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I. Index
WILLIAM MORGAN

Lewiston and vicinity; b. 1895
distributor, peddler

Parents homesteaded at Fort Riley, Kansas, and sold out after a rainstorm killed off a carload of hogs. Father bought a relinquishment at Moler (between Craigmont and Nezperce) in 1898; the planned railroad never came through. Local towns. A horse that survived a bad runaway.

Breaking eleven wild horses at age thirteen. Starting on the threshing crew at age eleven. Desire of kids to work and be men; at fifteen they felt grown up. Threshing operation. Threshing was too hard to permit socializing; men had to be tough.

Road building to pay poll tax. Four horses on a four-wheeled. Learning to use a sledge hammer.

A family on every 160 acres. Associating with neighbors. First telephone wire was strung on the fence. Playing phonograph for the whole telephone line.


Chautauquas were good but got corrupt. Local revivals were not sectarian.

Learning to work from father. At sixteen he was foreman for neighbor's threshing outfit. He was almost fired for something he didn't do. Learning at school meant nothing; he wanted to learn to work. Going to Seattle with a stock in working cider. Regular chores. The pride in work.
Father had open line of credit at the bank. Raising hogs (and cattle). Father's strength and character. Mother a dressmaker. Buying a year's supply from Sears and Roebuck; many who were better off did. Paying grocery bills once a year.

People are no longer trustworthy; everything is settled in court and is political. In the old days, a man was as good as his word. People are overeducated without knowing anything except books. How government is hurting society.

How he started peddling from a wagon. He couldn't get hired for free for the experience. Persuading a peddler to show him. His first sale, to a madame, netted him more than $2.50. The first year he made $30 a month. Contest sales. Mother protected him from being fleeced of his $250 in savings by the peddler, who was crooked and in debt. Mother made his first sale on his own.

Working for Grand Union Tea Company. After he won selling contests, they sent a tramp salesman to teach him how to sell. How the tramp sold to Mrs. Hambird, a society lady in Spokane.

Secrets of selling - know the product, no need to be a good talker. The salesman tramp. A tramp friend in the army band. "Showing" his competitor how to build up a sale.

The second year he made more than $250 a month. Visiting a home at a prearranged time increased sales. Change from peddling from the wagon to mail order. Salesmanship is the key to success in any field. His items were high priced and better than average quality. Making two sales at once. They kept peddling when they had the store. Preference of some women for brown eggs.
Selling malt and hops during prohibition, which he made his religious friend deliver.

Division of routes in Lewiston and Clarkston by tramp. Rate of commission. Growing importance of brand names. He referred women to neighbors for testimonials, being careful to keep their religions straight. Knowing German helped.

Selling a big order to a man who hated peddlars, by fixing his tire first; he became a steady customer.

Dealing with a big farmer who drank near Pomeroy. Breaking down the cattle gate and getting his Franklin stuck in the mud, the farmer was mad. He gave Bill the leftovers to eat. He lets himself get roped into a poker game, pretending he doesn't know much about it and has heard of the farmer's reputation. (continued)

He won $750 and barricaded the door of his room. In the morning he tried to give back the money, saying they'd been drunk while he was sober. The farmer paid the men back and gave him the biggest order he ever got in Garfield County.

A man who'd been sold tea for whiskey, sampled Bill's jamaica ginger straight despite his warning and almost choked. Sampling rum in Jamaica.

His welcome reception for staying overnight at farms; he entertained them. Most people lived poorly then - a bank director who ate on apple boxes, a family who cooked on a dirt floor coated with grease. Sense of superiority and higher living standard in the towns, but country food was better. Meat in the country. He thought his city cousins were stuck up.
Parents separated and father disappeared after selling farm. His brother Leo put himself through two years of college by growing a bean crop in his spare time with borrowed equipment, and sold just before the bottom fell out; Leo graduated WSC at the top of the class. Agreement to help put his third brother through college. Involvement of brothers in business.

They opened the store in 1921 when the market collapsed and many farmers went broke. How Bob MacGregor got a good price for peas in Washington, D.C. during the depression. The country suffered in the twenties; the cities did all right. He started Morgan's Grocery with $400, borrowing from his father-in-law. They took nothing from the store for three years. His wife supported them as head nurse at White's Hospital. In 1924 they made $9,700 profit, enough to buy a quarter section of land. He sold 5 gallon malt cans, costing $1.15, for $7.50. Dried prunes were made into moonshine. Buying stone crocks.

with Sam Schrager
October 18, 1976
II. Transcript
Was this Kootenay, Canada or Kootenia River, Montana?

WILLIAM MORGAN

This conversation with WILLIAM MORGAN took place at his desk at Morgan Brothers in Lewiston, Idaho on October 28, 1976. Because business was being conducted at the time of the conversation, there is considerable amount of noise on this tape in places. The interviewer was SAM SCHRAGER.

SAM SCHRAGER: Where did you come from?

WILLIAM MORGAN: Kansas City. From Kansas.

SS: With your folks?

WM: Yeah. My folks sold out of Kansas. I was born what is now the center of Fort Riley. We had a homestead there, right in the center of the present Fort Riley, which is ten miles square. And then we landed up here at Kootenay Lake, up on the Kootenay River. And my dad had sold out there mad at Kansas because of a big thunder storm. He had quite a farm and he run stock scales and bought and sold stock. And a big rain storm come up one forenoon when he'd received a carload of hogs and the rain soaked the ground and the next morning cockleburs came up, which are poison and poisoned practically all of this carload of hogs and he just sold out his two threshing outfits, everything he had and moved out West here. We landed at Kootenay and stayed there that summer while he looked the reservation over here for a homestead. He finally bought a relinquishment and we moved down here that summer and stayed at what was known at the old De France Hotel. And that's quite a historic spot.

SS: Do you remember it at that time?

WM: Oh, yes.

SS: Was it quite a place at that time?

WM: Yes. My mother and my brother and myself stayed there about two months that summer while my dad went over and finished getting ready to move up to the prairie; Nez Perce Prairie. We moved to Moler, Moler, Idaho. Which at that time became quite a town. There's nothing there but a windmill.

SS: Where was this near now?
WM: Moler, Idaho?

SS: Yeah. Well, it's between Craigmont and Nez Perce; about half way.

At that time a man by the name of Moler had made arrangements and surveyed the railroad from the Clearwater up a little canyon- up the Little Canyon- that's taken off at Peck, right up that way up to Moler. And built a town there and at that time there was three saloons, one hotel, a flour mill, a stock receiving station and scales, two general stores and one hardware, church and school and I don't know what else. But anyhow after the survey was made by Volmer from Lewiston to Grangeville up the Culdesac and Craigmont area up along there, which is the present road, why he withdrew his building a railroad. It was supposed to be headquartered at Moler. We were three and a half miles north and east of Moler; the ranch.

SS: So it would have been a good location, the railroad would have gone right through there.

WM: Oh, yes. And it would have been the easiest road to travel; the railroad. But, they'd had to cross another canyon, the Lawyers Canyon to get to Grangeville.

SS: Was that a fight between Moler and Volmer to get the railroad by the route that they wanted?

WM: No, it wasn't much of a scrap to it. The Camas Prairie Railroad, I think it was then the Union Pacific, just decided to build it, that's all there was to it.

SS: Volmer happened to be at the right place at the right time there.

WM: Well, he wasn't, because Volmer himself built two or three other town-sites. None of them survived. He built a townsite, which is now Craigmont on the northeast side of the highway, and the highway cut right through. Then Ilo, which used to be an old town about two miles west
of Craigmont, it folded up and moved to Craigmont, which was later called Craigmont, and then the battle was on who would be the city and what would be the name of it, whether it'd be Ilo or Volmer. They finally decided on the name of Craigmont.

SS: Neither one. That happened to Troy; it was originally called Volmer but the people changed the name. I've heard that.

WM: Yes, that's right. And there's a lot of towns up there at that same time that Moler was there—there was a town called Frazier. That's due west of Moler, about four miles. Then there was another town about two miles east of what is now Craigmont called Dublin. And then this side of there; this side of Craigmont was Reubens and a little town called Gifford and a community called Summit and another community called Lookout. They were all in a row between Craigmont and—well, actually and Peck, and that was called Big Canyon.

SS: Well, when you first moved there, was it all just the beginning of the farming in there.

WM: No big farms; they'd farmed two or three years, I think they had, because we bought—Dad bought the ranch and there was a binder on it, it wasn't any good but there was a pair of horses, team of horses left there from a runaway on this binder. They killed the other two horses and these two survived. One of 'em was a race horse. He had cut his—barbed wire, practically his neck—clear to the cord, you could see his neck. And that horse stayed there and worked on the ranch like any other horse til he was thirty years old. The damndest thing I ever saw! He was just a perfect animal. He had a chunk cut out of his shoulder and neck that you could put your hands in it; put a board across and never touch it.

SS: Were those runaways common in those days?
WM: Oh, yes. Lots of cayuse horses; Indian ponies. This wasn't, it was a half Hamiltonian, got mixed up with the Indians someway. There was lots of wild horses. In fact, a chum of mine and myself; I was thirteen and he was twelve, we broke one summer eleven head of wild horses that come from a man named Hunt from a little community called Winona that's up from Kamiah on the hill. And these were wild horses, actually. One of 'em nine years old, never had a rope on it.

SS: You were thirteen?

WM: I was thirteen and my chum was twelve. We broke that eleven head that summer to work and about two or three of 'em to ride. We worked 'em that summer. We had three older horses; one of 'em was actually an old horse and the other two was four year olds. So we had quite a crew!

SS: Can you tell me how you went about breaking them. The way you did it.

WM: Well, we had no grain, no feed, so we turned 'em out at night, but we fed 'em grain in the morning. So, we kept one horse to ride and we were on the Looking Glass Indian Reservation ranch, right on top of the hill from Kamiah. The Mc Leods were the people that owned the property, but not the Indian land, this is Indian land. We turned 'em out at night and go drive 'em into this corral and then we'd lasso 'em. We built a corral about eight foot high out of timbers that we'd cut down and we roped these horses and snub 'em up to the posts and then we'd get up on the rail and drop the harness down on top of 'em. We had a stick with a nail in it, and we'd reach through and get the belly button and pull it through and fasten that, and we had long chains that we'd put on the butt chains- part of 'em was butt chains, part of 'em wasn't- but they were long tugs that we could get far enough back that we wasn't in too much danger of being kicked. But we treated these horses very nicely; never had much trouble, only they were wild. Hail
storm come up one day while they was in the field and they just turned around with their backs to the storm and they come right over a still hitched up. Never hurt a one. So, then we worked them that summer on the plow, we had six head on a two bottom gang and three on a footburner plow. And the two of us changed off, one to the other, get tired walking. And that was in 1910 and '11.

SS: How did you come by that in the first place?

WM: Man by the name of Mc Leod that we worked for, his son and me, I was his neighbor in Nez Perce School, at that time, and he traded a house and lot there in Nez Perce for thirteen head of horses.

SS: To a--?

WM: Man by the name of Hunt Winona. And we went over there and drove 'em across the canyon and then broke 'em to work that summer. Try that some time!

SS: Sounds like you started pretty young.

WM: Well, people were-- kids were men those days at that age. Because I started my first threshing run when I was eleven years old. I cut bands on the horse power. Had seven teams on the big three power driven by a tumble rod from the power plant to the thresher. And I worked on that when I was eleven and twelve. And when I was thirteen I drove bundle wagon for the threshing outfit. And then the next year--no, two years after that, I drove what they called header box; grain come out of the binder, you know.

SS: What did you think of that at that time, you know, the threshing outfit, the whole business? It was quite an operation.

WM: Well, it was. Of course, a kid like me, eleven to thirteen years old--I was more proud to be in the threshing crew, than if I'd a made ten touchdowns on the football field! Kids at that time were trying to be
grownup men. There was a different atmosphere, different thought about youngsters; when they got about fifteen years old, those days, as I remember it, they thought they were men. You know a kid about that age he thinks he knows a lot, but he finds out later he didn't. And that's the way I was, too!

SS: Was that threshing crew mostly local men from the area?

WM: Oh, yeah, mostly. What they usually done, that was a small rig, a twenty-eight inch separator, and there was about sixteen or seventeen in the crew. But it was mostly neighbors and their sons, or nephews or whatever it might be; people lived in the neighborhood. They did hire some outside people.

SS: Did you just thresh the neighborhood? Or did they go outside?

WM: Oh, well, probably within a distance of maybe five, six miles.

SS: Did you have a cookwagon with you, or did you go home?

WM: Not at first, not when we had the horsepower rig, we didn't. We had the horsepower rig two years and then we bought an engine and then we had a cookhouse.

SS: Why did that make any difference?

WM: Well, first place it was faster and they had more horses to move with. And the bundle wagons'd usually leave— the bundle wagons, a couple of 'em and hook the teams from them onto the cookhouse. That was the main thing, to get moved. Later on I became with a steam rig and it was my job to move the cookhouse and supply water for the threshing outfit; the horses and the steam engines.

SS: Did you try to be careful when you moved the cookhouse?

WM: Oh, yes, you had to be careful, because you were going across plowed ground.

SS: And all the stuff they had--
WM: Well, they didn't have much to cook with, it was pretty well taken care of. I never had a bit of trouble, I hauled the cookhouse for three years, and I never had any trouble at all, except I had an old balky horse once in a while, that it'd get too heavy he'd balk, but I knew how to handle it so I got moved alright.

SS: How much team work was there on a crew like that? Would the guys have to work very close together to coordinate things real close, to get things done?

WM: Ohhh, yes. Pretty much so. We had five bundle wagons, and that took from two to three horses on each one, so that'd be ten—about twelve horses there, and there was fourteen horses on the horsepower, so that would be twenty-six head there. And the water team was four, that's thirty head. That's quite a bunch of horses on a threshing outfit. And nobody wanted the threshers when it rained, because they had to feed 'em.

SS: As long as it rained?

