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Oscar: Deary; b. 1906
logger and camp fireman

Hazel: Deary; b. 1920
schoolteacher and camp flunkey

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Wells family. If people didn't scrap and drink, they didn't fit in. Oscar's father stopped a fight that Joe was in. His father never avoided fights.

Death of father's first wife (Arthur Bjerke's sister), who burned to death clearing land (1896). The preacher, Andreasso refused to let father sell the place. His wedding picture.

Father came from Sweden as a sailor, jumped ship, changed his name and came West. He homesteaded east of Elk River, and couldn't locate his claim the second year. He got the home place in 1890.

As a boy Oscar cleared land. Shooting stumps to celebrate the end of the First War. Severity of flu. Mother worked hard; she never went to a doctor until she broke her arm at 85. Dear fire blew shingles onto their place.

He quit school because teacher was partial, and then went to work in the woods although he regretted the decision.

IWWs improved conditions in the camps during the First World War. In 1936 they gained nothing. Confrontation between strikers and workers near Pierce - beating two workers with a butt chain; revenge against the strikers. None were killed. Oscar was scaling in the camp. An agitator who got a toothache just before the strike. Oscar's brief stint as a deputy (continue

Arrival of militia. Laughing Jim's laugh. More about the confrontation. The company protected the men that did the shooting. In '36 conditions were good. He believed that few strikers were sent in from the outside.

Lumberjacks worked different places. He was foreman at Camp 14 by Beaver Creek. Camp 14 was a beautiful place because of the flower gardens planted by Mrs. McKinnon, the foreman's wife. How Hazel Olson became a summer flunkey and met Oscar (1942). Her great enjoyment of camp life. Work of flunkeying. The rule of quiet in the dining room, and other manners. Great food. Hot cakes. Men were considerate about flunkeys' using the showers.
How they met – she burned the blouse she was ironing. The man called "Me Too." Drinking and single men. Being a foreman was nothing special. Why George McKinnon was a good foreman; his wife.


Powder Puff stuck at his job. Pack Sack Dick Ferrell went by the camps over many years – he threatened to fight a man. Trustworthiness and kindness of nearly all lumberjacks. How he lost and found his wallet with money cashed for the lumberjacks. He never had trouble with men over scaling, and Potlatch never asked him to cheat.

Gypos that made too much money found their rate cut. The saw gang which produced least was sometimes fired to shake the others up. Working in the snow.

Why women were not allowed to teach when married. Her stint of teaching.

Quality of Potlatch horses. A barn boss for one remaining horse.

Trying to make a living during the Depression. Shooting game out of season; one family gave him trouble. Pulling bushes (current bushes) for the government in blister rust control. The extremely long walk into camp when he was out of shape.

Frank Tom, the Chinese man who ran the store at Clarkia, gave him a pair of shoes with no money or signature, without knowing Oscar.

Her first teaching, in a rural school at Craigmont. Community activities at school. Advantage of growing up at a country school to be able to teach in one.

Mt. Tomer school. Dancing at Deary; more community activities in the Depression. Deary as a bustling town.

Marriage of Chuck's ex-wife to Dan Ross; second wife's remarriage. Helmer store dubbed "the black-and-white store."
Many teachers married young men in the communities where they taught. Unmarried women needed to teach to make a living. Stigma of being unmarried and pressure to marry.

Bachelor men who would have made good fathers. Arthur Bjerke had to beat you by a little; how he danced around on a building. Some men may have felt they couldn't support a wife.

Father was owed money when depression hit. Father's thin dime almost had to be spent. 1906 income $64, outlay $48.

Father licked three Irishmen at local sawmill. Father's strong hands. As an old man father beat the strongest man in the threshing crew, twisting the broom handle.

Father pampered his kids, but no one else. The reason was his hard childhood. He stuck his feet in cows' urine to keep warm, herding cattle for a rich man in Sweden. Getting kicked for fall asleep with the cattle. The people were slaves. Father met mother cooking for a sawmill camp.

with Sam Schrager
June 16, 1976
II. Transcript
SAM SCHRAGER: This conversation with Oscar Olson and Hazel Hill Olson took place at their home near Deary, Idaho on June 16, 1976. The interviewer is Sam Schrager.

SS: What you remember about 'em. (The Joe Wells family.)

OO: Well, I remember him running a hay baler at one time. I don't know, outside of that I don't remember a great lot about him.

SS: Do you remember Chuck and Roy, pretty good?

OO: I remember Chuck and Roy.

SS: What were they like?

OO: Roy used to be a sheepherder and shearer; shear sheep. He come down here and did that one time. Good at it, too.

SS: I understood that he liked the sheep work better than he did the woods work.

OO: I don't remember of him working in the woods.

SS: But Chuck did all the time, didn't he? Didn't Chuck do that?

OO: Yes, I think Chuck did work quite a bit in the woods, but then he owned a little place up there. He had forty acres up there around Deary that he lives on.

OO: Was that the folks' place? His dad's place, or was that another one?

OO: No, it was a different one. His parents' place is the one that Boswell has now.

HO: Well, it seems to me like when I first came—Oh, that would have been before I came here, because Tom and Ida lived there when I first came.
And then Mary the sister, she lived there where Sundstroms—
Where Bert Sundstrom is.
Yes, she had a log cabin there.
Now, that log cabin had some other history, too. What other history did that log cabin have?
I don't know, I don't know. That wasn't the old schoolhouse was it?
Yeah, Mary—
Yes, it was an old school, I was going to say; there was some other history to that.
Yes, that was the Wells School and after they built the Deary School—that's what I've heard, why then she took that and moved it over and she lived in it then. That was the old schoolhouse.
Oh, then, it had been moved? Is that it?
Yes, that's what she lived in.
I remembered some kind of—Sat up on the other road, I think, sometime.
But I couldn't quite remember the whole story about it.
But I'm curious about how much they were accepted, you know—
Oh, just fine. Just fine.
Oscar went to school with some of the kids, didn't you?
Yes. I went to school with Mary's kids and they were just accepted the same as anybody else.
They were just as sharp as could be.
You bet, just as sharp as could be. I believe that little Easter was the best handwriter I ever saw. She had a beautiful handwriting.
SS: Hummm. I understand that Joe—at least a lot of people said Joe drank a lot, especially in later—in his later years.

OO: Well, I think back in the old saloon days nearly everyone around here drank. It used to be a pretty tough community in the early days, that way. If you wasn't a good scrapper and a good drinking man, you just didn't fit in too good!

SS: Was it that way by the time you were grown, still then?

OO: It had to have been when I was a kid or even before that, I guess.

SS: Was it mostly a lumberjack town in those days?

OO: Oh, I think so, yeah. Woods work and putting the railroad in and then of course, they had to work on the roads every year for three days or something like that to pay their road tax.

SS: Every man had to do that?

OO: Everybody.

SS: Do you remember fighting in the town when you were a kid?

OO: Well, I don't know—

HO: I think you should tell about your dad—about your dad—you've told me several different things about your dad having to get in fights.

OO: Oh, I don't know; my dad was the kind that there couldn't be a good argument unless he had to be in the middle of it!(Chuckles) Thye had quite a time with Joe Wells down here at the saloon, that's when the saloon was down here. It seemed like Chuck and—I believe it was Chuck and Louie Swenson got in a fight and Louie Swenson could handle Chuck, alright.

HO: And this was the old Louie.
The old Louie that lives up on Spud Hill there. And then the old man, Old Joe come and he got into the fight and he got Louie down and he was going to get his jackknife out and cut his throat. And my dad picked up a piece of 2x4 and told him if he didn't put that knife away—leave that knife in his pocket, he was going to take his head right off with that 2x4. So, when he left the fight was over. (Chuckles) They had a trial over that, too, but, you know, they didn't want to send Old Joe Wells to the Penitentiary, either see, so they didn't convict him and they didn't press charges.

SS: He didn't really do nothing—I mean, he didn't use the knife or anything.

OO: What?

SS: He didn't use the knife?

OO: No, no, he didn't get that far. He was digging in his pocket for the knife, but when he seen my dad threatening him with that 2x4, he quit.

HO: Then why did they even have a trial then? I wonder.

OO: Oh, I don't know.

HO: Get him for battery or—(Laughter)

SS: When else did your father scrap, or get into?

OO: Oh, I don't think he ever avoided one. (Chuckles) Just never avoided it. A fight of any kind. I don't think he really stirred up trouble or anything like that, but if there was anything to be had around, any trouble, he had to be in it, it seemed like.

SS: Can you give me an idea about what the kind of stuff would be that would cause an altercation, or a fight, you know in those days?
SS: Drinking?

OO: Yeah, drinking would be the thing, I think.

SS: I think you'd be living in close quarters, you know, mean, in all the same community and kind of isolated, you'd maybe get on each other's nerves through the years.

OO: Well, I guess—I kind of think so. I think it's pretty much that way. But, I think they were great for sticking together, too. I really do. And helping one another out.

HO: Tell him the one instance when they really stuck together and wouldn't buy this place from your dad.

OO: Oh, you know my dad was married first to Arthur Bjerke's sister and right over on the hillside there her clothes caught on fire and she burned—burned to death. And she died the next day, however. And I guess my dad felt pretty bad, you know about that and he was going to sell this place, he was going to sell it and get out of it. He'd always been just a lone wolf and traveler. He left home when he was thirteen years old and never seen his folks again, see, and so he just depended on himself. He was going to sell the place and leave and this preacher that was preaching at that time, he, right in front of the whole congregation, he says, "Now, Olson wants to sell his place and leave," and he says, "we won't buy the place and won't let anybody else buy it." They were going to keep him from leaving. He knew that time would heal eventually or after while I guess and so he did. He stayed.

SS: I wonder how he took it at the time—he was a little mad—
Well, I don't know, I think he had a lot of respect for the preacher.

What was the preacher's name? Do you know?

Andreason.

Oh, I've heard of him.

Andreason.

He was the Lutheran preacher and he was over in Genesee, too, I think. I think he was in more than one of the churches.

Oh, I think so.

Where was that church at?

It stood right down here on this place. Right beyond the cemetery.

On the Dry Ridge Cemetery?

Oh, no, right down here between here and the highway. Cemetery down there.

And the big Lutheran church is in Deary now, was down there and they moved it.

How was it that his wife's clothes caught on fire?

Oh, they were clearing land, clearing land, you know. And you remember how they had four or five or six petticoats and they all drug on the ground and I suppose she walked through hot ashes or something. Clothes in them days was pretty inflammable you know, they caught afire and she just burned.

Arthur Old Burke told Oscar just not too long ago that she was also pregnant at that time.

Uh-huh. They'd been married a year at that time, this happened in 1896, so you see at that time there was no doctor, locally in
and I think my dad had to ride clear to Joel before he could even call a doctor in Moscow. The doctor come out but there was nothing he could do. But that's tough—be tough anytime.

SS: But you know, in a way, it seems like a person should never have to dress like that to be doing that kind of work.

HO: Right.

OO: No, but it's the fashion in those days.

HO: You wore those petticoats if you were out clearing land.

OO: Yeah.

HO: It would be awful silly, wouldn't it?

OO: That happened right across the draw here, up that hillside there.

HO: And for many, many years we had a picture of her. It was a wedding picture—

OO: Yes.

