JEAN WILSON RINGSAGE
and
STINER RINGSAGE
Interview One

Interviewed by:
Sam Schrager
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I. Index
JEAN WILSON RINGSAGE  
STINER RINGSAGE  
Jean: Park, British Columbia, Alberta; b. 1905  
school teacher, nurse, homemaker

Stiner: Park, Alberta; b. 1890  
farmer, miner  

5.5 hours

Side A

00 1  
Caring for defective babies at Our Lady of Providence Nursery in Portland.

10 4  
Mother grew up at Prince Edward Island; she came to Blairmore (near Crows Nest Pass) where she met father while working at hotel. Destruction of Frank by landslide of mountain - two men who dug out thirty feet in three days and nights. They moved two miles from Coleman, because father refused to live in town. Simplicity of their cabin - to him this was a principle. Mother was contented - she read and wrote letters. Father's work took him away for the good weather. Parents conversed constantly.

18 9  
Mother favored women's suffrage, but not stridently; she was adored by father, who thought women were well off. Parents' restrictions on whom she could marry - no English, southern Europeans or Catholics. Need for women's rights. No divorce in Canada. A Ukrainian woman who killed her lousy husband and went free (near Wainwright, Alberta). Mistreatment of a Ukrainian woman; need to tame old country ways. Infidelity the only ground for divorce. Difficulty of divorce did not make unhappy marriages.

Side B

00 14  
Sister's divorce. Men and women could be much freer with each other at dances and parties in Canada, because the boundaries were set by the permanence of marriage; in America you couldn't be friendly with an unmarried person.
Her dream of horsemen coming over the pass during the First World War. Father's health failed. Their trip to move close to his homestead near Quatsino Sound on Vancouver Island. Importance of family relatives. Mother's serenity. Relations with neighboring Indians. Rowing father five miles to the cannery after the Indians refused to help. A man took father in open boat around the north side of the island to Alert Bay. Return to house, and Vancouver for winter; father's death. Children went to Vanderhoof to stay with aunt - their sense of security with family kin. No one met them when they arrived; her fear.


Friendliness towards townspeople. His love of Alberta Prairie. Red Stanfield underwear. His partner disappeared to enlist in army, but found that most Canadians wanted to get out. He could get a job anywhere because he was American and not to be drafted in the war. He forced American foreman to treat Canadians decently. Putting together a fanning mill by reading a diagram when others couldn't. He got them to get a sack sewing needle; teaching them to jig sacks and throw them in the wagon. Need to buy new equipment in Canada, at greater expense.

Evening life in mining in Alberta. He sent extra money to Uncle Ed Swenson. He worked for Ed on his farm. How Ed lost his $8,000 with decline after First World War. Great deal of work to be done on the farm. Stiner a "superman" at work. He gets farm in payment for work and homesteads an adjoining place.
Ed's mortgage. Fire in Wainwright in '27 hurt their credit. Bank liens on their property. Her purchase of brood sow in her name pulled them through. Poor harvest. High prices. Living on potatoes and carrots; a bit of money from mother for cod liver oil, tomato juice and underwear for the kids. Poverty of neighbor - giving her patches. He could live on anything. Her opposition to him mining.

Shocking wheat by the acre, he was fast and good. His ability to do hard work. First work on the farm was at age of five, sawing wood. His preference for work over leisure. His love of a mean horse. Ed sold all the horses when he left. His attitude about taking Ed's farm. Making a water trough. Ed's health problems.

Certain days he wouldn't play poker because he knew he'd lose. He made more on day wage than gyppo. Attitude toward strikes and union. He liked to handle big chunks of coal.

Danger was in deep mines. He propped his rooms well. A man who was killed when he changed mines.

Father's change of name back to Ringsage from Swenson. His troublemaking uncle who made good. Father favored brothers over sons, selling Ed land on Central Ridge that the boys wanted. Ed was very respectable and pleasing.

His father's great skill as a mental healer. He was persuaded to go to chiropractic school back East. The healing process through "treatments". His trip to Park to cure his sister of rheumatic fever. Curing the lump in her side, at a distance. Stopping the bleeding of a neighbor's stallion. Water from father's well witching.
Injuries from going over the grade with runaway teams. Father cured injured neighbor. More about father's method of long-distance healing by sending a message. Father's attempt to make boys answer in Norwegian. Father's success rate.

Stiner's fights compared to his brother's: his were to show he was stronger. (cont.)

A quick tussle with an Idaho champion wrestler. A fight with a bully. He and Helmer fought daily as boys. Neighbor girl who looked after them. He liked to be alone. Handling yourself, you shouldn't overreact.

Grandmother had to take care of farm on Prince Edward Island in husband's absence. Mrs. Ringsage's loneliness and love of companionship as a child — permitting a child to steal her doll clothes. She spent most time with adults. Walks with mother. She could read character, while young people can't today. Stay with aunt.

Mother got job as hotel manager from a woman she had befriended years before. The woman's problems and lot as a bartender's wife. A pregnant girl in her school committed suicide. She passed on birth control information, which was illegal. It was a better idea to stay with your mate - what difference would there be in another?

Drinkers and alcoholics. Advantage to woman of sticking out marriage. Advantages of marriage to wife — her ability to out-maneuver husband with thousands of years of experience. As a girl she felt superior to be a woman. Women's strength. They scorned weak women. Toleration of bad marriages. Husbands were unfaithful, not wives; women tolerated it since they were "number one." A family with syphilis.
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**Side G (continued)**

People's conduct in a given situation could be counted on. A dishonest horse trader and his wife, who lived in desperation. More about barkeeper's wife.

Parents' love. Mother's transformation after father's death - she became a saucy businesswoman. Mother's reluctance to remarry. Her joy in city life of Vancouver, B.C. Rejecting courtship from an old beau. Marriage to a widower in Los Angeles thwarted by his children.

**Side H**

Father's admiration of mother's intellect. His great considerateness. How can people doubt their identity? Her secure self-knowledge. Her preference for nursing over teaching. Mother's flexibility about jobs, and interest in variety.

Mother's democratic attitudes about others. The community can't absorb the exploding population. The dignity of her family as "working people." A working girl with a child out of wedlock. Class distinction in B.C. today, with recent immigration.

Canadian attitudes towards Americans. Girls from Prince Edward Island were trained in Boston. Her sisters went to Michigan, becoming "we Americans." American tourists were overdressed. American ability with machinery.

How she learned to read. Mother read her beautiful poetry. She couldn't learn from the silly primer. The glory of Black Beauty; reading it with mother was the most passionate experience of her life. She couldn't learn by phonics.

No school until 11. Mother said she'd learn when she wanted to. Learning to write letters by corresponding with mother twice a week for many years. Thrill of sharing small things. Mother's elocution. Love of nature-watching moon and sun. They lived surround by beauty.
Father's lifestyle. His opposition to women's fashion. Insistence on her wearing boy's boots instead of restrictive shoes. Attitudes towards Indian women's simplicity. His hatred of corsets. (continued)

Side I

Father was against celebration of Christmas because of its commercialism. Father wasn't religious but tolerated it in mother. Presents on birthdays, not Christmas.

After one fall of study in a special class in Vancouver she was ready to go in the seventh grade. Her exceptional teacher. She learned about nature in the city. Education through the cultural life of the city.

His experience in school in Spokane. Work wrapping the News-Reviews. Learning by asking the teacher in private how to do some rough problems, and following her method. Arguing with Helmer about doing problems. Helmer's effort to take care of Stiner, the younger brother.

Quality of her teachers. Running track on Spokane streets; sewing teacher. Morals of the school students. Sex education from pictures of the path of sin. Overstrictness of some; he thought you should learn for yourself. Helmer's suspicions about girls, and care about dress.

The house at Park. Starting an orchard before the house was finished (1900). Putting in more window space. Family took an abandoned place when he was a baby. Help from his mother's family when she had babies.
Why she taught. Nursing was very rugged. Women in rural areas were a scarce commodity, making a good situation for single teachers. Teacher's popularity at school dances. Looking for a husband - his line, his good house. Housekeeping by his uncle's father-in-law. How they met through her landlady. She liked the quickness of his proposal, which she refused. His neighbor asked for advice on breaking land.

Contact dancing helps you learn about people. Girls who thought they were superior. Going riding with a snotty teacher. Deciding to marry him.

His childhood sweetheart. He kept in touch with her, but he couldn't afford to marry. She kept him posted on the stories his girlfriends told about him.

Proper and enjoyable contacts with other men at dances. Etiquette of use of first and last names by schoolteachers and neighbors in Canada to show respect. They were related to everyone in Park. She was far out - she bobbed her hair, and rolled her socks. Teacher etiquette - borrowing a corset with stays to her first dance. Mother's trials as a teacher - a reprimand from her landlady for removing her wet shoes.

Women worked in the home, which was much easier than in a store. She didn't know them to work too hard at home. Clothes worn for a week. Her cultural loneliness after marriage, yearning for city; importance of information by mail from mother. Her woman friends were also isolated. Importance of politics and social issues in Canada compared to U.S. She enjoyed debating politics with leftists. American apathy: interest simply in the everyday struggle.
Political and social life were integrated in Alberta. Alberta politics. A scandal with the prime minister. Eberhardt's reforms.

with Sam Schrager

October 5, 1976
II. Transcript
First interview

RINGSAGE - Jean Wilson & Stiner

This conversation with JEAN WILSON RINGSAGE and STINER RINGSAGE, took place at their home in Park on October 5, 1976. The interviewer was SAM SCHRAGER.

JEAN WILSON RINGSAGE: -- where the cord isn't enclosed in the spinal column.

There is usually a sack and if it breaks meningitis sets in and that's it. And Mongoloids and other abnormalities, but maybe only ten, twelve babies like that all the time.

SAM SCHRAGER: Is that the kind of places you worked at, like you were in Portland? (There was mechanical difficulties, so this may not be verbatim)

JWR: Well, I worked in the maternity ward in St. Vincent's for about, I think nine months one time. I liked that too, but I like this much better. Much more interesting job. And then I had the well babies. Perfectly normal babies, but there were about 50% of them up for adoption from broken homes or unwed mothers or whatever. And there was children brought in there - babies brought in there - well the mother was taken out of the penitentiary in order to give birth to the baby in the hospital, and then brought out there. I remember one I had, lovely, beautiful, healthy baby boy. Ten days before he was born his mother had killed his father with an axe. And his grandmother or someone in the family had took him. And then we'd have these poor little battered things; were all beat up by their by their fathers or mother's boyfriend. And mothers would go insane or have tuberculosis or something like that and keep them til somebody was able to take care of them. But it was a very lovely establishment. And then we had a room full of boarders, people that wanted to go on a holiday somewhere that could afford, they were paying guests. They didn't get any better care in a way than the other ones, but they wanted to go to Europe or someplace and they wanted to be absolutely sure that the child was taken care of. They'd leave them there in the establishment. So I was there and it was very nice, they were very lenient. My daugh-
ters had babies in between times, and they always gave us plenty of
time off to take care of them. The pay wasn't so good, but, oh, it
was interesting.

SS: These babies, these little children that were defective at this house, did you
care for them too?

JWR: Yes, I was there about, I guess I was five years with them. Nights
and then days.

SS: What did you think of working with them?

JWR: You're not conscious of them being defective after—maybe the first
or so, and then you just love them to death. You just love them and
weep over them and talk to 'em. You don't weep when they die; you're
happy when you're with them. It's really a special thing. You see a
child, it's little spine is open, maybe it'll only live a very short
time, and you realize that, "I am his whole lifetime." I am the day
nurse, he's possibly sleeping at night. What I say, what I do,
this is the first pages in a book that's never going to be finished.
And what I think, what I say; it's a tremendous discipline on you to
control your thoughts, because they're conscious of everything you're
thinking, I am sure of it. That's the way I feel about babies. When
you get older you have to control your emotions. But a mother or a substitute
mother, her thoughts and her emotions are very important to that
baby. There is just a constant communication between you, and there
is always conversation going on. They were always encouraged to talk
to them. And I remember one—he had a huge head and they'd operated.
And I always felt sorry for the parents, because it was such a heart-
break to come and see him and then go, but he was such an apprecia-
tive baby. There are some babies that are so appreciative of every-
thing you do. You pat them and feed them and talk to them and their
whole body responds. They know that you're talking to them. And some of them, their intelligence is just great, and others, a little below. The little Mongolds are happy little things. They're little elves, their little eyes slightly slanted. They're the happiest ones. They're hard perhaps, on the parents to take care of, but they eat and they respond. They're only up to about a year old.

SS: But you didn't find it emotionally draining or anything?

JWR: No, it wasn't. It didn't-- because these things happen and I found it was good discipline for me to keep my mind going a certain way and in a certain channel to fill that baby's days with constructive thoughts and happy thoughts. Tell 'em about the world, the little birds that I saw; communicate. And when he died, or she died, well that was it. But you always have that feeling that, "I'm important to that baby." Not only physically taking care of him, because in that child is a record that they won't be an adult.

SS: Do you feel the same way about your own children?

JWR: No, I didn't because I always felt that they'd grow up, but I knew that child was going to die. I knew it's time was limited and just a matter of maybe weeks, sometimes months. No, I had a quite a different feeling, because I knew my impressions were limited with them. So, I was just about the same as any other mother's. I had a certain influence, but all things that come into the world would fade out--or they're different. Very different. I felt sorry and sad, the parents I was experiencing with them. They couldn't, they were too emotional. There was too much heartbreak. I could be on a different level.

SS: Do you think these kids themselves had a different--that their awareness was heightened because of this?

JWR: No, I don't think it was particularly heightened one way or the other.
I think there are different levels of intelligence. Some of them are perfectly normal responses, but others were subnormal, but sweet.

SS: What was the name of the place where you worked?

JWR: Our Lady of Providence Nursery. It has been completely changed since I've been there and they're going altogether into children that are defective. There was about ninety percent of them normal when I was there. Just this one room. But now there's just so many more, there seems to be. Course it's a bigger population. Some had rare diseases, that called for special diets.

SS: Well, I sort of wanted to talk to you about the early days.

JWR: Well, you had me started on this.

SS: Yes.

JWR: Yes, and there is one or two babies I could tell you about that were above and beyond what you'd expect in a relationship. There was something there. But we can go on to what you came out here for, for our early days and our life, would our married life or before that when I was a girl?

SS: I guess first I wanted to know about when you were a kid.

JWT: A little girl?

SS: Yes. And this isolation that you grew up in.

JWR: Well, my mother came out from the East. Prince Edward Island. She taught for five years, and her brother was working on the Okanogan—the Kootenay Lakes. There was a tie of some kind out here, so she came, but she settled in Blairmore. There was an opening—she helped upstairs, and she waited a little and she helped with the books and in managing this small hotel. And I guess it's there that she met my father, and he was fairly prosperous then. And he had been a miner
I mean he had mining claims, and he had timber claims and gone out and worked at mapping out timber claims for companies when they put in that railroad north of the C&R. He worked all in through that area getting the timber claims ready for when the railroad did come in. Well in due time I arrived; born in a log cabin that belonged to a manager of a mine. That's another thing that Daddy did, they were opening up coal mines and he was there and he was supervising that. And then we moved to Blairmore, and that was next to that place that had that terrific landslide, where the mountain came down. I told you last time, Mother had a sister come out, she was married then and this aunt was being courted by this young taylor, and he left his taylor shop and came up there and spent the night visiting— or the evening visiting her then went to a hotel and during that night his taylor shop was completely covered by this mountain. The whole town was destroyed.

SS: Frank?
JWR: Frank, yeah.
SS: Was this the town of Blairmore?
JWR: No, the town of Frank.
SS: Oh, the town of Frank.
JWR: Yes, you can look it up in history. You can see it now— I think there was seven or eight hundred people. There was a bank.
SS: Were there any people killed?
JWR: Yes, there was quite a few killed.

STINER RINGSAGE: I used to work in a mine and I worked with a guy that was down in there at the time. And I remember they had a bottle of whiskey in there and it was two o'clock, and he said, "Let's go up and—" They'd put in their work, they'd done their work, he said, "Let's get up there." And all at once they heard the thunder, you know
and rocks started to fall, it sounds like thunder. And so they waited a while, and finally they got word that the mountain'd tipped over, so that they couldn't get out. And it took 'em, I forget now how many days, three days and three nights, something like that to make a hole through it. And I said, "Did you have anything to eat?" He says, "We wasn't hungry." All we wanted just "Hurry up. Come on down here, you're tired. Let me dig it." Kept on til they got up through there. And day and night, they just worked til they got that through.

SS: So they dug up through the roof, through the rubble? Through the whole thing?

SR: Rock and all! I think it was thirty some feet.

SS: Thirty some feet?

SR: Before they could get up there.

JWR: Oh, it was tremendous, if you'd see the whole mountain, just a huge whole mountain.

SR: I've walked over the rocks.

JWR: I don't know what-- I've had it explained to me- there was a lot of rocks that got undermined or something. It's part of the Rockies, you know, it's the Crows Nest Pass. Well, anyhow that happened so he made a fresh start then in this little town of Blairmore. WE left there when I was about two and a half.

SS: Did your father lose anything in that?

JWR: No, he didn't. No money involved there. Oh, it was about four or five miles away, something like that from Blairmore. And then we went up to the next town, Crows Nest Pass was called Coleman, that was about seven or eight miles away. And Daddy took a homestead up on the mountain. He just wanted it for cattle grazing. Straight
up. Just about like being in a tub. The town would be right below one of these canyons there, and then we were on top, oh, I guess it would be about a couple of miles, you could look down and see the town. Coleman. Now they had a good sized mine going there. He never worked in it, but they had coke mines in those days and you could see these great, big coke ovens. Spectacular at night, but in the day it was dreary looking. He wouldn't consent to living there. He just hated people that lived in a town. He was a character! He ran away from home when he was about thirteen or fourteen; never went home again. Never wrote, never communicated.

SS: Who was this?

JWR: Dad. I know a little bit about his background, and wandered and did pretty good. So, we stayed there in Coleman, up on this mountain, and Mother would visit. She'd get out. She went back to Prince Edward Island; had a little baby boy that died; came back again. And when I was about eight she spent two or three summers up at a place called Proctor, near Nelson, B.C. where her brother was on the boats. He was a widower by then, and my grandmother kept house for him. My little sister was born up there, that was when I was eight.

SS: Was it pretty difficult for your mother to be living isolated?

JWR: No. That's what I say, she was another unique person. She never minded it. Up there we had a three roomed house, very sturdy. But, I don't know, Daddy was the original hippie. You know, the bare essentials in life, and plain. The walls were just nice, clean, first-grade lumber, but that was it. The ceiling the same. Table was handmade, and underneath here was a nice little shelf, well just like a complete table underneath the table.

SS: He made that?
RINGSAGE, JEAN & STINER

JWR: He made that—well, he made the whole thing. And when you got through eating you'd put your butter and your bread and all your things underneath here. But Mother finally prevailed on him, and she got rid of that in due time. But, boy, it was a struggle!

SS: He had set it up just like a table?

JWR: Yes, just like a table—whole tabletop underneath this one. That was his bachelor idea. There was one little cookstove—wood cookstove—and a chaise lounge made of leather—you've seen those old-fashioned ones. Just a very, very few books; History of the World and Modern Eloquence; I can remember them now. I was always dying for books. And a rolltop desk. Very small place. A spring where you got water. Plenty of wood. A swing in a tree and a hammock, then you could see the town below. And he had it all fenced. Very nicely fenced with these old-fashioned wood rail fences all around; a hundred and sixty acres. But he was gone, and Mother said, "Well it's lovely," she says, "my, how lucky I am up here, I can read." And she did. Of course, she could borrow novels or, they weren't generally novels they were pretty good—history and poetry she liked. She read very good books. And she wrote. She was just writing constantly. There was letters flowing back from her and her five sisters and, mother. And then there was—there was a few people would come out. It was quite a little hike but during the summer we had quite a few people. And we walked down—we tried to get out on Sundays; go to church and then maybe once during the week to pick up our mail. And then in the fall my father would come. But, she never seemed bothered. Oh, yes, the daily thing was to go get the milk about half a mile away. And when I was about seven or eight I got so I was able to go alone.
SS: Why was your father gone so much?

JWR: That was his work, you see. He was out taking care of these mining claims. Absolutely isolated places in Idaho and in British Columbia.

SS: Taking care of them for himself or someone else?

JWR: Himself.

SS: They were his claims?

JWR: His claims. And you know, he had to do so much during the summer. Then he had a beautiful place out on the west coast of Prince Edward Island- Vancouver Island. It was- I think there was about a hundred, maybe two hundred acres and there was about a hundred acres of it diked, and he worked real hard. He and another German to dike them. They both had property together in this particular area. Towards the north end of Vancouver Island, near Quatsino Sound. I suppose it would be a-- I never even seen the place. But he'd work on that a little bit, and then maybe odd jobs. He'd go and help other people with their claims. He kept busy all summer long, and then when the winter snow come, he'd come home and he'd be there till the snow broke, and then, of course, he'd go to town every day or two and get up wood. And he and my mother just talked constantly. Talk! That's why I was brought up on conversation. He was just fascinating, and Mother was excellent. They'd debate about things. And women's suffrage was something that was going on then, and I'd listen to all that. And politics. Just bubbly, and there was always life in that place. Just life and conversation.

SS: How did your mother feel about women's suffrage? How did your father feel about it?

JWR: Oh, well, Daddy sort of frowned on it; women didn't know when they were well-off, I guess. But Mother, she was for it but not belligerent.
She always felt she could get anything she wanted with a little diplomacy. I mean, she was an adored wife, so, you know, you can't fight it too hard when you've got everything your way. 'Course, he was a little positive; he wouldn't have fought it too hard, but I mean, he just figured women didn't know when they had it good. But, nevertheless, he had very high standards for himself and for the requirements of a husband. I know, he'd say, he hadn't too much use for Englishmen, "That guy, he never gets the wood in; he won't take a pail of water in. His wife has to milk the cows."

SR: That's what I always noticed. Only the neighbors that I had there - just but my gosh, they won't - they expect the woman to do everything.

JWR: There's some nationalities like that. And Daddy, oh- and, boy, you know, and you were brought up, from the time I was just like this- there was a lot of- well, we called 'em Bohunks- we were liberated in those days. These Poles, and they are perfectly good people, I guess, Poles and Bohemians they did the mining, and you knew; "Now," he said, "now listen, when you grow up, you're not to about to be married to any of those Bohunks. They're alright for their own people, but they don't make good husbands. They're too domineering, they expect too much of a woman." I was limited in what I was to have for a marriage from the time I was able to talk. You couldn't marry- first a guy over from Germany, he was another tyrant, you weren't to marry him. And then an Englishman. Well, that just left you with the Scotch and maybe second or third generation Canadians and Scandinavians, maybe. They were pretty good workers. He approved of them. But that's the marriages, you had your choice and you knew what to look for. And of course, Mother, she threw in the religion. You never dared go out with a Catholic boy, that would be awful! I
went once—(balance unintelligible because of laughter by JWR.)

You know, in your own little safe way you knew your boundaries and it didn't bother you. There was plenty there, there was lots of men floating around the country, you knew that, there'd be plenty to choose from. And even if you were sort of limited, I never fought it. But my mother and her sisters, they were much more vocal about women's suffrage and they really were for it. Because it was so unjust when you know all the arguments for it. You couldn't have property in your own name. At that time.

SS: At that time they realized all these things.

JWR: Yes, they did. They knew it then. And they really howled about it, because they realized that the husband—if you had a good husband, and you know benevolent—sort of a benevolent dictator, you were fine—but you could see that other women—

SS: Lots of women that didn't have good husbands—

JWR: They didn't have it, and he'd take the children and he could be un—true to you, and you just had to put up with it in order to keep children, that was the problem. That was one of the things. You know divorce was almost unknown up there, too. That's another—I was brought up there in Wainwright where we were married—there wasn't a divorced woman there. Mother never had a divorced woman amongst all her friends.

SR: If they didn't like their husband, they'd kill 'em! (Chuckles)

KWR: Lots of the Ukrainians did. They had a real way, but the English didn't, they put up with it.

SR: One woman, she got sick and tired of it, and I don't blame her.

JWR: She was a Ukrainian.

SR: Yeah. And, golly, she didn't know what to do and they had a well
about eighty-five feet deep and she threw a stick down there. She says, "You know, there's a big stick down there in that well."

(lots of outside interference) She wanted him to go down and get it out, so he went down and she pulled the ladder up, see, or a rope, whatever it was, so he couldn't get out. She went and harnessed up the horses— you know, she had to do a lot of that anyway— and she loaded that big load of rocks and she just kept dumping 'em in! It didn't matter how he howled, she just kept dumping 'em in, til everything was quiet and nice. I'll tell you, that's the way she got rid of him! Well, they thought they ought to have a little court, you know, but nobody would stick up for him.

JWR: He was brutal.

SR: He'd go and get drunk and spend all the darn money and come home and beat up on her. That's the way he'd do.

JWR: Our neighbor knew him, he was a Ukrainian and he'd say, "Oh, he needed killing." But it was in the paper, this was one of these big crimes up there.

SR: That's the way some of those guys were.

SS: Do you think he would beat her up pretty regularly?

SR: Oh, every time he got drunk. Every time he got money so he could go in and get drunk.

JWR: Oh, definitely. She'd protest about anything; and beat her up. You can understand why my dad put down the— he knew about people. Well, maybe there's only one out of ten that's like that. But then this Ukrainian neighbor, he was like that. They hadn't a thing in the house, they were poor. There was six or eight children. There was one coming along all the time. They slept on the floor. Just rags of quilts on top of straw. And no bed, there was never a bed
in the house. No bedstead. And finally one time they did have a little bit of a crop. What did he do? Did he buy blankets for the kids or her? No. He went and got a fur coat! (Laughter)

SR: So he could sleep in it!

JWR: The boy was sixteen, alright, he goes up to work harvesting; made a little money. What does he do with his money? He took it home, Buys himself a new bed, sleeps on it himself and his mother slept on the floor. That's one of the things.

SR: Nobody dare-

JWR: They're right from Europe. They're raw, they're untamed, they don't even speak your language. They're fine you give 'em another generation and they tame down, but they need some of those rough edges taken off 'em.

SR: Although this Gnur (?) that showed me how to mix mud and everything—why, he was a very nice guy, and he used to tell me about all these Ukrainians around there and what happened to 'em. How they treated their wives. I told him, "By golly, you better be good or your wife'll treat you that way!"

JWR: Well, he didn't like them, that's why they moved down, moved into our district in Wainwright.

SS: This woman that killed her husband in the well; you said there was a trial, but she wasn't found guilty?

SR: Did they have a trial?

JWR: Oh, yes they did, they had a trial.

SR: Everybody stuck up for her.

JWR: They all stuck up for her, and she may have been in prison for a while, but she wasn't killed.

