

EDWARD SWENSON
Fourth Interview

Interviewed by:
Sam Schragger

Oral History Project
Latah County Museum Society

I. Index

II. Transcript

I. Index

Park; b. 1883

farmer, carpenter

2.5 hours

minute page

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19 15 Get-togethers at Park. A very embarrassing forfeit that required him to kiss his girl. A trick. Boys had more freedom to get around than girls. Dating was inhibited by neighborhood teasing; there was nowhere to go on dates. Dating on a trip to Nora for Christmas doings. Girls didn't ride horseback, as the boys did.

29 20 People didn't believe they would get rich; they wanted to make a good living. He wanted to get an education, but he had to stay to help his parents, so he decided to learn carpentry as a trade. How he learned to do carpentry. (continued)

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with Sam Schrage

August 10, 1976

II. Transcript

This conversation with Edward Swenson took place at his daughter's home on American Ridge, August 10, 1976. The interviewer is SAM SCHRAGER.

SS: --- raised 'em.

ES: Yeah. Well, we had a little variety of that over there. There was one family that was very strict with their children, and partial. This man had married a woman that-- no, wait a minute-- This man had two children, a boy and a girl, when he married the second time. Then they had children together. And these two, this boy and a girl, they were not treated as good as the rest of the children.

SS: The first family?

ES: Yeah. I can't understand why-- well that man was a little bit radical in his ways, and his wife was pretty strict, and he took her side against his own children, you might say. Because he seemed to think more of the children he had with his second wife than those two first ones.

SS: Had he and his first wife gotten along pretty good when they were together?

ES: Well, we don't know, because he had remarried this second time before we came to Idaho. He was there ahead of us. And our in-laws, my oldest brother married into the ^{Hellerud} Helrude family, and this Helrude family was married into this other just a little. One of the Helrude men married a sister to the wife of this man that was so strict. And they were neighbors.

SS: A sister to his second wife?

ES: Yeah.

SS: How did he take out his being partial? How did he show that?

ES: Well, he-- Now this boy that he had was the oldest of the family. Well, his two children were older than the children he had with this second wife, you know, and so that there was no other boy to show partiality to. Because after he married the second time they had one, two- they had three girls before they had a boy. So far as I know he lives in Clark-

ston now; that boy. So that his own boy was half grown up before he had a brother. And so he had to carry the brunt of the old man's vengeance when he got mad at him, you know, and he was alone, there was no other boys. And the way he talked to him. That oldest boy^{of his} was the same age as I was, just a few months difference in our ages, so we were together a lot, you know. And I can remember one day, they had a well down in the lower- kind of a creek run through, you know, and it was a little downhill to that, and they had their well there and they had a wellwheel house up on it and run the bucket down, you know and pull the water up. And this boy and his sister, his full sister, they had to carry water from there up to the house. They had a one-by-four about six feet long and they would run that through the handle of two five gallon coal oil cans and they'd get that on their shoulders, see, and carry it up to the house. And one day this boy had forgotten to replace this bucket down at the well, so when his father- his father and my father were working; my father was helping him- and he came to the well and the bucket wasn't there, and he turned around and he says to that boy, he says, "If you ever leave that bucket away from here again," he says, "I'm gonna whip you till the blood runs down your back." That was the language he'd use. I got so mad at that man; I was just a kid, but from then on I hated that man. And one day the stepmother to this boy; I don't know what was wrong there at the house, but she picked up a stove poker and she just split his skin wide open on his head. My older brother and I, we were down there and he had his hat on and he says, "Come along." We went down to the barn, "I want to show you something." And he took his hat off and there was blood all in his hair there, you know and the scalp open. That's the way they treated him. And this man tried to run the neighborhood too, but he went stuck there. He carried a long barreled six-shooter

on his hip there the first few years, but he never had a chance to use it. One day he drew it and his brother-in-law took it away from him! And after that, why, he kind of quieted down.

SS: This friend of yours, who got bad treatment; was he expected to do an awful lot of work around the house, too?

ES: Well, of course, he did. They had several milk cows in those times and this boy and his sister, they had to help with the milking, and they kept a lot of hogs and they had to carry milk and stuff to the hogs, you know and the boy had to- the cows would graze around on the valley there, you know and he had to gather them up at night. Rain or shine. And their first house burned to the ground when the boy was-- I can tell you fairly close, because we had moved into our new house and that was in 1901, so I was about sixteen or seventeen years old and that boy would be the same. Well, he got a bed; some blankets and stuff in the loft over the woodshed that he slept in, so he didn't sleep in the house.

SS: In the new house?

ES: Yeah. In their new house. And they had two bedrooms upstairs and one bedroom downstairs, so there would have been room, but the girls they could have more freedom there, you know. And his sister had moved away by that time. She went, I think it was to Seattle, went to some people there and worked.

SS: Worked as a maid in their home? Worked in their home?

ES: Yes. So she never came back except she came once to visit them a while. So it was just that boy then.

SS: What do you think he thought of the way he was treated?

ES: The what?

SS: What do you think he thought of the way he was treated?

ES: Well, I don't know. He didn't take it very serious. He took it almost like if he was a slave. He was afraid to say anything, you know until

he grew up. When he grew up he told his father off and then he left home. He got to working with a threshing outfit and working in the cookhouse and he took that up as a business. He had a restaurant in Elk River town after that. He cooked at some of the camps, you know they were logging around Deary and up in there. And he cooked at the camps and then he settled in Elk River and he was at the head of that. He was doing Okay. And he was a pretty decent man. I saw him different times after he was fullgrown.

SS: Did he stop having anything to do with his father?

ES: Oh, yeah. Once I was in Elk River and that boy's dad came there to the restaurant for supper and the boy was civil to him, he just treated him like anybody else, but that was all. Well, his father died no so long after that. It was an accident. First his father was hauling stuff to Elk River and they had a railroad running in there, you know, and one part through the woods there, the railroad came up fairly close to the road; his team ran away and threw him out and broke his neck. That's a fact, it broke his neck. And they took him- they didn't have doctors in Elk River that could do anything, so they had a logging train in there and they took him to Bovill and then he was sent to Spokane. And it was such an unusual thing, I heard about it, that special doctors came ^{clear} to Spokane to see this condition. They had to turn his head around. He told me afterwards, he said he could look down his back. (Chuckles)

SS: So he recovered from that?

ES: And he recovered. I saw him after we came from Canada, he was still there at Park.

SS: But then what killed him?

ES: Well, later on, he fell into a scalding vat.

SS: For Hogs?

ES: Uh-huh. Yeah. And that finished-- he lived a few days even then. But he was scalded so bad, I heard them say, that the flesh loosened from the bones in part of his body. But that killed him.

SS: Do you know how he could have fallen in?

ES: Well, I wasn't there, but you know a scalding vat is up off of the ground just a little bit, and we used to have that, too, you have a little bit of a platform then the full length of that and you put ropes around the hog and roll him into the scalding vat and then you pull him back with the ropes. And I don't know, somehow- whether he got tangled in the ropes or what, he fell into the trough there. That was up on Round Meadow if you know where that is. And they had to take him to Elk River before they had the doctor for him. They had to take him in there and he was shipped then to Spokane.

SS: Would a bunch of farmers get together at once to scald?

ES: Well, there wasn't many in there in Round Meadow, you know, but he had some help there. I helped him there one spring with the spring work after we came back from Canada. And they had hogs there then but we didn't do any butchering.

SS: This man- would he have been considered fairly well-to-do at that time?

ES: Well, speaking of how the times were then, - He sold his place at Park and he had this Round Meadow. He was in partnership with some man that had some money and he was running this. Whether he finally bought it or not, I don't know. But he sold his place at Park right after we came back from Canada and he got \$5,000 for that. And at that time that was lots of money, you know. So they were kind of semiretired over there at Round Meadow. Well then, we moved away before he had that accident, so I don't know just what crowd ^(ground) he had, or what conditions were, but that's where he had that accident.

SS: I'm thinking more like; did they have enough money to have girls working

for them? Staying at their house and working for them?

ES: Well, his wife at that time was quite capable to do their own housework. And two of their daughters were here in Moscow at that time. And after he died then she moved and stayed with her daughters here in Moscow. And she was a strong pioneer woman, you know and she could do the-- I've stayed with them when I helped them there; that was in 1926, I think it was, we moved back in '25, and it was right after that. Be about 1926. And she was a strong, healthy looking woman then. Fairly big woman. And she was stronger in proportion than he was.

SS: In most families, do you think that the parents were fairly strict with their kids? Or how were they strict?

ES: Well, I can tell you about my own parents. My mother was a very good, mild mannered woman. Father was; he was kind of strict, but he never abused us, you know. Never did. But his word was law. But, of course, the way times were and the way we were kind of all by ourselves in Park there, we didn't get out much to town or to mix with other young folks very much, so we were kind of satisfied. We were all one kind of people in there, you might say, and so Father didn't have to be so strict. We didn't ^{run} go away at night and things like that. And we had our little neighborhood dances in there and Christmas parties and that, and we were satisfied. But when I got old enough to begin to think for myself about how to do things and then he eased up quite a bit because he didn't understand what I was doing. I started to do a little carpenter work and things, and he didn't know the first thing about that so he didn't try to say what I should do. But up until that, why, he would tell me what to do, and of course, I did it. But he wasn't mean, you know, it wasn't that, he would scold sometimes.

