha, Orenco and Hillsboro area. Also,

SR: (cont.) Julia Kishloehden on Cornelius Pass Road.

LM: They just moved away? Okay, then the town itself must have grown rather rapidly once the company moved in.

SR: Yes, there wasn't much else going on except the nursery itself, so it got up to this point quickly and then stabilized as long as the nursery was here.

LM: What was some of the activities going on in the town outside the nursery, say was it just a normal town just like any other town in the area?

(10) SR: Well it was quite an energetic little town. They had a military band which to me was one of the most wonderful things in the world. They had a good director named Jim Sheehan. Everything was "Let's go!" He was a real live wire. A lot of enthusiasm.

LM: This band, would play occassionally for the town? Or was it made up of people of the town?

SR: They were all town people. They worked for the nursery, mostly. I don't recall how often they had their concerts but generally they were in the church or schoolhouse. In the summer time in the park. The park was adjacent to the school house and the church. They put up at bandstand. I remember the concerts that were put on there. They even had some sort of horse race at that time if I recall, as well as Fourth of July celebrations (dog barking in the back-

SR: (cont.) ground).

LM: When you were younger was there much contact between the other towns in the area? With the people of Orenco and Hillsboro say?

SR: Hillsboro was the shopping center except for what they could get here at the general local store. Other than that I wouldn't say a lot of contact.

LM: The town was pretty well self-sufficient then?

SR: Yes. They had a hardware store, general grocery store, and later on another store, a boarding house, and an ice cream parlor, and a barber shop.

LM: It must have been a rather friendly town, with everybody working at the same place and knowing everyone else, it must have been quite a social bond between the members of the community then?

SR: Well it really was. They had a print shop that Mr. Mead ran. Everything but a bank, I guess (laughs).

LM: Was it an enjoyable experience as a young kid growing up in a town then?

SR: We grew up out here, we weren't in town. The only contact we had was at school and my older brother playing in the band.

LM: When World War I came along did that effect the nursery business and the nursery stock? The late teens?

SR: I really don't know what effect it had on the sale of nursery stock. I was too young to know or care about things at that time. I am sure it had an effect on the manpower because it drew quite a few fellows away from nursery work to work in the shipyards which paid more money.

SR: (cont.) So the train traffic between here and Portland, passenger traffic, increased a great deal.

(20) LM: Who did work in the nursery during the war since a lot of the men were working in the shipyards?

SR: Well there were some of older more reliable fellows who stayed and they used a lot of transients in peak times. Much of it could be done by them.

LM: Transients, you mean migrant labors coming through?

SR: No, probably Burnside people. They are still used a lot in the nurseries.

LM: They would come out in the trains then, on the Oregon Electric?

SR: Yes. Although the nursery and bunkhouses for most of them to live in. They were a pretty rough bunch. Orenco was a "dry town" and remained so as long as it was incorporated so these men had to import their liquor from elsewhere.

LM: When did you get your start working in the nursery?

SR: I was about twelve years old. It was about 1916 or 1917, during the war years.

LM: What was your first duties or first job?

SR: My first job was tying buds.

LM: Is that what everybody starts out doing that type of work?

SR: Either that or weeding. This work was done mostly during July, August, and September. Tying buds involved at that time, tying

SR: (cont.) strip of Raffia around the bud which had been inserted in the seedling near the ground. The purpose of this was to keep the wound closed so it wouldn't dry out. Later on seedling had to be cut off just above the inserted bud. In the '30's the rubber companies started developing rubber strips which replaced the Raffia. The strips were finally developed to the point where they would deteriorate in about a week to two weeks time and would break off by themselves and wouldn't have to be cut off. So those are still being used today.

LM: Did your responsibility expand as you continued working for the company?

SR: No, not really. One could go from tying the buds to doing the budding which was a more technical job. About the 1920's sometime they put up a lot of greenhouses and shadehouses to do their own propagating of things that need to be started from cuttings indoors. So I shifted over to that department and worked in the greenhouse and shadehouse.

(30) LM: You were showing me the photographs of the homes then, were they quite the showplace for people to come out and look at it?

SR: Well, I presume so. The office building has been torn down, but the vice-president's house is owned by Dr. Pitman. The other one is on the golf course still being used. They are still real fine mansions.

Page 19
Sam Rich
Accession No. LOH 78-207.2

LM: Did you ever have an opportunity to go inside when Mr. McGill or the Vice-President was living in at the time?

SR: No. I think I was in the front entry once when Mr. Mitchell lived in the Vice-President's house. He was to successor Mr. McGill as Vice-President.

LM: Something I gathered from a newspaper article said that on June 21, 1913, three hundred nursing men from all over the country gathered here in Orenco. You were eight years old at the time, does that something that stuck in your memory or is that a big event or is that just some business type arrangement?