SR: They might have put her in over night.
A divorce was so hard to get. There was only one ground; infidelity. And it's not always easy to prove.

The wife had to prove it?

She had to prove it. You bet, she has to get a lawyer. If you're the man rich, you know; you go to a lawyer, okay, "I know a woman, so-and-so, for fifty dollars she will meet you at a hotel. All you have to do is register as man and wife and go up to a room. My detectives will break in." It cost a hundred, a hundred and fifty- that was before this inflated rate. "And they'll go in there and they'll see you in the bedroom, even if you're not doing anything but just sitting there."

What if the husband wants to get rid of his wife? Is it easier for him?

No. Now if he wanted to- now this is how they'll do it- The husband wanted to divorce his wife and he could come to some agreement with her- he'd take you up, even if he wasn't guilty, he'd go. He'd go to the--

Did this make for a lot of unhappy marriages?

No, it didn't. I think they were happier than here, because you knew it was going to last. You didn't fuss around. No. And there were some common-law marriages. They'd come to the conclusion "I'm never going to get my wife,"And yet they were still legally married and there'd be somebody that they'd maybe live together. There was quite a few common-law marriages like that. But there was not a divorced person in our district. But then, the next generation's one different. Now my sister was the first in the family to get a divorce. She had an alcoholic husband and he came into it. He was a man, princely,

And as far as women was concerned, well, he didn't drink And they were separated for several years before he finally came down to
it and gave her the evidence to get a divorce. It was all arranged. But, of course, there were lots of cases where it is the genteel thing to do. But we kind of got our track.

Now I noticed the difference when I came here; there's more freedom when a marriage, to me, is firm, that you know there isn't going to be a divorce, that the thing isn't going to break up. You go to these dances; you go to these little parties; you're much freer with a man, I mean, you talk. And your friendliness isn't taken as a come-on. 'Cause he knows there's a boundary, there's a stop-off right there. This is what it means. You don't go any further. I'm married, you're married, we're friendly here, but that's the end of it.

SS: It was different up there? Do you remember?

JWR: Oh, much different than down here. Down here divorce is so easy. You start a friendship with a man, well, I mean, it can go on and on.

There, there was just such a boundary. There was barriers and you and he knew it. You could be more open. Here, if you was to—

I could notice here, especially amongst—

Did you see her, she was talkin' to him. Not that they said it about me, but you couldn't have— I don't think there's as much freedom.

SS: Do you think that's because of the times changing as time went on, or just the difference between the American and Canadian?

JWR: The American and Canadian. I think it was because of the divorce; the easiness of divorce down here. Say a person's been married and divorced several times, well, it becomes sort of a casual thing.

SS: Did you know people down here get divorced more than up there?

JWR: We know that. Oh, yes! We always knew it. We always knew it and commented on it. You know where my mother came from, the only way you
could get a divorce was an act of Parliament. You had to go through—well, just like you have to go down here to Boise to get a divorce. But now it's changed, there are other things—a man's insane or a wife's insane.

SS: They must have had a strong mind because it seems to me that six month's or a year of separation would be rough on a marriage. Now today, it would almost kill a man, but back then—

JWR: Look at these seafaring people, maybe the hard work or maybe they drank more, I don't know. I mean, the men, or just what it was, but my mother was quite happy. She really was. She never needed for anything and she was a person that could adapt to almost any conditions, seems to me and make a go of it. Now everything slid along pretty good until World War I come along. I was nine, and Daddy wasn't feeling so good that spring. He was about twelve, fifteen years older than Mother. And he put off going out; August the war came on. Now I'll tell you about war. Of course, I've read of stories. Remember I told you I had learned to read. That was so exciting and I'd read about wars; the thrill of battle and I asked my mother, "Would the men come through the Pass, this Crows Nest Pass on horseback. I could see them—black horses, white horses, and I was scared, and here it was over in Europe. "Oh," she dear, says, "it'll be a long while, before they get here. Let's not worry about it." But I was still not too easy about it. Then September Daddy was going downhill—It threw everything in an economic slump, as far as our work and our income was concerned. Everything just froze right out, and money was scarce; very scarce that winter. Daddy was—well, he was up and around always. But what was happening was dropsy caused by his heart failing. He'd carried such huge packs on his back and worked so hard out in the open all his life, and it was
failing. So the second summer came you see then, and he decided to
go to this homestead. Well, it was a bought place, it wasn't really
a homestead out on Vancouver Island. He was going to sell this hom-
stead- we could just sell our improvements-

SS: The dike land?

JWR: The dike land. We were going to go out there. And we finally put
the place up that we were on just for improvements. We got four hund-
red dollars- can you imagine, is all we got to move on. And our litt-
le bit of furniture packed up in August- July or August- we moved-
we started to move out slowly towards Vancouver Island. Mother was
serene and happy, and she had a black dress- new black dress and high
collar and she looked lovely. She was about thirty-eight then. And
stopped at Nelson, saw her mother and her brother and then we went
to Vancouver. She had a sister there. You know, families were so
important. It's just like jumping from stone to stone, you'd make
be your contacts for the next step. And they were a very helpful, kind-
ly family. Then, we got on the boat; the boat only went twice a
month. Went to Victoria; met an old friend of her's there. We had
to wait, I think, a week for the boat. Then we started up to Vancou-
ver; Quatsino Sound. And pleasant weather; landed in Quatsino. Daddy
had some old friends there. We were coming down with what we thought
was chickenpox, and Mother was right. We had to sleep in the freight
shed where the boat docked. Then in about a week we got groceries
together; hired a boat and went twenty-five miles- not to the dike
land- but to an abandoned fishing cannery. Oh, I think it was eight
or ten miles away. Oh, so this little open boat, little bit of a
thing, not much bigger than here to here- I think he must have made
two trips and brought more of the furniture and stuff the next time.
It was quite a sturdy old house, but nobody had lived in it for eight
or ten years. There was a stove— and oh, we had whooping cough to a
fare-you-well all September. My little sister and I. No doctor— but
there was an Indian village about a mile away, just across this lit-
tle inlet. And they were really nice, old-time, untouched, primitive,
Indians. They hadn't been christianized or anything; hadn't been tam-
pered with. I remember going over there; Daddy was talking to them,
and he could still get around. And seeing them come down in the even-
ing, and they were washing their nose and their throats— they'd take
a great, big swallow or a big mouthful of this good salt water, and
they'd gargle and then they'd take another one and they'd go, ssssss-
through their nose. And sometimes it'd go up this way and then down.
They'd probably be six or eight men doing this. Well, Mother'd al-
ways told me it was good to gargle. Well, I was about eleven then.
My little sister was a little younger— well, she was two or three
years old.

SS: Why did your father make this trip?

JWR: Because he thought— you see, up there in the Rockies it was very high.
And he thought that if he could get down to sea level he'd feel bet-

JWR: He didn't argue. You know, Mother went along: "If you think you'll feel better,
I'll go along." Everybody thought she was crazy.

SR: Well, I think he was right.

JWR: I don't know, dear. It didn't cure him.

SR: He was working too hard. He'd have to quit hard work.

JWR: I know, but he hadn't done a thing for a year. It was too far for
anything. But she just went along placidly. She was the most mid
Victorian, submissive wife you ever saw. No arguments. Just made
out. And here was a dying man on her hands and twenty-five miles
from civilization. Oh, maybe seventy-five miles from the nearest doctor. We did have a little medication we brought up from Victoria.

SR: She was naturally healthy herself. She knew how to take care of herself.

JWR: Well, the Indians were superstitious. I remember you could see their burial platforms. Burying their dead. You could see their burial platforms. And they had these canoes—dugout canoes, you know with the high prows. And there was one or two flatheads, stone, you know know the board, this one old woman with her head—been on. She had a board—they used to put board here and here to—

SS: Were they Indians?

JWR: Yes, I think one of them.

SR: They put that on when they're babies, so their head'll stay that way, after so many days.

JWR: And they had—some of them had iron bands around their legs—just put on—well, I guess they were adults; young adults. And you could see the flesh at top and bottom, it was kind of growing over it.

SS: Did you have much to do with them?

JWR: They'd come over—now that was September—see, it was quite a brief looking time. They come over a time or two, mostly for whiskey. We did have some. Daddy would give 'em a little shot apiece, hand it out to 'em. He had a few bottles for himself, you know, just in case of sickness. And he tried to get them to—we would pay them five dollars if they would bring our mail from this place twenty-five miles away. Well, they did once or twice, and then they brought us medicine once. We finally got some more medicine for him. Then, he was just going downhill—oh, that was another incident—Mother had rowed a boat as a girl; I had never learned to row, although I had been around the wa-
ter around the Kootenay Lakes, but never had a boat. But there was
caulk
an old boat and Daddy told us how to caulk it, you know, put some rags
around and make it seaworthy, and we found four oars. And I'd
practice and Mother'd practice and we finally went over to the Indians
one time. Got that far and come back again. I was pretty good size
for eleven. And this time we went over at night, in the evening, and
they turned us down, they wouldn't take Daddy and Mother realized
that he just had to get to a doctor.

SS: They wouldn't take him-?

JWR: They were scared. They were afraid of the superstition of a sick man
like him.

SS: What did you want them--?

JWR: We wanted them to take him-- well, even to a cannery, that was five
miles away, another cannery, and have them take him to, well, to Quatsino
and maybe there he could get on a boat; this twice a month boat, and
go down to Victoria, Vancouver, she was just desperate. And send
messages out to get help, that's what she wanted them to do. And
they refused, they didn't want to carry a sick man.

SS: So what did you do?

JWR: Well, what did we do? It was a calm day; calm morning, early in the
morning and we thought we'd try them once more, maybe offer them more
money. We just had very old clothes. I remember Mother had a pair of
gum boots of Daddy's on, and we weren't dressed up special just to go
across there and ask again. We did pretty good rowing and they turned
us down. Mother says, "I think we'll go to the cannery." — And
I'll show you the map— you've no idea what that involved. It wasn't
so far, but it was the open water. You come out of this inlet; we
were here and then you swung around; well the lighthouse was out there
at a distance, but shipwrecks and everything had occurred there, then you went up another inlet, several miles down. We had to cross the open water. Open water with nothing between you and Japan. And it was calm though and Daddy was wise about tides and we hit the tides right. But just about the last mile the tide was turning and, oh, we had to work. Daddy was able to bail, and we finally got to the cannery. And I know my mother, she told the cannery owner what had happened, and he thought she was the bravest woman he'd ever seen, to make a trip like that. And, I don't know, it's one of those things you never forget. So he got his launch, boat, a little open launch and took her over to our friends, the Lissens, but here we were, still with the whooping cough. He left us off at the— oh, everybody was kind there and a young couple— and they took care of us at this Limestone Island a couple of miles away from Mother. Well, Mother made arrangements. The boat had just gone and finally there was a man by the name of Peterson. Naturally he was a Swede or a Norwegian; a little open boat and he agreed to take them to them to the Indian hospital, that was clear around the north end of Vancouver Island. It is just incredible, some of the things they did then. And he was just a marvelous navigator. And that meant open water all around til he hit the inside and he took them to Alert Bay. It was an Anglican Mission hospital, and that left Mother and I on this side and stayed there a month. Mother and I then went back again— I guess for a while just previous, I guess— let me see— yes he was gone and we went back there. And by that time who should come along but the old German with eight kids and mother was going to teach school. And the government already got in action. They had sent in supplies to build a wharf for us. Here we were ready to leave. Of course, Daddy he
was going to get well and come back. Well, they built this and this old German was there and helped. I call him old because he had a beard and he looked like—

SS: They built a school right there?

JWR: Right out there on this dike land, because he owned the dike land next to Daddy, and they were going to start a community. But he came out there to kind of help build on this wharf, that would be that was an easier place for a boat to come, so they built this little wharf. Then it was getting around November; the end of October, close to November and she decided she'd have to leave for the winter. All of us just leave for the winter. She took our things back and stored what little things we had. I remember we gave Mr. Peterson my dad's gun; I guess maybe we didn't do it til after he died. But we come back, I remember sleeping— we were such healthy kids, but nevertheless we never could go in this woman's house because she had a child that was quite delicate—you know children died of whooping cough then; it was only a year and a half old. And my little sister and I had to sleep in a partly built launch that this man was building. Oh, I suppose it would be as far as from here to that—

SS: The German?

JWR: No, not the German, this was when we went back to Quatsino, afterwards. No, we had a house when we were at the German's. No, when everything got built the German departed and Mother decided she couldn't live alone there, and so she decided she'd go back to Quatsino Sound and eventually go down to Victoria and Vancouver, which she did. But, you see, you're waiting, always waiting a couple of weeks for the boat, and we always missed the boat. And Daddy was still in the hospital clear on the other side of the island. And when we got
back we had to wait again. My sister and I had to sleep in this
the inlet,
launch right beside the ocean. It was very pretty, kind of cold,
though, no lamp. I remember reading books by a lantern, trying to
amuse my little sister because we couldn't go in the house. Oh,-
Mother was beautiful; clam, serene, everything was going to be al-
right. We'd come back next spring. We'll go down there for winter,
to Vancouver. And I remember her brother sent her fifty dollars to
help out. So, that's what we did. We left our stuff; took our per-
sonal things and went to Vancouver; Victoria then Vancouver when the
boat came in. Mother didn't know it, but in the meantime my father
was getting so bad, they had shipped him down on a different boat
on the other side of this big Vancouver Island to Vancouver General
Hospital. So my sister and I stayed there in a hotel in Vancouver
with Mother for about a week. And we saw Dad for the last time in
the hospital. Then we were put on a boat and sent to an aunt and
uncle, Mother's sister in the interior of British Columbia. It
was Vanderhoof, close to Fort George- Prince George, right in the
interior. It was two nights and two days, I think on the boat and
a day and a night on the train, me and my little sister. The trauma
of leaving Mother, but nevertheless, no tears, nobody cried. You
never thought of crying in those days. Everybody had too much work
to do to cry. I may have cried later on, but not then. No tears,
no tantrums. For one thing there was no welfare, nothing like that.
You had a good rapport
with all the members of the family. And you knew
Aunt Amy loved you. She had no children of her own. You knew that
you were going to be taken care of. There was that. There was sec-
urity. You weren't just tossed aside like into some of these states
here. There was love. You never felt lost. Something happened to
all these
your mother, there was aunts and uncles, that had always been
kind to you. Maybe they weren't quite as good, but it was alright,
they were pretty good. So, we went on our little trip and I didn't
feel too good, I wasn't too seasick, but the second boat crept around,
and made our changes on the trains. And at four o'clock in the mor-
ning we got off at Vanderhoof. November, cold and clear. Nobody
there but the town drunk and the stationman. Nobody! Poor little
me and my little sister, and all those horrible things we'd hear, yo u
know. You hear 'em even when you're young. The town drunk was frien-
dly. He said, "Let me carry your little sister." I says, "No, I'll
carry her." 'Course she was little miss three years old and dead asleep. I struggled with her. The stationmaster
struggled with our two suitcases, and we went to a hotel, or boarding-
house. There was a very bosomy woman came and I don't know why, you
know children- I knew- I was very worldly-wise- I didn't know the
bloody details, but I knew there was women and women. She looked like
a madam to me. I was only eleven. I don't think she was but she'd
been around, so we'll say. I-- she maybe be alright, but- so she put
me upstairs in a nice bedroom with a huge- I think they call them a
wardrobe- Peeked under the bed. Got the lamp going. No auntie, no-
body, who's was going to take care of me. So, I guess about five-thirty
Auntie came and her husband- he'd been out on the trapline, never got
home til twelve. We'd sent-- there was a telegraph- she'd had the
message, but she lived twelve miles out there, and a horse and wagon-
you know that was in the country.

SS: She didn't know you were coming?

JWR: She knew we were coming, but there was no way to get there til her
husband came home, and he never got hom' til twelve off the trapline.
Oh, boy, was I glad to see her. I thought I was a goner in that hotel.

SR: You've never been on those traplines?

SS: Huh?

SR: You've never been around on one of those traplines?

SS: No. Never on traplines.

SR: Well, we had one. Carl and I when I first went up there, the first year. He says, "Well, we'll trap this winter." And I know when we started out it was below. I thought, my it's cold to go makin' that stuff.

SS: What did you call it?

SR: Well, yeah, what's stuff? Well, I learnt, you take a log that's laying this way and another one that way, you put sticks around and put your bait down a certain way and then use sticks around, you know, in the snow and when you pack the trail down— you see, when you're going around your trapline, you make a trail. Carl would take a stick, he's taller and heavier than I was, he'd make a step and I'd step right in between his steps, and every time we went around we made a trail a little better. Then from this trail to the back and forth. I would go back and forth while he was fixin' 'em you know and get a real good trail so they'd follow this. They'll follow a man's trail, and they get on that and they go right in. They smell this thing, and here's a little thing— you got this snare just the size of my hand, like that, see? You got two sticks down here and you got a stick about this long hanging up here with this snare, I think it's four or five little copper wires twisted, you know, and it's just along enough that it'll make that loop around like
this around, and back around in here and fairly close to the stick, so when he comes through here, we had a blade of grass tied around this stick here and around this one. And this mustn't be too big now, remember, it's only that big, see. And he comes through here, the first one, and he's got to break that blade of grass, see, and when he breaks that it tightens right up around here and he keeps going in, and he pulls that stick off the top. But he's got the smell of that and it's out just about that far. And when he smells it and figures, well, I've got to get rid of this stick, he backs up and he puts one foot here and you know that thing flops around and he puts the other one up, and he just lays down like that til he dies. He'll catch that end that's flopping around, he'll catch it and he'll hold it and when he gets that hold, he'll never let go. Just chokes himself to death. The furtherest we ever found one was oh, about thirty feet. He got one too short or something and he just kept a rollin', rollin'. You could see it in the snow. Little skiff of snow, you know and he moved like that, you see, and followed that and found it.

SS: What did you trap there mostly? What was it you were trapping?

SR: Lynx.

SS: It was lynx? It was 56 below when you went out?

SR: 56 and we had to go out and make these . Now you know what those are. If you found logs alayin' like this you had an easy time making it. You could make one in just a little while, see. Because there was plenty of sticks and stuff. We had, I think we had about fifty around there. Anyway, we had to go around and that's twelve miles. And we got that made in a day or two, that twelve miles. And then after that we had to go- whether you got anything or not, you
have to go around and tramp that trail. Go around and go into the coop and back and you have to do it. Well one night we went into the settlement, you know, Caroline was the settlement- and go down there and they wouldn't let us go back for two or three days. Take in the dances. 'Cause they used to come up there and stay all night and hunt. So when we got down there-

SIDE II

SS: Your place?

SR: Well, they come up and hunt.

SS: Which place was that?

SR: This wasn't my place, this was my pardner's place, see. Carl Bogan. And they just come up there, stay all night, and we were great friends. But anybody come, we'd always ask 'em to stay over night. And so we'd go huntin' the next day, 'cause that's what they come for. But anyway, we got around this trapline. Got quite a few that winter, not too many, but we got around twelve dollars apiece for 'em. It kept us going, you know. And it was kind of exciting, I was young then, twenty-something.

SS: And 56 below. I wonder-

SR: And my dad says, "Why cattle couldn't live at 50 below." And he says, "You better stay all winter." And I liked it, too, when I got up in Alberta. I loved it up there. That prairie country and things, I just thought it was wonderful. And so, I stayed all the time. I got used to it just like anybody else. Only I had to dress different. Instead of having these ordinary clothes we have down here, I'd get heavier underwear. I says to some of those guys, I says, "What kind of underwear you got?" They says, "Red Stanfield." Well, of course, I didn't know what that meant. Well, Stanfield underwear was a good place to buy. It was extra good, see, that underwear. And they had
different kinds, different labels. They start out with maybe the green, the black-and black is the heaviest-and then the red and then the yellow next, and then the green, and I don't know, there was some other color. And one thing about it, it never itches you.

SS: Long?

SR: Long staple wool. And never itches you like what we had down in the United States. Ours was short wool and I couldn't stand wool, I didn't think. But when that cold weather, like 56 below come and then just a little stove like this or smaller than this to heat the house, why you had to have something pretty warm. It was a log house and it wasn't even chinked, I don't think. (Laughter) So, we got tough! Or I thought I was beginning to get tough. The other guys was used to it. And he told me he was from Michigan. And you know where I found him when the war came up? He left to go or he'd be conscripted, and he wanted to volunteer. He never said a word to me or any of his friends or anybody out there, he just was missing. And the next thing I knew he was here in Portland. I went into to Portland—one of my brothers died there in Portland, and his daughter saw it and she says, "Stiner Ringsage—or Simon Ringsage,—died." "I wonder if he's any relation to Stiner?" And so they looked up the phone-course I had a phone, and Simon had a phone, but they called his wife, my brother's wife; she's still living there, and so she says, "Well, yeah, he lives over there at such-and-such a place." And so they called me up. I couldn't believe that it was Bogan.

SS: Did you figure that he was dead or something?

SR: Well, no, but I couldn't believe that he lived anyplace around. He was from Boken Michigan or someplace, you know, anyway he told me
the town he came from.

JWR: How long had it been since you had seen him? It was about in '17 you had seen him and that was about--?

SR: '40's.

JWR: No, this was later than that. It was after you'd retired.

SR: Yeah.

JWR: It was about, oh, I'd say about '58.

SR: I know it was an awful long time. Well, he wasn't married. Now he had a daughter, well, taller'n her and she was 20-something.

JWR: And she had a little girl.

SR: So I heard this woman talking. She said, "Did you know Carl Bodjan?"

JWR: No, she says, - how was she started that now?

SR: She said, "Did you know a Carl Bodjan? In Alberta?"

JWR: In Alberta! I says, "Yeah, I knew Carl Bodjan, but not down here. I didn't know anybody down here by that name." I says, "He'd go East if he went anyplace." "Well," she says- I says, "From Caroline?"

SR: She says, "Yes." "Well," I says,"sure I know him." Well Carl was living there at-

JWR: Oregon City.

SR: Oregon City.

JWR: Just south of Portland.

SR: "Well," I says, "we'll have to get together." The only thing was, just before I met him now, he was crippled up. He'd been sawing in the Blue Mountains, you know with a chainsaw. And he said he just had a dozen trees to saw, and the guy told him, "Oh, forget 'em. Leave it." "No," he says, I'm going to saw 'em." So he went out and sawed 'em and somebody else was working around there and a tree fell on him, and left him all crippled up. I guess he had diabetes
and that's why he was quitting. But he had to do that and that really put him on the bum.

SS: I wanted to ask you: When you grew up down here on Central Ridge, did you have a desire to go up to Canada at that time?

SR: Well, yes. Yeah! Sure. I come up here from southern Idaho; I was down there three years, and I come up here with the folks. And I said, "Heck, I think I'll go up to Canada." You know they had war up there in 1916. And we didn't have war down here, and I thought well, I'll go up there and join the army and go down to France, get a nice little trip! I said, "You don't have to be afraid or anything like that," I said, "you can get killed, you can get killed going down to the barn or someplace like that. There's nothing to be afraid of."

So, I went up and then I thought after while-- I wasn't going to volunteer right away--after while I thought I'd join up. And something happened, this happened, somebody was getting five dollars for joining guys up, well I wouldn't stand for that. I wanted to go in and join myself. And I couldn't get anybody that would go in with me, you know, just like I did, just for fun, you know. They said, "No." Nobody wanted to go.

So, the Canadians told me, "You're crazy! We're all trying to get out. We're all trying to get out." And I said, "What's the matter?" See, I couldn't understand. Oh, yes, they was jumping outta the trains and everything, gettin' out, and here I'm trying to get in! Well, I said, "Heck I'm not doing them any favor. I better keep outta this darn thing."

SS: It wasn't as much fun as you thought it was going to be?

SR: Well, I wasn't doing the Canadians any good, looked like. Me jumping in there and they was jumpin' outta the trains and me jumpin' in to get in. That didn't look very good, I didn't think, so I stayed out. I never did go in. They couldn't draft me.
SS: Was the war kind of unpopular among Canadians?

SR: You know I homesteaded there, and all that, but you know, I was too old, they wouldn't have me. And when the States got in war, see, I wrote down here for a questionnaire so I could fill it out, you know, so they could draw me if they wanted me, see. I thought that'd be the best. So just about the time the thing was over, they sent me a questionnaire. And I filled it out and sent it in myself and I was supposed to take it in to a—what do they call 'em now?

SS: Notary Public.

SR: Notary Public, you know. And I says, "Mark it A-1, everything A-1." right on down. And I might a not passed, I don't know. The only thing I thought they might turn me down on was my feet, but gosh, I was good every other way, so I don't think they'd a turned me down.

SS: How did you make a living when you went up there? What did you do?

SR: When I went up there I could get a job anyplace. They wanted me. I went to Calgary, and I said, "You got any jobs on hand?" "Yeah, sure." I was American, you know, they could do anything, but you take a Cana— he couldn't get a job dian, or especially an Englishman, they wouldn't give it to 'em if they had a hundred of 'em.

SS: How come?

SR: Because, they wanted 'em to fight. Just as long as they had a war, they wanted men to fight the war, see? And so, I could get a job anyplace. And I know, a fella says, "Yeah," he says, "I got a job for you. A fella wants a machinist." "What the heck is a machinist?" "Oh," he says, "nothing to it," he says, "they pay a little more money for that." He says, "You can fix a disc or anything like that, you know?" "Oh, yeah, I could do that." Know all about farm machinery and everything like that." He sent me up there, and this fellow was
from Boston; the United States, you know. And he was hiring a lot of
guys, and he was mean to these Canadians. By golly, I watched out that
he treated everybody like human beings. And so, I got to working
there, and I was his- oh, what do you call those? It was a machinist
anyway. And I thought, "Well, what the heck has he got to do?" "Well,"
he says, "you know-" Well, there was two men, a big Swede and a big
Norwegian, they was close to seven feet tall; weigh about two hundred
pounds apiece, you know. Not any fat on 'em, but they were big and
strong as any mules you ever had, and they got a mill in there- let's
see- a fanning mill. You know they used a fanning mill in there a
lot for fanning the ice out of the grain. You know they threshed late,
all winter maybe, and a lot of the ice went into the grain, and it fanned
it out. And they used it for a lot of things. Fanning weeds out and things. And this fanning mill was as big as a small threshing machine, see, and they had a great, big building there like a
warehouse. Nice place to work, this farmer. And so he says to me-
or these two older guys- these boys, they'd been working there for
fourteen years. Ever since he come in her. And they says- when this thing
come up there, it was what you call an A frame, like this, it come
down there and they set it on the floor and they didn't know what to
do. I guess they couldn't read, maybe. And there was a thing to read
and tell you every part, just how to do it. And I could take a binder-
knocked down binder in this country- get it knocked down, it's a
lot cheaper- get it out here and there is a piece of paper tells you
every part to put together. And I could do that, and I says, "That's
what this is." So I saw this piece of paper telling you all what to
do. I says, "Yeah, sure." So these two fellows says, "You think you
can put it up?" I says, "Yes, think so." "But", I says, "I gotta
have help." You know, I didn't want to be alone. So, I says, "I want Charlie." Another boy about my size; young fella, about seventeen. And even if we didn't do anything much- "That's alright, get some help."