SS: Did he expect you to do it the way he told you to? To do it his way?

ES: Not exactly, because about the only thing he understood was axe work; timber work, you know. Which was mostly what we were doing in those times. Fence posts and rails and stuff. We split rails and sold to some of the neighbors there, and that was a lot of work. Then we cleared land and things like that. And of course then, I worked for him, you know.

SS: What would cause him to get peeved at you? What would set him off?

ES: Well, if we shirked, you know, or anything like that, why he'd tell us to get busy. Or if we didn't do the chores up, he was right to the minute on chores, you know. And if we were a little slow on that he'd tell us to get busy. And we didn't argue with him. But as we grew older, why he began to kind of give us more freedom. So by the time I was fifteen, sixteen years old, I knew about as much about the work there as he did, so we worked together more, and gradually, why, he'd kind of turn it over to us. And of course, my brother older than I, he was four years older than I, so by the time I was half grown he was full grown and out on his own. So then it was just my father and I, and as time went along we got to be pretty good friends. He never abused us, really. And in a way we were better off than some of our neighbors because my parents were good, honest, respectable people. And that was one thing that both he and Mother told us about; that we should be like that. And they told us how we would succeed if we lived that way.

SS: So they really tried to teach you to be honest and respectable.

ES: They were right up to snuff on that. And they showed us that's the way they lived. And when I got old enough to go with Father to town, when they'd go to Troy, that was before Deary was built, you know, he'd tell me a lot about things that he had to go through and told me how he made out, you know. And that stuck to me.

SS: Did he feel that the towns or places like Troy were probably places that people should steer clear of and try to stay away from?

ES: Well, the only thing was that he didn't like the saloons, you know, although he took a drink once in a while himself. But he warned us about that; not to get mixed up in that. And they were religious, both Father and Mother, and they taught that to us. And so when I'd go to town with him why, I would do the driving, you know, driving the horses, and when we get to town, why, he'd go and have a glass of beer or something right away, but I didn't go there. And ^{then} we'd do our trading. We had plenty of time. We would get into town about ten o'clock. We'd leave home about three in the morning, and we'd let the horses rest then til about three or so in the afternoon to make the trip back home. And so, once in a while he'd maybe have one too many, but he was never cranky with me at that. So we had no trouble there.

SS: Did he tell you that life had been hard when he was growing up? Was that part of the way he was telling you how to--?

ES: No, no, that was just forgotten. And he began to ask me about this and that; how we should do it. And he wasn't so strict that I felt angry with him over the years. No. I kind of figured that it was about even up. Everything okay. Then some of the neighbors there they were a little too lenient with their kids, and I could see that. Somehow or other I didn't-- from the time I was quite young I didn't think it was right for kids to sass their parents, you know. And then have to suffer for it. So, my brother older than I, he took it a little harder than I did because he was a little more independent, but then as soon as he grew up why- we didn't have trouble over it, not a least bit, we kind of thought Dad was hard with us at times, but as we grew older we could see that he had some reason for it. And of course, in those times the parents were

kind of strict with their kids, most of them. Now the Helrude^s they had several children, and I noticed that- there were two brothers that had families there, you see- Helrude families, and one of them- the mother to the children was a little too easy with them, and she would brag of them. The one Helrude had a boy two or three years younger than I and the other Helrude had a boy same age as I, and he was a bigger boy than I was, and his mother used to ^{be} proud of telling about that once in a while, that he could do more than I could, you know. (Chuckles) And it kind of made him feel a little big until we were about half grown then we could figure things out together and we were good friends. We worked together and everything was okay. We never had any trouble.

SS: Well, these parents that were more lax with their kids; did they let their kids get off without working around the house?

ES: Yeah, they didn't do as much work. They would work some, but they had to kind of coax them more, you know. Now this boy would mind his father fairly good, his father didn't let him talk to him, but he was more easygoing on it. He didn't speak out quite so strict as my father did. You know my father went through military training in Norway, and that was kind of his life. And he was so precise about things. He even told me years later that he was given liberties in camp there, he had learned to butcher things and he got so that they let him kind of go out in the country and buy like, beefs, you know, bring them in and do the slaughtering and a kind of a roustabout when he didn't have to be in training. And he was so precise that when he finished there, he was given a silver watch. He used to say if he had an appointment to be at a certain place, he used to say, "It's better to be an hour early than to be a minute late." (Chuckles) And he got along good with his neighbors. If he was to help a neighbor you could depend he would be there.

SS: What about your mother? It sounds like she wasn't strict with you exactly, and certainly not like your father was.

ES: She never slapped us or anything like that. When she'd tell us we did wrong we respected her. She was good, and she was strong. We knew that she could handle us if she had to. (Chuckles) Oh, she was strong!

(End of Side A) Yeah, when they lived in Minnesota, when they had grain to haul to town she'd go out and help, him, you know. Instead of the wheat sacks we had here they had cotton bags, they were narrower and taller, longer, and she could take one end and he'd take the other and throw it on the wagon. And I remember one day one of our cows kicked her; she took a stick and she beat up on that cow and ^{then} she threw the stick away and she sat down and milked that cow. (Chuckles) But otherwise, I never saw her really angry with us kids. She would be a little bit angry but, I mean, she never used hard language, no. She didn't need to because we minded her. And with the neighbors; there was one woman in the country that she didn't like so she didn't go and visit her, but she never sat around and talked bad about her; just left her alone.

SS: Was that a part of the life there for her to go visiting the neighbors?

ES: No. She didn't go around very much. She was always busy, but people were always welcome to come there. The neighbors would come there, why, she always was friends with them; even this woman that was so bad with her boy, she would come up to see Mother quite often. They were our nearest neighbors; about a quarter of a mile apart. And many a time that woman- especially when her husband was away- she'd come up and spend quite a while with Mother. Yeah. They were good friends. So Mother didn't get angry with people, if they didn't do right, that wasn't her business. When they came there they were friends to her. She welcomed any of them that would come there.

SS: You say she was really busy with work.

ES: Oh, yeah.

SS: Was work for her something she did all the time?

ES: Well, we had a big garden and then we milked three or four cows at one time and she helped with that. She did most of the garden work; I'd be with Father, you know. And she helped with the milking and all that, and did her own sewing and things like that, you know. So she was busy. And she was healthy. She was never to a doctor that I can remember and Father the same way. You couldn't wish for better people for living way back in like that.

SS: I understand that for some women that was a very hard life and they didn't have very good health.

ES: Well, yes, there were a few, but most of 'em in there were pretty healthy people. This one of the Hel^lrudes he lost his wife. She got sick, and that was when I was quite young, so I don't even know what she was sick from. And it was a long ways to go and get a doctor, you know. And this family where he married the second time, they lost two babies, that I remember of shortly after they were born and they were buried out there a little ways from the house.

SS: Would you go to your mother if you wanted something like shoes or something special? Would she be the one you would ask for-

ES: Clothing?

SS: Yeah.

ES: Oh, no. We would ask Father about that and we didn't have to ask, he furnished us and we were satisfied. He bought boots for us for in the winter sometimes and when spring came they weren't wore out so we cut the tops off and used them as shoes, you know. No, we were never suffering for that.

SS: I've heard in a lot of families-- and I don't know if this would be true of yours and those you knew-- but I heard a lot of families, the father-- the mother would be affectionate with the kids, you know, she would show affection and the father really didn't, he just didn't feel that was right, and that the mother did. Is that pretty much the way it was with you?

ES: Yeah. Well, one of those families, it was a little that way; this one that bragged of her boy, you know, was a little that way, but not very bad. So far as I know they worked together pretty good. And it almost had to be with pioneers like that, you know, they had to depend on each other pretty much and work together.

SS: Did they have dances in Park before you left?

ES: Oh, we had a few, yeah, we had a few.

SS: I was going to ask you what your parents taught you about religion.

ES: Well, they were strict Lutherans, you know, and so were the neighbors there. Nearly all of them. There was one neighbor that was Methodist and he was a little better, you might say, educated about religion, so they chose him for Sunday School teacher. The others were Lutheran; he was Methodist, but he taught the Sunday School there.

SS: Was he Norwegian?

ES: Oh, yes. They weren't really radical about it, you know. It was more a case of being a good neighborhood.

SS: Did they think-- did your parents teach you that religion was supposed to be important in your life?

ES: Oh, yes. And of course, as we grew up we had no occasion to consider or think about any other religion than the Lutheran. We didn't get out to mix with others very much. I can remember when we were confirmed; the minister gave us a little talk and advice, you know. And he said,

"Soon you will be out on your own, among other people, and you will mix with people and hear their side of things and in religion," he said, "they will try to win you over. But don't listen to them." I thought to myself, "Don't worry, I'm not going to listen to them." (Chuckles) But as I got out and began to get acquainted with others I found they were good people too. We never had any trouble with anybody over religion, not at all, because we began to understand that there was two sides to it with most of them.