WM: Well, yeah.

SS: Stayed there?

WM: Yeah.

SS: Did that happen very much?

WM: Oh, yes. In—oh, I forget what year it was— it rained quite a little bit in the fall, and it cost some of the farmers a little bit of money. Course, it didn't cost 'em money, only they couldn't make any money, they couldn't sell it, because the horses ate it up. And then they had to feed the men. Of course, a lot of 'em went home, but what extras they did hire, well, they usually drew some of their pay and went to town, celebrated for a day or two. So, it wasn't too expensive as far as the feeding of the people, was concerned.
SS: Was there much chance for socializing with the neighbors during that time? Like in the evening and that kind of thing.

WM: No. When you got through one of them days, you went to bed right now! You were just simply worn out, that's all. There was no socializing; very little.

SS: So it was real hard work.

WM: You just stayed there and slept in the haystacks. Tickled to death to do it.

SS: How long a day would that be then?

WM: How long a day?

SS: Yeah, of working.

WM: Well, we was up at five. You were supposed to have your horses harnessed and fed before you went to the cookhouse for something to eat, or the house where you was working at. And you started the machine at seven; some of 'em got started at six. The horsepower rigs they couldn't—the horses couldn't take it. They'd usually wait til about seven. The steam engines, they could get off at about six.

SS: Then how long would you go? Would you go right til sunset?

WM: Usually about six o'clock, but that's sunset then.

SS: You worked really hard. Hard enough to really do you in by evening.

WM: Well, it was hard work because all your jobs were not simplified. When you worked sewing sacks on the threshing outfit, you handled every one of those sacks. You sewed it up, picked it up and carried it over to the pile. When you carry 180 sacks a day, that's sewing and jig 'em, jolt 'em down you know, that's not for-- a lot of small fellows did it but they were tough, they knew how to do it. Knew how to put it up on their knee, pick up. You take these sissies you got here now in these colleges I don't think any of the football teams they got-- I don't
think the players could do it. You don't work, you don't know what work is. But, you get up in the morning, you take care of your horses; feed 'em, take care of yourself the best you can, maybe you shave, maybe you don't. Cold; kick the snow off your blankets or frost. You don't wash your face very much, either! I worked several years on the threshing. The things that bothered us those days was building roads, because in those days there was no roads. So every man, by law, had to pay a poll tax and you could work out your poll tax with a team and horses, and when I was hired out it was usually my job to take the boss's team and go out and take his place on the road. And we usually had scrapers, what they called two-horse or four-horse Fresnoes. Do you know what they are?

SS: You better explain to me; a Fresno.

WM: A Fresno is a long scraper. It's about, oh, about five foot long, I'd say, oh, about six, and two horses hitched to each end and a big, long iron handle. Well, you drove these four horses the best you could up to where you was going to load and you take hold of this iron and lift it up and it'd scoop up the dirt, rocks, or whatever it was, then you pull it back down. Now, if you think that's easy, just try it on your own! And especially-- it is fairly easy if the horses are trained to pull even, but the worst thing I got into, I had two big black mares, weighed about 1,400 pounds apiece, and two little mule Jennies, and they weighed about 850, and they were on one end of this scraper and the big horses were on the other end, and when the little mules would feel that bite of that scoop, they'd pull ahead real quick, throw the weight and all the load on the big team. Soon as they got the thing loaded, which their end wasn't loaded, why they backed up and went right along as a team. And you say a mule ain't smart! You try it; work with them a
would

while! (Chuckles) And this big iron bar come around and hit me if I was foolish enough to stand in front of it - break your leg, break your bones, or anything, because the weight on that big long iron bar about five or six foot long hit you there with those teams pulling against it, there's a leverage there, just knock the tar out of you! Anybody that's ever drove a Fresno knows what I'm talking about.

SS: How much of that did you do in a day?

WM: Oh, well, we worked about ten hours. I think that was a day then; ten hours on the road.

SS: On a stretch road, how long would you have to put in on your poll tax; how many days of work was that?

WM: Well, it depends on how much land you had. So much an acre. I don't know what the assessment was, but you was assessed so many dollars and then you got so much a day for a man and his team credit.

SS: Was that how most people did it; was work it out on the road?

WM: Oh, a lot of 'em did, yes, 'cause they didn't have any money. Usually the work on the roads was done in the late spring, and by that time the winter's over, you didn't have any money. That's all. You just didn't have it, so they worked out, most of it. And that's how these roads all over this country were built; working out their poll tax. The old Kamiah grade from the Indian Reservation there, Looking Glass and the Catch-Catch place down to Kamiah was built by that kind of labor. You get out there and handle a pick and a shovel, and if you don't know how to handle a pick or a shovel or sledgehammer you got an education coming! I got one. I'd slam that sledgehammer down with all the might I had and I'd slam it down and I didn't give any with it, and my wrists was just almost paralyzed. After about two or three days I let the
sledgehammer do it's own hitting and I'd hold it loose; didn't hurt then. You work on those roads like the men used to do and that was a job. That road from Nez Perce to Orofino; if you've ever been over it here lately you'll see what I mean. That original road's still there. And the one from Nez Perce to Greer, there's another one.

SS: Was there much, I mean, besides this poll tax business, was it all regular road jobs that men could get?

WM: No. Taxes was very limited. About one load of wheat paid our taxes, on our place. Those days, all the ranches up there were 160 acres, now they're about 2,000. One man does more work now than the whole neighborhood ever did before. There's a lot of difference between living now and living then; just a hell of a lot.

SS: What was the neighborhood like when you were growing up then? Was there much of a real neighborhood right there where you lived?

WM: Yes, there was a man and a family on every 160; almost a family on every 160 acres.

SS: Did that mean that you were very close to the neighbors; that you knew them real well?

WM: Well, half a mile. Quarter section, 160 acres is half a mile, so you was a half a mile from your closest neighbor. You may have three or more around you.

SS: Well how much did that mean that you associated with them?

WM: Oh, not too much. You didn't associate maybe once in two months, maybe, on a Sundays. Very little evening association; practically none. The nearest we had to associations was one of the first telephones. My dad helped run the line from Peck to Moler, and it was run on the barbed wire fences. It would follow a half a mile of fence along the quarter section; 160 acres, if there was a gateway you went up over it,
across and down. And the cattle was always breaking the fence down so your telephone service was not very good! Because, maybe down the road eight miles somebody run into the fence, no connection. Now our association then—my dad was quite progressive in some ways; we had one of the first phonographs, one of these Edisons with the round records, yah long, and about that big around, and one of these big horns that come out. And at a certain time in the evening, it would ring on the telephone; crank, you know, and you could just hear the receivers, click, click, click all up and down the line, and we would turn on that phonograph into the telephone. And we'd have The Preacher and the Bear, and some violin, maybe, or tunes like The Devil's Dream or the Old Irish Washwoman or Soldier's Joy, or some of those old-time tunes, they'd be played for the whole line to listen! And that time you couldn't call anybody, cause everybody had their phones down. And that's about as much socializing they did, excepting—(End of Side A)

SS: Four miles—
WM: About four miles apart. You'd have a schoolhouse about four-five miles, maybe closer than that. And in this community with one family on every 160 acres, let's see, you had about fifteen families to a schoolhouse. And they had what is known as literary societies. You put on your own plays, debates, musical programs, religious programs and everything like that. Box socials. That's what socializing was done those days. I remember my dad and mother had a play that they had made up pretty much themselves, although they got the principle part of it out of a magazine, "A Slow Train Through Arkansas". You had the old passenger coach and the kids trailed along behind, the old maid with her bird in a cage and all that kind of stuff, and this slow train to Arkansas, it would stop, there's a cow on the track, or maybe some wagon crossing the rail—
road and the train would stop and let the wagon cross. Or if there was a little town or somebody lived there that's kind of important or something, why, they'd stop and let him off, or pick up a passenger along the slow train through Arkansas. You rode it just like a street-car used to be here. You'd probably go thirty miles in a day, maybe fifty.

SS: Did they put this on as a play?

WM: Yeah.

SS: Did they act the parts?

WM: Oh, yeah. Man and his wife and his family—

SS: On the train.

WM: On the train. You had your box lunch and the kids smeared jelly all over the seats and all that kind of stuff.

SS: Did you kids act in it, too?

WM: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

SS: And then you put it on for the other families that were there?

WM: Oh, yeah. There were all kinds of things like that. Debates,"Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" "Which is the most important, a mopstick or a dishrag?" And they get into it, they'd argue all one evening! They'd choose up sides; two on a side to lead the debate and anybody else could come in on either side. First thing you know, the whole audience would be on one side or the other. And they'd tell the damn-dest stories you ever heard! Well, for instance the broomstick or the dishrag. Well, this old cow had swallowed the dishrag and couldn't get it on down so the broomstick was the most important because they pushed it down with the broomstick. Oh, such things as that!(Laughs) That was socializing in the olden-days. And that was not (just) here, that was all over!
Yeah, I've heard of them having the literarles up around the Ridges out of Moscow and Troy and up in there.

Around Pine Grove and out towards Troy and Deary and Southwick and Leland and Cavendish, all those places.

I've never heard the argument for the dishrag and the broomstick!

Oh, there are a lot of other ones, too, but I just happened to think of that.

Did they ever have any political debates— maybe not political — but over issues of the day?

Not very much. Not too much. I heard Senator Borah in some of his political speeches, but I was then about eighteen— that was quite a bit later.

They wouldn't do it like say, a debate in a schoolhouse?

No.

You take one side and they take the other?

No. Once in a while we'd have a religious debate. But that was kind of dangerous.

What kind of questions did you debate on in religion?

Well, some of 'em got pretty warm! (Chuckles) They'd get their funny ideas, you know. And most of them were atheists, didn't believe in religion. I know we had one neighbor that was an atheist, he didn't let believe in religion. And a preacher came onto that prairie, which is about seven or eight churches; that Nez Perce Prairie, he'd challenge 'em all to debate, any time, any place. And he'd read the Bible through he claimed three times; had all the paragraphs marked, and he was dan-gerous. Preacher had to be pretty good to handle him at all. Yet he was as fine a man as you ever saw; a perfect gentleman, but he was off on that one thing. And, boy, he was off, too! He'd take anybody on.
SS: Did he declare himself to be an atheist? Did he say?

WM: No, no. He was our next door neighbor.

SS: How did he present himself? Did he just say he had some questions about it?

WM: Yeah. Just make the other fellow out a liar, that's all. Try to.

SS: Did you ever see him debate a preacher?

WM: Oh, yes. I wasn't very old then, I was about twelve—no, I was about ten. About ten. But he was pretty well-read, but he was off on some of his statements. Like, it's pretty hard to debate religion. Because he said he could prove anything in religion; either side.

SS: He could disprove.

WM: That's the kind of a fellow he was. But he just—a fellow get up and preach a sermon and he'd tear it to pieces, just as sure as the sun came up! He didn't care what religion it was, what faith it was.

SS: People like your father didn't mind, he'd put up with him, he'd listen to him what he had to say.

WM: Oh, yeah, well, the neighbors knew him and paid no attention to him. They'd get a big kick out of him; laughing at him.

SS: Did he get worked up?

WM: No. Perfect gentleman.

SS: Did you say there were a lot of people out there that weren't believers at that time?

WM: Well, those days, there was. Lots of 'em. Most of 'em it was because they hadn't had contact with the facts that might be in the Bible, the Good Book or history. All three of 'em go together. And a lot of these roughnecks—see there were three desperadoes in this country. One time it was reported they had 5,000 Chinamen up there at Pierce, Idaho. And they claim that they found 'em—wait till the snow goes off so they
could find the dead ones. Stories like that. 

Pretty rough. This 

Negroeeoutlaws shot some people up east and south of Grangeville, 

and they got as far as Lewiston here and they trailed 'em and one man 

from Lewiston followed 'em into California and caught 'em and they 

brought 'em back here and hung 'em. Three of 'em.

Speaking of the roads a moment ago - the roads, for instance from 

the Nez Perce Prairies to Lewiston here was just about as rough as you 

make 'em. Most of the roads went from Craigmont out west to then down through Soldier Meadows down to Waha, then down to Lewiston. 

And that was rough coming down those hills, and just rougher going up, 

too. They used to tell about cutting a tree down up on top of the hill 

and tying it on behind the wagons to hold 'em back. Team of horses 

couldn't hold 'em, steep. Same way going up there, they'd put what 

they call roughlocks - ever see a roughlock?

SS: No, but I've heard of them.

WM: Well, you take a wheel, like this and an axle through here and 

a chain come down here, a wire, whatever it is and this block sit ac-

cross the block, and when your wagon starts back it lifts this chain 

and this block'd sit down on the ground and the wheel run up against 

it. In other words, it drug along all the time on the ground. The 

minute you stopped your horses, the load backed against that block.

SS: Blocked it.

WM: And then when you go ahead again, why - always going up the hill they 

had a rough-lock on.

SS: Probably had to stop a lot to the horses.

WM: Oh, yeah, you couldn't go about a hundred yards, steep spots you was 

lucky if you got a hundred yards. With a team of horses pulling all 

they could hundred yards was quite a little ways to run without any
wind. And coming down a hill, the same way; we had a rough-lock coming down the hill, which is a piece of metal about the size of my hand, cut this way, and the wheel backed into the bed. Well that thing was fastened up into the bed.

SS: To the bed?

WM: Bed of the wagon. And you loosened that about three inches or four and the wheel would run into this rough-lock shoe, iron shoe, and that would drag, wheel wouldn't turn at all, and that's the way they went down a hill. It was a sled.

SS: Was there another brake besides that?

WM: Sure, but that was no good then when you put a rough-lock on the wheel didn't turn at all, just a sled. And there was some danger with that too, because that sliding, if it wasn't level it would slide off to the lower side with a rough-lock on. Sometimes you'd have to loosen that, and let the wheel get back over to where the power was.

SS: Would people's brakes fail sometimes?