So, I got him, and we fooled around. And, of course, I'd read this darn thing and I'd be careful- the next thing had to be done- gonna put that in- it says this goes in next. Well, you have to figure that out because nobody else knows. And I knewed there was one thing before I put this other frame- or whatever it was- there was an elbow that had to go in- what the heck, I can't figure it out right now- put that thing first, and I'll take this thing out and then put it in. Sure enough, I had to do it. But anyway, we had it pretty near all together that one day, see. And it was good sized, it pulled with a good sized engine, you know, and they had a belt that was five, six inches-

SS: This was the fanning mill?

SR: Yeah. It looked like a little threshing machine; good sized. And so-- And this place, was a place, they told me they had three crews. One on the job, one agoin' and one acomin'. It was a hard place to work, see. And the main thing, he got an Englishman on that and fired him. Well, he was onto that.

SS: Why?

SR: Well, that's the orders I guess he got. But when he come to Americans, he wasn't supposed to touch them. That's the only people they could work. Couldn't do nothing with 'em. So I could bawl him out or anything. And whenever I saw him picking on those Canadians, boy, I bawled him out good and plenty! I really bawled him out sometimes. Well then, I got this thing all up in a day and a half. Well, we was tired of sittin' around watchin' it. Screens and everything all in it, all fixed up. There was a lot of things I showed 'em how. They didn't
know I could do anything. And they was out there sewing sacks. You
know they was going to haul off a bunch of this stelts (?) it's a
wheat and looks like barley, but it's a wheat. And they was sewing.
They was gonna ship three carloads, and sewing it. Well, I looked
at it. I says— They wanted me to sew some sacks— I says, "You
haven't got a sack needle." "Oh, what's that?" I says, "That's a
patching needle." You know to patch sacks with, it had the curl,
like that, see. You know, to patch the sacks with. "Well, what does
it look like?" Well, I told 'em it's a straight needle about five in-
ches long and it's wide. It's wide at one end, and you can sew the
sacks with that. "Well," he says, "I'll get you one." And it was a-
bout five miles outta Brooks, Alberta. He got in and he had a little
buggy, light buggy and shafts with a little black horse; Dobbins, they
called him. And that horse, my gosh, the minute you'd touch the lines
away he went. He went out there and back in just a little while. Was-
't over an hour, I guess. And I looked, yes, he had a sack needle.
"Well," I says, "now I can sew sacks." Now, they'd been using a pat-
ching needle; no wonder it was slow, see." "Now," I says, "I've got
to have a sack gauge." Says, "What is a sack gauge." "Well," I says,
"I'll show you." So, I sewed this one up, you know and this needle
you cut the thread with it, you know, stick it along side, put it in
the bunch here and stick it in the side like that and be ready for
another one. And then take the sack by the ears and click it over on
my lap, get up, and you'd get rid of it, either throw it in the wagon
or throw it on the pile. I says, "Now when I fill this next one up,
I want to jig it." I wanted 'em to fill 'em, see. They tried every
way. Some people even tried to put sticks in, you know. I said,
"You don't need that. Bust your darn sacks, just jiggin' 'em." And
You know it's easy. You take a sack of wheat; their oats up there are heavier than ours. If they don't weigh forty-six pounds, I think it is, you know, ours used to weigh thirty-two, and if their's don't weigh forty-six pounds it isn't good oats.

SS: You jig just by—

SR: And then you put them in the regular oat sack, you know, they get to be a hundred and fifty-three pounds, see. And I always had Charlie, that young fellow, you know, to help me. He was my size and everything. And I said, "Now, when that hits the floor, it's going to rebound. And you pull up," I says, "just as easy, as it was empty pretty near." A lot of people think it's heavy. "Well, if you let it set a while and then lift it, that's a heavy load. But if you get it just the right time," I says, "it's easy." So Charlie and I'd get onto to that right away, see. They had an old wagon, oh, most unhandy thing; square box on it, and you had to throw it— it was pret-near as high as that ceiling— to the top of the boards that was around there, and you had to throw it in there. It was a little higher than I could reach. And, I said, "Now listen, when we get up here, so, we'll say, one, two and," then I says, "we'll just— three, and go right in." Just stand off a little ways. And the first time we did it, we did fine. And we could do that right along. And I told this big Swede and that big Norwegian, they was pretty near as tall as that, to do it that way, you know. Well, they got a hold of that sack and one'd pick it up and the other one bring it back down. And then this one'd pick it up and the other fellow'd bring it down. I said, "Listen, you fellas going to bust that sack." (Chuckles) They couldn't get together!

SS: Well, what was the matter with them?
SR: I said, "Listen, the best way is to take one in each hand." I says, "Not two on one sack."

SS: What was the matter with this place that these people couldn't figure out how to do that stuff right?

SR: Well, it takes practice to do that together.

SS: Hadn't they ever seen how threshing is done before?

JWR: This was in Canada, wasn't it?

SR: Yeah. They'd thresh- yeah everything was threshed and handled in sacks. But now look there, they had a patch needle- just imagine how they'd go around there--

SS: Hadn't they ever seen---?

JWR: Evidently they hadn't.

SR: With the regular sack needle, you know how you shape the sack? Bring it this way, and you get it up there and you just come down. You press the needle down like this--

JWR: You've seen those needles, haven't you?

SR: It goes down and up from your hand. You see, they thought that if they got the hook in that needle, pulled it down, it'd come up of itself.

SS: Was farming kind of a new thing in that part of Alberta?

SR: Well, it was just something like here, only they went at a little different.

JWR: The farm equipment wasn't so good, I don't think. It was real expensive. What do you think? Nothing would hold up there.

SR: It was expensive, for one thing. Tools, you bought anything, it was high. Binders, $300. And you couldn't buy a secondhand one, it was always in use.
SR: You had to buy everything— and if you did buy a secondhand one, you paid a big price. I know we finally—my uncle and I, we had to buy everything new. A drill was $323. 'Course, we got a good drill. And wheat—my gosh, it was like this—eighteen cents a bushel, there at one time. They couldn't make anything down here so they couldn't make anything up there.

JWR: And you have a shorter season. You've got a lot of things that makes it harder to farm up there. Such a narrow margin. They have adapted. They've got better wheat. They've figured things out better now.

SS: When you went up there, did you—?

SR: I worked for the other guy.

SS: You worked for the other guy's?

SR: Yeah, for quite a few years and then in the wintertime I worked in the mines, because it was cold.

JWR: And then you worked for your uncle from about—

SR: Well, after a few years, I went to UNK. And he just begged me—

JWR: Uncle Ed. You know Uncle Ed.

SR: And he just begged me to stay, for a year, he said. Well, I stayed there three years. I thought, "Well, gee, I don't save my money anyway." In the wintertime I used to mine in some of those mines. And hurry up when I got out hurry up into the beer place and have a good glass of beer and play a little pool and then supper was ready, and had supper and then maybe after that go up and play poker, at night. Had a great time.

SS: But you would spend all your money?

SR: Well, I never spent any that way. I was ahead all the time.
SS: Oh, you were making money?
SR: I made the price of my clothes, all the time. My uncle thought I did but I sent enough money to pay taxes on his place. I'd send him fifty dollars now and again, you know, that kept the wolves away.
SS: So he asked you to stay?
SR: Yeah.
SS: You did stay then?
SR: Well, he'd just give anything to have somebody to stay with. He offered me— We made an agreement, we made an agreement that I was to get thirty dollars a month in the wintertime, see, and I'd be out working in the mines.
SS: You didn't work in the mine anymore?
SR: Oh, yes.
SS: You did?
SR: Yes, I worked in the mines.
JWR: In the wintertime.
SR: In the wintertimes. And then I sent home money. That's the only he could get any money to pay--
JWR: And then he helped him break land.
SR: Well, and then in the spring, I was just dying to get back on the farm, because I'd rather be on the farm than in the mines.
SS: Where'd you send the money home to?
SR: Ed's place.
JWR: Ed— around Wainwright.
SS: You were sending money to Ed to help him get by?
SR: Yeah. Well, he had a section of land you know, and we had to clear up some of it. It was all brush, pretty near.
JWR: And with four little kids. They come every year.
SR: He spent all of his money. I know when he started out up there, he hadd $8,000, and he didn't have a cent to spend. And he got about that much out of his father-in-law. And everything went— you know, he thought that after a while he'd get crops and they'd make some money. There's no such a thing as getting money out of it. You spend it once, it's gone!

SS: How did he wind up broke?

SR: Well, I'll tell you. He was traveling trying to see; stop at this place, see what the land— talk to the farmers, and then another place around like that, and that all costs money.

JWR: He started from scratch up there. Now one thing, when he started in it was right after the war. Prices were high. He had a wife and four kids. He had to buy equipment. He had a father-in-law that lived with them. And then, the prices kept on going down. It was sliding on down, towards the—

SR: He had spent before— before that he had spent most of that, you know buying things, you know.

SS: The equipment— buying equipment?

JWR: Yeah. You had to buy all the lumber. You were living out on more or less prairie; you had to buy lumber. And food was expensive.

SR: Yeah. He built a house that cost $1,200 for lumber. And I got the house and that place.

JWR: And the mortgage.

SR: Then besides that he had some lumber for the barn, I imagine. Not much.

SS: How badly did he need you to help him? Did he really need you?

SR: He had so much work to do. Just an awful lot of work to do. It's more than one man can do. You got to go to town fourteen miles; that takes up practically a day. You get the paper and a little groceries,
and you talk to a few of the neighbors and so on around, and your day is shot! It takes you—now us, we never drive fast with the horses.

JWR: A horse and buggy.

SR: Fourteen miles each way. Each way, you see. You don't drive it in a hour.

JWR: A day's shot.

SR: Your day is shot.

JWR: They had to haul water.

SR: He had to, and when I come there I hauled water.

JWR: And let me tell you, he's old superman when it comes to work. No matter what anybody else could do, he could do it faster, quicker and better, when it came to shocking, plowing—anything.

SR: I used to shock by the acre up there.

JWR: And Ed figured if he could just—he needed Ed's not strong physically. Never has been, and then when he got up there it was a moment of truth. He saw what he got into. It's just like pouring water down a hole sometimes, getting started. Very few people made money.

SS: So he figured that Stiner would be the best kind of worker he could get?

JWR: Oh, absolutely! And he couldn't afford anybody else. And Stiner, when he went out in the wintertime he was bringing in cash, and he sent some home to help out with taxes and they had a telephone, I guess, and they had a few things. You'd just be surprised, even those years, how expensive—

SR: And I never used any money when I was there. All they had to do was feed me, and I smoked tobacco. Didn't even buy me any smokin' tobacco.

SS: Did they pay you wage? For helping?

JWR: The contract was to pay him, but there never was any.
SR: They put it on the books. Put it on the books. It was all on books when we settled up, I had $1,700 coming, he said, "I'll give you that place, that you're living on now." $1,700 and he figured $2,800—oh, yes, yeah, and he owed $1,000 on it, and, "You take the mortgage over. The other $1,000." So I got that palce. And then I homesteaded a quarter, next to his, the one I bought from him, but it took me all this time to get that. I knew about it for years, but somebody'd go in there and file on it, just when the other guy'd give it up, and then when this fellow'd want to give it up, he'd talk to a friend of his, says, "You give me twenty dollars, and I'll let you have my rights and I'll leave." Well, I wouldn't know anything about it. So finally I found out it was open you know. Nobody would do a thing when they got it, they had no money, they just, you know, transferring it. So I got it. When I got it, I says, "Boy, I'll just break it up right now." So I started in plowing. And I farmed on it for, well, seven years. I got crops off of it; part of it. Sixteen acres down next to the river, there, that I know one year that I put it into wheat, I got 350 bushels off it. I never did figure what that that would be an acre, but it was quite a lot of wheat. And then I had fourteen acres on top that I plowed it, and then I had forty-four acres on the one I bought.

SS: The land you got from Ed, was that 160?

SR: That was 160 and then I homesteaded this 160 right next to it.

JWR: Ed had 160.

SR: The guy that--

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SR: My uncle for six hundred dollars, and my uncle never did, oh, he paid a little interest, I guess.

JWR: Nine percent interest was awfully high in those times.
SR: And finally when I had to take it over it was that $1,000, so you see they never did pay much on it.

JWR: You see, too, there was several factors—now, we married in '26—okay in '27, we were just getting started—and '27, I guess, that year we had a baby, and the town burnt out. That meant your credit—you know, it was hard on everybody.

SS: The town of Wainwright?

JWR: All the business places burnt out. You know every good town has a fire, and it had it. Then '28 was the beginning of that depression, and it seemed to me it hit up there just simultaneously down here. And we had a few bad years. I mean, it was just downhill all the time.

SR: Seemed to be that way everywhere.

JWR: And then I went back teaching, I guess, for a year to try and get us on our feet. I had two little children by then. And I guess that must have been around '30, '31, I went back teaching for a year. You see the bank, they wanted security for everything. They wanted to take a lien on everything you had. The only thing I could do—I had my own money, and I got a brood sow; a real highbred brood sow—a certain breed we wanted; Yorkshire. And we got started and it was in my name and the only thing that pulled us through. We did very well in pigs.

SR: Well before I left, that's the first thing I did, I went to the bank and settled up with the bank. I didn't give a darn for the rest of it.

SS: Well, why? That way they couldn't take it?

JWR: They couldn't take it. Anything in his name, we figured if he sold cattle the bank would be---

SR: There was another thing there—there was another thing, they had a
law up there in Canada, that you were allowed out of the crop, and nobody could touch it. So much of the grain, any of the grain, they couldn't touch. I could have a bin full--

JWR: But you realize we put in twenty-five bushels of wheat, or was it fifty or whatever, and we got back about half of that, so weren't doing too good. Didn't matter what rights we had if you don't have the wheat. We had a very poor year that year.

SS: Ed said that for the first three years that he farmed the place, that he got nothing.

JWR: That could be. I don't doubt it. He was about right. And he had to live.

SR: He had to live.

JWR: Had to feed that bunch. Food was much cheaper down here, much cheaper.

SR: Well, one thing, I did make something on the pigs. Now a neighbor over there had sixty head of hogs, but he didn't have my kind, and he couldn't sell one of 'em. And he says to me, "Well, I'll kill 'em for dog food."

JWR: Well, these were Yorkshires. They were special bacon. They were bred for bacon. They're just like race horses.

SR: The Yorkshires up there are different from the Yorkshires we had down here. They're a little more on the lean.

JWR: They're beautifully lean.

SR: So they were wonderful. I like 'em. And the fellow told me, he says, "But some of mine", they were in pigs - and this neighbor of mine, he says, "I'm buying one. You ought to buy one." I think there was only one or two left when I come there to get it. So I got this one anyway. She had thirteen little pigs. He picked one and he said, "This is a good sign, they got lots of teats, they have lots of little pigs." And
she had eighteen. (Chuckles) Well, when you're up there, just forget money. Just pay what you have to and leave the other, if you got it, leave it there. Just forget you got money and only pay for what you have to.

JWR: You have just no idea—I know one winter there, we had potatoes—well, we always had pancakes; we did have flour. And we had potatoes happened to have one meal and the next meal we had carrots. We had a good crop of carrots. Put a little cream sauce on 'em. That was just it, no fruit, no nothing! My mother she sent a little money—sent enough money to give the children cod liver oil, and I'd buy a tin of canned tomatoes, and dole out, maybe half a cup of tomato juice apiece to keep them going. And she sent enough money to buy underwear for the kids. There was two little ones then. I was better off than my neighbors. I was lending her patches to put on her children's clothes. She had eight children. Across the canyon. She had been well educated, she was an American. She was a court reporter, she wasn't any sludge as far as education. And they were so poor they were sitting in the dark. All winter long in Canada, the only light they had was from something like this— they made a few little dip candles from their drippings. They didn't have enough money for even patches; if I could just give her patches she could get along. I gave 'em to her. And food was—

SS: You were living on carrots and potatoes?

SR: Well, I could live on anything.

JWR: He could live on anything, but it was grim.

SR: I never craved apples or anything like that.

JWR: Oh, I just died for fruit and Ed Swenson, this tough guy, it doesn't matter, he could eat that white— I call it wallpaper paste—

SR: Gravy.
JWR: Gravy. I hadn't heard about it til I married. If you have gravy you have to have beef, and you start from there.

SS: What winter was this? What year was it?

JWR: Let me see, it was before Elaine was born. Oh, about '33-'32, '33. The winter I guess it was possibly a little bit better. We didn't—no meat.

SS: You weren't working at that time then?

JWR: Oh, no, I just worked the one time. Then the next year I was pregnant with— let's see the two older ones were about, I guess, five or six and then I got pregnant with the last little girl. I didn't go back to teach any more.

SR: And she wouldn't let me work in the mines after I got married.

JWR: I don't think you could have worked, Stiner, during the Depression. Nobody could work. There was no work for anybody during the Depression.

SS: Why didn't you want him to work in the mines?

JWR: Well, when we were first married, well, I was, I don't know— you know those slick American salesmen that my mother told me about— He was going to make a killing through farming, so I married a farmer. And I hadn't planned on a mining guy. And I knew mines. It's alright, you worked maybe six months out of the year. He did pretty good to work what he did. It's nothing sure. And during the Depression, you couldn't get work in mines.

SR: You know, I never made money up there shocking or anything by the day. It was four and a half a day. I said I could beat that by contracts. I said, How much an acre?" "Thirty cents." I said, "Okay." "How much you got there to cut?" "Three hundred and eighty." "Well, can you cut twenty acres a day?" That's what I could shock, twenty
acres a day. And if I had a pardner with me—I had a pardner with me from Kamiah up here. He said he was the best shocker in Alberta. I says, 'You are?' "How much can you shock in a day? Can you shock twenty acres of that good wheat?" He says, "Yeah." "Okay," I says, "so can I." So we'd just go out and get contracts. And I said, "You pick your side—" you know, like this table, this square, I said "You want to meet me at that corner? Or do you want to go this way, you want to go that way?" You know, sometimes you'll find a little lighter place, see. And I'd always be there, just about that time or a little ahead.

SS: Did you stay ahead of these people that you shocked for?

SR: Oh well, we'd never get in a hurry in the morning. Let 'em cut a few times, see. Then we'd start out, had to have something to start out from. Work down to this corner here, and then wait a while. Wait a half an hour or so, til they made a few rounds, see. Then we'd take everything to that corner, and then we'd go into the house, eleven o'clock. Then they'd come in at twelve and at one o'clock they'd go back to work, see. Well after while we'd go down there and we'd start there and we'd come to here. Sit here and wait a half an hour or so then get over there and by golly, there wouldn't be much left when we got over there, we'd be pretty well up. And I know when we went to work that first place there, there was two brothers; they had three hundred acres. Well, I said it'll be a few days, and oh, his mother was an awful good cook and we had the best board there was, you know. And here's the way it was— in Alberta there'd be a flat up here and then drop down and flat down here—like this table. Well, gosh, it was a hundred feet up to that top flat up there. And so the oldest boy he hired us, and said, "You go up on top after dinner," he says, "you boys go up on top," he says, "we got about nine acres cut
up there." And, he says, "We'll be up there about two o'clock or something like that." Two eight foot binders, see. They cut twenty acres a piece a day, see, that's forty acres. So they come up there, and we was already around, but we was kind of standing there. And the young, "Hey," he says, "you fellas gone clear around?" "Oh, yes, sure." And that was an hour. Well, you're supposed to put 'em in a straight row. Well, I told him, you know, "You drop 'em straight, we'll put 'em straight. We'll tie no loose stuff." "Well," he says, "you don't even have to raise that." "Oh," I said, "we can raise that up, if you want to." And we did.

SS: Loose stuff?

SR: Yeah. If there was any, but he said, "We don't have any loose stuff. Pretty hear all of it's." He says, "I don't care what you do with that." But, it had to be in straight rows because they have stook loaders. You know what a stook— it was a shock; shock loaders. And they'd take these stook loaders about six feet wide, I guess, and just grab the shock and throw it up and get it into the wagon. A big hayrack. And then they dump it off down there at the stack. So you have to have 'em in straight rows. So that was agreement. And then the guys says, "How long you going to stand?" I says, "Til we get away from 'em." The young fellow— the youngest brother, he asked all kinds of questions. "Well," he says, "You make too much money." "Fine," I says, "take us back to town. You brought us out here, and," I says, "all you have to do is to take us back to town." This was the younger brother, you know. I says, "We come out here to make money. We didn't come out here to board." I says, "If we come out here to board, I wouldn't want better board than what your mother puts out." I says, "That's fine, but we come out here to make money."
The older brother he says, "Come on, let's go." So they went to work cutting. They got the three hundred acres cut. We come in for dinner. And we just shocked a little in the morning; little in the afternoon. But we shocked fast.

JWR: And believe me, they stayed out. He was just a whizz.

SR: A month after I got through with this place, you know, I happened to meet this guy on the street. I think, I forgot, it wasn't Lethbridge, it was another town, anyway. And he says, "Hey, you know those shocks you put up for us?" I says, "Yeah." He says, "They're still standing." "Well," I says, 'I didn't expect 'em to fall down. Good bundles, you had all good bundles." I says, "If you put round shocks, they won't fall down without you got an awful wind. But if you put 'em up right," I says, "drop 'em down around like that and braced just right." Don't pick up a bundle unless you can, and pretty soon you got nothing."

SS: You two didn't work too hard and you stayed ahead of 'em anyway?

SR: That's right, didn't have to work hard. And we worked in spells. Boy, I tell you, you go up there and pick up two bundles like that and you set 'em down and they stayed.

JWR: Let me tell you, it's easy for him to keep ahead, it's easy, but some of these other guys it would have been a good hard day's work. Like when he'd go to fill up that tank— that great big water tank—

SS: Where? Here?

JWR: No, Alberta. He'd just pumped and pumped. Some other poor soul, he'd be just working his guts out. He's Superman, believe it or not!

RS: Three hundred and fifty gallon tank, I'd haul up there, two and a half miles, with one of the neighbors. We all got our water there. Real nice water. I'd fill it in twenty minutes with a pump. Time myself and I'd just go just like that, and that water was just a steady
stream into that tank.

SS: I got to ask you: where do you think your being a hard worker came from?

SR: Oh, I just figured you had to work.

JWR: Good physical health. All those boys, Helmer and Stiner had to work when they were younger. Their mother died. They had to pitch in—

and how old were you? About fourteen and sixteen? When your dad left to go to school.

Sr: No. I was eleven when Mother died.

JWR: I know, but when your dad went to go to school and left you farming over there on the Ridge?

SR: Well, I was—let's see, seventeen and eighteen.

JWR: You were younger than that, when your Dad first went to Missouri to take up chiropractor work.

SR: No, seventeen and eighteen—something like that.

SS: Did your father start working you when you were pretty young?

SR: Yeah. I'll tell you how old we were. Just like if we had a draw like this down there—well, right down there, only it was a little steeper than this—we had a little tree that Dad thought was dry, and we had to have some wood and he had to go out and get something, I don't know he wasn't at home very much—and he had something under the tree, another log, I guess, and he had a saw out there and he'd started this saw half way in the cut, and I was coming six, I wasn't quite six, you know how big I was then, I was small for my age, and Helmer was coming eight. Let's see, that May I'd be six and the last of June he'd be eight. And we started then and every day until we had to go to school, we had to saw wood. And he set that saw, just like that. Just a few teeth come out of the log at the back end. So, you know it took all afternoon to saw that little log, that big around. Half
of it was already cut, see. Just a few slots that Dad would make, and we'd saw the rest of it.

SS: Did your father expect a lot of you?
SR: Well, he got us started working, instead of play. That was our job. We got to working, got exercise.

JWR: I think they expected it. I don't think they questioned it years ago.
SR: Oh, no.

JWR: Kids just did, well, that's it. They didn't even fuss.
SR: And if you worked like that after while you'd get so you'd rather work than anything else. Dad says, "What do you want to do?" When we went in together. "Who's going to go to town and get the groceries, and the mail?" I said, "You are." I'd rather stay out and dig stumps or anything. I wouldn't take that job. I wanted to be workin'. And I had a couple of good sized horses and I'd pull stumps; poplar stumps you know. Some of 'em with the dirt on would weigh maybe a hundred, hundred and fifty, maybe two hundred pounds. And I'd pick 'em up and throw 'em in the pile. I got piles and piles of it and burned it down. And we could plow it all down. And I'd rather do that than have Sunday off and just run around.

SS: Really?
SR: Oh, yes. I liked my horses. I liked my horses because— and they knew. I had one horse— my uncle used to just hate him— he'd go up there, he was a loggin' horse. He liked to break a single tree. He just loved to. And I just liked him, because I'd put one chain around this stump and one chain around that stump right over there, you see, and he'd tighten up and he'd hit that so hard that that stump would almost break off level with the ground, you know, then come up, just like that. And then he'd just take another stump— another step or so and he'd find out he'd have to pull another one, you know, and he'd
snap that one out. The other, all he had to do was hold. He'd walk up and hold him. But this gray, I think he was a little bit lighter, maybe fifty pounds or so, and he just liked to torment that bay. Just liked to jerk him right on his rear. He tried to, but he never could. (Chuckles) Oh, I loved that horse. Well, then Ed sold the whole darn bunch of horses, nineteen head. When he left, he had to get money, I guess to come down here.

JWR: He left ten years before we moved down here.

SR: Yeah, and he got $500 for it, and I said, "Gosh, Ed, couldn't you have left me the saddle horse?" And the saddle. I said, "I could use that saddlehorse and the saddle." "Gosh," he says, "they had to have that saddlehorse or they wouldn't take anything." Oh, they're onery to deal with, I know 'em.

SS: Who did he sell to?

SR: Oh, some guy up there, a horse buyer.

SS: Oh, yeah. And when did you decide that you wanted his farm?

SR: Well, I always liked it up there, but I didn't say that I liked it too well. I had that-

JWR: He had to take the farm in order to get any money.

SR: The water that we had-- we had plenty of water, but it wasn't any good.

JWR: For the house.

Sr: For the house. It was alright for the stock. When Ed left I took a log about thirty feet long and made a trough out of it, you know, and put it down there for the water to run into this log, and it run in there winter and summer and the stock would go out there and drink.

JWR: Now, you and Ed didn't use that water for stock, did you?