SS: Can you tell me just a little bit of what you learned when you grew up and what the Lutheran teaching was?

ES: In what way?

SS: In how to live your life, and God was--

ES: We got that through our Sunday School and then the minister, he would come in there once a month and we had lessons to go through with him, you know. We would have in our books, we would have several pages for that one time. So we practically had learned that so we could answer any question that he would ask us. And that was what we believed in and that was it. In fact we didn't have any chance to do much wrong because we were all under this ^{ONE} strict religion. And at that time everybody believed his neighbor was honest and we never had any trouble about any tools or anything like that being missed, you know. Our barns and houses and woodsheds and so on was open to anybody to go in that wanted to, and nothing was ever missed.

SS: Did people talk about religion among themselves and discuss it?

ES: Oh, to some extent they did, but they didn't make much of an issue about it, they all believed the same way and that was it. There was one Adventist family that lived in there and he neighbored with us and there was no trouble. And at one time an Adventist minister came in there to visit

them, you know, and he had asked our school directors if he could have a meeting in the schoolhouse, and they gave him permission. So he came in to our Sunday School one Sunday; he came in to announce this. He came in and he sat down back by the door and was quiet til Sunday School was over and then he got up and asked permission to speak and then he announced that he had been given permission to have services there the next Saturday, and he invited us to come. And I was looking at the people and at him when he said this and I could see some of them was giving him pretty hard looks there; they figured he was a bad man, you know.

(Chuckles) And of course, they didn't go to his services.

SS: Did anyone go besides that Adventist family?

ES: I don't know. We didn't go, and I don't know about the others. I don't think many went there, because when people are drilled into believing one certain thing for a long time, they don't want to believe anything else.

SS: I was wondering just a little bit of what the Lutheran teaching was, what it taught you about religion.

ES: Well, I don't see any big difference; the Adventists believe, of course, in Saturday being the holiday. And there were certain foods that they didn't think they should eat; and that was about it. And in what I have read and learned since those times, I think it was almost silly that they should argue about things which were not so important. Now, Saturday being a holiday, that was almost more correct than having Sunday. Because if you go into the Bible about it, Christ kept the seventh day, you know and his disciples did. And I haven't found any place in the Bible where it says that they kept Sunday, I mean, His disciples. They met on Sunday in remembrance of His rising back to life, you know. They kept that a special day, but it don't say that they didn't keep the Sabbath. So there you are.

- SS: What about dancing? I've understood that some churches were against dancing; they didn't want them to dance.
- ES: Oh, yeah. My parents were and most of the neighbors there were. They had been brought up to believe that having dances and being jolly and all that, and to a great extent they thought it was not right. And they didn't have a chance to look at both sides enough to-- I remember when I was around seventeen, eighteen years old, I got an accordion, and I learned to play that some. That was okay, but later I got a violin, and my mother didn't think that was good, because they used violins at dances. So, I had my room upstairs and that's where I'd play my violin. And I got so I could play some of the hymns we used in Sunday School. So I took the violin down and I sat down and I played one of them to Mother. That settled it; the violin was okay! (Chuckles) So, you see they would have one line of thought and that carried through from their parents to them and on, you know.
- SS: But then when it reached your generation it changed a little bit, because you - didn't you start seeing these other ways? You must have had some reason to get a violin.
- ES: Well, I like music, and I didn't consider any music instrument being different than another. So, you get a little more open-minded as you grow up. And it didn't matter to me, as long as it was music. And dances, now, my parents didn't really - she didn't condemn then, but still she thought it wasn't really religious, you know. But when we grew up and we began to go dancing, why, they didn't object to it.
- SS: Did you have dances at Park, or did you go mostly other places to dance?
- ES: We had dances around home. You know in the wintertime sometimes roads would be pretty bad and we didn't get outside. We supplied up with groceries for the winter and we were back there through the winter. But,

now, like this man I told about married the second time, he had the biggest house in the district so we had dances there. And we were friends, ~~we~~^{we} young folks were. We didn't regard anything like the old people did about things, so we were good friends and we had dances together.

SS: Where do you think the young folks got the idea that it was alright to dance, if the parents -

ES: We just naturally couldn't see anything wrong with it. You know. Now if anybody got drunk at the dance, we didn't stand for that. Oh, no. That would be wrong. Or if the fellow got to flirting too much with some of the girls, why, we didn't think that was right. So they didn't get away with something like that. So it was quite peaceful. Okay.

SS: Did you have get-to-gathers at homes that were just parties and not dances?

ES: Oh, yes. Yeah. Sometimes after Sunday School a neighbor would have the rest of them invited to come to their place, you know. And maybe another time to some other place. We had good visits together. 'Course, we boys, if that was in the summer we weren't in the house much, you know, we'd be out either chasing squirrels or something. They put up good dinners you know.

SS: Would you play party games?

ES: Well, we started playing cards a little bit, and then there were other games that parents had taught the children, you know. Indoor games. I don't remember much of it now. There wasn't so much of that. There was some games where-- see, what was it? I remember one game that you had to forfeit if you missed the answer, you know, you had to forfeit something. I got stuck in one of them. I was kind of going with a girl, but it wasn't very serious, but at the same time she looked better to me than the rest, and at this party, why, I didn't get the right answer and so

the penalty was- they were lined up there kind of- you should start- the girls were all by themselves here and the boys - so then you were to go to these and you should bow to the wittiest and kneel to the prettiest and kiss the one you loved best. (Chuckles) Boy, was I in a corner! And I was kind of bashful, too, in those times. (Laughter) Something turned up and my girl was there, and oh, I would rather take a licking than go over and kiss her, you know! (Laughter) And something turned up before I got started on that, I don't know what it was, but it broke up the game. That saved my life that time. (Laughter)

SS: Would you have kissed her if you had to?

ES: I s'pose I would have had to. I thought at first that I'd kneel to her as the prettiest and kiss one of the other girls, but I didn't get to it!

SS: Boy! That's a mean one, isn't it?

ES: Boy, that was a ^{rough} rough one! They ^{would've} teased the life out of me afterwards!

SS: It sounds like games like that were a chance to get to pair off and get to know the girl.

ES: Yes, yes. And one game- they'd pair you off sometimes-- one game was that you were to go into another room and you were not told what was going to happen. You were going to go in another room and they fixed up two chairs and they strung a blanket over there real tight and two girls sat down on those chairs and there was a space between those chairs and underneath that blanket was a tub full of water, or part full of water, and it was backed like this and the blanket would go down to the floor across from those chairs so when you came in you didn't know about this. And then you were supposed to come in and you were supposed to talk to those ladies, say, "Hello," and so on, and then they would ask you to sit down, you see, between them! That'd put you right in the tub!

Because when you sat down, why, they'd get up, you know and the blanket would go into the tub! I didn't get caught in that. (Laughter)

SS: Do you think that the girls were raised any different than the boys, as far as the boys having more freedom? They could go around and do more than the girls?

ES: Yes, of course. The boys- we could go from one place to another, but not very many of the girls would go alone. They would come- like when my younger sister was home, why, there'd be other girls come to visit her. And sometimes they'd go to another place together, but not as much as the boys would. But there was very few of us boys old enough to really pick out a special girl to go with. And if ^{he} did, why, he'd better stay home pretty well, because the whole neighborhood would find out, you know and they'd just tease you to death! (Chuckles) So, there wasn't much of that going on.

SS: If you wanted to go out with a girl, where could you take her anyway?

ES: Well, that's it, there was nowhere to go, unless you ^{to} wanted to go to some other neighbor with her. So there wasn't much of that done. And we didn't have any buggies; we had just wagons, you know, until the very last part, so, you couldn't take a girl out to town or anything like that. One Christmas a bunch of us young folks got together; I furnished a team of horses and the neighbor furnished a bobsled and we all got into that and went clear down to what was called Nora, down there to a Christmas doing. We left right after noon; got down there in time for the doings and then back home at night. And we got caught in this snowstorm going back home. So, before we started out, why,- there was three of us boys and four girls, and we arranged that that one should drive all the way going down and going back at night the other two should share the driving, and I drove all the way going down, so the other two had to set up there

in the snowstorm and drive the horses. And my girl was in that party, and we had a lot of blankets with us, and we pulled a blanket over us so we were in the dry! And of course, the other girls they'd set there and kick at us and tease us, you know! (Laughter)

SS: It sounds to me kind of like that most things were done in groups.

ES: Yes.

SS: A group of boys and a group of girls.

ES: That's right.

SS: I suppose that if a boy and a girl went off by themselves then it was pretty serious. For instance, if they went into town, just the two of them together or something like that, that would be more serious courting.

