ALBEN HALEN

Interviewed by:
Sam Schrager

Oral History Project
Latah County Museum Society
I. Index
II. Transcript
I. Index
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Side A</th>
<th>00</th>
<th>Page 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Copenhagen instead of cigarettes. No smoking while working in the woods during summer; forest fire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Deary fires. Fire in butcher shop: lack of water in severe fire of 1923. They almost lost their grain, but the warehouse didn't burn. Farmers built homes in Deary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jurgeson built his store as soon as the town began; first he'd built at Nora. Early post office at Anderson moved to Deary. Farmers rented their homes out in Deary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>A drunk man stuck his whiskers in a paint bucket. Troy saloon keepers set up in the front of the Deary hotel, waiting for their saloon to be ready.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Problems locating plots in Dry Creek cemetery. (continued)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Side B</th>
<th>00</th>
<th>Page 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty digging through clay in cemetery. Graves are no longer dug six feet. Digging graves as a group effort. Catastrophe when trying to dynamite a grave. A grave for three family members. Death of Knott girls in a raft accident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>The towns of Deary and Bovill were Potlatch set-ups by company men. The natural meadows were cut for hay. Beauty of the country in the early days. Joe Wells' logging. Land freezes too quickly; deer eating gardens and orchards. Yield of orchard on the farm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Frank Wells was a good blacksmith and horse doctor; he cured Alben's father's horse. Frank and Joe lost their racehorse when it was doped. Roy told Chuck to remember he was a &quot;nigger&quot;. Some would insult the black Wells if they had a chance. Alben's brother worked for Joe and thought he was all right. Lou Wells used Copenhagen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Side C</th>
<th>00</th>
<th>Page 22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lou Wells' snuff; she was the boss. Joe Wells was tough - his hay baling. Lawrence tore his pants off in a tussle, and made him go into town to get another pair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Cutting and hauling lumber in the winter of 1914 on the heavy snow cover. Low prices for cordwood in Deary. Size and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
set-up of Joe Wells' crew. Huge log decks. Troy Lumber Company sawmills. A lumberjack who wouldn't help his partner learn to saw. Lumberjacks were friendly in their own way. Gyppos made more money than salary men. Cutting timber

Plowing the neighbor's fields with a walking plough, starting when he was thirteen. Clearing timber from land by climbing high into the trees with a chain.

Working in a threshing crew, starting as a boy.

with Sam Schrager

February 20, 1976
II. Transcript
AH: I could just - in a few days, why I didn't care for cigarettes—
I had Copenhagen, why that's good enough. But, he used Copenhagen
and his sinuses just like I've got. He quit for over a year -
he could see a post down there and he said, "Give me a little
of that", and I let him take some and it wasn't more than an
hour afterwards he said, "You got to give me another pinch of
this Copenhagen." Then on the way coming back home in the car,
he says, he was going up to his place and I went to mine - he
says, "Bring me a box tomorrow morning." Well, I said, "As far
as for that well, take the one I've got here." He said the
habit was back just like when he quit; as soon as he took one.

SS: Well, that's the same way with cigarettes.

AH: I suppose.

SS: I know people that stopped for years; one cigarette does it all
over again.

AH: Well, alcohol I guess is about the same way. You take a real
alcoholic, if they take one drink they know why - they're cured,
well one drink will start them off again. And I know two or three
guys that way - they quit. Just one little swallow and it will
put them right back.

SS: Were lumberjacks as hard drinkers as they say? Did they drink
a lot?
AH: Well, there was bell drinkers in those - they'd get their paychecks -
why, then there was drinking, then after that, why sobered up and
went back on the job. There wasn't much drinking. I never knew
of anybody when I worked in camp, 'cept, that carried any liquor
in. But, most of them used Copenhagen or some cigarettes, of
course. If it was a dry summer, you wasn't allowed to smoke in
the woods. You could go and sit down on a log and smoke a cigarette
if you was sure it wasn't hanging in your mouth when you was sawing
or swamping or anything. Scared of fire in those days.

SS: Do you remember the fire that they had here - the one in 1923 that
burned down a town?

AH: Oh, yeah, I remember that.

SS: How did it start - what do...

AH: I wasn't working in camp at that time but I remember the fire all
right. My brother, Oscar, was working up there. Started just
a little ways off from the camp there in the driest part of the
summer. I didn't work there, but at that time I was out in the
farm in the summer. It was that harvest anyway. I remember when
they had the big fire and I don't know, in Coeur d'Alene and all
the way down. That was 1919, and the air up in here was - you
could stand and look at the sun and then it wouldn't hurt your
eyes for days from the smoke. I guess that's the worst part we
had at the time. I don't think they had any fires when I was
right around close here, though. They had the fires a few times
started up above. Up in that country, of course, but in here,
why I don't think they ever - oh, they had one down in Kendrick,
that burnt there one time. I don't remember what year that was.
Burnt up a haystack and burnt along the side in there. I could
see the smoke but I never went down and looked at it.

SS: What about the time that Deary burned down - that the town here did? Were you in town at all to fight on the fire?

AH: When Deary burned?

SS: Yeah.

AH: Well, Deary burnt two or three different times.

SS: It did?