WM: Why sure, you betcha! Lots of horses been killed. You betcha. Up here when I took a trip from Skagway to Whitehorse in Canada they had a stretch of road there, railroad built on there and they claimed there was a thousand horses that had died on that stretch. Main reason they died with no food. And they'd just work 'em 'til they died, then get another team. No feed, no way to feed 'em. Snow twenty foot deep and all that stuff. Same way with men up there. That section of the country, banker or anything else, he was just a human being, that's all. His money, nobody's take his money. (Pause in tape)

WM: I was there. This is thirty miles beyond the Arctic Circle. That's up at Kotzebue and Nome. That's where the big gold rush was and the
Yukon. 'Course the Yukon was in Canada, but the river flows down through that section.

SS: You know we were talking about religion and it occurred to me to ask you about revivals. Did they have them?

WM: Oh, yeah, you betcha! Lots of revivals. Had revival meetings all over and then later on it turned into chautauquas. They had some religious meetings in that, too. That was supposed to be an education deal. Had all the good speakers that got kicked out of congress, or something, and singers and musicians, and everything in chautauquas. And that was probably for about three or four years, and the community would guarantee it. Well, it got dominated by crooks and ambitious people that didn't want to work and it just got rotten. They just quit it, nobody would attend it, so it folded up. I attended lots of chautauqua meetings around here, Colton, Genesee, Clarkston, towns about that size.

SS: What did people get out of it, when it was good?

WM: Oh, when it first started it was pretty good. You saw these dinner clubs they used to have. Years gone by had dinner clubs you had to join, pay so much a month to belong. You got so many lectures, entertainment once a month and so on. I had four girl friends by the name of Anderson, lived at Nez Perce, and they were pretty good singers, and they went two years on a tour in the West here, revival meetings.

SS: Revivals?

WM: Well, we have one now, of course Billy Graham is one, only he's got beyond the small, he's gone to the big ones. Same way only--miniature size. I guess Bill was around in those days.

SS: Yes. Billy Down in California-- what was that lady's name used
to have—The Four Square? The Gospel of Four Square?

SS: I've heard of that.

WM: Oh, she finally wound up in a scandal deal down on the beach. What was her name? (Aimee Semple Mc Pherson) I went to see her show twice. Pretty good.

WM: A pretty good show.

SS: What were they like out on the Prairie?

WM: Well, they'd usually set up a tent, once in a while they'd have it in a building. And a preacher would come and he'd usually have some kind of entertainment with him, a couple of singers; men and women, or maybe a couple or more preachers. And they'd preach—not necessarily any creeds; they wouldn't preach creeds, they would preach religion as a whole, whether you were Catholic or Protestant. What branch of the Catholic religion or branch of the Protestant religion, they made no mention of that. It was just religion in general. And most all the places you could join the church of your choice. But his job was to preach the gospel and get you to join the church of your choice. So it was popular. Most of them talked religion as he claimed it was written in the Bible. And it was entertaining. It was educational; pretty good. Course, the old straightliners, the Howling Methodists or the Dirty-shirt Baptists, whatever you want to call 'em, why, they had their own ideas of their creed and they didn't like that preacher, he didn't talk their religion and their creed. You had to be sunk under— you had to be baptised under the water; not sprinkled, and so on.

SS: But these guys wouldn't talk that way, mostly?

WM: No. Just talk in general.

SS: Did they produce conversions and that kind of thing?
WM: Oh, yes, oh, sure. People used to join the revival meetings by the
hundreds! Go two, three times to church and that was maybe several months
worth.
SS: That's one thing I've heard people say, that there was an awful lot
of interest at the time and then a lot of backsliding afterwards.
WM: Oh, yeah. Well, the same way with any religion only this was magni-
ified. You joined your own— the church of your choice. You might join
an entirely different church than your folks did; lot of 'em did, too.
SS: You know when you were talking about some of this work you were doing
as a kid, I was thinking; did the adults, you know, the grown men, did
they help you much, I mean, to show you what to do and how to do it?
WM: Oh, yes, sure. I worked in the field with three horses on a plow when
I was eleven years old. My dad was with me; he had six head of horses
on a two bottom gang, and I had a one bottom, and I'd follow along be-
hind, but my old three horses knew just as much about it as I did, or
more. They just followed along behind. I'd guide 'em, of course, now
and then at the corners. I'd help unharness 'em, harness 'em and feed
'em. I usually fed 'em while Dad unharnessed 'em. But I worked in the
field right alongside of him. Show me how to hitch up the harrow. Well,
when I was sixteen I was the foreman of my neighbor's outfit. He had
a threshing outfit, and I was just a kid; had to show all the men
what to do. What horses to work, where they belonged, what size col-
lars they wore. Sure, you betcha. Older people taught all the kids.
SS: How did you get that much responsibility? You knew more about it than
they did?
WM: Raised right there, and my neighbor knew I'd worked in the field since
I was eleven years old. Yeah, help, sure. Only time I ever
got fired, it only lasted about an hour, I wanted to learn to milk a
cow. And the fellow I worked for took me out to the dairy barn, which
he had and showed me how to milk. So every night, instead of going in
and eating dinner and going to bed like the men did, I stayed with him
and helped him milk. Well, one night, or it might have been morning,
one of the men had used the cow barn for an outhouse, and he stepped in
it. Made him mad; he fired me, he thought it was me. And I quit right
then and there, I wouldn't have nothing to do with him, and so he came
back, thought it over, and gave me fifty cents a day increase in wages
if I'd stay. And the next year I became his foreman. But then, I
could handle horses. As I told you, I broke eleven head one summer
when I was just a kid, and I could handle horses. I knew how deep to
plow, I knew what was wrong with a binder. Tied the knots on the twine
that bound the bundles. I could fix that, put the chains on, just like
any man could. In fact, better than most of 'em. But I was raised on
a ranch. Had to know. You couldn't take a team of horses out there
with wrong size collars on, they'd come in at noon all skinned up here,
boy, Dad would use a board on me sure. Course, I knew better than that.
No, your teaching—much of your teaching was done at home. Practical
teaching. You didn't learn it in school. You learned ABCs and how to
read, write and spell. When I was in the sixth grade, they graded you
by numbers; 100%, 95%, 90— I got 28%! I couldn't spell c-a-t. I
wasn't interested in learning how to spell cat. I was interested in
going with my dad when he had to the hogs.

SS: When he had to what?

WM: He was a stock buyer— and we'd buy stock; hogs and cattle— carload at
a time— and ship 'em out of Kamiah or Peck or Culdesac up here, and
ship 'em to the coast to the butchers. Slaughterhouses. And at the
World's Fair in 1908 I went from Kamiah, Idaho to Seattle as a care-
taker of two carload of cattle. My dad was with me too, he had two
cars too. They always allowed you one man for two carloads. You had to unload those cattle every so many hours.

SS: Feed and water?

WM: Feed and water, yeah.

SS: They were bound for the Fair?

WM: No bound for Seattle, butchershop- or slaughterhouse. That was in 1908. It was the Seattle-Yukon Exposition. I had advantage lots of times over the other kids, lots of 'em. Well, I done a lot of things like that that other kids didn't get to do. And I'd adone it if it'd a killed me. I wanted to do those things, so'd all my brothers; had three brothers. They were all the same, liked to do things. There was a cider mill I had made; I had five of them made.

That's like the old mill. The year before I graduated out of high school we called a hack. Dad used to peddle cider, we had two horses and what we called a hack. He'd take a fifty gallon barrel of cider and go downtown, peddle it, two bits a gallon. Well, my brother and me, it was our jobs to crank that darn thing and press the juice out. And it would take about two days to make fifty gallons, a load, see, a barrel of cider. Pick the apples and wash 'em, put 'em in the grinder, crush 'em all up?

Us kids used to do all kinds of things like that, and that's what made the difference. These poor kids now, I feel sorry for 'em, most of 'em don't know sic 'em. Wear long hair and let their beard grow.

SS: Does that mean that you pretty well worked most of the day when you were not in school?

WM: Sure you did. You betcha! When you got out of that school you head for home, went out and got the cattle, cows, milkcows, helped milk, took care of the horses, fed 'em, cleaned out the barn. That was every day, too, Sundays and all. Horse eats on Sunday, so's the cows. We
each had a saddle horse. I had a pony. Saddle it, ride after the cattle. Course, lots of times; much of the time the cattle would come in to eat. The cows, would come in to eat, so we wouldn't maybe have to go very far. Maybe wouldn't have to go at all.

SS: You told me about how nowadays kids are about working and I agree it' changed an awful lot. But when you did it, was it fun? Did you get a joy out of doing the work?

WM: Pretty much so. Pride. Let's put it that way; pride. You was proud to be a man. I did just as much work as the hired man over at John Jonse's. I think that was the general consensus of all people. I play the fiddle a little btt^ now and one of the fellows that's in our group, name of Jeffries over here in Clarkston, he was very active in this literary society, him and his father, and his father was very poor, but they did make a little money, and he used to take a team and one of these hacks and during the grain hauling in the fall, he'd travel down to the elevator and haul watermelons and cantaloupe and roasting ears and all that stuff and peddle to the farming section. And they liked him because he was a little fellow. He isn't over- I don't think he's much over five foot six or five foot five. But he was business, always business and they'd buy off him, some would trade him wheat, some would trade him chickens. And he would bring the chickens back with him and try to sell them back here. He learned to trade; a watermelon for a chicken, couple of watermelons for a pig anything he could get that he didn't have at home. And that's the way he got his start. He gets quite a kick about telling different things that happened. How some of the men would try to cheat him.

WM: to a certain extent. Everybody had some cows and hogs-

SS: In your family, was that the main interest?
WM: ---about even. We had more stock than any of the rest of them, because my dad was a stock buyer. If he saw a chance to buy a bunch of stock, cattle or steers or cows, why, he'd buy 'em. He had a very unusual setup with the bank; he was a good friend of the banker's - can't do that nowadays - he didn't have any money. They always wait for old Dan Morgan, he'd pay you cash. So he'd find a bunch of hogs, got a good buy on 'em, wrote 'em out a check right there on the bank. He never had a cent in there. Oh, I don't say he didn't have a cent, but he didn't have enough to pay for the hogs. That check was a note cashable when the stock was sold.

SS: A lot of guys give you that, they had to buy it on time or something?

WM: Well, the average fellow was not versed in stock like my dad was. And with the dollar and cents, he was honest as the day is long, He'd buy this stock, take a day to load, ship it over to the auction house or some packinghouse, get his draft - he'd never accept a draft, it was mailed to the bank to cover all these checks he'd written. That was banking in those days. Since the Federal Government owns our banks - runs our banks - you can't do those things.

SS: He must have been completely trusted then by the president of the bank.

WM: Yes. That's right, that's right. Couldn't be otherwise. The man couldn't commit much of a crime; he couldn't get away, he couldn't get out of town in an automobile.

SS: Where did he get his stock from, usually?


SS: Most of it was local?

WM: Yeah, Well, you couldn't go very far in a day; twenty miles horseback.

SS: So how would he do that? Would you buy at a certain age usually and
then raise 'em up on your ranch?

WM: Well, that depends entirely, we did just about everything. They raised some of 'em. I know one time, I remember that dad took two four horse teams and two hog wagons and traveled about twenty-five miles over towards the town of Cottonwood. He drove two nights and two days to get over there and back with these loads of pigs, brought 'em home and we raised 'em, fattened 'em and drove 'em to market. I remember that very plainly because at night here Dad'd come with his four horse load of hogs and another man, he had a load, too and unload them that night.

So there was a lot of variation as to what you could do. Generally speaking, we tried to raise as many as we could, because we figured it didn't cost anything to raise 'em. Only bad part of it, they old sows was smarter than we were. They could tell where we planted our potatoes on the far side of our ranch, and they could go over and find 'em any time. And old sow with pigs is smarter than you think. She can sense a potato patch anywhere. That's a fact. You may think that's kind of funny. A doggone pig, you know—there's a picture over on the wall over there—Cottonwood, Idaho where a fellow trained four head of hogs to pull a wagon and he took 'em to the World's Fair in San Francisco in 1902 - 1915. Take a pig is, I understand, rated as Number 1 as the smartest animal. It's either a pig or a horse.

SS: Could you grow most everything that you fed 'em?

WM: That we fed 'em?

SS: Yeah. Didn't have to buy grain, buy hay, any of that stuff?

WM: 160. We had no money to buy anybody's place.

SS: I wonder how much stock you could turn over in a year?

WM: Well, not very much. Usually, just offhand, kind of a wide guess a-
MORGAN

bout twenty head of hogs, you could raise very comfortably. And usually cattle, you'd probably have three or four cows. Maybe at intervals, because, you always wanted fresh milk.

SS: What put him in such good status with the bank?

WM: Well, I suppose. I couldn't say what the banker thought of him, I don't know. But, of course, you was in a different environment than you got now. Now you're living with a bunch of, let's say, college graduates who are striving for money, get it honestly, get it, but get it. Those days you didn't do that. You couldn't get away. And you didn't have any politics to get you a job either. You had to live a pretty straight life. There wasn't no other way about it. And my dad was raised— he was a Welshman, raised in Wales. He graduated from college. Wrestling, fighting, singing. That constitutes his graduation in those days, in Wales. College graduate; that's three things he had to know. My dad never was whipped but once. He hit him over the head with a neckyoke of a wagon. He'd get on a spree once in a while, but never so he couldn't handle himself. He was an athlete; very, very strong, and he was a good singer. We lived at the De France Hotel down here, they used to buy him all his liquor; get him to sing. He was a good pool player and he played cards; pretty good card player. Took care of himself. Himself first. But he was still a good mixer with everybody. He never got into the gambling stage, if that's what you call it. He probably could have, but he didn't. He stuck to the farm and buying and selling stock. And, it's just one of these things; you can't have that now. Your stock sales are out here at the stockyards; auctions. You're not buying ten head of pigs or ten head of shats or whatever it might be, two or three cows or three or four steers, you don't buy 'em anymore. You go out here and you raise
three or four hundred head of cattle out here on the cattle ranches
and you sell maybe forty or fifty at a time. It's a different set-
up.