ES: Yah, it could have been. If we'd had a way of going, I suppose we would have. But the girls didn't do much horseback riding, for one thing, the boys had horses we'd ride, you know. The girls wouldn't. So they didn't get out of the neighborhood except to go to town for shopping. So we spent the winters pretty much right back in there.

SS: Were the girls expected to work as hard as the boys?

ES: Oh, no. No. They helped with the housework. They never did much work outside, except in the garden and tend to the chickens and things like that.

SS: But they worked?

ES: Oh, yah. And they were all strong and healthy so they could do heavy work but we never had them out with farm work. Well, this outlaw I speak about, he had the older girls out helping to shock the grain and such and help in the hay, some, but they were big strong girls, they could do it.

SS: But that was kind of unusual?

ES: Yeah, they were about the only ones that had to go out and when they got

older, why, then the older ones would get out to work, you know. And then the younger boys grew up, so they didn't have to do much of that.

SS: Do you think that your generation, you know boys that were growing up when you were, do you think that they believed that there was a really good chance to get ahead- you know they talk about making a lot of money- in those days did people think they could make a lot of money?

ES: No. We didn't think much of that. We thought more about getting a good job of some kind that would- that we would earn money at. And speaking for myself, why, I never thought about getting rich or anything like that- I never did. I was more anxious to get a- what I first liked to have had was an education. But as conditions were, I was there with my parents, and of course, I had to stay with them, you know. So the next thing was to learn a trade, and I liked carpenter work. So I began to kind of work towards that, together with the farming. And I liked farm work, too, but I kind of liked to do more particular work like carpenter work.

SS: How did you get a chance to learn carpentry?

ES: My older brother farmed about thirty, thirty-five miles from us and I was over there once and he had a horse that I liked better than mine, and I talked him into making a trade.

SS: You gave him the horse, and you gave him-- (END of Side B)

ES: I was to give him twenty dollars to boot on horses.

SS: And you didn't have that?

ES: And I didn't have the money, but he needed my help. He had a carpenter there; they were just starting to build a barn on his place, a big barn. And he needed someone to help this carpenter, and I liked that kind of work. I had done just a little of it before, so I got to work with him those twenty days. I got a dollar a day, you know. And he was a very good man to work with, he would take time to show me how to do things;

to do it right. So by the time we got through with that I could do some carpentry work. And then back home we had a little bit to finish on the house and I did that and then we built the barn, and I did that. And then I did a little work for some of the neighbors. I worked on the church that we built; volunteer work some, and things like that. And then eventually I moved over to where my brother lived and farmed there. I did some work there, I built the belfry on the schoolhouse there and things like that.

SS: Did you learn most of it on your own, or did you learn most of it from other people? Watching.

ES: No. I worked on my own. After I got started it seemed to kind of come natural for me to do this kind of work, and of course, I studied it as I went along. Didn't try to do more than I understood to do. And from then on through life, why- well, I built the kitchen onto the house we had on the farm we bought, and so I made a little money there selling that. Added onto the barn and things. And I built an addition to my brother's house. And so, everytime I worked on a job I learned a little, you know, through trial and error.

SS: I was going to ask you how far the school did go at Park. Did it go all the way up to the eighth grade?

ES: No. No, the children didn't stay home long enough for that. Of course, they may have done that after we left, you know. They built the new schoolhouse and they may have gone further. I don't know.

SS: How far did it go? For most kids?

ES: Well, I got through the fourth grade and by that time my older brother was leaving home and got married and so I had to help Father. At that time you weren't supposed to go a certain grade, you know, when you got old enough to work and you could add and subtract, you were through.

- SS: How old were you then?
- ES: I was about fourteen years old. I was nine years old when I started school, and I was about fourteen- I went through about one grade a year.
- SS: When you were in school, did you have to lay out much to help? To Work? While you were going to school?
- ES: Oh, yeah, we had morning and evenings and weekends. I worked at home, I never worked away from home in those days except when harvest was on, why then, the neighbors got together and helped each other.
- SS: Did you ever have have to stay out of school during the week?
- ES: No. Not-- you see we had our school through the winter months. And at first we had only four months of school; winter and early spring, then school was out.
- SS: So it didn't interfere with the heavy work?
- ES: No. We had a small farm. Father managed most of that and I got through in time for spring work, you know. And harvest.
- SS: Had there been any school before- where you lived before you were nine? Before you came out here, had there been a school?
- ES: No. I went to school a few days in Minnesota; I think it was a week. We left there in the spring, you know, and I went with my older brother to school. I can remember that. It wasn't long enough that I learned much, so I was practically a new beginner when we started in Idaho.
- SS: Well, did they have school when you first came here? It was a little later they started.
- ES: ^{Yah} ~~No~~, that's why. I was seven and a half years old when we came and Father got a house built that summer; cabin, and we moved into that. There was no schoolhouse. Then they had to build a schoolhouse next, and that took the next summer to build that. That's why I was about nine when I start-

ed school.

SS: I was going to ask you about-- When you left Park and you went to Central Ridge; is that because there wasn't enough land around that you could get to farm? To make a living?

ES: Yeah. We still didn't have our^g broke up. There was timber there, you know. And I rented a farm. The last three years we were at Park, I rented a farm from a bachelor neighbor and I began to make a little money there, but I still couldn't see a^{good} future ahead there, and I had a lot of ambition. And a neighbor of my brother over on the Ridge there, he offered his place for sale, and so I talked to my brother about this place at Park. I got an idea he could afford to buy it maybe, and so I put a price on it of \$2,500 and we talked about it and he got kind of interested and I said, we should keep that in the family. There was my father's homestead where he spent a lot of his and Mother's life, and they would hate to see a stranger come in there on that place. So I suggested to him, I said, "If you'll buy it, I ^{can} will sell it to you on good terms, and that'll help me to pay for what I ^{am} ^{ing} buy." So he decided he would. So he bought that place, and he paid down some and ^{I had} to borrow money to make a downpayment on the place that I bought. ^{Oh} I went in debt, but it was good land there. So we made out Okay. And that's why that place at Park is still you might say, in the family. One of my nephews, my oldest brother's son has it now. So, it stayed in the family.

SS: That's Stiner?

ES: Yeah. That's him.

SS: Now this brother of yours, the oldest brother- what was his name?

ES: Sven.

SS: And that's Helmer's father too?

ES: Ya. That's right.

SS: So you went over to Central Ridge then and started to farm there?

ES: Yeah. We farmed there about, I think it was about five years. Yeah. I rented out for two years. I got the idea I wanted to go to Canada and raise cattle, you know. There was a lot of that done up there before my time and I thought there was still a place to get there so when I had a chance to sell I sold mine. My folks were living with my oldest brother then there, you know, so that was okay.

SS: But at Central Ridge why did you wind up deciding that that wasn't worth the effort?

ES: Well, farming was okay and I was making money enough to ^{pay} out my contract on there, but I had this idea that I could make money faster by having a cattle ranch. Up there, you know, you could lease land from the government if you took a homestead but you had to raise hay to feed 'em about half of the year up in the north country. There wasn't any prairie country there. There could be big meadows and things and that's where you would get your hay. Well I scoured all that ^{Peace River} country and all that up in there and I couldn't find a place where there was enough hay for cattle. I even had a deal made for forty head of these Black Angus cattle; heifers, ready to go right in there, but I couldn't buy 'em until I had a place for them.

SS: Where were you looking? What place was this you were looking?

ES: I went north from Edmonton up in there, you know, I went east after that but I went north up into what's called the Peace River country. And up there I met three cattlemen from- two from Montana and one from Southern Alberta that was looking for land. So the three of us, we went on a Boat on the Peace River clear way up into that north country there. And we finally found a place. There was a French Canadian man there that knew the country and he had a team and wagon and he took us out there.

That took us a day and a half one way, out in the wilderness, and there was a big prairie there, open land, and we all could file and we all could get located there together, and not one of us decided to stay. For one thing, it was an awful road to get out there. In one place we run into what they call a muskeg, and we had to unhook the horses and get to the land and run a cable back to pull the wagon through. And another thing- and of course, you had to build. And the winters were long and hard. And I got to thinking; I kind of was getting towards getting married too, at that time, how would it be if you got out there and got sick? Even the town we went out from was just a couple of stores and that was about it. And the steamboats went up there only twice a year. But we had heard about this wonderland, you know, but we didn't know about these hardships you might go through. So all of us went right back again.

SS: None of you filed?

ES: None of us even- we found a section corner- they had iron stakes for each section corner there- and we stood there and looked around and wasn't much said for quite a while, finally one of 'em turned to me and he said, "What do you say, Ed?" I said, "No, you can have it." The others said, "No, we don't want it." So we went back and then I began to look for farmland, then with rangeland close by. I went east and on in towards Saskatchewan, in there and different places. I found a place; I bought about a section of land there and there was pastureland by it there.

SS: Was it difficult to find any place that wasn't taken?