SR: Oh, Ed didn't-- no, he never took time to make anything like that. But I had that--
JWR: Did you water 'em at all down there, you and Ed?
SR: Yeah, but we had a smaller trough.
JWR: Oh, I see, you didn't have that big trough.
SR: I said, "Well, gee whiz, why not take that big log we had down there-" big, oh what is it? Oh, a poplar- we call it cottonwood down here, I guess it would be- and it was a big one about thirty feet long, I says, "that'd make a dandy-" All I had to do was plug the one end and I had Old Brickey, that's his father-in-law, he wanted to stay with me another year- and if he hadn't stayed with me I'd a gone in the mines; but he stayed with me. So, one morning I just got up a little early and made that trough before breakfast. And then after breakfast I took the horses and pulled the trough down there, about a half a mile to the spring. Put it in; never had no trouble, that water just ran there nice all the time. But you couldn't drink it. Ed tried to drink it, I think. And he was used to spring water, you know, couldn't stand that.

JWR: Well, their diet there; they were hard up and their diet was so starchy and his health went down fast.
SR: Well, I was used to starch, I think I was raised on starch.
SS: Who's health went down?
JWR: Ed's. He lived a long time but he always had problems with sight and asthma.
SR: He could work; he could work good when it come to cutting brush and all that. He couldn't stay with it. I could stay with it day in and day out.
SS: When you were up there, did you look forward to the time when you couldn't work? Like a month in the winter or something like that?
SR: I wanted to work so bad when we was in the mines and on a strike and around the mine there was all that brush and stuff and stuff around
there. I just wondered if I could go out and see a farmer that owned it, I'd cut an acre or so for nothing. Just to be working, see. Just to have a little something to do. The mines fed so good, five six, seven kinds of meat.

SS: Five, six, seven?

SR: All kinds of meat; seven or eight kinds.

JWR: There was no fun; his idea of a nice occupation on Sunday was to walk around the fence and see if there might be a staple missing or a fence post down- that was his idea. And up there in Canada, summer or winter- you have to get your wood out for the next year. Having it drying out.

SR: We got some pictures where we had it piled up.

SS: But you said like in the evenings you liked to go down and have some beer and shoot some pool.

SR: Oh, yeah.

JWR: Oh, that was when he was in the mines, before he was married.

SR: Well, you got to do something. And so, I couldn't go to sleep til twelve o'clock, so I'd play poker. And if I lost- some days I wouldn't play, I knew I'd lose. Three days a week I couldn't play, just watch the other guys. I knew that was wrong to play those three days.

SS: Why? You didn't want to lose, you mean?

SR: Yeah. I wouldn't gain anything. I'd lose everything I had.

SS: You were superstitious about it then?

SR: Well, I got to be.

SS: How did you know which days not to play?

SR: Well, I just learned it from experience.

SS: Working in the mines, I was going to ask you: Did you work gyppo, there in the mines?
SR: Yes, all gyppo.

SS: Did you make good money on that?

SR: Well, I say all gyppo; no, it wasn't all gyppo. There was some places it was all shift work. We called it shift work, so much a shift. Seven and a half.

SS: Seven and a half?

SR: That's what they paid then, yeah.

SS: A day?

SR: Yes, seven and a half a shift. Eight hour shift.

SS: Did you make more than that gyppo?

SR: No, you couldn't. You couldn't make near that. They couldn't give you enough cars, or something. They tried it, and they had to give up. They said, "We can give you all the cars you want." Said, "Alright, bring 'em on." And we just loaded up the cars— now, the cars— cars— cars— what's the matter with you guys. They said they'd give us some cars! Oh, boy! They couldn't do it.

SS: Did you guys have to go on strike very much?

SR: Oh, I think two or three times, something like that. I never did like to strike. That threw me out of work! (Chuckles)

SS: Well, was it worth striking?

SR: You had to strike, if they— you didn't dare to walk through the line or anything, you know. It's the same outfit they got down here, and they mean business.

SS: Would the company try to make as much off the men as they could?

SR: Well, I don't know how that is.

JWR: They paid just the same as the—

SR: It's the same union.

JWR: Same union. And everybody's out to get all they can— well, unions
SR: You know all these big unions they had. Some big fat guy'd take in lots and lots of money, and give it over to other big concerns; mines or something, I don't know what they do with it.

JWR: Well, I thought Ed had not too much use for the mine, he wouldn't work in 'em.

SR: Oh, it was alright to work—yeah, I joined up in Lethbridge. They said, "You have to belong to the union." I said, "That's fine." And so I joined up right away; went to work. I believed in making good coal. They even told me that I was making too big a coal, too big a chunks, they had to break 'em. Coming down through the tipple and then through the screens; break the screens. Said, "Break 'em up a little more." I says, "That's work." I said, "I just want to take em out big the way they are and set 'em in the car and you can do what you like with 'em." And I was pretty husky, I could pick up some very big stuff. You know some of these coal mines, you'd be picking it up sittin' down, see, just roll over with it and roll it right into the little cart, you know. Only hold 1,400 pounds. So you could load them up in a hurry. Depends on— you had a long wall system; that was a good system. That was quite a thing. That was around Coaldale, Alberta. They had a wall, I think it was six hundred feet, they took everything. And the fireboss, he'd put a shot every fifty feet or so. And when you come in there you'd find this coal all laying down, see.

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SR: They have what they call a— I forget the name of that machine now—Sullivan machine, I think Sullivan, a machine that cuts underneath—takes about three inches from underneath the coal, and then the fireboss shoots it and it comes down. Well, if it comes down nice, you
can split it.

I'll tell you where the most danger was in the deep mines, like the- up there on the Mountain Park mines. That's a forty-five foot seam. That's a big seam, and that's a gas mine. You wear gas lamps there. And that's dangerous, but otherwise- I guess, if you aren't careful it's dangerous anyplace. I've seen fellas-- we used to get under a prop and eat our lunch, and another guy sitting there, and feel safe. And I 've seen where the roof'd break off and come right down on 'em. But it never did all the time I was there. All my place-- my rooms and things was all propped up good, plumb straight, no leans. Plumb straight.

SS: You did your own propping?

SR: Oh, yes, you have to, all your rooms. If it was thirty feet wide, you had to look after that. See that the prop was right.

We used to get together and say,"Gee, I wish I could get over in that other mine." The other fellows were working, you know, it was paying awful good, they made fourteen, sixteen dollars for their shift. "Gosh, wouldn't it be nice to be over there?" "Gosh, yes, that'd sure be nice." See, the coal was deeper, you know. Higher seams. And, so well we was talkin', and they was going to need somebody over there and I and another guy or two, we was thinking maybe we'd get in there. By golly, we missed it. This other guy he got the job instead of us. And, you know, two, three days he was killed in there. "By golly," I says to this other fella, "maybe it was a good thing we didn't get in that. He didn't get a chance to make much, did he? He just got in there and got killed."

SS: I forgot to ask: I was talking to Helmer about it. Was your father's name originally Swenson?
SR: Yes.

SS: Now why did he change his name to Ringsage?

SR: Listen, if you had six brothers— or five brothers— and they all flocked around here with the same name, around in the country, besides strangers now and again with that same name, you know, why— And he just got into business— he got into this—

JWR: You've got to go back a little bit. The old grandfather came over, now this has happened to other people. I know Mr. right out there from Moscow told me the same thing. The grandfather came over, alright, his name was Swen— wasn't it?

SR: Yeah.

JWR: Ivar Swenson Ringsager. Got to the Immigration; that's too long, too long a name, and Ringsager, that doesn't make too much sense, "I think you better make it shorter." So the poor guy leaves off the last name. This other did the same thing; His name was Bjorsen or something. So, then they went by the name of and everything was Ivar Swenson. And his dad, you see, he about eleven or twelve kids, besides all Stiner's brothers. And all these Swensons! And was his dad was in the insurance business; Farmers Mutual. And the mail all getting mixed up decided to back to the original name. And then they Americanized it a little. I found it on the map of Norway. It's spelt Sager, or Saker, I believe it means a circle of meadows. So that's how they got the name.

SS: Among your father's brothers and your uncles; was one of those uncles a troublemaker in your family?

SR: Well, he didn't bother us too much. He come around, I guess one of 'em, he wanted to get out of the country and he put up a big story, and he had a stud horse, or something, I don't know how much it was worth,
but, anyway, he got six hundred dollars out of Dad. Because Dad's credit was good, he could just go to the bank you know and they'd give it to him. But he went East, but he was smart. He married a woman back there; widow woman. She put him through college. Well, he was young, he was in his twenties. You know, this was a long time ago. And he graduated as a veterinary. And, my gosh, well, he was smart and really good. And Ringling Brothers they would come around, they wanted them to send their best student to come around and inspect their horses and they got this uncle of mine out there. And he knew exactly how to handle them. And he charged 'em; when they went to charging- the main thing was to charge the right price: $200. They knew he knew something then! And, boy, I tell you, he did that.

JWR: He divorced that woman that got him through school--

SR: Oh, that was bad, yeah.

JWR: That wasn't very nice.

SR: He was full of work: do things right now, and all of that. But as far as- I don't know a thing about his marriage business. I know he married her and she furnished the money, he was smart, and knew he'd get some place, which he did. And I don't know how she turned out. Whether she was needing help, and he should have helped her or maybe she was okay. Maybe she didn't need his help. But I never liked his way of doing things.

SS: Do you know what he'd done here that got him in trouble?

SR: No, I don't know, only just what I heard. I don't think he got into as much trouble as he pretended. You see, my dad thought well, if he was in that bad trouble, he'd better get out; better give him the money and get him out.

JWR: What do you think he'd done? Stolen the stud horse?

SR: No, the stud horse was his. He put that up with the prize winner
or something. He believed he was stung, that's all. Horses was cheap at that time anyway. Nice horse, no doubt. I don't know what he was now. He was a hacker.

SS: He sold him as a prize winning horse?
SR: Yeah, I guess so.

JWR: He was young-
SR: I was just a kid.

SS: I know Helmer said that your father was more generous to his brothers than he was to his sons.
SR: Oh, yes. Well, even with Ed, sure, Helmer and I tried to buy— I was gonna say right over there— ninety acres of farm land and the rest run down the big canyon, and we could pay it. We was running Dad's place. He had some two, three hundred acres of farm, and we farmed that and did all the chores and everything. And we told him we could farm that other right in with this, and all he had to do— we didn't have the money— and he'd go the note. No, he took Ed, after a year or two. Turned us down, but Ed comes over, he had this place. Well, Dad offered him a good price for this place, and give him cash for it, so that he could put it on that place over there, and then he went his note for what was balance over there. So they were sure of their money over there. But, no, he wouldn't do that for us. He says, "They gotta work for their living."

JWR: I tell you Ed is a very smooth talker. He's very diplomatic. Now, when he lived in Canada he was always on the school board. And they just practically wept when he left. He would smooth things over, you know, those little schools, they was always getting in fights and he was just dandy at that. And he was a good talker. Just really good, and helpful.

SS: Do you think it was common for the fathers to favor their own brothers
over their sons?

SR: I don't know.

JWR: I don't think so. I just think that he was the baby brother, you know, and there wasn't too much difference-

SR: Well, he was looking after Grandma and Grandpa, and he had this place. He tried hard. And if he made a nickel out here he didn't try to spend it foolishly, there's no doubt about that.

JWR: And he had a very good, logical reason for wanting the money and for doing it. He didn't drink, he didn't smoke, he didn't carouse around. He always reliable; sang in the church.

SR: Oh, he was great on church business. Because Grandma was.

JWR: He went because of his mother, not because of any great personal conviction. But, he was pleasing. And he didn't swear and cuss around like Helmer!

SS: Stiner you were swearing and cussing, were you?

JWR: No, Stiner doesn't cuss in the house, never did, but Helmer-

SR: Yep.

JWR: But I don't know. I don't know why he would act so much like that, because he sure got a lot of mileage out of Stiner and Helmer. He really did.

SS: The work that you boys did for him.

SR: Well, he figured like this-

JWR: Quick as he could get out, he found out that he had a talent, you know, for healing and chiropractic work. He really was good.

SR: Some doctor here told him that he should go to that school. "Boy," "You should he said, "you've got a lot of talent." He said, "go there."

JWR: Did Helmer ever tell you much about him?

SR: And so, he finally convinced my Dad that he could, and he went there
and talked to some of those people and he liked the school and everything. I don't know whether he went to two terms or-

JWR: Oh, yes, he went down several years he went there. What happened, there was a very sick neighbor and he was so sick that he needed a couple of men to go over to Spokane. I guess the medical doctors had given up and there was sort of a chiropractor, a mental healer, or whatever you call it up there. So they did. They took him up there and they worked this man over, and they did this man really very good. And he looked at Swen, he says, "You've got as much magnetism in you as I have. You should do this." They called it magnetism in those days. And I guess Swen must have had a feeling for it. I don't know how old he'd be. Your mother was dead, he must have been close to getting on towards forty. So, he went back, and the only thing he could do in order to put it across was to be a chiropractor, but that wasn't where his ability was. It was in mental. He would have you go into a bedroom or lie down, and think certain thoughts. I got his directions here; you would relax and loosen your clothes, visualize this healing power all around you, and it's there, and drop any grievances that's in your heart and head. You know, don't be hating people. And he says, "I'll be doing the same thing. I'll work with you."

Well, he could be in the next room or he could be a hundred miles.

SR: It don't matter.

JWR: It doesn't matter where. Evidently he could get people believing that. And his sister or the neighbors here, they'll tell you that it just saved their lives.

SR: Yeah.

JWR: His sister... 

SR: That was in this house, wasn't it?
JWR: Yes, it was in this house. His youngest, his baby sister was married, I guess she had maybe one child. She came down with rheumatic fever.  
SR: You know, that's an awful fever.  
JWR: That's very, very painful. Your joints-- you can't bear a sheet or anything over you. She was lying in this-  
SR: You can't bear anybody touching it.  
JWR: And the doctor was out at Troy. He sent her some medicine January. Didn't do any good. They didn't have telephones in those days.  
SR: And Dad was over on Central Ridge.  
JWR: Yes, and they got hold of him his sister was so ill. Now up to that time the family- he was a widower, of course, but nobody in the family believed in it, you know; just take it or leave it. So, they told him to come, they said, "We don't know what to do for her." And she was so ill. And he says, "I'll come." And he came on horseback, traveled all night; cut across through Boulder Creek. It's about thirty-five miles in the wintertime. And, oh, it was tough. And I guess it was late- or early in the morning, three or four o'clock when he got here. And he says, "I haven't too much strength left, but I'll give you what I have." And they had her there in the living room. And he says,"I'll give you a treatment." He didn't touch her body. He didn't touch her. He worked- he just held his hands, he just sort of cupped 'em, just like this; up and down, never touching her. And he says, "Now you rest, and I'll get up and give you another treatment after I've rested and recuperated." And when he got up at eleven she was walking. And he gave her a few more treatments, just like that. She got well. Then I talked to this woman, this aunt of his. Then later on, oh, five children later; hard up and poor, the doctor discovered she had a large lump somewhere on here. He didn't know whether it was malignant or not. And it was supposed to come out
then. No money for doctors, no help— you either had to pay for a doctor or else. So, he told Swen, her brother— he was at Kirkland he was... then in Washington then—

SR: Seattle, you know.

JWR: North of Seattle. She says, "Swen, I've got a lump in my left side, and the doctor says it should come out, it might be malignant." "Well," he says, "I'll treat you. You lie on your bed at nine-thirty and think these thoughts, and I'll work with you." She says, "I laid down for a half an hour at that time every night regularly." She said in a month's time it was gone! There wasn't any lump. The doctor couldn't find one. You tell him about that stallion that got cut. Remember, it was bleeding so, and your dad— got cut on a shoulder or someplace on a barbedwire fence.

SR: Neighbors?

JWR: Wasn't it a neighbor's stallion, that got cut?

SR: Well, there was quite a few— but there was one—

JWR: Well, anyhow, he just made a pass or two over it with his hands and that was it!

SS: Really? Stopped the bleeding?

JWR: Stopped the bleeding. They called it magnetism. It wasn't religion or anything like that. He said he had magnetism in his body that could heal.

SR: They've began to discover what it is now.

JWR: He believed in it! Just real strong and he could get a person responded that was it. Of course, I don't know how he did it with a horse! (Chuckles)

SR: I think it's something like this; Now, a fella had watch stopped, and the guy come over and he says, "Can you do anything for it?" "Well, sure," he says, "it's running." He could start it by just
saying, "Run." to himself, you know, it'd start, and he could stop it. It's just about the same thing. Now, you'd say, it can't be done, they do that.

SS: You mean, it's just like water witching?

SR: Well, it might be. Dad witched and got this water that I'm getting. And I says, "Well, that's good enough for me."

JWR: I think some people-

SR: Everybody told me, "I wouldn't go way down there. Listen, you've got lots of water coming down here. And you got some coming right here by the well, not too far." And a good friend of mine told me that, too. Went to school together there in Moscow. And I says, "Well, listen, Clarence," I says, "I don't like to gamble on anything. We know I got water down there, because when Dad dug it," I says, "he couldn't get the tools out fast enough. And he had to leave the tools down in there. He left the dirt, the dirt he had down there."

And so, I says, "I think I'll take this." So I dug it out, and I dug a little deeper, and that's what we run on for quite a few years. And I know you could lose it—dig down too far, you can lose it. And the ranch down here, they had the same thing. They dug down and lost their's. But, you know, it's funny, but there is one thing, I forget now, just what the work was—Oh, Setlow, you know—we had a neighbor when he come back from the East from school— you know, you couldn't make me believe that he could do anything like that, you know. I was—oh, heck, you couldn't make me believe anything. Well, we had this house—I got a picture I think now of the house that we had over there. It was a nice house, and we had to have carpenters and we had to have a stonemason to build the foundation. So we had everything and got the house all built and the inside fixed up. And we
had some more stuff to do in the house, like the stairway running up there had to have railing and things like that, and you know, little things running on the side. And there was a guy there that used to be a— oh, what do they call it? Well, he was a furniture maker—

JWR: Cabinetmaker.

SR: Cabinetmaker in Moscow, and he had a leg that had been broken twice

I think it was, run over it with a wagon, down that grade there, and he always had lines tangled up around his feet when the wagon turned over, why, he went to jump and the wagon, you know, the lines would pull him under the wagon. And you know how some people they just can't be clear to jump or anything. Believe me, whenever Helmer and I— If we wanted to jump off the wagon going downhill, we had everything clear. We'd figured on it; being clear, if we had to jump we were clear.

SS: When the wagon'd run away?

SR: Yeah, oh, yeah, your brakes give away, say the rod broke, down it'd go, down the hill, you know. So you're never too safe. Now, we was going to school in the fall, and we talked to one of the neighbors, "Oh," he says, "nothing like that can happen to my brakes," He says, "I've got new rods, and five inch thickness, good rods. I got four nice horses, brand new harness." Cost a thousand dollars at that time for the harness. And everything was just so; bells on 'em any everything, you know. Everything was right up to date. Says, "I'll show you how to put the brake on, lock those wheels so easy, you know." And two or three weeks after that, he went over the grade. See, and killed one of the horses, and he just barely got out.

SS: You were trying to tell me about that when your father came back you didn't believe that he—
SR: Yeah. You know that I never had no faith in it. Couldn't make me believe it. I don't care, if I was sick and dying. Well, I could get on another story now. Well anyway, he came up and so this man named Setlow, he was sick in bed, couldn't get up, couldn't walk. His leg was ulcers; just full of ulcers.

SS: This is the guy that broke his leg, huh?

SR: Yeah, busted twice, see. No doctors could cure it. We had a good doctor, but he couldn't cure it. That was in Peck. So, he knew what Dad was studying, and he wanted to know when he was going to be back and all of that. I didn't know a thing about it, but oh, he was just anxious to get in touch. So when Dad come back, why, we told him about it. Well, sure, Mrs. Setlow called up; we had a phone, and called Dad up, "Yeah," he says, "You tell him at nine o'clock to prepare, get ready, and I'm going to concentrate on it anyway. I'm going to give him some treatments. for fifteen minutes." And so, I don't remember whether she called then after that or the next or so. But anyway, he got so he come right up and talked to Dad, and, he says, "I'm gonna pay you. And I'll do some work for you. How will that be?" "Well," Dad says,"fine." He was a good carpenter; real good. So, he said, "If you want to work, fine."

SS: He cured him?

SR: Yeah, he cured him right up. But he stayed there and took treatments.

SS: From your dad?

SR: Yeah. And Dad never got close to him, never touched him. But that's three miles where he first give him the treatment, down there. And the next day he was practically- that is, he felt alright.

SS: Did your father sit down in one place and concentrate?

SR: He went in the bedroom.
RINGSAGE, JEAN & STINER

JWR: He went in the bedroom. I think he'd usually lay down himself. He run-of-the-mill did chiropractic work too. But then there was some--

SS: But this was different?

JWR: Well, he could sense that he believed--

SR: They could send a message to a person if he was in a vault, seven foot of steel all around him, he said it'd penetrate just the same. Can you imagine that? Now, that's what he said.

JWR: You know it's like this Lourdes, you know, shrine—there's people that seem to be able to—there's evidently a strong earth force of some kind, there is possibly, and there's some people that are able to turn it on.

SS: What your father did, wasn't religious?

JWR: Oh, not a bit.

SR: No. No.

JWR: Not a bit, he just says the magnetism—

SR: He was always on the right side, you know, or he always figured on being on the right side of anything, you know. His people was Lutherans

JWR: He was a believer, but this had nothing to do with it.

SR: I know he tried to—Mother told him never to let us forget the Norwegians' language. "Listen," he says, "you answer me in Norwegian." We'd outrun him. We'd answer him in English. He saw that didn't work, so he forgot about it. But he tried—

SS: You would outrun him. He'd chase you when you answered in English?

SR: He'd take after you. Gonna beat up on you. We'd outrun him.

SS: This is what your mother wanted him to do?

SR: Oh, yeah. And he thought the only way we could keep up the language was to answer in Norwegian. Well to heck with that. We was here
where we don't need that language, why use it? (Chuckles) So there
you are.

JWR: There's people in here that—well I'll tell you, one of the ones, I
think it's Eugene Goodmanson—

SR: Oh, yeah.

JWR: He's in that store out there at Helmer. He doesn't know anything about
it, but his mother swears that his dad saved that boy's life when he
was young. Doctors were so hard to get, medical doctors.

SR: He was different from anybody. There's a lot of people'd say,"Well I
can't do nothing, for her, she's got so-and-so and can't save her.
She's too far gone." Well, Dad was different. It was never too late,
to be saved. Not according to him.

SS: Did it usually work, what he did?

SR: I guess so.

JWR: Well, now listen, I wouldn't say—he had a pretty good batting average
but not 100%.

SR: He practiced in Seattle, that is Kirkland for I don't know how many
years and he was in Spokane for a few years.

SS: You know, one thing I got to ask you about is—Helmer told me about—
something about this guy, Bloodwurst there on the Ridge.

SR: Oh, yeah.

SS: Sounded like he was not a very nice fellow to have as a neighbor.

SR: I don't know Bloodwurst too well, either.

SS: You didn't have much to do with him?

SR: He never bothered me, cause I never saw him much. But then Bloodwurst
and he had their troubles, and still on the very last they made
up and got to be good friends. They'd have a fight or two and instead
of beating him up, Helmer'd just hold him and show him that he was—
that he could overpower him, and so he give up.

SS: Did you get in many fights like Helmer did?
SR: Oh, no, not like Helmer. No.

JWR: He got in fights, but they were a little different fights.
SS: What was the difference between 'em, do you think?
SR: I'd-
JWR: Of course being prejudiced, I think it was more in self/defense.
SR: I never tried to beat the guy. I'd just hold him so he couldn't do nothing, and then laugh at him or so. That's the best. You'll think it's funny, but it can be done, if you know how. I used to rassle quite a little bit. I've rassled there in Canada.

JWR: I think Stiner's the better rassler of the two. Always more rough and tumble.
SR: Yeah, Helmer used to be- you know he'd scratch a lot- and we had a rassler- we boarded and roomed together in Moscow, and he was the champion in Idaho. And Musser was his name. Well, they wanted he and I to rassle- we was built the same and weighed the same and all that. And I said, "No," I said, "Look here Musser," I says, "we're all rooming right here, and I might accidently flop you, and you're professional. You got a medal." I says, "You wouldn't feel good a- bout that."

SS: You were just a country rassler?
SR: Yeah, and I said, "I'm just a country rassler. You wouldn't like that."

SS: So, you wouldn't wrestle with him, uh?
SR: Well, he made a pass at me one day I come in there. And, oh, let's see, grabbed my shoulder or something, and anyway, I run backwards- I put my hand on his shoulder like this and run back and give him a
throw like this and he went down to the floor with his hands, you know, and I grabbed him. I grabbed him by the shoulders and sat my knee in his neck and shoved it right over, like that, and held him like that for just about—oh, it seemed like thirty seconds, but not too long, and then I walked off. He never bothered me. And the next morning he told me, he said he'd give me— if I'd give him twenty dollars a month he'd teach me a hundred and some rassling holds. Well, I never knew what holds I was gonna take. Like one time I was playing poker, any time, I never think about it, and there was a guy weighed a hundred and two hundred and thirty-five pounds and everybody in Taber, Alberta was afraid of him. And we was playing poker and settin' in the bed, and my brother was pretty near as big, you know, he was husky, my brother was, and he come in there—he'd been working for the night police delivering the mail to a place called Retlaw, forget how far it was. And those days the roads was awful bad. He was driving a Ford, and he was tired, and he come in and he wanted to go to bed. We was settin' on his bed playing, see, and I says, "We'll have to get up and let him have his bed, and go to bed." And this guy said, "We'll have to get up." Well, he was too big a loser. "Well," I says, "You might not win anymore just settin'. You know when you're losing all the time you're going to keep on losing maybe." You know how that goes. And he was twenty dollars in. I said, "We'll have to get up." "Well," my brother said, "I'll throw you both out." It was in a Chinese restaurant, you know. And this guy set on the side of the bed and he...

JWR: You said it was a Chinese restaurant, it was a bed, wasn't it, in sort of a room, owned by a Chinaman?