AH: Oh yeah. The first building - I stood right there where that Conners Cafe is at, and that thing - well, that wasn't the first one. There used to be a butcher shop and the whole where that store is at along in there. A big shed outside and the store and a meat market and that thing caught on fire. One evening I was up here, folks lived up in this end of town. Old Gartland did - and I went over and visited with him across the street before I went home, and he looked out the window and he said the whole town is burning. We ran down and I went up and walked in - he lived in the other building up on the corner out there and pounded on the door and said, "Your store is one fire." It wasn't more than a few minutes before it burned down. So, right where that Odd Fellows Hall is at, there's some building behind, owned by old lady, mother to Frank Jean. My brother was working for Jean there at that time, Robert was. I went up and walked in across Franklin and Second at the hospital and I went down there and asked her if she was scared. "No," she said, "I'm not scared, but if anything happens," she said, "I've got my coat on and I'll get out." But it's right across the street from where that other building burned. Then another store - it was a drug store first, and the store and then
they changed that over to a beer parlor - that thing burned down during the night. I don't know - I wasn't here at that time. That went down. But they all burned separately just about. Jorgenson has a store where the garage is at - the big wooden building. That went up in smoke, but that was after the other part of town burned. They cleaned out there where that brick building was at - that was a big hall up on the upstairs and a fellow by the name of Peterson had that. That burned during the night. I didn't know about it until the next morning when we drove into town, but I think three or four buildings burned there. Then that hotel - that stood right out from the street across from Lawrence's store on the other side. That beer parlor - that burned up, that wasn't too long ago either. So the oldest building that is left is the one where the Odd Fellows Hall is at - that was a saloon building before. Before they fixed that over to a grocery store, Frankie had in there. I guess that's about the last of that hall.

SS: Which is the fire that burned a lot of the buildings, except they saved the bank?

AH: Well, that was when that hall burnt. There was a store, and there was a building up above that, that was a beer parlor, or a pool hall. That burned and there was a building or two this way. I don't remember who lived in them, that burned. I believe the one that burned, probably was the post office that burnt. Or Devoigns had a restaurant, I think - that burned down. But I always had it in my head that was where they had the post office. No, there was quite a few buildings that went that time.
SS: Well what was the deal - they didn't have any water?

AH: No, they didn't have no water. Unless they hauled it in the tank or drilled water some way - I don't think they even had a drilled well. For many years there they didn't - to start with. Right across from where that hotel is sitting, or that, what they call it the park - where they got that shed. Right down in the draw there was a strong spring - they took ahold and took water from that spring to start with. But I was thinking, there was another building that burnt after that. I guess he had jewelry store there that went up in smoke at that time too. It was out pretty well and them brick buildings, they was put up afterwards. One building was moved. Was moved off from the corner there and moved up above above the bank on that corner and that Rollefson that, that burned, but I think that's the only building that burned at that time.

SS: So did most of the other buildings there besides the bank, most of those other buildings burned right around it then?

AH: Yeah. Right around this way. Down as far as, I think, where the post office was down in there, down there too, you know, I think that burned out at that time too, and everything that was in there.

SS: Did they just rebuild the town right away? Did it take very long to put them buildings back in?

AH: Well, they put in where Lerder's store is at, that's two different buildings, you know. They cut the hole and connected them up, see, otherwise, that belonged to some other party. I don't know
exactly who has it. Up there were Lawrence's - Jerry Lawrence is at, that was a building, I guess, in there too that burnt. I think there where the post office is at. No, I figured when I woke up in the morning, why,: we drove uptown and we'd been there the evening before and bought a bunch of groceries in that store that burnt up. That was nothing but ashes there. I said to my brother, "We're just hauling the grain to the warehouse in time to get the whole thing burnt." We had about fifteen hundred sacks of grain in there. But that didn't burn. I guess, if it would have, there would've been no insurance on it or nothing at that time. But the later years they changed that so as soon as you owned anything you had insurance on it. I didn't carry any insurance on the farm when the grain's out. I could've had that transferred up here but I didn't even have any insurance on the grain there so I didn't bother with it. Everything was all right.

SS: So the warehouse didn't burn at all?

AH: No.

SS: And lucky... 

AH: I was lucky at that. No, that is really the oldest building of the first buildings. That's the third building that was built in Deary.

SS: Which one?

AH: Where they got the Odd Fellows Hall where that saloon is at - that's still standing there. Then they had - on that, below on this side coming down the highway, they had a dance hall and the show - run the show there - that darned thing burned up.

SS: Where was that at?
AH: That's coming this way down from the - on that side of the highway coming down a ways.- I don't know exactly where it stood, but - it must be down in there someplace. Like some of them older built houses - just like the living houses, they're still standing. A lot of them are still here.

SS: Did you know who homesteaded here before the town started up?

AH: Well, I heard many arguments, I wouldn't say which one, but they said Blalock had one part, but I won't say that's farther down, they used to say. I was always thinking that Stockwell had one and Blalock had the other one on this end of it, I don't know. I wouldn't say that for sure though. It didn't look anything like now, you know, in there at that time. Like the house that the folks had up there and the house that Reed's gotten in them houses - they went in there pretty soon. Then all the old farmers out there, they went in and build a living house, Burkland, John Carson and Applquist and Nels Burkland, and they all had buildings up along - and I think they are all standing. Up along the street there, going up, I don't know who owns the place now, but Joe Andrews built the house there. His daughter, oh, what the heck, what's her name- Jessie Andreasen was the first kid born in this town, so they gave her a lot. He built the house and I think that's still standing there.

SS: Got the lot for free?

AH: He gave her a free lot because she was the first.

He built the store down there by Reed's, to make it in a hurry, you see. He didn't know the town wasn't even big - he bought that store that burned up there where the garage is at.
That was Jorgenson's store. He had a place down at Nora before and when they started the town, why, he thought they was going to start it down there, see. So he bought up a building, but that store down here and he built up here. That house that Lawrence's got up there, a big house - that Jorgenson built that house - that was his home. I guess he sold out to - I think he sold out to Rollefson.

SS: Was Jorgenson's store a very good one?

AH: It's a big - covered quite a ground and then Bjorn had it and it - when it burned up it belonged to Bjorn.

SS: I heard Jorgenson used to undersell the other stores.