ES: Yeah, it was. That is, that looked good. And that was towards harvest time and the crops looked good there. The price was good on wheat and grain. And I bought one quarter section for \$1,250 from a land company, that was all raw land, of course. And I bought another quarter section

had some broken up on it, and had a crop on it, but he claimed the crop. I got that for \$1,600. Then there was a homestead right by there that was pastureland and there was two springs on it and part of the Battle River run through one corner of it. I got that as a homestead by- you could homestead without living on it if you had land adjoining it. And you had to put a certain number of cattle on there, and that would prove it up for you. Which I did. And then there was another quarter section there that I didn't buy right away, and my brother came up there and he said, "Say," he says, "I'm going to buy that." He lived in southern Alberta. He bought that one. And he thought maybe his son would want to come up in there, you know. But he wouldn't go up there, so then later on I bought that. But the first two years we didn't get a thing. The first year I put in what I had on mine and I rented a place and I farmed that, and when the grain was about waist high it froze. Just froze so it just wilted down. We got a little bit of hay out of it, but it just fell flat on the ground. It froze ice on the water outside there, in a bucket I had, so you know how it was.

SS: What month of the year, would that be?

ES: It was in July. And I had got married in the meantime. And so the next year I went to work again at it and that time it froze again, but we could get hay out of it, and I sold one load of oats. That was all I got that year. A small load. And I had to buy seed grain again. And we began to have children, that was a little extra expense, you know, and I had to build onto the house. Well that year, that third year, I had one load of wheat to sell. And, I'll tell you that was hard times, now. So, we began to talk about Idaho. And I began to break up land as fast as I could afford it. So I had about a hundred acres more in crops the last year I was there. And I figured out a way to sell- no-

body had money to buy with to amount to anything, you know, and I had a neighbor there that wanted to buy; so I figured out if I would sell almost on the same way as you rent your place; sell on crop payments. Because if you take a mortgage on a piece of land and he don't have a crop, what's he going to pay with? So you're just as safe on crop payment as you are on a mortgage. And the contract was ^{that} if he failed when he had the crop, if he failed to pay I could give him a certain length of time notice and I could repossess the land. So, we sold. I sold to two different people there, and we moved back to Idaho.

SS: How many years were you up there?

ES: Well, we were there from 1918 to 1925.

SS: When it was hard times, after you lost those couple of crops, how difficult was it for you?

ES: Well, you see, you couldn't raise anything else but grain there. We had good hay land; we could cut what they called the buffalo grass, we could cut that for hay. So I didn't have to buy hay for my horses and cattle.

SS: Well, could you grow good gardens and that sort of thing there, or not?

ES: No, we could grow potatoes and carrots and cabbage, but it would be apt to freeze, you know. One year my potatoes froze down twice. (Chuckles) I tell you, it took a strong back to face up to it! And I bought a few cattle to prove up that homestead. I paid up to a hundred dollars a head for cows; fifty dollars for calves. And by the time we were ready to sell out, I had to sell what cattle I had for two cents a pound! Just imagine that! Shipped them to Edmonton. A couple of us got together and shipped carload lots, you know, and we sent a man up there to sell them. During that time, just before I sold, I went to a sale and there was a nice, big, red cow there; I bought her for fifteen dollars. A man came a little late to the sale, he came to buy that cow, and he was

disappointed, so he offered me twenty dollars and I sold the cow to him. (Chuckles) I paid two hundred dollars a head- no, I paid \$750 for four horses and when I sold them I had twelve horses and I sold the bunch for \$500; was all I got for 'em.

SS: What happened to the market? What was going on? Was the price on everything just going down?

ES: Yeah. You see, I came there the last year of the war, that is, that I was settled, in 1918, and the price was up. Wheat was two dollars a bushel. I had to buy grain; seed grain, three years before I had a crop. And oats, the same way; was high. Horses and cattle was high. And then all at once, it began to go down, and it just kept going down. I heard about one cattle rancher that got in so deep that he just walked off and left everything. Left his herd of cattle and everything. He couldn't commence to break even, so he just left. Oh, I'll tell you, there was many of 'em that lived on almost nothing there.

SS: Did it get bad enough that you worried about having enough to eat?

ES: It was down pretty close. We had a little blackboard on the wall in the kitchen and my wife would write down what she'd need, because I'd go to town maybe once a week, and before I'd go to town I'd sit down and write down on a piece of paper what I was gonna buy, you know, and we'd try to figure out what we could do without that was on the blackboard. And she was so good about saving things and not worrying about times. I worried more than she did. She was so good and she could make clothes for the children, you know. They all were born there in that house. And so we got along. If she hadn't have been as helpful as she was, it would have been rough.

SS: Was she used to that from her childhood? To roughing it?

ES: Well, pretty much. They lived very economically; but they lived good.

She was the only child, and her mother died the year before we were married. So her father came to live with us up there.

SS: She was a Bricka (?)

ES: Yeah. That's right, you know. Yeah.

SS: So, she had a lot of courage.

ES: Oh, you bet she did.

SS: During hard times.

ES: She did, but she was willing. I had just a little two room cabin when we married. But the next spring we built on. Not only that, but we had to build a schoolhouse. There was no school there, you know. And some of my neighbors met at my place, that was the fall before I was married, to organize. And they chose me as one of the members, and then we had to get a contract with someone to build a schoolhouse. And there wasn't very many that had much of a house, but several of my neighbors had more house than we had, and they wouldn't board the carpenters. They came, some of them, from-- The main carpenter was from Edmonton, and he hired some. Well, I was on the board; it was up to me and the others, you know, to see that they got a place to stay. One neighbor there had a nice two-story house built about the time I moved in there, and they wouldn't take 'em. Well, we had just this little place there and they came down to me, said they had to get a place to stay or they couldn't built the school. So I asked my wife, I said-- and we had just the little twelve-by-twelve sized kitchen and the bedroom. But this neighbor that had the big place, they had a cookhouse and I figured if we could manage to board those fellows, I'd bring the cookhouse down and they could sleep there. So, I asked my wife, yeah, said she'd tackle it. There was a couple of neighbors that helped, so there wasn't so many of 'em stayed; four or five, something like that.

SS: How come these other neighbors didn't want to help? They had an interest in the schoolhouse, too.

ES: They just said, "No." And you couldn't force them to keep them. So we

SS: explained to the carpenters what the situation was and they said, "That's fine. We'll sleep in the cookhouse." I pulled that right up in front of our cabin there, so there was just a couple of steps between them. And so, she cooked for 'em. Stiner was up there, he helped 'em on there. He stayed with us, and he helped. He slept up in the loft. (Chuckles) He had to almost crawl to get to bed up there. He slept up there. So we made out.

SS: Do you think these neighbors thought that these carpenters were just working people and they shouldn't help them because they were better than they were?

ES: I don't know, and I didn't ask them. I don't know.

SS: How do you think that community up there compared to Park? Were they similar?

ES: Yes. We had about three different nationalities there for neighbors. There was two English families and there was one-- oh, what were they?-- but they all spoke English, because we were United States people and there was one Scotch family. And, let's see-- there was two English families, yeah, from different parts *in* England. And two of them was on the board. The two of them and me, and we had another one for clerk. But we got along real well. It was a good neighborhood. We got along real well. Exchanged work and things. In a new neighborhood like that people need each other, you know. So they decide to get along together, a lot better than an old- new neighborhood might do. So, we exchanged work and visited together and run the school and had our Christmas doings and things. We never had any trouble.

SS: So you would say that it was really a lot like Park would be?

ES: Yes. It was. Very much like that. There was one family that they were not quite as honest as the others, but we didn't have any trouble with them, because I made it understood with him myself the first fall I was there. I rode with him to town before I had bought any horses, and he started talking about the neighborhood there and he said once, he said, "You want to keep your house locked when you leave anywhere." His name was Ben. I says, "Ben, I'll never lock my doors against my neighbors." But, I said, "I keep pretty good track of what I've got. And wherever I find that, if it's missing," I said, "either that man or I'll get the damndest licking you ever heard tell of." By golly, he believed it. (Chuckles) We got along fine! We joined land, even, you know. That post that I had was right up to his place.

SS: You think some of the other neighbors might have had trouble with him?

ES: No. They steered clear of him. Didn't have much to do with them, but I was next door to him, you know- I mean, we were a mile apart, our houses, but I joined land with him.

SIDE D (End of Side C)

ES: -- town. And it was a good little town.

SS: How far from Edmonton?

ES: It's about a hundred and twenty some odd miles. I am not sure of the exact miles. Well, of course, they have different roads now, so there are more direct roads into it. So we didn't have to go to Edmonton for anything much.

SS: It sounds as though it was a lot rougher to make a living up there than down here.

ES: It was because you couldn't have the variety of crops, you know. You couldn't have an orchard, and only the hardiest things for garden. You couldn't even raise alfalfa there.

SS: Really?

ES: No. No, just grain.

SS: Was there a lot of turnover of the people that lived there? A lot of people selling out?

ES: Not during the time we were there. We had almost the same neighbors when we left there, they were pretty much the same. You see, they were mostly homesteaders and that country hadn't been settled long when we came, so we were all new beginners, pretty much. Some were a few years ahead of us, but they were still breaking up land.

