ALBERT PIERCE

Interviewed by:
Sam Schrager

Oral History Project
Latah County Museum Society
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His grandparents emigrated from Virginia to Minnesota, and his cousin told him he walked at the head of the oxen all the way. His father's Minnesota farm did much better than his Uncle John, who turned his farm over to his son.

The local miller from Minnesota set up a flour mill in Kendrick, then came back to tell people about the opportunities in Idaho, about 1900. Some people from the nearby Minnesota town were interested in buying farms, so one by one the Pierces sold out and moved West.

On the train trip out from St. Paul, two men sat down across from the Pierces and smoked cigars, which disturbed his mother. The conductor after asking them to leave, kicked one through the door by the seat of his pants.

His family followed their daughters to Texas Ridge, but father tried Juliaetta first. Albert's love of saddlehorses made him enjoy the West; buying saddleponies for $2 apiece. Literary and debates Kids had a better time in those days. Halloween tricks: turning an outhouse over with the editor's wife inside.

Riding horses up Spud Hill. The rock pile monument on top had wood pegs with the names of visitors printed on them.

The Blailock place was the only homestead at the site of Deary. McGowan and Henry formed the townsite company to lay out the town. Mostly new people came in from out of the area to buy townlots. Jorgeson, a Norwegian store owner, operated like a Jew, charging different people differently. (continued)
He hears about the Deary fire while in Spokane, and fears for his wife and baby. The building he rented burned down and was rebuilt in brick. Three general stores were too many for Deary, so he didn't do a very good business. Having to carry farmers on credit until harvest took away operating capital for the store. Knowing all the people well also made it harder, because they expected credit if their neighbor got it.

Location of Blailock homestead in Deary. The Stockwell house was on the east side of town.

August Leisching cleared the last twenty acres, heavily timbered, on his homestead, then broke it up, and then died. He asked Albert to take out his glass eye so he could clean it; but Albert didn't like the job, so the postman did it. What the Pierce store sold. August made a man clean the mud off his shoes before entering his shanty. Before his death, he feared he'd have no relatives left in Germany to give his place to, because of World War I. He might even have favored Germany but he was very honest and well liked. Other oldtimers on Texas Ridge. (continued)

He remembers Mr. McKie repeating himself. The McKies had a couple thousand acres of land. Wealth broke up the family.

After talking over their differences, their argument flared up again and Stanton shot McCoy dead. An old Texas Ridge bachelor who took to drink after his wife left him, was shot by a saloon keeper after pounding on the door.

Potlatch Lumber Company bought the timber from local farmers for a dollar a thousand on the stump. Almost no farmers who tried to log it themselves and haul it to the roads made any money. Potlatch sent around a salesman and sold the majority Ford cars.

Joe and Lou Wells. Indians liked to pretend they had a bad horse on grades so they could take the inside track. Some Indians farmed.

The best times around Deary were the days when logging was going on there, before it became a farming town only. Weyerhaeuser's exclamation on seeing high lead logging for the first time.
Handling a bolting team of horses won Albert a compliment from Arthur Bjerke and his father.

Albert was never a farmer at heart. He stayed in Deary after quitting the store, and then took a job with Sears, Roebuck and moved to Spokane.

He says that life stories are interesting. He remembers being made to do two men's work shocking grain because he didn't know any better. Most people who come West want to stay.

with Sam Schrager

August 22, 1974
II. Transcript
ALBERT PIERCE

Deary, Texas Ridge; b. 1889

farmed and owned Deary store

1.6 hours

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His family followed their daughters to Texas Ridge, but father tried Juliaetta first. Albert's love of saddlehorses made him enjoy the West; buying saddle ponies for $2 apiece. Literary and debates, kids had a better time in those days. Halloween tricks: turning an outhouse over with the editor's wife inside.

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Jorgeson picked out the townlot he wanted in advance of other people. First Deary businesses and businessmen.

Swan Erickson the blacksmith who moved up from Troy was a kind old bachelor. His death. He loved kids, gave all the town kids pens, and they loved to watch him work.
He hears about the Deary fire while in Spokane, and fears for his wife and baby. The building he rented burned down and was rebuilt in brick. Three general stores were too many for Deary, so he didn't do a very good business. Having to carry farmers on credit until harvest took away operating capital for the store. Knowing all the people well also made it harder, because they expected credit if their neighbor got it.

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with Sam Schrager
August 22, 1974
PIERC\E: I say a little girl, she's a little lady, staying and living with us, a schoolteacher. And she went somewhere and they made a record of her singing. And when she heard herself, that just got her goat! She was a good little singer, but it didn't sound good to her.

SS: I don't know if it ever sounds good. My voice always sounds funny to me.

PIERC\E: I suppose it does to most everybody.

SS- Because you can't hear yourself.

Well, the first thing I want to know about is about how the Pierce Clan, that whole family wound up coming out to the Deary country in the first place.

PIERC\E: I can tell you that pretty easy, I've got that in my mind, yeah. Your story should start a little farther back than that, but, mine I'll tell you. My grandfather and grandmother and father and uncle and grandparents all emigrated from the state of Virginia to Minnesota in real early times, because I had a cousin, he was an old man when he told me that. He says, "You know, Albert, I walked all the way from Virginia to Minnesota." He was a young man and all the rest of 'em were older and they was driving oxen, and he had to be mostly, it seemed like then- I thought that even if you drove oxen you could ride, but he said you had to walk almost at their heads. Which them days, you stop and think, they didn't have roads I suppose, they had to drive around a tree or something and he had to be right at their heads, maybe more than they would if they had a road maybe they would follow the road and he could have rode part of the time, but he had to be right there to lead 'em. And he says, "You know, I walked all the way from Virginia to Minnesota." And that was my aunt's son. Granddad Pierce and Grand-
mother Pierce had three children, my father, Uncle John Pierce and Aunt Rachel Moore—always to me because I was Dad’s youngest one of the family, and they were all old folks when I first remember ‘em almost.

SS: Did they all live-

PIERCE: No, they all took up homesteads land adjoining each other.

SS: In Minnesota?

PIERCE: In Minnesota, yeh. That’s just in Minnesota.

SS: How did they come about to leave Minnesota?

