Interviewed by:
Sam Schrager

Oral History Project
Latah County Museum Society
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RANNIE JOHNSON VINE

Elk River; b. 1882
kept boarders, worked in hotel

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Why they moved to Montana from Greenwood, Wisconsin. Husband didn't like dairying.

Homesteading south of Fort Peck in 1910. First flax crop. Paying off their barn by giving dances on the hardwood floor of the loft; people came from great distances to dance. Sunday baseball.

Hard work. The flu was especially hard on pregnant women; treatment by sweating.

Her near death from slow consumption. A voice told her to get up from her bed and go home, and she did. The doctors called it a miracle.

Hard water. People went to town at Wolf Point or Poplar; the French Canadians had their own community. They lost their wheat in three successive years of drought.

Decision to come to Elk River. Superintendent Bloom would not let people loaf around town. She went to work in the hotel to get a room to live in, then moved over the printing shop. Japanese in town.

The land-office business serving food at the hotel when the men struck in the woods (c.1920).

The IWW's who helped them with harvest in Montana were wonderful; they got barbed wire that the corporation had abandoned for the farm. People rode the freights west from Minnesota to work on the harvest; hoboes might steal food from their basement. At Elk River hoboes asked for food in return for work. IWWs were against the terrible camp conditions.

Moonshine sold to lumberjacks. An excursion (continued).

Uncovering a stash of moonshine; the town marshall was in partnership. Three crews of men for the job. The hotel where she worked.

Cleaning up a bootlegging operation at a hotel.
Burning crosses scared some people. Many were Southerners and related. Klan clothes hanging on the line to dry.

Social life in Elk River.

Shutting down the mill. Older Weyerhaeuser's great regret about plan to remove the mill from Elk River. Husband refused to move; closeness of people who remained. How they continued to make a living. Getting by in the depression – a huge haul of food from Juliaetta. Enjoyment of the country. Home.

Malker Anderson's suicide. Emil Anderson (his brother) died in a stump blast.

Malker's strange wife, Maggie May, was very cruel to her daughter. She helped Mrs. Vine take care of her ailing mother-in-law. Malker's son died in an accident at fifteen, an alcoholic. After her big parties she made her little daughter clean all the dishes.

A fatal plane crash. George Schmaltz's stories about Harry Adams. Recipe for huckleberry ice cream.

with Sam Schrager

July 8, 1976
II. Transcript
This conversation with Rannie Johnson Vine, who is better known as Ma Vine, took place at her home in Elk River on July 8, 1976. The interviewer was SAM SCHRAGER.

SAM SCHRAGER: This moving to Montana, why did you move there in the first place?

RANNIE VINE: Well, they advertised that part of the country at that time, like they do everything else and homesteading and one thing and another, so my husband and several other men with families that just took the notion they wanted to go on out there and homestead. 320 acres of land sounded big because we came from Wisconsin, Wisconsin isn't too big of a state and it was all dairying and my husband didn't want nothing to do with a cow, he said, or a calf, too, how in the world a person's going to make a living stripping a cow every night and morning. (Chuckles) So, he didn't like it, so they went on out there and we done alright.

SS: Had he been dairying in Wisconsin?

VINE: Yeah.

SS: Were the people that went on out with you neighbors of yours?

VINE: Yes, and a lot of his relatives. The father and mother came out with us and one of his brothers and my brother came out there with us, but he went back. He said, "None of this for me." He went back to farming there in Wisconsin, he says, "That's good enough for me."

SS: Where in Wisconsin?

VINE: Have you ever been down in there?

SS: A little bit, I've driven through it more.

VINE: Do you know where Chippewa Falls is?

SS: I think, yeah, yeah.

VINE: Oh, I don't know how far east of St. Paul that would be, probably 150 miles or something like that. We were just about in the central part of Wisconsin. Small town, they called Greenwood. That was an old
logging town, too.

SS: Greenwood?

VINE: Uh-huh. Greenwood was an old logging town. And when I was a child I've heard 'em tell about—well, when they pulled the sawmill out—

it would be the last of the lumbering and woodwork around Greenwood.

They still are hauling in and they got little patches—let's see what do they call them now—they make boxes for up in the northern part of Wisconsin for fishing boxes and stuff like that to put the fish in. Lot of fishing going on up there. And they homemade a few basswood bolts, I think, they called it.

SS: This decision to go to Montana; do you think that they—do you think that your husband and others, that you all felt that you could better—do a lot better out in Montana than in Wisconsin?

VINE: Yes, my husband did one reason he didn't like that dairying and he was born in a lumber camp in Wisconsin and of course, that's what he liked, and when he got out into Montana, he done alright, although he wasn't a very good farmer, but then when the crops began to fail, why, out on the coast, out in the timber again, out, come out here. That's how we came out here.

SS: Would you tell me a little bit about what it was like around Fort Peck when you got there? Was it at all developed already?

VINE: Fort Peck, of course—Let's see, on the north side of the Missouri River, and this homesteading that they had going was south of the Missouri so we had to cross a ferry to get on the south side of the river. And in 1910 there wasn't anybody—there were just a few; very few people that had started to homestead, but during 1910 and '11, why, there was cabins sprung up on most every 320 acres all around there. So there was people from North Dakota that lived there and done okay, I guess, I don't know, anyway they homesteaded. We
homesteaded, I think it was twenty miles south of the Missouri River went right—Poplar, that town where we come that far by train and there, that's right on the bank of the Missouri there and we homesteaded about twenty miles south of there and then there was another twenty miles further and there was any amount of people who moved in there. And the second year we were there, 1911, why there was a—I don't know what they were, I think they were some foreigners, anyway foreigners of some kind, either Hollanders or Germans or something like that, had farmed in North Dakota, then they took up these homesteads, the Old Man did, and his sons they took up land—awful lot of it up there. And they brought in their equipment from North Dakota, you see, great, big, old tractors and plows and what you have and so when they got as far as our place, why, this old fella says, he says, "I'd like to plow that field over there for ya. I think it was something like 100 acres or so or something like that over there, and my husband says, he says, "I haven't got the money now," he says, "to pay for." He says, "I ain't asking you for any money." He says, "Let me plow that," and he says, "If you can, put it into flax." And he says, "I'll wait for my pay.

I'm just on my homestead and we got lots of builtins to do then that boys can do that." So that's the way it happened. I never saw such beautiful flax in my life. Grow up about this high, and just as level, and just wonderful. Made all kinds of money out of that flax; two straight years, and that kinda put us on our feet.

SS: Did you build a homestead cabin on the place?

VINE: Yes, we shipped up two railroad cars full of oh, lumber, and everything that we needed from Wisconsin. We had quite a nice little house on our claim. And people them days were so different from what they are now; now there's a carpenter that lived down close
to the Missouri, and his land would be flooded every year, you know, the ice would jam up and then it would flood his land so he couldn't do much of anything, so he done carpenter work for people that wanted to build something. So he come to my husband and we had lots of lumber on hand and he says, "Let me build you a barn, a good, big one with a good hayloft." And we had some maple flooring with us—stuff about this wide, you know, and he said, "Put that in the loft," he says, "and use that for a dance hall for a while." He says, "I'll bet you'll have that paid for in just no time." So that's the way it happened. And we shipped the piano out with us, and we had that, so when he had the barn finished, why, he says, "Now," he says, "Let's give a dance to advertise a little bit." So they did. I never seen so many people in my life as there was come to that.

Did you have the dances there very often after that?

Yeah, big ones, for Red Cross and one thing and another. We made an awful lot of money for the Red Cross. We didn't put any hay in there for a long time. I don't know as we ever put hay in it. You know that prairie hay, you could stack that. We done okay.

When you had a dance there would it be often just a community dance, just for local families?

Well, once in a while we'd have it just for the neighborhood or something like that, or try to. I remember one time the neighbors said let's have a little party and dance Saturday night. And I said, "Okay." And we did, and first thing we knew, why, you look out and here was horses and cowboys and women and kids all over the place!(Chuckles)

You couldn't hardly keep 'em away?

Ya, that was advertised, oh, all around there, (Chuckles)
Lot of work about it. I enjoyed it. And then there was quite a few people from Chicago that come out there and homesteaded. And some of 'em had been in the baseball leagues in Chicago, and so they started a baseball outfit. And that was every Sunday and every Sunday. I might just as well bake up twenty loaves of bread and cook up a ham or two or something else and feed that bunch every Sunday. And enjoyed every minute of it!

SS: Where did they play at? Close to the home?

VINE: Yes. Here is our homestead, here's my father-in-law's homestead, here's my sister-in-law's homestead and here is Hubert's- that's another fella that come Greenwood with us. So, we had our buildings right close here, and this sister-in-law- she wasn't married yet to my brother-in-law, but anyway, they were going to be- but she come out there and homesteaded, and-

SS: She homesteaded?

VINE: She homesteaded- teacher, yeah- and my two oldest girls and three other children, I guess, she taught them. She was out here last summer.

SS: Really? Herself?