AH: Yeah, he did. He never lived— he lived at Nora before he come here, see. All that was there was a saloon and a store. He had a store and I guess - I'm not sure, unless there was another store in there, but I don't think they even had a post office. I don't know where that building burned up there across the creek over here, where you go out of town away - about two miles - where that road forks and goes that way and this little house that burned up and they put in a trailer house. Well, you see that's where father to Mike Cluver lived - he had a store there and he had the post office. That was Anderson's post office. Anderson's post office started the first post office they ever had, I guess. This wasn't where I lived, over where they had the Kleths living. That's where he homesteaded and he got the mail there once a week, or twice and Dean Anderson. This was Anderson's post office when Cluver had it - it never changed names - it's Anderson's post office. So when Deary was built, why, they changed the name to
Deary and Anderson's Post Office was taken away and Avon went down there. Had a post office there, but you know, that was Vassar before. It wasn't Avon when it was Vassar. No, it made quite a little change in things.

SS: Did Avon lose its post office too when Deary came in?

AH: They didn't for awhile, but after awhile they put it up here. Take Avon on the route now.

SS: Well, when you say it made quite a little change, what do you mean? Did all the people move into Deary?

AH: Well, all the change was made when they changed the name, you know, lots of sent by mistake to Anderson's post office and it was Deary. Had to get that straightened up. A lot of people never knew that there was anything like that, I guess.

SS: Well, did a whole bunch of people move into Deary real quick when the town started up - a lot of new people come in?

AH: Yes, quite a few got in here. But then, farmers they bought them buildings, and built them houses - hardly ever lived there. They rented them out all the time. But, you know, there was a bunch of carpenters come in here - I think their name was Grangers - I wouldn't swear to that, but they built an awful lot of houses. I knew - shouldn't say this about the man, anyway, but - fellow was married to my sister, his name was Swenson. They was building that hotel and he, Louie was painting and you know, to make all them rooms it's a lot of work. One morning he asked me if I would take the old horse down and pack up a sack of spuds he'd bought. So I took the old saddle on the horse to come down and he was laughing so big and I was asking him what he was laughing at. He
dumped them spuds into sacks and tied them on the saddle. They had this old Orrie and was washing his whiskers and his hair - he went and stuck his head in the paint bucket - drunk. (Laughter) He had long whiskers - way down - and I don't know if he got it in his eyes or not, but his whiskers fell in the paint bucket. They had him out there washing paint out of...

SS: What did he do with the spuds?

AH: Well, I took them up to spud hill there, to my sister's place. He was married to my sister and staying up there. A kid you know, he tied that sack on the saddle horse and I walked up and tied the horse up and got up there, I don't know, I thought I had enough to handle the sack or not. My sister came out there and we took them off the horse all right. I got the saddle off the horse too, as far as that goes. No, lots of funny things happened there. (Chuckles)

SS: Do you think he caught it from her pretty bad? From your sister?

AH: No, the more he got drunk - that fellow he was living there in the house. He went and got drunk and my brother was painting and he had a paint bucket standing there, my brother-in-law, and he went and stuck his whiskers in there and fell down. Oh, I remember them guys in there pretty well, we as far as that goes. Fellow by the name of Salene and Albert Pearson, they was the one that built that building there where the saloon was at. They was such a hurry, that Troy guy came up and put in the bar in the front end of the hotel while they was building the saloon, so it wasn't short the liquor or anything. No, I...

SS: Salene - he came from Troy didn't he?

AH: Salene?
SS: Yeah.

AH: Yeah. And Albert Pearson. They had the saloon down there, you see and moved it up there and I guess they added on to it probably, I don't know.

SS: Didn't Swan Ericson move up here from Troy? I think he'd been down there.

AH: Swan Ericson moved off of the place I guess. Yeah, he probably lived in Troy for awhile. He was a blacksmith here - he had a place out here south on - well, you know where that Dry Creek cemetery is, well his place is just on the east side of that road and the cemetery on the west, I think. I think four of them fellows owned places in there and donated land for a cemetery.

SS: Right where they met at the corner?

AH: In the corner, yeah. No, they got that tangled up too, that cemetery stuff. There was two people buried there and didn't know - ain't never knew who they was. Buried at night. One - they marked it - one was right in the drive-way where they drive over it. But they tried to trace who it was and somebody said they thought it's a Holiday - they wasn't sure. But there's two graves there that nobody knew who they was. Funny things have happened, you know, everything was wild and they had a man looking at the cemetery and that wasn't surveyed more than just try to get the lots in it. But you know they came pretty near to missin' some of the graves there when they surveyed it. But it wasn't worse and they let it pass. I dug lots of graves in there, as far as that goes.

SS: Is that hard soil to dig through?

AH: Oh, it's harder than heck down in the bottom. Clay. I dug one
grave there for a kid alone. It was for a kid so I didn't dig more than that one four feet. There were graves down there we had to get them down to six feet - and you know they've changed all that stuff. They never dig a grave that deep any more. Dig them about five feet and when they get the cement blocks around, get the coffin in and I don't think they're more than about that far from top down to the... Somebody dug a grave up there, six feet deep. Going to bury the guy, why they didn't have them straps that they got now when they let them down; they wasn't long enough. They had to get a bunch of ropes and stuff to put it down. Now they tried to get by as easiest as they can I guess.

SS: Well, when do you start hitting the clay pretty bad? Right close to the surface.

AH: Well, for the first two feet you can go down pretty good and after that, why, it got harder and harder. No, I was with lots of that grave digging, you know. Somebody died, why asked.somebody to dig. Probably five or six men would go dig that grave. There was no charging or anything like that. Nobody ever charged for it. Nowadays, why it's different. You get one of them back-hoes and dig it out. I guess you pay off from $25 to $50 for a grave.

SS: Did it take a very long time to dig in that clay?