PIERCE: That was only sixty miles northwest of Minneapolis and they lived there ’til, oh, they were all grown and the older ones were all married, the biggest part of ’em. I had two brothers and two sisters—they were married and come out West. And— I’m getting a little ahead of my story. It was my uncle who had a place, he turned the place over to my father. Dad got 160 acres of land and Uncle John, his brother, had got a quarter section right by the side. Dad cleared up, oh, he had a good farm when he sold it. Never had a mortgage on it, got along alright. Uncle John didn’t have any larger family than Dad did and got in debt so head over heels. I don’t why he did, or just no management whatever, or what, I just don’t know any more about that, why he got in debt. He told one of his boys who was a real good fellow, he was ambitious and honest and good every way, he told Joe, ”If you’ll pay off the mortgage on this place, it’s yours.” Just give it to him. He gave it to him as soon as he assumed the mortgage of it, and he paid it off. So, I don’t know how in the world—he had it all paid off and good farm, too, but it must have been about that time, along about 1900, when there were so many people emigrating West, going out, of course; took us
three days to come on the train from St. Paul to Spokane. The trains weren't too fast then, either. So, they sold their place. Uncle John Pierce had that place, he got in debt and told Joe if he'd pay off the debt that he would give it to him as his, so he did. Then, of course Joe being a good fellow, he took care of his parents in their old days he seen that they was comfortable and looked after 'em. And his wife was a nice woman, too. And so, - I don't know why, Joe- I think it was some of his friends, none of his relatives, I don't think, came out here around Moscow- and, oh, yes, I know- it was the Miller, had the flour mill in Hitchison, he came out and he put in a flour mill at Kendrick because they raised so much wheat on American Ridge, Potlatch Ridge, Tex Ridge and Bear Ridge and all around there. And he come back and he talked to so many of his friends about- and that's the way they became interested. And it was just about that time when they was up in our country- we lived north of town six miles- there was a lot of young folks out on the prairie come up to buy some of the wooded areas, you know, farms that was partly cleared, small farms, because they could buy them cheaper than if they would a had if it was all ready for cultivation. And, Joe Pierce sold his- that was my cousin- Uncle John's boy, he had taken over Uncle John's place. So, he sold it and my uncle, Ed Moore over at the other side sold it and that sort of got my folks in the notion of selling, I guess. And then my oldest sister and her husband, Ed Bogar, they came out West, and then my younger sister, who was six years older than me, she got married, they come West. And that was leaving, Father and Mother and I there, so just as soon as the girls both left then Mother was ready to leave, too, you know, so she put on the pressure. Dad was getting up in years and he would a stayed there, but he was just as well off out West as he was back there;
the weather was better. And so, he had sold the old place and come out West- he had 160 acres and then he give my two brothers and my sisters, I think sixty-three acres each- each one of the boys got twenty and my sister got thirteen or something- twenty-three or something, I forget just what the number, but I know it was 163 acres he had. The reason it is an odd number, he had one lake so much of it zigzagged around and these points out was figured in on Taxation, I guess. And my uncle and his son, Joe, Joe owned his uncle's place because his uncle got in debt head over heels and turned it to Joe and Joe paid it off. I think I've told you that. And so they- Joe sold out and he didn't hardly know where he was going and what to do, and some of the- that was in Minnesota- and some of the folks- neighbors, I don't think it was relatives, I think it was some neighbor- oh, yes it was the miller in town, man that had the flour mill, he came out to Kendrick, which is only twenty-three miles northeast of Lewiston, and he put in a flour mill there. And he told my dad and he told Joe, too, what a good place, what a good country it was in there.

SS: So everybody wanted to come?

PIERCE: Yes. First one then another.

SS: What do you remember about the train trip out?

PIERCE: Well, it took us three days to come from St. Paul to here. And we had a nice trip, but that was like a slow train through Arkansas, when you think of it now. Wasn't it? (chuckles)

SS: A long time.

PIERCE: Yeah.

SS: You mentioned to me before there was a little problem with a guy smoking?

PIERCE: Oh, yes, yes. I never will forget because I was a kid and it tickled
Tobacco smoke always made my mother have a headache. She just couldn't stand it. And they have a smoking car on all passenger trains, like they do even yet, you know, they did them days. And here come an old fellow, sat down just across the street— that wasn't his seat but he come and set there and smoked. And I don't think Dad said anything to him, Dad might have asked him, told him that it made my mother sick, but he didn't pay no attention and the old conductor— I saw with this conductor something I've never seen, I've never seen a conductor or a brakeman on a train with whiskers, he was a young man, but he had whiskers down, oh about that long, but trimmed and neat and nice. He looked like a neat man and a young man. But why could a conductor want to wear whiskers, I wonder, chin whiskers; he did. And so Pa told him, and there was two men come and sit right there by him, and blowin' that blue smoke and making Mother sick. And Pa told my Dad told that conductor that it made her sick and he went in a nice way and told that man and asked them to go in— there was a smoker, just a place for that, told them to go in that. They paid no attention, stayed right there and smoked, and didn't say I, yes, or no or nothing. And he went on I suppose one way and then when he come back and they was sitting there smoking yet. And I don't know whether he took time to ask 'em to go again, but anyhow I remember just as well as if it was yesterday, him grabbin' this man that was sitting next to him and yanked him outta the seat, told him to git into the smoking room, and the second man out as he went, he went through the door he hauled off and kicked him in the seat of the trousers. He was boss of the train, you know. A conductor he's in charge of the engineer even. Did you know that?

SS: I've heard that.

PIERCE: The conductor he has charge of the complete train. Anything goes
wrong at all, he's the business. And that's the way he put him into
the other coach right then.

SS: When you got out there, when you got out to the Deary country;
it was Texas Ridge that you-

PIERCe: That's where we went up to first. Texas Ridge is just north of Ken-
drick, you know. Kendrick is twenty-three miles northeast of Lewis-
ton. Well, see, my brother-in-law and sister came there and he got a
place, they liked it and then when my younger sister and her husband
got married, they went out there, too, and that took our two girls,
the daughters, well, then, Mother- the jig was all up, Mother had to
go, too. And we sold out and went up- went out there.

SS: You said that your father had a little difficulty figuring out where
he was going to live there though; right? Didn't it take him a while
to settle down on that place?

PIERCe: I know what it was- I was going to tell you. Yeah, when he first come
there, he told us and maybe these other folks around, he wasn't going
to do like most of 'em come there and go and buy a place first thing,
he was going to look around and get just exactly what he wanted. I'm
telling it just exactly as it was. We went up just six miles north
of Kendrick, up on Tex* Ridge, which is nice country up there and
there's American Ridge to the west and Potlatch to the east and a
lot of good, nice country around there. But Dad he wasn't there a
week until someone told him about Juliaetta. Juliaetta was only four
miles south of Kendrick down there, says the climate was good. Dad
went down there- I don't know whether he looked at more than one
place, but he bought the poorest place that he could have bought!

(Chuckles) After he said he was going to look around and get thirty
acres, of course, he come out alright, because he traded it, that
thirty acres for eighty acres —
way up, oh, ten, twelve, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, twenty miles north of there, then he sold that place for money, so he got his money back. He done alright after all. But when he bought that place down there they was 160 acres for sale up on Texas Ridge and my brother-in-law and my sister wanted eighty acres— that's all he wanted— so Dad told him he'd take the other eighty acres, so they bought that. And we never lived in Juliaetta more than a year or two. There was no buildings on that eighty acres, so he went up and had a house built on it and he lived there the rest of his days.

SS: What did he do when he first got on the place? Built that house first of all?