SR: Yeah. Well, we was just using the bed to sit in. And so, anyway, he
says, "You're a coward." Well, he called me all kinds of names, you don't pay no attention to that, you know he was mad and not feeling good, so why get mad about it? I don't blame him. But when he called me all kinds of names, you know—said I was a coward, you know. Well he was big and sitting on the bed there, my gosh, he was half as big as that bed. I just up and I hit him in the face with my flat hand, see. And that'd make him made, you know. And he come up and he had a brand new shirt on, and he just grabbed my shirt and he took half in one hand and the other half in the other hand, see, coming back, and then when he come up again I run under him and picked him up on my shoulder and I dumped him over into the bed. And boy he fell in the bed, and he fell like that, and I put my knee over on this side teeth and knee in the other, see, and my chin right in here and my there to hold his chin and you know, it was just natural for me to get that hold you know, and he was powerful, oh, boy. He was doing the brushing and the binding. Boy, if I didn't have have my legs there he'd a pulled them together easy. And he pulled his arm up as tight as he could, and he found out he couldn't go no further, and the teeth was kind of sharp you know, the blood started running down a little bit, you know, "Oh, let me up, let me up!" Well, I let him up. And he went to look in the glass. And he said, "We'll settle it outside." So I started to go outside with him and we got to the bottom of the stairs, and he said, "We'll leave it til morning." I says,"Okay." So the next morning I come down for breakfast, he come in and says, "Shall we settle it— or— shall we fight it out?" or something like that, you know. "Or forget it," "Oh,"I said, "let's fight it." I went come around there, you know, and boy, he got up and he just. out of that restaurant just as quiet. (Laughter) And you know, there was
a little Irishman, Murphy, we called him, and he said, "Listen," he said, "I wouldn't believe that. Nobody can believe that." He said, "He chased three of us out of a house there"—they had rented, you know, three of them and this fellow; they had rented the house and he had come in there to bed and they wouldn't let him in, they locked the door, and he said he kicked that door down and come in there and he said, "We went through the windows, we didn't wait for doors!"

SS: He didn't believe that you had beaten him up?

SR: I said, "What's the matter," I said, "all you had to do was stick up—stand up, that's what I do." So there, you never know.

SS: Fight?

SR: No. No. Just protect myself, more or less was all.

JWR: I think Helmer fought for the sheer joy of it, more than a personal grudge, I don't know.

SR: Helmer and I used to fight every day. You might say, fight, I had to stick up for myself.

SS: You mean you fought each other?

SR: Yeah. I remember one time he threw a stick—well, would you call it a fight, if he'd throw a stick at you and hit you in the nose? Got to do something, don't you? A wood stick, you know.

SS: Did you want to fight, too? Or was it just Helmer?

SR: Boy, I didn't want to, but I went after him just as hard as I could and I darn near caught him but he could sure run! He knew I was mad then.

SS: Sounds that you fought each other and kept in good shape that way.

SR: Yeah, sure.

JWR: Oh, they just rassled, like two pups, just growl and fight.

SR: When we moved to the reservation, you know, I was—let's see, I was six
I would say, and he was eight.

SS: And he was eight and what?

SR: Yeah.

JWR: And Stiner was six. (Jean says Grace before their meal.)

SR: And the neighbors; yeah, they were Irish boys. They were little Irish boys, you know, and they had one sister, and she was the oldest of the family. And if any of us needed a licking, she could do it. So that was it. (Chuckles)

SS: This was a neighbor family?

SR: Yeah. Over on Central Ridge. But we all liked her, and she was like a big sister, you know. By golly, she was going to go in there and settle things right now. And we'd do anything for her.

JWR: What was that story, Stiner, about the time there was a couple of guys in the village and they were going to annihilate you?

SR: I don't remember.

JWR: It was in Canada. It was something to do with, they thought you'd squealed on— You were walking along and they followed you and followed you and— it'll come to you after while— and then you walked the other direction— and they was gonna. Was it during the days of bootlegging or something? I don't remember just what was the deal, but— well, it will come to you after while. Now what else was there?

SR: I don't remember.

JWR: Taber, or some of those places down there.

SR: You never know what's going to happen ahead of you. You know, I used to like to be alone, I was capable of handling myself, I liked to be alone. I remember one time, I went into Lethbridge, just come in there and looked around and I thought I'd have a beer. And they was about five or six deep, just a looking around there innocent, you know.
All at once here was a fist out about this far, coming right straight at me. I just put my head to once side. And I had a meerschaum pipe and it took that out of my mouth kinda rough, you know, and it went over there in the corner, and I went over and I says, "Don't get excited." Went on and got my pipe and it didn't happen to break the stem or anything; put it in my mouth. And so, he never bothered—well, I think he kept coming, maybe that was the way it was. And you have to keep your eye on someone like that. Some guy else met me some other place, and I've had that happen. A colored guy said there one time there in Lethbridge, he said he had a fight with me in Mexico—no, Nevada or someplace down there. I says, "I've never been there." "Oh, yes," he says, "I know." He says, "I sure bit your leg good, anyway." I said, "No bites on me anyway." Now, see, he mistook me for somebody else. So, you never know. They figure they know you.

JWR: His business would bring him closer to home, he might run up through the summer, maybe for a week and check and then he'd be gone again. But I think there was a great many people that were used to that. There were men, their wives were still in Europe. Now my grandmother, she lived on Prince Edward Island, I don't know how many acres they farmed, but it was a fairly prosperous little farm. I know fifty years ago it sold for $16,000, I saw the bill of sale, so it was quite a little farm to keep going. And then the men put in the crops, they had sheep, they had cattle and they had some fruit trees. It's a unique place, Prince Edward Island. That little tiny island right in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Sheltered. Red soil! How can it have soil so red? I've even got some of it upstairs, I gathered some of it up. As I said, they got roped into being there.

SS: You were saying about your grandmother.
My grandmother; she was a very feminine woman, and I guess quite often they had a hired girl. Girls worked very cheap then. But in the wintertime, the men you see, built ships. Small little ships and they took their produce down to the West Indies. They'd be gone for months, and she'd have to manage that farm. Maybe she didn't go out and milk the cows. But the men were gone, and you didn't expect them to be delinquent, they were good old God-fearing Presbyterians, or stray or anything else. You just accepted it. They went and they maybe come back and that was it. But they were gone for several months. Quite a little trip for a small schooner—sailing boat. I think a lot of people had to, in the early days, the husbands were far away, and the woman had to stay home, trying to make a living and carry on. Sure, there were some that went carousing around. 'Course down here in the States that was pretty bad. (Chuckles) The WASPS up there, they tried to live a pretty course of life and carry on.

What's with you? What was it like growing up in fairly isolated— not having too much contact with other kids, other children.

Oh, lonely. It was lonely until I learned to read. I guess I told you how dramatic it was. I was lonely and when a child would come, I would just—really, I gave into that— a child was downright nasty. You know some little girls wouldn't treat your dolls just right, and some of them— I remember one swiped things from me.

How did you respond to that? Put up with it?

Well, I tell you, she had her little suitcase open and I saw my choice doll dresses in there. I took out some of them. I just deliberately took 'em out. I felt guilty, but they were mine, and I took 'em back. I suppose I was about ten then. And then, some of the ones that weren't so important I left, but I put
up with it and I never even said a word, because I was afraid to offend her. Companionship was so precious. But we did go to town; and I was mostly with adults, Mother had a lot of—she was very friendly and she had a lot of friends. And she got out; Mother got around. And she'd get on the train and go into Blairmore where we used to live. And there was a little girl there I'd play with. Well, I don't suppose that we went more than half a dozen times during the summer, but that was a landmark. And then there was a couple of summers we spent up in the Kootenay Lakes and I got to play with other children there. I even got a couple of months of school in. But it was pretty lonely. I don't know how I would have survived if Mother hadn't been such a great conversationalist. We'd go out and notice things. We'd walk out through the woods over to get the milk. Mother would be noticing the new flowers. We'd watch it every day, that rose coming out; the first one. To get to see the first one and watch it unfold. Every day was an excitement. Honestly, I was just vibrating all the time. And then Mother was so tender. "Ah, that poor little flower, look at that little piece of wood on it." She was taking sticks off, little rocks off things, and there was a little brook we went over and that was always exciting. Sometimes she'd sit there and rest a minute and let me make a little dam. And this place we went to for milk, we'd sometimes chat a little bit, there was cows and things of interest like that. I was with adults an awful lot, that's why I was brought up so liberal with all this information and all this—doesn't matter what it is, they know it. But I'm the one that when I was twelve, I would be far more aware of the character of that person; what they did for a living, man or woman, where he was a con man or a pusher or just whatever they
had in those days. I was aware of it. They're so gullible in spite of all their knowledge. They really are, they just amaze me. They don't read characters. When I was twelve, my dad died, I come back from living with my aunt for a winter, and I left my little baby sister up there. I told you about, in that boardinghouse, or whatever it was, and went up there and spent in this little tiny log cabin. Just, oh, so small, beautiful; Auntie had it just like a little doll house. It was really one house with their bedroom partitioned off and two little beds made from poles with straw on them, that's what my sister and I slept on. Well, then come August, I went there in November and by August I came down to Vancouver and went to school; formal school, for the first time. That's the time I worked so hard to catch up. Well, Mother was— that is another whole story. But she was just so fortunate; casting bread upon the water and getting it coming back. She was kind to a woman years and years ago, maybe twelve, thirteen years ago, and this woman was a bartender's wife. And it was never mind, she got up in the world. She got to own two hotels and she never forgot Mother's kindness to her.

SS: How was she kind to her?

JWR: She give her a job managing a hotel there. That was quite a good thing, and it was very good money, managing the hotel.

SS: Your mother own the hotel?

JWR: No, she didn't own it, but she managed it. She was the manager. Hundred room hotel.

SS: Oh, she got your mother the job?

JWR: She owned hotels and she gave Mother the job managing.

SS: I was thinking; how did your mother help her twelve years before that?
JWR: Well, it's kind of delicate, I wouldn't want it to go public. This poor little woman— in those days, Mother knew about it, but very few did— well, they suspected. And you know to have a child out of wedlock, well, you know.

SS: It's not so unusual now.

JWR: Well, in those days, my dear—

SS: It was. (Chuckles)

JWR: Whew! You might just as well hang yourself! It was just hushed. Mother was risking her reputation. If it hadn't been lily-white and she hadn't had the clout behind her socially— you know, you don't go associating with a bartender's wife. And they had a small hotel, but it was the bartending. But she was sickly and people weren't too friendly with her. But she was a blonde, and there was not too many knew about it, although they surmized a lot. And her husband was very condescending, I suppose, because of marrying her under the circumstances, and he was very unkind to her. Well, Mother had her to her home. She'd come up there for a refuge and rest and she was just generally kind to her. Didn't do anything for her financially, she didn't need it.

SS: So, in other words, she befriended her.

JWR: She befriended her when she needed her. And Mother had— I mean, she was one of the woman— it was just a small place— that other people knew and respected. And the little push, the little encouragement; Mother's acceptance of her paid off. She didn't think anything about it. She says, "Poor little thing, I'm going down there to see her." She was always having an operation, and she's always having trouble. I think those operations were another one of those forbidden things in those days.
SS: I'm surprised that it came both you to tell me.

JWR: It doesn't bother me, I'm telling you because— and because of the people— the children have survived. It doesn't bother me because it's happening all around with this generation or my kids that it was happening to, I wouldn't care, but in those days, it was so different. You've no idea what would happen— I remember in my lily-white high school that I went to, there was over a thousand children; there was one girl got pregnant, one! She quietly committed suicide. That's just what I'm just trying to get it across. You see, it's wrong, of course, it's wrong, I don't agree with it— and for a poor little woman to drag through a dozen abortions is terrible. I shouldn't say a dozen, it might have been four or five butchered up. And, another thing in those days, birth control was forbidden to pass it on in Canada when I was married. It was against the law. You couldn't— I was sticking my neck out, I passed on birth control information and I had the pamphlets and the things. That was practically underground work.

SS: Where did the pamphlets come from?

JWR: Planned Parenthood. Yes, there was a clinic.

SS: It was illegal to have them?

JWR: It was illegal to have 'em. It was illegal to pass it on and the clinic was frowned on. I mean, it was sorta one of those subrosa things.

SS: So they were giving it out under the table? The information.

JWR: Well, more or less, until it finally got above board. And then it got so that maybe a doctor or nurse there kind of gave it a little status. You have no idea the background. That poor woman's background. Her problem, and what she was fighting. Now, Mother was liberal. She
She knew it was wrong. She knew that woman was in a— she wasn't a promiscuous woman. She just, one of those things that happened.

SS: Made a mistake.

JWR: And paid for it and her husband was miserable with her.

SS: The child? Was it her husband's child?

JWR: No. Somebody else.

SS: What's so interesting about that, is that that really tells you what life was like in those days.

JWR: What life was like and I knew about that, I suppose when I was four or five years old, I'd hear older women talk, and they didn't think I understood, I was a nosy little gal. I might not have known all the deep, bloody details, but I put two and two together, I got the idea. You see, you could see what— the trauma that woman was living– the strain. No status, a bartender's wife, miserable little hotel, two sickly kids and a domineering husband.

SS: So the only reason she married him then, was to make it legitimate?

JWR: Well, no, she gave her child, it was a girl, to her mother and father and they brought it up as their child, which it wasn't. She always referred to her as her little sister. One of those things. I suppose I knew more about it by the time I was eleven, than when I was really tiny, but I knew Mother's feelings— Mother was going to bat. Mother would have made a great women's libber if she had lived.

SS: Was this after the child was born, or during that time when she was pregnant? Your mother befriended her.

JWR: After she was married. But young people— goodness, I got ten grandchildren— don't think that I don't know the lumps and bumps of life, it doesn't bother me one way or the other. I'm all for abortion, if it's necessary, and I do not believe in promiscuity. Although I
can't prove it, I've got a good idea that—well, we'll say—never mention the towns or anything, but I think that woman, now this is something I can't prove—nobody could prove it—whether she had a wealthy patron, shall we say, he was involved in a great many things whether he helped finance her in all these hotels and she did very well, she finally got the upper hand.

SS: Did she leave the husband?

JWR: No! This Canada. You live with them, you celebrate your fiftieth wedding anniversary peacefully.

SS: Oh, that's right. She stayed with him?

JWR: Oh, yes, and he straightened around. I mean, if you live long enough why things just sort of— it isn't worth it. I think Canadians are smarter, or the people that don't divorce are smart. It isn't that much difference between either a man or a woman unless they're neurotic, psychotic or what have you. You could marry any one of ten women and I could marry any one of ten men, if they were sort of within your peer group or more or less within your social status, you could get along with them if you made up your mind to. That's what I call insecurity. Searching for a perfect man or a perfect woman, that's stupid. Look for a partner for life. Somebody to come home to that'll satisfy your needs. Never mind all these other things.

SS: How can you believe in something like the perfect mate? The whole idea of finding a perfect— a person that's perfect is as silly as to think you're perfect.

JWR: Well, that's what I mean, you must be searching for something or you couldn't compare one to another to another, you must be searching for something better, perhaps not perfect but at least something better and better and better.
SS: Granted.

JWR: Unless you've got awfully poor judgement.

SS: I agree with you, really. I have a hard time understanding all this stuff that goes on now, although I'm very familiar with it. But if you have a marriage, say in those days, that wasn't very happy. If the husband, say, was drinking, I don't know how about Canada, but in America alcohol and drinking was very common.

JWR: It was common up there, yes it was, it was common.

SS: Doesn't that mean that a lot of people were forced to have lives that were unhappy a lot of the time. Not everyone now, but a fair number of people.

JWR: You had both drinking and you had infidelity to struggle with. Mother's friend, she had both. Alright-- Ones that are just hopeless, and then there are others that are social drinkers, you know, go down and have a lift of beer or have a shot or two before they come at night, and they manage to keep their jobs, but then there was others that beyond- couldn't work. There is a difference you see in a social drinker-- but they never missed a day's work. Well, a woman would- 'course work was harder to get. You were either a teacher or a nurse, and secretaries didn't pay all that much, or maybe I'm prejudiced. But I don't know, the alternative, to get out with your children and try to make a living-- now my mother was fortunate being left a widow and having sisters that supplemented, you know, took you in and helped. She had me for a while with her, and then when I got in high school, she had my little sister when she went back to teach school. There was help that way. But other women didn't have that help. Well, alright, you have your three square meals a day, the guy drinks, he drinks hard, but he isn't an alcoholic, and if you're smart enough
you'll know how to keep your mouth shut and not arouse him so that he'll wallop you one, and you wait; bide your time. The interesting thing about life is that it's the unexpected that eases the situation. That woman, she was actually smart. She was a good manager. She was actually shrewd and smart, although she was so kept down, and the husband was just a blustering, handsome, arrogant guy. She just bided her time and waited and worked. And in spite of all her illhealth she got on top. Alright, he came around, he was decent to her. They made a striking couple. He was affable. They managed to send their kids to the very best schools. They married them off well. They took tours, they entertained people. The status of the people they entertained was just amazing. You'd just be surprised. Mother would see it there in the paper, she'd read— well, titled people for instance. Mother'd smile. She didn't envy her or she didn't begrudge her, she was just happy like she'd "come a long way baby". That's just the way it was. Now, would she have been any better to have divorced that husband? A husband in Canada and a lot of society, doesn't matter what he is, it's a twosome. You get invited out more. You're more accepted, you're not a threat to your neighbor, like if you were a divorcée or a widow. There's a lot of fringe benefits even to a poor husband. And if you treat him half way decent— actually men are fairly decent if you— we've got thousands of years of maneuvering before we've had any rights. And if any woman's got two licks of sense she can outmaneuver him some way. I know it's very frowned upon by the now people but we had to do it. Just outwit 'em a little bit and comply. It isn't right, but there's no other out.

SS: If you were going to try to characterize what it was like among the women when you were growing up and even when you were grown, you know
forty, fifty years ago, do you think that most of them were able to maneuver their husbands in a lot of things, or do you think that they were really instilled into an inferior position in their relationship?

JWR: They were inferior, but they didn't mind it. Who cares? I don't mind being inferior if the other guy's going to open the car door and pay the bills! I don't mind. It's just really, he thinks he's superior. Now look, I want to tell you something about women: When I was a little girl, nobody told me this, I just simply deduced it by looking at all my mother's friends. And we did have a lot of friends. There was this terrific isolation, but there was adults—there was a lot of adults in my life, although few children, and I was so happy I was born a girl; gee, this was great. In fact, I thought, "I've got everything going my way. I'll work a while and I'll get a husband that'll support me. I will be like my mother. I will be able to dream and talk and indulge in any hobby I want to. I'll have a kind husband that adores me." I just felt I lived in the best of two worlds and my poor husband would have to work, and it's tough and I feel sorry for him, but that's the way the world is. And I never felt put down upon. I was the superior one. I really felt, well, I mustn't say anything to hurt feelings, and I know I'm superior, but—I'm not alone. We knew we were. We knew we were stronger. And my mother went through those crises just beautiful, serene, no tears. Like that trip through that water, everything was just about like that. That was the lot of the expected behavior of a woman to carry it off. Of course, she was a religious woman, but there were no great prayers or wringing hands, or anything like that, just quietly do it. But you knew you had it.

SS: I wonder if that was truly the Victorian woman or this was a post Vic-
torian woman you're talking about, because--

JWR: Mother was Victorian, but I'm post, naturally.

SS: But the image that you had, when you read some of the literature about, you know, about what it was like in those days. Often you get the idea that a woman as being overprotected, as being sickly, as being dependent and those kind of things.

JWR: There was that, too, but we frowned upon that. We scorned women like that. We just say, "Ugh, what a miserable thing. No wonder her husband is chasing out at nights, with her with her headaches and her backaches and her vapors." No, we had no sympathy for women like that. Evidently we are quite a strong stock. Seemed to be equal for whatever work comes along. Mother could just swing into that huge job that she had and just never bat an eyelash. No matter what came, there was the physical strength there. And, no-

SS: Were her friends more like her?

JWR: Her friends were more like her. As I said, you pick your peers, and there'd be one or two, but there was always one or two weak sisters and of course, the others would kind of pick at her. And she was not above a little gossip, too. I know there was one woman, she was a French Canadian and of course, she had quite a few children and he was quite well-to-do, he was a businessman. I think he dallied, shall we say, a little on the side, but then he provided her handsomely and they had automobiles and the rest of us hadn't even hardly even got a horse and buggy, you know. And I don't know whether her headaches and her sickness was brought on by him or that was just the way it came about. But we knew those things were happening. But Mother used to visit her, and I think there was a few whispered words about her husband, but never a thought of course, of divorce or anything. They
always felt that, "I'll hang in here, it may be tough for the first thirty years or whatever, he'll settle down. We'll be the pillars. I think nine times out of ten they were. Sometimes some poor, unfortunate woman would get one that would start in drinking and never quit and he'd never quit hardly chasing women until the end of time.

infidelity

SS: Was fairly common among the men?

JWR: I didn't notice it so much amongst our group. That was the only one that I knew of. I don't think I knew of any others ever mentioned. They were pretty solid. They had pretty good jobs and stable.

SS: If there was infidelity, it would more than likely be the husband than the wife?

JWR: Oh, definitely the husband. The woman, no, she never had a chance. No, no, it was very, very seldom there was any infidelity, if there was the marriage was broke up and she was taking in washing at the far end of town. No, it was the husband. And yet, I think the women seemed to learn to cope with infidelity. As long as they were the No. 1 woman. They were the wife, the No. 1. Remember this goes back, it goes back to Bible days; the kings, there was always a No. 1. You have the harem, but you've got the law on your side, you've got the public opinion on your side, you've got the family on your side—that is if you're tracking along and you're always living in hopes that he'll settle down. And whether in those times people were more practical, and unless it was a wretched marriage, well of course, there are a few wretched ones, but they'd figure out that whoever he picked up with or whatever it was, why, wasn't half as attractive as some of the others. Well, I know there was another case now—there was another woman—Mother never told me this till years afterwards. The girl never married, they had two or three little children, one of the
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girl never married. The boy was rather queer and the woman, I know said
was rather sickly. I think about this little daughter, I said, she
was about twenty something, twenty-two, I said, "My goodness, why don't
she get married?" She was kind of a cute little thing. Well, I think
she's soured against marriage. She's either afraid—her dad picked up
syphilis. See, those are things you know about you. You saw 'em and
you realized it. You'd see the picture—that oldest daughter whether
she had it; whether the wife had it, I imagine the wife had it and
the son, the whole thing, you see it. Well, that's it. You'd think
twice before you'd— I don't know whether young people see the pic-
ture—an overall picture. Now, I saw that family for twenty years—
I didn't know it at first, but then the ills come, I saw the tragedy
of it.

SS: What happened in the family eventually?

JWR: Mother and Father lived together til the end of time, and I think he
died and she died decently. The girl was never married. The boy,
I think maybe ended up in an institution or in a menial position.

SS: You talk about character today, and the young people having a more
difficult time judging it.

JWR: I don't know whether they all have it, but sometimes I look at my
family and I think, "Good grief, kid, can't you see what that's going
to turn out? Don't you see that that girl or that boy are doing some-
thing that's a foolhardy thing?" I don't say anything, naturally.
I'm wise enough not to say anything, but they just look like they'd
never seen it before. There's a lot of things that people don't see,
they don't realize the situation. And you know, like VD and all that
sort of thing, I think they're discreet enough, and in fact, they're
very health minded and all that. But if it isn't morals then it's
that would keep them pure and holy. But so many others, they haven't
seen a picture of a family ruined by it. And, I think that makes a difference. 'Course there's other brakes that-

SS: When you were talking, I thought too, about judgement— the kind of people that people are, is another thing that—

JWR: It's not only judgement about people. It's business judgement and there's one or two that seem to have a little intuition, but— I think whether people didn't read so much or didn't have so much information, or whether people in years gone by— you could expect them to respond in a certain situation in a certain way, and if you got a clue to what they were, you could just about figure out, "Well, they're going to be like this if I deal with them, or if I do this, they'll do so—and-so." There's where I'll either accept 'em or avoid 'em, or be cautious. There isn't the clues now that there used to be. Do you think there is?

SS: See, I don't know what it used to be.

JWR: Oh, that's right—

SS: But it's difficult to say—

JWR: This is the district I've lived in from the time I was born, overall picture till I was, say, eleven, and then it carried on a little more remote, but the same thing till I am through high school and married. But you have all these people my mother was associating with— they're a crosssection; poor, rich, educated, but you just about know how they're going to respond in any situation. Or you can figure them out.

SS: Do you mean by that, you know from the way they act what kind of people they are?

JWR: No. But I know what their response is going to be. What it is going to be. Sometimes they'll delightfully surprise you.

SS: Is that because you know them, or you know their social class?
JWR: I think it's social class, and upbringing. And if they violate that you're very much surprised. I think that's it. You know that, for instance, that Catholic woman, you know her upbringing, you know her belief, you know just about what she's going to do. And you'll help her as she goes through it. She's putting up with drinking and infidelity and all that. She's a wife with prestige and she's one of the social leaders and all that, but still, you know she isn't going to do anything desperate. You just want to ease through the time she's going through.

SS: What you're saying, is that behavior and standards were a lot more clearly set.

JWR: Oh they were much more clearly set, and you could depend on them, for good or bad. Like for instance, that little woman that had the child out of wedlock. She knew what she was up against, and that girl in high school. I didn't know about it- in fact, I didn't know for a long time, never knew what happened til maybe a year or so afterwards; why she committed suicide.

SS: I think there is really something to that, just the way things are now, because I find that it is very difficult when you are dealing with the people often to know, for instance, that your word is good. You say something; do you mean it? Is that as good as signing something on a piece of paper. I've dealt with people who seemed to be perfectly fine and intelligent and sensitive people, and found out that what they say doesn't mean a thing. Because the next day it's something else. Because in my own life I find it very important to follow through with what you say. That's the way that it seems to me to be. I don't think these people, for instance, see themselves as being dishonest and I see them as being rather shady.

JWR: I don't think they are- I think you're right, they don't feel that they're dishonest. No, they don't. It starts up when they're quite
young. Their dad breaking speed limits, and, oh I don't know, super-
market—maybe little bit shady things—loading a few things in the
bottom of—you have a big shopping bag, now for instance, I heard
one did this—I think he'd put a few choice tomatoes in the bottom
of some other cheaper vegetable and weigh it all up you know, or some-
thing like that. Little things, kids are watching. And I saw that
one time. And I thought, that isn't the right thing to let a kid see.
Just little picky things, well, you can think of a dozen more.

SS: Do you think in your dealings with people that you had when you and
Stiner were married and people you knew, your neighbors in the com-
munity—was there real strong differences among people, I mean, cer-
tain people that you wouldn't want to trust?

JWR: There was one. There was this one, there was a horsetrader, Ameri-
can, of course, no doubt, (Chuckles) and you just didn't put any
faith in him. And there was, oh, one or two others that were a lit-
tle on the shaky—another one on the shaky side—he was a Welshman,
but on the whole they were pretty dependable. Pretty dependable.
A dependable person was a person that would— you'd work for and he'd
give you a full day's work back. You know that was one thing, you
didn't have too much money dealings, but you'd have that. Exchange
work. And most of them were pretty dependable, but there was one—
well, you've got to have one village scoundrel, and we had that one
out there. Now that was a woman; she had it tough. Tough. Tough.
Eight kids and that husband he got laid up with rheumatism and he
never worked before and he never worked afterwards. He had an excuse,
but she to rustle and of course, people said a few unkind things about
her character, but they forgave her. Now there's a case; a hardwork-
ing woman. A very hardworking woman trying to keep a family to-
getter. Good cook, good housekeeper and she lived in a hovel, and she kept it spotless. No-good husband that was just cruel and shiftless, and I don't think he was so bad to her but to the kids. And there was a lot of people thought that she picked up a few nickels on Saturday night, shall we say. But still I couldn't prove it, I wouldn't dare say it was the truth; but how did they live? And how did they survive? And under those circumstances I would never criticize, and neither did anybody else. She lived out her days in honor and respect, but she was desperate. And there were other cases like that where— I think people try to be fair. Try to be just.