AH: No, it didn't take too awful long. You know, you can't work more than two men in a grave - two men can work in there, of course, one on each end. You'd work like heck when you're down in there, but you don't stay there too long till you tire out and somebody else would take it. Over on this other cemetery there we had one awful time. A guy died - Arwick died and we was going to dig
a grave, so we got up and started digging and all at once, why, they got in the head they was going to shoot it. "Shoot it?; No, let's not shoot it." "Oh, yes, we'll shoot it." It's much easier than digging. So they put in a charge of dynamite and dug down, loosened up the dirt, and when they got that done why, now the grave was made a year or two right beside it...everything was water and that side from the other grave and into what they was digging. But that happened one time. They had planks and everything else in there, I don't know if they ever got it out. Water and you know, what it smells like coming from another grave. No, the way they dig them nowadays, why they can dig in harder ground. Well, it wasn't harder than we could dig it.

SS: Well, which cemetery was that? That wasn't the Dry Creek?

AH: No, that wasn't Dry Creek. It's up here where this church is standing, right out of town on the south side where he was buried. No, the biggest grave that I ever helped to dig was room enough to set three coffins down at the same time.

SS: Why was that?

AH: Well, got in a car wreck and killed Joe Whybark and Mrs. Whybark and one daughter and we buried her down in Bear Ridge. It was no use to try to space it, we dug the whole works and put them in there. We dug it and set the coffins down in there. That's the biggest grave I've ever had to dig. It was like digging a cistern or something.

SS: Did you ever hear about those two girls that drowned around town here?

AH: Yes, I can't think of their names. My wife should know them.
SS: What's the story. Do you remember what happened to them? How that happened?

AH: Well, they went out on the raft up here at some brick yard up here where they had a pond. They got throwed off I guess, and drowned. I think it was - I'm sure my wife would know the name.

SS: Yeah, I've seen it someplace in writing - but I don't remember it. That's okay.

AH: You probably remember the girls that drowned up here? [speaking to his wife].

MRS. HALEN: Knott girls. The name of Knott.

AH: Well, you probably went to school with them.

MRS. HALEN: No, no, it would be more like going to school with Mary than it would me - my daughter. They were just out playing in the big pond on a raft. I don't know whether it was just the two of them or not. But one of them fell off the raft and the one went in to try and get her out.

AH: Well, one fell off probably and the other one...

MRS. HALEN: The other one went in to try and get her and they were both...drowned.

AH: The raft tipped over or something and throwed the one.

SS: Were they real little then or were they already teenagers, or do you remember?

MRS. HALEN: No, not quite.

SS: They were pretty young then?

MRS. HALEN: One was quite small, five, six years old probably. The other one was a little older, probably ten or eleven, something like that.
AH: Oscar - wasn't he the depot agent here at that time?

MRS. HALEN: Yeah.

AH: Well, he was here for quite a few years, I guess.

SS: These guys that laid out the town here, was that McGowen and Henry that laid out the town - that started it?

AH: Yeah, they was the ones that started it.

SS: Did they work for Potlatch or how did they find out?

AH: Sure, there was not but Potlatch concerned the whole thing. As far as Bovill goes, up there was nothing but a Potlatch man. You've seen that they got all that land piled for so they could get in there and buy the timber. Bill Helmer, I guess he was a locator. He took the lines out, see, and anybody wanted timber claim, why, he'd take 'em to another place. That's the way that worked. Hugh Andree, they wanted to put the railroad in so they could log their logs to Potlatch. Well they logged. They had that mill Palouse to start with. No, you know, Bovill didn't live there, up there for nothing. He had that - that's a place if anybody come you know, that wanted to be located, work and like them other fellows going out there and issue land. They had to have some place to live. Of course, they put up the hay on the meadows and filled tree barns there.

SS: So they would stay at the Bovill Hotel?

AH: Yeah. No, I don't think built that hotel. There was a hotel there but I don't believe it's the same one that he lived in. I wish my sister would have been alive, why she could have told you. She worked there for seven years straight. Waiting tables and doing up beds there and help with the cooking. You know, she knew
every son of a gun that come up there.

SS: What did she think of the place? I heard it was real pretty there before they came in?

AH: Oh, it was real nice. All that tall, big timber standing up around them meadows—that meadow was just heavy with grass. Grass that stood up this high. That's the way all the meadows was up in here. White meadow and Shea meadow and the whole works. Open spot—grass, no timber on it. Up there at Hog Meadows, you know where that's at—well, that's the same way there, you know. That's where, let's see, what was the name, I can't—well, he was an old wrestler, thought he was anyway. He lived there—Donner.

SS: Donner—that sounds right.

AH: Yeah, Donner, I knew him well. Of course, the old man went and the boys worked in the woods, one guy crippled up pretty bad, two as far as that goes. The Donner's Meadow, you know, he farmed some up-threshed grain up there. The rest was in hay. But I don't know—how many has had it after that.

SS: Well most of those meadows—most of them were just used for grazing, weren't they? I mean, most of them weren't cleared up and grown crops on in the early years?

AH: Well, in the early years the grass just grow up there and they cut that with the mower. That was slough grass up like this and just as thick as the hair on a dog's back. I was with Nigger Joe, up there was supposed to drive team. Of course, I shoveled some hay too, but I was a young punk of a kid. Him and Lawrence put up hay on them meadows. Oh, it looked nice in there. The timber
wasn't taken out. Well, it was nice here too if you wanted to call it nice when the timber was all standing. Like that field over there, that was no field, there was no field here. Big, nice moog yellow pines. Thirty inches and two feet and bigger on the stump. Oh, I remember when there was logging mostly on that slope. Nigger Joe was logging a lot of ground up there, but I can't think of the name of the guy that logged in here. He was a big, big logger, had a camp in here and everything, but I can't think of his name.

SS: Did Joe do a lot of logging?