PIERCE: Oh, yeah, yeah. And there was only about ten acres cleared up on it and that was all slash so he had it slashed and the bull pine was laying in rows, so he had a man to burn that; knew how to burn it, knew when to burn it, and just how to handle it. And he had that broke up and just lived on that place for the rest of his days— I mean 'til he got real old, then he moved into town.

SS: What did the land- what did the country look like to you when you first saw it?

PIERCE: I was only a kid about sixteen years old and I just loved it. And back East— the only horses I had would be a— one old horse too old to trot pretty near, you know, then I had one crooked legged colt and I was a horse lover from the time I ever seen one. I think I loved the horse when I was a baby! And so, - got off my story now-

SS: You were talking about liking horses and I asked you what the country was like to you when you first got there.

PIERCE: Yeah, when we first come up there. That just appealed to me because all the young folks, boys and girls, everyone of 'em had
saddle horses. And do you know what I- maybe I've told you before- what I bought was one colt or two- one or two colts one time; two dollars a piece. I mean, yearlings- year old colts. Yes sir. Nice colts, not one thing a matter with 'em. And then I could buy- well, I bought a nice little saddle horse, white horse, you had to look out when you got on her, if wanted to ride her- I was never a good rider, but I got so I wasn't afraid of her. She wasn't mean, she'd just try to throw you off and if you could stay on her for a little bit, why, that's all there was to it. And I bought her for seven dollars and with a good riding bridle. And horses was cheap and that just appealed to me. So I liked that western country- just appealed to me than it did my old daddy. I think poor old Dad was too old to adjust to different place, different conditions and everything, although he bought- he had two places up there at one time. He had two- eighty acres on two different places and someone come along wanted to buy that other place that we had- that my grandfather and grandmother was living on it- and he sold it, just kept eighty acres.

SS: What did you do for amusement? What did kids do? Did you have a good time together?

PIERCE: I tell you, I think the kids in them days, young folks them days had better times than they do today. Too much of this- these young folks now getting in a car and drive about a hundred miles, don't know what they're going there for or what they're going to do when they git' there or go to a show and that's about it. Well, them days, all the boys and all the girls, they all had saddle horses and always quarreling about- each one had the best horse, you know. (Chuckles) And now let's see, the other things that they did- there was one thing, too, out in the country, Dad had lived on the farm four
or five miles out, and of a wintertime they had literaries or debates in public schoolhouses. And you take good public speakers, they'd always decide on some question that was debateable, you know, and then they would have songs and different things for people to do for entertainment. And when I think of it, I believe them young folks them days had a better time than young folks have today. I believe they really enjoyed themselves just as much or more.

SS: What about raising Cain? Didn't you tell me that they used to play a lot of tricks on Hallowe'en and that sort of thing sometimes?

PIERCÉ: Oh, yes. Hallowe'en, all the time. That was carried on for years and years and years and years, why, it was carried on, well, oh, I think my wife and I was married twenty years before they ever stopped that nonsense.

SS: Are there any that you remember, I mean, any of the old tricks they used to pull?

PIERCÉ: Yes, mostly - take out in the country they had these outhouses, you know, always go and turn them over. And then right in the town of Deary one time, the editor's wife was setting in the outside toilet when some of them fellers come - they didn't know she was in there - probably he or she might have thought afterwards, but they didn't. I don't remember who it was at all now, but they turned that thing over! (Chuckles) I don't know what position she was in, but, she went over. So there was a lot of funny diddoes pulled them days. And I guess there was a lot of other things that I've almost forgotten, or haven't thought of.

SS: Did you tell me that kids used to go and climb Spud Hill?

PIERCÉ: Oh, yes, yes. That was - I just thought now, how I used to climb that old Spud Hill. And after our baby was born and I carried him up there one time and I believe I carried my niece, who is going to be
PIERCE married in a few days now, for a second time, her first husband died oh, ten, twelve, fifteen years ago and she's going to be married, I carried her up that hill one time. And one- I remember my niece when she said, "Oh, Uncle Albert-" I put her down and I said, "I'll take you by the hand." I was getting tired before I got up to the top there, but she said she just couldn't, so I carried her all the way up. That was a hard old job.

SS: Well, in the real old days, could you ride your horse a lot of the ways up there?

PIERCE: Oh, yes. We could ride 'em almost all the way up there, only we had to go about a mile east of Deary and then we had what we called a hogsback, just a slanting slope from way back here to almost to the top, we could tie our horses to the trees and it would be no object in taking horses up to the top- the top was all rocks, and a horse would have to just pick his place, almost have to place his foot in the right place because it was rough, and it was just about thirty feet- thirty or forty or fifty feet down to where the trees was we'd tie them in there and walk. There was a trail there. And I can remember the first times up there- it was in the spring on Easter day, 1905 and there was about seven or eight of us- eight I think- eight or nine went up and they had built a monument; piled one rock- small rock on top of another, and built it up about, oh, six feet high and it was- I don't who done it- and everybody went up there, made a peg about that long and would print their name on it. Put' their name on it. I don't think it was with just lead pencil, I think they must have carved it with knives so it would last. And the pegs, the pegs was stuck in there and the wind blow 'em down or someone knock 'em down, and I betcha they was that thick all over- all around that thing.
SS: These were like-a-pieces of wood?

PIERCE: Yeah. A little piece of wood, just like— you've seen these in a bale of hay, little pegs, something like that, yeah, had them and they'd probably make it out of green wood or something, I don't know.

SS: So what was the view of the country like?

PIERCE: Oh, beautiful! You could see clear down— there's two mountain peaks— No, no, that isn't there— you could see a long, long ways. I was going to tell you, you could see two mountain peaks down in Oregon, but that's up here north of Spokane.

SS: Yeah, yeah.

PIERCE: But you could see a long, long way from Mount Deary, or we called it Spud Hill them days, they've changed it.

SS: Well, you said, you saw a townsite here before there was any town there.

PIERCE: Oh, nothin' but a log cabin, a log cabin and a—the first time I was there, it was a log cabin and a little old barn, that's all there was in Deary. *K's sir!*

SS: Who's place was that?

PIERCE: A fellow by the name of Blalock homesteaded it. And the town site company— I think it was the Weyerhaeuser Lumber Company bought the town site, but they put a fellow by the name of Fred McGowan and Hugh Henry there to promote it. They come up and had it surveyed in lots and sold the lots and stayed up there until they got all the lots sold, and then they pulled out for to do the same work somewhere else I suppose.

SS: Did they do that for Potlatch? For the company?

PIERCE: Yeah. Whoever owned that—yes, it was them that had—yeah. Anyone that bought the lots after that—after they pulled out of there, and they had sold just about all the lots, why, they'd have to buy the
lots from some individual that had bought. Some people bought 'em for speculation or for some future use and probably change their minds, want to sell. There was always lots and lots for sale, seemed like.

SS: Were most of the people that bought the lots local people? Or were most of them from out of the area?