SS: Your mother? What was she like?

WM: Oh, she was a very good-looking woman. She was five foot eight-
tall as that tallest gal in there—and she was a dressmaker and made
hats. And, always well dressed. Of course, she probably made the
same dress out of—I mean, made different dresses out of the same
cloth.

SS: Did she sell them for money?

WM: Oh, yeah. Lots of people had her make their dresses. Wedding dress
or a nice dress to wear and so on. And when you bought your clothes
those days, that is, the way my dad did, he'd get whatever money he
could and we'd send to Sears and Roebuck and get the year's supply
of everything. In other words, we'd get the harness and collar for
a couple of horses and a pair of shoes for each one of us kids and
maybe a suit of clothes for one or two of us. Mother would get cloth
goods to make into clothes. Underwear. Christmas candy, nuts. Sugar,
syrup, coffee and all that stuff. We'd take a four horse team to take
from the farm to market and sell it, and bring back this
load of stuff from the depot.

SS: What made it better to go to Sears & Roebuck by mail than to try to
buy exactly what you wanted in at Lewiston?

WM: Oh, I don't know. Well, in the first place most of the stores didn't
have it. In other words, they didn't have yardgoods so much. But,
that's the way Dad done it. I don't know whether he done any better
or not, I couldn't tell you.

SS: Do you think most people kept mail order—?
WM: Some of 'em did. The ones that had better clothes and so on, usually did. Only the poor people that had to charge—course, those days, you charge a lot of stuff. You didn't pay cash. It was general to run a grocery bill by the year. In other words, let's run the grocery bill when and after you sold your grain, and then you start charging for another year.

SS: Did the people on the Prairie run a grocery bill down at Lewiston then?

WM: Some of 'em did, yes.

SS: Didn't have to be just a

WM: No, I knew one family traded with the grocery store out here on 21st Street about twelve years and they only paid their bill once a year. When they sold their grain.

SS: Pretty hard on the grocers.

WM: Well, they bought that way, too. Although they usually put up some security, either their ranch or stock or something, or maybe the local bank put it up. Those days, the money was run by money lenders. For instance here in Lewiston, used to be the big warehouse over here—the Lewiston Mercantile Company and they would sell a store their supplies payable whenever they got any money and from one month to the next, maybe it'd be a year. Maybe they owed $3,000, $4,000 in notes which would be $15,000, $20,000. But people were honest those days, generally. Not like this bunch of skinflints we got now. Hell, right today you can't advance one man out of ten. See your morals of your country is so low today, that you don't trust anybody. Your laws are governed by your law graduates, law school, and there's not much of a law anymore. Nobody honors the law. It's all however the judge rules. And that judge's political. Democrat or Republican.
WM: And you've got into the same old—we don't have liberty or justice any more. No, there's no such a thing.

SS: Do you think there really used to be in early days?

WM: Why, yes. A man was as good as his word; that was the old slogan years and years and years. Do you know Bill Jones?

Yeah.

WM: Yes sir. His word is as good as his gold; is the old saying. "Do you know Smith?" "Yeah, he's an honest man, too. You sell him anything you get your money, too." Not any more. You sell anything, you've got the money if you can catch him! We've got far too much education; college wise, bookwise. It isn't worth that. (Snaps his fingers) Get out here, the average college graduate comes in here and applies for a job, don't pay any attention to him, because he doesn't know anything! All he knows is the books. And you can stack all the books you want to across the front of that building and it don't make this place. I'll take those two or three men out there and you can have all the books you want. And that's the truth. That's why your failures of all these big businesses. W. R. Grant—250 of the biggest stores in the United States—Newbury, Woolworths, Yellowfront. Look at 'em. Roscoe Temple.

SS: What?

WM: Roscoe Temple, big outfit. He had big warehouses in Portland. They're all having plenty of trouble. That's why they have the stock market, they keep building new ones to sell stock. The stock ain't worth anything, when it all levels off, it's all done by executives, stockholders, auditors.

SS: You figure these guys are all in trouble, because they're all experts in—

WM: In books.
SS: Books.

WM: Yeah, that's right. The average person may not believe it, but there it is, right out there in the street.

SS: You can see it. I certainly agree with you.

WM: We're building a place downtown here. We're building this Morgan's Alley. Well, I own two places down there between Third and Fourth facing Main and facing Dean. At one time that was the property. Our welfare and our police department and our fire department and then our commissions—zoning commission—and our county and city, both—zoning commissions and all this environmental stuff, the ecology, the whole business of it has just took business and just crunched it, in favor of labor to be elected. And Health and Welfare; something for nothing. I draw social security myself, I don't get a salary, but the poor bastards that's working for me out here is paying it; you're paying it, too. I'm eighty-one years old and you've got the rest of your life to pay what I spend. Figure it anyway you want to, that's the way it is.

SS: When you say a man's word was as good as his note, as he was known in the early days. Had he done something wrong, something shady, would the word get around fast?

WM: You betcha. You betcha it did. Yessir. His neighbors might be the very ones that turned him in, and the ones that may come after him, too. Yessir! That's the truth. Today, you do something wrong, Oh, well, he's a good Democrat, he didn't mean to. And that's the truth that's the way it is. I can sit here by the hour and tell you people— I've been here a long time; know lots of people, naturally, being in this buiness here fifty-five years, right here, this building. And seven years house-to-house. That picture of the little wagon and the horse. Going from one house to another. Selling coffee and tea.
SS: Will you tell me how you first got into that? Started that?

WM: Well, yeah, I worked - I told you I was foreman for this threshing outfit and I made and saved $250 in one lump sum. That's what I was paid at the end of the deal. Well, when we got through grain hauling, I was tired, I was worn completely out. So my folks was living in Clarkston, so I came down to my mother's place, stayed with her and tried to find work. I couldn't buy a job! I went over to this big building, second house from here and offered to work at the big mercantile house for three months for nothing; no pay, just to get experience. They wouldn't even give me a job for nothing. No pay! Well, went downtown, I give the cashier at the bank two bits if he'd give me any information to get a job. The fellow thought I was crazy. Well, I went on down home and a fellow moved in from Genesee up here next to me, owned one of them tea wagons. So I went over and talked to him, wanted to know what he done and how he done it and all this and that. "Well," he says, "next Monday I'm going to be on my route, why don't you come and ride with me?" "Alright." So next Monday came and we started in down at where is the Lewis-Clark Hotel and we came up Bigger Street used to be C Street; first place we stopped at, he says, "Well, here's a card now this lady might be home, and if she's home she may buy something from you, and I'll go across the street because a woman over here wants a waffle iron." In those days you peddled everything. So I went over, went in behind the house and this woman came to the door and said, "Well hello, Willie. What are you doing here?" She run a little red light house down here on the street, and evidently had a good night, because she wanted to know what I was doing. She says, "Come on in." I knew her, yes, but that's as far as I knew her. She says, "What are you selling?" I says, "Coffee." "Well," she says; I'll buy some cof-
fee." And she told me how much she wanted and some tea and some soap.

I got all through, and I read down this list that was on this card, and I thanked her and went on out to the car. And this fellow said, "Well, did you get an order?" I says, "Yeah." And he read this thing down, and he said, "Did you sell all that stuff?" "Well," I said, "she told me that's what she wanted." And I says, "I know her folks and family, and she'll pay. She's got money." "How do you know?" "Well, she knows me, I can show you if you want to, go back." He says, "Oh, no, that's alright." He set there and figured a little bit, he said, "Do you know how much you made?" Anyhow, he figured up, he says, "You made a little over two and a half." Just something hit me then, I worked for two and a half a day and I was getting fifty cents more than the rest of 'em, 'cause I was the foreman. And I said, "In thirty minutes I make two and a half? I'm not going to look at ten head of horses in the rear end anymore!" So, I started driving the coffee and tea wagon. I never did make two and a half in thirty minutes until the second year. First year I was on the run I was $30.00 a month gross. I had to feed my horse and live myself on $30 a month. The boss from Spokane that I was working with, he wrote me a letter and then he called my mother, says, "If Will will stay another year we'll teach him how to sell. I think he can sell." So she says, "Well, you come down and I'll talk to you." So he came down on the train. He says, "If you'll stay for a year I'll teach you how to sell." So he sent a man down. He was a professional trainer. That's all he ever done, was travel. He had a card in his pocket; man by the name of Jones. He was president of the Grand Union Tea Company. Says, "Give this man a job, any time, anywhere he is in the United States." So he's the one that taught me how to sell- how to run a wagon, a business. I started in,
that was in October, and I started the first of January, really out for business. And I won five contests in the Western United States, selling contests. I won one in Seattle, two in Spokane, one was selling cocoa and chocolate. One was selling bluing, one was selling starch and one was selling rice. Rice sales, I placed second in the nation. They paid my expenses.

SS: What did you have to do?

WM: Well, they give you thirty days; thirty days selling period. They all were the same.

SS: Were you still operating out of a wagon?

WM: Yeah. The wagon in the picture over there.

SS: Well, I'm going to ask you a little more in detail; this company. You started with this guy, and then what? How did you go from there? You had to get a wagon of your own.

WM: Well, no, he tried to fleece me out of $250. He found I had this $250 and so he offered me half interest in the job. I was a dumb kid, I didn't know. So I agreed to pay him $250 for half interest in his job, if I could make $2.50 in thirty minutes. My mother wouldn't go for it, only under conditions she had an attorney. The attorney lived next door to us, so she went over and talked to him; says, "Let me fix it."

So he put the money in escrow over here in the Idaho First National Bank providing that if I was accepted as their agent, to drive this wagon and that horse, he could have the money, but my mother saw to it in the thirty days that I wasn't accepted, so she went and got the money out of the bank. And he skipped the country because he owed Grand Union Tea Company about $750, unbeknownst to me. And that's how I got the job.

SS: How did she fix it that you- that you didn't get approval in a month?

WM: I don't know just what all she told them, but anyhow, I didn't get any
appointment. He beat it.

SS: So then you-

WM: Took over his route.

SS: I notice that Tom Campbell says in that story that she had to push a little bit get you selling in the first place.

WM: He wrote that in. That's right. When I went out the first time on my own on that wagon, my mother went with me. And I was active in the church, I went to Sunday School and went to Endeavor meetings on Wednesdays.

SS: Which church?

WM: First Christian Church over in Clarkston. That's the big one. It used to be the biggest one there. So she went with me and the first person— the first sale we made— I was showing my stuff and she took over and she got the order. That was the first sale that I was credited with at all. That's what he wrote up there.

SS: This fellow that skipped the country, did you go around with him?

WM: Yeah, about a month. Yeah, just about a month. But anyhow it was kinda funny. Well, I'd worked for him that fall from about October and November and December with him. Then when I took over it was sometime in December and I really took over on my own about the first of January. Then the war came along. There is a space in there of about five months— let's back up on that a little bit— well, this contest winning was the latter part of my year's time. The first five months we had a little store right down the street here, first turnoff to the right, where the street bends, right there on the corner. It's about twenty-five foot by fifty. And what stock we had was in there. Well, you see this fellow still had some of his own stuff in there, he had two or three waffle irons and different things that he could sell.
peddle, from house-to-house, along with a few pounds of tea and a few pounds of coffee, but I owned half of it—I'd buy enough stuff during that time.

I don't think he ever paid me anything. I don't remember. He could have paid me something—fifteen or twenty dollars. But when I started out on my own I never entered these contests until May—March, March. I sold starch—come in a little blue box about that big—square—three pounds for thirty cents. I don't know how many boxes I sold. But I'd been in school around here and I'd picked cherries, knew a lot of people, and I just went from one house to the next. I never passed anybody up.

SS: Whether you knew 'em or not.

WM: Yes, whether I knew 'em or not. Because they had a pretty good reputation, Grand Union. They had an awful good reputation on this starch.

So I didn't pass anybody up. I come out a winner and that's when they sent this tramp down here. He was the most polished fellow that I ever saw. He lived in Spokane with the division there for about a year.

And, at that time, in Spokane was the Humbird Lumber Company. Humbird, do you know them?

SS: Oh, yeah.

WM: Mrs. Humbird was a society gal. That's the old lady. Well, he decided to go sell 'em some tea. Well, no damn tramp she's going to let into her place. They had a place up there near Manito there, on that ridge there; one of the four hundreds— they were one of the big ones. He called her up, said he was from New York Grand out of New York. He'd heard she liked tea. He was the goddamndest flim-flammer you ever saw.

He goes down and he rents a suit. He gets one of these surreys with the fringe hanging down from the top and the nicest livery team he could find and a chauffeur, driver from the livery barn. And he made
a date with her to see her. And here he come driving up with this fancy team with a driver; got out; and that's the story. He sold her an ungodly amount of stuff. I forget what it was. But his commission more than paid for the liveryman and the driver, and the rental on the suit. Well he told me all those stories and he had a list of 'em and I found out that they were true. He didn't do anything wrong. He showed her the samples of the tea and instead of selling half a pound or a pound like I did, he sold her the biggest chest. Seventy times as much as I'd sell. That taught me a lesson. And from that story and several others about shoelaces and pencils and picture frames and all that stuff that used to be the go, I decided to learn to sell. Main thing is just show what you got, but be sure you show it in the right angle.

SS: What's the right angle?

WM: Well, mainly the right angle to selling is just know what you got. That's all you have to do. You don't have to be a polished speaker nor nothin'. Selling a package of sunflower seeds tell 'em that come from Kansas, and it was salted in salt brine, roasted in an oven such and such a degree and so and so. That's all you got to know. That's all. There's nothing to selling. Person-to-person. Lot of people think you've got to be a humdinger of a talker. I couldn't talk to myself even! Yet in 1946 - '47, I was head of the Toastmasters. I helped reorganize the Toastmasters Club. I can't talk today. I haven't a voice that's any good at all for conversation. I can't talk to a crowd and make 'em hear me because my voice is on the gutteral side. I know what I'm talking about. I can guestrate and do pretty good, but as far as a voice, like some of these fellows on radio, that takes talent. That's hard to do.
SS: You know, you called this guy a tramp. When you say tramp, what do you mean by that?

