

Idaho Panhandle Oral History Project
Interview with Henry Kottkey
October 22, 1979
Burke Road, Wallace
Interviewed by David Barton
Questionnaire Information

HK = Henry Kottkey
DB = David Barton

Tape 11, Side 1

HK: For single man, single men.

DB: Hm-hm. What was there a special red light district in town, or...?

HK: They've been pretty much, yes it's been, pretty much confined all the way through, to a certain part of town.

DB: Where was it; what part of town would that have been?

HK: I would say Kelley's Alley and part of the--north side--of Cedar Street.

DB: Is that where the B & J grocery store is, right around there?

HK: Yea.

DB: Is it illegal to have prostitution in Wallace, or...when you say that they managed the prostitutes, what do you mean by that? Is it quasi-legal or...?

HK: I don't know. I really don't know. I think the law enforcement people--your leadership in the community, has, has, might say, tolerated, under certain restrictions--with certain restrictions, the existence of them.

DB: Where did people get alcohol in Prohibition days around here?

HK: We had a few rum-runners, in the area. They brought alcohol in from the Dakotas, Minnesota...ahm...and quite a bit was brought across the line from Canada.

DB: Was there much beer-making around here--homebrew?

HK: Of course, we had a few for a number of years, had a brewery right in Wallace. The old Sunset Brewery.

DB: Did that turn out good beer?

HK: I thought it was all right.

DB: Uh-huh.

HK: Went out of business. Now, that brewery was in existence for a good many years. I've forgotten what the last name that they...it was Sunset, wasn't it; the last brand name they had on it? Gem? Maybe it was that Gem Beer.

DB: Was it Prohibition that ended their work, or had they gotten out before that?

XF: I don't think so, do you? Because I can remember the brewery and I didn't live here.

HK: I don't know, it went out because they couldn't compete with...

XF: Yea they couldn't compete.

HK: ...with the bigger outfits. Throughout the Northwest.
DB: What about gambling, where did people gamble?
HK: Well, most of the taverns had gambling.
DB: Was there any favorite kind of gambling that they do?
HK: Well; there was poker and blackjack, and pangingi.
DB: What's that?
HK: That's a card game. It's kind of, depending on how you set the stakes...otherwise it's pretty much a past time type of gambling.
DB: How about slot machines?
HK: They had, Wallace had its share of slot machines, up until they were banned. Whenever that was that they were made illegal. But they were in every tavern, and other places had slot machines.
DB: So, they were not illegal.
XF: Not then.
HK: Not at that time, no.
DB: Are they now?
HK: Yes.
DB: We are interested in some of the names for different places around this area in the forest. Maybe you could tell us, if you know some of them, how they got the names for the different passes. There's Trowel Gulch. Do you have any idea how that got its name? How about Moon Pass? Heard any stories about that?
HK: No.
DB: _____ Moon Pass. There's Weyer Gulch. W-E-Y-E-R.
XF: Weyer Gulch.
HK: Yea.
DB: Weyer Gulch?
HK: Yea. That's named from the...from the fellow that was a resident at the mouth of the gulch for a good many years. Billy Weyer.
DB: When did he live there, was that when you were young?
HK: Yea. He was...I delivered papers to him...I don't know, must have been...I don't know how long he...I think he was a homesteader. Original resident around that area. On the Weyer Track.
DB: Remember when he passed on?
HK: I would say somewhere near 1930. I don't have any idea, really. But then, I know he was alive and well, although quite an old man, in 1925.
DB: Do you know how Dago Peak got its name?
HK: No.
DB: How about Eighty Day Saddle?
HK: This Eighty Day Saddle, the name of it probably goes back to the original survey work in the area. There from, when they were establishing the section lines. I don't know that that's true, but I suspect that that's probably their 80th day of encampment. I know that, I'm trying to think

of...over there on Steamboat...there was a place over there called Rainy Day...she just was a rainy day and this got into your survey notes. Just like Fourth of July Summit, down there, you know. Probably had something to do with Bill...Bill.

XF: John Mullan.

HK: John Mullan's encamping there on the Fourth of July.

DB: How about Hord Gulch? H-O-R-D.

HK: This was a homesteader, by the name of Hord.

DB: Do you remember when he passed on, was it before your time?

HK: Well, I don't think so really. I think, probably...little earlier than. I'd say somewhere around 1920, but I don't really know. Have no idea when...but I do know that's where the name came from. There was a little ranch in there, called Hord Ranch.

DB: How about Bad Tom Mountain?

HK: No.

DB: Dead Man Gulch?

HK: No, I don't know the background on that. I know where all of these places are, that you're talking about.

DB: Yea. Do you remember any stories about New Deal programs or CCC camps, anything like that? Do you have any favorite stories about the CCC?

HK: No. Of course, I was...I was a foreman in a CC camp. For a couple, two or three Winters.

DB: Where was that located at?

HK: On the Coeur d'Alene River at what is now Shoshone Camp, and up river from Shoshone Camp, about six miles, was the Devils Elbow camp. I worked in both areas.

DB: What Summers were those?

HK: Well, I know one Winter was the Winter of 1936-37 at the...and then there was at Shoshone Camp a couple Winters at a later date than that. Between there and 1940. Late 1930s.

DB: What work did you do at the camp?

HK: Oh, there was roadside clean-up, cutting out another...an old abandoned road, previously abandoned, we did stand improvement work, I'm talking personally. These others...they had a lot of other project...but then, those were the type that I was involved in.

DB: Was there any road building?

HK: Oh, yes.

DB: How about bridge building?

HK: And bridge. Road and bridge. And the first bridge in there, across Shoshone Creek that amounted to much was built by CC labor, under Forest Service supervision.

DB: What kind of kids were working with the CCC back then?

HK: Mostly these camps that I speak of were from Kentucky, Tennessee, some from Ohio, and Arkansas. Mostly from the Midwest.

DB: Did the people who lived around here look at their work as being useful?

HK: Oh, yes. Yea, the CC program was pretty well regarded here, in the Wallace area. They built campgrounds, a number of campgrounds; worked on ski courses; set up a number of fire towers. Of course this is all a matter of stuff that you can dig out of a CC book.

DB: Well, there haven't been too many CC books. There have been a couple written. Do you have any favorite stories about working with the Forest Service, that you remember; personal experiences that you've had?

HK: Not that I want to talk about. Ha-ha-ha.

DB: All righty. Ahm...do you think that if I showed you a map, you could locate some of the CC camps, and some of the old log...saw...ah...log camps, on the maps of this area?

HK: I don't know. There's no question but what I could.

DB: OK. How about, are you familiar with siwash monuments?

HK: No. That's outside of my area.

DB: OK. So they don't have any in this area.

HK: No.

(END OF TAPE 11; Side 1)