SS: You mean, you don't consider that the judgement that the community renders is really—

JWR: In that case, it wasn't. In the case perhaps of a young girl, like that other woman was, of course there was about a thirty year gap between that, but in the thirty years that had passed between that woman's mistake and shall we say, this woman's enterprise to keep the pot boiling, and just to keep eating—

SS: \textit{Attitudes become a little more tolerant?}

JWR: A little more tolerant. Besides nobody, I can't say that anybody ever proved anything. They just surmized.

SS: Well, the case of the woman who married the barkeeper, was it common knowledge that she had an illegitimate—?

JWR: No. Mother was one of the few. One of the few. But a barkeeper's wife wasn't—it wasn't too high status. And perhaps there might have been a few things rumored because it happened, oh, maybe, a hundred miles away. There is always some bigmouth that blah, blah, blah. Mother didn't get it from that woman, ever. And yet we knew later on in life. Her sister-in-law told us what had happened.
SS: In matters like this, now who you associate with; is that something that would of concern to your father one way or the other? Or was it just really your mother's province?

JWR: It was more than my mother's province; who I married, my father laid the lines down. Of course, he died when I was eleven, and I don't know how he'd have been later on.

SS: But he made it clear?

JWR: He made it clear, - he was very fond of me and and my little sister, particularly, of course, my little sister, who was a darling little baby. And he wanted us - to see us cared for and loved. They were a very loving couple. It was amazing the love that existed between people in those days.

SS: Your parents really had a close relationship?

JWR: They had a very close relationship. A very loving relationship. I was going to say, there was such a complete change after Mother was a widow. She had been such a gentle, dove-like little fluttery woman. You know, a real Mid-Victorian. And later she had to make a living and she became a smart, poised, well-dressed- well, she always was decently dressed- well-dressed before, but she made a point- she was in an office and she was administrating things and she just- I was just dumbfounded myself at eleven and twelve to see Mother change. And assertive. Not bossy. But she was administrating, she was doing things. Just such a change, it was in there all the time and just came out like that. She had men that had wanted to marry her a time or two. She never encouraged too many, but she was an attractive woman after my dad died.

SS: (noisy-)

JWR: Mother was very practical. There was some- well, she says, "Once for
love, is fine, but you got to look after yourself when you get older."
She says, "Just what would be an advantage to me to marry him? He's
a nice guy; but, no. I'd live in that dumb place--" She thoroughly
enjoyed the city; Vancouver. She was gone every night, she was free
from work. Lectures, music—she loved archaeology and politics. She was
just into everything. Perhaps not so active, but listening. And then she'd
come home just thrilled, telling you all about it. "You got to come to-
morrow night, they're going to say some more." I was just going all
the time, places, between my school work, when she was around town.

SS: Was this the first time she had been in a city, a major city?

JWR: Yes, that size, she'd been in small towns and she'd been in the island.
Yes, this was the first time that she'd—and there was libraries and
museums and people talking and the artwork of Indians, you know all
the things that go on with the colleges. And Vancouver is a very
interesting place to live, and it was an interesting place to be in-
troduced to in my teens. But then Mother— I was going to go back to
before
Mother and her marriages. There was a man that she'd known when she
was back in Prince Edward Island. I guess they were maybe sweethearts
after a fashion; not too serious, and she came West and he married
somebody else. She knew the wife he married and I don't suppose they
even exchanged a Christmas card, and then he was a widower and so was
she. You ought to read those loveletters! Beautiful, Victorian love-
letters. Just gems, I think my sister's got them. Mother said, "Oh,
go back there and live on that Prince Edward Island! Sure he could
take care of me, sure, he was a nice guy. Honest and upright and—but, oh, the place! The situation. I want more life." No. And
there was another man; very nice American man. My father was an Ameri-
can, by the way. And this man she met while she was managing another
real hotel. A first class, beautiful hotel over in Westminster, and he'd come up there on a holiday or whatever and stayed several months, and they got acquainted, and she liked him. He was a very fine person, and he was in real estate. And he proposed; gave her a beautiful ring. My sister was still a young girl, I was teaching then, my sister was still in high school. And the wedding set up. She had a beautiful wedding dress bought, of course, it wasn't anything white, or anything like that, but a lovely dress. And she and my sister got on the boat and went down to Los Angeles, and there the bombshell dropped. He was in partnership with another man in real estate, a very good business. The children had not met Mother; a boy and a girl, in their 20's I suppose. And they said, "If you marry-" They hadn't seen Mother or anything, but they heard she was coming- "If you marry, we're going to demand our mother's share of the estate and business." Alright, it would ruin this other man's life. The business was meant for two, it had to be two. They'd have to break it up. They'd have to sell it. Neither one could carry on. Mother looked the situation over, and she says, "At our age-" she was around fifty then, I suppose, ruining both his life and the antagonism of your children- called it off. She gave him back the ring. No tears, no screaming, no howls. She was speaking. -- to a good loving marriage--

(Cassette change) So you see people do things like that. She was attractive enough, JWR: I think it is. She was better educated than him, but he was a good businessman, and he was bright and he was strong and all that. And charming! Talk about charisma, he had it! But he admired her intellect. And she did all the business work, and all the business writing. I never heard anything unkind said between them. What I mean is- course, they didn't live together all the year and the times they were together it was very nice and she's always told me how completely con-
siderate he was in every area of her life. Just beautiful. Lovely and considerate and loved children when we came. There was just the two of us; there was a little boy died in between. There was serenity to our life. We weren't searching for identity. I knew who I was. That's something I guess, that's lost on me. I see these poor little grandkids of mine, they're trying to find their identity. You're born with it and how could you be so stupid to lose it? It's there! You know who you are and where you're going. And what do you lose? Tell me, where's your identity? Or did you lose it? How did you not know? You might wish for a few other things. You might think you're not completely satisfied. But who is? If you found, whatever this mysterious, elusive self is, would you be any happier? What is it? Or don't you think I've ever found mine...

SS: I think it's, to a lot of people it's, you know, a search for something you do with your life. You know. I don't know. When you say identity—what do you mean by your identity?

JWR: I knew I was happy to be a girl; I knew I was going to grow up and I was going to go to school; I knew I was going to get married, and that's what I wanted to do. And there's some things I would like to have done. I'd like to have traveled a great deal. Well, I haven't got that. I've traveled some, but not as much as I'd liked. I'd liked to have had more money, naturally, we'd liked to have been a better mother, better parent, better daughter, better everything. And there's nothing—You know most people say, "If I had my life to live over again"—I couldn't have done any better. I'd have made some stupid mistakes; sure, I've made stupid mistakes. Perhaps even a few colossal ones, but they're part of life. There are very few people can get through life without making a few. And you don't find a per-
fect work. I wasn't too happy about teaching. Although that work I
did in the nursery was grueling work, it was hard, and it had a lot
of drawbacks, but I was interested in it. And I found, years after
I had ended my career, I think this was better. I think people have
to be willing to work at something for a while and be ready to switch.
That's what my mother said. She'd just look at some of these spinster
teachers. "Oh, my gosh, that woman taught for thirty years." Or
twenty years, "And this whole big, wide world." She says, "I'd rather
wait table. I'd rather clerk in a store or do anything to meet a new
class of people. Get in contact with something new." I don't mind-

SS: Is that why she quit teaching after five years?

JWR: Yes. Yes, she says, "It isn't good. I'm going to be here in this is-
land-" She was a very successful teacher; very good teacher. Even in
those benighted days, they had a very high standard of education.
Prince Edward Island is so small that your children—when you raised
a child there—if you raised five children, you know four of 'em is
going to have to leave the Island and find work elsewhere, somewhere
else, and you start from the minute you have that job preparing 'em
for a life someplace else, a career. So, education's good and she
had a good job and she had friends and she had fun, but she said,
"This isn't all there is to life. And I'm going to go West and seek
my fortune." But she quit that hotel business and went teaching af-
teer three years and swung back again after a while to another similar
even job. She got older and got tired of that she tried nursing—well, I
mean just caring for people in their homes.

SS: What do you think about social class in those days? It sounds like
your mother was very democratic.

JWR: Very democratic. Didn't bother her at all, in the least. She could
be happy. She'd be happy talking to a janitor. She says, "You can
learn from everybody." And she says, "The main thing is talk to everybody, you may learn more from the janitor in a hotel than you will from the owner." And, she was most democratic. And most kind; compassionate. And she was born a hundred years ahead of her time. She really was. She just felt so badly about so many social conditions that are prevalent now. I think why you see so much, there's such a much larger population. You're struggling with this huge population. It gets bigger and bigger, and you can't feed them. There's more to it than food. They're just exploding all over the place. The community hasn't time to absorb them, or the people to absorb them and nurture them and love them and to-

SS: How do you think she would have characterized herself, I mean, where she fit in the social scheme of things? Do you think she saw herself as coming from aristocracy?

JWR: No, no, no. We were just working people. But there was a dignity to their class. The Island is a unique place. There is an aristocracy. There is a dignity to people that lived in a great many small farms. The farms aren't huge. They were in sight of the sea almost anyplace. And I think it's only a few hundred miles or less long. It's a very small place. Not very many rich people there; no lords or ladies to speak of. You're very much on a equality. There's a few French, - because of their language barrier, and because of their huge families- you don't feel superior to them, but you sort of pity them and you know they've got a traumatic handicap. They were quite often, hired men. And sometimes the hired girls would come from those families. No, there was just very - they were very close - you weren't the lowest, you weren't the highest, you're coming out of a community lifestyle where all people were very much alike. There was a few fisher people, perhaps, that depended mostly on the sea that weren't too well
off. Had a grim time. Oh, there was always a few people that were, had a— Now for instance, this is rather interesting— there was a hired girl, I guess she worked for my great grandmother— she had a child out of wedlock and she kept that child. And she went to work for nothing— well, her room and board and the keep of her child for my great grandmother. But, I mean there were things like that and — They always called her Poor Nellie, or Poor Ellie or something, and Mother said in the end, the girl married off better than most girls.

SS: In British Columbia I've had the impression, and it isn't extensive, I've only been up there a few times— but, today, I sense a real class distinction— not to say it doesn't exist down here, too, but it seems to be even sharper, it seems to me, there.

JWR: I think there is now, because— there like my mother— there was no feeling of that when she lived, but now the few that's left are just appalled— you're just struggling by these refugees from Hungaria and Poland and hordes coming in from Jamaica, or one of those places—

SS: The same thing was going on back then, all these refugees from Greece and Italy and all those—

JWR: No, there weren't quite so many. We were getting— when I was growing up, there was people from Poland and Bohemia and in the big cities, there was Italians, but the most of our emigrants were Scotch, Irish, Welsh; they were from the British Isles themselves that were coming over— that was the big population. There was Jews coming into Montreal in the eastern part— and they never hit Prince Edward Island, for instance, you'd never see anything like that there. You would get— Oh, there was Sikhs out in British Columbia, there was a bunch of them, but they hardly were allowed to have wives.
SS: Sikhs?

JWR: Yes, those Hindus. They were our lumbermen. They did the tree cutting and that sort of thing. But now we've got this huge population. Just so many of them, and in some cases they're justified. The older people have, well, just naturally they've just formed sort of an aristocracy. They're a little aloof. They get a little irked—because, oh, there's so many. You go to places downtown, they're just speaking foreign languages. It's so different from when I was a girl. 'Course, it's fifty years ago, when I was going to high school. It's so different. Like a different world, out there.

SS: How were Americans regarded in those days when you were growing up? People like Stiner and others that came up? How were they regarded?

JWR: Well, I'll tell you now—Prince Edward Island is fairly close to the United States in a way. A lot of our things like our lobsters and oysters and that are shipped to New York and Boston. Grandmother was sent to Boston when she was a girl to learn to be a seamstress and she was sent back home again—you know, that was the thing. Send your girls to learn some practical talent—or develop some talent that she has. And Amy went there. And if you didn't go to college you went to Boston and learned. Aunt Florence went there and learned to be a cook; a very fine cook, and she cooked for establishments, you know—not establishments but for very rich people in Vancouver. They carried a kindness back with them, a friendliness. Mother had it. Now, her aunt's, my grandmother's sisters were teachers. They left Prince Edward Island with a brother, oh, there was a big enough family, and they came out to Michigan. They taught there and they
married and they had like a sort of a little colony there. And so they were always writing back about "We Americans". Mother'd write, "Boy," she says, "have they absorbed it." "We Americans feel," this was spoken, spoke their little minds- about what we Americans should do. And Mother'd just chuckle and chuckle. But she liked 'em, she was very kind. So, we had that exposure. But then up in Kootenay Lakes those two summers I was there, we would get Americans from- I suppose those two summers I was there, we would get Americans from- I suppose Spokane, the wealthier people- beautiful resort place. It was a hotel. Mother'd sort of sigh, "Look at that child, look at the clothes she's got on. You can always tell an American; overdressed. That kid is dressed like for a party and here it is Tuesday. Look at her shoes; slippers." "Course me, here I was going clumping along with boots on and maybe a linen dress; plain linen dress, you know, sort of a natural colored thing. But we considered them overdressed; loud. We respected them thoroughly for their business ability and for their women. We considered good cooks, good managers. And we always admired their plumbing, their machines, their ability to run the machines. That's where United States is tops. I never go by a road that I don't admire your dirt moving machines if they're in action. Those are the things. I wish you had a few Rembrandts thrown in, but that's the things that America's just wonderful for. And it's too bad that she's so kind and never gets any money. I was jarred this morning, I was listening about all that we've given Russia and not get a nickel for it. I just forget the debt there- hoping that- no wonder Russia wants détente.

SS: I want to ask you about learning to read. You mentioned it to me when we were here before, but would you tell me about that again?
How you learned to read?

JWR: Well, I was read to, of course, and I just loved it. We had so few books; there was no library; there was no place to get books. And Mother read a few and I went to school, I think I went to school for two months and I had a little primer: "Jane has a dog." "Dick loves his dog." Ugh! I just hated it; this dull - I wasn't getting anywhere, I just didn't read it. After all, Mother had been reading the most exquisite poetry to me. She would read Longfellow; she would read Shelley; she would read anything. I was being fed this beautiful poetry and then these dumb Dick and Jame things or the equivalent, whatever they had and there was no excitement. They were just nothing.

I always remember that story of The Ancient Mariner. I'd get in my little bathtub - I was only about five - and, "Too hot, Mother." And she'd put a little iccicles in and we'd say, "The ice was here, the ice was there," you know, and then we'd go out and we'd look at the moon and she'd recite this beautiful poetry about the moon coming up and about Diana, the moon and told me all the Greek history. I wanted her to read to me. I was having trouble, I just wasn't getting anywhere. Then Mother told me, she used to tell me stories because she didn't have any other way of giving me literature like that, so she told me the story of Black Beauty. I begged my aunt, I says, "Auntie send me a Black Beauty book." I think she missed the first time, and something else, then she finally sent me Black Beauty. Mother had my little sister by that time, and she was busy. She read me the first chapter. Oh! the glory of it! What a wonderful story! I kind of knew the ending, but, oh, there never was any other literature but that! So beautiful; so wonderful. I loved animals and that was it. I says, "Mother, read me some more." She says, "Why don't you learn
to read?" I says, "I can't, it's too hard. I can't remember the words. But I want to read." "Well," she says, "try. Let's sit down and see if we can go through one chapter a day together." So we sat down. Word by word, the hard way. Oh, I knew "the", "and" and "too." Maybe I got that far along, but that was it. We went word by word. Of course, I got a little better all the time. Didn't sound 'em, no bother of that, just read. And then there was some days she couldn't get at it and I'd cry. But as it unfolded, I tell you, there was never- there's never been another passion in my life like that. There's never been another moment. As I got further into that book, and I could remember. I guess I had a pretty good memory, I could remember the words and I didn't try to sound them out. If I found a difficult word I'd tell her to tell me, "What's this word?" And she'd try to make me sound and I'd cry. I was really emotional. I seldom cried, but I was emotional. I says, "Tell me, and I'll remember. Don't keep me waiting." Well Mother, good old Mother, she just came right along. "Alright, it's thorough." or it's some other long word of about four or five syllables. And you know, by the time I finished that I had it licked. Then I went on to a novel. It wasn't too complicated, it was called The Story Girl. Something like Anne of Green Gables, by the author. It's a young girl growing up in Prince Edward Island. And there were a few difficult words and I figured them out. And then I was also simultaneously- I got into these history books- Greek and Roman Mythology. They were pretty hard. Then I started putting words together. But, do you know, it would have been torture to take a child— you'd a killed me if you'd a made me learn I phonics. I was so willing and had such a good memory, you only had to tell me once or twice and I had it.
SS: So, before you were through Black Beauty you were reading it yourself?
JWR: I was reading it myself. I was reading myself and then I just went on.

SS: How old were you then?
JWR: Nine, coming ten. I started in about January and by February and March I was just really deep in anything. Mother was rather- "I don't know whether you should read that book, it's pretty grownup." I think it was the Tale of- not the Tale of Two Cities but Under Two Flags or some of those. Sounds a little advanced for me, but whatever. But it was the biggest thrill of my life. I can remember just to this day. It's just like some scientist that worked at some kind of intimate thing and its yours and its yours for all time, all time. I wish children could experience that.

SS: Then you just kept on reading and reading after that?
JWR: Yes. Oh, I did. See, Mother was always able to borrow books for herself, and she did have books of poetry; we'd get in on that. And then I got acquainted with somebody else that had some fairy tales. I liked that. And that was at nine, and then of course, through the years it wasn't long til I was in the city and had access.

SS: Well, these first years when you were of school age, five or six, you weren't going to school?
JWR: No. No school.

SS: Out of town?
JWR: I was out of town, up there on that mountain. And there was no road, there was just a footpath. And in those days, people didn't care too much. You know, they didn't exert themselves. Mother says, "Oh, she'll learn when she gets around to it. She'll learn. I'll teach her when she wants to." I did learn to add and divide and multiply.

SS: Did she teach you that?
JWR: She taught me that when I asked for it, but I just knew the principles. But I wasn't fast. And to this day I have never learned to spell, because I didn't get it when my memory was at its peak. I learned to write quite well. I mean, not so much for penmanship, but to express myself. Mother started in writing to me when I was up there at my Aunt Amy's. She wrote to me twice a week and I would answer back. My first letters were dismal, but I was lonely for her and I loved her letters. She was a beautiful penman, just exquisite and she just told me things— her letters were so interesting that I was inspired to write. You know, we wrote twice a week for at least— I was married twenty-five or thirty years- we were still writing twice a week, and we tapered off to once a week. We always had something to say. And we'd write under any circumstance. She'd write on buses on the back of an old envelope or a shopping bag or piece of paper she found in the wastepaper basket at the post office. They'd just go flowing back-- I don't know what I wrote about out there on that lonely prairie. But there were just letters; eight, nine, ten pages at a time, writing back and forth. So I could write, and I could read, and I'd picked up history through reading and it was just a cinch for me. The only thing I was weak in mathematics and spelling.

SS: This writing that she had done— she wrote to a lot of people?

JWR: She wrote up there in the ranch.

SS: Sounds like that was the way for her to keep in touch.

JWR: Oh, yes, she wrote. She never expressed loneliness. And we just were so interested in the little things of life, like Oh, we'd go out there and we'd wait for it. We knew the time— it's coming, who'll see it first. It was just a— I don't know, you just have that little prickles up and down your spine, it's there, I've seen it. How
lovely, I've seen it is. Took time to appreciate it. And Mother, she had taken up elocution— that was the correct thing to do, you know, years ago in school. And she could recite some beautiful poetry for almost any occasion. Even if it was the same little poem. Beautiful little poem. Mentioned *Endymion* and Diana; the moon coming up, was one, and she'd tell me different stories in mythology about the moon. And then the full moon, and the sunrises—you know sunrises and sunsets are very spectacular in the Rockies for some reason. And I always remember eating breakfast and watching it. Watching it and thrilling to it. It's just a physical thing, your response to it. And sunsets; because there was no competition, there was no radio, no nothing, there was just nature to respond to. Daddy loved nature. And he always picked beauty— the house place, the house wasn't much but you were surrounded by beauty. You just absorbed it. You expected it. And there was flowers—very, very beautiful there and there's lots of them.

SS: Your mother really accepted his inclination to be poor, but in a beautiful place?

JWR: Well, he wasn't actually poor when they married, but that was his lifestyle. He would not put money in a house. A house was just a warm shelter with plenty of food. He, people and people that had elegant houses. Now, look, he had two houses in town, this one town and he owned the livery stable and had an income from it. But he wouldn't live in those houses. See? He liked it up there amongst beauty.

SS: By himself?

JWR: By himself. He liked it up there and the isolation possibly and if people wanted him bad enough, he'd talk.
SS: Wonder why—what made him that way? When most men were interested in living in town?

JWR: Well, kind of hobos, I guess—well, he wasn't a hobo, but I guess there's always been free-souls like that. And you don't know half of it. I don't know whether I told you but—he really, in a sweet way, in a nice way, he'd—I never felt the harshness of it—oh, there was a little ruffle or two, but I guess the girls and the women wore high heels, you know, these button shoes and they were kind of tight and he was determined his little daughter would have beautiful feet and I wore boy's boots I'll have you know, till he died. Excepting on Sunday. Boy's boots, the kind that you take out the laces and get some good old moose or some kind of elk hide; trim 'em down for me; put 'em in, they won't be breaking all the time. And always about two sizes too big and here I go clumping around happily in 'em! Barefooted in 'em, too!

SS: So your feet didn't get bound up?

JWR: Bound up? No. They never grew too big, and even now I've got beautiful toes. I thank him for 'em. These of my mother's they had bunions and corns and here I had lovely straight feet! But, you know, not every kid could take that, but I was up there and it didn't matter up there on the mountain. And he couldn't stand Indian women because they were so dirty. Being on the Island you couldn't help but brush with these Indians and Indian tribes, but he thoroughly approved of their footgear. And he thought they were dressed nice and he liked their modest ways: two braids of hair. He says, "That's the way every woman should be. That was the days of pompadours, rats, all those pompadours; to get that way, you back combed and you put a rat—what they called a rat—inside to hold it
up. Oh! the fury of 'em. It's no wonder he didn't think no woman should have a vote. Any woman that would do that! But a nice, modest woman would have— if she'd wear the gear, the footgear of an Indian woman and have somebody make her some moccasins, wear her hair in braids— and a corset, that was another thing. Women really cinched themselves in. Laces, I remember lacing her sisters up, you know, getting them in tight— oh, he wouldn't be there looking, but he would know what was going on! "Tighter, tighter, I can't get that dress fastened. Tighten it up a little bit." "You women better cut that out, you're going to ruin your health. You'll be having problems."

Side I-

JWH She went her own way, but she didn't, . She didn't go his way altogether. But you see those things, now— for a man to speak out and— Mother she hardly wore any corsets. Her corsets were very loose and practically all the duty they had was to hold up her stockings. He won out that way, he wasn't going to have her body deformed by corsets. He was a freethinker. Now another thing, and that way to this day— he couldn't stand Christmas. He thought it was a big rip-off. We just didn't celebrate Christmas. No, sir, he said, "that's alright for those Bohunks and those Catholics down there that don't know any better. You should have more sense." We weren't allowed a Christmas tree— Oh, well, so what? It didn't bother us. No Christmas tree and the gifts were very restrained. Maybe the aunts would give me something, and maybe I'd get a doll.

SS: Why did he feel that way?

JWR: Well, he was smart. I admire him. He could see ahead that it was just one great big graft. It's a commercial thing. It has nothing
to do with Christ. I don't believe in it to this—it isn't Jesus's birthday, it isn't. He had nothing to do with it. Why celebrate? It's a pagan thing, and I mean, sure, if you want to—I think Saturn—not—do you suppose it's—which one? Was it Saturnalia that came in there at the time of the good old yule log? I don't mind a little folksy things, like the yule log and putting a sheaf of wheat out for the birds, and I don't mind a lot of those folk things, but I don't believe in the Christian things. I have nothing to do with it, as far as that's concerned.

SS: Was he very religious?

JWR: No. He wasn't. He tolerated it and he was very glad to see Mother go to church, but—

SS: He was glad to see her go?

JWR: Oh, yes. In those days, a woman was glad to, you know, it was her duty and he liked to see his wife go to church.

SS: But he didn't?

JWR: No. He never went. Oh, he might have went on some rare occasion. I remember he used to go to dances and they were beautiful dancers, both of them. So, no, I think he was wise, and I've never—in fact, if I get around too much of this Christmas whoop-de-do, it makes me despondent, because it isn't right. You commercialize something, you've got a hybrid of pagan and Christian. I'm sure Christ wouldn't want something that wasn't his. It isn't his birthday. It's just like Easter.

SS: I wonder—your father at that time, he saw it as being commercial then, do you think?

JWR: He saw it as being commercial. And he saw the religious angle to an extent—not as clearly perhaps as I do. But he saw that it wasn't—
it just wasn't right to make all that fuss over something— And I admire him for it. We didn't even have a — Mother made a Christmas cake, it was on the quiet, she'd maybe bring it out in January. I just think it's one of the biggest rip-offs. We're ripped off in a lot of things, but we could do something about. I only send a few Christmas cards to some old ladies, they'd be just crushed to death if they didn't. I like to give gifts, but why not given 'em my birthday? Or your birthday? I brought my kids up Don't expect a thing from me at Christmas. If I have any ideas I'll give 'em money and I say, "Don't you dare spend it till the January sales." I've got 'em all conditioned the whole batch. But I go to Canada — and their birthdays— be generous with them, don't let them feel neglected. But don't let them get commercialized. Don't mean you drop your religion because you don't get that. And, oh, — alright you're kind and generous one day a year— good old Christmas basket—what are they going to do in the middle of January?

SS: Same people will be hungry.

JWR: That's what Daddy used to say— that was his whole idea. And to be stupid enough to fall for it.

SS: Well, you said you went up for a while then and stayed with your aunt, and then you came back down after your mother got the job.

JWR: Well, my dad died. He died and then— I'll tell you what she did; she went over to Victoria. This woman, while she was in the process of getting these two hotels going, she started Mother in a very small hotel she had in Victoria, and Mother was there for, oh, maybe four or five months, something like that. Then she came over to Vancouver just prior to me coming down from British Columbia— or from the interior. I left my little sister there and came down on the
boat. I did happen to have friends. There was a schoolteacher friend of my aunt's coming down and I had company coming down, so it wasn't so bad, leaving my aunt. That was quite an experience up there, too. But going to school, of course, I was quite apprehensive. The school proved much better than I anticipated. I was in a special class and got extra help. One teacher and twenty children or maybe less, and got lots of individual attention. So by January I was able to go into what would be equivalent to grade seven, I guess here.