SR: Well I don't know, but what that could have been the American Association of Nurserymen or more likely the Pacific Coast Association of Nurserymen. It was a very active group at the time. So they had their conventions at various areas. I remember my Dad going to one in Salt Lake City and to another one down near San Jose, California and that area. It was a good time for nurseries all over in that period.

LM: After the Orenco nursery got it's start then, did other nurseries follow in this area during the 20's? Well, Washington County and Hillsboro area.

SR: Not really until the Oregon Nursery went out of business. Then others like Motz's, Sabo's and Orenco Nursery and ours and Vanderbom's and Stout's. Some of these fellows started elsewhere.

LM: You mentioned not until the Orenco started to go out of business, what caused that? Why what was the circumstances surrounding the decline of the company?

(40) SR: Well friction between two major men, McDonald and McGill. I think largely centering around McDonald's determination to have Mr. Mitchell come into the organization as sales manager. Mitchell and McGill could never see eye to eye and things went from bad to worse. Finally, McGill pulled out and I guess in the settlement arrangement they agreed to pay him a huge sum of money. Which I doubt they were ever to pay completely. That with Mr. McDonald's tendency to overplant brought it to a crisis.

LM: When was this then, this crisis? What time are we talking about?

SR: They finally had to close it up in 1927.

LM: Did the company just go bankrupt then?

SR: They were in receivership for quite a while and then finally closed up and sold everything off. Sold the land. Everything.

LM: What happened to McGill after he left the company, did he go on?

SR: Yes, he moved out east of town and started growing things out there at Troutdale. They grew a lot of stuff out here for him in payment of debt I guess. He went on to establish a very large nursery, he and is some Wayne; one of the nurseries with the best reputation in the country. It is still in operation. It is run now by the third

SR: (cont.) generation, Peter McGill

LM: Was McGill really the brains behind Orenco Company then?

SR: Well I couldn't say who had the brains I would think McGill was the better businessman of the two.

LM: What happened to Mr. McDonald?

SR: Well he kept the name Oregon Nursery Company and operated sales office in Northwest Portland near Montgomery Wards. He lived to be quite an old man. After he passed away, his daughter Florence carried it on for a number of years. She is gone now, too.

LM: What happened to the town of Orenco, after 1927?

SR: Well, it sort of deteriorated. Once store kept operating for quite awhile, but the hotel and boarding houses, and barbershop, hardware store and printing shop all folded and left town. But it is a nice community to live in, so I don't think there are any houses vacant for very long. There are good roads so people can commute to their jobs.

LM: So did people that worked in the nursery than move on to other nurseries?

SR: No, they went to other occupations for the most part.

LM: And then they stayed here then?

SR: Some stayed here and some moved away to do other things.

LM: Did that town than just gradually lose that spirit that you were

LM: (cont.) talking about, that enthusiasm?

(50) SR: Oh yes, they lost it completely. It was a very different place.

Even the school is gone now so there is really nothing left there except the church. That is about the only community thing that there is. It is part of the West Union School District now. We even had a high school at the time. I took two years of high school there before they closed it.

LM: Was it pretty sad or hard for you and your father and other people in the town to accept that the town was gradually disappearing?

SR: Well, you know, at my age it just didn't have any great bearing, but I'm sure that it was an ordeal for anybody involved in the nursery.

LM: I have something here that I also read in the same newspaper article that during the height of the civic town of Orenco they filmed a movie here in 1924. Do you have any recollection of that or what that was about?

SR: No, I really don't.

LM: Okay, well once Orenco did collapse, what did your family do? Did you pick up again another nursery?

SR: We started growing on contract for Mr. Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell had been sales manager before he was vice-president of the nursery. So he operated under the name of Orenco Nursery Company, and we grew trees for him. We did the growing and he did the selling.

LM: Then your business just gradually expanded?

SR: Yes, he died very suddenly in 1937 and we were left pretty much without a market then. His widow continued to run the nursery, but sales started to decline quite rapidly for her, so we got into retail at the time, selling wholesale on our own as well. We put out a small catalog, I think in 1937 a retail catalog and then gradually built it up to a large color catalog which brought orders from all over the United States and foreign countries. Even after we quit putting out the mail order catalog we kept getting requests from all over the world for years afterwards. But now we are strictly wholesale.

LM: During these years during the 30's and 40's did the nursery business, your nursery business and the whole industry as in this area begin to expand and grow?

SR: Yes, there is a very dramatic growth in the county. Our business grew and Motz's business grew as did Drew's in Beaverton. The Carlton Nursery moved from Carlton into the Forest Grove area. They became one of the largest nurseries in the area. Later Glen Walter's started, he has a huge operation now.

LM: Has the nursery stock itself changed? You mentioned initially it was mostly apple and fruit trees. Has that grown, too.