SS: When you left, where did you come? Did you come back to Park?

ES: We came back to Park, Idaho. We sold our land on crop payments, and of course, we had to wait a while to try and get started here. And at that time, why, the old house at Park was vacant. So I contacted my brother and asked him if I could move in, and he says, "Sure, you move right in." And we stayed there a while and then began to ^{kind of} move around to see what could be done. And they began to have crop failures again after we left, you know. One year, one of the buyers there, he- they were honest people but when they didn't get a crop they couldn't pay. And he was so near broke one year that all he could send me was thirty-five dollars. The interest alone at that time would have been \$156. But he paid out every cent he could, that is, my share of the crop. They were selling wheat one year there for twenty-seven cents a bushel, so you can imagine. I don't know what they had to live on. There was just he and his wife on this plot.

SS: Was that land mostly prairie? Or was it timber?

ES: No, it was kind of spotted. There was patches of poplar and willow and prairie. If you were in a plane you could have looked down on it as just like a spotted cow ~~or~~ something. So, to break up land to amount to any-

thing, you had to clear those patches of poplar and willow and that stuff.

SS: So when you went back to Park, did you just have to wait until you could do any farming?

ES: I rented a place there for a year or two while we were waiting to get some money to go ahead with, and we didn't get much up there, then I finally started trucking. I bought a truck and started hauling cedar poles.

SS: Had Park changed very much between the time you left and time you came back? Had many of the old-timers gone?

ES: Yeah. Most of 'em were gone. There were, see, about three- There was one outfit that bought several places in there, you know. And what we called the Noland place, that was where this widower that married a second time; he had the best place in the valley. He was one of the first ones. And so, when he sold there was new people came and then there was another outfit came and bought that again, and they bought some other homesteaders around there, so at one time, Park, most of that was owned by two different outfits. There were still one or two in there but not of the ones that were there when we lived there.

SS: When you came back, was there still a community there where people got together like they had in the older days?

ES: No, there wasn't enough of them hardly, you know. Let's see- there was- did you know Charley Jelleberg?

SS: Oh, yes, I talked to him.

ES: Well, he was the oldest one in there and the only one left in there when we came back from Canada. One of my brothers was still there, but they moved out of there shortly after. And then there was-- you may know Norman Enger?

SS: I know who he is.

ES: He was born over at Park. And they were still there, but they moved out of there, too.

SS: Were there still any getting-togethers and that sort of thing with the new people?

ES: No, not much. We were in there only about two years, I think it was. We moved out. No, there was just a few and they were new to us, you know, and so there wasn't much going on. And then they consolidated with the Deary school district, you know, so there was no school in there.

SS: Did many of those people leave when they sold the timber to Potlatch?

ES: Some of 'em did. There was some that had mostly timber, you know. So they didn't have much to stay there for, so some of them moved out. But we moved before that road was built in there so we weren't in contact with them much from then on.

SS: I wonder if they got what the timber was worth from Potlatch?

ES: No. No, they would sell for-- I knew of places sold for around \$1,500; good timber on it. Potlatch was pretty shrewd about it. They'd send private men in there for them, you see, to buy the place. They'd come in and say, "I would buy this place."

SS: Then they'd sell and--

ES: But it was finally found out so that they could get a little more.

SS: But it did happen to some people at Park. They sold thinking they were selling they were selling to a private person.

ES: Yes, they didn't know who they were selling to, you might say. But there wasn't much of that, and I don't know much about that because we moved away before there was much of that done. I know one of our neighbors, he had a timber claim, you know you could file on that, quite a ways back in over towards what's called the Three Bear Country, and he got a little

out of it, but I don't know exactly how much, but he didn't get much.

SS: Did you know Joe Wells? At Deary?

ES: Oh, yeah. Up by Deary there. Yeah. That is I knew about him and when we lived in Deary, when we put in that water system, one of the Wells- what was his name? Chuck Wells?

SS: Yes.

ES: He worked in there, quite a while. They lived just east of there. And they had a daughter, was a daughter and a son went to school ^{when} Viola and my kids went to school there in Deary. So they were chums. Yeah. They were decent people.

SS: When you left Park then, was that the move to Deary? Or to Helmer? Or where?

ES: We stayed in Helmer one summer; I don't know just how long we stayed there now, it wasn't very long. Then we moved to Spring Valley. I rented a house there. That was where Floyd started to school, next to Viola, we were close to the schoolhouse there. And I did a little hauling around. And I kept waiting for some money, you know, I didn't get anything from there, not very much, you know so, I couldn't decide just what to do. And so then from Spring Valley- I got to study a little-- we moved to Deary, yeah. And then I began to work in town there in Deary, then, until we moved to Coeur d'Alene.

SS: Could you make any money hauling poles, then?

ES: Oh, yeah, but it didn't last long each year, you know. There was just a couple of months and then it'd get wet back in the mountains, you know, so you couldn't get in there. It was about three years, I think, that- And then, the last year that I was hauling poles, something happened to the market- I worked for the same man three years. He bought timber you know, and had men to make the poles; skid them up and then I'd haul them

out. And that fall he came to me, and he says, "I can't have any poles next year," says, "I'm going to quit." Well, his brother started in and then he went over on Cedar Creek, you know where that is, where that road goes into Park; down in the canyon there, he made ^{up} some poles, a few so I hauled that out. And that was the end of it.

SS: It sounds to me like it was rough. Just rough for a lot of people to make a good living in those days.

ES: Yes, it was. It helped a lot of 'em when that,- oh what did they call it?- that government work?

SS: The WPA?

ES: Yeah, yeah, that. So we moved to Coeur d'Alene and I tried it there and built, and then I did a little carpenter work there. Then I went up to where they built that government training station, up there, you know, Farragut, and worked there for a while.

SS: When you met your wife, did you know her a long time before you decided to marry?

ES: Yeah, we were acquainted for five or six years. She was brought up quite religiously. And you probably know about the Church of God religion. I don't know how it is now, but at that time they had the thought that they were the only church that was right. That anybody else was not-- they were called unbelievers, and I was in that class. (Chuckles) And there is a place in the Bible that says, let's see how it is- "Do not" - I can't get that word now. Anyway, it meant that she should not marry anyone that was not a member of that church. That was a rough one! Well, I was not particularly a member of any church at that time, but I wasn't an unbeliever, exactly. I could go to any church and get a good thought. And we talked about it quite a lot and I talked with some ministers locally there; that was toward the last part I lived on Central

Ridge. And there were certain questions in the Bible that I couldn't get straight, and they couldn't help me, even outside of the Church of God. And she was hoping that I could join that church, you know. And we were ready to get married in a minute if I would join! (Chuckles) But I couldn't-- Well, finally it went so far that there was a congregation, or you might say a convention of ministers of that church had a meeting in Spokane, and she and her mother were going up there, and she asked if I would go there. Well, I said I would. They went up there and I got away so I could go and I went up there. I stayed there a few days, and of course, I went to all the meetings there. And she and her mother and I were there together. And so I think it was Eunice that talked to one of the ministers that might be able to help me--

SS: Eunice?

ES: That was my wife. Of course, she was not my wife then, but she was working to help along, you know. So one of 'em came in; I happened to be sitting in the chapel there. The minister of that church had his residence right connected with the chapel. So, Eunice and her mother they stayed there and I had an apartment downtown, or a room downtown. I'd go up on the streetcar up to this place, it was out a ways. And so, he came in, and we set down and talked and he didn't ask me to join the church or anything at the beginning, because he hadn't seen me before and so I started right in asking certain questions. And the one that was the biggest problem, not with that church, but just about religion, was about the Creation. After God created heaven and earth and all the animals, and in the first chapter he created man and woman, and he blessed them and showed them what they should have to eat and all, and then it says at the end of that, it says, "God saw what he had made and it was very good." Well, that sounded good. Then in the next chapter, in

the ^(second) chapter, there was another creation. Well, the ministers that I had talked with ^{had} said, "That's just a continuation of the first chapter." But it couldn't be because in the second chapter, He just created the man. And it doesn't say that He created it in God's image; He created a man. And then He built this orchard, and He put him in there and then it says, "God said, 'It isn't good for a man to be alone. I will make a helpmeet for him'." Well, hadn't God thought about that when He created the man? You see? That was part of it. So then He creates a woman. Then He puts them in there, and then He says, "Don't eat off of that tree. 'Cause if you do, you're going to die." Then it seems God kind of faded out of the picture and then this serpent came there. And you know what went on there. Well, then the question in my mind was; Why did God let the serpent do this? Because another place in the Bible it says that God knows the past, present and the future. He knows everything. He must have known what was going to happen there. So I asked this minister, "Can you tell me why?" And he sat there and looked at me a while, and kind of studied, and he says, "You know," he said, "it isn't necessary for the salvation of your soul to know those things." He might as well have said he didn't know. And then he looked at his watch, he says, "I've got to go." That was all I got out of that convention. Well, I didn't tell Eunice all of this, but I told her that I still couldn't see my way free, I said, "I've got to be honest with myself." I could have joined; sure I could have. I could have joined, We could have got married, but what would it be in the future for us? And our children? You can't do that. You've got to be satisfied in your own conscience that you're doing the right thing. And I told her, "So long as I can't get these answers; how can I believe it?" And I wouldn't say that I'm a saved man when I can't understand what I read in the Bible. There were other things, too, but this was the