VINE: Well, she came from Wisconsin with us and she just got that urge that she wanted to come West. She taught school in our neighborhood in Wisconsin, and that's how she got acquainted with my brother-in-law. And she wanted to come out and she came out with us. And she had her homestead- let's see- I got her whole history here. The whole business.

SS: Did she write it down?

VINE: She wrote it. I just wonder where I got that.--- blank space---

SS: A lot of hard work, too?

VINE: Oh, yeah, but everybody worked hard them days. We didn't think anything
about it. Different than it is now. Why, that work had to be done, you might just as well get in and do it- forget about it.

SS: What was the hard work, when you think about it now?

VINE: Well, as far as housekeeping- we always had so many hired men- not many, I shouldn't say that- about eight or ten all the time. And we had to haul all our water a mile and a half; drinking water, wash water, bath water and the whole works. And then the water was so hard you had to break it with lye. And the winters are so severe back there. Sixty below. The people didn't think anything about it, we didn't know any better, I guess. You know, a lot of people now, you start to tell 'em about it- and of course, the younger people's not interested in it, and it can't be so, that's all there is to it. (Laughter) But anyway, we never thought about that. You know, people this day and age feel like they got to be right close to a doctor all the time. Well, I raised my family out there on the hill- or in Montana, I shouldn't say hills, because it wasn't, it was flat as it could be, but we never thought about a doctor. Never gave it a thought. We got along just fine. And it was during that- in 1918, that flu-

SS: You thinking of that flu?

VINE: When that flu was so bad.

SS: What about that?

VINE: Oh, that was terrible. Any amount of people that died right out there on the prairie with that. Not any more than they did in town, because there wasn't anything much that a doctor could do for it. Mostly the people that died was pregnant mothers. Their temperature'd run so high that it killed 'em that way. It struck a neighborhood just north of us a little ways, and those people came from Canada and homesteaded in there. French people. They were hit
awful hard, there was several of them that died. But anyway, we helped one another and we got along just swell.

SS: Was there any treatment— was there any way of treating it, that you used out there?

VINE: Well, they didn't have anything much to treat it with. And the doctor came up once or twice— and I happened— they all called on me for some reason or other, I don't know why. If the children was sick or anything they had to have me and I didn't know anything about those things much. But, anyway he'd give 'em shots, you know, and then give me orders what to do. Temperature gets up so high, why, give 'em a shot, and I never did, I was supposed to, but I didn't— kids lived anyway! (Laughter)

SS: In general, what kind of remedies did you use there? I mean, considering you didn't have a doctor—

VINE: He didn't give us anything!

SS: I don't mean just for the flu, but there was a lot of sickness of different sorts, I know in the pioneering. I mean, what would you do when kids were sick or parents were sick? Were there any plants or any medicines that were commonly used?

VINE: Not that I know of. I took care of a lot of them when they first started to come down, and the trouble was, try to break the temperature. We had no aspirins, nothing like that them days; nothing. There was an old woman, I think she's part Indian. She says, "You know," she says, "you've to get 'em to perspire." And she says, "The way that we used to do it," she says, "is to go to the corncrib and get them to count the corn and put 'em in the boiler and put 'em on to boiling and get 'em good and hot; wrap 'em in Turkish towels and then lay 'em next to the patients." And that's what I did, and I had more luck with that than anything.
They'd just break out wringing wet and that's when they kind of relaxed.

SS: What about tuberculosis? Was there any of that consumption?

VINE: You want me to tell you one of them stories, too?

SS: Yes.

VINE: I had that, when I lived on the ranch. And, of course, it was called it them days—slow consumption. And you just kept goin' down hill and you kept workin' and goin' downhill and you'd lose your appetite and you couldn't eat and you would had this work to do and you had to keep up. So, my folks lived, a lot of 'em in North Dakota, and so they said that I better come on down there. And I thought, well, I can't do, I couldn't believe that I had it in the first place. I went to seven different doctors before I'd really make up my mind that they knew what they were talkin' about. But finally I had to go down there. And their medical doctor was in Bottineau, North Dakota and their surgeon was in Rugby, so of course they took me on up to Bottineau and he wanted to send me to a sanitarium up at Dunseith, up near Canada up in there. I said, "No, not me." And my sister had a large family, she said, "Well," she says, "We'll, just put her in a room," and she says, "one of the girls'll just take over and take care of her, and that's it." And so I laid there for a couple or three months and they'd take me to Bottineau once in a while for a check up and finally their doctor at Bottineau said, "Well," he said, "she won't last only about three more days, that's all there is to it." He said, "If the folks want to see her, they better come on down." So coming home from Bottineau, they lived up on a large farm close to Souris, North Dakota. Well, anyway, coming home here they set and bawled and bawled and bawled
and I says, "What's the matter?" I says, "I know what he said," I says, "I'm doomed, and I can't be here much longer." But, I says, "What's the difference? Got to go sometime." And, then they really did bawl. Well, anyway when they got home they sent for the folks. And they were to come the next day, which they did. The next morning then I was so weak and had been-- they had to carry me into the car and out of the car and into the doctor's office and all of that sort of stuff. But anyway, my brother-in-law used to come up to my room about three o'clock in the morning-- it was in the month of June-- nice and light, you know. And they'd send him up there first for fear that probably I was gone or something like that, so this morning he came on up and looked at me and I just smiled; I couldn't talk or anything, I'd cough my head off and I couldn't hardly raise my hand, so he went back down, an then my niece came up that was taking care of me and gave me my bath-- I guess she did, I don't remember that, but anyway she fed me and that and I was so weak I couldn't.

And I grabbed ahold of a piece of her dress and I held onto to it and I says, "I want to get up." And I scared her to death. But between the time that my brother-in-law was there my niece I went thru something but I don't know what it was-- I can't tell ya. I had chills and sweats and everything else. I never could explain it; there's no way to explain it. And the Lord came to me and says, "Get up and get out of that bed and go home!" And so when she came up, I just had to follow this instruction-- and she says, "You can't get up!" And I says, - "You can't even set up to get dressed." And I says, - and there was an old-fashioned chair-- and it took her about to tell her this- "Tip the bottom side up," I says, "and slide the back of the chair in under my back and raise me up gradually, til you get my clothes on." So, she started, then she went down stairs and, "Oh,"
she says, "Auntie's just about gone." She said. And then they de-
cided down there, they'd do what they could for me anyway,
clock that afternoon I was up and dressed and I've never coughed and
I've never been in bed with it since! Had the strength to walk down
them stairs and everything at three o'clock in the afternoon. Now,
that's unbelievable, isn't it?

SS: Yes.

VINE: That's a miracle.

SS: Incredible!

VINE: That's a miracle! But that's what happened. And in three days af-
fter that I went home, and here I'd been foolin' around with it for
several years, and I was okay.

SS: Do you know that voice that you heard speaking to you, is that all
that it said?

VINE: Huh?

SS: Is that all that the voice said, just to get up and get your clothes
on?

VINE: All of it? Yeah. Well, this voice says, "Get up and get ready and
go home." Something like that. "And live, because you've got a lot
to live for." And that was it. But I had to do it, I had to follow
those instructions. Just had to!

SS: Do you think that the chills and all that that had happened to you
then was like some kind of a turning point?

VINE: Sure it was. Whatever this was- really it turned things. There is
a higher power, I'll tell you than doctors. And then my husband came
and my daughter and then in about two years, I guess after that I
went down there to visit again, and my sister says, "Let's go on down
to Bottineau and see Dr. Mc Kay." And I says, "Okay." Well, they
took me in there and when it come my time for him to talk to me, why, I says, "I guess you don't remember me, do you?" And, he says, "No." "Well," I says, "I'm Mrs. Johnson's sister that was here so sick a couple of years ago." And he began to back up, and back up and he looked at me and he says, "Miracles will happen." And he just went and set down.

SS: How old were you at that time when that happened, more or less?
VINE: Well, I think I was in my 20's. I don't remember- I don't keep track of those things. It was too much.

SS: Well, during the time you were in Montana-Bertha was about eight.
VINE: Three years. So it was about forty some years ago- fifty some years ago.

SS: Well, if you had died, I suppose it would have been a real awful blow to the family.
VINE: Well, they were kind of prepared for it, because I'd been sick so long.

SS: When you were sick like that and you didn't really want to believe it, did it really impair what you could do, did it get in your way a lot, did it stop you from doing the work that you wanted to do?
VINE: Oh, yes, I didn't have the strength. I didn't have the strength to go ahead and do anything, much. But, when I got home it didn't take me long to get back.

END SIDE A

VINE: One or two that I remember of. I think in this book that I gave you that Alida, she'd tell about all that stuff in that.

SS: How far around did the kids come to the school?
VINE: Huh?

SS: How far around did the kids come to the school that she taught?
VINE: Well, she taught right in our homestead shack. And that was right
close to our place, you know, so the kids didn't have very far to
go, until more settlers settled there and then they built a school-
house about a mile and a half from our place. Kind of in the center
of the whole neighborhood, you see. I don't know, I never did have
a picture of that schoolhouse, but she taught there.

