

ANNA BENGTON THOMASON
and
OSCAR THOMASON
Second Interview

Interviewed by:
Sam Schrager

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homemakerOscar: Dry Ridge, b. 1901
logger

2.5 hours

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with Sam Schragger

March 19, 1976

II. Transcript

This conversation with Anna Bengston Thomason and Oscar Thomason took place at their home on Dry Ridge, Idaho on March 19, 1976. The interviewer is Sam Schragger.

Sam Schragger: What do you feel when you go back and see the places where you were born and grew up? Does that make you feel...?

ANNA Thomason: Homesick? no, not exactly. We have been to my home. People are friendly and nice. But I tell you, I had neighbors, we had the closest neighbors. We were back and forth so much. And they had kids and they had died, all except one. Young I called them, young, they're my age and so, but I mean, I can't see they were strong people. REal strong people. We just heard lately here, I have a letter here today that so and so was buried. And another time, so and so of them had died. And I will miss that. They had a girl, the youngest she come with us to America. And she have died here in America. In Seattle. And then a brother, that was a younger one of hers, he died here in America too. But then the others at home, like I say, the oldest of them all is my age and he is the one that's living and I will miss them because it was like coming home when I come to that place. So those I will miss. But I guess that's the time. We have to go, when we be called. That's all.

SS: I was gonna ask you about the time in Sweden when (break in tape) are these Sweden? (They are looking at an old Swedish food rationing bood.)

AT: Yeah, we got those to buy our food. You see, we were rationed to so much and then we had to have that to get it.

Oscar Thomason: Get food.

SS: Tell some of what it was like during WWI in Sweden.

OT: The last year, 1917 and '18 then it was harder to get stuff. And the rationing was pretty hard. You had to buy everything on the book, you know. Rationing book, see. And then I was in Norway in 1918 but it was no better there then it was in Sweden probably. Just about the same. We don't get enough on the rationing cards, so they don't have it. And we used to work, you know, and well, we was a big family home when we was home. There were five of us. My brothers and I used to be in Seattle, he came home too. When rationing was, you know. And we don't work on the same place, we worked here and there, you

know. So it was kind of hard to make it. We couldn't work every day. We couldn't get enough to eat. And it was hard work, to work in the woods.

SS: Where did you get the food from? You didn't have money to buy food or there wasn't any food to buy?

OT: We had money, but there was no food to buy. It was all you could get on the rationing card, that book, you know, it wasn't enough. We had money. There was pretty good, the work paid pretty good, you know.

AT: We never had trouble at home because one of our, we had cows and we had our meat and we had things, but we could go and buy what we wanted there, but we had to have the book for that. But I mean as far as food, we had plenty food.

SS: But you didn't have enough food to work,

OT: No. We don't have nothing, see. We had a little place and the place belong to the company and there was kind of north in Sweden, and a lot of rocks and things so we don't grew very much. Like barley, we could raise barley. But oats, there was early fall, so they don't get ripe. Then they come and measure the land there, and then they took summers off so it would be one or two months we couldn't buy nothing.

SS: Summer's what?

OT: They took on the rationing, see. We had so much you know and then we couldn't use the card, the rationing card. That was hard, that way, see.

SS: You mean what you grew they took away from you...

OT: They counted that on the rationing card, see. So they got probably one month probably two months^h you couldn't buy any flour. And flour was the hardest to get, you know.

SS: Did you have meat?

OT: Ya, we had meat just about so we made it. And then we couldn't buy meat, the cattle, so you can buy, see. Otherwise we don't have, there was so many of us, a little place, we have three, four cows. Sheep and goat.

SS: How many days a week could you log during the war when you didn't have enough food?

OT: We used to work 3,4 days a week. And we don't work very much, We had a little bit with us in the woods. And then we had a fire, and then we had some logs or something, it was sitting there and talking. If it happened to be war be over, so we could buy what we want. So we get enough to eat, you know. That's what we were thinking about, see. And we took long noon hour. And the coffee there, the coffee was no good anyway, and we get little bit sugar. But there was no flour, we should have had, we could have baked see.