PIERC: An awful lot of business people from out of the area. They's an old Norwegian fellow and he was Norwegian by blood but if they ever was one by nature he was a Jew! (Chuckles) He would sell goods, I don't know whether he ever put one price on goods or not. He was good enough judge of human nature to know who...

END SIDE A

PIERC: Yeah, yeah, he come there, he come there and put up a store, a temporary store about a quarter of a mile down the road before the lots was put up for sale. And he had the one picked out and probably paid some one a little bonus to let him have that. He got the best location in town. And he run the store- well, he had small children and he stayed there until they was grown, wanted to go to college, I guess, then he sold out.

SS: So he was a pretty good judge of human nature?

PIERC: Yes he was, yes he was.

SS: That was Jorgeson, was it?

PIERC: Yeah, that's old Mr. O. C. Jorgeson, yep.

SS: So a number of these people that moved in then in the area when the townsite-

PIERC: They were practically all new people from everywhere. They had- in a business way they had a blacksmith moved up from Troy up there, old twenty Swan, Swan Erickson, put in a livery barn, had of horses there. Now, that sounds funny, doesn't it? Ten teams.
And creamery, cause people was keeping cows and they thought it was going to become regular dairy country. And a drugstore, Jorgeson had a general store, Alvin M. Anderson moved up from near Troy-Nora, Idaho, he come there, and there was three stores—oh, who? Oh, Emery Olson— I believe Emery Olson and Andrew Olson started too. Three stores. They put in a grain elevator, a grain elevator—Andy Carlson built the hotel; he done good in the hotel business there for a long time. There was a lot of lumberjacks would stay with him there, coming into town or going out and going into Bovill or out of Bovill. And, let's see, I know they had a doctor—young doctor come from back East, started his business there, stayed there 'til his kids were grown, had to go to college. And a photographer, Anton Lee come there, he used to take a lot of pictures of the new places and new folks coming in and everything. And, let's see, what else? Oh, there was so many other things. A newspaper there a long time and then when he got too old his brother come and took it. Carl Peterson had it first then Sam Peterson had the weekly newspaper. And, they had a bank, a pool hall, a hardware—I said drugstore, didn't I?

SS: Uh-huh.

PIERC E: Huh.

SS: All springing up overnight, did it?

PIERC E: Well, yes, it come up in a hurry. Just like mushroom. And of course, some of them there and businesses didn't make it and others kept coming in. And I can remember when they had about twenty horses there in the livery barn and they was doin' a good business. And then, of course, just as soon as the cars come, the livery barn went out and the garages and service stations started.

SS: What about Swan Erickson? Will you tell me what you remember about
him?

PIERCE: Poor Old Swan was just the finest old Swensky— he was from Sweden when he was a young feller. He told me one time, he says, "You know one time when I was coming over across the water," says, "I got so sick—" stomach sick, seasick, — said, "I got so sick I thought shore I was going to die!" (Chuckles) And, everybody liked Old Swan, honest old fellow, never married. And he built a good, big blacksmith shop there and he built living quarters up in front upstairs, right in the front part of his— and he was over at our place, visiting our store, in there visiting the last place he was ever visited— he come every evening, visiting around different people because he was over to his shop all day, you know, and he liked to get out and visit peo-

ple. And he went up to the other store before he come down to our place, they said that night and then our place was the last place, so when I got ready to close, why, he went home and he had quite a long stairway to go up to his living quarters, and he had some wood split up into— that's when they burned wood in cookstoves, you know, in the cookstove size, so he just filled his arm full and went to carry it up and evidently that was just all it took, carrying it up there, and he didn’t get quite in the woodbox, he got it just about to the woodbox and his arm went down and it went on the floor and Swan Erickson dropped over dead. He was just as good, honest as the day was long; good, loved kids, a bachelor and every kid in town would a swear by him, because he was just so good to them. And no matter where they'd see him, anywhere, they all called him Swan, "Hello, Swan." Even our boy, and I don't believe our boy was taller than that, he knew Swan Erickson and called him by his first name and all the other kids did, too.

SS: Did he give the kids presents?
Oh, give them nickels— they didn't like him for just that one reason, because, he was just good to 'em and they liked to watch him pound out that red hot iron and make this and make that and liked to watch him— be off a ways, and watch him shoe horses and everything. And, as I say, he was— I remember one time he give all the kids in town a pen, and our boy, probably seven years old, he give him a pen; a writing pen, you know. (Laughter) That's how he learned to write, maybe he was only about six years old, I don't think Arnold could write yet, but I guess we had that 'til we burned out in town. Our place of business burned out— that's the reason we lost that, or we'd probably had that pen yet, yeah.

Well, Swan moved up from Troy to Deary.

Yeah.

I wonder if he had much— I wonder why he moved to Deary.

I'll tell you— see, I don't know how long he'd been in the blacksmith business in Troy, but— and I think there was another blacksmith shop there. I think there was two blacksmith shops there then, and there was two— and Swan wanted— he had a sister living up close to Deary. I think maybe that have been one reason he wanted to get up there and another place where he would have been the only blacksmith shop.

Well, for a while there was two barbershops (blacksmith shops) in Deary, too. Two barber shops— blacksmith shops in Deary, but the other two fellas they left— there was two brothers. I think just one of 'em worked most the time and the other one worked off somewhere else.

Do you think that Deary was a lot like Troy as a town? Think the towns are pretty similar?

Well, pretty much. Both farm towns, that's what they were. Troy did have a little more— they had a clay brick plant there and Troy
had that much more than Deary. They started a brick plant there—the banker done that, and if he'd let someone else done it, or tried to—sold out, but when he seen he wasn't going to make too good at it, he just let it go. And—let's see—well, that was about all that Troy had that—

SS: Deary didn't.

PIERCE: Yeah.

SS: So Deary was a pretty lively place then?

PIERCE: Yes. Of course, Deary burnt out. That set it back one time. Of course, it made a— I was in business there then. And the hardware man, Mr. Curtis, — I had some business in town and he did, too, so we come up town and his father lived out— just out of town a ways. A town out here, I forget the name of it, I don't think it's there anymore.

SS: Is this Spokane area?

PIERCE: Yeah.

SS: Clean up to Spokane?

PIERCE: Yeah. And next morning we was going home and I got on the train, just got on the train and I met a woman; mother-in-law of a man that run a confectionery right alongside of our place; we had a general store, and I says— I asked her how she was, or her folks was, or something like that and she said, "Oh, Mr. Pierce, I betcha you haven't heard what happened in Deary." I said, "What?" She said, "It burned to the ground last night." Well, Well, then there, I'd left my wife and baby living in the back of the store— I was— well, the first town I got out, when I could— they stopped long enough that I could phone, and I phoned in and they told me just what was what, not to worry, because I didn't know what in the world had happened, you know. Of course, I knew if someone was killed or something, why, I
would a heard somehow, they'd sent someone up or something. But, 
that's the way that was.

SS: So you lost the business?