SS: How serious was the water shortage?

VINE: Well, it wasn't such an awful shortage, but it was so hard; so many
minerals and oil and that that you couldn't use it. We had three
wells on our place but we couldn't use the water for any of it only
just to water the stock. And now, the one that wrote that book, they're
still hauling water from the well that we did a mile and a half away.
They built a pond for to water their stock and for things like that,
but for their use in the house, cooking and that, they have to haul
their water. Just about the only well around the country that the
water is fit to use.

SS: In your visiting time, I mean the time that you had to get together,
was it mostly with your kin? Mostly with your relatives, that you
would spend your time on that homestead, or was there a lot of other
neighbors, too, that you would get together with?

VINE: Well, we had- and I guess they still do out there- had A Ladies'
Aid and all that sort of stuff. And I don't know- yeah the French,
they have their own church and cemetery and everything down in there,
they're kind of all by themselves, but the rest of 'em goes into a
town they call Wolf Point, that's where mostly all my people live
now.

SS: Wolf Point?

VINE: Uh-huh.

SS: And you were going into town and back then, too?

VINE: Wolf Point- on the north side of the - get across the Missouri River
every time we'd go to town. They got a bridge there now across
the Missouri there at Wolf Point, where at Poplar you still got to
go across on a ferry.

SS: Well, what— when did this string of bad harvests start?

VINE: Well, let's see, 1919, '18— about '17, it began to kind of go downhill.
They was hot winds that began to get so bad and that. And a lot of
'em toughed it out, you know, they stayed and nearly starved to
death and everything else, but my husband, he— he walked up in the
fields— well, about this time of day, it began to blow real hot and
wsssh— He says, "I'm going up in the wheat field and see what it
looks like." Away he went. Beautiful stand of wheat, great big
heads and all that, and he brought a few back and they were just
cooked in the milk before they started— they were about half grown.
He says, "This is it!" He says, "I'm leaving tomorrow for the coast."
So he pulled out. Both the state— and then you see they built that
big dam at Fort Peck, started that, and after that dam got in there
and got that water— body of water in through there, they done real
well. They're really wealthy people down in there now. But they're
entitled to it, after what they went through, I'll tell you.

SS: Those years of drought were really rough?

VINE: Oh, terrible, terrible. Yeah.

SS: Was one year after another?

VINE: Yes, three years. My husband spent all of his money just like gamb-
ling, you know; if he didn't make it one year he'd try it again the
next year, tried it again the next year. That was it.

SS: Was the crop a total loss?

VINE: Yeah. Yeah.

SS: Sure different than around the Palouse here, where they never had
that sort of thing.
Oh, this Palouse country, it's something. That's a gold mine. And once, when was that? Year before last the crops wasn't too good down there but this year they're having awful good crops down in Eastern Montana, And they're fixed now, you know, they can stand it. And they have things insured and things like that, most of 'em.

During these drought years, do you remember, did they try making rain or anything like that? Did they try to make rain?

Uh-huh. Didn't have much success with it.

Do you remember what they did? Did they get somebody to come in, or something?

No, that was— they didn't while we were there, they tried that little afterwards, you see. I can't remember when they started but it was along time after we came here, not between the time we went and up 'til that time, that they tried that. But I don't know what they did.

How did you feel about leaving?

I was tickled to death to get out of there! (Chuckles) And, of course, I didn't have much of a place to come to when I come here either. I had to go to work. I came in on the train at three o'clock in the afternoon and I had to go to work the next morning in order to get a place to live. This was a booming town at that time.

How did it happen that you came here instead of going all the way to the coast?

Well, my husband went to the Coast in the first place and looked around— no, yes he did— then he come back to Spokane, went to the employment office and looked for a job. He was a blacksmith, he learned that trade in Wisconsin. And that was before they had all these modern equipment— they logged with horses and all that sort of stuff and he done all that sort of work. Shoeing horses and making
sleighs and everything that they needed out of iron and stuff like that. So, he got a job from Polland, and Polland had a job here Christiansen Meadow at that time and that's where they put him. And this suited my husband just fine because they were just a going Bloom it; loggin' to beat the band. And this, that was mayor of the town, was superintendent the, he wouldn't let anybody loaf around town unless he walked down the street and seen somebody in the middle of the day settin' around and that and was lookin' as though he wasn't interested in anything he'd go on up to him and say, shake hands with 'em, and say, "What are you doin'?" And he'd say, "Nothing." "Are you looking for work?" And if he'd say, no, "Well," he says, "take the train out of here," he says, "this is working." (Laughter)

SS: Is a working town?

VINE: Yeah. Yeah, he wouldn't let anybody loaf around here. So, my husband worked for them for a year, I think it was, then he turned over and worked for the Potlatch down at the mill down here.

SS: Well, what did you think when you first came into this country? Kind of different than where you were coming from.

VINE: Oh, my, yes. Yes. You know, there, you could just and you could see the horizon way over there, you couldn't see nothin'. And here, when you'd look out, why, you'd feel like something hit me here right in the face, all the trees and things so closely.

SS: You say you had to go to work as soon as you got here?

VINE: Yeah.

SS: Why was that?

VINE: Because I couldn't get a place to live. Had to go to work, work at a hotel down here, and they said, "Well, we haven't got any extra room, but we sure need some help. And if you want to we'll give you
a, I think the number of the room was nine, we'll give you that room 'til we can do better for you and your girl." My husband was up to Polland's in the camp working, you see. And that's the way it turned out. So, I worked there for- I worked there all that winter and the next spring- I don't know as you remember, up to the school-house there where you seen that printing office?

SS: Oh, yeah.

VINE: Well, the fella that owned that- oh, there was a family- oh, that was a large as large building- a family that used to live in Spokane but they were here working but they wanted to move back to Spokane, and they'd been living up there and that was all furnished and everything- he boarded down there where I was working and he knew I was lookin' for a place, so he come to me one day and he says, "Hey," he says, "Gordons are moving back to Spokane, if you want that place up there, why you can move up." I was tickled to death moved out, over to a friend's house and lived there 'til we got ahold of this place in '25. Yep.

SS: I'm surprised that the housing was so tight when you came here.

VINE: Well, there was so many people here; many people. Everything was full, the same as it is now. And there was several Jap families living in here. Had two Jap laundries that I can remember of. One down here and one up here on the corner. And people of all nationalities. And the men in camp, they'd come into town. They had a strike here one time while I was a workin' at the hotel. The people that owned it, their names were Wilson's, and she done most all the cooking. It's kind of mixed work them days, didn't have no regular jobs at a certain thing. Well, anyway, we'd run the millwrights out at eleven thirty for their lunch, then we had the regular mill and planer crew at twelve, and we was running them out-

SS: Running them out? What do you mean by that? You was taking a lunch
out to 'em?

VINE: No, but they'd got through eating and they could get out! (Chuckles)

So, the passenger train in then at two ten, and we had to get the dining room and that cleaned up again because there usually was a lot of the lumberjacks coming in to go to camp, you see, and a lot of 'em going out. Well, anyway, this one day, why, we was busy as could be and she come to me and she says, "Take a look out in the office."

Looked out there and there was people—all you could see was heads. And I says, "What in the world now?" She says, "They're struck at camp," she says, "and there's about 300 men in here we gotta feed."

And I says, "How in the world are we going to do it?" She says, "Well, I don't know, do the best we can." So she sent up town to get all of the lunch meat and everything she could think of. They was out of bread and out of meat and out of everything in town. And them days, they got their meals for fifty cents. You fifty cents for any kind of a meal, whether you set family style or what, and that's what she always did. And we just had to begin to take them fifty cent pieces into a sack to hold 'em all! (Laughs)

SS: Were you feeding people the whole afternoon?

VINE: Well, they were all going out on the train, you see to Spokane, and so when the train crew came in, of course—I don't remember whether we had anything left to feed them or not. I don't remember anything about that. Anyway, they left quite a little while before they got things straightened around. The cooks left the pies and the roasts and the vegetables and everything on the stove and walked right away from 'em up in camp—they're planned to eat up there.

SS: Was this 1919?

VINE: This was in 1920.

SS: 1920. Do you know what they were striking for?
Higher wages, I imagine.

Then when we lived in Montana we run into—did you ever hear tell of the IWWs? We run into them, too. And they're the nicest people we ever had. My husband went to town one day to hire some men, he needed some hired men awful bad and here was some IWWs, so he brought out three of 'em. And the neighbors found that out and they was sceart to death. They locked up everything they had. And these men stayed with us I think for a couple of months and worked. And they're the faithful workers! They says, "Can't understand," they said, "why people don't understand us. We're trying to help the laboring class of people in place of these big corporations." And they finally got so that they— the neighbors understood 'em better and found out what it was all about. And they're the ones that cleaned up these camps and things. The workingmen had to live in filth, almost.

When you had men at the place like that—

Huh?

When you had men at the place like that in Montana working for you, did they sleep in a bunkhouse, or did they stay with the family?