SS: You had flour?

OT: No, we didn't have flour.

SS: What were you eating mostly?

OT: We eat what we get on the rationing cards, stamps, but it wasn't enough. Well I went to work many times, had the frying pan with, we couldn't get no bacon, either, No. The bacon, it was called side pork, we couldn't get that.

SS: So you took the frying pan?

OT: Yeah. I took the frying pan with, you know and they had a little bit flour sometime and something else. I think they call it farina here, it was kind of a little mush, you know. And that wasn't very much to work on. We couldn't work.

SS: The logging work gives you the big appetite.

OT: Yeah, and we were young too, so it took more. And hyou have to crawl down under them trees and shovel snow and try to saw them down, and then you have to peel them. And that was hard work.

AT: None of ~~that~~ we never knew.

OT: It was tough for us.

AT: My brother, when they went in the woods and stayed for a week, we always baked bread.

OT: They had more land, you know.

AT: We got more when we had our own rye to grind, We got more then toe ones that went and bought it on the card. Because we couldn't papa couldn't go to the mill and grind all he wanted. He couldn't have, we were allowed so much.

- SS: You could only grind so much?
- AT: Yea. So, and where there was many it was bad. It won't be if it was kids.
- OT: Kids, you know, that were bad.
- AT: Look out for them too. But where he was, I don't know, he may have told us...
- OT: Rye, her home they were raising rye.
- SS: Were your father and brothers logging then?
- AT: My dad and my brother, in the wintertime, they were in the woods, too, doing the work, but otherwise, my dad was carpenter.
- SS: They had bread to take with them?
- AT: Yea. They'd come home weekends, and we had to have bread baked up so they could take bread with them where they were going to do their cooking in the woods.
- SS: Did the women eat bread too?
- AT: Un-un. We were saving our bread because we didn't need it so much.
- OT: They were home and could milk and things like that.
- AT: We were home there and had all milk and butter and all that. And we had potatoes, of course, So we, you have never eaten that kind of pancake we made at home. That was one thing in Sweden. We got the potatoes and peeled 'em and grated 'em on the grater, And then we put a little flour in that, and salt and maybe an egg, and fried them. And they like them yet. And that helps for the bread. No, it wasn't hard for papa and the boys. It wasn't because we had those things that they could take with them.
- SS: Is that what you call potato pie?
- AT: They call it risque (Swedish). That was different.
- OT: They were shaped like that.
- SS: That's a potato pancake?
- AT: So we had, but it was more work of course, to keep on with that when they come home weekends. Before they went back, we had to have those things made for them to take back, And then of course, no it, I'm sure it wasn't that we had to be hungry. But we couldn't get just exactly what we wanted, like white

flour. If it took too much on the rationing book, of course then we had to be without or have less in other things. We had to kind of try to see that, so, but it was, maybe I told you that there was an old couple, brother and sister that lived close to our place. Not next door, but and they were just two of them. And it was awful hard, two grownups, and at home we were kids. Each one had allowance you see, that was easy. And she said, "If we ever will be free," she said, "so I can buy flour, I'm going to have open house " just as soon as she could buy flour and bake, and she baked and we saw people, People went, not that they needed, but just to go to that old sister and brother, and oh, she had company and she treated them like everything. When it was the end of the rationing.

SS: She must have been waiting for years for that chance.

AT: Yes, she really did.

SS: Did you say that you heard that some people had to grind rye for coffee?

AT: Oh yeah, we did that in those days. Oh yes. We would dry it so it was dry and then we grind it. And I tell you, you had to stand there and watch that coffee pot, it used to overflow so fast.

SS: What would it do?

AT: Just come over so fast.

OT: It boil you know, and that rye went up over on the stove.

AT: Soon as it was hot enough to boil, . . .

OT: You had to watch that pretty close.

AT: Oh yes. Like I say, if it was when the boys and papa were out from home, we always saved for them, so they could when they lived in the camps, they had to have more handy than it was four us that lived at home.