the main thing. So, I had already sold my place over there and I was going to Canada. So to me, it looked like we wouldn't get married. Couldn't. She wouldn't give up. She says, "Something will turn up." "Yeah," but I said, "I'm going up there and you're going to be down here." Well, she still had faith, you know. She wouldn't give up. We said "Good-bye" just like good friends and I went to Canada. And we corresponded and it went on that first year, and went on. I came back down here to see my brother and family and then I went back to Canada. Went on through the next year. We were corresponding. And I had given up, I wasn't thinking about marrying her at all, and still I wasn't going to bach, I didn't want to bach, you know. And there was a couple girls up there that would have wanted to get acquainted with me, but I just couldn't get interested at all. Not at all. They were decent people. I just went on from day to day. Finally a letter came from her and she said, "Is there any other girl in your life?" And I wrote back, said "no, there isn't." Went on a little while and she wrote ^{up} and she said, "If you still want to marry me," she said, "if you come down we'll get married." Just like that! Well, I had to read that a few times, you know. So, I began to make plans right away to- Well, Stiner had come up there at that time and Simon, one of his brothers came there, and they had nothing to do, and nothing in view, so they'd take care of the place. So that was fine. It was after harvest. So, I packed my suitcase and away I went, and came down here and she had been teaching school over-- was it Riggins? or somewhere over in there. And she got permission to cancel her--they got another teacher. She hadn't come home yet when I came down here, but she came right away. And the first thing I did after I got down there was to get the flu. It was in 1918, when it was so bad. I was staying with my brother. Eunice's dad met me at the train when I came and I

went and stayed overnight with him, and my brother lived just a block or so from there, so I went over there, and I got the flu. I was in bed about three days. That wasn't very bad, and got up again. She came over there before I was out of bed. Came over there and talked with me. And as soon as I got up I wanted to go over there. There's when I got sick. Got a setback, you know. I wasn't there more than a few hours until I was in bed, right there. And they got a doctor for me. Then she got down with it. But she wasn't very sick; so she was up again way before I was. But I was sick enough then that the doctor told me afterwards, there was three days that he just couldn't do a thing but just wait.

SS: So, you might have died.

ES: He said when I went down to pay the bill, he said, "You can thank your lucky stars," he said, "that you are living now." "You can thank your lucky star," he said, "that you have a strong heart." He said that was what saved me.

SS: Did she tell you why she changed her mind?

ES: No. And I never asked her. I figured that she probably had a hard time to break away from that church. And I never asked her.

SS: Did she stop belonging to the church?

ES: There was no church of that denomination up near where we lived, so she had no chance to go, and somehow she didn't say that she would have liked to go. Didn't say a thing about it. She was just satisfied.

----- In the second chapter He creates Adam, well it calls it the man; He created the man. And right after that He created this Garden of Eden. Then He took the man and put him in the Garden. And he told him what he could eat and what he couldn't. Then it says, God said, "It isn't good for a man to be alone. I will make a helpmeet for him." So then he goes on

and creates all the animals, next. Then He has Adam to see all those animals and whatever Adam named them, that would be their names. But it says he didn't find any that could be a helpmeet to him. So then He put Adam to sleep and took a rib out and created woman.

SS: So, you were saying, how come he didn't do this in the first palce?

Es: Pardon?

SS: You were saying, why didn't God do that all in the first palce?

ES: Yeah. And the big problem is, it don't say anything about God until after Adam and Eve had aten of that forbidden fruit, then God comes and asks them what they had done. Well, then, so one question is; "Where was God? Because the Bible says, "God is everywhere." So He must have known what was going on there. Some ministers say that God really wanted them to take of that fruit to become human. But if He wanted them to, why did He tell 'em not to? And if He wanted them to be human, why didn't He create them as humans? You see, it doesn't answer. I have talked with many ministers; not one has been able to answer. ^(End of Side D) They'll come back, and one Adventist minister this last winter when they came to that question, why, he said there was something about the serpent, you see, that he talked to Adam and Eve. And he said, "You know," he said, "at that time the ani- mals were much more intelligent than they were later." And then he stop- ped, he realized he was getting into a corner, and he stopped and he says, "I'll tell you what we'll do," he said, "I will come back later, and then, we'll just set down and we'll go into this more completely." I said, "That's fine, if you'll do that." And so he got up and gathered up his books and got up and shook hands with me. And I says, "When will you be back?" "Oh," he said, "it'll be about three weeks." This was just about Christmastime last winter. I haven't seen him since. And he lives only about a block from where I am there. And that's what the others have said, they'd come back.

SS: When did those questions occur to you?

ES: Just about the time that Eunice and I began to be acquainted, because we talked about it- religion quite a bit, you know. And I had read much of the Bible before, but when you believe in what you're reading you don't question anything much, and you may overlook certain things that are contradictory; because you're always believing what you read and you don't check back. And this was when I was supposed to consider the church that she was a member of; then I began to think about this and I began to look into the Bible to see where they get that thought that they are the only church. And of course, reading one thing led to another in the Bible and I began to check back and forth. And the next one in my mind which I hadn't had much chance to bring up ~~with~~ ^{to} ministers, because ~~tried~~ to settle one problem first; and that is that in the Book of Numbers in the twenty-third chapter and I think it's the nineteenth verse, it says, "God ^{is not} man that ~~He~~ can lie, nor is ~~He~~ son of man that ~~He~~ can repent." That's reasonable; God is almighty, he wouldn't repent of anything. But what did he do in the sixth chapter of Genesis; ~~it~~ says, "God saw that man was getting so bad all over the world," and it says, "it grieved him in his heart. And he repented that he had made man." Isn't that a stinger? Could you face God and say, "You made a fool of yourself?" You see, I don't fight God, I'm fighting the Bible. There may be a God, but there are things in the Bible that I can't believe. And if there is a God and anybody'd say that about him, he'd certainly disown that man. So, those are things that upset me. There are about five different places I have found lately in the Bible where it says that God repented for what he had done, or what he was going to do. When Moses was up on the mountain to get the Commandments and then the people got tired of waiting for Moses and they had Aaron to make that calf, and they were celebrating and it

says, "God heard the noise, ^{that} they were making and he says, "Leave me alone and I'll go down there and destroy them, and I'll make you a big nation.' So Moses said, 'No, you mustn't do that,' he says, 'you remember that you promised us that you'd take us through to the Promised Land,' and he said, 'if you don't do that now, all the other generations will say he is no good because he didn't live up to it.'" And so then finally it says, "God repented of what he was going to do and he didn't do it." So, you see he changed his mind, just like ~~as~~ if he was an ordinary-- And other places, too. ^{now,} I can't believe that. If there is a God, ~~He~~'s a God that you can depend on and that you can worship.

SS: Do you think there can still be a God if the Bible is wrong?

ES: The Bible is wrong, sure.

SS: I mean, there can still be a God even if the Bible is wrong?

ES: Yeah. There can be a God, but I believe that many different authors have written these different sayings in the Bible. In fact, I have one Bible that in the back of the Bible ~~next~~ to the concordance it tells about how they put together the New Testament. And they had ~~several~~ thousand manuscripts to choose from. The priests were gathered together just like in a hearing in court, gathered together and they looked over these and they picked out those that would compare most favorably with the Old Testament and put that in and discarded the others. Well, that's simple. That shows that there is a lot of things written-- in fact, I have another book that I bought years ago, that I got somewhere, got hold of some of that and put it in this book. Some of it is very good and some of it is ~~really~~ ridiculous, you know, about what they are supposed to have done.

SS: Did you ever run across Frank Robinson and Psychiana () in Moscow?

ES: No.

SS: He was the guy that started ----?

ES: Yes, I remember of him, but I never did get to see him. I didn't, I wanted to. I went there once on purpose to see him, but they wouldn't let me. They said you can buy his books but you can't see him. And I'm still wishing that I could find some answer to that. I don't care what denomination a minister is that- it doesn't say anything about that in the Bible- and it's what's in the Bible I want to know. When there was two Mormons came to see me why they had some Mormon literature, you know, and one of 'em started to want to talk to me about it and I said, "I'm not ready to join any denomination until I can get straight with the Bible." One of them was studying to be a Mormon minister and I was hoping he'd have the answer. So when I bring up something that he kind of hesitated on, why the other one was looking up some other Scriptures in the Bible that might explain it, but it didn't. And, furthermore, what Paul or Peter or those said in the Bible, that isn't so important to me as what God said. You got to get straight on that, you know, because the whole Bible is based on the Old Testament and on the Creation. That's the beginning of it. And if a body can't get that straightened out, what you going to do?