No, we had a bunkhouse for the men.

Did you get to know these fellows, these IWWs very well?

Yes. We did. They'd do anything in the world for us. We were having for one thing and they had to rush that haying on, so of course, after supper at six o'clock, they'd eat their evening meal—Pa didn't expect them to go back to work but he'd gone out, you know, here they'd come and work til ten o'clock and think nothing of it. Every day and every day.

It sounds like they were almost part of the family.

Yes, they were. You almost feel that way. And then we needed some barbed wire one time.
And Pa says, "I should have five rolls of barbed wire to fence in, whatever it was, I forget, field of some kind I suppose. And I think they was talking about this while they were eating, looked at one another and said, "Well, don't buy any, we'll get it for you." "Come with us and we'll get it for ya." And I don't know how many spools of wire that they brought him, and Pa says, "Where in the world did you get that?" Says, "We got it. It was throwed in the ditch in the first place." Says, "Those big corporations waste that stuff and think nothing of it, but they won't let a common man have it. We'll take it." And they did.

Where do you think they got it from?

Got it from a railroad company. That's where they got it. And these rolls of that is a fact. They built the fence that they wanted wire was-

Thrown away?

Just left there.

I understand that a lot of the working people, men that work in harvests part of the year might work in the woods part of the year and they were IWWs and they got around by riding the freights, mostly. I was just talking to a guy last week who was- came from Sandpoint, he was telling me about taking a freight out to the harvests, you know in Montana and Nebraska.

Oh, yeah. Yeah. Well, that's been going on ever since I was a kid when I lived in Minnesota with my sister, going to school there. The railroad track was right down here and my sister's place was up here, so you could look down there—down to the depot—and well, I don't know just when it started, but anyway, when harvest started out West here in Montana, this in Minnesota— and the people from Wisconsin would ride the freight trains, you know, on their way out West
to take in the harvest and stuff like that, lots of times. And lots of times. And lots of times our basement window would be gone out and in them days we didn't have refrigerators and stuff like that to keep things- or separators or anything, we'd put our milk and cream and butter and whatever we had into the basement. They had a real nice basement- cement basement- it wasn't cement, it was rock that they made those things out of them days. The window'd be outta them probably there wouldn't be a thing left of the milk cream and the butter and the potatoes and the meat- they would be gone! (Chuckles) They had a couple of hobo camps up here, yep.

SS: Were there many men jungling up down there?

VINE: Yeah. They don't do that any more.

SS: But I mean back then.

VINE: Yeah.

SS: Would they come over to town and panhandle a little bit?

VINE: Well, no, they didn't bother too much, once in a while they'd be a guy come around and he says, "I'm awful hungry, you got some little work for me to do? Can I split you some wood, or can I do some little thing for a meal?" That happened quite often. But they was always willing to pay for it in the best way they could.

SS: You know, in talking about the IWWs around in this country, the way I've understood it- of course, the company was dead against 'em, and I think, say, Mr. Bloom, I've heard was really against 'em, too.

VINE: Oh, yes. Sure, sure, he was, because anybody that worked for a big company, they'd better be against 'em, you know, because the company was strict against those guys because they wanted to- different living conditions for the working class of people. See, my husband had been in camp in Northern Wisconsin many a winter and all in the world they had was a bed made out of boards and some straw put
in there and wool, a dark or black wool blanket on top of the straw and another one on top of you and that's all you had all winter long! You didn't have any sheet, pillowcases, any place to take a bath or anything else. Well, that's what the IWWs was against. And you see it would cost the company more to clean that up and keep sheets and pillowcases and keep somebody to keep it clean, which they had to at last. Yep.

SS: You know John Diamatis? Diamatis?

VINE: Huh?

SS: I'm sure you know John Diamatis. John Diamatis?

VINE: Oh, yeah.

SS: I talked to him up in Spokane.

VINE: Did you?

SS: Oh, yes, a couple of years ago and he told me that Bloom said anybody with an IWW card— and this was a couple of years before you came, '17, I think— anybody with an IWW card can't work in the mill any more. Says, you can't go in there and work any more. You either got to go in there and work and tear up your card, or leave town.

VINE: Sure. Yeah. Course, I didn't know too much about the IWWs 'til those three gentlemen come on out to work at our place that time on the ranch, and they really explained things, and says, "We're just gonna keep at it 'til we do get things cleaned up." And they did.

SS: Well, do you think there was—a— say in a town like Elk River here, was there much distance between the management people like Bloom and those top management people and the working people in town?

VINE: Well, I don't know. I don't know. — I don't as I want to put this stuff on a tape recorder; I'll get in Dutch.

SS: In Dutch with who?

VINE: Huh?
In Dutch with who? I just want to know the way things really were.

I don't want to make things prettier or worse than they were in the past, but to be honest about it; you take a town like Potlatch, there was a big distance—big distance between the higher-ups and the working people.

Well, they tried to pull that here, too, and of course, here, it was so many foreigners, Austrians and Greeks and all that of people and Swedes—well, now don't record this—

I'll tell you, if I used any of this I wouldn't use your name in connection with it at all.

You take these Greeks like Diamatis now and all of his pals. Diamatis had a big house on the alley here, I know them real well—and a lot of them, well, they—that was during Prohibition days, you know, well, they'd make their moonshine and all of that. And I don't think that they drank too much, but they'd sell to the Swedes and the Swedes was the ones that really kept that up. Oh, I can tell ya some real stories about that stuff. I was a working at the hotel all that time.

Well, tell me some of them. I'm really interested in it, this is the way it was really like. (Chuckles)

Yeah, it was. And it was all new to me coming over here, well, my folks never drank and I didn't hardly know—my husband did, because he was a lumberjack. But coming out here, it was all new to me and I'm telling you I had some experience at the hotel and one thing and another. I finally got used to it. Had some neighbors living up on the hill here, and we didn't pay too much attention to those things, but anyway, one day she came down here—the snow was just going off from the ground and she says, "Do you want to go for a walk this afternoon?" And I says, "Yeah, I might. Where you going?" "Oh," she says, "going up
the highway." I says, "Okay." She says, "I gotta go home get lunch for the kids." She says, "I'll be back and we'll go out that way." So, we did. And she says, "I'm lookin' for something." I says, "What are you lookin' for?" "Well," she says, "during the night," she says, "I woke up—" them days you didn't have to clean up your backyard the way you do now, you know, if you have some tin cans or anything—

VINE: She says, "I heard something rattlin' in them tin cans in my garbage place out there." And so, she says, "I didn't do anything—get up or anything," she says, "I went out there and looked this morning, and lo and behold," she says, "here some son of a bitch," she said, "is hidin' this moonshine in my garbage place. And a great big, old jug," she says, "in there, but it was empty." And she says, "I looked around," she says, "he went up the hill." And I says, "What about if I'ld go over this way?" She says, "I'll bet we'll run into something over the top here." So, sure enough when we get way over here on the highway where we could see where a car had drove in that far and from tracks from up in the woods, and he'd taken the stuff outta the car and took it up in the hills, you know and around. She says, "Now, we'll follow those tracks around," she says, "see what we can find." So we did. And we looked around— it's pretty up there. The snow's just about all gone, just a patch now and then, and we could catch these tracks, you know, and then pretty soon she says, "Oh, look!" And right in front of us great big jugs full of moonshine! (Laughter) I says, "Now what? 'What are we going to do?" "Well," she says, "I don't know." She says, "I'm pretty sure who owns 'em." And so we went to 'em and lifted 'em and one of 'em he'd taken about half out— these two big ones—full. So, we had a phone in the house then, haven't got it now, but we did then, and she didn't have a phone up there. She says, "Let's run down to your place," she says,
"and call the sheriff." Or marshall. Had a sheriff and a marshall both in town then and, "tell 'em to come on down to the house, we want to talk to 'em." I says, "Okay, I don't care." So, they came—the sheriff came down and he kind of hemmed and hawed and sputtered around and he says, "I wouldn't know where to find it." She says, "We'll go along with you," she says, "we'll find it for you!" Took 'em up there and sure enough here they sat, and he looked at 'em and looked at 'em and hefted 'em and he lifted the one that was partly empty and set down with the jug between his legs, like this, took the cork out, and "Oh," he said, "that's good stuff!" (LAUGHTER) Such things as that been going on here. You get...

SS: What did she do? Was she made, did she think that he would arrest—

VINE: He done of course, and he had to try to catch the guy and he knew awful well who it was in the first place. I think he was in partnership with him. But anyway, he deputized a man to lay around up in the hills here for several—had to, because he kept an eye on them! (Laughter) And he wasn't very well anyway, the man wasn't—we had a hospital up here then and he caught an awful cold. He had TB, and he caught an awful cold and put him in the hospital, "He might die," she says.

SS: This was the moonshiner? That they caught.

VINE: I don't know what he done with the moonshine.

SS: Oh, this was the cop.