WM: He just never had a home nor he never had anywhere to go. He just lived from daylight til dark and he had a hotel room. Only sell enough stuff to make enough money to go to the next town. No ambition.

SS: Did he work for the Grant——

WM: Grand Union Tea Company. He actually didn't work for 'em, he worked on commission for them. He got nothing unless he sold it.

SS: Did he drink heavy?

WM: No. No, no. Nor smoke.

SS: A lot of tramps you know, that was a part of it, I had the idea. For him it was just a kind of a way of living.

WM: Well, put it that way. They called him a tramp; so do I.

SS: Well, I've heard of tramp printers and tramps in a lot of fields.

WM: When I was in the army band I had a fellow played baritone, I played trombone and I got quite well acquainted with him, and he was a professional tramp. He went with the Barnum & Bailey Circus, he played in the band. Just as soon as a act was over, he went downtown, went up all the alleys; every alley in every town pick up all the brass, the copper, all the metals and stuff he carried in gunny sacks, he'd take it down and ship it to his central home somewhere in Tennessee. And then in the fall when the circus was through he'd go down there at that storage that he shipped it to, fix it up, clean it up, sell it. That was his year's wages. And he was the goddamndest baritone player you ever saw. You'd get him out on the street and pretty soon, Wham! you could hear that old baritone singing all the way up there. He just blew the bell of it. And just the minute he'd run out of wind he'd stop. He just couldn't go any further. And then some other
fellow'd take over, maybe a coronet or something. And then pretty
soon you'd hear that old baritone again. Whump! up there she'd come
and he'd just— and in the army band he played the same. Whenever he
was playing the baritone you could hear that old baritone singing a-
above the whole bunch of 'em. Just a rippin' it! I'll never forget that.
And he'd tell me where the towns were and how far they were apart and
the alleys. What he used to do and how people'd chase him off once in
a while.

SS:
Seems like a real hard way to live, I mean, to be on the bum all the
time.
Yes it is.
He enjoyed it.

SS:
Get to see a lot of places.

He never stole anything. He said, "I never did steal anything. If I
found some stuff there, I'd ask 'em."

SS:
This tramp that taught you— did he teach you how to sell a lot instead
of a little?

WM:
Well, yes, yes. He did. He'd build a sale up. He'd build it up. I'll
never forget one time: One day I was up here at Craigmont, and in
those days they used to have wagons out over the country selling Wat-
kins products. Raleigh products. Medicines, patent medicines. This
fellow was named Randolph. So we eat breakfast at the Craigmont Hotel,
he introduced himself and I did. "Oh," he says, "you're the son of a
gun that steals my orders all the time?" He says, "I would like to
see you go with you sometime." I says, "Well, I'm going cut right away
you can ride with me now." "Where you going?" I told him out to some
people name of Randall, says they live out— "Oh, I know, which one
you going to?" "Russ," I said, "Russ Randall's place." "Well, I was
just there last week, you can't sell nothin' there." "Oh, well, it
don't make any difference. I'll go out anyhow." So, we drove out there. Both of 'em was to home, him and her both. I'd sold 'em before two or three times, they bought usually six month's stuff at a time; maybe a year. Says, "Yeh, we been looking for you, we want a box of raisins and a case of salmon," and I don't remember what the rest of the stuff was. Anyhow, she says, "Well, I can't buy any extracts or spices from you. Mr. So-and-so was just here last week and I bought from him."

"Well," I said, "that's fine." I says, "He's just got small bottles," to buy I says, "you'll have more the first of the year anyhow, and I want to show you an orange I got. Orange flavoring." So I got my samples out. I'd learned very well to pour it out with the tip of my finger because of evaporation. If you get it up close to your nose you've got not the true orange flavor. I learned that. She says, "By golly, that's just delicious. Is that extract?" I says, "Why sure it is."

"Well, maybe we'd better. Send me some pepper and some cinnamon and something else, and I'll take a bottle of that orange." She says, "How big does it come in?" "Well," I says, "you been buying quarts of vanilla, I don't think you'd want a quart of this, probably you'd need a pint of lemon and a quart of vanilla and about eight ounces of this orange." She says that that would be alright. Send 'em all three. So I wrote down the quart of vanilla, pint of lemon and this eight ounce bottle of orange. In other words, this was my base to work from, to get the bigger sizes. We came to White Rose soap. Now White Rose soap was white powder in those days, in drugstores, and there was a hell of a price on it, and we had a fairly good price on it, I think it was eighty-five cents a box, a dozen. And she asked me two or three questions how it come and I told her, she says, "I'll take a dozen." I says, "Three dozen in a box." "Well, that's alright." So I wrote down
three dozen. We got outside, this feller had sit out in the car,
"Well," he says, "I'll be goddammed. You lazy bastard you, you never
done one goddammed thing. Now I went out to the car and got my little
bottles, as you call 'em, and I brought 'em in here and I put 'em
away and I went out and got some more stuff, and you sat there and
done nothin', and you sold four times more than I did. You never
done a darn thing!" "Well," I says, "what was I supposed to do?" I
says, "The company ships it to 'em." Well, I guess there isn't any-
thing to do. "White Rose soap comes three dozen- you know damn well
that so." "Now listen, just a minute now, you sure it's not
packed so?" "Well, no, it's probably dozens, but you wanted to sell three
dozen, so you told her it come three dozen in a box." "Well, what
difference does it make? You only get three dozen soap. I don't know
whether they're going to ship all three in one box or three one dozen
boxes." "Alright." All the way back to town.I says, "Well, I tell
you, I'll buy your dinner." "Alright sir, Goddamn you." "I'll buy
your dinner, and White Rose soap comes three dozen to the box!
"MORGAN'S SON: That reminds me of the way I got out of one one time up in
Pierce there then I was selling- the guy says, "Well, how is it packed?"
And I said,"A dozen." He says, "Well, give me half a dozen." So
I sent him a case. Next week when I got up there he says, "Goddamit, how come
you sent me a case of that stuff?" And I said,"I didn't. I thought
you said,' I'll take that- a dozen,'I mean half a dozen . I mean I'll
take a dozen- I mean half a dozen." "No,' I said,' half a dozen." "Oh,"
I said.
This is my son here. He's copied a lot of my sales tactics, plus a
lot of his own. He's about as good a salesman as in this country.

SS: Did you teach him?

WM: Oh, no. He, of course, listened to me around here, but he's way out
above any of 'em. You can't corner him, I don't care what you do. And everybody likes him, hasn't got a enemy in this country.

SS:

How long did it take you to build up the understanding of how to go about selling?

WM:

Just one year. I told you a while ago that I worked for $30.00 a month for the first year. The second year this tramp came down. I was considerable more than $250 a month. I was the highest paid grocerman in this valley. $250 a month.

SS:

And was it all door-to-door, the way you did it?

WM:

That's right. I'd go in and knock at the back door. She says, "Well, I've been expecting you." Says, "What time is it?" "Ten o'clock." "Well, that's my regular time, ain't it?" "Yeah, you said you'd be here at ten." And that was one little thing that I used to use. I'll be here at ten o'clock. Ten o'clock I was there. I didn't give a damn if I killed a man on the way, I was there at ten o'clock! And I used that to sell goods. Never late. Never early.

SS:

How often would you get to a place?

WM:

Oh,— like that?

SS:

Yes.

WM:

Well, I would see to it that I didn't make that statement too often. Maybe I'd pick one place that was hard to get to or easy to get to, drive back, go out of my way just to make that one statement. But it paid off. They'd say that tea man he says he'll be here at ten o'clock he's be here at ten o'clock every time, that's why I buy my tea from him. Sounds silly, I know. It isn't. Salesmanship and it's something that the average person don't want to monkey with; silly. Well, maybe it is, as long as it makes a sale.

SS:

It's probably mostly women that you would sell to.
Right. Well, those days it was all women. Then after I took the job out of Seattle it was men, because they spend more money. A woman don't spend much money, only on herself. I dealt with men then. Then I worked for The Commercial Importing Company out of Seattle, and I'd take orders and ship. That's why this Randall was talking about. Shipped everything.

In other words, at first you were selling right off the wagon, and then you shipped it?

Yeah.

I see. Is that when you started making big money, when you moved into the shipping stuff?

Yeah. Oh, yes.

So that meant you could carry a lot more stuff in the wagon?

I didn't carry anything in the wagon. I just took orders, I just had a order book and sample case.

Samples, that what I mean.

You couldn't carry that stuff.

never did make any money, just acquired more stuff. (Chuckles)

Well, that's what it amounts to. Of course, another thing in selling-

You told me you never made any money til the last one's sold, and there ain't no way you can get rid of all this stuff. (Chuckles)

Well, the selling game is the highest paid profession on earth. There's no game, nothing, no profession of any kind that will equal selling. Doctor, lawyer, you got to sell yourself, I don't give a darn what you're doing or where you're at, you got to sell it. It doesn't make any difference, anybody's profession, if you can't sell it, regardless of how good you are, it isn't a success at all. You can see that every day. If you can sell something, you're on top. These politicians-
nothing but salesmanship. Most of 'em ain't worth a tinker's damn for nothing! Crooked, lying and everything else. They sell it to the public. Get money for it, too!

SS: When you were selling in the wagon, like that, when you were taking stuff around, what would you sell mostly? Was it coffee or tea mainly that people would buy?

WM: That's ... Course, we had starch, as I told you before, and we had cocoa and we had rice and bluing and all those things were tops. Our prices was always higher than anybody else.

SS: Really?

WM: Always.

SS: So, it was quality?

WM: Yeah, well—maybe not. But it was better than this common run—let's put it that way. I didn't give a damn what the other fellow had, I had a way to get around it. I'd figure from the top; quart bottle instead of a two ounce bottle and so on down the line, then I'd work back up. I'd get an order maybe for a two ounce bottle and work up to the bigger one. In those days, of course, you could peddle off the wagon. I didn't do too much peddling, I would make the sale then and then take another order for the next delivery. I'd make two sales at a time; one for now and one for two weeks.

SS: Selling things you didn't have on the wagon at that time?

WM: Sell things I had on the wagon and take an order for what I didn't have for next time. Then when I got there next time, I'd deliver what was ordered plus what more they wanted. Lots of times, maybe she had company, the woman, she'd want another extra five bars of soap, or most anything she forgot to order. So you'd always deliver one order and take another one for the next time. See, I did that in the
store, when I had my store there in town, one of us was out selling all time. We weren't in the store, was out working house-to-house selling anything they wanted, lettuce, brown eggs—brown eggs, I'll never forget that. Some of these women they liked brown eggs; had to be brown shelled—no sir, they tasted better and they were better in every way. So, I'd get the cases of eggs in the store and sort 'em all out; any brown ones I'd set 'em out to one side and get a dime extra or a nickle a dozen. They wanted brown eggs, so they got 'em! Same damned eggs, well, wasn't either probably some different kind of a chicken; had to be. I'll never forget that. One of the fellows that worked with me turned out to be a preacher in the First Christian Church, and he was in charge of national finance for the First Christian Church, and his office was in Kansas City. Orville Peterson. And he just passed away about two months ago. He worked for me from the time my brother left for college until he graduated at Oregon—Eugene—what college is that?

SS: University of Oregon.

WM: Yeah, the University of Oregon. He graduated there. He's a fine fellow. Just about as nice a man as you ever saw. He worked for me for about four years. And when he graduated from college he got a pulpit. Pulpit of his own. In the meantime, he'd worked for me during the summertime, holidays if he got a chance to come back here. Used to kid him a lot. We sold malt and hops during Prohibition days. Get in a fifty gallon barrel of malt and a bale of Yakima hops and I used to make all kinds of money on that stuff. These people'd come in and buy quarts and gallons and five gallon cans; I'd dish it out of these barrels. Had German people that lived up here on Seventh Avenue, used to run this big iron works that's right up the street here, they owned
they thing. Nick's Welding. She made her own beer and used lots of it.
I'd usually try to fix it some way so he'd have to deliver it. And
then I'd kid him about peddling beer! He'd take it all with a grain
of salt. "Well, damn you Bill, it was your turn!" (Chuckles)
He used to tell it around the college, he used to tell where he worked,
what all he done. And some of the girls there in the office; one
day they got a package he'd mailed up here, and we had a - and still
do- soap called Sudsamor, five pound boxes, so he ordered a dozen bars,
puo bars of soap, and he'd send up here to have me send him
this soap, and this time he went to get 'em and somebody'd moved 'em
over to the main office, someway, and he wanted to know why they done
that. "Well," this girl said, "they were leaking." Started to kid
him and he went over there and someway, I don't know how, or just
it all happened, but anyhow they said to kid Orville about his leaking
books, and they wanted to open it up and see if it was books that was
leaking. So he started to open it and something happened that he didn't
and he got home and I'd sent him a quart of malt and a package of hops!
Then I waited a couple of days and sent the soap. 'Course, he just
paid for the soap. He said, "Goddamn you, if I'd ever opened that up in
there, it'd upset that college!" (Chuckles) He wrote me a letter-
and if I was over at my house I'd show you a letter one time he wrote
from Kansas City; he still remembered getting the hops and malt! Oh,
all this business isn't always somber.

SIDE E

WM:

They did the same thing in Clarkston. He worked here, I told you he
was here a month, he was here a month. And he had every route, this
street on a Monday, this street on Tuesday, this street on Wednesday,
this one Thursday, so he could catch the misses, and this one here on
Friday, and on Friday I'd pick up the misses on the two other routes. In other words, he had three routes to start off with; Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. Put 'em in between so if I missed Mrs. Joe Brown on Monday; driving a horse, not like an automobile, you went three blocks over the next Tuesday— the next day. But her business might be valuable enough to go over and pick this up and then come back tomorrow.