HO: Yeah, your dad's wedding picture and then when Arthur Bjerke and his sister were here, oh, what did we decide it was? About ten years ago, we showed it to them and it really didn't have any sentimental value, as much for us as it would for Arthur and his sister is 100 years old this year. And it was about ten years ago. I guess it wasn't quite ten years ago. And we asked if she would like to have it. She looked at it so longingly. It was a beautiful, big picture—big wedding picture and she was a beautiful girl. And of course, she would like to have it, so we gave it to her.

OO: We give that to her.

SS: And your father—did he come out here when he left home, or did he travel around or what?
OO: He was a sailor—he was a sailor, he went across that Atlantic seven times, I think, in that old sailboat.

OH: He was born in Sweden.

OO: He was born in Sweden and then when he come to this country he—well, I really don't know what happened then, but I think he jumped ship when he come to this coast and then he changed his name and then he come over to South Dakota and he worked there a couple of years then he come from there out here. He worked in these sawmills—like you have pictures of there—and then he oh, he homesteaded. And then he lost that claim somehow, he couldn't find his claim the second year or so and then he lost that; then he bought this. He bought this place here from Old John Thompson.

SS: you say he couldn't find his claim? That is, he couldn't locate it?

OO: The second year. (Chuckles)

SS: Wandered around where it was at.

OO: It was east of Elk River somewhere.

SS: I can understand that.

OO: I remember him saying that when they stayed at night there—when they went there to prove up on it the first time, why, he said he could hear the river running down below him somewhere. But when he went back the second year to continue proving up on it, why, he couldn't find it!

SS: About what year did he get this place? Do you have any idea?

OO: This place here?

SS: Yeah.
Well, it had to be about 1890, I think.

Early.

About 1890, I think. Because he came to the United States in '88(1888) and he worked in Dakota then for two years and then he come out here.

Well, he set about to get himself a claim pretty quickly after he'd been here.

I think so. Yeah.

Do you think he missed the sailing life?

Huh?

Do you think he missed the sailing life?

Oh, I don't think so, oh, no, I never heard him mention that.

We have his old sea chest.

Oh, yes, we got the old sea chest.

It's about the only thing we do have that's that old.

Yeah.

And the-

Did you ever see one of those old sea chests? We'll have to show you.

Shall we just go upstairs?

Yeah, huh. -------

Probably, well probably, because it wasn't long after he married her, you know, wasn't too many years before you were born and that is the bedroom you were born in. But I do remember your mother saying that she helped him—now, maybe it was just finish up the upstairs. But I know she said that she helped your dad do some of this carpentry work, so maybe it was just
Oscar & Hazel Olson
Reel #0346

Finish up the upstairs.

Oo: That's possible.

Ss: Did he clear up this land? Or was it done?

Oo: Oh, yes, you bet, you bet. There wasn't anything here when he came. He often spoke about just a big yellow pine standing out here and he could get out with a scythe and cut a little grass in between the trees and have some for the cattle—for a cow.

Ss: What kind of work did you do around here when you were a boy?

Oo: Land clearing. That was it.

Ss: You cleared, too?

Oo: Uh-huh. You bet, that was a big job to clear this.

Ho: You especially remember when World War I was over, you said. What you were doing then.

Oo: Yes sir. Back in World War I, we was plowing up here and my dad was shooting stumps and I was trying to plow. I was only about twelve years old, but I could hand onto that plow and as it happened he had eight or ten stumps loaded about the time when we heard that the war was over and it seemed like it was very appropriate to shoot those stumps right then.

Ss: He shot 'em then?

Oo: Oh, yes, yes.

Ss: Did you go into Deary?

Oo: Huh?

Ss: Did you go into Deary at that time to celebrate, too? The end of the war?

Oo: Oh, yeah, I think so. Yeah, we had to go in there and listen to the assembled celebration.
And then it might be of interest about the bad flu and how you escaped the bad flu.

Oh, by golly, yes. About 1919 or 1918 flu that was terrible.

I've heard of that. What was it like?

My goodness, there was so many people died around here that it was terrific.

Now, did they close down the schools? Because you said you stayed right here at the farm.

Yeah, we did, we stayed right here. I remember that fall we was clearing land right over there by the woods. That was a bad deal. We escaped; we didn't get sick at all. But our neighbor over here was sick and we delivered milk over to 'em and I didn't dare to go into the house, they wouldn't let me do that. I'd take the milk over and set it in the road by their place and one of them that wasn't too sick went out and got it. Oh, it was quite a scare.

Do you think that your mother, the work that she did was pretty difficult to do without the modern conveniences people have now-days?

I'll say so! I'll say so, pack water from the spring down there up the hill. Everything done by hand.

And your mother worked right out in the fields, too.

My mother worked out a lot. It took rugged people.

Now, she lived to be 88-

89.

Eighty-nine, was it?

Eighty-nine, I believe.
And, I think it was true that she'd never been to a doctor until she broke her arm when she was eighty-five or so. I'm not positive, but I believe that's what—

I believe that's right.

I believe that's what she said.

Never been to a doctor until she broke her leg—or arm.

Arm, broke her arm. And that's when she was old.

When you were growing up did you see a doctor at all?

No way! No. We didn't have no doctors, never took no shots or nothing.

When did you first see a doctor, do you suppose? In your life?

That's a good question. I'll be darned if I know.

Probably when you had your tonsils real bad, when you were in camp.

Well, that was after I was up in a logging camp.

That's what I say, that was the first time you ever seen a doctor.

I think so, I think so.

Listen, did you go to Deary much when you were young or growing up? You went to school.

Went to school.

You went to school in town.

Oh, yes, walked. It's only a mile and a half, just good exercise!

You might tell him what you remember about the fire; the Deary fire.

Well, I just remember there being a fire. I don't remember a great lot more about it than that.

I thought you said that there were even great big sheets of things
that would come clear down here.

OO: Oh, yeah, there was pieces of shingles clear down here.

HO: What year was that? Do you know?

OO: Gosh, -

SS: I think it was '23(1923) at least that's the year that I've heard.

OO: That's possible.

SS: There was more than one but the worst one was in 1923.

OO: Oh, yes, there were several fires in Deary. '23- yeah, I be-
lieve that's about right. But I remember those-shingles laying
all over the country.

SS: Did you start working in the woods when you came of age to work
out? Is that what you did?

OO: Sure was.

HO: He was a bad boy and quit high school to go to work in the woods.

OO: I quit high school to go work in the woods.

SS: How come?

OO: Well, I knew more than the teacher, so I didn't see no object in
going to school. All she knew was nouns and verbs and adverbs
and I didn't care about that! (Chuckles)

HO: Did you say you got mad at a teacher?

SS: What was it over that you got mad?

OO: Well, I thought she was being partial. I didn't like that very
good.

HO: So he hurt her by quitting school!(Laughter)

SS: She was being partial to certain kids?

OO: Yes. Yeah.

SS: Were you in high school at the time? At Deary.
Yes, huh-huh.

Then you went to work in the woods?

Then I went to work on the section. Went down to Princeton and went to work on the section—on the section: Camp 1 at Princeton. From then on it was work, work, work.

And how you wished—

Yes, I wished I had. My dad just tried everything in the book to get me to go back to school, but I was just too stubborn.

This would be interesting, too, where you went to school, where the high school was.

Where the high school was?

Well, yeah. The high school was in the churchhouse up on the north side of the track. Campbell's shop. That's where I went to high school, to start with and then they transferred over into the other building.

But you didn't, did you?

I went there a little while.

Into the new one? The brick high school now. I didn't realize that you'd ever gone.

Half a year, I think.

When did you regret that you had left school? How long did it take you?

How long did it take to realize that?

Yes.

It didn't take too many years, I guess. I think I realized it before—

You told me that you wanted so to go back, but you were just too
stubborn.

OO: Yes.

Ho: You told me that many times.

OO: I went to get on the train to go to Princeton to work there and I just knew I was making a mistake; I just felt terrible, but the decision had been made and boy, I was going to stick with it. Stubborn! Is the word. (Chuckles)

SS: What was it like living in the camps?

OO: Oh, that was good, that was fine. Camp 1 down there it was pretty modern camp. Railroad cars.

SS: Which year would that have been in? You were born in '06 (1906) and when did you start working there?

OO: Oh, let's see, I don't know just what year that was.

HO: It would probably be about '16.

OO: Yes, you bet. Quite a deal in 1919, you know that IWW strike was pretty vicious. And then the IWWs, they got blamed for setting a lot of fires out in the harvest fields, you know, putting matches in the shocks and stuff like that. I don't know whether they did that or not.

HO: But when they were the strongest would be when you were still in school, it would be before you left.

SS: Do you think they were responsible for improving conditions in the camps?

OO: Oh, they improved the conditions, you bet they did. Before that the loggers, a lot of them were carrying and stuff like that. Oh, they helped to beat everything.

SS: Were there many, do you remember, when you went to the camp?
Were there many guys that were still Wobblies? Working in the camps at that time?

OO: I think there was always a certain amount of 'em. And then the strike in '36(1936) you know—but I don't think they gained anything then. Don't think they had anything to squawk about at that time.

SS: What happened in '36(1936)?

OO: Well, it was just a-

HO: What were they striking for? Better wages?

OO: Better conditions and wages, I guess.

SS: Did they shut down the camps in the woods around here?

OO: Yes. But I don't think they gained anything at that time, lost cause from the start, I think.

SS: One fellow that I know—(blank)

OO: Well, I seen 'em when that pickup went out of there. Those gun men on there and they wasn't no hired gunmen, either, they was just lumberjacks. Just fellows that had been working there all time. And when these two fellows come into camp that evening and they come through this picket line and they beat 'em up with chains. You could—this one fellow you could just count the links of the chain right across his face. And the end had hit his ear and damned near tore his ear off. And they told him to go back to camp and tell the rest of the fellows what they had coming. They were going to get the same treatment. And these guys says, "Oh, if that's the case, we'll go out and meet 'em halfway."

So, the one that had a gun grabbed the gun and jumped in this pickup and they went out to meet these fellows. And when they
met up, why, they really started shooting. Two or three of them got shot, but I don't think either one of 'em died from that.

SS: Was this while you were at Pierce?

OO: This was out of Pierce, you bet. Rommel's camp.

SS: So, the guys that beat 'em with a chain, they were IWWs? The ones that did the beating?

OO: Oh, I don't know that they were IWWs, but they were-

HO: They were the strikers.

OO: They was the strikers, yeah, on the picket line and these other guys was coming through the picket line.

SS: Where were you at?

OO: I was in the camp. I was right there in camp. I was scaling, see and I couldn't belong to the union. I was in that camp.

HO: What were you considered? On the management side?

OO: Yes.

HO: Was that the reason you couldn't-

SS: Scaler?

OO: Yeah. And it's a good thing I didn't have a gun because I think I would a been on that truck with 'em. I'm glad I didn't. Very glad I didn't. As I remember one fellow got shot through the shoulder and I think six months later I seen him in Orofino and he had his arm way up over his head like that. I don't think any of them died from that. Did they?

SS: Well, that's what Michigan Bill said - but maybe it was even another incident. Maybe it was another thing that happened in the same area.
OO: Oh, this was the only time—it was quite a shooting scrape and they called the militia—the state militia, yeah, that's the only time. Oh, I remember it well.