PIERCE: Yes, I lost the business then. And I started up again in business.
The old fella that I was renting the building from, frame building, 
he put up a brick building for me. And I stayed another seven 
or nine years, I forget which then I sold out.

SS: What kind of store was it?

PIERCE: General store.

SS: How did you do- How was it to be in business there in Deary?

PIERCE: It wasn't too good, we had three stores there then, and then after-
ward one of them fellows went out, so it was two stores, it was a 
good thing; two stores. I would a liked to had one then. But when 
there was three of us, divi ding it up three, 'cause I don't care

who it is, if he was a black man he would get some of the bus-
ness anyhow. He'd run a sale or something or do something else, 
you feel it, you know.

SS: Was it- for running a business, were there any troubles by it being 
in a farm community? Did you have to wait on harvest?

PIERCE: Yes, that was one thing that I didn't like about it. The only thing
I didn't like about it; you had to wait too long from spring 'til 
fall, so many of 'em, before you got- until they harvested their 
crops. And that works a hardship; takes all your profits to put right 
back in the business, and if you're not pretty careful you're going 
to let too much slip through your fingers, you know. Going out fas-
ter than it comes in. But we knew everybody and that made it a lit-
tle bit worse than if you was among strangers, too, because-(Laughs)

if they knew you was giving someone a little credit, why, they'd-
entitled to it, too. So, I can see why Jews that I knew way back
just as soon get out, clear out where they didn't know anyone to be in business, and that was one reason. Treat everybody just alike and not get in difficulty over it.

SS: Well, I want to go back and work back before Deary started and ask you some more about the old times.

PIERC: Alright, I can get back about 1905, as far as I can go.

SS: Okay. First, I'd like you to locate where the Blailock homestead was.

PIERC: Right by townsit of Deary was the Blailock homestead.

SS: Where would it be today, if you were looking in Deary for that site? The old first-

PIERC: Well, right down Main street- Main Street is right in that old homestead site. And that almost splits Deary in two. And then out to one side- I don't know who's old homestead it was but Stockwells- Mr. Stockwell had passed away, I never knew him, but Jimmy Stockwell and he had another brother and their mother and some girls, all lived in a house- big white house on the east side. That house disappeared a long time ago, it must have burned. And that was off to one side of Deary at one time, of course, Deary built up to it. And when I first went there- when I first saw Deary townsit- there was two, four, six, eight about ten of us on Easter Sunday in 19- either '04 or '05- I've almost forgotten which it was to tell the truth. I'd get up on a stand and testify to the truth- I hardly say just which it was-

SS: About seventy years ago now, that's pretty long time.

PIERC: Oh, yes, it'd be seventy if it was '04, if it was '05- but I believe it was '04, because we was all going up on Spud Hill horseback. We had to go way over east of town, more than a mile east of town, to get up on that thing- I guess I told you- go up that hogsback. Tied
our horses up there.

SS: That was the first time you-

PIERCE: Yes, the first time I ever got looked from the top of that hill, yeah.

SS: What about some of these other old homesteaders? There was one guy you mentioned to me before named Leishing?

PIERCE: oh, yes, poor old August Leishing.

SS: Will you tell me about him?

PIERCE: Yes, I can tell you about him. He was an old German fella. He come on Texas Ridge and they tell me he had it all cleared when I first met him but about forty or fifty acres. And they told me that was the heaviest quarter of timber on Texas Ridge. Nice big yellow pine. And he cut 'em down, rolled 'em together up against the stumps and burned 'em, logs, stumps, roots and all. And he just got through the last twenty acres. He had 140 acres— he had about twenty acres down in the southwest corner, just like this, this is a quarter section. He had twenty acres right in here that wasn't cleared up. It was cleared but not broke, and he had to cut some small brush out as yet, and he was a little bit slow in doing that. And he just got that all broke up, I don't know whether he'd raised a crop on it or not, when he died. So, he just got his 160 acres, every foot of it cleared up.

He come from Germany. Just as honest as the day was long. And one time something got the matter with his eye, kept getting worse, big red spots in it, so he went to Portland— it was cancer of the eye. He went to Portland, I think he had that eye taken out— I don't think it, I know it. And he come back— I had a store there in Deary, come in when and there wasn't any money and he says, "Albert, could you take this eye out so I can clean it?" "Well," I says, "I don't know whether I could or not, August, but I'll try." And, you know, we had one little corner curtained off where women went in to try dresses—
we sold women's dresses and hats, and so, my wife helped me in the store and I took him back in that dressing room to try - and I was afraid, you know, I might hurt that - he come back with a glass eye - they took that eye out, and he had a glass eye, and I was afraid to touch it, afraid I might hurt him. And I got it and just turned it wrong side to, just made him look awful. And someone come in the store, August'd say, "Go take of 'em, go take care of 'em." So I had to leave him--

SS: You mean, he did walk out?

PIERCE: I said, if he would have. And after whoever went out, anyhow, I got it straightened up, but oh that was a tedious job, I didn't want to do it again. And afterward the mailman, Axel Gramlin was carrying mail, go by every day and I think he paid Axel. Axel was one of these moneymakers, you know, he'd do anything extra to make some money, and I think that every day or every other day, he'd come and take that eye out and August came, and I think August put it back in himself, it was just taking it out. Looks like he could a learned to a done that too, but he didn't for a long time, maybe he did the last - but for a long time I know the mailman done that. But he was from Germany; little short, heavyset - and he cleared it all up, got it all cleared every bit of it when he passed away.

SS: Speaking of the store, when you mentioned that, I forgot to ask you about how - what you did sell in there and what sold good and what didn't sell good in the '20's when you had it. Do you remember?

PIERCE: Well, we had more groceries than anything else, but we had quite a little of a general store, like overalls and gloves and so many clothes for men. And then my wife sold - she was selling quite a lot of
these—oh, they sent 'em to us on consignment; made in Seattle, some
dress company, and that's the way they was putting 'em out and sell-
ing 'em.

And poor old August Leisching. He went back to Germany one time, had
quite a visit back there. He built a good house—funny thing—he
built a good house and a fellow name of Bert Baker, neighbor there,
he was going over there—I was glad it happened to him because he al-
most had it coming. It was raining, storming, and poor old August—
before he built this nice, good, big, new house, he just had a little
old log shanty, not fit for a bachelor to live in, you know, but any-
how, he come in and Bert Baker come over to visit him and it was
raining and his feet was muddy, too, and he was going to walk right
in and August made him go out and clean his shoes off before he could
come in the house. (Laughter)

And he went back to Germany one time for a visit, I guess the first
time he'd been back there for a long time, and then he took awful sick.
My brother-in-law, Ed Bogar and I, went and set up; different neigh-
bors would go and set up with him night, you know, and that's be-
fore he ever went to the hospital, and he never did get to recover
from that sickness, because when he got worse they took him to the
hospital and he died in the hospital. But while we were there him
and I was staying that night and August took worse, got to feeling
bad and he commenced to talk about he didn't know just what would
happen to his property; you know property meant an awful lot to for-
eigners when they come and got it for nothin', cleared it up and every-
thing, that meant— which was something. And so, well, Ed says, "You
have got—" See he went back before the war with Germany and when he
come back, why, he said he didn't know—well, my brother-in-law says,
"August, you've got relatives back." He says, "I don't know whether
I have or not now, because we've been at war with 'em and England was at war with 'em and they's probably all killed.' He hadn't heard from any of 'em for a long time. And I believe they were because a young German man, he was made administrator of 450 he disposed of it. He got in touch— if he had any relatives at all left over in Germany, why, they got their share of it, and if they didn't, why, it was distributed by law, the way it should have been.