AH: Oh yeah, he logged here and there wherever he could get a contract, you know, and had a couple of teams and he put in a lot of logs. Well, he had to do something to make a living. He didn't farm enough up there to make a living. Well, there's not a lot of farm land up there anyway. You can't raise any good crop - it raises too quick up there.

SS: Where his place was?

AH: Well, all of that land up in there, barring none of it.

ain't any too hot here, I'm telling you. I was looking for frost all last summer as far as that goes. It's a lot of different from here and just five, four and a half miles out on the ridge, on the weather you know. Out there you used to stand there till the snow fly and it wouldn't freeze down. Up here, you know, that froze down last fall and the year before, but it was getting ripe, anyway, when it was down.

SS: How much longer, would you say, do you get for growing up there? Another two weeks maybe, or more?
AH: Down on the ridge?

SS: Yeah. It was longer than that sometimes. Right from our house that's where it took way late in the fall before it froze down. Cucumbers and tomatoes and all that stuff that freezes easily. It was down there quite a spell. Oh, I raised ripe tomatoes here, as far as that goes. I had two plants last year, and the year before I had a dozen big plants. They just about got ripe enough to start picking and a bunch of deer came in and cleaned them out. Must have been seven deers that jumped over the bank, and what they didn't eat off, why they knocked off. They come back afterwards and cleaned them up anyway, what was left. She give her, Jim's mother lived in that house, she give her four plants to plant between the buildings there. She was gone and she come home and I told her Sunday evening, "You better pick them ripest ones and they'll ripen." She said, "I'll do that tomorrow." Tomorrow come, why, she had four big ripe tomatoes hanging, deer come and cleaned them up. They are crazy for stuff like that.

SS: Well, didn't you have deer out on the ridge too?

AH: Yeah, worse than here. But they never come up much to my garden, but they was in the orchard all the time. I had a big orchard out there. It wasn't so big because I kept a cutting it down, cutting it down, but it must have been 25-30 trees when I left, or more. That's trees I never for two acres there, at one time. Apple trees, prune trees, pear trees. Sold a lot of fruit to people, company bought - a lot of fruit, a lot of stuff.

SS: How good were the crops from the orchards? Were they dependable - I mean, could you count on a good fruit yield?
AH: Oh yeah. When the trees were young, they was awful nice fruit.

Yeah, dad sold 250 boxes of apples to Potlatch Lumber Co. in the fall and then I think they sold about 250 boxes later than that in the winter. Prunes – they come out there, oh, what's the name of the guy before Nogle?

SS: Jones.

AH: Jones. He come out to the farm, looked over everything – he said he'd take everything that was there. But, didn't take all of them anyway – but packed them in boxes and everything and come up there, took the boxes, and went and dumped them in an open truck and then drove to all the camps. Twenty-three hundred pounds of prunes. That's a lot of prunes. No, it's quite a difference than here. Oh, the prunes here are all right. Had prunes on that tree there, both of them trees, and I got one standing there up under the house there, but you know, they're not taken care of the way they should be. Out there on the farm, why, you worked that ground every year just like an ordinary garden, harrowed every year you worked it and got moisture in it so they didn't – for what it is it's a lot of work if you're going to raise it. My pears stand out in the – well, there's one tree there that's our worked around, because it's where the flower garden and her garden come up against a field and I knocked the bank down that, worked up the ground, and I worked the ground ever since. Nice prunes on it this year and last year too, as far as that goes.

SS: I wanted to ask you a little more about Joe Wells.

AH: Joe Wells?

SS: Yeah.
AH: Well, Joe Wells, when Frank and Crom Wells, they homesteaded on that side of the road where the roads fork, and out that way, they homesteaded and they come from somewhere back East. I don't know exactly where. Father to Frank and Crom Wells had slaves and Joe Wells' father was working for Frank Wells' father and that - Joe went up here and he took his homestead up here, see. That's how he happened to come here. He was a married man and those other two guys, neither one married. They moved down there to Moscow, out of Moscow a little wheres - a couple of miles about a strip between the road and the railroad, they had a house in there and lived there for years. Frank died and Crom he was left alone, he lived quite a few years after that. No, they had a blacksmith shop there. Everybody, and Frank Wells was the horse doctor. If you had a sick horse, go to Frank Wells. Before they came here, you know, Frank was telling me one time when Dad was up there one time doing some blacksmith work for us, he said he had a race horse and him and Joe Wells they slept with the horse all night, but he says, "We was drinking", and the next day when the horse got out - they put $1700 - the horse had gained $1700, it was offered that for the horse. The horse got out and he wasn't able to do a darned thing. Somebody doped the horse. They was broke.

SS: This was Frank and Joe?

AH: Yeah, they were both together at that time, see, and Crom. And I guess they had the horse and the dad I guess had owned it, but they said, "we lost the horse." So, they broke even then, they came out here. But Frank was no fool on horses, see, he had a
stud colt or anything, why, you get Frank Wells to castrate him - they all went up there. If you had a sick horse, why, he would give them some remedy of something. Anyway, he tried. They they wasn't much for medicine, anyway. He was nobody's fool. Dad bought a horse that had a white eye - dad says he's blind in it, 'says "no, he's not blind." He had some stuff there, he blowed, like dust, and he blowed it in his eye and imagine that eye cleared up and got good. I asked dad what it was, and he said, "Oh, I don't know, didn't ask him." He said, "It looked like blue stone or sharp, but he got something to blow into his eye a few times and the eye cleared up." Otherwise, it was just plumb white.

**SS:** You said it looked like blue stone?

**AH:** Yeah, he taught me what it was - dad didn't know. Blue Stone - that's what they used to treat grain with years and years ago.

**SS:** To treat what with?

**AH:** Wheat. So it wouldn't smut.

**SS:** Oh, oh.

**AH:** Dilute it in water, so much water, in a barrel and dip the sack into it. That was the only thing they had for years, treating grain, but after that I don't know how many things they had. Formaldehyde and sarasan.