SS: Do you remember those guys coming into the camp after—did you see them get beat? Or did you see—

OO: No, I didn't see 'em get beat. I seen 'em after they come in to camp. They were beat up, I tell you. You beat a man up with a buttchain and he's in bad shape. And you could count the links across his face with that butt chain. I tell you, when you see that you begin to wonder if there isn't some way to stop that sort of thing.

SS: Do you think the feeling in the camp was all one-sided, I mean, do you think that in the camp all the men wanted to put a stop to it?

OO: Oh, you damn right. Those fellows in camp they were determined no more of that stuff.

HO: Now, all the ones that were in camp—were the ones that were breaking the strike, was that it? Or were making the strike?

OO: Well, like me and others—

SS: Well, how come it was so divided? How come, you know, the men didn't agree on either one side or the other? How come they were split?

OO: I couldn't tell you that, I don't know. I don't know. I think a lot of the guys felt like they had no striking coming or anything like that. Yeah, that's funny, talk to someone that knew anything about it.

SS: I've heard that—I've heard a lot about the '17(1917)–'18 strike.
Not too much about that '36(1936) one. Charley Jelleberg talked to me about the '36(1936) strike.

OO: I suppose, I suppose Charley would remember that real good.

SS: Yeah, he told me of a guy that got beat on that side, he came over here and so one day he happened to have his—I don't know if he had his shirt off or something, but, he just saw the, you know, the wounds on that guy's back and that, and he asked him, and he said he felt real funny about even asking a guy about how it ever happened. That was the same deal—there's been violence over there.

OO: Well, those things all have a humorous side, too. I know one guy that was a great agitator, he had an awful gab. Boy, he'd get up in the woodshed and he was agitating that they were going to have a strike and they were really going to raise hell, bring the machine guns in and they were just going to tear things to pieces. And the day before the strike was called, why, he got a hell of a toothache! Got an awful toothache! He had to go to town and he never showed up as long as that strike was in effect! But, you know, those kind of fellows can stir up a mob, real easy. And he did his share, but, boy, when it got to where the going might get rough, why he had a toothache!

SS: This the same strike or another one?

OO: This was the '36(1936).

HO: Now, you were telling Claire and Bud about—didn't they appoint you as a militia appointee?

OO: Oh, you bet. This is the same night when those guys went out and did the shooting. Little later that evening, why, a policeman
come in there and deputized me and another fellow to go up and
guard that road into camp that night before the militia could
get there, see.

Sounds like that could have been a kind of dangerous assignment.
You bet, it took good cool nerves and I didn't have too many of
'em! Anyway, he told me to get down below the road there be-
hind a big log and there was another--there was about a space like
that and then there was another log over there, so I had real
good protection and a good view. The other fellow got up on the
bank just above the road and this policeman he stopped in the
road. He says, "Now, we're going to stop everybody that comes in
here." Then, he says, "They have got to stop." So we set there
and boy, I was kind of nerved up, I didn't like that too good.
This old cop sit there and after while we heard a rig coming,
and, boy, I tell you it was tense there for a little bit. Luckily
it turned out it was the militia coming. 'Course they stopped, too,
believe--you--me, they did. When they found out who it was, why
then we could go back to camp. And he picked up his six shooters
and we was off duty.

Did you say that was Laughing Jim Delaney?
Yeah.
That was the cop—that was the policeman that deputized you?
Laughing Jim? Where'd he get that name from you know? Laugh a
lot?
Yeah. If you ever heard him laugh--
Hazel knew him.
What kind of laugh did he have? What was the deal?
Well, it started out as a kind of a little chuckle and developed more and more and hysterical and everybody around him would laugh. That's a fact.

SS: Did he laugh easy?

OO: Oh, yes. Well, he knew he had a failing there and he kind of tried to hold it back a little bit, but once he got started, why couldn't hardly stop him.

SS: Sounds like Jimmy Carter's smile.

OO: Jim was a good guy though, he was a real fine fellow.

HO: Does Jim still live?

OO: Yes, I think so. He's still living.

SS: Well, did you-like these fellows that shot these guys on the truck were the same guys that got beat that did the shooting, or were they?

OO: Oh, the two guys that got beat, they were ready to lay down when they got to camp, I'll tell you. They were hurting. They were beat up.

HO: These were friends-

OO: They were friends of theirs. Fellows that had been working to gather all time, you know, friends.

SS: Now what about these guys on the picket line? Were some of them from the camp, too? Guys that had been working in the camp before?

OO: I imagine, I didn't know who they were, of course, I imagine so.

SS: Do you know what kind of picket line they had? Were they just holding the road? Couldn't get in?

OO: Stopping them. Stop 'em at the road.

SS: The foreman didn't try to do nothing about that?
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OO: Oh, no, no way, uh-huh.

SS: When they got these guys though, were the guys that they shot, were they in the back of the truck at the time that they -

At the time when they did the shooting?

OO: I think so. I'm not positive.

S: They weren't just staying on the road?

OO: Well, I don't know. What I heard that when the first shot was fired they just took off into the brush. It was in the woods. Luckily somebody didn't get killed on the spot.

SS: These guys that did the shooting, nothing happened to them, I imagine; no charges were pressed against 'em, or what was-

OO: The company had something to do with that, I don't know, they were kind of on the company's side and I don't know just how they were protected but I guess there was no shortage of funds for protecting them.

SS: It's-

OO: Those were pretty exciting days, I'll tell you.

SS: I'm thinking about different it was between then and 1917 and '18 in that first IWW business. I had the idea that most everybody in the woods, at least all the working men were on their side, because they wanted the conditions improved, because they were bad. Now, this in '36(1936) sounds like a completely different deal.

OO: I think so, yeah. Uh-huh.

SS: I wonder why it changed so much; maybe because the conditions were pretty good by then.

OO: Oh, yeah, they were not bad, they were not bad. I didn't think
they were bad. Clean sheets and—

**HO:** Clean sheets—were they provided? Clean every week.

**O0:** Yes, and lots of food; good food. And I couldn’t see but what conditions was real reasonable. Lot of those fellows that was raising all the hell would go to town and live on beans maybe all winter down by the railroad track somewhere and now in this camp they was kicking on the conditions there. It didn’t make sense.

**HO:** When I said clean sheets—they weren’t, they were blankets—

**O0:** We had sheets, too.

**HO:** Did you?

**O0:** Yes, you bet.

**HO:** I just remembered the sheet blankets.

**O0:** Yeah, sheet blankets. Yeah. Not those white—

**HO:** Percale.

**SS:** Most of these guys that were in the IWW in ’36(1936)—would you say that they were mostly local men, lumberjacks who were just discontented? Or do you think they were mostly people who’d come in from, you know, who were sent just for the strike?

**HO:** I think so.

**SS:** It’s hard for me to believe that they’d have that many people even sent in if there wasn’t some local support.

**O0:** It was mostly—well, of course, the camps even in ’36(1936) was a lot of transients. There were a lot of transient labor. But I don’t think there was anyone really sent in to stir up a lot of trouble. I don’t think so. There was a few of these fellows like the guy I was telling you about that got the toothache!(Chuckles)
HO: But they didn't even call 'em IWWs in 1936, did they?

OO: Well, I don't remember what they did call 'em.

HO: I really don't know but from reading history, you heard about the IWWs so much back in 1919.

SS: I don't think they had the clout in '36 (1936).

HO: In '36(1936) you just heard of 'em as strikers, you know, you didn't hear of them as Wobblies, because they got a pretty bad name out of that.

SS: Back in 1919.

HO: Back in 1919, you know, a lot of people didn't want to feel that they were affiliated with 'em and even though they might have thought the same in '36(1936) I'm just saying what I have read because I don't know anything about it.

OO: I think that's about right, yeah.

SS: Well, let me ask you a little bit about lumberjack life. Now I understand the guys were mostly bachelors, and they mostly would work in a camp for a long time and then they'd blow in?

OO: Yeah, that's about right.

SS: That's what I've heard.

OO: Yes, I'd say that's true. Some of 'em would work on the coast a while and some back in Michigan and some other place, go from one place to another.

HO: And every month or so they'd go out and spend all their-

SS: How long would they work before they'd blow in?

OO: Oh, some had to blow in every payday and some'd go maybe all sum-

mer before they'd blow in.

HO: When you were there, it was twice a month that they paid, wasn't it?
OO: No, you had a draw day, you could draw in the middle of the month.

HO: Otherwise, it was once a month.

OO: Once a month.

HO: Oscar was camp boss at 14-Camp 14 for a while.

SS: Where was Camp 14 at?

OO: It was on Beaver Creek.

HO: We went back last week to Camp 14 just to see what it looks like back there. I was there in '42(1942) the summer of '42(1942) flunkying.

OO: That's where she and I met.

HO: And that's where I met Oscar.

SS: Was the fluming being used there when you worked on Beaver Creek?

OO: Flume was—definitely yes, used at one time while I was over there. I don't remember whether it was used the last year I was there or not.

HO: The signs last week said that it was used—

OO: in '41(1941)

HO: The last that it was used was in '42(1942) it said.

OO: '42(1942)

HO: And I remember—I don't ever remember ever seeing them being used but we used to walk on 'em and they were in real good condition right now they're all down.

OO: You can see a little part of 'em down there.

HO: The sign said they were only used for twelve years, from '30(1930) to '42(1942).

SS: What was it like—were you foreman there when the thing was being
used?

OO: No, well they never flumed out of 14 anyway, that was below 14.

SS: Oh, I see.

OO: Logs from camp 0 went down into the Doyle dam and from there on down. 14 was a railroad camp; they shipped the logs down to the railroad.

HO: And it was a beautiful camp. It was just a showplace. Old George McKinnon, when I first went in there he was the camp boss and his wife lived in there with him and she was a great flower fancier, a great gardener and she had lots of help from the—what would it be—the bull cook?

OO: Bull cook, anyone that would help her, you know.

HO: And she had beds of flower gardens all over that camp and it just looked a garden instead of a logging camp; I couldn't believe that was a logging camp.

OO: Beautiful lawn, and everything.

HO: Just so pretty.

OO: All watered and cared for and it was really a showplace. But, boy, you'd never know it now. You can't recognize it.

SS: That's unusual. I've never heard of a logging camp that was set up to be pretty.

HO&OO: It sure was!

HO: This one was, I'm sure it was because of Mrs. McKinnon. And then later, in '42(1942)—then I went back to teaching, I went back to teaching in Kellogg that year. And then what, must have been along in September—no, I think it was in August that George McKinnon had a heart attack and died.
Yes, August.

And then Oscar took over then.

Took over then.

You were working sometimes as a flunky and sometimes as a school teacher?

I was teaching in Nezperce that year. And I can't remember how we heard, read it in the paper, can't remember, but all the men, all the young men that they had for flunkies were drafted and they were wanting girls to come in and so I was one of the first girls that went in to Camp 14 and they had women flunkies at other camps on this side but I was one of the first ones that went in to Camp 14.

That was quite a heyday—that was a great day for celebration.

(Laughter)

And the only way you could get in there at that time was by train.

Train, speeder.

How many miles to Headquarters was it?

Oh, it was sixteen miles.

I thought it was twenty some and it just seemed forever and I thought,"Oh, my goodness! What am I getting into?" And then when we got back there, there was this beautiful camp set in there, as I said, it was just almost like a park.

Yeah, and pretty flowers a growin' all the way around.

And then as luck would have it a girl friend of mine came in just a little bit later than that.

Didn't you come in together?

