

Field Notes, Phyllis Reynolds interview, 5.17.2024
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I conducted a pre interview with Phyllis C. Reynolds on May 15, 2024 via a phone conversation. I had met with Phyllis on several occasions over the past decade and sought her advice as a founding member of the Portland Heritage Tree Committee. After presenting her with the Maynard Dawson Memorial award for Oregon Heritage Trees in April of 2024, I chatted with her and the staff at Hoyt Arboretum and they urged me to do an oral history with Phyllis. I mentioned this idea to her and she warmly agreed, which is not always a guarantee with her as she has strong opinions and a reputation for being firm on folks. However, I have always had a good rapport with her and as I explained the transcription and review phases of the interview she quickly agreed to participate. It took several weeks for me to find time to fit in this work, pro-bono, but I was able to contact her in mid May and she agreed to be interviewed the next day.

Phyllis has severe macular degeneration and is rapidly losing her vision. I offered to interview her in her home and she accepted this as an ideal and comfortable location where she can feel her way around.

I arrived at her home promptly at 2:00pm on May 16th, 2024 and set up my equipment in her living room. She sat comfortably and I set up my Zoom recorder with a lapel mic and my room mic. A camera was the R6 with attached shotgun mic, set to autofocus and auto ISO as the room was rather dark for her sensitivity to bright light. B camera was the EOS r with internal mic, again auto focus and auto ISO.

The interview lasted almost 2 hours. About an hour in we had a phone call interruption, and I needed to replace batteries on the recorder at about an hour in. I also noticed the room microphone was not registering early in the interview, and successfully troubleshooted the situation.

We discussed her early life in portland, her involvement with trees and the neighborhoods she lived in, and then mainly her work as a founder of the Portland Heritage Tree Committee, her publication *Trees of Greater Portland*, and her work with Portland Urban Forestry Commission, Portland Japanese Garden (to which she was quite a bit touchy about and I decided not to ask more questions), and Hoyt Arboretum. By the second hour we were both feeling a bit taxed and responses were getting shorter so I decided best to start wrapping up the interview. I ended the recording and went over the release form and deed of gift, both of which she signed. We agreed to share the interview with her on her Ipad so she can listen, as reading a transcript is nearly impossible for her.

In all it felt it a successful interview, and though focused on her tree work, it also reflects some of her long term work for the city. A potential follow up interview could dive into her memories of early Portland, but the details seemed to be a bit lagging for her. In all a successful interview.