**SS:** Did Frank and Crom Wells and Joe, did they pal around a lot together while they was out here?

**AH:** Well, they went up there and was awfully good friends anyway. They went back together, Frank and Joe would get drunk, but I don't know, Frank and Crom, I don't know if they even drank. No, that was ..
Joe had married and had three kids, a girl and two boys, Mary and Chuck, and Roy, and I knew them well. You know Roy always used to say to Chuck, he'd tell him what he could do, but he said, "Remember, you're a nigger." They had the school here the same as the whites, I don't know.

SS: Why was Roy telling Chuck that - Chuck must have known what his color was?

AH: Yeah, but he'd do things, you know, that Roy figured wasn't going to be right, it wouldn't work with the white people that way. Roy knew his faults.

SS: Well, did people care though. I mean, did they give them - did they have to watch themselves more than the white people?

AH: No, I don't think they had any trouble with the white people.

SS: Well, I mean, did they have to be more careful about, you know - I had a feeling they sort of fooled around quite a bit themselves, just like anybody else did.

AH: Oh yeah. There was people that would insult them, all right, if they had their chance. No, Joe, wasn't a bad fellow. Oscar, my older brother, said, worked for him for years, Robert and Oscar. Gus worked for him in the woods, baling hay, too, as far as that went - he had an old team baler where you go out in the country and bale hay for people.

SS: Did they - was he a pretty good man to work for?

AH: He wasn't a bad guy to work for. Dad - his son and him would argue quite a bit but he'd never argue with the other men. No, as far as that goes, the Wells always got along.

SS: I heard that Lou used to chew tobacco? Is that true?
AH: Not tobacco. She used Copenhagen. And she didn't care who knew it neither. She had one heating up above the stove, why, she had the snooze can standing up there. Well, I guess all them women, I think they came from South Carolina or some place, used it. Cause I could name a few younger women, like them Coles and Youngs - they all used it. They had a different kind - it wasn't exactly the kind of Copenhagen, you know; some used the nicer stuff and that later on, but oh, Lou, she had one then.

SS: You stuck a stick in...

AH: The only thing I ever seen was one woman using it, it looked like a little brush, you stuck that in their mouth. But, a woman up here, old Lou, she had a can that high of six, five some boxes in there. If you bought - that come in a big can and was just as much as six boxes of little ones, you got that for 25¢. The price on small boxes, it would be 30¢.

SS: Arthur * told me that she used to be able to spit through the knotholes in the cabin.

AH: Oh, I think he wound that up. No, I don't...there's so many stories out on her that I could tell, but they ain't fit to put in writing.

SS: I've heard she was a very good cook. She really knew how to...

AH: Well, she was the boss, of course. When she said something, old Joe would "all right, all right, all right." So, she had the say. Joe got drunk or anything, why he didn't argue with her.

SS: Well, I had heard that him and Chuck were pretty tough, too, that they were pretty strong people.

AH: Well, I don't know. Robert and Oscar never kicked on him that
SS: Well, I don't mean mean, I just mean strong. I mean, it...

AH: No. I don't know. They just about average men I guess. He was tough though. He jumped in that old hay bale with his foot down with every big slug he get. I didn't know he was jumping in the hay bale and shoved down 12 ton of hay in a half a day, why, that was putting a lot of hay with a team bale. So, he wasn't noted for to give in, anyway. He just plugged us in there till that big horse is going around with the bale, sometimes he just had to pull like heck to get it.

SS: Oh, is that how they done it - they had a sweep?

AH: They had a sweep and it trips twice on the round, see. Then, when it's tripped, why then, then it was opened, you see, then you put on another wad. Jumped down with your leg and stomp it down in there. Then when that goes in, why, got another half ways around, why, it snapped again, why then that plunged back with a big heavy s ring, see. That's the way that worked.

SS: Did he do a lot of baling around in this country?

AH: Well, he done a lot - quite a bit out on the ridge, but he mostly did the baling up along in here. On these meadows and stuff. he always put up a lot, got a meadow to put up and then he baled for others up there. Old Lawrence, father to Don and Jerry, or grandfather, I should say to them, they – him and old Joe used to be together quite a bit. Logged together and then they got done, why, they started scuffling and they was going to tear the old clothes off of each other and they tore the pants off of old Joe. Sat there in his underwear, his old pants were
all tore and threwed away and he says to Lawrence, "You go down
and get me a pair of overalls." Lawrence said, "Go yourself."
Lawrence's wife had a store and they all pulled out, he
sat there a long time but he finally took and went down to the
store and got a pair of overalls and Lawrence just got up and
left. (Laughter) Well, it happened to him too, I guess. He
would have got somebody to go, but they wanted to con the
nigger, anyway.

SS: They wanted to what the nigger?.
AH: Well, old Joe, he tore the pants off of him and he had to go
and buy another pair.

SS: Yeah.

AH: And they had nobody to go get them, he had to go to the store him-
self and get them.

SS: Well, I've heard that Joe could make pretty good money if he
didn't drink so bad - spend it all that way.