No, we didn't come together. She came later, she came later. I
had gone to school with her so I knew her and we had a great time that summer. And went back to teach school and I taught until November and came back and married Oscar and then we lived in there we called it our honeymoon cottage. And we honeymooned at Camp 14.

HO: That was our first residence.

OO: And we couldn't even see a sign, just could hardly tell where our honeymoon cottage was after that, because it just was-

SS: When you flunkied, what was the work of flunkying like? Was it a hard thing for you to adjust to? Was it a lot of work? Heavy work.

HO: It was hard work, but I was young, you know and it was an adventure and we'd get up early; we had to get up real early and work late and I remember old Bill-

OO: —and she had a good appetite and a whole lot of good food.

HO: And I remember Old Bill Burke saying, "Now, you girls shouldn't stay up late and you shouldn't do this because you're going to get too tired and they're going to say I'm overworking you."

(Chuckles)

OO: Yes, you bet.

HO: But, oh it was so much different than anything we'd ever done; it was so much fun to get out and walk on those hills, you know. We'd go up to the—and I remember the cook's wife was in there occasionally and she'd say, "What do you young people have? Are you taking some kind of a vitamin X that you can run to the top of those hills every night and work so hard every day?" It was hard work but it was fun. And Oscar'd take me fishing. (Chuckles)
OO: Yep. Kind of like to go through those days again.

HO: I had never worked as a waitress or anything before that. Didn't have any idea what I was getting in for.

SS: Can you tell me what the main part of the work was for you to do? Did you have to help prepare the food?

HO: Yes, we pared the vegetables. There was a dishwasher, a man, that washed the dishes. But we put the dishes away, dried the silverware and-

OO: Set the table.

HO: Set the tables.

OO: And carried the food on there and that was the main job, to see that the hotcakes was good and hot! Because a lumberjack didn't want the hotcakes after they'd been off the cookstove for two minutes.

HO: But what I thought was the strangest of all was that that cookhouse was completely quiet. The lumberjacks didn't say a word except, "Pass this, pass that, please."

OO: "Pass this or pass that-Please!"

HO: They didn't visit, never, not one word-

OO: -in the cookhouse.

SS: Was that a rule?

OO: Rule; you bet! You bet!

HO: That's what struck me the most, because it wasn't like if you'd go into a cafeteria.

SS: Tell me why they had that rule.

OO: Well, because those lumberjacks can say some of the damndest things you ever heard of, you know. They cannot only say dirty
jokes, but they can talk bad about the food and some fellows got weak stomachs and there's many a reasons why. And it was a good idea.

HO: And they were anxious to get 'em in there and get 'em out, that they were in there to eat not-

OO: They were in there to eat and that's all.

HO: And to me that was the strangest thing. All those great, big men come in there and they'd sit there just like little school children that could be spanked if they talked out of line. I was amazed.

OO: That was enforced by the camp boss and the cook, too. Wouldn't stand for it.

SS: Had it always been that way in the camps?

OO: Long as I was in there, yeah.

HO: They were just as quiet except for rattling the dishes and you would hear them say, "Pass the peas, please." Pass the hotcakes, please."

OO: You bet, I think that was a good idea. If you just said, "Pass something," why, you may not get it, if you said, "Please." why, you'd get it right away quick. And you didn't want to reach out in front of somebody to get something; you had to ask for it. Like, if you reached in over somebody else's plate he's liable to jab you with his fork or something. You just didn't do that. And I thought that was fine. Real good. I approved of it.

SS: So there was manners and courtesy.

OO: Dam right, manners and courtesy. But, like Hazel said, it would
seem kind of strange to see a bunch of those big, tough, rugged
buggers setting in there behaving themselves! (Chuckles)

HO: I'm sure, that's what impressed me the most was the quiet.

SS: I guess the food was about the most important thing, too— I mean
if the food wasn't good—what use was the camp—was the idea I had.

OO: Oh, yes, you bet. The food had to be good.

HO: I can only talk for 14, but I've never seen such fantastic food
in my life. I gained about forty pounds— (Laughter).

SS: That good, huh?

HO: Too, good, as far as I was concerned.

OO: I don't know how you could get better food.

HO: Steaks and oh, just—

OO: And when they brought hotcakes out they set a pan of hotcakes on
there and one time around and it was no use to pass that plate
the second time around, nobody would take a cold hotcake. That
went back to the cookhouse and then to the garbage can and there
come a new batch of hotcakes. All hot, right off the griddle.

HO: If it ever got set down, the pan of hotcakes on the table, we
were supposed to pick it up and take it back to the kitchen and
bring some hot because the lumberjacks wouldn't touch it if it—
didn't, you know, you could hand it and they'd pass it around.

SS: That was pretty rough, you know, to keep—how do you have enough
stove space to keep 'em all hot?

OO: You can't imagine how they cooked hotcakes there, they had a grill
as far as from here to that wall.

HO: Almost like Paul Bunyan!

OO: A man a'pouring 'em all the time and another coming right around
behind him with a thing turning 'em over. And they just-he didn't get around til they were on the plates and going out. And that was around and around til breakfast was over, you bet.

You feed 140 men and-

SS: Were there that many in a camp? Did you find the food varied in the different camps you were in or did you find they were always to be of this high quality?

OO: I found it to be good, always.

HO: I think Bill Burke had a exceptional reputation as being a good cook.

OO: Yes, he did, he was an exceptionally good cook.

HO: But I think that there were good cooks-

OH: Still living, living in Oregon. We hear from him about once a year.

SS: Did you ever work in a camp that Shorty Justice was cooking in?

OO: Yes.

SS: I interviewed him up in Spokane two summers ago.

OO: Yeah, there was a good cook. Shorty Justice.

HO: And what was Thad's last name? Thad—he was the second cook, they had a main cook and a second cook. Thad somebody.

OO: Thad was about all I ever heard.

HO: That was the second cook.

SS: Did you find that you received a lot of attention—I imagine it was rare for these lumberjacks to have any women in the camp at all.

HO: It was at 14.

SS: Were they awkward?
HO: They didn't seem to-

OO: Didn't seem to me that they felt conscious-

HO: No, not.

OO: I think appreciative, maybe, but I don't think they felt too uncomfortable. I don't ever remember of it.

HO: But they were awful good about leaving the showers at a certain time. Boy they- we were supposed to have the showers at a certain time each day and even the ones that were in camp, they just disappeared completely, they never were the least bit impolite in any way. They just cleared out. I don't know whether they had been told to. They must have been told to.

OO: I don't think they had to.

SS: How many were there at 14 at the time you were in there- women flunkying at the time you were in there?

OO: Four, wasn't it?

HO: Four, I believe.

SS: Did you meet right away when you came into the camp?

HO: Oh, I can't remember for sure.

OO: Oh, not very long. I liked her smile and I said, "I'm going to get acquainted with that gal."

HO: The first time I remember you was when I was ironing a blouse.

OO: Oh, and you burned your blouse?

HO: Yes.

SS: The first time you noticed him, you burned your blouse?

HO: I burned my blouse.

OO: She got excited and she-

HO: And then you asked one time if we wanted to ride out-if Elva and I wanted to ride out up to Headquarters. You were going to
take a speeder out, you were going to get some fellows.

OO: I was going to go get some fellows and get the mail, wasn't it?

HO: I think so. So, we decided that we would for something to do and when old "Me Too" was so drunk.

OO: Yes, that's right, Ole Vinsen. He was so drunk and anything you mentioned he said, "Me, too." "Me, too."

SS: Was that his nickname?

OO: No, no.

OH: We nicknamed him that. I don't know whether anyone else called him "Me Too" or not, but we called him "Me Too". I didn't know what his real name was after that.

SS: What was drinking like in the camps.

OO: No liquor was allowed in camp.

SS: Well, did that mean there was no liquor in camp?

OO: No, no, it didn't mean that at all! There was liquor there but it was held down pretty well. They would come back from town liquored up pretty well, but they generally come back on a Sunday evening and by Monday morning they were generally ready to go to work.

SS: Do you have much of an idea about why it was—Thing I haven't been able to figure out about a lumberjack why most of these guys could only save up their money to blow it and then come back broke. I mean what was this idea that you couldn't—you know, nowadays everything is save, save, save, now these guys seems like they didn't have much-most of them didn't think about saving.

OO: No, uh-huh. Well, nearly all of 'em were single men, they had nothing to save for. They weren't concerned about tomorrow. I
think is the reason, I don't know. Now, most of the lumberjacks
are married men, got families or something. But how many men
in camp there were married men?

HO: Not, too many. Most of the ones that were on the train were
married men.

OO: Not too many. Yes, the trainmen probably.

HO: But they didn't stay there, either.

OO: No.

SS: Where did they stay?

OO: They was generally at Headquarters.

SS: At Headquarters. So there were women living at Headquarters.

OO: They had a trainmen's shack that they would stay there—part of
the time.

HO: But I would say that the majority of the men back there were
single men in 1942, the ones at 14.

OO: Oh, I'm sure they were. I'm trying to think now, I can't think
of any men that were married.

HO: Sunny Sewell was married.

OO: Well and Walter Grew, he was married.

HO: And his wife was—

OO: —clear back in North Dakota.

HO: I didn't know any awful lot of the men's names. I knew them by
sight, you know. But there were so many of them I didn't know
what their names were.

SS: What did you think about being a camp foreman after working in
the camp? Did you find that you enjoyed that responsibility,
or did you find it a big headache?
OO: Oh, just another job, just part of the job. Didn't make much difference.

HO: Well, you were kind of strawboss before that—assistant weren't you?

OO: Yea, I worked up from working on the section to camp boss, so I did everything along the line and it was just another advancement, a little more responsibility. But it wasn't too much different than scaling or looking after a gang—looking after the sawyers or looking after the cats or anything like that—wasn't too much difference.

SS: Was there any foreman you had that you liked especially?

OO: Oh, yes, yes, indeed. Old George McKinnon just was tops. He was the fellow. He had a heart attack in August and he went to the hospital and lingered along for a while; then he died.

SS: What made him good?

OO: Oh, I don't know, I guess you'd have to call him an alcoholic, wouldn't you?

HO: What made him good— a good foreman?

OO: Well, he was just considerate of everyone and I think he treated everyone alike. He was just a good guy.

SS: But he had a drinking problem?

OO: Yes, he did; very bad.

HO: And the sweetest wife.

OO: Oh, my, yes.

HO: She was as sweet as she could be. You know what would be interesting—tell him some of the names—like Broomsface Brooks and—

OO: Oh, he's probably heard all those things.
SS: I haven't heard that one.

OO: Broomface Brooks?

SS: Nope.

HO: Camp foreman, wasn't he?

OO: Yes. Yes, I worked for Broomface Brooks one time. He always wore a mustache and it looked like a little broom sticking out there. So, I thought one time, well, I'd raise a mustache, too, and mine began to look just like his and I had to shave it off, I was afraid he'd fire me out of camp. (Chuckles)

HO: And then there was Hard Hearted-somebody.

OO: And Dangerous Dan.

SS: Dangerous Dan?

OO: Yeah.

SS: What's the deal on him?

OO: Oh, he was the guy - no it was Cruel Jimmy-

HO: Cruel Jimmy-

SS: Holmes, wasn't that his last name?

OO: Might be, I don't know.

HO: All I've heard is the Cruel Jimmy part.

SS: Do you know where he got that reputation?

OO: I think so.

SS: Where?