SS: Do you think that he had any harder time because he was a German during the World War I? People were suspicious of him?

PIERCE: No, no, they wasn't, because he was one of these fellows just as honest as the day was long, and he probably— should I say, and I might be as wrong as could be— he probably wouldn't care which won— this country or Germany. It probably wouldn't have made any difference to him. He probably had just as much feeling for his home— country where he was born and raised and all of his ancestry was— and he probably wouldn't a felt just as— he never expressed himself that way, so he never got in any difficulty, no one ever suspicioned him at all because he paid his taxes. He was just a good neighbor; good man; good person. Everybody— No one— if you could talk to— there was not very many fellows around you could talk to that knew him. But they'd all tell you just the same story that I have. Ralph Labau, lives down on Tex Ridge yet, oh, about two years younger than 

SS: but he's one of these quiet fellas, just say, there's something you wanted to find out real badly about August, you go there and ask him, he probably wouldn't tell you. He's a bachelor, never got married.

Is there anybody else like that who stands out in your mind; these old-timers like August who were sort of special, they stood out as being, oh, not exactly as being characters, but different kind of person that really was an individual, like August or Swan Erickson? Is
There other people around there you remember from the old times?

PIERCÉ: Well, now, let's see-

SS: There was a guy named McKé that you mentioned to me. Was he an old-timer?

PIERCÉ: McKé?

SS: Yes.

Pierce: No, no, you got it wrong.

SS: I was wondering if he was, I can't remember.

PIERCÉ: No, it's not McKie—it could be some other old fellow, but there's never a McKie lived there that was an old-timer. Tom and Alva Bovill were old-timers but they weren't old men, you know then, and they got in there early and got homesteads. They must have come when they was twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three years old; homestead. Let's see—There was both Byerses—they was both German fellas, come from Germany and Rileys, old-timers and McKie--

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—and Al McKie didn't live to be such an old man, but his father owned 2000 acres of land, he sold a little and he come and lived with Mr. and Mrs. Al McKie after their children were grown. That was—I remember—sometimes, you know, I'm getting so my memory isn't as good as it used to be—and I went there one time to see Al McKie or something and he wasn't home but was going to be back right away and he told me to come on in and wait a while. Well, Mr. McKie was settin' in there, the old grandpa; nice old fella, and so when he heard me say something about Dave Usterout was a man he had known—Usterout was a pioneer and Mr. McKie was an old pioneer, so they knew each other, when he heard me mention him, and he said, "Say, how is Dave Usterout?" How is he or something, I told him and then we set there and visiting and in about fifteen minutes he asked
me the same question again, "Say, how is Dave?" It kind of hung in his mind—then he'd forgotten it just that short a time. And then once in a while now when I hear something one day in a week's time, why I—like it was a lot longer, so I guess I'm getting a little bit that way.

SS: That's the way a fellow gets.

PIERCE: Yes.

SS: How did he ever get 2000 acres of land?

PIERCE: Well, I tell ya, I don't know— in the cattle business, I guess. And an awful lot of that land, too, was in the canyon and hilly land, that was only good for pasture. Then he had a lot of good land that he raised grain on and sold the grain and then he raised the cattle on, had, you know, plenty of grazing land, so that took care of the cattle from spring 'til fall and they run the straw stacks and saved enough grain to feed 'em.

SS: Where was most of his land at?

PIERCE: On the point of Bear Ridge— Bear Ridge is just west of Texas Ridge, most of it, on that. And I think he had a little on Texas Ridge, too, but most of it was on Bear Ridge. Then his son, Al McKie, had—well, I guess he had as much land as his dad did, but he had his on Texas Ridge, and then, of course, he got all of his dad's, too. So, he was just so rich that him and his wife had—split up and his daughter and his son wouldn't—and him weren't on friendly terms at all. So that's what wealth done for that family. Mrs. McKie, his wife, is a good girl— was a good woman, his daughter was a good woman and I guess that the boy turned out to be a good fella, too, but—

SS: You think that money can make it pretty hard on you?

PIERCE: Too much money; too much, yeah. And of course, it wasn't all money there because he was one of these fellows, he was riding horseback
all the time, traveling all the time, buying and selling cattle and
no matter what people had to buy or sell, why, he'd buy or sell and
he knew where to make money on it. (Chuckles)

SS: You told me before about a killing down on the point- at the point of
one of the ridges; what was that story?

PIERCE: Well, that was before my time- I'll tell you about that one. A
fellow by the name of McCoy; I knew Bill McCoy and Mace McCoy, both
good fellows, but I didn't know this one. And I knew Hughey Stanton,
Harry Stanton and Claude Stanton and their mother, but I didn't know
the father. Well, them two fellas lived right down on - and the
Stantonses place was right on the point, they had a good quarter
section of land; they own it yet, unless it's been sold in the last
did {n, twenty years, maybe it has. Oh, yes, I know I heard a woman
bought it. But they had some difficulty over something, you know,
disagreement, so this man McCoy come down to see Mr. Stanton and
they was into his house and they talked it over and they just agreed
to disagree, and go be friends from now on and cut out that nonsense
of being enemies at sword's point and everything. And now, then I
don't know surely, Stanton- I wonder if he would be carrying a rev
volver in his pocket at that time when he knew this man come
to see him, he might have done that very thing. He might a done that
very thing, anyhow, they settled their disagreement and he started
to walk out from the house to the road and Stanton went walking a-
along with him- well, they say, talking like this, well, now- they's
both glad that they come to an agreement and be friends and this one
says, "Well, now"- I wouldn't know the words, but you behave your-
self or something like that, from now on- he didn't make it "we"
he pinned it on the other fellow, the other feller says,"You'll do
the same"- or something worse and one word led to another and Stanton
shot him dead. That was the murder on that place. There's one or
two others but I've just forgotten. - That was two other fellas that
was murdered from Texas Ridge but it was elsewhere. One was down
the country in Kendrick town and the other one - this fellow was
only about a year or two older than me that was killed downtown.

SS: In Kendrick?

PIERCE: Yeah.

SS: Do you remember what happened to him that he died?