AH: He made pretty good money on logging. He logged all that from the
highway and up where that meadow is up in the winter of 1914.
When they found a bunch of snow up there that they never seen the
likes. Out on the ranches it lay deeper than the fence posts and
then it come a rain on that and it got so hard that they logged
on it - took and skidded logs right on top of the snow. He
logged that whole side way up there and big nice yellow pines,
and took it down to the spur - railroad spur down at Pine Creek.
It was for a while there you couldn't turn the horses out -
there was no fences - they didn't see a fence. Cows you can
walk on it. The cows wasn't bad. If they had the snow tramped down,
they had to go to water down by the pond, why, they went and drank and they followed that trail, but, the horses, if they got out after they went down I could see the wire fence out there and the one that run out - run on that snow and rolled on it and kicked up the heels and they don't make a mark in the darn stuff. Well I - at that time I was a pretty good size kid anyway, I got my brother when he came home on Sunday and Saturday to go with me out there on the strip of ground that dad had broke out and trees a standing, just like the big ones. Big Tamaracks and make three cords and I would dig out all the snow and throw it away and then we'd saw them right down to the ground. As close to the ground as we could and get down four trees, three or four trees, I figured I'd had enough there for another week. We worked so nice, they laid right up on that snow and I was bucking and I would shove that blade down there and work it till I got it. It would keep the balance in there, see. The saw wouldn't wobble, I could just shoot 'em off. A day I saw me two or three cords, bucking and splitting it on that snow and that wasn't all. When I was done, why, I had, if I remember right, I had 39 cords, a little better. I dug a hole in the snow that I could start to pile on the bare ground and I banked it all out in one pile, and I had the snow that deep I had to start in piling here so - to get in piles started, and after it got up I could put it up nine feet and stand on the sled driving there and drew it right along side with the horses, along that bank and it wouldn't cave. See, you know it was some snow.

SS: How much would you be hauling in one load, do you think?
AH: Into town?

SS: Yeah.

AH: That would lay over summer you see, then I'd haul it next winter. I generally hauled two cords to the load over them hills - that was plenty of a load. But you know how a kid is, he never got enough - never got enough on them anyway. (Chuckles)

SS: Well, who was buying the wood then?

AH: Buying the wood? Up along the warehouse here, that side all along that spur was wood piles, piled up eight feet high. Some double piled because they didn't have room, and they shipped that out and they got, you know, a big price - $4.00, I guess they got a little better. To start with there, why, I don't think they got over four and a half a time.

SS: A cord?

AH: A cord. But, I think dad got on the last wood that I made there, why, I think he got $7.00 a cord. But, you know, we just wasn't nothing.

SS: What were your brothers making when they was working for Joe? Did they make much money?

AH: They got two - about two dollars a day.

SS: Did they stay with him and Lou?

AH: They had the bunk house and they boarded up, from the log down there, why they had a cookhouse and there they cooked in there, where Frank and Crom Wells used to live, they moved out. Mary they cooked there, the daughter, and they had the bunk house out there built up for the men to sleep in.

SS: Well, how many guys was working for him, anyway? He had a real crew there, huh?
AH: Well they nearly had two \textit{gang of} - that would be four men. Then he had a swamper, anyway, for each team.

SS: Six, then.

AH: Then he had two men a-decking and jacking them up sky high, along the spur. I wish I had some of them old pictures. I'd show you just what the skid would look like one time down where Lynn was logging, that was measured twenty-two feet up the top, on the end of it. They took it on the side deal and the spur was up above. Why, they filled this old darn hole, down in here and then they rolled over the two - decking, you know, they took them logs and rolled them on skids laid in on top, just take them up and after they got up so high, why, they didn't care to go anymore, why then they took - then they had the blocks, see, they pulled them up with the horses on skids and pulled them as high as the ceiling here, anyway.

SS: Big decks.

AH: Big decks. But Troy Lumber Co. at that time had three or four saw mills. They had one at Dry Creek, and one over on Bear Ridge and I don't know, I think they had four mills a going.

SS: Was this mostly before Potlatch come in, or afterwards too?

AH: It was before Potlatch come in and afterwards too. I stood and looked at a picture here that was taken out on Bear Ridge. Here's the picture - it shows on the that's at the cookhouse and that's where most of the men worked on the saw mill.

SS: Well, whose crew was this?

AH: Troy Lumber Company's. I used to know them all, but I had some pictures of them and then I had the camp back spotted in here -
I worked up there and they come up and they took pictures of the camp crew by the cookhouse. But I was inside the cookhouse and I stuck my head out the window. Now, that's a good picture for being that old.

SS: When Joe Wells was like doing this gypo logging, did he do it for many years? Did he have crews for over a long number of years, or was it just for a short time?

AH: Yes, some come and went, of course. You know it was different then, when the Potlatch first come in here, you know, if a man come to camp and the old boy is in there work for him, why, go in and eat—there was never no charge—going and eating and stay, go to the bunk house and sleep. Even if they didn't get work, you know, there was lots of people coming in and going out. Sometimes there was people coming from Spokane. I remember, up at Camp 11 there was a big, tall guy, he come up there and wanted to go a-sawing. They sent another guy just as tall out there and they sawed logs, and I guess he never seen much in the timber, but the guy that he sawed with was all right—I guess he told him what to do and they got along pretty well for two or three weeks. And this other guy quit and they gave him another man to work with, well that other guy that they sent out there, he didn't even know where in the heck to stand when he fell a tree. He stood behind the saw with the hand... (Chuckles) Can you imagine, he never said a word to him—this guy come from Spokane. He didn't correct him.

SS: Well, did he keep working with him?

AH: They worked there a few days and I guess they didn't make nothing
so that guy pulled out again. (Chuckles)

SS: Some of them lumberjacks – they didn't say much did they? I mean, some of them guys, I've heard that them older lumberjacks like some of those guys, were pretty surly, or they weren't very friendly, I heard.

AH: Well, they was in their own way I guess. The whole bunch. Oh, some of them was all right. Now, Johnny O'Neil, he was a stump boss, he come out and look over and see that they cut clean when they was sawing, see that they didn't take the highest stump. He was always talking to it—and a dog or two with him, and he was talking to the dog. He didn't - he talked to himself all the time and he come up to me and my brother, Gus, and he kept a talkin' and Gus, "Huh?", "Oh," he said, "I was just talking to the dog." (Chuckles) Oh Tom Mallory and Jack Mallory. Tom and Jack they wasn't the oldest kind. I worked for Jack, I liked to work for Jack – he was pretty good guy. Les Mallory, he worked but I just don't know what he would do, I never worked around him. But Jack, he was always cheerful and I sawed logs for him too. I sawed for Helmer—way out they go. But them old guys, I don't know how many there was there.