OO: On the drive. That's what I had heard.

HO: Oscar doesn't know for sure, but he'd heard of him.

OO: I had heard that-well, they were on a drive breaking a jam and his pardner got his foot caught-the jam shifted a little bit and he caught his foot, and it was getting ready to leave, you know and
it was a cinch to take him down—

HO:  —sudden death for his partner if he didn't free him.

OO:  And he had an axe there right handy and he just chopped his 
pardner's leg off right there, one blow of the axe. Cut his 
foot off.

HO:  Had you heard this before?

SS:  I don't know, but it sounds familiar enough that I may have.

HO:  Oscar had told me this for thirty-five years.

SS:  I think I had heard a story like that.

OO:  Cruel Jimmy.

SS:  That the only thing he could have done to save his partner?

OO:  Oh, yeah, he saved his partner's life, sure.

HO:  Saved his life, but had to cut off his foot.

OO:  Because that big jam was starting to boil over, you know and 
would have taken him—

SS:  Did he strike you as a cruel person?

OO:  I didn't know him that well. I don't know. I never heard that 
about him. He was just a quick thinker and he had to do what 
had to be done, that's all. Broken Ass John, you remember that?

SS:  I've heard that. Did you know Leo Gilfoy?

OO:  What?

SS:  Did you know Leo Gilfoy? He was from Bovill, he worked in the 
cedar yard, you might not have known him.

OO:  Gilfoy?

SS:  Yeah, Gilfoy.

OO:  I knew a Gilfoy, but—

SS:  Leo. He told me that. He gave me that name, Broken Ass John.
SS: What was the matter with him?

OO: Well, I don't know. I believe he was a sawyer, but anyway he'd put wedges in his pockets back here, you know and he wouldn't have suspenders strong enough to hold 'em up and you know his pants'd kind of sag down and they'd look kind of silly and they hung that name on him, I think.

HO: And then there was a Dirty Shirt Martin.

OO: Dirty Shirt Martin, you bet. He was there in our camp. He'd just buy a new shirt and he would never wash it til it wore out and then he'd throw it away and he'd get another shirt and they called him Dirty Shirt Martin. I have a picture here of him.

HO: Did you say that he came here and-

OO: Yes, he came here with me one time and helped me put up hay over Fourth of July one time.

HO: What were some of those other names?


HO: Tell him why he was Butterfly Pete.

OO: He seemed to be so light on his feet.

HO: And he worked on the drive, you said.

OO: He was on the river and fluttered around the logs, boy, he could flutter around a log, you bet, he could run out there with a little cedar pole that wouldn't hold up anybody, and he'd have only oxfords on, he wouldn't get his feet wet. He'd just trip along just as light as a feather.

HO: Then Powder Puff McDonald.

OO: Powder Puff Mc Donald.
SS: Do you know where he got that?

OO: Well, he was a fellow—an unusual guy—generally you know a lumberjacks go out there with horses and skidding tongs and this rigging, you know, dragging it around in the mud and working in the mud and they'd come mud clear up to their hips, you know, and he could go out and work with the team all day and he was nice and clean in the evening. Just wouldn't get mud on him at all.

SS: I wonder how he did it.

OO: Oh, I don't know, he was just using his head all time, I guess.

HO: Some people are clean, have that talent to do things without being dirty.

OO: I can't work around anything like that; I'd get it all over my clothes the first thing, you know. But, Old Powder Puff he was just clean as a pin. I listened to Powder Puff McDonald one time. He even run camp.

HO: He was the camp boss?

OO: He was camp boss at one time. He was over there I believe it was '26(1926) over at the camps anyway, oh, it was the camp that Broom faced Brooks was running and he was going to swamp for a couple of Irishmen—Flannigan and Mike Techney(?) they was two horsemen, you know, they were driving, teamsters. And they had a big strip there and they got in the habit after a fellow'd swamped about so long, why, they'd get miserable, you know and holler at 'em and cranky and run this fellow off then they would divide up the bonus on the strip, see. Well, they were going to try it on Old Powder Puff McDonald, the same stunt. But, by God,
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OO: "was a spouting off one day. It had been snowing and it was kind of miserable and, "Oh," he says, "we're stuck; we'll never get these logs out of here." And he was just having a hell of a time. Powder Puff, he says, "Oh, we have horses and we've got cable and blocks and lines; we'll get them logs out." They couldn't run him off no way. He stayed and got his bonus off of that big strip.

HO: Did he have a pleasant manner as well as being-keeping himself so spotless?

OO: Powder Puff—I don't think there was anyway to get him mad or roiled up.

SS: That sounds unusual for a lumberjack.

OO: Oh, kind of unusual, but not for him. He's a good fellow. I can't think of some of the other names, but there's lots of 'em.

SS: Did you ever know that Backsack Dick, Dick Farrell?

OO: Yes, yes, the preacher? Oh, yes. You bet.

SS: Where did you run into him?

OO: In camp.

SS: Was that up on this side or was it down there—

OO: I think I run into him the first time up in Elk River Basin about 1929.

HO: But he also came through 14 Camp when I was there.

OO: Yes, he was in all the camps, he went all over.

HO: That was in '42(1942).

SS: He was still going?

HO: There was a preacher came through and I think it was Farrell.
I think it was Farrell.

I do, too.

What was he like, this Backsack Dick.

Well, in what way would you mean?

Well, I'm wondering,

Used to be an old prize fighter. I heard this about him, I don't know, I wasn't in their meeting at the time, but I heard that some lumberjack was trying to make some caustic remarks or something while he was having a sermon in the cookhouse and old Dick stopped his sermon and he says, "Say, I quit fighting Years ago," he says, "don't think I can't start it up again. This is my meeting and I'm going to keep it up. I want order here." That guy decided to take him at his word, too, I heard.

That might be why he along so well with these rough lumberjacks because they knew he could work 'em over.

Oh, he was a scrapper, too. He was a nice fellow, real nice.

Do you have any idea what kind of preaching that he did? The way he would talk to the men, whether he gave 'em — whether he told 'em they were damned or whether he told 'em—

I don't remember of it being that way; no, no I don't think so.

Did you go to some of his meetings?

Yes, I've been to his meetings, uhuh. He, as I remember, he emphasized the fact that he used to be a rounder the same as the rest of 'em and that he had changed his ways and he thought that it was for the better and stuff like that. I admired him, good fellow.

How did he travel? Did he come in there on the train?
I believe so. I think he just went from one camp to camp whenever there was a means to get by—to ride with somebody. I don't ever remember him driving a car or anything.

At Dedication, he was there for so many years, I didn't realize he'd been there for so many years, been to camps for so long. That speaks something for his ideas.

I believe that's right though. I think I seen him up at Elk River the first time. I know I seen him many, many years.

Did you know Melker Anderson?

Yes. Yes. Yes, I worked in the camp when Melker was boss.

What did you think of him as a boss?


As were many of the lumberjacks.

Oh, very few lumberjacks that wasn't that way. But the lumberjacks had a special trait though, by golly, ninety-nine percent of 'em you could trust 'em with anything, and they'd give you the shirt off their back if they thought it helped you. Course, you always had that other one percent that wasn't so good, but I guess you expect that everywhere.

What's surprising is the ninety-nine.

Uh-huh. What other line of work can you say that about? The ninety-nine percent of them.

When you say that you could trust 'em—in what way? Loaning you money?

Anything, you bet, you bet.

You could leave your wallet laying on your bed, couldn't you?

Yes. You bet. Leave your wallet lay right there and it would
be fine with most of 'em. Once in a while there'd be one that would— that couldn't be trusted, but very, very few.

HO: I don't know whether it would be of interest or not to tell him about when you cashed a bunch of lumberjack's checks for them.

OO: Well, I was foolish on my part, but I was trying to be good, too, you know. And some of those fellows was staying in camp and I was going out, why, they wanted me to cash a check for them, so they could play poker. So I had taken some checks with me one day, I had about $400 worth of checks and as I was going back to camp I decided I would fish a little before I got to camp. Fishing was real good over there and by God, when I got into camp and reached for that billfold and it wasn't in my pocket. I'd lost it fishing. Gee whiz, you never seen a man —

HO: Many hundreds of dollars—

OO: Four hundred dollars in that—their money.

HO: And at that time that would be more like $4,000 now or more, you know.

OO: Boy, oh boy. I just threwed my fishing rigging down and I went right back out in the creek and I walked back up that creek just exactly where I'd come down, you know. Winding around and look and look and I went under a trestle and as I went under this trestle I remembered setting up there on top and changing a hook or baiting a hook or doing something. I thought I'd better get up there and look. I went up there and looked and I'd set on a log there and there was another log right behind it—there was my billfold right in between them two logs! Whoooo-boy, was I glad! It taught me a lesson; I never did it again. I didn't cash no more checks!
SS: That sounds like about the worst situation I could imagine. I could see the same thing happening to me, boy, I'd be scared!

OO: You scared? My God, -

HO: Even if you had to borrow.

OO: I'd have replaced that money, because nobody would have believed that I lost it, see. Well, it was my responsibility to bring it back. And I would have had to replace that and I'm sure I'd a had to worked all summer to make that much money because, I don't know, I was scaling at that time, I think, and I don't know, I was getting about $80 a month or something like that. It would have been one hell of a job to repay that.

SS: Did you find that guys had a hard time accepting your scale? I've heard from scalers that, you know, some fellows just would never—couldn't believe, you know, that whatever it was—it wasn't enough.

OO: I don't believe that's true. I scaled for many years and I can't ever remember having any trouble in that line. Some scalers did. But I think if you tried to be fair and tried to do the right thing that you didn't have no worries, you didn't have no problem at all.

HO: And that's all Potlatch ever asked you to do, wasn't it?

OO: You bet. Potlatch never asked me to cheat for 'em in no way. And I didn't. And I tried to give a sawyer or skidders or whatever I was scaling for just exactly what I thought was fair. And I never had any trouble at all. No problem. I think that's the only way you can do anywhere, is to do as near right as you know how.
SS: What about gyppo—when you were in the woods was it mostly gyppo instead of day work?

OO: Yeah. Well, it was both kinds. You gyppoed for a while and then they decided they try to saw logs by the day and they tried that and then they went to gyppoing again. I don't know as there's—

HO: Was there a combination of gyppo and day in the same camp at the same time?

OO: That I don't know—quite remember.

SS: Well certain people, the ones that were doing the—I imagine you were on a salary because you were scaling, right?

OO: Salary, yeah.

SS: So there were certain positions like that that were probably just on salary.

OO: Oh, yes.

SS: And then these others were—

OO: Well, I sawed logs in camp before I ever went into scaling or anything like that and that was gyppo. I sawed there for Winton Lumber Company up on—what's the name of that creek up there? above Fernwood? Where they mined them garnets? What they call it?

SS: Emerald?

HO: Emerald Creek.

OO: Emerald Creek. I sawed logs up there and that was gyppo and we had to take the scale the scalers gave us.

SS: Well, you know some men have told me that one thing they didn't like about gyppo was that the more work you done the more likely they was to cut down the rate.

OO: That's true. That's true. The big companies, they are watching that.
And if you made too much, why, they'd be trying some way to cut the price down on you.

SS: On an individual basis? I mean on a-

OO: Pretty much run the whole camp. Some of the things didn't seem quite fair because when they worked by the day and you thought that production was being down a little bit, why, then the thing to do was to fire the saw gang that was on the lower end of the totem pole and that would spruce up everybody else.