PIERCE: Well, I tell ya, he was just the best little hard-
worker and a good fella every way, his young days, and when he was
up getting to be quite an old bachelor he married a young girl and
then, I don't know whether she - she left him for some other fella,
or something. Any, anyhow he was - he lived up on Texas Ridge and
he went down to Kendrick and I don't know, he was rambling around
there of nights, I don't know - he wasn't a drinkin' man, young
fellas at all, but I believe someone said he went to drinking there
at the last when he was fightin' with his wife and he went up and
pounded on a saloon door. I hate to tell this story because it's
him- he wouldn't go in a saloon, he was just as good a fellow as
you'd find anywhere. Ambitious and good worker and got along fine,
but he knocked on the door and the saloon keeper told him to go away
or something, and he got him probably so drunk he didn't know what he
was doin' - pounded the second or third time and the saloon man shot
him. Killed him right there at the door. That was one, and then
there was some other one, but that there slipped my mind.

SS: Who was the man?

PIERCE: Bill Dar.

SS: Did this Stanton ever get in trouble for what he'd done? Did he
ever get--
PIERCE: Oh, he killed Stanton-

SS: You said he killed that fellow in that fight. Did he ever get in trouble for that?

PIERCE: That's what I told you, I wasn't too familiar with-

SS: -with what happened?

PIERCE: Yes, I don't know- do you remember? I know my sister and her husband was the next folks that lived on that place and I should know and I knew Harry Stanton and Hughey Stanton and Claude Stanton, all of them, but I don't know what Stanton got. And I don't know the nature of the trouble; what caused it. He was on the Stanton place when it happened, see, so if he was there for trouble-

SS: That was before you got there?

PIERCE: That was before- I never seen Mr. Stanton. I knew all the boys afterwards and it might have been at that time I learned- maybe I never did hear just what-

SS: There was a third; there was another guy from Texas Ridge that got killed and you don't really remember how that happened?

PIERCE: There was another fella by the name of Bud Still, he went to California. He was killed there. And then there was still another one, and right now I can't hardly think- there was three fellas that was murdered there, and I can't think who that third one was- second or third one, anyhow.

SS: Well, the one thing I wanted to ask you about that I haven't yet is this business when the railroad came in and then they started cutting the timber. What kind of deal was it the Potlatch made with the farmers about cutting their timber?

PIERCE: I'll tell ya. The Potlatch Company got the timber given to 'em, because if they bought the timber it would cost 'em as much- and logged it themselves it would cost 'em as much as a farmer hauled it in to
the right-of-way, three dollars a thousand, for nice big logs and a dollar— they would pay a dollar a thousand stumpage and trees. But of course, pretty near, they knew— they didn’t want to do that, but they’d offer that because most of the farmers thought they could make a little money hauling logs in, which I don’t suppose they did cause there wasn’t one farmer in a dozen knew anything about loggin’, you know or had loggin’ equipment.

SS: Did you tell me that you tried that once?

PIERC: Yeah, my brother-in-law and I we logged our own timber off and for our neighbor; we never made any money on it. We thought we was going to make good on it.

SS: What happened when you tried?

PIERC: Well, we went ahead, we got all of our logs in, but when it counted all up, why, we didn’t make good wages, we didn’t make halfway good wages hardly. We got money for our logs, but didn’t make any wages hauling ’em in.

SS: Did many farmers do the same thing? Sell their timber to Potlatch?

PIERC: Yeah, pretty near all of ’em did, but most of ’em left the company log it off.

SS: There was a lot— was there as much timber left as cleared land when the Potlatch came in?

PIERC: Yeah, there was more. More timber land than there was cleared up land there. Yeah.

SS: So Potlatch had a pretty good deal?

PIERC: Oh, yes, they got a good deal— they’re no wonder they was rich a long time ago, but they kept gettin’ richer’n richer’n fast. ’Cause that’s what happened there and that’s what happened everyplace they went— into a new place, you know, a little out of the way.

SS: And you think that people felt sorry later that they just about gave
away, or didn't they have any choice?

PIERCE: Well, I'll tell you here—most of 'em got a chance to get a hold of a little money then that they wouldn't have otherwise. They'd had to haul it and some of them folks that owned was getting up in years and they thought if they ever derived any benefit out of it they'd better be selling it then.

SS: Did you tell me that Potlatch—did you say they tried to sell them cars afterwards?

PIERCE: You bet, they didn't try, they done it! A feller down at Potlatch, who was a car salesman, he was a car salesman, A—What did I tell you?

SS: Potlatch had a car salesman.

PIERCE: Sent a car salesman right up—sent him up—and he done it, too, he sold the biggest majority of 'em a car! (Laughter)

SS: After they logged the land?

PIERCE: Yeah, after they logged the land and was gettin' the money, they hired all time just right, so they didn't want to sell 'em the car if they didn't have any money, but just when the money was there they was already there. Just like a cat pouncing on a mouse! (Laughs)

SS: Do you think this guy came right from Potlatch who was selling the cars?

PIERCE: Yes, he did, right from Potlatch.

SS: What kind of cars were they selling?

PIERCE: Fords.

Fords, And to tell the truth, that's the only cars that they had right then and then before—in a little while you had the Maxwell.

SS: When was this when they were selling the Fords, do you remember?
PIERCE: About what year?

SS: Yeah, just roughly.

PIERCE: That's one thing I couldn't give you-about in 19--

SS: Oh, it doesn't matter.

PIERCE: I tell ya, it was in about 1914, I believe, yeah, I believe that's about as early as we got the Fords out here, I think it was. And they had 'em then. Just about 1914, I think.

SS: What about Joe Wells? Did you know him?

PIERCE: Sure, I know Old Joe Wells.

SS: Do you know any stories about Joe? Anything about him? What he was like?

PIERCE: Yeah. It's just as well it not be told. Yeah. A hard worker in his days. But the old alcohol didn't make him a better man.

SS: Well, I've heard that before, in his last-later years.

PIERCE: Yeah.

SS: Did you go to Lou's funeral?

PIERCE: I didn't, I think my wife did. Everybody liked her. She was a good old soul.

SS: What about the Indians? Did you see them in the early days?

PIERCE: Oh, all kinds of 'em. They come up right by our place every-from spring 'til fall, all the time. But then they were civilized Indians. never tried to- One funny thing was, if you'd meet 'em on the grades going up and down the ridges, you know, and here's where you'd travel-this is a hill; mountain here, and you was going up it and it was too steep to go up, you go up here and make a switchback, make a turn here, you'd go up the hill that way, you know, zig zag and if you'd meet an Indian and if you're going down, you know, you're supposed—if you was going down the hill, you would be on the right hand side, so you should be on the inside, but Indian always had a
bad horse, a bad horse, he couldn't get out on the side. And they just thought that they'd—they was putting that over on everybody. But didn't take ya once or twice, whether they could or not but they done it all the time, because they was afraid to get out on the outer edge of that trail.

SS: Was your mother afraid of the Indians?