VINE: This was the cop, yeah. No, I imagine they left it right there and then kind of watched it, you know, probably he took it after we left, I don't know and then deputized some men. And then when I first working at the hotel, they were—(knock on the door—machine shut off)

SS: It is called blowing in—kind of thing— but I imagine that— I kind of figured that if they couldn't get to Spokane or St. Maries
it was just a weekend or something, they'd probably be in town here, you know, getting out of the camp. Did you see much of that?

VINE: No, oh, no, it was during Prohibition days, so it wasn't—well, I guess they had a pool hall here, couple of 'em, but as far as I know there might have been a lot of it going on and I didn't know anything about it because I was working, I didn't know too much about—the only thing I know— I got acquainted with a lot of these Swedes and they were all pretty heavy drinkers.

SS: Oh, would they just get drunk and come to the hotel and eat and that kind of thing, was that it?

VINE: Well, it wasn't too much of that either. There was no disturbance with drunken men or anything like that. No, it wasn't bad at all as far as that was concerned.

SS: But you said that it took you quite a bit of getting used to.

VINE: No, they mostly got out of town. Course, there was no highway here then, the only you had was the train. There was a freight train in here and a passenger train once a day. And used to save three crews of men; one crew was a working; one was coming into town; one crew was going out of town. Yeah.

SS: What was it like for you working at the hotel? What was the work like? What you did.

VINE: What did I do in the hotel?

SS: Yes.

VINE: Oh, I helped in the kitchen, and as I say, we kind a mixed work. Helped in the kitchen and then tended to the rooms upstairs and one thing and another like that. The landlady and I kind of worked together that way.

SS: Who was staying there?

VINE: At the hotel? Well, I don't know how many men would be working at
that lumber mill, and then they had a planer; an awful big planer here. Well, some of the planing mill men was rooming, as many rooms as you had, you know and boarding there, and they are the people that-

SS: So it was mostly people working in the mill and the planing mill that stayed at the hotel then?

VINE: Yes. Those that didn't have a home of their own in town. And, of course, this wasn't a company hotel, this was another one, the company hotel was right back of this, but there was a lot of 'em that didn't like to stay at the company hotel. But that was full, too.

SS: Why do you think they preferred-

VINE: I don't know, I don't know, I don't know how that come.

SS: I imagine, for some of 'em, they'd probably want to get away from the company for part of the time, that they were working for.

VINE: I think it had something to do with the pay or something, take it out of your check or something, that sort of thing.

SS: Were the prices the same at the two places, do you think?

VINE: Just about, I think.

Here's another big, old story: I don't want this published either. There was another big, old hotel, down right close to this tavern down here at one time, that was before the tavern was there there was just a family home where the tavern is now and this hotel was right above that. This fellow that run it, they came from Wisconsin. We didn't know them but we knew a lot of people and they knew a lot of our relatives from the town where they came from in Wisconsin, so that way we was pretty close. So, his wife wanted to go back to Wisconsin and visit her folks and she asked him— I was working then— I had to work, or figured I did, if I would kinda oversee things down there and help him out with it. And I said, yeah, I guess I would, she
paid me awfully good. And so, it turned out that way and she says, "I'll depend on ya." And I says, "Yeah, if I make a promise I'll stick to it through thick and thin." Which I did. And so, that was during the Prohibition days. It wasn't long 'til Old Fritz went wild. Some carnivals came into town, and he really had a ball. And then he began to bootleg. Well, one day— he was quite open with it too, to me, and I said, "Lookit here Fritz," I says, "you're doing wrong." I said, "You're gonna get caught." And I says, "Just think of your wife and those two kids you got." I says, "What'll she think?" "Say," he says, "you ain't here to tell me things, you're here to do the work." I says, "Well, I'm tellin' ya things anyway." (Laughs) And sure enough, things went on for quite a while and pretty soon— and there was a pool hall below— they were Austrians, and they were bootlegging to beat the band, I guess, I don't know, they musta been. And he was bootlegging. But, anyway, I done my work there. I'd usually go down there about nine o'clock in the morning and I'd be through by one o'clock and forget about it. But anyway, pretty soon there was an elderly man that rented a little room right off of the office, and he'd come there and stay there three or four days, walk around the office and up the street and down the street, and of course, I had to clean his room and that and I couldn't see what in the world that man was there for. And he'd be gone again probably a week or two; back he'd come. And that kept on for about all summer. And finally one morning I was down there and I was upstairs and looked out the window and here I seen the sheriff and two guys searching things around out there. So, got ready to go home, went through the office and Fritz happened to be in the office. And I says, "I see they're searching the place today."
He says, "I guess they are. They haven't got anything on me." I said, "Good for you, Old Fritz." I hadn't been home only about an hour, I had to get lunch for the folks and the telephone rang and answered it and here it was Fritz. And he says, "Hey, could you come on down and run this place for a while?" And I says, "No, I can't come down and run that place for a while." I says, "You're running it good.

A detective stood right side of him and I heard him say, "Let me have that phone, I'll talk to her." And he told me who he was and that, And he said, "We're taking Fritz in. We've got him good now." And, no, I don't want to go down there. "Well," he says, "you know those workin' men," he says, "Have got to have their rooms tended to and the water hot and one thing and another." "Well," I says, "I've never been down in that furnace room. I've never been through that pool hall." And, I says, "You've got to go through the pool hall to get to the furnace room." "Well," he says, "we're taking those two guys along with us, too." He said. (Laughter) So, come to find out, you see, this old fellow, he was there to watch me to see if I was in with the gang, selling the moonshine and stuff! That's what he was. But they didn't have a thing on me because I had nothing to do with it. And they tried-- I couldn't see it at the time, but I seen it afterwards. If they'd a had an inside room the here— you came in, office here and there was rooms there and there was an inside room here, dark room, well, one morning I was— went in the office there and here was two drunken lumberjacks, supposed to be drunken lumberjacks. And I never talk to— when I see— if I open up the door and I seen they were drunk, away I went, I wouldn't even go near them or anything like that. So these guys, they was— had an half empty bottle and tried to talk to me and I wouldn't talk to 'em or anything. And they were detectives, you see. And had
nothing to do with them. And after that— And so, I had to go on
down there. And he said there is any of them roomers— I said,
"I certainly refuse to stay there nights." I says, "I'll stay there
most of the day and see that the water tank is hot and all of that stuff,
but I refuse to stay there nights." "Well," he says, "You come on
down," he says, "and do what you have been doing," he says, "and
I'll guarantee that things'll be okay." And they were. But Fritz,
he served a pretty good sentence.

SS: Did he?

VINE: Yes, he did. And when he got out—his wife came home while he was in
the pen— and when he come home, I talked to him. He says, "You know,"
he says, "when my trial came up," he says, "on the judge's desk there,"
he said, "here stood that darn bottle of moonshine," he says, "that
I sold them two guys in that dark room." (Chuckles)

SS: That's a good story.

VINE: Huh?

SS: That's a good story about the consequences of your actions, you know.
I mean, if you do that, what you got to expect.

VINE: Yeah, there's more to it than that but that's too filthy to tell.

SS: Too bad?

(VINE: (Pause))

VINE: Hobbled in here and he says, "Hey, you know, I just got thinking a-
bout so and so the other day," and he says, "I just got to tell it to
you again!" (LAUGHTER)

SS: He's a great fellow.

VINE: I like George. Yeah. Yes, he comes up here and sets and— he wasn't
up here last year, I don't think. Crippled up pretty bad. Oh, that
George! He can tell you more things. He's got the best memory and
he can tell it so funny! Yeah, I imagine he'll be up huckleberry
time, I guess.

SS: Do you remember him very well from the early years here?

VINE: Yeah. He used to live right across the street here, when he lived with his first wife.

SS: He really seems to have been in on a lot of things that went on around town here.

VINE: Oh, George was one of them. He knows all about it. Yeah.

SS: You know that kind of story, like the story that you were telling. -- blank--

VINE: -- more than what they are now. Now, they can take anything and bring it right out in the open and don't think a thing in the world about it; that's the way it looks to me.

SS: Well, 'course, when something is forty, fifty years old in time, then it's lost it's- it doesn't hurt anybody any more. Doesn't have that kind of- there are probably things today that people wouldn't talk about today, but another fifty years it would be okay.

But, you know, we were talking a little bit about some of the different ethnic groups, you know, different- Austrians and Italians and Greeks and the different groups. I was wondering about that. How much were they a part of the social life of town? Or were they kind of separate?

VINE: They were kind of separate as far as I know. Yeah, they were what I'd call kinda cliquish, you know, kinda stick together. And there was a woman used to live down here on the corner, let's see, her husband was with her at that time, but he wasn't very well and he finally passed away. And I think he had TB, I know some of her children died with TB, but she used to bootleg to beat the band. Oh, all of that class of people, that was their headquarters, and dif-
ferent things like that. Yeah, they kinda stuck together.

SS: Did she make a pretty good living at that?