SS: Why do you think it was that your family had more to eat than Oscar's?

OT: It was on account of that that they had their own. So they went to the flour mill and grind, and we don't have, we have a little bit only, see and that was barley. It was all there was, see. Like oats, we couldn't have that,

AT: And then those big boys were big eaters too?

OT: Early frot in the fall you see, too. And then there were so many of us. And all grown up, see. And we don't work on the same place.

SS: Your family?

OT: Ya. Boys, you know. So that was pretty hard, I tell you, that was pretty rough. Money, we had money, but we couldn't buy nothing. You see how it is: if you have a million dollars and can't buy nothing to eat, you know. Can't eat the money, If you can't buy something for it.

AT: No, it was never that we had to be hungry. Never. But we didn't have the choice. Was like that lady and her brother. She really feasted when...

SS: Did you feel that when you went to bed sometimes at night that you were hungry?

OT: Oh y-h, you be. Were hungry, you know.

SS: Well, I've never known what it was to be hungry.

OT: Well, I don't know, there are still I think people some go to bed hungry. Even here in this country.

AT: I feel sorry for his mother. Have all those big eating kids running around and want things to eat. She had to say it wasn't anything.

OT: There was noting. We know that. We were that big so we know that, We go out to work, but there was nothing we were getting.

SS: Did you know of peolle who were close to starving?

OT: Yeah, I know quite a few. They were really starving. They really was. There was one you know, that lost his hair, On one side, had big spot he did nd they said that it was from starving. That's what they said, he starved. That was often. If the war been keeping on longer, I don't know. Summ ertime you could go out fishing. We always done that, even if we have plaenty flour, bread and stuff. But , And Sweden wasn't in the war, and not Norway, either. We couldn't get noting in, We used to buy here from America, see. But then they was in war, Germany, they shot down quite a few boat too, you see, bringing food.

AT: Here's something if I just could explain it to you, but I can't so it would

be anything, but this would be real interesting. This is wheⁿ_A, you know, flax.

OT: They fix the flax to be...

AT: To be so it was yarn and they had to go through all this, but I have to explain.

(Anna and Oscar talk among themselves)

SS: That's a nice picutre. Are you in this picture?

AT: No, but I got it and I wanted...

OT: Anna's sister-in-law there.

AT: You see, I thought...

OT: And some of her cousins too,

AT: I can't explain, I thought maybe it would help to say this.

OT: How they fixed the flax, had it to make yarn from it, see. Lot of work.

SS: They grew flax on her farm?

OT: Ya, I think they did. But we never do at home where I come from, come from north, you see. Norwegian border.

AT: I was with the girls but I wasn't with this group. Like now, the begining of flax, when you seed it and it grows like it was wheat and anything, but when you go to cut it, you have to pull it up.

SS: By hand?

OT: By hand.

AT: I don't know, I can't figure out why they can't cut it. And make it in little bundles, And had sticks and put them up os it dried. Then after that, this is later, then they had a heavy board and in the center of that they had a round thing with lots of pegs on. And you sat and took a little bit of that and hooked it over and pulled. And then you put your straw and what is it called, put it away. When you have done all you had, you have to go out and spread it out real thin on, if I say hubblefield or something. So it was laying too flat on the ground. And there it was supposed to be so it got kind of rot one way, the outside, so you could do something with it. And then it comes to this.

OT: Lot of work.

SS: What are they doing here?

AT: This isn't the first step even. They have a little house, I think you see a little bit of it back there, and there you put it in, you have a fire. They had shelves around that little house and spread it out there, and have the fire so it was hot there. It got really dry. And then, now here is the first step from that house. See that thing? I can't explain it but like this and then you have a thing that goes down. You see, this goes in between to break the shell. That is what they do there. Then there it's broken so it kind of hangs there. Then they have different things there, but they don't have it all shown. So they get all those shells, peeling off. And then after that, it's so long and you can pull it. Ya, I have been spinning even of it. On a spinning wheel.