SS: The lower end of the totem pole, meaning the guys that were producing less?

OO: The least.

HO: Kind of shake the others up to make more-

OO: Shake up the others and they'd produce more on day work. Of course, the gypos done away with that, see.

SS: How much direction did you get as a camp foreman? How much were you—did you get, you know—

OO: Wages?

SS: No, how much did you get told what to do? How much were you directed?

OO: Well, not—they didn't come out and throw their voice much as to what you had to do. OH, there had to be some influence, but I can't quite remember how that come about.

HO: Who was directly above you, Bradbury?

OO: Bradbury and Hornby; Bradbury was the superintendent.

HO: And then Hornby was what?

OO: He was the wopper (?), he was kind of over the trains and that sort of thing.
I don't remember him being around an awful lot.

Not very much, no. No, they left you alone pretty well.

Probably if things went well.

How long were you foreman?

Well, from the time McKinnon got this heart attack-

Not really very long.

- until we left there. We left there the second of February-

- of '43 (1943).

-'43 (1943) the next summer. And when the snow got so deep we couldn't hardly produce anything—seven feet of snow on the level! That was pretty good reason for leaving, wasn't it? (Chuckles)

I don't know what you can do in that kind of snow, anyway.

Seven feet on the level! We have pictures of that.

You had to shovel it out to get down, because you had to make how much?

Fourteen inch stumps.

So you have to shovel down-

A lot of work to get to cut your tree.

You damn right. They have a snow shoveler with every gang of saws to shovel down and then, my God, you were down in that hole there and when that tree went to go you had to have a passage out of there. Terrible.

What did you think about—did you mind giving up schoolteaching?

Not to marry him, not to marry him! (Laughter)

She was still a schoolteacher.

Did you continue to teach after you got married?

No. No.
OO: Just a little while.

HO: No, I didn't teach at all after we were married. No, I was teaching second grade at Kellogg and I just told my superintendent that I wanted to get married. And at that time—well, it would have been too hard and too far to try to commute or anything so they found somebody to replace me. And we lived in camp for several months and then we came out and then we've been here ever since.

OO: We've been here ever since. This has been our home ever since. We spent a year out on the coast—but—

HO: During the war.

OO: Worked for Boeing.

HO: Worked for Boeing, but other than that we have been right here on our own place. Thirty-four years this November.

OO: Yep.

SS: Did you ever consider teaching again?

HO: I have taught since then. Yes, I taught in Deary and Bovill— I taught until year before last. I taught first grade Deary—Bovill for—

OO: Got our family pretty well raised and then she taught again.

HO: For several years.

SS: I had the idea that in lots of place they couldn't teach once they were married. They wouldn't even let 'em.

HO: Yes, that was about—well, they were changing right about the time that I married Oscar because so many of the women were working in war work at that time. But up until that time—the first few contracts I signed said that if you married you lost your job.
That was right in the contract.

SS: Well, I'll be darned. Do you have much idea why they had that kind of clause or what they were trying to do?

HO: I think they felt that a man should support—at that time, no women's lib, they thought that a man should support his wife and a wife should not work and they felt that girls—that maiden ladies who didn't have any means of support deserved the jobs. I'm sure that was the feeling. And, I also think that they felt a woman who has a house to care for will be thinking more about her husband and her house and her family than about the school children. I think there was those two things.

SS: Do you think that was a well-founded kind of idea?

HO: No, I do not. I have taught since, and I had a husband, a house and children, and I'm sure that I was a better teacher then than when—well, mostly because of experience and more training. But I don't think it was a valid reason at all that they had those.

SS: Doesn't seem fair to me.

HO: At that time, I'm sure they felt that a married woman should not work; I mean it was just part of the morality at the time that a married woman just doesn't work, it's the husband who's supposed to support her and that the job should be—

SS: I've also had the idea from talking to people that the only jobs that were open to women pretty much was teaching and nursing.

HO: That's right, that's right.

SS: And that too seems quite different now.

HO: Yeah, it's a different world, it truly is.

OO: Well, she found that I couldn't support her and so she tried to
teach me things and she never had no luck there, either, so she had her work cut out for her!(Chuckles)

HO: Now, what have I taught? Three or four different stints, haven't I?

OO: I don't remember.

HO: We had three boys. Let's see; I taught before I was married and then we had three boys and when our youngest one—when David was four I went back to teaching and I taught for a couple of years and then we had a little girl and then I stayed home until she was school age and then I taught again, and then I got sick and then I stayed home for several years then I went back and taught parttime for a while and then I taught for about eight years and then my mother died and my dad lived—he was old and lived in Lewiston and I stopped teaching the year before that so that I could be with him.

SS: I was going to ask you—on the whole have you noticed much difference in the lumber operations up here of the Potlatch Lumber Company and the Clearwater Lumber Company down there? Was there any noticeable difference?

OO: I wouldn't say there was too much difference, it's pretty much—It was all the same company, you know. I can't see that there's much difference.

SS: I've heard they had better horses up here, when they were using horses. Think there's truth to that?

OO: Well, I don't know, their horses were tops. My goodness—well, I believe maybe that's true because Nogle was pretty much of a horse lover and I do think he had about the cream of the crop,
when it come to picking out horses. But I was a little better acquainted here at that time with the horses than I was on the Clearwater so I don't know.

HO: What year did they phase out the horses as a rule?

OO: Well, it was kind of gradual but it must have started about, oh, probably '35(1935) or '36(1936).

SS: That sounds about like what I've heard and then they were gone by '40(1940) I think.

OO" Very few left by '40(1940).

HO: Because when I went in there in '42(1942) there weren't any horses although they had a barn boss-

OO: -and one horse! (Laughter) Hauled out the garbage with one horse wasn't it? Yeah.

HO: I only remember the one-that's all I ever saw but still Earl Fox was barn boss and I wondered—barn boss? with one horse!

SS: Kept pretty busy. What happened in the Depression? When the Depression hit what did you do? Did you get laid off?

OO: In '32(1932)-year, I hadn't worked in the woods a great lot before that—sawed logs and worked on the sections and stuff like that and, boy, she was tight in the Depression. You couldn't get a job of no kind.

HO: Even those that were working—were they laid off?

OO: Yeah.

SS: What did you do?

OO: I worked on the welldrill and I tried a little farming and shot game out of season! Had to eat!

HO: Do you think that—
OO: Oh, I tell you that was pretty rough.

HO: That statute of limitations is out—do you think that they could get you for—

SS: They'd have to arrest about half the county! Everybody outside of Moscow—I can't imagine—were people worried about getting caught doing that kind of thing?

OO: I don't think so, not too much.

HO: Oh, yes, you said you were worried.

OO: Oh, yes, I worried, I didn't like to get in that jailhouse—but I knew I was going to have something to eat.

HO: You said that a neighbor lady told him that she dreamed that she saw him kill out of season, you know, she hadn't seen him and she was just trying to tell him—

OO: Just trying to get it out of me, trying, to get me to admit to it.

HO: And she said she dreamed that she saw him kill game out of season.

OO: It was her boy that come and told me that, that his mother had had a dream.

HO: Oh, I didn't remember that.

OO: And he thought he was being so smart, he didn't know how close he come to getting a first right in the mouth! (Laughter) But I knew that was no good either. I would have ended up in jail if I'd a done that. But he didn't bluff me too much; I don't bluff very easy.

HO: But you were guilty.

OO: I was scared, but I don't think I showed it.
SS: There was a lot of guys around here that did it. I mean I've heard 'em called— I've heard deer called government cattle. (Chuckles)

HO: When they actually did need it to feed their family, you cannot fault them too much.

OO: No, not at all. We didn't waste any. Didn't waste a bit.

HO: Well, except in the fact that if you killed 'em out of season there may not be any then for the next people.

SS: How long did it go on before you wound up getting on solid ground again?

OO: Oh— I can't remember when it was—

HO: You said that you were working in the camps in '36(1936).

OO: Oh, yes, I'd been in the camp before that. And, I don't know—about '34(1934) I guess maybe '35(1935) no, '34(1934) I think.

SS: Did you ever get in one of the CCC camps or that sort of thing during that time?

OO: I was in blister rust, yes, yes. Yes, I worked in the blister rust one year. I don't know that was probably '33(1933) probably.

SS: What did they do on that blister rust? How did they attack that blister rust? How would they go about doing that?

OO: You went out there and you run a string through there so you worked between these two strings and then you pulled these bushes.

SS: By hand? They come out easy?

OO: You had a pulaski there if they didn't come out easy, why, you helped 'em out with that. But that was just a make-work deal; it didn't help as far as blister rust was concerned, I don't think.

SS: Do you think they thought that it would?
Oh, yes, yes. That was what they told us anyway.

And what was it—wasn't it barberry?

And gooseberry.

And wasn't there something else, though besides those two?

There was three or four different kinds of bushes.

And the blister rust was supposed to host those—its spores.

Were there many young men from the cities that were working on that at the same time you were?

Oh, yeah, you're darn right, you bet.

But they were more in the CCC camps weren't they than the blister rust?

Well, I don't know, maybe. I was never in the CCs. This was strictly blister rust. Oh, boy, I'll never forget going to that blister rust that time. Been laying around home, you know, no work hadn't been for quite a while, soft and went up and got me a job and boy, that was wonderful! I think—I don't know what they paid; eighty dollars a month or something like that? Boy, that going to be real good! Went up to Clarkia and this fellow took us out with the pickup over to a trail and put us on this trail and he says, "Just follow this and you'll get to the camp." And he says, "It's nine miles, it's nine miles across." And I believe that it was nine miles by section line because I never seen nine miles so long in my life. (Laughter) Had a packsack and our rigging on—had to carry that. Oh, yes, I'll have to tell him: you ever hear of Frank Tom? Old Chinaman up at Clarkia? He had a store there and when I went to work up there in the blister rust I didn't have only a pair of oxfords, you know, smooth
shoes and was going to go back in the woods and I needed a pair of shoes. And believe-you-me, I didn't have the price of a pair of shoes, which was probably about ten dollars then and I went in to Old Frank Tom and I told him I was going to go to work in the blister rust and I needed a pair of shoes. And he had never seen me before, I'd never seen him before either and he didn't even ask me my name, he says, "What size do you wear?" And so I told him what size and he got me a pair of shoes and I put 'em on and went to camp and I never paid him a penny down and he didn't even ask me my name! And believe-you-me he was the first man I visited when I got my first check. That was a good turn. Boy, I'll never forget Old Frank Tom for that. Because I didn't have a dime when I went up there to work.

SS: Do you think that he decided to trust you just because of the way you talked to him?

OO: I don't know. I don't know; I have no way of knowing because he didn't even ask me my name or didn't have to sign nothing or anything.

SS: Was he there for a long time at Clarkia?

OO: Oh, quite a long time, you bet. Many, many years.

HO: In fact, I think he was there after we were married.

OO: It could be.

HO: Who was this Zoe?

OO: Oh, his daughter lived there.

HO: I don't know, I've never gone into that old store and you tell me the story and I can't remember whether that old fellow was there or not.
He ran—was his a general store there?

A general store there. It burned, it isn't there any more.

Speaking about stores like—oh, before I ask you that; you said then you had to hike in and you were way out of shape; were you out of shape when you started working in the— that sounds like rough work to me, pulling that—

No, it wasn't too bad.