SS: Would you rather work gypo then for wage?

AH: Well, you made better money. You got 85¢ a thousand, or 75-85 cents. If you could knock down 16, 17 thousand a day, why, you made good money, compared with a couple of dollars, a dollar, dollar and a half, two and a half.

SS: Could you knock down 16 thousand a day?

AH: Well, we sawed out there, me and my brother and we figured we should have 20,000 a day. We got a dollar a thousand. All
around 115, 120 thousand a week. That is, timber scale. They come out and scale them in the woods.

SS: That sounds like good money.

AH: Well it was, but that was after the war, see, first World War, when we sawed for him. So, that was long ago. But that was nice timber. Couldn't be beat. We had a tree there that we thousand fell that was over 12 feet in the first log. We had a few of them. So, you know the timber was nice.

SS: Real nice. Alben, I'm going to go soon, but before I go I wanted to ask you a little bit about when you was growing up on the farm. I was wondering about when you started to work around the farm? How old was you when you started to work?

AH: I was thirteen years old when I went - his step-dad, but he came over and wanted me to go over and take a foot burner and three horses and go plowing, too. They just cleared enough of that ground under the divide going down to wherever that big barn is at. I guess we put in a 150-160 acres there. Two foot burners and that's when I was 13 years old.

MRS. HALEN: Maybe he doesn't understand what foot burners are?

SS: Well, I've heard of foot burners before, yeah.

AH: It's a good time ago.

MRS. HALEN: A thirteen year old boy, you know.

SS: Well, what was that like. Tell me what that was like, working with a foot burner? I mean, I've never even seen one, I've heard of them, but...

AH: Well, it's a steering plow, you get a mold board on it and you got two handles out there and the lines around your back and three
horses on there - one on the far and two on the outside.

MRS. HALEN: You walk all day long.

AH: Walking plow is what they call it. Sure walk you, too.

SS: Were you breaking the ground?

AH: No, it was broke up, but you got to plow it every year for every crop, see. Well, I worked that many years, but you know that's good money for a kid. I went out there in March, started on them hills and well, I worked for ninety days straight there. I got - I don't remember, but two dollars or $1.75 a day. I don't remember which now - and a half a day on Sunday.

SS: How long a day do you think you'd been putting in?

AH: Well, we started at 7:00 with the horses and worked till 12:00 and give them an hour at noon, and then went back out there till 1:00 to 6:00 in the afternoon. Oh, it's great life. I got so I liked it.

SS: Must have had a lot of time to think, you walking around there.

AH: Well, you had all that plowing you know. If you hit a stump, you don't know why - you had to stand there and jerk them back up and get over the stump and after that you find a root that you didn't go through, it wasn't broke deep enough. I was working the cleared ground there too, for him, but went up - crawled up in a tree with a decking chain — 150 foot decking chain, and as far as I could hoist it up and then we dug a hole around and bull pines and got off as many roots as we could and then four of the horses abreast on the double-tree and pulled them and if it was too strong it'd take those horses and throw them right back.

We cut as much as we could but you know them bull pines had a root
SS: How did you get the chain up the tree?

AH: Crawled up into it. Tore the rope, why, you got up so far, the higher you could get up, the better it was. No, I remember the first year I worked there and then I went to - and when harvest come I thought I'm going to get me a job, so I went over and asked Milt Johnson for a job - he had a thrashing machine going down on Bear Ridge to thrash. I'll never forget the words he said, he said, "You're too God dang little." Well, I said, "If I can't make it you can always make it out." Well, he says, "I'll see."

But then when he went out then he come and told me "I'm moving out tomorrow." Then there was moving and thrashing out of shocks, pitching it on a wagon, they were taking it in right out of the field and into the machine. Mowed every so often, I had to move the truck wagon team and drive that for Frank Davis and, oh, I got along pretty good.

SS: Well was that the main job - what was the main work you did in that thrashing that year? Was that mostly what you were doing?

AH: Well, we was pitching bundles.

SS: You was a bundle pitcher.

AH: Yeah, in the field, see. But then after we got farther up this way we got into stacks that stood up twenty feet high, some higher. Get to crawl up them stacks and then you pitch them into the feeder right into the machine that stacked them up. Oh, I didn't get that he went out. Had that new machine - he had two big wide side wings, short and these other wings came out fourteen

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feet they could hoist them and lower them with their crank. Frank Davis, he was running then you need to see that it got too far away or too high up or too wide, why he went down there and turned it down, otherwise the boss was supposed to do that but that wasn't always done. No, I got along good with that two pitchers and anyone that. Well the stackers drove the machine in and then there was four stacks and then they'd put the feeder right in between two and two, see, and the machine would come into that stub feeder why, they come on these long ones and they went in like that, just went into the stub feeder and into the machine. No, that was a lot of, well, 1500 sacks in a day. That's a lot of grain, you know — some of them sacks weighed, well, wheat weighed from 140 pound to 145-50 pounds. Oats, long sacks, would weigh around 120 pounds; short sack, 100 pounds. No, that's quite a life. Well I took in, I don't know, I liked harvest. I took in harvest, I guess, ten seasons anyway.

SS: What was good about it to you? I mean, what made it so good?

AH: Well, pitching bundles out in the field was a nice job, as far as they that goes. Sack sewers, they got sometimes three sack and sometimes two. That's all could do on 3500 sacks you sew in a day.

SS: Did you sew sacks too?

AH: No, I did, but I didn't care about it.

Transcribed 3-21-80

Karmen Harrison