SS: Does that mean that you could do the whole town once a week?
WM: Well, it was every two weeks. Every two weeks, the next week was Clarkston and Asotin.

SS: What about the outlying areas? When did you get them?
WM: Well, I never took that on until we went to the Seattle outfit. See this was all local. You couldn't do anything with one horse and a wagon, not over these country roads.

SS: What was your percentage, commission, on the stuff that you sold?
WM: Ohhhh, my highest commission was 25%. Most of it was 20%. But soap and washing powder and starch was only 10(%). Sell $100 of stuff to make ten dollars. And that ain't very much. On a thirty cent box of starch you made three pennies.

SS: Did brand names mean very much to people at that time?
WM: Yeah.

SS: Well, you know, at least I heard, that in the early days, real early days, brand names came in in the late 1800's. They got more and more important as time went on.
WM: Well, that's true.

SS: Wanted one brand instead of another.
WM: Show you what I mean now by that, Arm & Hammer Soda; when I was selling, Arm & Hammer Soda was the soda. The other brand was Cal brand.
The two brands national. So Arm & Hammer bought up Cal brand and they turned it around and one side of the box was Cal brand and the other one was Arm & Hammer. So you put both brands on the shelf, Cal brand and Arm & Hammer. Yeah, that's right. Then a lot of other things was done the same way. Bon Ami- had a picture of a little chicken- "It Hasn't Scratched Yet". Soap powder- cleansing powder. And it says here. the little chicken sitting there, just out of the egg. You don't see that any more. Well, all those things had it's origin along about that time. Just before that there was, Kellogg's Corn Flakes, it was Force- had a man-

SS: Muscles.

WM: Yeah. -faking punches.

SS: Like Wheaties, huh?

WM: Yeah. Taken off the same, just about the same thing. And about the same type of dialogue. So a lot of things that came on the market those days: Ivory Soap, It Floats. I don't know what difference it'd make whether it floats or sinks, but that don't make any difference, it floats.

SS: That was before they had the 99.44% pure.

WM: Yeah, that came later.

SS: Pure, what? (Chuckles)

WM: Yeah. All those catchy things. Well, lots of people made fortunes over labeling. That finally disappeared with the chain stores. Safeway don't have anything, they have their own brands. You just buy Safeway.

SS: It's a little cheaper than to buy their other brands on the shelf.

WM: Of course, they don't handle 'em any more, it's all their own brand. Same way with Albertsons- well, not Albertson, but URM in Spokane.
They got a brand called Western Family. All it is is seconds. Now seconds don't mean it's second grade to a certain extent. You take seconds means that the top grade is sold under other labels. Then the next grade, which is the common grade, garden-run, or whatever you call it, good stuff, but nothing fancy. That's Western Family. They don't sell anything first grade at all. And they are cheaper. But you're also buying cheaper merchandise.

SS: What were you telling me about the women— that you spoke to? Did they depend on you for information on what was good?

WM: Yes, a lot of times, yes, you bet. Yeah, Yessir. Usually say, "Well, call her up. You know Mrs. Brown down here on Third." I had to be awful careful on that though, she might be a different church member! I had to know their religion, too. You darn right, kinda touchy. If they were Catholic, I'd better find it out.

SS: Find another Catholic for them to talk to.

WM: Course, I sold 'em all. If I'd get into a Catholic settlement, I'd name all the Catholics I knew, never mention the others, and so on, down the line. I got down one time after World War I, I was overseas in the army and I come back and I learned quite a little German and quite a little French, I was with an interpreter all time and I got down here to La Crosse and Endicott; Russian-German settlement. I sold a few bills of groceries speaking German. Just conversation German, phrase German. Dumb cluck, or something like that or Dummcluck or something like that, you know. (counts to six in German)

I could talk that way, but I couldn't carry on a conversation. They'd call from one place to another, "Say, this man selling coffee, he's alright. He talk German." Yah, I got orders that way, too. Sounds funny but that's the way people are.
SS: Makes sense to me though.

WM: I'd go down there and I'd say—maybe I'd speak French
"What time is it?" And then turn around and say speak
in German. And they get quite a kick out of it. And all those things
count. It's just something—well, you don't learn in school. You
just don't!

SS: What about the suspiciousness that people might have for strangers?

WM: Well, that is true, and they were, too. A good bill of goods I sold
up here at the little town of Gifford; Gifford, Idaho. Maybe you know
the people, I don't know. Summers. There was two brothers, Lee and
Charlie. Well Charlie Summers and his wife always bought an order
every year from me, groceries; like fifty pounds of peanut butter and
whatnot. Well, Lee Summers was his brother. They were just as oppo-
site as two ends of a stick. He made the threats that if a peddler
ever came on his place he'd run him off with a pitchfork. So I came
and sold Charlie his groceries. I said, "You have a brother, Lee."
"Oh, you don't want to see him. Oh, no, he's death on peddlers."
"What do you mean?" "Oh, no, don't go over there, you'll get in trouble.
He run a man off last week or last month." I just made up my mind,
the hell I won't! He lived down the road about, ohh, I guess, a mile
and a half. I went right down there. It was quite a hill, up to his
house, and then it set on a flat up there, and it was just about
just about dinnertime. I drove up there and he was fixing a tire on
his car. I said, "What's the matter? Little hard luck?" Oh, yeah, he
can't get this tire fixed. I said, "Let me see it. What's the matter?"
I says, "I got some good tire equipment, I can fix it." And, "Let's
see it." I says, "You test this? Know where the leak is?" "Well, I
want it filled about that full of water. Think it's there." "You got a tub?
find out where the leaks at."
I got a good pump out here. We'll find out where these leaks are." I said, "Get me some water in the tub, I'll fix your tire." I didn't tell him who I was or nothing. So, he says, "Well, if you think you can fix it, alright." So he went in and got a tub and we filled it full of water, and I pumped it up. I says, "See what I told you, there's the leak over here. See it?" I used a pump, see. I took it and marked it, I says, "There's your leak. And you got one here, too, but you fixed that." So I took it out, wiped it, and those days we used a flat piece of iron, kind of that way, so you put gasoline in it, and light it; you'd heat that hot and put that stick- weld that- cement it on there. So I fixed that patch and I went back to where he was working, and I said, "You didn't do a very good job of that. I better do that over." So I done it over and I says, "Now, I think that's cool enough; let's see if it leaks." So I pumped it up, and no not a spot. I says, "Now, let's look in your tire, what caused that leak?" I around in there and sure enough that had a been a nail in there, but it'd been pulled out. I said, "I got some glue that I'll put on top and poke it in that hole the best I can. But," I says, "the first time you're in town you'd better get this hole welded up. This patch'll probably last you, but it might not." So we put the tire on his car; took the jack off. "Well," he said, "I'm glad you come along." I said, "You got an extra?" "It's flat too." I says, "Get it out here, let's fix it up." So, he says, "By gosh, I'll just take you up on that." So he got this extra tire and got it out there and I run it through the water tub process, fixed it all up. He says, "Who are you?" "Oh," I says, "I'm just a damn coffee peddler. Thought I'd stop by here, and I'd like to eat dinner with you. I'll pay you for your dinner." That's one thing I always did,
I never bummed a meal in my life. I says, "I want to pay you for it, understand that.. I ain't sponging on nobody." "Well, you're certainly welcome. Welcome for fixing that tire." I says, "That has nothing to do with it. This is different, this is my meal." So, we ate dinner. During the conversation, he wasn't so bad, course, I had knocked him clear down on the floor by fixing that tire. He said he had no use for peddlers, and I says, "I don't blame you, I don't either. These goddamn peddlers, you can't trust any of 'em. But, I said, "As far as I'm concerned, I don't consider myself a peddler because I don't peddle anything off my car, I ship it to you." I says, "Lee," I called him by his first name, I says, "Lee, I checked you at the bank. You got a good reputation. So, I'll tell you what I'll do, Charlie has bought from us, your brother." "Yeah, I know, he buys from other peddlers." "Well, he's smart enough to know what he's doing. I'll ship you this stuff and you send me a check and if it's like I tell you, if it isn't here's my phone number and here's where I live in Clarkston. You call me up and I'll come and get it. You don't have to keep it." "Well, by God, you seem to be a pretty fair sort of a fellow, I'll just try you out once. I've never done this before." So he give me a nice little order- wasn't a big one. I shipped it to him. And he up thanking me for the tire. I says, "Nooo, you don't thank me for that. I'll do that for anybody. I hate to see a man with a car that can't run it." You know, he bought from me from there on. I was the only one he ever bought from. Actually it was the goddamn tire deal that put it over. I can see myself yet fixing that damn tub and that water, but if I hadn't a got that tub out, I'd a probably not got to first base. The hole he was fixing was about that far away and bubbles coming up over here.
But the way that you told him that you don't like peddlers either, that was a good, probably a good move, too, to get on his side.

Well, I've had a lot of funny experiences; lots of 'em. I can set here all afternoon. One of the best experiences I ever had was down here at Pomeroy; man the name of Smith. He run a big farm; had about twelve hundred acres. Those were the days that you had a permit to buy liquor, and he drank lots of whiskey. All his crew did. So, in the afternoon- and he'd built a gate, one of these fancy gates that you had to pull the thing down and it'd open, and when you got through you'd get a hold of the handle on the other side and pull it and it'd shut; cost him some money. Well, I went through that thing, I knew how to do it, so I went through it fine. Tickled me to death to get through one of them things, the first one I ever went through. I'd saw 'em work, but never went through one. When I got up to his house, his house set- there was a swale, full of water and they'd filled it up with straw - or manure, and over here was a barn and over here was the house, and this spot out here was a knoll, and he kept his car there because it was free from being wet, you know, nasty. So, I thought, well, I'll go through this swale to get over on that knoll. So, I went out and walked across this thing and I walked over there and it sounded alright; I drove my car and down she went! Down in the mud clear down. Well, the men- there was six nine-horse teams plowing in the field next door, and they were just unhitching. So, I waited til they come and I flagged down a team of horses. He had the eveners there and they hooked onto my car and pulled it on out and over onto this knoll. His help did. I offered to pay them and they wouldn't take any money. And that's one thing they used to do; if you done a man an accommodation, usually they didn't take any money for
it. I talked to 'em and they put the horses away and here come Smith, with a load of whiskey, and he was about half shot. His head foreman was with him and he was about half shot, and the woman cook, she wasn't quite so bad, but she was bad. So June came up to this gate—Smith—and he was drunk enough that he was bragging about what a fine deal it was and he was showing this foreman of his how to do it. And he had a Franklin air-cooled automobile, cost in those days $4,000, and that's an expensive car them days. He reached up there as he was going along and for some reason it caught, or he didn't get ahold of it just right, and pulled this down and he was trying to pull this, forgot about the car going forward, and it went right through that gate; just smashed it all to hell! Oh, God, his foreman kidded him and laughed, and the more he laughed the more mad this fellow got. Didn't hurt the car a bit, never broke the windshield, never done a darn thing to it, never scratched it. So, he felt pretty good about that, he could build another gate, but he couldn't buy another automobile. So he drove down to the house, coming this way, and there was my car setting over on this knoll. So this goddamn foreman, he says, "Oh, Smith, your god-damned old Franklin, why this damned old cattle truck here, why it's no good. I'll bet you that Ford's a better car than this one. It got through this mudhole and drove over there. It drove right through there." It was just like sticking him with a needle. He says, "This car'll go anywhere where a Ford will." Down he went! Took six head of horses to pull that damn Franklin—they weighed 4,000 pounds, and that thing was clear into the running boards in mud. It was a mess. It took six head of horses. They had to go harness up six head of horses and get the eveners off the plows to pull it out.

SS: Sounds like he had a pretty rough day for himself!
Well, I want to tell you something— I wasn't popular, no way. And he was another one of these fellers that wouldn't have anything to do with a peddler. But I was in the house, so cook introduced me to him, said, "This man here, Mr. so-and-so." I said, "Mr. Smith, I'd like to arrange to stay overnight with you, and I'll pay for my meals and my lodging. Same price I'd pay Frank Henley that runs Pomeroy Hotel." I was smart enough now to call a man by his first name, but full name, if you can. Frank Henley, his father was a grainbuyer, but Frank, his son, run the hotel there. I says, "Whatever Frank charges for his rooms and meals, I'll pay you." "Well," he says, "I never turned a man down in my life. I guess it's alright. What's your business?" "Oh," I says, "I sell stuff a little bit, that has nothing to do with this." "Well," he says, dinner's about ready, so come on set down with us." And, I said, "I sell groceries house-to-house." Well, he set me at the end of the table. The crew set here, and the set down here. Well, there was about four feet difference between the vegetables and everything you had to eat and I had nothing in front of my place, just a plate. Well, they had just about finished dinner before they started passing me anything. I didn't say a word, just set there, took it. They finally passed me what was left of each plate. I guess he'd told 'em to do that, I don't know. Anyhow, I ate the dinner, as if nothing had happened. Got up, picked up the paper, they had a paper out of Spokane, went over in the corner and sat down. So they were all drinking and they passed the whiskey around to these fellows that was driving the plows and they all got to feeling pretty good, and they decided to have a poker game. And they set down— oh, I guess the poker game had gone on at least an hour, well this Smith turned around, he said, "Well, peddler, whatever your name is," he says, "why don't you join us?" I says, "I don't know
anything about poker; playing cards," I says, "I don't play cards." 
"You got any money?" I says, "Oh, not very much, like you have.
I probably got, oh, maybe, a hundred dollars." And I knew they didn't
have much more than that; all of them. He says, "You got a hundred
dollars with you?" "Well," I says, "when you're paying your expenses
like I do; meals and lodging over the country, you got to keep pretty
much cash on hand." "What do you sell anyhow?" I says, "Coffee and
tea and syrup and baking powder stuff that you use here." "Well, I
never bought from no peddler in my life." I says, "Well, don't blame
you. But," I says, "I stopped at the bank this afternoon and found out
that Hugh Smith is pretty well thought of around this territory. You
have about 1,200 acres of land here." "What did you do that for?" I
says, "Well, Mr. Shaw, John Shaw, from Seattle is my boss and he hired
me to go out here and I just hunt out the good ones because
our sales policies are different than any you ever heard." I says,
"If I did sell you a bill of groceries I wouldn't send it COD, like
you have to pay these other peddlers. I just ship it to you. Open
bill of lading. And, if it don't suit you, here's my address, phone
number and I live in Clarkston; I'll come and get it." "Well," he
says, "you been selling lately?" I says, "Well, just since the first
of the year. I just got out of the army; I was overseas in Germany."
"You in the army?" I told him the regiment, where I'd been. I didn't
tell him that I'd played poker in the army all the time! I played
day and night. I had enough money to go to southern France. I was
down on the Riviera, I was in the casino at Monte Carlo all on
my own money and I'd got transferred into the band the last month of
the war, because I loaned the lieutenant of the band poker money. And
he transferred me into the band.
SS: Was that his way of paying you back?