PIERCE: No. No, when we came West in 1904— the spring of 1904— Indians were just—they were civilized, they was farmin' like white people all down there, some of 'em was. Not very many of 'em was farmers, I guess, 'cause they all got allotments. Got enough money to live from the government, you know. But you take some of the younger fellas they— I knew a fella by the name of Mc Donald, a Indian lived down below Juliaetta about four or five miles below Juliaetta, why, he had— he was farmin' hundreds of acres of land, way back early. So they was ambitious people, way back a long time ago, too. Not very many of 'em, I betcha you couldn't say that about very many Indians, but he was one that perhaps his father was— give him a good boost. And then he was ambitious and he just made it fine.

SS: Have you got any feeling about when the best times were in Deary?

When life there was best?

PIERCE: Well, I suppose it's when they was logging, taking logs off all around Deary. You know, I'll tell you one thing—maybe I told ya—Old Man Weyerhaeuser — old Grandpa— Daddy of 'em all, you know, Granddaddy of 'em all— they was loggin' by air, you know, they had— they put up, oh, these square posts, you know, like you see, wide at the bottom and narrow top, they had them, and there was a post for cables and it would have great, big steel baskets, I call 'em,— Did you ever see 'em haul grain up and down a hill? on them?
beyond your time, young man. They would make great, big, strong steel things to lay the logs on, and they was loggin' 'em that way over some rough land. And Old Frederick Weyerhaueser, the Old Man himself came out and he looked up at 'em, "Well," he said he was glad of one thing, he was glad that he'd lived long enough to see 'em loggin' in the air. He'd made his fortunes and fortunes, you know, in loggin' but he was just glad he'd seen that. He'd seen something then that he'd never expected to see.

SS: Do you think that Deary went downhill after the fire?

PIERCÉ: Yes, it did. And not so much that fire, they were going because, after they got all the timber off, we just had to depend on the logging industry. Had to become a farmer town, as much as- that's about all it is now. Of course, there's quite a few fellas living in town that go clear up to Elk River and work on the woods or this place and that place. I think one of my nephews is doing that now. My nephew's son. And I believe he drives - drives a new car and he drives back and forth every day.

SS: Do you remember the Bjerke place?

PIERCÉ: Oh, yes, Arthur Bjerke, I remember him back about as far as I remember anything. And yet, we was talkin' about him not long ago. I remember his old dad, if I remember right he had one eye out. And I can remember one time I had a load of fruit, I'd taken a load of fruit I guess to Bovill and I had a team of horses. I had an awful nice team of horses, but they was lively, fast walkers and one of these teams you had to pretty near hang onto the lines all the time instead of urging 'em. And down by their barn, I had to open a gate, and let 'em through and shut the gate and Arthur Bjerke and his old dad was settin' up on the porch, the house up on the hill, a ways
from the barn, and so, when I got out and opened the gate and I've just forgotten whether I led 'em through or how—anyhow, I went back—after I got through the gate—I always did train horses—I love horses, I just love 'em—but I was never mean to 'em and I always trained 'em to stop when I say stop without jerking 'em, a lot of people would jerk a horse, hurt their mouth, I never did do that. And so I had got the team through and went back to shut the gate and something happened—I believe there was a colt there and he jumped over a fence or run through there or something and frightened mine and they started running and I yelled, "Whoa, whoa, whoa." three times sharp and loud and them horses stopped, stopped right then. And so here come Arthur Bjerke and his old dad down and they said that's the best they ever seen horses mind when they's frightened, starting to run and then stopped 'cause I just hollered, "Whoa!" that way. They was lively and that was just about as nice a team as I ever had. They was twelve and thirteen, looked alike and gaited alike, fast and you had to look out, they was just ready to go anytime and anything happened, why, they'd go.

SS: What led you out of farming and into starting this mercantile?

PIERCE: Well, I'll tell you, I was never a farmer at heart, never was. Never was and I only had sixty acres, and that wasn't very much, I didn't like it so after we was married I thought it would be better, the store business. I worked in my younger days is all the experience I'd ever had before, but I was never sorry I got off the farm when I did.

SS: And when you decided to quit the mercantile, did you decide to leave Deary at the same time?

PIERCE: I got a job with Sears, Roebuck, that's the reason I come up here,
that's the reason I left Deary. I had sold out and I was helping some woman there for a while, and I come up and got a job with Sears, Roebuck, just to see, I thought I'd try it and see how I liked it, and I liked it real well, so we sold out, sold our place, we sold our place— we had two places down there and we sold— we didn't sell either one for quite a little while, see— we was going to like Spokane well enough to make it our home, but we did and we sold both places out.

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PIERCE: one time, and someone I think, maybe someone kind of smiled or something, well, he laughed, too. He says, "You know, most everybody's life is interesting, their life stories, even yours!" He says.

(Laughter)

SS: You think mine would be, too?

PIERCE: Yes, it would be, too, even as a young man. If you could just hit enough high spots close enough, not skip too a long a spaces in between, it would be interesting, too.

SS: I think about that now and then, but I don't think I have my story down yet, I think maybe when I live a lot longer I will.

PIERCE: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yes, you will.

SS: But now it doesn't seem very interesting.

PIERCE: Well, some things aren't interesting. When I think of some of the hardships I went through— I can remember one year, I remember one year, and that was the other fellow's fault and mine too, I'd oughta had more sense— I had a cousin that always— he didn't care how hard the other fellow's job was, just didn't care, he wanted the other fellow to do most of the work. And I went to work for him one time, him and his brother-in-law— oh, they had in a lot of land, and I went to
shocking grain for 'em, and a man does good when he keeps up with one binder, shocking grain— you don't know much about binders, though, do you?

SS: Just seen the pictures of them.

PIERCE: Well, they drops out bundles and you have to pick 'em up and shock 'em that's a man's job, and when a man does that, he's had kinda hard day's work. You know what they had me do? Keep up with two binders. Yep. And I was just about eighteen or nineteen years old. And because they knew I'd do it, they had me do it. They said, "Take it easy and do what you want to." But they had me do it, yeah. And things like that, when I think of it— there's not very many people would have a boy doing that. But he was a good fellow every other way, too, everybody liked him. And I just—

SS: He just took advantage of you.

PIERCE: Yeah, yeah.

SS: Boy, that sounds tough. (Pauses)

PIERCE: Many a young fellow, when they become twenty-one years old, was coming back from the old-time they liked it too. West—to clear land. Of course it was more wild and woolly then, too, but they liked it a lot better than they did back East.

SS: I don't know if it's a certain kind of people that like it out here and there's others that don't— they don't want to change, or what the reason is that some people come out and some people stay.

PIERCE: But, I tell you, there's not very many people that were born back East and come out here and lived here a while, they don't want to go back. I think the percentage is pretty small. But I never did see the time I wanted to live— after World War I, my wife and I was married back East and we stayed back there a year or two afterward. We go back and visit quit a while I like to go back and visit. END

Transcribed by Frances Rawlins, November 9, 1978