VINE: Oh, I don't know. I imagine probably she did, I don't know. I rem-

ember one time- she was raising her family, too, at that time, but

anyway, the youngest boy was awful, awful sick and on a Saturday I'd

been downtown and she stopped me and she was a great woman to cry

and carry on, you know, and wondered if I wouldn't come and take a

look at her Georgie, he was so sick. So I did. And he run an aw-

ful temperature alright and all that, but I forget what I told her to
do, so I thought, well, Sunday morning I'd go on down and see how he

was again, so about ten o'clock I went down there. The house was

full of men- black men- I call 'em black- and her pockets in her

apron was chuck full of paper bills! I think she made it alright!

SS: When you say "black men" what do you mean?

VINE: Well, you know they're a dark race of people.

SS: Oh.

VINE: Those Austrians and like that. And we always used to call 'em the--

SS: Were they the same as like- were the same nationality as like Sam

Pavich?

VINE: What?

SS: Sam Pavich, you know and Mike Bubuly? Did you know him?

VINE: I've heard of him.

SS: And there were some that were Serbians, too.

VINE: There is a lot of Serbians.

SS: They're different than the Austrians, right?

VINE: Yes, there are Serbians and Yugoslavians and Austrians and Greeks

and- I can't name 'em- But they was really some Niggers in here, too

at one time. Boy, and were they the black kind! I believe every

nationality there is was in here at one time.
SS: Do you remember Charlie Segara? The Japanese fellow?

VINE: Yeah. He was a nice guy. Yeah. He roomed at the hotel when I worked there. But that was before— that man that was so friendly with the United States (?) I think. He used to have an awful bunch of Japs— come in from Seattle every once in a while and they'd have their suitcases with them and they had their three special rooms down at the hotel. And if the door was open so you could see, they had their tea and everything in there. And when those people left, I think Charlie Segara copied everything he could think about or would know about around the mill and then give 'em all the information that they possibly wanted and took it along with 'em.

SS: What makes you think that he did that?

VINE: Because, they took— you could see these stacks of books that they had tablets or whatever it was, and pencils and things where they'd been writing all that stuff down on the tables, in their room. What in the world would they be doing all that for in a small place like this if it wasn't something like that? Yeah, that happened two or three different times while I worked there.

SS: Did your husband get to come home a lot of the time, or was it just on weekends that he'd be home? Would he come home every day from the camp?

VINE: No, he could up there— the camp was only about a mile and a half up the creek up there, and then he started to work in— down around the mills, the riptrack they called it, I guess the riptrack is the place where they repaired the logging cars that they hauled the logs down out of the woods by train, and they called those trains the shay. ‘Come down on the shay.

SS: Then he was here— he could be home every day?
Oh, yeah. And then there was different camps and they had railroad tracks all over up in the woods here—different camps and one thing and another, haul 'em down. But there was a strike here before we moved here, I think that probably Kenny Pearson can tell you about that. They had their pickets sittin' on the railroad tracks out here with their guns. And they shipped a lot of guns in here and everything else. But I didn't know anything about that part of it.

You know it's a funny thing about Charlie Segara, even if he was working for Japan, that he was still such a nice fellow, I mean he was friendly and kind to the people.

Yes, he was.

Do you think he was well liked, too?

Seemed to be, far as I know. He was an awful mannerly sort of a guy, tended to his own business and quite a dressy guy. Have you ever seen him?

No. I never have, he hasn't been here for a long time, has he?

No.

Didn't he go back?

No, no, years and years, way, way years. Yep.

You worked at the hotel for very long?

Well, I worked there

- the printing office—hadn't been there many days 'til one evening, why, a rap came at the door and here was about twenty of the boarders down to the hotel, and I says, "Well, what in the world?" looking for a place to eat and sleep, and I says, "We haven't got it here for you." "Oh, yes, we have." And the front part of this printing office—oh, it's a large room, large as this whole house,
and longer, I think and wider. He says, "We can use that for a bedroom." I says, "I haven't got the bedding or the beds or anything." "Never mind, we'll buy all that ourselves if you'll just let us come in here and you board us." They were mostly lumber pilers and they work real hard. And they said, "We like plenty to eat and we'll pay ya good." And so I had those eighteen men for I don't know how long, boarded them. And they bought their own beds and bedding and everything. I think I had four beds on each side and just the alley for 'em to walk through. But they had their bath and everything there at the-

SS: This was downstairs in the printing-

VINE: Huh?

SS: This was on the ground floor of the printing shop?

VINE: No, upstairs.

SS: Oh, I see.

VINE: And the stairway was on the outside of the building.

SS: So you were kept pretty busy?

VINE: Huh?

SS: Was that like having a fulltime job, to take care of feeding them and everything?

VINE: Yes. Yes and then once in a while—there was two times I remember, head carpenter come to me one day and he said, "Say," he says, "I've got a man here," he says, "that's just over from Sweden and he can't understand a word of English," and he says, "he's gotta have a place to eat and sleep." "Well," I says, "I can't handle that." "Yeah," he says, "you better try," he says, "he's an awful nice fella and I'd like to have him work for me but I gotta have him someplace where he can understand somebody." So it happened that I did have a place, and he came in there. And
he roomed and boarded with me for a while. One day we was eatin' dinner and he hadn't been eating much, and I imagine I had roast and spuds and vegetables and I had spinach, and I says, "Ed," I says "eat some of this spinach, it's good for ya." And he said in Swede, he says, "No, thank you. If I wanted grass," he says, "I'd go out here and buy me a little farm," he says, "and eat the grass!" he says. (Laughter) I'm not a Swede, I'm a Norwegian, but I can understand 'em pretty good!

SS: I wonder why he wasn't eating before.

VINE: Huh?

SS: I wonder why he wasn't eating more.

VINE: I don't know. Food's different from what he was used to. Spinach and vegetables, he wasn't used to very much of that.

SS: Do you think it would be a kind of a hard adjustment for somebody fresh over from Sweden?

VINE: Yeah. But he was real bright. They had night school up here then for people like that, for all of these Austrians and all of 'em that wanted to go to learn the English language. So Ed went there and 'twasn't no time at all 'til he picked it up, just right away. And when he left here, he went to Seattle and worked there and finally somebody thumped him on the head and threw him in the bay. And the way they identified him was by his gold watch. Poor Ed, he was really a nice man. And then some of them men went up in the woods to work. And Sunday morning about eight thirty or nine o'clock here they come on down, wait for their Sunday dinner at my house. I was kind of a mother to 'em. And I guess it was after that that they began to call me "Ma". They always called me Ma, old, young and everybody, you know. All around here. The way that started was, my youngest daughter, she kind of a whiner, she'd say, "Ma, Ma, Ma."
And then boarders, they began to say, "Ma, Ma, Ma." this and "Ma, that." And so it's been Ma ever since. (Chuckles)

SS: Do you think they needed a little mothering?

VINE: Huh?

SS: Do you think that they really needed or wanted a little mothering?

VINE: No, no.

SS: You said, that you were a bit of a mother to them, I mean, they'd come and eat your food.

VINE: Yeah, oh, yeah. I guess it was kind of home to 'em.

SS: A lot of those fellows, they were probably bachelors, right?

VINE: Yeah. Yeah.

SS: Do you think from what you could see that that was a little hard on men to not have families, and to just be living that way?

VINE: Yes, it was, it was. Yep. Oh, yeah. Yeah, they were kinda lost. And then- well, I treated 'em as my own kids, you know, to a certain extent. I had some boarders which I didn't have room for 'em or anything else, but they wanted to stay, so I said to 'em, "Put up with it," and I said, "eat what we eat and I ain't gonna fuss for ya." Tickle to death. So, evenings, of course, there wasn't no pool halls or anything to go to them days or anything downtown much, or anything like that, so we'd play cards. And sometimes we'd have neighbors that was kinda curious what's going on at your place, you know, so this was during the Ku Klux Klan days, so a bunch of 'em they had cleaned all up, like they did every evening and eat their evening meal, and we had it all done up, and been uptown and come back and says, "How about a game of Whist?" I says, "Okay." And a bunch of us got a playing whist, and doing nothing else, playing whist, and we didn't have any liquor or anything like that anyway, never did have, but anyway, I guess probably the Ku Klux Klan thought
we did, so while we was playing cards, why a rap came at the door
and I ran and opened up the door and sure enough, here stood a Ku
Klux Klanner, all dressed up. Said, "Didn't you see—don't you see
that cross across the creek burning?" We said, "Yeah, we looked at
it. Didn't mean a thing to us. It's been burning quite a while," And
we didn't pay no attention to it, we went on playing cards and fin-
ally listened, and it was our next door neighbor.

SS: Was it the next door neighbor had a cross on his place, or was it
your next door neighbor that came to the door?

VINE: The one that came to the door was my next door— that was the Ku Klux.

SS: What were they burning the cross for?

VINE: I don't know. I don't know. They must a thought we was doing some-
thing wrong here, ya see.

SS: Were they burning it on your place?

VINE: Yes.— No, they wasn't burning the cross on- they burnt it over on
the other side the creek.

SS: Yeah.