WM: Well, partially, yes. But I was in the infantry before that at Chateau-Thierry but I got transferred in the band and the first time I played, they give me a trombone, got me out in the woods there and handed me some of these army pieces that is hard to play, like Bombasto.

SS: Like what?

WM: Bombasto and Under the Double Eagle and the Stars and Stripes Forever, and all those army pieces.

SS: Had you played before? The trombone?

WM: Oh, yes, I played in the Lewiston band. Well, I didn't make a very good impression, I didn't play too good, but anyhow, since I'd been transferred they didn't bother sending me back, disqualifying me, so I stayed with the army band. I told him about it. "Well, come on and play." I says, "I don't know how to play poker like you fellas do. Hell, you know how to play poker." I called him by his first name, I says, "June, you know over in Lewiston here, you're kind of feared over there." He'd been playing some big stuff over here in Lewiston. I found that out in Pomeroy. And I called him by name. I said, "You got kind of a bad name over there in Lewiston, some of the boys are afraid of you." That's like putting soap on a fellow, that's soaping him up pretty much. "Well," he says, "you're not a bad fella. I don't know who in the hell you are, but, by God, you don't seem to be so bad. Come on and play with us." "Well, I got to have money left and I might lose some. I'll tell you what I'll do, whatever I've got in my pock- ket, I'll put up half of it, I'll have to keep the rest for meals."

Still on that meal and lodging business. I figured he wouldn't charge me anything and he didn't either, til the next morning. Well, I got into this poker game, and I'd ask the silliest questions; "I got three
of one color and two of the other; that mean anything?"

WM: Wound up, I had the money; $750! Well, the cook come in and said, "You men got to work, this got to be called off." So she made 'em quit. He give me a room upstairs and I heard 'em talking that they were gonna take that money away from me. So this woman says, "You leave that fellow alone. He's a big fellow and he's not such a dumbbell as you might think he is. I've been watching him and he's no dumbbell. You better leave him alone. You're all drunk and he's not. I'll bet you he could whip the whole bunch of you, if he had to. He's right out of the army, too, where they kill people. You leave him alone til in the morning." So they agreed to it. Thank God for that, because I'd taken chairs and barricaded the door. Well, this is the best bluff I ever played in poker. I came down the next morning and they were just settin' down to breakfast. I didn't sit down. I said, "Howdy," I said, "I want to kind of straighten this game up last night. I got into a game here and maybe I shouldn't have." I says, "I got more money than I should have here," I says, "I'm gonna give it back. I want to know you fellas how much you lost." I says, "You man over there, I don't know your name, how much did you lose last night?" "Well," he said, "I lost about thirty-five dollars." Counted out thirty-five dollars and laid it down there. And I says, "How much did you lose?" About the third time, this Smith was sitting on the end there, he jumped up, "No Goddamn peddler can come in here and make fun of me!" I says, "I'm not; haven't even spoke to you, I haven't even spoke to you, what did I say?" "Well, you didn't say nothing, but you're giving this money back to these people. That ain't the way you play poker." "Well," I says, "I don't know as to that, but
I didn't win it fair." "Well," he said, "why didn't you?" I says, "Because you was all drunk and I wasn't. I wasn't drunk; I knew what I was doing." "Well, you said you didn't know how to play poker."

"Well, I don't, not with you. You're supposed to be one of the best poker players in this country. I wouldn't try to play against you, only knowing the circumstances." I said, "I've played a little poker in the army (blast of noise- telephone, etc.) yes, just dollar and a quarter and dollar." He says, "Sit down, I want to talk to this man." So I set down had the money and everything right there. He turned to this fella, "How much did you lose last night?"

"Well," he says, "something, I don't know, a hundred and some dollars—over a hundred." He said, "Well, I guess I'm the biggest loser, apparently, and he asked each one of them how much they lost. "You'll get all this back next payday, I'll pay you, not that peddler. I'm not going to let him come in my house and make fun of me." He says, "Kid, you put that back in your pocket and you shut up, don't tell anybody either what happened." "So I put it back in my pocket."

Gosh darn right I was tickled to death. That's the best bluff I ever made in poker. If I've told that once I've told that a hundred times and then some.

Do you think that if you hadn't done that, that they would have taken it from you? Taken the money back?

No, no, I don't think they would have. But he says, "You stay here, as soon as I get the boys out on the plows, I want to talk to you."

He gave me an order; the biggest order that I ever got in Garfield County. It took six head of horses on a wagon to haul it out from Pomeroy.

I don't believe a word of it!

Yes, you do. You know June Smith, don't you?

Yeah.
That's who I'm talking about. You know his brother, too, don't you?

SE: What?

WM: You know Ed too, don't you?

SE: Yeah.

WM: Well, I laugh about that yet, because it's just one thing that happened. He gave me an order for 1/4 of a gallon... (lots of interference)

He gave you an order for what?

SS: He gave you an order for what?

WM: Well, we sold barrels- fifty gallon barrels of syrup- they made syrup in Seattle. I sold him a fifty gallon barrel of syrup, also sold one to Bill Bozart out here at Culdesac, too. Three or four orders for barrels of syrup. You don't hear of anything like that now.

SS: I wonder what made him give you such a big order.

WM: Egotistical. I told him he was a feared man in Lewiston, playing poker, that's one thing. Another thing, I said I'd went to the bank. I did that, and he was rated very good; that I had to do. And several other things. He was one of these fellows that wasn't to be outdone, and he was making good money. He was making big money at that time. Wheat got up to about two and a half a bushel that year.

SS: About what year was that?

WM: Well, that was in 1919, and then '20 was the crash; next year, and he went with it. He went with it, too, in '21. Lost his farm. Because he was a good spender.

SS: That's a hell of a good story.

WM: Well, it's a fact, absolutely. You don't need to take my word for it. There's a man in there, he'll vouch for it. I've had some funny things happen. That was one of 'em. One more thing then I'll quit.

Down at Dodge Service Station- you know where Dodge is? The other
side of Pomeroy.

SS: Yeah.

WM: Well, old man Dodge built that big house right on the highway there; left hand side. He run a lot of sheep. So, it was about eleven o'clock in the morning; wind ablowin', colder than the devil and he was outside between the house and the highway digging a ditch to buy some water pipe and connect up his house. Well, I come in there, told him what I was doing- and the funny part of it was, he liked whiskey, oh, boy, and peddlers come in there and sold him ten cases of whiskey, and they delivered it to him right out of their car and they had him sample it. When they opened the trunk of the car, and they knew where these bottles were, and they'd give him a bottle right out of the case and open another case and give him another one. They did give him whiskey, but all the rest was tea. So I told him I was selling whiskey. He says, "You goddamn son of a bitch, you, rub it in!" I says, "Well, I'm not that kind." I told him who I was and I said I'd like to stay for dinner. "Well, ain't you got anything to drink with you?" I says, "I got some Jamaica Ginger." "You got some Jamaica Ginger with you?" "I can't sell it to you though." "Well, why?" "Well," I says, "it's 96% alcohol." "You mean Jamaica Ginger's 96% alcohol?" "Yes. But I can't sell it to you. You're not going to buy it from me." "Well," he says, "I want to get some." "Well, I can ship you an order of groceries. If you want this Jamaica Ginger for your horses, that's alright." "How much can I buy?" I says, "I'll sell you a gallon." "Well, come on in the house. Where's your sample of that Jamaica Ginger?" Well, I had a case, had tubes about that long, about that big Jamaica Ginger, probably a good half ounce. Well, they're probably ounce tubes. And I brought the sample case in and he says, "Let's
see it.' I said, "Now, you can't drink that, that's not for drinks, that's Jamaica Ginger; hot, burn you." "I can drink anything, gasoline, coal oil, or you just name it." "Well," I says, "You can't drink that."

By that time he picked that tube out there and he just pulled the cork and down it went. And I thought I'd killed a man. Jesus Christ, Almighty, he coughed. He run over and he grabbed a dipper and he must have drank five or six dippers of water, and he gagged and he struggled and he held onto the sink. It just burned the hell out of him. Did you ever taste Jamaica Ginger?

SS: No.

WM: Well, pure alcohol is 100—well pure alcohol is 200—but as we know it it's 100. Well, he coughed and he spit and the tears run out of his eyes. He finally leaned over against the wall and that water had diluted that ginger. Pretty soon he says, "Young man, I've a damn good notion to give you a whipping." I says, "Now, in the first place you can't do it. Nobody ever gave me a whipping yet. And you're not about to now. But let's forget that now. I won't fight you under no consideration. I told you that you couldn't drink that. I told you to leave it alone. Isn't that right?" "Well, yes, I guess you was right."

"Well, okay, I guess it was my fault." So, we had dinner. After dinner he give me a hell of a good order, including the gallon of Jamaica Ginger. And I says, "Now, goddamn you, don't you try to use that straight." He says, "No, no. I learnt that a little bit ago. I'll take your word for it."

SS: What was it generally used for? Jamaica Ginger.

WM: Well, I never did find out. Actually, I never did know what that was for. I do know that they use it in moonshine, because it had a whiskey color. I had several customers bought gallons. One of 'em was a
bachelor up here at Gifford. Lived out there by John Black's place. Right behind it there and he bought a gallon every year and he made moonshine. And I don't suppose that in a gallon of moonshine, I don't suppose he used over one ounce, maybe, or maybe two. But that stuff is hot. And I was in Jamaica three years ago and I wanted to see some Jamaica Ginger. I rode out on that little narrow gauge railroad from—what's the bay there?

SS: Kingston? Kingston is the main city.

WM: That's Kingston. No, Kingston's way down east. You land at the bay. What's that bay? Where all the airplanes land. Anyhow, the railroad runs from this bay— not Mobile Bay— well, anyhow from the bay up to , where they have these bauxite factories, and the biggest supply of bauxite in the world is there in Jamaica. And that's where most all our aluminum comes from. I think about 75% of it comes out of Jamaica. Well, I rode out on that train and the big rum factory—Jamaica rum— we went into the factory that makes that. So they give me a sample of pure rum; don't try it! They give us a drop on a little— I don't know what it was now, kind of a little spoonish deal, just one drop. "Now," he says, "don't try to swallow it, just put it under your jaw, you'll get the flavor." I took that one drop that was in there and just that quick, completely numb. I couldn't feel nothing, the whole side of my face. I never saw anything like that! I've often wondered what would happen if a man would take a swallow of that, musta killed him.

SS: Your friend down at Pomeroy, he would have done it probably if you give him the chance.

WM: Well, if you give him the chance, he would have. The damn fool!

SS: There's one thing I want to ask you. When you were talking about going
and staying overnight with people and that kind of thing. Did that really help bring about friendships with people? They were tickled to death to talk to me. Everywhere I went, 'Bill Morgan, I heard about you down at so-and-so's place. Come on in.' No trouble. I lived in the country. I never went to town maybe once in two or three weeks. And I never paid for any meals or room, either.

They wouldn't take it, eh?

Uh-huh, that's right. Cause I was a good conversationalist. I played football here in high school and basketball and baseball, and I knew the different kinds of horses they worked, whether they were Clydesdales or Percherons or Shires or cayuses or whatever they might be. I knew the different kinds of grain, "Turkey Red." Told 'em about working on the threshing outfit. And how I hated to work in this Red Russian because it made you itch; the skin. I could talk with anybody on the farms, you see. And then I had lots of gadgets I used to do, just little silly things. I had a tube about that long filled with syrup; Crystal White Syrup, clear, and you leave an air space about that far, you know on the top, turn it upside down and that bubble'd go up like a balloon. You've done that probably. Little kids around, I'd say, "Come over here, Sonny, I'll show you something. Want to see a balloon go up?" And I'd turn it up quick, see that balloon shape, teardrop, you know, go to the top. Kids'd get the biggest kick out of that. Just silly little things. And you add all that together—and I never did have any trouble, I never did. Never was turned out. Never did have any trouble. Big orders; lots of big ones, because neighbors had bought from me the year before, and liked the soap and starch. Again, salesmanship is one of the best professions on earth if you use it right.
SS: What kind of shape were most of the families in at that time, like the early '20's?

WM: Terrible. You said most of 'em, didn't you?

SS: Most of 'em.

WM: Terrible. No toilets, no running water, lots of times. No sanitation. I'd hate to go back to those days. There was lots of good ones, too. Not percentage wise. Lots of nice big homes. Even those big homes weren't modern. Take the big house over at Matt Beal's place right next to June Smith's; ten rooms, big ones; three stories, but no accommodations in it. No heat upstairs. I'd hate to have to go back.

SS: Was it hard on families, do you think? Comfortable in houses then?

WM: They didn't know any different. They lived that way, most of 'em. They didn't know what luxury was, like we live now. They just didn't. They ate their meals. And one of the directors of the Farmers State Bank in Pomeroy never had a table nor a chair. I ate there.

SS: How'd they eat?