Walking was when you found you were out of shape.

Yeah. You just wandered along through the bushes looking for those things and then you had a ball of string, you strung it parallel about every—

Did you get room and board and eighty dollars, do you think?

My, God, I couldn't tell you that.

And what year was that, do you think?

Probably '33(1933) or '34(1934).

'33(1933) or '34(1934) '33, probably.

Well, really that was good wages compared to—

Oh, it was like falling in a gold mine! You bet.

And I only got eighty dollars a month and I had to pay my room— I had to pay twenty dollars for room and board.

Teaching, yeah.

A country school had all eight grades.

I think you have that contract.

Yeah, I think I still have the contract. I taught in a country school up by Craigmont and made eighty dollars a month and had to walk.

You made eighty a month?
HO: Eighty dollars a month.

SS: And paid twenty-

HO: Paid twenty dollars a month for board and room and only a eight
month school because they afford to have a nine month school.

SS: And did your own janitor work.

HO: Oh, definitely. Lit my own fires and did my own janitor work
and must have walked, oh, I don't know, I suppose it was two and
a half, I think it was about two and a half miles from where I
stayed.

SS: Each way?

HO: Uh-huh.

SS: Times have changed.

HO: Uh-huh, the old Hart School at Craigmont the first year I taught
in 1940.

SS: Was much expected of you in the community as the teacher, as the
schoolteacher? Did you have a part to play?

HO: Oh, I don't quite know.

SS: I'm thinking of-some people have told me in a lot of the social
life for the community-

HO: Yeah, yeah, we did. They had community dances there and I really
wasn't-I don't think I was obligated to go, but I lived with the
people in the community and so I went, you know, but I didn't or-
ganize the dances myself. But, we had big potluck dinners there
and I did: help organize some of them, for the whole community.
And it was a community center because it was many miles out of
Craigmont. I think we were about eight miles out of Craigmont.
And that was the community center—the school. And we used to
have literary programs and I did help, you know, I did help with those. You'd get people in the community to—we'd put on plays.

SS: Debates?

HO: No, plays. No, we never did debate.

SS: Did you have that when you were in school, debates?

OO: Well, I can remember—yeah, uh-huh. But I went to school up there in Deary all time.

SS: Did you find it really enjoyable to teach? When you were first starting or did you find it a little overwhelming with all the kids?

HO: I had gone to a country school and I think that helped a lot.

I know many girls that I taught with that went out to teach in if they hadn't country schools, also grown up in that type of a community and had seen how other teachers taught they were overwhelmed, but I do think that the ones that had had that experiences in their childhood weren't quite as panicked.

SS: What do you think it was—

HO: They panicked.

OO: Had a reason to panic. I don't see how it's possible for one person to teach eight grades.

HO: But now, I take it back. There could have been eight grades, but there weren't that first year. But then I taught over here I can't quite remember—there weren't all eight grades, there weren't that many children. Do you know where Mount Tomer is?

SS: Oh, yeah.

HO: Do you know where the schoolhouse used to be?

SS: More or less.
HO: Do you know where Roger Smith lives?

SS: No. No, I don't think I know him.

HO: Have you been out on that road?

SS: Not really, but I have a rough idea about where it was.

HO: I taught at Mt. Tomer and that year I had at least one child in every grade. I had-I don't want to say too many—but I think it was seven first graders. Either five or seven and I believe it was seven, first graders. And at least— I believe there were twenty-seven kids in that school and that was hard!(Chuckles)

SS: What?

HO: And that was hard.

OO: Oh, well, I guess. Eight grades, gee whiz!

HO: The Ingebritsens—the Ingebritsen kids were there that year. Fritz Flomer—do you know Fritz Flomer?

SS: No, but I know the name. Have heard that name.

HO: And I taught—was there more than one Flomer? I remember Fritz especially I see his name in the paper. I haven't seen Fritz since I taught him. But I see his name in the paper.

OO: You say anymore you'll be telling this man how old you are, Mom! Getting way back in ancient history.

HO: But I thought maybe you— Have you lived at Moscow for sometime?

SS: I live on Little Bear Ridge, not too far from here.

HO: Oh, yes, I thought maybe you lived at Moscow, so I was going to tell you Moscow names, but if you don't live there— But that would have been in what? '41(1941) maybe? I think so.

OO: Been a big change in her lifetime.

HO: I was so surprised to hear that woman here— Mrs. Bos here last week
say that she taught in a country school in South Dakota and I
didn't even know or realize that there were any country schools
left. There hasn't been in Idaho since about the time that I
taught back in the early forties.

OO: Yeah, that's right, she said she was teaching in a country school.

HO: In a country school just last year.

OO: South Dakota.

HO: In South Dakota and that's truly amazing.

SS: Did you-after you got out of school did you do much in Deary-
did you have any connection with the town, I mean right along?
Did you always trade there mostly?

OO: Oh, yes, that was our town though.

HO: And you played for dances in Bovill and Deary and around.

OO: Yes, yes.

SS: What did you play?

OO: Saxophone. They had dances—that helped put us through the De-
pression!

SS: People kept dancing during the Depression?

OO: Yeah, there would be a few come.

SS: Where?

OO: Played here in Deary and played in Bovill and played in-

HO: Played in the -

OO: Oh, up above the mercantile.

HO: Did you charge a certain amount or did you just pitch in what
they could afford?

OO: No, they charged.

HO: Probably twenty-five cents?
I don't remember. Then we played out in the old opera building in Bovill, that old— it's still standing you know.

Yeah.

That was a rickety thing. Gee whiz, play schottisches and the floor'd go up and down like that, people sitting along the side, you know, the head's would be going this way and that.

Was it because the building was that old at that time?

Just dilapidated, never was very strong, I don't think.

In Deary—was most of the people that came to the dances just townspeople or people come in from the countryside?

Well, I suppose that the biggest part was right in town, a few outsiders all right. Oh, we was getting quite a rep built up attendance pretty good considering the times and everything.

I think in the Depression people did go to more dances.

Yeah, they were more community-

—minded.

They didn't set home and watch television! That's for sure.

Yes.

Didn't have the money to go traveling then.

Couldn't go very far to go to a dance, but they had to patronize their own community.

Do something.

You know Deary doesn't seem like it has much going on in it anymore, I mean in the way of business and all that. I'm wondering when that decline set in, when it kind of fell off there. It just seems like when you look at the old magazines, like the schools and the old newspapers and you see all these stores
and businesses and they're all gone now.

HO: I really don't know if it ever had any more population than it does now, though, did it?

oo: Oh, I think so. Oh, yes, I am sure. Haven't we got a picture of all the school kids marching in some—some day marching, and my golly, there must be a hundred kids going to school there. Haven't we got one of those pictures?

HO: I don't think so, I don't think you had one, I really don't.

SS: The business setup that seems to be gone—

HO: And there was a bank—

oo; Oh, yes, it was quite a town at one time. And it was pretty darn good. Had a bank and post office and confectioneries and bakery and harness shop and couple of garages and creamery station and—oh, it was just a pretty good town. Depot.

HO: What do you think the population was at the height? Do you have any idea?

oo: I just wouldn't—

SS: Do you have much of an idea about when it started to go downhill?

oo; Well, I believe about the time when the depot was discontinued.

SS: I wonder when that was?

oo: Oh—

SS: After the second World War or—

oo: Oh, yeah, must have been, uh-huh. I don't know if that's it, but it seems like it never was—

HO: Was there a depot agent here?

oo: Yes.

HO: Who was the last one? Do you know? I don't even know.
I think Mrs. Jim Baker was the last one.

I'm just trying to remember what it was like when the depot was here. Just can't remember.

Oh, one thing I was going to ask you about. Wasn't it Chuck Wells's wife that then after she left him went up and ran the store at Helmer?

Yeah. She married Dan Ross.

That's right. Did you know them at all? Were they there for a long time at Helmer?

Oh, I just can't remember how long they were there, but I remember both of them real well. And then he married another one, another colored person. What was her name?

I'm not sure I knew. I'm not sure of that.

What happened to his first wife? Did she die or what?

What?

Did she die or did they split up?

The second one?

The first one.

Chuck's exwife.

The first one, the second one you mean? They split up.

Then Chuck married again?

Yes. Oh, they split up, too and she lived with this Hanson, Art Hanson, you know.

I didn't really know.

Art Hanson, he's still living.

That was Chuck's second wife.

Uh-huh.
SS: Do you think people— I'm a little surprised—it sounds not like the kind of thing that would go on much in those days, I mean, racially mixed marriages—nowadays it's pretty acceptable, but back then it seems that—

OO: Oh, I suppose people kind of looked down on it a little bit, but no one made any big issue of it, that I remember. Probably a few jokes went along with it, I don't know.

HO: I guess they called it the Black and White store.

OO: Yeah, they called it the Black and White store, alright.

HO: That's not very derogatory.

OO: I don't think it was very acceptable to Dan's children, though.

SS: He'd been married before then?

OO: Yes.

SS: Dan had. Did you ever get the booklet that we put out on Arthur Bjerke?

OO: Yes, we read that?

HO: Were there more than one?

(Break in the conversation)

HO: —and if they didn't have a man to support them, then that was about—they had to either teach or nurse, that was about the only thing that was, you know. Rather than the fact that teachers didn't marry, I think many, many of them did and what most of 'em would do would go out into the community to teach and would teach there two years and then marry one of the young farmers, one of the young men that lived in that community—I think that happened many, many more times than the ones that didn't marry. But the reason you saw so many old maid schoolteachers, I think, is
because that was about the only thing they could do to make their living. Either that or work as a hired woman or a hired girl.

SS: And it wouldn't be as good work for them, probably. I wondered that maybe that might have influenced them to not— it seemed like you almost had to make a choice there between a career and a family.

HO: Yes, uh-huh. Now, let's see, that first school that I taught the girl that taught before did had married a local boy, local young farmer and then they wouldn't let her teach the next year. It was just understood if you got married you just didn't teach.

OO: She had her job cut out for her.

HO: Yes, she had her job cut out for her.

SS: Do you think then that some women might who were teachers, simply might have made a choice—they preferred to have a career than marriage?

HO: Possibly, possibly.

SS: I was thinking perhaps some of them would have married if they—

HO: If they could have combined the two. Uh-huh, probably.

SS: I don't know but—

HO: Of course, even as far back—even as recently back as the early forties, it was almost a stigma not to be married, you know. Whereas now they have a choice. But that was just the only thing they did; you just got married.

SS: Do you think there was much pressure on single women to get married?

OH: I know there was. I know there was.
SS: What form would it take?

HO: Just nearly everybody said, "You're not married yet?" I was twenty-one when I was married and still people, "Do you mean you're not married yet? You mean you're not married yet?"

My goodness, as if you were the worst old maid-

OO: "A good looking girl like you? Something must be the matter."

HO: Definitely there was pressure.

SS: Do you think that a single woman would be likely to have people try and fix her up?

HO: Oh, no doubt about it, no doubt about it. Because to most people unless you were some kind of a freak or, you know, that was just the traditional thing that you'd do. Well, it still is quite as acceptable but it isn't quite as pushed on people now. I still think of my twenty-one year old as a little girl.

OO: Yes. We'd feel terrible if she even got interested in a boy!

HO: But I definitely was—there was a lot of pressure put on me.