SS: With one fall of study, you did six grades of work?

JWR: Well, yes. Well, it wasn't - you didn't have to go through grade five, grade six history. You didn't have to go- mostly on my reading ability. My arithmetic was the thing that I was just drilled in night and day. And my ability to handle arith- to feel like I could crawl through- they didn't expect my art work or my - a lot of those other things. And what they called grammar then or English- I was rather weak in. But no, they didn't drag you through every little thing that you would have taken up. But you've read it' you've got it.

SS: Was it a public school?

JWR: Yeah.

SS: Was it the class for kids that were in the same boat that you were?

JWR: Yes. Yes, there were children from the boondocks like me, and there was a few I think were a little mentally retarded or slow or had been sick. Yes. Oh, yes, they had things like that. It was a big city, you see, and there was a special class for kids just like me. And I hope - that teacher- I hope I'll see her in heaven with about maybe a couple hundred stars in her crown. Boy, she worked hard. Just really poured it into us. She not only had to teach us, she
had to keep our spirits up, because we knew we knew so little. And we were all trying, but she just had to keep our moral up and to teach, too. She was marvelous. Just a really marvelous teacher. When I went in then- but I'll tell you, now listen, I went into a regular class, but I had to take the whole grade seven over again. From beginning to end. That- I don't know- they thought they'd try me out- they really didn't expect me I don't think to pass, but it was just getting used to a classroom schedule and to study and to know what to expect, because the other wasn't following anything in particular. And the next two years I really did quite well, I mean, I was right up there within- I think I was second all the way through school for the next five years.

SS: During this early period when you were first in the city, was it a tough adjustment?

JWR: Oh, no, it was glory. And you know they say wild things- that's where a city is overlooked. I am sorry people are downgrading cities so. I learned the names and a lot of things about flowers, and there was no one to tell me when I lived out there in the country. I learned about all the little details about animals in the city that I didn't know about when I was out there. I saw them, I might have even seen their nests, I might have seen their little holes, but, boy, did I learn a lot about them. I learned about music and art. I always loved pictures and to go to an art gallery and to see art. Oh, how lovely! It was just things like that. And to hear people. Hear singers. Oh, I guess it was Schumann-Heink or some of those famous singers. And then there was movies and things like that I got to see and got to go to. Good old vaudevilles. Boy, they used to have a few good ones - I always got free tickets to a lot of those
things because we had people connected with the theatrical world that would stop there— not all the time, but part of the time. In those days you never worried to send a kid, you knew it wasn't going to be an X rated show. And, oh, there was church. I could go to church regular. I belonged to little girl groups, you know, like—like what you have right down here—like a Canadian girls in training, like something between a cross between a church group and a girl scout group. I just loved it. I just took to it like a duck.

The hotel we lived in, we had like a little apartment— and all these people— that's what I say— you're just continually watching all these people; checking them in. Even I checked 'em in. I was fairly tall and large for my age and ran the elevator, too at times. And Mother'd say, — she talked to herself— "Boy, she's sure not going to stay here any more than one week, unless he pays in advance." "Count the towels," she'd tell the maid on the floor, "just keep a watch on them."

There is a difference in teachers. Now, we had a teacher, oh, she was wonderful. And in high school they give you so much to do, and you do it; nobody to help you. But in Spokane— this was in Spokane—the professor there; it was a Norwegian college, and they told us anybody that had to work, you know, work their way through school— now we didn't have to— but I liked to have a little spending money. And so to do a little on the side, a little side work wouldn't hurt you, so I thought, well, I'll take , you know, athletics. I liked athletics anyway, and then that didn't count so much, but like working in the Review Building. The twice a week Review . Did you ever take that paper?

SS: Yeah, I've read it, sure.

SR: Well, that used to be our paper, you know. And the twice a week—
they offered us so much for working there in the afternoons—Saturdays, see. And Wednesdays, I believe, Wednesdays and Saturdays—I think it was twice a week. Yeah. And you get so much a pound for the outside wrapping. Twenty-five cents, I think. And how many papers that would be, I don't know. But you're supposed to learn to get speed. And I thought, "Well, I'll take it, but I'll never learn." And I went in there in the basement part and started to learn, and the guy that was teaching us, he was a superintendent you know. He says, "Listen," he says, "I don't care how long it takes you to learn," he says, "I want you to do it right." And we got a dollar whether we did anything or not, and I told him, I says, "I haven't done five cents worth of work," I says, "it's impossible for me to get this up." And you'd take and fold the paper over once and then again and then again, but it had to have a square butt, see. And I told him time and time again, I says, "I'll never learn," I says, "I might as well quit." But I never lost a minute, I kept staying with it. And he figured as long as I stayed with it, that I'd eventually learn. He says, "Speed'll come to you," he says, "but you got to learn right, and then speed'll come to you." And, you know, I stayed with and stayed with it, and in two and a half months I could wrap a paper as fast as one of those fastest ones. There was sixteen of us there. And I didn't believe that I could ever learn. But it just showed it took time and interest. Some of 'em took lunch along, and have lunch. I says, "I haven't got time, if I had lunch, I haven't got time to eat it." That's how interest I was.

SS: How long did you work there?

SR: Well, I worked there most of the nine months that I went to school.

SS: I mean, how much time could you put in there a day? Just a lunch—
hour?

SR: Well, on Wednesdays, I had to come in, I forget now, during the afternoon, or sometime. It didn't take too much school time off, you see. And Saturdays. And so it didn't interfere with the school. But anyway the teacher will help you out, that's what the professor said, "You just make arrangements with your teacher, and she'll help you out." Well, what she'd do, she'd have you learn your— you didn't have to bring anything to her, you'd explain to her; like if you had a problem; a good hard problem, and you didn't have time to work it out. "Did you get it?" "Yes, I got it." "Well, can you work it—" You naturally didn't bring it in, well, alright, nobody else got it in that class. There was twenty-four girls in the class and a few boys— and nobody else got it in the class. Alright, you go up there and you take the pointer, she give you the pointer, and you explain to her how you got the problem, see. And you had got it the way she taught you to get it. You break it all to pieces and put it together again. Oh, she was wonderful. And so, it got so good and I'd rather do that than even try to write it up. And me taking a work at night, I'd come in and I'd be all sweaty— it depends on what time of the year it was, you know— and then take a bath, right after, you see. And I'd come in and my blood was in good shape, see, circulating. And Helmer would sit there in the evening and pull one of those green shades, you know, trying to study and trying to look through it, you know. You can't do that, you got to concentrate, see, on these hard problems. You can't see through it. And so he would tell me, "My, gosh, you'll have to quit, you know, I've set here all afternoon looking at this one problem. Impossible, nobody can get it." I said, "Well, give it to me." I'd read it two, three times, yeah, just fell in my head, just like that you know.
SR: I understood it.

SS: You mean because you followed her instructions— the teacher's instructions?

SR: Yeah, I'd do like she said and read it, so I'd have it by heart, and I'd say, "Why, that's easy. I could write it up." "No," he says, "that's wrong." You make it out to him and tell him how it's done. "No, that's wrong. That's wrong." He argued with me. It's hard to work, like this sickness I got now, right now; it's hard to breathe. You'd argue with him and argue with him, you couldn't get nowhere. So, I says, "Alright, leave it. Have it your way." You go to class. Alright, "Anybody have trouble wiht such-and-such a problem?" Well, outside noises— I don't know whether Helmer said anything or not. "Did you have any trouble, Stiner?" "No." "I didn't have no trouble." "Well, alright, you come up here and explain to the class." And, you know, you get up and explain to that class, you've got to know it. At least you gotta make an effort. And then, he still didn't believe me. Thought we was both wrong or the teacher, either. I says, "Alright, we got both the same idea."

SS: What is the difference between good teachers and bad teachers? You said there were good teachers and bad teachers.

SR: Now this is the one— well, now she was awfully good. She could teach me how to break it apart. Of course, I could listen. I was willing to take it on, and she'd go ahead and tell me exactly, and I was taking it on, and after she told me a few times, I understood. The only thing that I had to do, a bunch of times so's I wouldn't forget it. But you know, I've forgotten her way now. I couldn't tell you nothin'.

SS: Well, Stiner, since Helmer was your older brother, he was supposed to take care of you, right?
SR: Yeah, he would take care of me.

JWR: Yeah, he promised his mother that he would take care of him and he's been ever since.

SR: I'm supposed to tell him something— believe it the same as he did. I can't do that. I've got my idea, and if the teacher tells me something that appeals to me and it's right to her and it's right to me, that's my idea. But I can't explain to him.

JWR: And another thing, I have had such excellent teachers all my life. I can't think of one that's inferior. I've just been blessed with them. I hear these kids— I don't doubt that there are some teachers that's just really goofin' off now. But those teachers were just super.

SS: Maybe you're lucky because you didn't have as many. Didn't have as much chance to get a bad one. I didn't.

JWR: That was. We had one room teacher. Well in the city schools, you know, maybe there'd be about twenty rooms or maybe more, I don't know. And the principle might come in and teach one subject—and another thing there would be maybe an art teacher or maybe a music teacher, But you just had really good teachers. Dedicated, good teachers. Discipline was never a problem. There was never anybody fightin'— I mean you weren't swattin' kids. Oh, there'd be a little talkin' you know, and you stay after school or stop that talkin'. But that was about the worst thing; talking.

SR: Some of the guys, you know— it wasn't a long distance; we run a five mile races, and we'd run two miles, one mile, quarter mile, and so we were running most of the time. And we had to run every few days for exercise. And I know we'd be down to Spokane sometimes and meet one of your friends, and say, "Hey," and the bus would be about ready to go, the school bus, "listen, we can beat that darn thing up there. It's only three miles—three miles, we'll beat that darn
thing up." And I remember our teacher, the one I was tellin' you about; one time she was going home, and she lived on a certain street, I knew where she lived. And she saw these guys comin', you know how you strip when you're running, she'd take off, I don't believe anybody could catch her. (Chuckles) I laughed when we passed her and we got to this street, but you know, she really took off.

SS: Did you like being in the city? Did you enjoy being in the city?

SR: Well, it wasn't too bad, you know, where we were. Manito Park. Do you know where that is? We were up there on 29th Avenue. And we thought that was wonderful. Oh, you could go out in the park and if you had a nice book you wanted to read, but either that or some nice friends to talk to. That was fine, go down there and visit. You know the sun was nice at that time, that time of the year.

SS: Did you hang around downtown at all?

SR: No, not down in the city, no.

JWR: They lived a very pure life. Oh, boy, his dad took 'em up there to showed you pictures. a, I don't know, someplace, and taught 'em the facts of life. Scared the daylights outta you and Helmer. Wasn't that it?

SR: Yes, he did. "You guys been here before?" "Oh, yeah." Some of our friends took us there. This school was more or less religious. Wasn't

SS: There places downtown where they--?

JWR: There was pictures that showed you the horrors of being led astray. The downward path.

SR: Those young students all went dressed up nice. No bad habits at all. That's the first thing they did. They wanted to see what kind of a drunk guy you were, and if you drank, well the only thing we ever didn't think I even drank coffee, because it bothered my running. We drank water, and they had good water.

SS: Where did these pictures come in? You got that downtown or at the
school?

JWR: Where were these pictures your dad took you to?

SS: — you get or the bad falling away?

JWR: You know those pictures that your dad took you to? Or did you get there on your own?

SR: They disappeared long ago.

JWR: Never mind where they are now. Where were they then? We're trying to get at.

SR: What street -- ?

JWR: Who took you? Your dad or the school?

SR: Oh, well, Dad- I don't think Dad did.

JWR: You just found them yourself?

SR: No, we told him.

SS: I was just wondering what the sex education was like in those days. What they taught the young—

SR: Oh, they were scared to death to mention anything to your kids.

JWR: I know, you told him— I thought you said—

SR: Yes, we just up and told him right away.

JWR: I know, dear, but what we're trying to ask you, is who told you where to go to see those pictures. I think it was the penny arcade or something.

SR: We went with a preacher's son just about our age, and he took all these young fellas around everywhere. The good places to go to; the good restaurants—

JWR: Well, what about the pictures? Where do they come in, now? Did he show you horrible pictures you told me about.

SR: Oh, he might have. He showed you pretty near everything. Places to keep out of and all that.
JWR: I think there was pictures somewhere along the line, a peepshow.

SS: I thought he said that there was a place downtown where the kids went and they just found out—got some information.

JWR: I think that's it. That was it. That's true.

SR: Yeah.

JWR: You've told me lots of times. Boy, you see those pictures and you'd stay straight for the rest of your life. The facts of life. That was sex education in those days.

SR: A Lutheran minister—his boy was supposed to be a good boy, and if he didn't do the right thing you know, why, his dad wouldn't own him, or something, you know. They was awful strict. I never liked 'em that strict. Catholics are the same way. Terrible strict.

SS: How strict? How were they stricter than you would be?

SR: Well, I don't know. I like a little freedom. Let 'em take a chance. Let 'em look out for themselves. Tell 'em the bad things and let 'em take their chance. They'll find out.

JWR: Well, I think you were strict enough, Stiner. Good night! I don't know what you're trying to say, because I think an awful lot of what they told you sure rubbed off on you. Only they sort of sent you half way to hell if you made a mistake. He knows what's right and wrong and so does Helmer.

SR: Well even now-- Well, Helmer, you know--

JWR: Stiner is much better than Helmer.

SR: If Helmer saw a girl and she had little spots on her face or something— he'd accuse her of everything, you know. Well, gosh, he wouldn't give her a chance. That'd make me so darn mad, you know. How do you know? I know there was a girl there, absolutely as far as I know, nothing wrong; talk to her and be nice. "Well, gosh, you shouldn't associate
with her." I heard so-and-so talking about her and so-and-so: "I
don't give a darn what you heard or anything," I says, "I guess I
can understand a few things." I talked to her and she was very nice.
And so I'd stick up for her. "You can say what you like, she's a
darn nice girl." I said, "Didn't you ever have a pimple on your face?
You're lucky if you didn't." I've had a lot of boils and things on my
hands and all that. Poor thing, she was having an awful time, she
had it on her face.

SS: I think that Helmer's a little more straight laced than I thought.

JWR: Oh, he was terrific!

SR: He was so bad. You don't know how bad he was. And after he got
married, he turned the other way.

JWR: You don't know what Helmer's like. You mean he's careless, but not
morally. He's just as straight laced morally, but he's careless
about his clothes. Careless about his speech and talk and things like
that. But, oh, he was so clean and fussy and persnickety. I'll show
you a picture.

SR: You know, every day; brush my shoulders.

SS: He would?

SR: He'd tell me to brush his shoulders. I'd look on, "Not a darn thing
on your shoulders." I said, "Brush it off!" So, I'd brush his
shoulders.

JWR: Stiner, Helmer and Ed— that's quite a picture, and you see how good-
looking they were? Gosh, they were goodlooking!

SS: This Ed Swenson?

JWR: That's Ed Swenson. The three. Isn't that something? And, I was
going to say—

SR: I got a lot of pictures while I was going to school. You dressed
with a white collar and a shirt. But we had these collars we could change collars every day.

JWR: *old* celluloid collars.

SR: Well, no, no. We had some of these-

JWR: Cloth ones?

SR: No, they were starched and ironed together. But you could throw them in the laundry. But they were so cheap to get done up. See? Do up a dozen for, oh, quite reasonable. A cent and a half or something. 

SR: You know like you say I hain't or I ain't, you know. I'd tell him that was using three words in one, and things like that. Well, he'd look it up in the dictionary and he'd find it all in there. And then there was different things. I remember in this house, once when, here- I can tell you the distance from that corner to that corner up there. Now, I said, "You wouldn't know how to find that out would you?" Well," I said, "you have to work at it." I said, "well, three squares, now." You start like this: you get the distance here, and then you get the distance this other way, and you add them together and they give you this distance, so that you can work from distance over to there. Anyway, well, figure it out-. That was my job- I just explained it to the guys and I was always right that way, so it worked out alright. But, I think it would been a good idea for me to hand in my work. But I was too busy with taking track and all that stuff. And I made the team anyway. The five mile track team in Spokane.

SS: Would you tell me a little bit about this place? This house when it was first built and all that?

SR: Oh, well, gee, I wouldn't know much about it when it was first built.
Oh, yeah, I do.

JWR: 1901.

SR: Well, yeah. See, I was seventeen, eighteen.

JWR: 1900.

SR: It was kind of an old house then, wouldn't it?

JWR: What this?

SR: When I'd be seventeen, eighteen, it would be kind of an old house then, wasn't it?

JWR: Oh, it wasn't so old. Well, we got a sign out here that says 1900. That's when they moved in.

SR: Yeah, in the fall.

JWR: In the fall.

SS: You lived at the old homestead before that.

SR: Yeah.

JWR: Yeah, it was between that shed, that barn-like thing we have and the old cowbarn. Right in there.

SS: And this one, your grandfather built?

JWR: Yes. And I don't know whether I showed you this picture or not, but this was taken even before they had the house built. One of the first things, there was a man came through here selling fruit trees, and I guess they had the orchard set up even before they had the house built. Now this is the house. I suppose this would be 1910 or even before that. Because this is a fruit cellar. Look at the good orchard they had.

SR: You know they built the orchard before they built the house. That's why they got one tree so close to the house, only about, two, three, four feet. And, you know, when that tree got this big around; it was a apple tree, it broke down on the house. Well, it couldn't hurt the house, but then I had to take it away. But I wouldn't until it
just leaned right on the house.

JWR: Now these are logs, chinked. And that was one long when we came here, there was just the one window here. We tore it out and put in a-

SR: You see how many windows I got out of it? Now see that one there; it was up and down there was two windows, but I took and cut out a bunch of logs here and put four in, and then you could see all around. It made a lot of difference. And then when you looked around, I think you saw that chickenhouse that's on there,

JWR: Yeah, this was a chickenhouse, right out by the plum tree and there's the same woodshed, you see, out there and that was a full barn then, now this part here has blown down.

SR: So I took that away. That was a good chickenhouse.

JWR: It was a better chickenrun here. This, I think, was put there.

SS: You grew up you went over to Central Ridge when you were just a little tot. Right?

SR: Oh, yeah, I was coming six in the spring.

SS: When you moved over there?

SR: Moved over there, I think Helmer said in March, and I was five, coming six the last of May, you see, the 31st of May.

SS: Was your father's place right near here?

SR: When we lived here, you mean?

SS: Yeah.

SR: Well, we lived a half mile up on the mountain there. There was a cabin there.

JWR: A half a mile to the right.

SR: The cabin was built before we came here from the East. And the guy that built it and lived in it- he first thought he'd squat on some
land here, see. Then he got another idea, that he'd get out— and
somebody talked him into getting out and getting a place someplace
else. So he just walked off and left. So the neighbor says, "Well,"
You know I had an uncle there— quite a few relatives, around here—
and they says, "Well, what's his name's gone—the house is empty why
don't you go and just move in there, see." So, alright we moved in
then, and was in for four years, I think it was— five, let's see,
four, five years. It'd be five coming six that I was in there—but,
I figured.
anyway, I was about six months old, I was born the 31st of May and
we moved up there, and as near as I can figure out, it was in the fall
and it was that fall that I was born.

JWR: No, no, you was born in the spring, dear. Oh, the fall of the year
you were born.

SR: I was born in the summer, you know, May. I'd say that's summer, or
spring—and then I was born in the fall (?) So it must have been
November sometime. Well, I must have been about six months old then.
So, we stayed here a year or so and then Mother wanted to go back
East; she got homesick or something. And she went back East; stayed
a while.

JWR: Had twins. She had twins back there. in Minnesota.

SR: She'd go back and had them; so they were born there. Minnesota must
be a wonderful place.

JWR: I talked to an old aunt, his old aunt back there and she remembered
the dear little twins being born. And I thought it's nice— people
did such nice things. Here she was with Helmer and Stiner, they wasn't
any better than they are now—and then these little twins, and they
sent her brother, one of her younger brothers out here to help her
out. She sure needed it. You and Helmer and the twins— baby boys.
SR: Oh, yes, well. That was only the right thing to do. But they had to put out the money, too, you see. Mother didn't have the money. And Dad didn't have any money.

JWR: But I thought that was very nice of them to give her a little helping hand, you know.

SR: Oh, I think my mother's people were very nice that way.

SS: I was going to ask how it was that you became a teacher.

JWR: Well, you know, there was only two things to do when I grew up. Be a nurse or be a teacher. Well, Mother was a teacher and I thought it was the easiest of the two. Actually I think that I'd a made a good nurse, But, oh, nursing was hard to learn. Nursing was so rugged in those days. Those twelve hours those nurses would put in and the scrubbing. You'd do all the work that the aides and the cleaning women do now. Just scrub the beds after a patient left.

SR: Oh, they piled the work on them.

JWR: It was pretty hard, so I thought, "Oh, I'll teach."

SS: The nursing was tougher.

JWR: Oh, it was tougher. Well, it's not as bad as it used to be. Teaching I think is tougher now, because discipline-- teaching is nothing, little it's discipline and, vandals and upset parents and, and there wasn't that.

SR: How you going to talk to the little vandals and get 'em to mind?

JWR: But, just let me tell him a minute about teaching. In those times there was quite a demand for teachers, too. There was the prairies and all these one room schools. I mean, you're more sure of a job. That was another factor. And, besides, you get a better choice. You get a swing at the boyfriends. See, I lived at the end of a golden era; just at the end. The beautiful golden age where women
were prized. They were scarce. They were a scarce commodity. This was just after World War I, and there was about four or five bachelors to every girl. You'd go out there to those little country schools; boy, there was never a debutante had any better time. All these men competing for you and you just had to be a female. You didn't have to dispense with your favors. You could be prim, you could be modest; you were a woman. And that's all that was necessary. And you got all this attention. Pretty nice, wasn't it?

SS: Well, it sounds great. Do you think this was just true in the backwoods area, like that. It wasn't the same in the city?
JWR: No, it wasn't the same in the cities. But out on the prairies, out on the prairies and the backwoods area-
SR: Nobody wanted to live there, you see.
JWR: Well, there was all these bachelors just starting up and all these men. There was Scotch and Englishmen and whatever coming out from the other countries.
SS: Did you have a lot of men pressing invitations on you?
JWR: Oh, definitely. The center of everything was the little country schoolhouse. And there'd be dances in some schoolhouse somewhere. There wasn't too many cars, but you'd usually latch onto somebody— he might not be the one you wanted, but he'd have a car, and he was wise enough and lucky enough to not press his luck. He'd take you there and he'd get the first and the last dance, and maybe the dinner dance and he had to be satisfied. Then you'd have dances, you'd be booked up for four or five dances ahead. And people wanting dates. And it was just an interesting time sorting them out. Times were so— I don't know, girls have to do so much now to interest people, seems to me unless you drew an awful good brain, or awfully wise, or awfully pretty, or
very shrewd. But there you just had to do so little; just be natural
and talk and just give a little companionship and listening and you
had it made. I don't know, the girls now, it seems to me now they
have to go more than half way. Not every time, but so many times.

SS: But when you were there and single like that, were you seriously hun-
ting for a husband?

JWR: You were looking, definitely. You weren't hunting; you were sorting,
shall we say.

SR: Keeping an eye. The only thing that kept me coming—

JWR: You were keeping an eye open. And another thing— it was interesting.
Different backgrounds; different men, different backgrounds and young.
And passed the time, too. But I met him and he had a house and a good
line; an excellent line.

SS: Excellent line?

JWR: Oh, you bet. One of those slick Americans, you know.

SR: B.S., you mean? (chuckles)

JWR: I guess that's what it was, but it was a line.

SR: I had a two bedroom house—

JWR: Well built.

SR: And it was the warmest house in the country. My uncle built it, and
the floor— Old George, you know, my uncle's father-in-law he wanted
to stay with me here, and my gosh, he was already talking about get-
ting too old, you know, to cook and keep up. "Well," I thought, "gee
whiz, I better get married. I can't bach." And so he had— I think
he did it apurpose— but he could cook the nicest pancakes you ever
saw. He was a German cook, you know. He said, "You know how many
pancakes you ate this morning?" "No," I says. He says, "Thirteen.
And they were big."
SS: I was going to ask you— you told me a little bit before: I'm a little curious to know how you did meet. Him.

JWR: Oh, that was simple. I'd worked at the summerschool. You know, some schools went there from March til January— all through the summer to avoid the bitter cold weather, so the students wouldn't have to go out. Well, that's the first kind of school I had. Well, I got out in January and I could have gone back but it wouldn't have been til March, or maybe part way into March. I thought, "Oh, dear, I hate to lay around." I had an aunt there, but I saw this ad in the paper and I wrote in and I got it. And so I came— and well, let me see— The first week I was invited out to a dance with Catholic boy, I felt guilty about, Nice boy, and we went down to— not there— but somebody else, down at Guilt Edge. Anyhow, I went down there. And the next Sunday— that was Friday— Sunday I went to the horsetrader's place— my landlady drove me there. And on the way back, she says, "It's kind of cold, let's drop by Stiner's and warm up."

SR: Yes, she was my guardian—

JWR: Yes, she was trying to get him married off.

SR: She was an English woman, you know— and everytime she got a new teacher she'd invite me over for dinner.

JWR: Actually, she was an interesting person. She was a Boer from Africa. And so, we dropped by there, and oh, beautiful clean place and close to the school and so on and so on. And, alright, a very smiling, very nice looking and lovely blond hair and you know, the healthy, outdoor muscle guy. We didn't stay long. Time to put on my galoshes, right there to put 'em on, helped with getting my gloves on and he was there to snap it for me. Nothing said, you know, but you were watching all the time. So then, he called me up and asked me if he could take me
to a dance next Saturday. And I said, "No, somebody else had asked me." And, well, he was there. And then I guess you asked me for the next Sunday dance. He took me out once— I guess he took me out on a Sunday afternoon— the next Sunday afternoon.

SR: After you came down, Goldie brought you down, I made a date for—
JWR: For the next Sunday afternoon.
SR: Yeah, two weeks.
JWR: To take me for a drive. Well, he took me for a drive. That Friday I went to a dance with somebody else and I saw him there. Sunday he took me for a drive. The next Friday he took me to a dance and he proposed to me. That's what I liked about him. "A laggard in love—"
you know, "A laggard in love— and a dastard in war—" You know that story?

SS: Uh-huh.
JWR: Well, you ought to learn. Well, he's a laggard in love, never know right now. what— I want somebody that knows whether they want me or not, Not saying that I'm going to marry them, but I want them to be attracted enough
and to be willing to sign on the dotted line, and he was, right then and there.