VINE: And then they burnt some out back of the schoolhouse.

SS: Was he trying to threaten you, or anything by coming to the door like
that?

VINE: I don't know, that's all she said— but I'm sure that she had in mind
that we were really a rough bunch in here or something of that sort.

SS: Did that scare you a little bit?

VINE: Didn't scare me, but—

SS: Do you think it was intended to scare you?

VINE: Yeah. Yeah. Didn't scare me because we never done anything wrong.

SS: What was burning crosses at the school for? Why do you think they
did that?
VINE: I don't—well, that was for to warn people downtown, I suppose, I don't know— I don't enough about the Ku Klux Klan—what they burned the things for. And the postmistress asked me that summer if I could point out the place where they burnt the cross, across from us, and I said, "I don't believe I can." "Well," she says, "I'm going to see if I can find it." They have a homestead up here on the hill, and she goes by there quite often, I haven't seen her to talk to her much this summer, so I don't know whether she's found that place or not.

SS: Well, from what you've heard, what do you think their intention was, or what their purpose was, the Ku Klux Klan in here? What was their idea for having a group?

VINE: Well, I just don't know. These were Southern people, you know they tried that here a year or so ago again, to start the Ku Klux, down South, you know, but I guess they stopped 'em. I don't really know.

SS: Were they Southern people in town that were in it?

VINE: Yes. Of course, I think the most of them were relatives— I know it was the mother to this woman and this woman and then a brother-in-law and another sister. He was the postmistress here for a long long time. But that was a long time after they quit dressing up and parading in the streets and one thing and another.

SS: So they'd do that openly, they'd parade around town?

VINE: Yeah.

SS: But they were hooded, so you weren't supposed to know who they were?

VINE: No, you're not supposed to know, but couldn't miss this one, because I know her voice so well. And, well, she's dead and gone now.

SS: Do you think they scared anybody in town?

VINE: I imagine probably they did. And my idea always was, I think that they thought that they really were somebody and doing some good—they were going to clean up something that wasn't supposed to be going
on and one thing and another. That's my idea, but I don't know.

Anyway, first I knew it, I guess they'd been out one night, and

them days you had to hang all your clothes out on the clothesline, you know, well, on my neighbor's clothesline here was was the most uniforms of the Ku Klux Klan, washed and hanging on that line. You ever seen! (Chuckles) But things like that never bothered me. I had no fear of anything like that because when you don't do anything that's wrong, why you always come out to the head anyway, so they didn't bother me too much, but I guess there was people that was really scared of them.

SS: I understood they were really were Anticatholic, that they were out to get Catholic people.

VINE: Yeah, yeah,-

SS: The Catholics might not have liked 'em, you know.

VINE: Yeah.

SS: Was there much social life in town- community-type things?

VINE: Well, yeah, they had some good lodges here then, they had the Eastern Star and the Masons, and of course, the Odd Fellows and the Rebekkahs and all that sort of stuff. And then they had the Moose Lodge here and- They only had one church up here and that's the Community Church. The Nazarenes used to come in here once in a while, but they had their meetings up over head of the store that was here at that time. Oh, yeah- and then they had a large gym, they used to have quite a time, good band, music.

SS: What do you remember about the mill going out? The mill going down?

VINE: The mill?

SS: Shutting down?

VINE: Oh, well, that was during Depression days, too, if I remember right and I may be wrong, but anyway, they shut the mill down and never did
open it up again, they burnt it, you know. And, see, my husband knew the Weyerhaeusers and I forget what his name— one of the Weyerhaeusers— Fred, Fred I believe, Pa used to call him. He knew him in Wisconsin real well, and of course, he didn't live here but he come up here every once in a while and talked to Pa, and the rest of the men of course, too, but he remembered Pa from the East and that was at the time they started to build that big mill in Lewiston, and he was against it; strictly against it. He said, "That's where the younger people are making an awful mistake," he says, "taking this mill outta here." And one thing and another, but he says, "They're gonna do it." He said—

SS: He said that to your husband before they shut the mill down here?

VINE: Ya, he did.

SS: That this mill was gonna go out?

VINE: He says, "When they get that one completed down to Lewiston," he said, "this mill's got to go." And it did. And Pa said he felt so bad he almost cried, the old fella did. But it turned over then to the younger generation, you see.

SS: Did people have a strong suspicion that that was going to happen?

VINE: No, huh-uh. I don't think so. No, I think that the people thought well, it'll open up again next summer, it'll open up again. And same with the planer. And then it wasn't long 'til they burnt it and then they began to move the company houses out— they moved an awful lot of houses outta here, to different parts of the country. And we was just settin' here by ourselves! And we could have moved to Lewiston but my husband was that stubborn, he says, "I'm not going to move down to Lewiston." He says, "I'm going to stay right up where I am."

And that's why I'm here now. He never did want to get outta here.
He loved it here. Hunting and fishing and at that time there was a lot of this old lumberjack pals still lived here, you know. Almost like a family living here. Everybody was friendly. Lot of the - most of these foreigners, we called 'em, had moved outta here.

SS: What did he do to make a living after the mill left?

VINE: I don't think he worked! We had a little money. No, I don't know- he didn't work on the PWA or whatever you call it or anything like that, naw, he just- well, he - for one thing, he bought some of these buildings for little of nothing and he started a- he had a pool hall up here for a long time; he run that and he sold that and made a little money at it and then he built this service station down here and then he run that and he sold that and after that he didn't do very much of anything. And then we owned any amount of these old buildings here- houses- and it's lucky he got rid of 'em, lot of them- most of 'em. So we made it without any help at all. Whatever.

SS: How rough was it? How rough was it when the town went down like that in the Depression? Those were hard years.

VINE: Oh, it wasn't so rough on us, because, as I say, we had- you know, when you've got your own home and things like that and my husband was a great hunter and we had all the wild birds, fish and meat and stuff like that that we wanted and had a little money to go down and get your vegetables and stuff like that, and then we went to work and- went down to Kendrick and bought a little Jersey cow- best little thing you ever seen, and was she ever a dandy to give milk, and we had our own milk and cream and butter and stuff like that. And we had woodstoves, went out in the woods and got all our own wood and everything; didn't cost us scarcely anything to live. And then the husband to this woman that I told you that found this moonshine up on the hill, she had a sister living down on Cedar Creek, down to-
wards, I believe it would be down towards Southwick, somewhere down
in there, I don't know, I've never been down in there— but anyway,
they had a pretty good farm there and you couldn't sell anything, you
know, wasn't no price for anything, so he came down . one day,
he says, "Ernie," he says, "let's go down to Hunts," he says, "and
see what we can pick up." He says, "I'd like some pork," he says,
"he's got lots of hogs down there." So they each took an old model
T Ford pickup apiece and away they went! And got down there and they
told 'em that they'd like to buy a pig apiece, and "Sure, alright,
you can have 'em." And then Hunt says, "You haven't got a place up
there," he says, "to butcher them pigs." He says, "Why not butcher
'Em here?" He says, "Stay over a couple of days and we'll butcher
tomorrow, and then hang the meat up and get it good and cool, and
you can go home the next day." So, they did. And I think then,
the hogs, If I remember, weighed between 175 and 200 pounds apiece,
and then they got 100 pounds of dry beans and cabbage and potatoes
and carrots and everything you could think of that grew on the place.
They had them pickups just loaded with stuff when they come home.
Cost them less than fifteen dollars a piece! (Chuckles)
And, of course, they had all that stuff to take care of. Well, we didn't
mind it a bit, the Depression.

SS:
How much did you mind the town going down?

VINE:
Huh?

SS:
How much did you mind losing the mill? Did that personally— did
that hit you and your husband really hard to see the mill disappear
or didn't it affect you?

VINE:
It hit everybody. But, of course, most people moved out somewhere—a
lot of 'em, many of 'em moved to Lewiston and some to Spokane and
some to Moscow and some over on the Coast and all over. Lot of peo-
ple in this town at that time. But Pa, he wanted to stay right here, so he did. And, I don't know, anyway we didn't mind it too much, because, as I said, we happened to have a few dollars and we liked the woods and that, and we rammed all over these woods and had a good time. Gold mined a little bit, I still got a little raw gold here that him and a couple of other guys mined and fooled around with that for months- a year or more and different things like that.

Do you think that there was a lot of resentment towards the company at that time for doing that?

I don't know. I don't know. But I don't know what's going to become of this town now. Don't look very good. Course it don't matter to me, I can get outta here tomorrow and stay out if I want to. But, I still- this is home to me. 'Course, I suppose if my old shack was in some other place, why, that'd be home, too, but I live with my daughters in the wintertime in Spokane, but that isn't home to me; that's their home. So, I come back here when spring comes and spend the summer here and spend the winter up there with them. One of my daughters, right now is in the Yukon Territory.

-- Marker Anderson was such a good foreman- you know, they thought he was just terrific to work for in the woods. Well, you know, he killed himself.

He did.

What I'm wondering; is what the idea was about why he killed- he might have done that.