SS: Do you think that you can have some understanding of God without-- by forgetting about the Bible? By not using the Bible?

ES: I think so. I believe that there is something that keeps the world going, there is something that you might say, creates thought in people. I have had one or two occasions to know that there is something that I don't understand and it has affected what I was doing. I don't know what it is, but there is something there. For instance, when my brother Isaac was killed by a tree falling on him over near Deary, when they were logging there. He was killed instantly and we were over at Park at the time. We started to build a haybarn on the place that I was renting and there

was some timber close by and we were skidding some timbers down to frame the barn with and I had such a time, I was doing the hauling with the horses, and I couldn't get those logs to stick on the stoneboat I was hauling them on, somehow or other. My brother-in-law was with us and he told me afterwards that he was wondering what was wrong. I couldn't get the work done right. I wasn't blaming anybody, ^{it was} just something was wrong. And about that time a man came horseback-- we had no phones, you know-- came horseback over there and told us that my brother was killed. And Albert said, "Now I know why you had such trouble." And one night shortly before that, ^{while} my brother was living-- we lived over at Park and he lived over west of Deary over there, and one night I was sleeping upstairs and I woke up looking at something. I thought I had seen somebody there. I went back to sleep. Now, I had no belief in any of this superstitious things, you know, at all, that was all bosh to me. Second night, there was some more there. And I could see it coming through just like a person coming through the upstairs window. And there was a big apple tree outside and nobody could put a ladder up there and go through that window without me knowing it. Well, I went back to sleep and the third night I saw it coming through; there was a little table in front of the window and it just came right through as though it wasn't there. The window was closed. And I saw it step through just like there wasn't a table there and he turned and he stood and he looked down at me, and I woke up saying, "What do you want?" And it was gone. After the funeral his wife told us, we took her home and talked with her a while, she said that there was one night that Isaac woke up and there was something that was bothering him but he didn't tell her about it. He said, "I wish I could see Ed." Now there is a connection there; I can't explain it, but it's something. If I had been talking about and believing in ghosts and stuff; but I didn't

believe in that stuff, til then. It was twice when I was making a decision about buying land that something kind of stopped me. I don't know what it is. I was going-- when I bought on Central Ridge-- I was going to go over that evening from my brother's place, going over there, to write out the contract; I drove a team and buggy, I came to an intersection in the road and turned left to go, ~~It was~~ ^A little downhill, and when I started going downhill something pushed me, seemed like it pushed me back against the buggy seat for just an instant and then I went on. Well, I had bad luck there with the first two crops I had. Had some hard times there. The first year I lost thirty acres of beans that froze on me and so on. When I went to Canada, when I finally found ^{the} ~~a~~ place I bought there we went back to town and I was going to the real estate office to close ~~the deal~~ the deal there, but first I went to lunch at the hotel, well, I was to go across the street down this way, ^{when} ~~and~~ I got half way across the street ^{it stopped me-} ~~I~~ stood still, and I didn't know what it was. Then all at once I go right on. What is that? And, like I told you, I had hard times up there. But we finally came through. ^A and since that nothing has happened.

SS: You think that it was a warning? That it was a warning of some kind?

ES: Yeah. It was. There is something in-- Mother was a little that way, she would get kind of like a warning. She would get a kind of a feeling about things. So, for a body to say, "I don't believe this! I don't believe that; it isn't so." ^{well,} ~~We~~ [^]re not smart enough to say things like that. So, I don't worry about dying; I'm getting old, you know. Some of these times I'll die, but I'm not worried about it, at all. There is one thing I'm quite sure about, that there isn't a real hell anywhere. Because ^{God} ~~^~~wouldn't have needed to create a hell if the people had been like the first chapter says, "everything was good," there was no devil there. There was no need of it. God is stronger than the devil. There wouldn't

have been needed any sin among people. So when I die; I've tried to live a decent life and I'm not afraid of hell at all. If I could see the devil I'd talk to him. (Chuckles) But I kind of believe there is something; maybe I won't be conscious of it, maybe I'll just be a spirit that will someday will affect living people, one way or another. I don't know. I don't know and I don't worry about it. And I'm going to continue searching in the Bible to see if there is something I can discover and try and find someone that can tell me about those things.

SS: Do you think that when you say that there isn't any hell; is that because you think that people are good, basically good, and not bad?

ES: Yeah. I believe it was a warning from a good spirit or whatever it was, that was trying to do it for my own good. Just like if you're going out on thin ice and someone would maybe whistle to^{you} and tell you to stay away from there.

SS: I'm thinking of hell; if it's true that there is no hell, do you think that's because people are pretty much good, they have a good nature instead of a bad one?

ES: Yes, to some extent. But it's pretty much the same with us human beings as it is with animals. There are some wicked ones among them and some good. I have found that out handling horses. I've had horses that are just naturally mean. And I've had some that were exceptionally bright about being handled. And I've found that if I handled a horse in a friendly way and didn't overdo working him and so on, the horse would respond in a good way. My horses ~~would~~ follow me around when I was in the field when I'd unhook, I'd say, "Come on, boys, ^{and} we will go to the barn." They'd follow and so on. When we got ready to go on out, I would line 'em up with the bridles on and ^I ~~they~~ could go to work and I could turn 'em loose with a load and they'd follow me. But I've had some that just- you

couldn't do it. They just wouldn't work. But they're not on the same grade or same plane as human beings are. And we taught our children to be honest and decent and treat people and they followed that advice and they're all doing good. They all have a lot of friends. You should have seen the crowd at the wedding; one of my grandsons got married last Saturday. There was a crowd there, I don't know, and it seemed like everybody that they- my kids met they were shaking hands, and were friends with them. So, it pays. You can create your own happiness by what you do, you know. That's why I am feeling so good now. I have no worry about any of my children or grandchildren. They're good, decent people. And of course, even financially, it's to a man's own good if he can follow a straight line and be respected. Many a time I've borrowed money to work with and build with when I started building houses, you know; I'd borrow a thousand dollars or more sometimes just on my own note, because it was going to be paid back. So, you can help yourself by trying to be decent to others. And if anybody starts to mistreat you, why, just leave 'em alone. Just like you would a balky horse. (Chuckles) And I feel a lot better after searching the Bible and finding- because if God knew- we'll say what the condition is today in the world- if ~~He~~ knew that and if ~~He~~ was almighty ~~He~~ wouldn't have had to create those conditions. So when we say that God did this we're blaming ~~Him~~ and you can't do that and believe in a God. The Mormons believe ~~He~~ is a person, like we are, because in the first chapter it says, "Let us make man in our own image." See, the Bible says so many things that can't be proven.

SS: Well, then how do you explain all the evil in the world? How can we understand?

ES: I think it comes from the people themselves. You know from the time money was created, why, money was a powerful thing. And money is what's

caused most of the bad things in the world now. One nation trying to take another, that's greed and power and things like that. You let some children play together, little children, pretty soon there's one that wants to gobble up all the toys, well, he does a bad thing, and that can go on and on and get worse and worse as he grows up. If he's allowed to do those things, there is where the responsibility of the parents comes in. They have got to walk a straight line themselves if they want their children to do so.

SS: Did you have dealings with the Bank of Troy?

ES: Oh, yes. Yeah.

SS: Back in the earlier days?

ES: Back when Frank Brocke first started working in the bank. Yeah. Ole Bowman was the head of it. And I've borrowed money there many times.

SS: How were they to borrow money from then?

ES: Pretty good. Well, I can't speak for everybody, you know.

SS: For yourself.

ES: But for myself, I was never turned down and I had to get extensions at times on my loan; they were always there to help. At one time I borrowed money there and I was paying I think it was seven percent on a loan, and Mr. Bowman was in the back office there and Mr. Brocke was clerk there, and I told Mr. Brocke, I says, "I feel like I'm paying too much interest here." After I was applying for another loan, so he turned and went back there to talk to him and I heard him say, "Ed thinks he's paying too much interest." And so pretty soon he came back and cut it down one percent. So I never could say a bad word about that bank. That's the main thing.

SS: They were always willing to give you a loan when you asked for it?

ES: Yeah. Whenever I needed money, why, - I didn't borrow much at a time at

that bank because I wasn't doing so much then. And there was a bank in Deary I had dealings with them; borrowed money once in a while. And at other banks. There must be half a dozen banks or more that I've had dealings with. And they all were that way. ~~But~~ I knew of one man, he wanted to borrow a little bit of money at Deary to put in a crop that spring and he had to give the mortgage on everything he had to just get a few dollars. So, you see, it was his doing, not the bank. He wasn't responsible himself, so you can't blame the bank.

SS: Do you remember the IWWs?

ES: No, I never had a thing to do with those. You see I never hired much help when I was working and that way I got by without having to join them.

There may be a lot of it that it isn't worth to consider any more, if you get any good out of some of it, that's okay, but I didn't really think that it would be important enough to make it public, but if you think it's any good, why, you can kind of piece it together the way you think it's best.

END OF INTERVIEW

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