SS: You think then—it's funny, I haven't talked to many older ladies and I've kind of wondered if there's a way I could ask 'em about that. I'm not sure; I feel like it's pretty touchy. Maybe a woman could do it, I'm not sure that I can ask about that.

HO: But definitely there was. There just was an awful lot of pressure.

SS: Do you have much idea, do you think that some of the people—I know that bachelor men—that seems a little come common to me. I kind of wonder why, you know, in those days that anybody—how anybody managed to resist the pressure to get married, you know.

All those lumberjacks did, most of them did anyway. Guys like
Jelleberg, a guy like, like Arthur Bjerke, they never did marry.

No. Both good guys, would have been good fathers, both of 'em.

Um-hum.

And some of these other bachelors that's living around here—

I remember how Arthur like our kids and he'd come and stand on his head for them.

He'd do anything to entertain those kids.

And he said at that time he certainly should have had grandchil-
dren because he just loved kids.

Gosh, yes, he must have been what? Sixty-five years old and stand-
ing on his head here to show our kids.

And he'd play with them.

Just tease 'em.

Do you have any idea why a guy like him never got married?

Probably because he felt responsible for his mother, don't you think?

Could be.

He told me that he took care of his mother.

Well, I kind of think that he probably felt responsible for her.

And I think the only way that would have been would have been for some woman to ask him! (Chuckles)

He wasn't shy.

Well, he wasn't really, I guess, I don't know.

He had quite a reputation for work.

Oh, you bet, he worked awful hard. He never could be outdone.

He had to beat you a little bit no matter what he did. I know we was putting up some siding in the bedroom there, we was one on
each side of the door and we had strips about this long, you know and I always kind of liked to tease him, you know, to see what I could do. I'm pretty good at driving nails, myself. And we was boarding up and we had the boards all cut and was putting 'em on-

HO: Not a word was said.

OO: Not a word was said about being a race or anything like that, you know but I was going to beat him. And he could see, I guess that I was trying to beat him or something and boy, he lit into them nails. You never seen anything like it and he beat me, of course. And not a word was said either before or after.

HO: And he was an old man when they were building the granary down here and he was just awfully afraid of heights; Oscar's always been afraid of heights and old Arthur would just dance around that—it was built up so high-

OO: And we just set a 2x4 up there on the corner with a little short brace on, you know and then we was going to put a plate across the top there and he had to get up there and set on top of that post up on top of there. Well, there was no sense to that, he didn't have to get up there. He thought that was smart to get up there and then he hollered so Hazel should look out the window to see him.

SS: Probably made you feel a little queasy.

OO: Well, I'm just not good on heights. I can't do it.

SS: Some people just aren't.

OO: I know. And I'm one of 'em. I shouldn't be that way, because my dad was an old sailor and it didn't bother him at all, to get
up on heights. I never seen anything like that, but I couldn't.

SS: Another thing that I thought, too, maybe with some women who didn't want to get married. Maybe the men, too, maybe they had impossible ideals, you know, because I had that idea that in the early days in the more or less like in the end of the Victorian times, you know that people would idealize their prospective mate and then if they couldn't find somebody that ever measured up-

HO: It's possible.

OO: Another thing is that maybe they felt that they wasn't capable of making a living for an extra person. Because times was pretty tough a lot of the time. I suppose that contributed, how much I wouldn't know.

SS: Did you say that times were tough here before the Depression, too? Back in the twenties. So would you say those times were-

OO: Well, the part of the twenties, you know that was-after the First World War that things was fabulous before the big break. Criminy, I know my dad sold what for two dollars and a half a bushel back in them days and that's when two dollars and a half was a lot of money. But, of course, he ended up not getting that too, it was all on time and times got tough and they couldn't never pay it back.

SS: On time; what do you mean?

OO: Well, back in '28 (1929)

HO: Who owed him the money?

OO: Oh, the neighbors who had bought wheat for seed and stuff like that.

SS: He was owed money then?

OO: Uh-huh
HO: Oh, now, I know what would be interesting, about your dad-
00: His what?
HO: His thin dime, that you still have.
00: Oh, yes, yes, you bet. This was when I was pretty young kid my dad, they were hard up; I mean money was just scarce and he had to go to town to buy something, we needed something real ad at the house and he had a little dime—a dime that was up in the clock.
HO: Used to have an old clock setting up here.
00: It was 1838—was the date on this dime. And he had to have something out of town real bad so he took that dime to go up and buy something in town.
HO: He knew it was an antique then—
00: And he hated to spend that old dime. And when he got to town, I don't know somebody that owed him something or somehow or another he got the groceries without spending that dime and that dime went back in the clock.
HO: And we have it today.
00: And I still have it.
HO: Talk about your last thin dime.
00: That was right down to the last dime. And we still have it. So that's getting down pretty close.
SS: It really is.
00: You bet! Well, we have our records that our mother kept—1906 that their total income for the year was $64 and they had an outlay of $48—wasn't it?
HO: I can't remember.
SS: I'd be real curious to see that if you still have it.
I think it's up in that old suitcase upstairs, isn't it? I believe it is.

I'm not sure, I'm really not sure. (short blank space.)

--an Irishman was gonna whip him on the sawdust pile and he whipped all three of 'em slicker than a whistle and he said that Old Swanson, he was another Swede working there in the sawmill, and Swanson was taking sawdust away or something—Swanson was underneath there peeking out there from underneath and he wouldn't come out and get in the fight.—

(outside interference.)

Well, no, my dad he wasn't supposed to fight or anything like that on the job.

Probably all got canned.

After their fight, why, he went up to the office to call for his time because he was in trouble he had to get off and go somewhere else—and he went up to the office and called for his time and the boss told him—he asked him why of course, and he told him. "Well," he says, "you're going to stay," and he says, them other guys are going to go." So he stayed and the other guys was canned.

Was that around here in the sawmill?

That was in one of those sawmills we've got a picture of.

You said they had separate bunkhouses?

Yes, a separate bunkhouse for Swedes and the Irish. That didn't go over very big. Fighting words. They was going to clean up on him, but they didn't have any luck.

Was he a big man? Your father.

Well, he weighed about 185—in that picture you can see he's.
HO: Not a tall man.

OO: No, he wasn't tall, no, I was taller than he was, but he weighed about as much as I ever weighed.

HO: Wouldn't you say about like our Rich?

OO: Pretty much, about 185 pounds. But he had hands on him that you couldn't believe, a grip, and he was quick as lightning. Yes, he was quick. I know a guy down at the saloon come at him with a knife one time and he got close enough that he could hit him and the knife sailed clear to the ceiling.

But he was strong. I'll tell him about when the threshing crew was here, I seen that, that happened right out here on the lawn. I don't know he must have been along seventy years old-

HO: An old man. Oscar was seventy day before yesterday. "Old man!"

OO: He went out here of an evening and they used to twist down on a broom handle, you've seen 'em do that. And Mc Donald tried to twist the other fellow, to make him let go and those other guys had been doing that until one guy was the winner; he was the best. My dad was sitting there, he was an old fellow waling with a cane. He says, "Let me try that." And he got up there and he took ahold of that broom handle and twisted down like that and that guy told me after wards, he never saw anything like that in his life. He said if he hadn't let go he'd a took the hide right off'n his hand. Dad just took that broom-

SS: He was not a man to trifle with.

OO: No, there's no question about it. Arthur Bjerke tells about— that he was the only man that he ever saw that could take a wheat sack by the two ears like that, full wheat sack and throw it up in
air over his back and walk off with it. Only man he ever saw
that had that much grip in his hands. You know, when you stop
to think about it that takes some doing.

SS: Did you get along well with your father?

OO: Yes. I feel sorry now about some of the things I did to my
parents, but I think everybody does that. You better get along
with him, I tell you. He had a heart as big as all outdoors.

HO: He said he was rough with everyone else except with the kids,
he said that he pampered and babied the kids.

OO: He wouldn't take nothing off of anybody—nobody better cross his
path, except us kids, and he was so tolerant with us that he put
up with murder. He spoiled us from the word go, no question
about it. I got by with things that I should not of got by with
and so did my sister.

SS: Like what?

OO: Well, sleeping in and him out here working, you know, things like
this. He had a heart as big as all outdoors for the family
but not for anybody else. He was straight; he was a straight
shooter. By God, he expected the other fellow to be that way,
too. I can't help but think that the reason he was that way is
because he had it so tough when he was a kid. He tells about—
well, he was only eight years old when he had to go out and herd
cattle for this big landowner in Sweden and he didn't have
no shoes and cold in the fall, frosty and when a cow would uri-
rinate he'd get up and stick his feet in it to warm his feet.

HO: Pretty rough for an eight year old, isn't it?

SS: Yeah, and working for somebody else besides your own family, too.
That might have been one of the reasons why he was so easy on us that he didn't want us to have it like he had it.

Well, in my opinion, if you're going to be one or the other, it would be a lot better to be nice to your family and mean to the outside world than to be nice to the outside world and mean to the family.

He was awful strict with the other fellow. He'd better be on the up and up, because that's what he expected. And I remember him telling about herding these darn cows and there was one day it was warm and sunshiny and he was up on the hillside and he was only eight years old and laid down there and went to sleep. And, of course, the darn cows, had to go down and get in this fellow's oat field or something and the old fellow seen dad and he come up there and to wake my dad he just kicked him. Give him a hell of a kick. I know that stuck in my dad's memory all the time. He said if he ever went back to Sweden he was going to kill him! By the time he got big enough that he could do that, why, that old fellow was probably sitting in an old rocking chair or something.

Was the deal on that that most of the families like his family just kind of worked for this guy?

Sure, slaves, slaves is what it amounted to. You bet, they had to ask permission to go and gather up some twigs up in the brush for wood.

I can't imagine a guy— I can understand why that would make a man feel that everybody better deal with him as an equal.
Oh, boy, yep. And he left home when he was thirteen years old and he never seen his folks after that.

But his sister—his sister came out here then. Came not only to the United States but right out here, lived in Deary. So he did see his sister. Do you suppose he was the oldest, your dad?

I don't know about that. I don't know if she was.

I said he—do you suppose he was the oldest?

I kind of think so.

He was probably the oldest seeing that he had to sea and so on.

Do you think that he had a real dislike of aristocrats or that kind of system? Feudal?

Yes, indeed. Never liked to see anyone take advantage of the other fellow. But that was memories that stuck with my dad all his life. Remembering herding that cow and then getting kicked. So, he had a big heart for kids, especially us kids. Spoiled us rotten.

Did you ever get in any fights, do you remember yourself?

No, I remember he wanted to get in a fight—

I'm talking about you.

Have I been in a fight? Oh, yeah I been in one or two, but nothing to amount to nothing. I was always sissy!

Your dad raised you a sissy, huh?

Yeah.

You don't strike me as a guy that would turn the other cheek.

I left some marks on some of 'em, but nothing to amount to much.

Now, he met your mother when she was cooking in one of these sawmill camps.
OSCAR & HAZEL OLSON
Reel #0346

OO: Yes. Yeah, uh-huh. She was cooking for a sawmill over here when my dad met her.

SS: Local girl?

OO: Oh, no, she come out from Iowa to visit her sister that was out here and liked it out here and she and my dad was married. That was about 19-what? Must be 1903?

HO: I imagine.

SS: When you say that—this about dealing fair—that he expected others to deal fair with him.—

HO: Well, your word had to be good.

END OF TAPE

Transcribed by Frances Rawlins

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