Well, that I can't-- I don't think anybody that really knows why Marker done that. You know, Marker was a man that drank a lot, too. And, here's what happened that day; the mail comes in here- always has- you can get the mail about eleven o'clock in the mornings and when my husband was home he's the one that always went down-
town and got the mail. Well, he got the mail that day and he run into Malker downtown, and Malker and him walked together going home and Malker had a bottle, of course, bought himself a bottle, and that was it. And Pa said he just talked like he always did and all that and Malker went home and Pa came home and here along towards evening why here was- Malker had killed himself. And that's when he had- I don't know what the trouble was or anything at all about it, but a lot of people seemed to have the impression that him and his wife had some trouble, I don't know.

SS: I've heard this before.

VINE: Did you?

SS: Yes, that his wife- seemed like some people didn't like her- didn't like his wife very much either- thought she was a-

VINE: She was a funny woman. But as far as- he must have had a brother that killed himself, too.

SS: He did?

VINE: Yeah; Emil, Emil, his name was. He's buried up here, too. Yeah. Yeah, they were building this road that goes to Orofino at that time. And I don't know who had the contract for building the road, but anyway, see, Emil was working for 'em and they had to use a lot of dynamite to blow stumps and one thing and another at that time, right down here at Deep Creek. But, anyway, Emil was engaged to a girl at that time, and it seems like that something went wrong, he didn't want to marry her or something, that's what I heard, anyway. Well, anyway, he loaded up this stump and went and set on the stump and let it blow himself to pieces.
Yeah.

—way to die—

Yeah.

Was this many years before Malker died?

Yeah, uh-huh.

A long time before that?

Yeah, a long time. I can't tell you anything— the year or anything, but this was before Malker ever done anything like that.

Was Emil a camp foreman, too?

I don't know that— I don't hardly think so. I think he just worked in the woods, as far as I know.

What was funny about Malker's wife, the way you remember her being?

She was just an odd person. Maggie May, we used to call her. She was really odd. She had three children; two boys and a girl and was she ever mean to that girl. You can't believe it, how mean she was to Lillian. And Lillian turned out to be an alcoholic. And I think that on account of her mother, she done that. She finally got married anyway, to get away from home and I guess there wasn't any love mixed in with this marriage or anything, and that didn't work out and Lillian just took to the bottle something terrible, I guess. I liked Lillian. And Maggie May had a good enough heart—(chuckles) she was funny.

She had a good heart, you say?

Huh?

You say now that you think she had a good heart, but she mistreated her daughter—

Yeah. See, I took care of my mother-in-law here for eight years
that I didn't scarcely get out of the house. That was before they had a convalescence home or anything— and she had lost her mind completely and that and I was just about — well— tied up here awful, awful close. And my mother-in-law was an old-time Rebekka, belonged to the Rebekka Lodge and someone brought it up at the lodge one day, one evening, I guess, that they should come and visit her here and help me out once in a while, and nobody showed up only Maggie May. Maggie May used to come down every afternoon and relieve me. Just as good as she could be and bring Lillian with her. And If I had ironing or had started scrubbing or do anything, they'd take over, they was just as good as they could be. But, as I say, she's odd. And their youngest son, you know, Emil's his name, he was killed, when I think he was fifteen years old. That was after Malker died. Maggie May went to work in the woods. I don't know what camp it was and Emil was up there, too, and he went to jump on the side of one of those big logging trucks or slipped some way or another and fell in under there and crushed him. But that was a good thing, too— and maybe that sounds funny, but it is to me. That boy had started to drink something terrible; worse than his dad had ever thought about drinking, and that's all he could think about. See him— tell about how drunk he was the Saturday night and had a good time and what he was gonna do the next weekend and all that sort of thing. I always figured it was the best thing that ever happened that Emil passed away when he did.

SS: Did she drink, too, Maggie May?

VINE: No. No, I understand she never drank. No.

SS: What was she doing— what kind of work was she doing in the woods after Malker died?
VINE: I don't know whether she was what they call a flunky— that'd be waitress— or if she cooked in camp, I don't know which one she did do. But she had done a lot of that before she married Malker. That's where Malker got acquainted with her, when he was running camp and she was working in camp. Yeah.

SS: Well, for her to mistreat Lillian— what was the kind of things she would do? Would she hit her?

VINE: No. Now, this is— I'm going to tell you the truth— it isn't very nice to tell, but they used to give parties, you know, people like Malker that drinks and being boss and one thing and another— they'd put on some pretty swell parties. Maggie May could do that, she had the equipment, dishes and everything to go ahead with and do those things, and probably her kitchen and sink would be just plumb full of dirty dishes and one thing and another, take a day or so to clean things up again, and she used to take a chair and put up to the sink and get the dishwater ready and make Lillian stand there— little bit of a thing— and wash those dishes. And before that, when she was still wearing diapers, well, May didn't want her to wet her pants so she—

A man by the name of Christison and they had quite a nice place down there and all that, and she'd been downtown shopping one day I guess and went home in the afternoon and dropped dead.

SS: You know—

VINE: Well, Axel's a nice man, yep, and of course, Emil, I didn't know him too good. I think there was three boys and from a nice family.

SS: Axel lived here for many years, didn't he?

VINE: Yeah. He lives in Spokane with his daughter now.

SS: Yeah, that's where I talked to him, in Spokane.
VINE: Oh, did you?

SS: Oh, yeah, I talked to Axel many times up there. He had a couple of wives or several— he was married several times and they all died, didn't they?

VINE: Yes, they did. Didn't live long. Yep! I didn't get to see Axel this last winter I was up there. (skipping around on the tape)

SS: Where did you hear about that?

VINE: Well, let's see— it happened one afternoon and I'd been over here to that neighbor over there in the afternoon and this neighbor across the street here— coming up the street and she says, "Wasn't that awful?" And I says, "What?" "Well," she says, "there's a plane crashed up here," she says, "and killed a man and his wife and little baby." And I said, "A plane," I says, "that circled around here?" And she says, "Must be." And then I had a neighbor living in that trailer house down back here, and I came home and she knew all about it and she said, "Let's go out there." And, by that time they had everything all cleaned up. And what I was told— now, let's see, if I can get that straight— they'd just adopted a baby and this baby wasn't very old, just a few weeks old, the way I remember— and they were going from Mount West here someplace, I can't even remember where they started from, anyway, I believe it was a rented plane they had and they were going back East to visit some of his or her folks and they were on their way and they got off from the trail or something and wound up here, and people told them not to— to be sure and not take off that way, but they did and that's how they crashed. That's the story I got. I don't know. But we found the baby's bottle and a few things like that. But that's what they said, they'd just adopted this baby.

SS: You know George Schmaltz told me a lot of stories about Harry Adams.
VINE: That's another clown. Yeah, Harry- I guess George has told that hundreds of times, and my husband, too. My husband, he went in on that with Harry- Oh, he stuck by Harry, you bet! My husband was on that side, too- he had a lot of fun. Anyway about a lake being up in here someplace- (laughs)

SS: Was Harry really a big liar?

VINE: Yes. Yeah, he could make up the best stories you ever heard! (laughs) Yeah, I don't know as he just intentionally lied to hurt anybody, but just stories like that. I liked Harry awful well. He used to own this house next to me here. Yeha, they had a lot of fun with that salesman. Go and take that boat to Lewiston. (laughs)

SS: Are those stories that George made famous or were they stories that were well known when they happened? Do you think they were well known when Harry told them?

VINE: Yeah.

SS: Lot of guys knew 'em?

VINE: Yeah. I think so. I don't know. Harry might have made it up right there and then and you might have helped him. He was good at that, too. Oh, boy, yeah, they could make it sound real good.

SS: Have the huckleberries always been good around town here?

VINE: Well, most generally. Last year there wasn't very many nor the year before, but this year they should really be good again if the frost didn't kill them. But we had a frost here not long ago, so I don't know. I haven't had a chance to go out, I'm been dying to go- get up in the edge of the woods someplace and see.

SS: Isn't it still a little early?

VINE: Yes, it is. Way up high it'll be the latter part of August before they get ripe. I want to pick quite a few, I have a grand-
daughter over in Sequim Washington. She'd rather have huckleberries than anything in the world, and she'll just open up a jar of 'em without any sugar or anything and set and eat a quart of 'em. And why not have them when there's plenty of 'em?

Maybe I'd better go and get the recipe. I believe it's four cups of sugar, two lemons, a quart of cow's milk, and a can of condensed milk and a quart of huckleberries and freeze it. And it's the best darned stuff you've ever eaten.

SS: You just freeze it? You just mix it together and freeze it?

VINE: Yeah.

SS: You don't have to-

VINE: Yes, your freezer would be the best- electric freezer or hand turned.

SS: That sounds good.

VINEG It is good. I made huckleberry pies for Fourth of July. I got some canned down in the basement and I thought, well, I'll just fool 'em one day- they'll think I've been out in the hills agathering 'em. I made a couple of huckleberry pies-

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END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Frances Rawlins, November 20, 1978