SS: Did you accept him right then?
JWR: No, of course not! Good grief; no! But then you knew his intentions.
SS: Well, you got the upper hand right away.
JWR: Sure, that's the thing.
SR: You know, the people around there says, "Hey, why don't you come over to the dance?" The first dance they had after she came out. "Well," I said, "heck, I don't know." I says, "They don't interest me, those school ma'ams."

JWR: "More they come, the worse they get."
SR: "Yeah. The worse they look, and I just don't give a darn about them."
to the States, I thought sometime I'd come down, wouldn't take me long to pick out some of the girls that I knew pretty well down there. And so, oh, they thought that was fine. Well, finally Mrs. Golding brought her around to the house. And, you know, George kept the house—and that front room, you know was shiny. He used some of that oil of cedar to put on that nice floor. Oh, it brought the grain of the wood out nice and it looked good. And it was warm. Heck, we had it pretty near 80 in there I guess. That'll attract anybody. I don't we think knew you guys was coming, did we?

JWR: No, you didn't know.
SR: We didn't know they was coming, any time.
JWR: I was very practical. I realized then; I could have ten men. I'd seen enough of them and know I could make a go of marriage with any one 'em, providing they had a home and just a few of the essentials of life. So what?
SR: I was the only young feller around there that had anything.
JWR: Well, no—there wasn't, I mean they were all struggling; no matter where I went they were all struggling young men, but they were good men.
SR: worked hard
I had for what I had, and the neighbors would always watch for what I got. And I know when I left up there, the biggest farmer up there, he come and asked me, he says, "I got a lot of land to break up."
And he knew I was breaking ground every year, and he says, "What kind of a plow you using?" And I told him, I says, "I've been using— I've had John Deere and different kinds," and, I says, "I've got another notion now, I want the International." And some of the reasons? I says, "I think they're only twenty inch, and I only use ten horses. You put on twelve, you've got lots of horses," I says,
"and you can walk aright along all day through anything you got over there." And, you know, he did that and he plowed eighty acres of new ground. Well, of course, he had plenty of help, just as fast as they could plow.

SS: He came to you for advice?

SR: Oh, yeah. Ratho was his name. We got his name in that other book, we haven't got it here.

JWR: It's in the front. Well, I was going to say; those golden days are over. The schools are all consolidated. They have the same hassles, the same problems. It was fun.

SS: Stiner, did you know that you were interested in her right away? Soon as you met her?

SR: Just about. Right away, yeah. We agreed on everything. Pretty much.

SS: Well, but I mean, before you knew that, you were ready to put her galoshes on and button her gloves for her.

SR: Oh, I'd do that with anybody. (Chuckles)

JWR: He's more daring than Helmer. That Helmer! At his age— he's went to a few of these Senior Citizens— and they ask him over, "Nice meal."

And he'd say, "Oh, I can't stand 'em. Those women are always asking me over for dinner, but I wouldn't think of going there." He is just as vulnerable and just as frightened, he's just as skittish as if he was some young teenager just about to be trapped. He is cute! No Stiner is polite, but I think he was attractive.

SR: But I've had girls, I'd be dancing with girls and they thought they was so much better and all that, why, heck, I could just let 'em go just like that. And I wouldn't never ask 'em for another dance.

SS: How would you know if they thought they were better than you?

SR: Well, that's easy to tell. That's easy.
JWR: You know, I think contact dancing teaches you something. What do you think? You never had much of that did you?

SS: They were too good or something?

SR: Yeah.

SS: Not as much any more but it used to be.

JWR: I really think that some of the romance in life- I think they're getting back into it. He was an excellent dancer; I was pretty good, too.

SR: Who was that?

JWR: You. You were a good dancer, dear.

SR: I Used to be. Pretty good.

JWR: Oh, you were real good.

SS: So what's so good about contact? It isn't an intimacy.

JWR: I don't know what there is about it. But there's something about it. I just think it's awareness. Just really imperceptible things about a person when you're that close that you can pick up and learn and feel and sense. And what you say. These far away dances where you're just- no wonder people feel so solitary, so lost. There's something very romantic about those old-fashioned dances. Waltz and the schottische- and well, the schottishces are more action things.

SS: I still want to know how you know that a girl thinks she's superior to you? How can you tell that from dancing with her?

JWR: Well, what she says while she's dancing.

SR: The way she acts, the way she talks.

JWR: The way she talks. It's what she says, it isn't what she dances. The dance itself- it's the conversation. Eye to eye, very close.

SR: There was one girl up there, schoolteacher; Mrs. Golding, you know, she expected me to do the right thing. Went out to the barn; got a couple of saddle horses, saddles and I brought 'em up to the house.
Says, "Which one do you want to ride? Which horse do you want?"

"Well, I'll take this one." "Okay, fine." She took that one. So I was supposed to go with her, we were going for a little ride. So I said, "I'll take this one." So, we go along- or no- so I thought I'd help her on, see. I held the horse, I was holding the horse, and she grabbed the horse by the bridle- stall, or something- I guess she was used to riding- and I wanted to take her foot, you know and help her on.

Give her a boost

JWR: "Get away from here!"

SR: she says, "I can get on myself. I don't need you around here." Just snotty, you know. "Alright. Get on." So, we got on and we rode on five, six miles and not a dang word said. So, I said, "Let's run a race? What do you say?" "Okay." She agreed to. I run off and left her. (Chuckles) Then I stopped and waited for her.

"What was you doing back there? You know, kiddin'. And then she got to talkin', but she wouldn't talk before that. But she kind of woke up then, see. But girls like that I just-- Oh, there's different ones. That was Blair's wife. She's the first one that come in; one of the first ones.

JWR: Then there's some that try to throw their weight around when they're at dances.

SR: When she come in, you know, she thought, oh, everybody was just falling for her! Gee whiz, yeah! She had to look around and she had to be careful, she wouldn't get a dance. The only reason why I danced with her- I liked to dance one dance with her because she was from our district, and anybody from some other district, they didn't have to dance with her, see, if they didn't want to.

JWR: There was no etiquette.
SR: See I just show her that I didn't turn her down altogether. I was from the same district she was.

SS: Which district was that?

JWR: School district.

SS: But where was this dance at? Wainwright?

JWR: Oh, no, no. In the schoolhouse. It was fourteen miles from Wainwright in our own little school. Every little school has their dancing. Two or three fiddlers -

SS: Would people come from very far around?

SR*: Every school, every five miles, I think it was.

JWR: Maybe someone that was a particular attractive girl or somebody wanted to see them, they'd come ten, twelve miles. Depends on the girls.

SR: Oh, yeah, you can go further than that.

SS: Were there a lot more men at the dances than there were girls?

JWR: That's the fun part! Yes, they'd be maybe three to four to five men to a girl. Depends on your district. But that's all gone.

SS: So when you turned him down at first, what did you say?

JWR: Well, I just told him, I says, "I'm sorry I have an engagement for next Friday. I'm going to such-and-such a schoolhouse."

SS: You said, but he offered to marry you- he asked you to marry him.

JWR: That didn't make any difference, if you had an appointment to go with someone else, you wouldn't break it just because a guy asked you to marry him. You just don't break-- he wouldn't expect me to, even if he did--

SR: You see, I was--

JWR: I wasn't going with him or anything. You know what I mean. There'd been nothing established between us.

SR: I was getting desperate because Old George was beginning to fail!

(Laughter)
SS: Did you ask a lot of girls that summer?
JWR: Oh, no, he wasn't
SR: No, I never asked a one.
JWR: I wasn't in any hurry, I just thought I'd play the field for a while longer.
SS: Did you?
JWR: Well, yes. We didn't get married until that spring later on. I got sick of my boardinghouse and the kids. Oh, the kids were hard to-
They were such big boys, you know and there was about five great, big boys. I was planning on getting married and, thought, "Oh, shoot, I might as well get married."
SR: I had a girl ever since I was a little fellow. When we was going to public school, you know, I don't know how old I was, but anyway, she was six years old. And her brother, you know, he just didn't like to have to look after his little sister. He had another sister older than him. So he come over, he says, "Stiner, here's a girl for you."
And he give her to me. Says, "That's your girl." I said, "Okay, fine, Carl."
So I took her, and she was so glad. And when we grew up, we wrote letters, for, oh I don't know, I didn't give a darn whether I ever got anybody else or not. And she never got married. She always said- I told her, I says, "Well, you get somebody that's got money and that's got a good place, get married."
JWR: She was just beautiful, I don't know why you didn't marry her. I've seen how pretty she was.
SR: I told her finally, I says, "Well, don't look like we's gonna get enough married," I says, "I haven't even got enough money to buy the license." I says, "You know what times are now, you better go ahead and get mar-
KWR: And she did.
SR: She did.
SS: Well, I think you did pretty darn well for yourself.

JWR: I think he did, too. I'm satisfied. He's wore awful good, you'll have to admit. He had durability.

SR: But she figured that something else happened, that I didn't want her or something.

JWR: That's that Ethel?

SR: Yeah. She was pretty. She was really pretty and not only that, she did me a lot of good turns too, you know. If I went with a girl around that district and she said something, you know, about me and it come to her she'd tell me. She wasn't allowed to go with anybody outside—away from her folks, you know till she was sixteen. And when we met in any school or any place and she'd say, "You're going with such-and-such a girl—" course she knew every girl I was going with—She says, so-and-so tell me all the news. And I never told a thing about it, so we had that between us all the time.

SS: Sounds like her parents were awful strict, that they wouldn't let her go with anybody.

SR: No, not strict—

JWR: I never went till I was sixteen. That was the accepted thing.

SR: And she left and went to California when she was fifteen; coming sixteen. So that was it.

SS: What was you starting to say?

JWR: Well, we was talking a while about divorce—

One of the things: Now we were speaking of dances; you went with your husband. You were married; fine. That was an achievement. And you had all these young herd of stampedeing hopefults around you. Al-right, they know their place. They retired quietly to the background but still they enjoyed you, they liked to dance with you and talk
with you or something. Your husband, he was a very nice husband, 
dutifully danced the first dance and the supper dance and the last 
dance with me and in the meantime you had this ball stamping around. 
If you wanted to dance, fine, but he was usually finding somebody to 
talk the plows with. 'Course, he danced a lot, too. But here, you 
go, the dumbness of kids, how can they stand it, they go to a dance 
and dance all night with the one guy. * I don't understand it. But 
you had that freedom. It's men they're talking about. And I can re-
member the men, they were talking about politics- Good Old George, we 
used to dance the schottisches- that's about all Good Old George was 
good for was the schottische. And he'd be talking about some interes-
ting Ukrainian thing. You had all these contacts, and yet they were 
innocent. There was nothing out of the way, and you were above reproach 
and it was fun. You weren't worrying about husbands or divorces or 
entanglements. You knew that married guy you were dancing with was 
tied up tighter than a drum and you're not about to take him or 
anything was going to happen. I think you feel more secure. May not be 
as exciting, but sometimes you like a little security. Another in-
teresting thing I was thinking about the other day- It's just a matter 
of names, not that it matters a great deal- You ask for the differen-
ces between here and in Canada. The matter of your first name. Now 
I went to public school, alright, up til the time I hit Sixth grade 
I was Jean. By the time I got into grade eight, I suppose I was thir-
ten, fourteen, something like that, must have been fourteen- suddenly 
all the men teachers, there were two or three that came in for dif-
ferent things, you became Miss Wilson. The boys, in a way, they were 
called by their last names; Jones, Belinsky, or whatever. No more 
Bobby or Jimmy, something dignified. The woman teacher, she would con-
continue to call you by your first name. When you got to high school, unless she was a very old woman— an older teacher— she would call you miss, even from someone that was old enough to be your mother. It was just a little sense of identity. You were a woman, and you begin to feel it. And you begin to feel that respect from your men teachers. And boys, alright, and even amongst the girls— oh there'd be a few girls'd call you by your first name, but usually they'd call me Wilson, "Hey, Wilson, come here." Just like you would in a barracks or someplace else. More so than my first name unless it was some of my closest friends. Then when you became married, when you went on, my landlady would never call me anything else but miss. And the men now; there was just a little variation. I would call George- this famous George. He would never call me anything but Mrs. Ringsage to this day.

SR: Yeah. Always.

JWR: And my women friends; I don't think there was hardly anybody ever called by my first name. It was something separate. I don't resent it, it doesn't bother me. Especially all these years down...

SR: Peggy?

JWR: Peggy might have called me Jean in due time, and her husband, but we talked about intimate things with one another. A man would kiss me, a young man would kiss me before, but he'd still call me Miss Wilson. That would never be until after marriage.

SS: You mean down here, they would be more familiar.

JWR: Of course, I came into a district here, where we were related to every last person here. Just practically solid intermarriage. And well, relations you just expect anything else but 'Jean' and that was it from here on in. And it's true excepting when I was working at the
nursery. There you became Mrs. and amongst the other married women—

SR: What did Delores call you?

JWR: She called me Mrs. Ringsage, always, never— she was the supervisor of the nursery. Always, and none of the nuns called me anything else than—

SR: What did she call me?

JWR: Mr. Ringsage. And the girls in the West were using "Peterson," but we still would never intrude.

SS: In other words, it was the same there in Portland—

JWR: Because, as I say, they were ran over with a fine-tooth comb. We couldn't smoke, or drink, swear—. They really were fussy about picking you out.

SS: She called you Mrs.— she didn't call you Ringsage?

JWR: Mrs. Ringsage.

SS: Other girls were called by their last names?

JWR: No, we called each other— no, no, the other girls were called Mrs.

SS: What do you think the significance of that is?

JWR: I don't know. I just wonder. I often wonder about girls, in particular; does it give them a little more sense of their worth as a female? A little dignity, a little— I don't know. What does it signify to you? But it gave me a little feeling, a little jolt; boy, I'm Mrs. now, Miss— I'm Miss. Just a little shade of honor; respect. How many people pay you respect now? How many teachers pay respect?

And it was a nice way they would say it. It just automatically went with grade eight. We were just little wobbly kids yet. You know what? I was the first girl in my grade in the whole school that bobbed her hair. Now there you can see that I really turned the world over!

But you see, you had to do so little in those days to really—
SS: That was a little radical at the time to do that? To bob your hair?

JWR: There wasn't anybody else— there wasn't hardly any women with bobbed hair. I remember there was Irene Castle, she was the one— she was that famous dancer with her husband; Irene and whatever his name was— Castle. And she had bobbed hair and I thought it was very interesting and beautiful. My hair was a mess anyhow, it was scraggly and short and thin and not very nice. So I cut it. And then there was another girl in the class— poor thing, now I realize what she went through— I don't know whether— it must have been— I wouldn't say she didn't seem to have negro features, and she was fair, but there are other races that have that problem, but her hair was very fuzzy and short and she always had a broad band of ribbon around, tied in front. Then when I liberated myself, she did. And then we did naughty things too, like—

SS: What did she do? Take the ribbon off?

JWR: She took the ribbon off, and let her short hair be seen, because her hair just naturally didn't grow. So you see, we had ways of being defiant, and we rolled our stockings below our knees. Course, our dresses were long, I stopped looking for shock—

SS: Rolling the stockings below the knees was shocking?

JWR: Oh, definitely! That was really— of course, your dress came half way down your thigh, but then there was always a hope there'd be a breeze and going up a step or crossed your knees and someone might see your little dimpled knee. So there! And that was something that was rather frowned on, but not quite forbidden.

SS: You started to say something else—

JWR: Well, I don't know just what, but there were some little things like that.

SS: And that was rebellion?
JWR: That was rebellion and defiance. You have to do so much now it's pitiful to be rebellious and to be defiant. They didn't try to stop you or anything, but raise your eyebrows. Of course, as I said, funny little thing, you couldn't see it half the time, and after the first initial shock of about six months, you were comfortable to have your stocking up again.

SS: Well, when you went out as a teacher, were the rules very strict, governing what a teacher could do?

JWR: Oh, yes, you knew what was expected of you, and you complied easily and naturally. There wouldn't be any rolled stockings in those times but, now for instance, in my first dance I went to; now I'd taken my dad's advice and there was no girdles confining my natural waist—of course I was slim and kind of nice little figure. But, I knew there was a sort of a thing women wore—particularly nice, well-brought up nice women always wore some kind of a corset with definite stays in it. I asked my landlady, I says, "What'll I do? I'm going to a dance and I haven't got a girdle with stays in it." I know I had some kind of a little deal that held my stockings up. "Well," she says, "gosh, I don't know." She says, "I wouldn't want anybody to talk about you. They might think things or you know." And we talked it over and finally she loaned me a pair of hers. Got to be careful. (Laughter) After I guess I went there a few times, and I found that most of the girls in the district weren't wearing girdles with stays in 'em. And so, forget it. But I'd come a long ways from my mother. My mother was telling me of her trials as a teacher. Oh, she's the one that had misery! She was bright and vivacious and full of fun— I mean she was innocent, too, I mean, but there was nothing in her life that you wouldn't expect of a woman that was beyond
reproach, but she said she had to walk through a field back and forth to school. Of course, long dresses, high topped shoes, they used to just get soaked and wet and one particular miserable November, she came home; feet cold, they didn't have golashes and things in those days. And her dress was wet and there was no heat upstairs, in the bedroom where she boarded, so she took those wet shoes off, and of course, I don't think she had another pair of shoes, or if there were they weren't too suitable- she didn't want to put her wet * on them and she sat down in front of the fire and she just brought her dress up so that her feet could dry out, and the landlady came and she says, That would not be proper to be without shoes and the skirt above your ankles. My husband is in the house." So I thought I got off light. Mother said she'd never forget that. And this must have made Mother much more liberal, much more willing to fight for women's rights and family planning and all these things that have come in.

SR: He must have been an animal.

JWR: Oh, he wasn't. He was a poor little henpecked man and Mother says that poor guy didn't dare lift his eyes above his plate when he ate. (Laughter)

SS: Did your mother actually become active in that sort of thing?

JWR: No. It hadn't progressed, it was just barely starting up when I was a girl. But I mean, all her sympathies were with- not only women but men. Men needed liberating, too. Now we've got so much going for us. We've got this nice little extra layer of fat and live longer, and, oh, just think of all we've got going for us now. (Chuckles) So that's why I think you need liberating!

SS: You know, when you were talking about women as actually having a better position anyway because they didn't have to work. When you said
that, I was thinking that it seemed to me that women had to work pret-
yy hard in the home.

JWR: They had to work tremendously hard in the home, but oh, working in a
store! That twelve hour day! That twelve hours and miserable bosses.

And poor pay. Even the hospital work was so hard; even the respectable
jobs.

SS: But compared to the work that the husband was doing—didn't women still
have to work pretty hard at home?

JWR: She did. But see, I had a picture of my dad being gone most of the
time and my mother had it very easy at home. I never saw a woman work-
ing too hard. Grandmother managed to have a hired girl—she had eight
kids, but still she had a hired girl.

SS: So your mother didn't have to work much at home when he was gone?

JWR: That's right, and when he was home he was very helpful. I remember he
did a lot of the washing because it was done on the board, and he
didn't mind helping. And hang clothes out. In the cold Canadian win-
ters he always hung the clothes out. And he'd pack the water and he
always kept the fire going. And she always said she always had it
pretty easy. And my aunt, my Aunt Amy, she had it the same way, and
she was another adored wife. And my Aunt Frances, boy, she was just—
spoilt— I shouldn't say she was spoilt, but she was another one. The
was the kind of woman that got her a $900 coat—fur coat during the
Depression. So she wasn't doing so bad. And a husband that loved
her. She didn't have too much work. So I didn't see the real hard
slaving women. I knew they were around, but if you didn't have too
much of a family, you got by. Another thing, there was a lot of things—
Your washing wasn't so much. You had one outfit of underwear all week.
None of this once or twice a day. You used a towel for a week. And
you could use a bath towel cheerfully for a week. Everything was
on a weekly basis, unless you fell in a pond or something! And it
eliminated a lot of things.

SS: Like when you were first married, in those early struggling years,
did you feel that you had to work a great deal? Very hard?

JWR: No, because I never did any outside work. Loneliness was my big
problem. Loneliness and lack of contact, as I say, I yearned for the
city. Not for a lot of things— not for socials so much as the intellect-
ual. Mother kept my mind alive or I'd a died. She sent me books. She
sent me magazines; she sent me word-by-word descriptions of what was
going on politically. And she her certain line of Bible study she was
interested in something you'd never heard of, British Israelites was a real wing-dinger up there.

SS: What was it called?

JWR: British Israelites. Mother was in deep in that. It kind of fell by
the wayside. But they were always digging out things, lot of like a
archaeology. And mother was sending the most fascinating things—
they'd dug up this and that and Stonehenge and all the whole thing
was so—

SS: So what you felt was the cultural isolation?

JWR: That was the whole thing. It wasn't hard work. I mean I was young
and I didn't have my children— although the first two came close and
the next one was spaced. It wasn't hard work, it was that. That was
the prime thing.

SS: There wasn't really anyone that you could talk to that gave you men-
tal stimulation?

JWR: There was a few teachers, yes, quite a few married teachers, but not
too many. Politically, there was a few. There was some excellent
people I could disagree with politically. That was a help.

SS: Disagree with?

JWR: That I could disagree with, and that was a great help. A very great help. And they were very good, they were very much in earnest and they were quite smart and quite bright, and that was a help. But the women— I had some good women friends. Some fairly well educated, they were good. But they were isolated like me. They were isolated from the stimulation that they needed. They weren't too happy, either. That was the whole thing. There was a whole area that was just sort of blotted out. Although there was lots of other things. We had things that you didn't have down here to at least keep your mind— the wheels turning over. They were much more involved in politics. Just ever so much more. And social issues. You always were very involved. The government came out with a bill went through that in order to save money, advise that women have their first child at home, to save money. And, you know, things like that. And then you'd tear into them, see! Something like that. You could really get your teeth into that and fight back. But they did, they actually did and that came out in some of the papers, some of these districts— I mean the municipal districts. This was during the Depression. Anything to cut down on bills and save a dollar, why, women had to have the first child at home.

SS: What was the basis that you would disagree with some of these people on politics?

JWR: They were too far to the— you know, they leaned toward Communism. That's what it was going— they didn't say it was Communism— it was going to lead into that. There was too much Socialism attached to it. I didn't like it. It wasn't a matter of liking or disliking, I could
see the flaws in it. I could point it out, and time has proved I was right.

these were and

SS: Socialists not conservatives that you were arguing with. Yes.

JWR: I wasn't considered Conservative Alberta is really the most progressive and they're conservative in some ways, but their politics are much more liberal and much more progressive than the other provinces around. They, oh for instance, they've got a good firm grip on their oil. The Province has it, it isn't all in the hands of Texaco. They dabble in it alright and people do make a little money out of it, but the Province has a lot of revenue from it. And they're putting it into a heritage tax fund, for the children. They're not letting Ma and Pa blow it! A few years ago they gave a bonus considerable bonus to everybody in the Province.

SS: Do people argue politics there then?

JWR: Oh, they just argued just little groups like this. You just got together and women and everybody talked. That was one of our main entertainments. Main topic of conversation.

SS: And here you found that absent?

JWR: It was just a complete blank. It was just as pure as the driven snow. Well, they all thought Roosevelt was great, but they didn't know why, but it's better and that was it. They were happy. I don't know what they did talk about. What did Edwin talk about? Did you talk with Edwin?

SR: I don't know-

JWR: Nothing, nothing. They had hunting and shooting and things like that.

SS: Give me an idea in your mind of why the difference? Was it Americans just don't have any political interest?

JWR: No, I don't think I think it's just apathy. Just like they don't
get out and vote. And that's catching up there, it's getting to be the same in Canada.

SS: But it didn't used to be? That's funny, that there was that concern.

JWR: They were-

SR: Jimmy Carter's got to say now, 'I'm going to vote for him. I don't want any more of this loan stuff. He's the only thing I can see.' Unless something new jumps up. We know what Ford's got. Got the same old stuff, only they got to work at it from a different place.

He was working over here last year, now they've moved down here six inches and they're working from that, see. And they've got maybe a few different words, I don't know.

JWR: I think here you're more interested in the everyday struggle. Get up wood, get your tractor and your machinery working. "Where am I going to work next year?" "I think I'll go out in the woods." They visited an awful lot. There was a trail back and forth between them you know. Just a different tempo. Well, I'm not sayin' it's right or wrong. I don't know. It's different.

SS: There, how would you contrast it? What would it be like there, I mean as compared with this? There they were more tied into the government?

JWR: Oh, much more. It's just no comparison. Everybody from the kids on up—parties and dances to raise money for to—get so-and-so elected, or to send a delegation, or getting up a petition. Here we are just a handful of people—and it isn't only us, it's all around us. I think when the government after we left—I think that new one that went in, I think he went in with ninety some percent of the vote. It was just overwhelming, the vote that went in. I don't think they can do that now. But you can imagine it's just a fervor, it's just almost like a Billy Graham religious fervor. That's the way we were.

SS: What was the party that everybody was for?

JWR: Most of them was for—oh, he was called Eberhart.
SR: This is in Canada, now.

JWR: There was United Farm Association. United Farmers was in for a good number of years. And, oh, it did pretty good for the farmers. When farming was good until the Depression hit them it went to pieces.

And then, by the way, we have our little scandals. I think his name Manning was, just about the time we left, there was a man named Manning, he was the prime minister of Alberta. He got involved, I don't know with, I don't know whether it was the secretary or whatever, but he had a wife, very highly respectable, something like Harding and his little butterfly, that he had years ago. And there was front page details and she was, oh, years younger than him; just barely legal, and no child or anything involved but, boy, talk about a sex scandal; this pillar of righteousness. And then there was this Eberhart; now he was a very shrewd cookie. He was a good politician. He stayed in just year after year after year, and he really introduced marvelous reforms and he got things out of the slump they were in. He was something like on the line of Roosevelt down here, but there there was never any help; no welfare, not a hand-out, no work you know for people like the Peace Corps or WPA or anything. I don't know how he managed, but he was a marvelous manager and he spoke every Sunday on the radio to the people. Every Sunday he would speak. Now that was keeping in touch. And it was small enough place that you could respond. I don't say everybody was a hundred percent for him, but his morals were irreproachable and that's what they wanted after this other. This idea of this guy having a roll in the hay while everybody else was half starved to death and all these troubles and miseries in the country, just didn't go over. Well, this man has been succeeded by a man—maybe it's Manning the next guy, there was some other
fellows come in and he's carrying on very much. But he hasn't got the majority the other fellow had. But see, they're picked out different; I guess you know a little bit about the—the system out there, it's so much simpler. Like you'd have democrats and you get them all elected in and you might say when they get there, then, they pick out one. Although you got a pretty good idea who you are going to have.

SS: Party leader.

JWR: Yes, for a party leader. They'll by pass these electoral colleges and they'll bypass the delegates and all that sort of thing and the big conventions. It's much simpler.

END OF FIRST INTERVIEW

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