WM: Apple boxes. Just ordinary wooden boxes they got from stores. And they had a couple or three boards laid on some boxes for a table. And yet he was a director in an American bank. That's Black. He had four sons and all graduated from Washington State University. They bached all of 'em. You can go look at their records. But their home was something awful.

SS: What about the women? Was it hard on their wives?

WM: Why sure. They lived—seemed to live just as good or better than any of the modern ones. Here's Mrs. Brucheau who is in Clarkston now and she's 83— I'm 81— and I called on her when she was on the farm. sold her groceries. Husband got killed in a horse killed him some way. And she's a good healthy woman right now. She's 85. My daughter
and her children, her two daughters was raised right along with Mrs. Brucheau next door, and they call her Grandma. Just part of the family. Grandma. Every time we have a birthday or Christmas, New Year's why Grandma is always invited. She's related to half of that Garfield County over there. Grand person, and she's had a hard time, too in the early days. No, you take the way we used to live up here at Culdesac. In a place there one day where—

SS: room in the house.

WM: Oh, yeah, no floor in it. Just dirt floor. It was in the kitchen and it had settled down, they had swept it, this woman had swept out in front of the stove til it was about eighteen inches lower than the sills. Just a hole in the ground. And she'd poured water in there and grease and stuff until that was solid, just a solid cake of dirt, but it was smooth. And she'd step down in that hole to cook. You wouldn't believe that. The name's Shoemaker. George Shoemaker. They live about a mile and a half this side of the Mission up here. And you wouldn't believe those things. But I saw it. I was in the kitchen myself. I sold 'em a bill of goods for their threshing outfit. Yessir. But he was one of these lower-type Germans and believed nothing but money. Possessions. His family—

SS: Nothing.

WM: But his son is head of the trucking outfit down here; Star-Bacon.

SS: Learn anything?

WM: No, I can tell you a lot of stuff. I went house-to-house here for seven years. I learned stuff. I'll tell you.

SS: Was it much different in the city of Lewiston than it was out in the country? I mean as far as the way people were living?

WM: Oh, yes. Yeah, they in town here were pretty much— not modernized like
we are now, but then, they had nice places. Heat in one or two rooms and heaters and so on. Hot water. They were pretty nice in town. You lived in town you were called city dudes. They live in the city. They were supposed better than the old poor farmers.

SS: That's what I heard. I heard they acted like they were, too.

WM: That's right.

SS: They said the country people were pumpkin rollers and you know, hicks and smelled bad and all that.

WM: That's true. Out there.

SS: They didn't have water- like hot water.

WM: That's right. The ones in town, they didn't have too much either, but they did dress better, lots better. And they had jobs and they had a salary coming in, maybe a little one every month. But they didn't actually live longer. And they didn't enjoy themselves any more than these farmers did. 'Cause they'd go out hunting, fishing things like that. And the meals were pretty much wholesome. They'd kill a beef; knew how to take care of it. Smoke it, dry it. My folks used to kill three or four hogs at a time. Grind the meat up into sausage. My mother used to stay two to three days at a time cooking sausage, frying sausage on the stove, put it in the five gallon stone crocks, covered with grease, sealed. Keep just as nice as a refrigerator.

SS: How good was the food then when you were at these places in the country?

WM: Generally good. Generally good. Fried potatoes, carrots, parsnips, turnips, corn; dried corn, canned fruit. Lots of canned fruit. Hell, they canned then way more than they do now. People too damn lazy now! And the young girls, they learned to cook. These young girls now between eighteen and thirty; what do they know? They don't know anything!

SS: Would you say the cooking was better in the country than it was in the
city?

WM: Yeah.

SS: Better food?

WM: Yeah. Yessir! Now like old country fried chicken, you've heard of that. Contry gravy. Sure. Country sausage. Sure. I was raised on a farm. We had lots of sausage. Lots of meat. We'd get out meat—

we'd usually wait til the first little freeze and we'd kill a beef.

Divide it up with the neighbors. Maybe three of the neighbors come in and they'd each take a quarter; each one of 'em. Then they'd kill one and we'd go over there and get a quarter.

SS: Always a quarter at a time?

WM: Yeah, that's right. Didn't want it to spoil. Wanted fresh beef. You had to work more. You had to travel more. You had to spend more time. But you had good meat. Maybe better than what you're getting right now. Grain fed, usually. I think we had, actually, better food.

SS: You were talking about the difference between country and town—city people. Do you think country people felt real aware of that when they came into Lewiston. They felt out of place?

WM: Yes, I think so to a certain extent, yes. I did. Because my city cousins were stuck up— they weren't, they were just as common as us. But they didn't appear so. Course, we lived, part of it in town and part of it in the country. Lived in both places at once. Farmed outside and lived in town. As I told you before my dad was a stock buyer, so we moved to town in the wintertime, provided we got rid of our stock. Some times we'd leave them on the ranch and Dad'd go out every day and take care of 'em; or every other day. Maybe go out and stay three or four days at the ranchhouse.

SS: Why did you live in town? What made it more convenient to live in
Did she get a chance to socialize in town when she was here?

Not too much. After we got into town complications set in between her and Dad. They finally separated. No particular reason—one reason was, he got drinking too much, one thing. And just one thing let on to another. They finally decided to separate. No particular reason why, as near as I can ever find out; other than they just didn't like each other after while. I was about sixteen.

Did he go back out to the farm?

Me?

Did he, your father?

The sad part of it was, he sold the ranch, his part of it, half of it and got the money, and whether he broke or whatever happened to him, nobody knows. I never did. He left town, and never heard from him since. So us kids had it pretty tough for about four years. Real tough.

Were you the oldest?

Yeah.

So the other brothers were younger than you?

Yeah. They were all four in here at one time. Altogether in this business. My youngest brother run the pickle plant; Morgan Pickle and Packing Plant.

Well at that time did your work support your brothers at all?

Not very much. They each one his own way, and he made his money. The only time that I did help my third brother was—this is quite a story. My second brother had a lot of friends, and he worked for one of 'em out here in the Lewiston Orchards. And beans were quite a thing in
this country then. So my brother wanted to go to college, so this fellow says, "Well, if you want to raise a crop of beans, maybe you can sell it for enough to go to college." So he gave him his plow and horses and everything. My brother was working for him on the ranch. "And as soon as you get through with the farm work for me, you take the team and go out and plow your yard and your garden or acreage and plant your beans." Which he did. Twenty acres. He harvested 'em just as soon as they were possible to be harvested. Brought 'em down here to this mill where Sambo's is now, and sold 'em there for $8.50 a hundred. The next week beans dropped and never did stop dropping, went clear down to three and four dollars. But he got his eight and a half and it put him through two years of WSU. Two years. Had enough money to carry him through school two years. And then all of us always worked all summer in the farms, farm threshing and everything else. All hard labor. All four brothers.

SS: Were they working in those years after your father was gone? Were they working all that time?

WM: No, they was going to school, stayed with Mother. In the summertime, yes, they worked hard. One of 'em was working on the pipeline, Asotin to Clarkston, fell off of that and got hurt, He never did recover any damage. But, my second brother he had this money from the beans and then he worked out in the harvest field, and picked cherries. There used to be a big job in this territory picking cherries. And us boys had our places where we picked cherries and they always give us our job back every year, just us four. I, at that time was selling so I didn't get to pick much; in the evenings or Sundays or something. My second brother, Leo, he was a partner with me here afterwards. They all come in with me after I started this place. My second brother, Leo,
was the top man at WSU graduation. You can check his records there, if you want to, L. J. Morgan. He got an offer of deanship at the Ellensburg Normal. He didn't take it; he came with me. And my third brother; I started to tell you, he worked in the store this way. He didn't have any money and he wanted to go to school, so he stayed out of school one year, and he worked different places, made all the money he could, but he came with me and worked at the store. And I told him "If you work for me for nothing, I'll give you room and board and if the store don't make it, I'll go out and work, hand labor, and pay your bill in college." So he graduated. That was the deal. if I couldn't make enough money in the store to pay his way through college, I would go out and work, hand labor, any labor I could get, to pay his way through college.

SS: Did you feel you needed him that bad, or did you just want to help him?
WM: Neither him nor I would ever take a nickle out of that store. All the assets were left there. If we wanted a loaf of bread, we'd take it out of the money, if we had any, and paid for that. He done the same thing. He stayed out a year. But when the time come to go to college, that store was making all kinds of money. That's why both of them quit teaching and came with me. Morgan Brothers, Inc. The fourth brother graduated from high school; he didn't go to college. He started in working for me, then he went up and run our store at Kendrick. Stayed there a year; wanted to come back to town, so I gave him the pickle plant. Morgan Pickle and Packing Plant. And he run that thing for the only job he ever had, the pickle plant.

SS: When did you first start a store? Was it at that time you stopped doing the selling from Seattle?
WM: Yeah.
SS: What was the idea there? Did you figure that you were better—?

WM: Well, wheat went down from two and a half to two bits a bushel. You couldn't sell those farmers anything. Couldn't even give it to 'em. And our benefactor that had all this land out here and furnished the team and the horses for my brother to raise the beans, lost everything he had, and he came down, says, "Bill, I hate to crawl on my hands and knees; give me a job." I never had a cent to speak of, but he'd lost everything. So he went to work for me in the grocery store. And two years before he was worth at that time possibly over $50,000. In two years' time it had wiped him out. Course, that was the time when all these farmers got wiped out. Lots of 'em. This fellow up here Webb Ridge, Parrish, had a farm out there that was worth $50,000 and he sold it for more than that and he bought— they sold him a flour mill at Kendrick, and he lost that, and his entire money, I think he's on welfare right now. That's just one, there's hundreds of 'em.

SS: Did it all happen that fast, '20 and '21— in two years?

WM: Yessir. Every bit of it.

SS: Was it beans and everything else that all went down at once?

WM: Sure. Who had anything to buy it with? Sure. Peas: dollar and a half, two dollars a hundred pounds; green beans— Dry beans. They got three dollars and a quarter, two eighty-five, they thought they had a mint. When Bob Mc Gregor was appointed by President Roosevelt to represent the pea growers in the North Pacific, he went back to Washington, D.C. and said they needed five dollars and eighty-five cents a hundred for their peas. And everybody that was back there, they didn't know a pea from a rock. Bob Mc Gregor from Lewiston, Idaho, place is right at the end of this street, the Mc Gregor Warehouse, and they owned a lot of land, all up in the upper country. And he
went back and represented the pea growers, and those college professors and they give him five eighty-five, subsidized. And, oh, Moscow, Geneseo, Uniontown, Colton, Pomeroy, Garfield County- oh, when it started, it started.

SS: Was that about in '35 in there?

WM: Along in there, yeah. Well, you can find it on the books up there exactly.

SS: But then when it hit bottom in early '21, didn't a lot of people stay- I mean, hang onto their places? Up there they did, I know.

WM: Yeah, sure, all over, a lot of 'em did. They didn't mortgage it, they didn't have any money, they couldn't go to town, they couldn't do nothing, they just stayed there and ate their beef or potatoes or whatever they had and let 'er go at that.

SS: Did that go on clear through the '20's, or did it pick up again?

WM: No, it picked up when Roosevelt was elected in '32. Then things started on the- well, the first year, it didn't start, it was the second year.

SS: Well, that was ten years- ten, twelve years. So that whole '20's was depression for the farmers.

WM: Pretty much, yes.

SS: But not for like people in Lewiston, it wasn't the same way was it for the people in town?

WM: No. We had cattle, we had hogs, we had lumber. Lots of lumber. People jockeyed around. They traded labor and managed to get by. I know that in that time, I was making money. I started a store in 1921-$400 even. That was my total money. I bought the store, the fixtures, stock, barrel of pickles; the whole caboodle for $400.

SS: What was the name of the store you bought?
WM: Morgan's Grocery.

SS: No, but when you bought it, whose place was it?

WM: A fellow by the name of Little. He had this little store. I borrowed the money from my father-in-law; my wife's father. And we didn't take a dime out of that store for three years. Not a dime. That's what these fellas won't do now. They think of themselves, nobody else. I wouldn't accept a bill, wouldn't let anybody run a bill. My wife was a graduate nurse, she was in charge of White's Hospital up here, they tore it down. And she made enough money, being head nurse, to pay our living. And whatever profits was made in the store remained there. In 1924 I showed a profit on eight thousand three hundred and some dollar stock of $9,700. It was enough to buy a quarter section of land. See anybody, any store you'd name, Albertson's, Safeways, you show me one that can make enough profit to buy a quarter section of land today. Now, you're traveling around, you just try it. You go up to Moscow, Pullman, you find any store you pick, Yellowfront, Rosauer's, see if that store makes enough money to buy a quarter section of land in a year.

SS: How did you do it?

WM: Huh?

SS: How did you manage it?

WM: Oh, just sell 'em. I told everybody I knew more about groceries than anybody in the country. And I bought and sold certain things. One of 'em was this malt I was telling you about—fifty gallon barrels.

SS: It moved pretty fast, eh?

WM: Yeah. A five gallon can of malt cost me $1.15 and I think I sold it for seven and a half— that was two day's wages, just that quick. Prunes, I'd buy a ton of dried prunes from Kendrick, Juliaetta from
those driers. Sell it for making moonshine, I guess, I have no way of proving it, don't make any difference whether they did or not. It was legal to sell prunes, it was not legal to make moonshine. I presume that's where it went, I don't know.

SS: Do you have any idea what quantity of hops and malt was moving?

WM: Not now, no. But then you could buy things, for instance Mason Ervin had a big warehouse down here and he come over to see me one day about stone crocks. That's why I'm still in the crock business. I got all sizes of crocks. I bought the entire stock for two bits a gallon, less 50%, freight paid. In other words, I paid twelve and a half cents for a gallon crock . a five gallon crock'd cost me sixty two and a half cents. Today we're selling a five gallon crock for $15.16! That's what you call inflation.

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Frances Rawlins 4-7-77.