SS: Sounds like a lot of work.

AT: Of course it's a lot of work.

SS: All by hand?

AT: So far it's by hand. Oh, I'll tell you, when we had those busted, we worked and oh, we were so crazy and we had a highway that went by us. And they yelled and they screamed at people that they saw when they worked. We women were in the bostuga house, worked with that, they were just crazy. We yelled and yet it was fun.

SS: You mean they were yelling and screaming not because they were really going crazy?

AT: Ya. Just put on. And people went in the road and they knew what it was, they clapped at us and all that. Oh, it was fun though. And it was lots of work. But then they could send it after it was taken care of. You could send it to place where they made things. Yarn and things.

SS: They made yarn from it? You'd get the yarn back?

AT: I have things that have been woven from it, but I haven't done it.

OT: It was hard work. All hand work.

AT: You never go by the bostuga when they were there screaming.

SS: What do you call that ?

AT: Bosu.

OT: They call it bostüda house.

SS: The house where it dries?

OT: Finnish, bostu. They say that...

AT: Where he comes from the sat bostu, But where we come from we said stuga, like we said about a house, Bostuga. So we talk a little different that way.

SS: What was the bostu, is that where you worked?

OT: They had fire you know, so they dry it, see.

SS: That's where they dried it?

OT: YEah.

AT: You see, they couldn't work with it when it come from the field and take it up there, But there was shelves around the walls in that bostu. And then we spread it out pretty thin and then we had to have the fire so it was real hot, so it dried. It break the shell and then you do different things. You can imagine the work, here is the yarn from it.

SS: It's beautiful,

AT: Long time ago when it wasn't, this is boughten. I have gotten that from some friends. But see, that's spun. But long time ago, they have get that yarn made and we put a loom and make the weaving. We made for shirts for the men and everything. So we had that years ago. As more years, but now its more for trim.

SS: So did you grow all the cloth that you used to make clothes?

AT: Oh no, Not that much. But like I say, we put up a loom and made a long loom, ya, then we could make, have you ever had a linen shirt on?

OT: No. I don't think so, I think my dad had, But I don't think I have,

SS: Was it, there was some socializing, the women had time to be together,

AT: They had so much fun too. And crazy. They were ^{and} yelling. We said "We are drinking coffee, now, you come and have coffee." People knew about those crazy women!

OT: In my time...(exchange between Anna and Oscar)

SS: Well...

OT: Spinning wheels in the wintertime. They made the wool pants, you know. Wool coat and vest, you know. The older people, they had it year round you know. They were kind of warm in the summertime but they had 'em. Wool clothes. But then in winter you know, they were pretty good. They were warm, you know. And they don't get wet or nothing. But in the summertime they were too warm.

SS: Did your mother make clothes for the family?

OT: No, she made some. She didn't have no sewing machine for that. She done it by hand. But then they went to the tailor for the other clothes. Pants, dress, coat. But then she done the spinning, loom, you know. But it was awful work. And ten knitting socks. You know, wool socks. Them younger ones, I don't think they can do that.

SS: Maybe Anna could,

AT: What?

OT: Make woolen socks. She been making them here, use the spinning wheel.

AT: If you would ever want to mark it down, you should have better description than I can give. I can give it to you, but I can't explain it. Like after this now, where they have broke it in that, you see, that thing that in bent in between there, those two, of course, it broke the shell there too.

OT: If you pull it. All the ones they taking up so they pull it.

AT: Then they had the next one was a foot here of wood, and aboard that went up about that wide, and that was about that high just for us to be able to stand. Then they laid that over that and it hung down, then it get like that and try to get the shell off and turn it and get down like that. They got that peeling and whatever else you call it, off. So it was lots of work but I don't think they do much of it now.

SS: Seems like too much work for them to do it now.

AT: Much work, but it was a natural thing.

SS: During the war, did you tell me about the two women who came out with money and couldn't buy food?

AT: I was going to say that, but I thought maybe I told you about that before.

SS: What was that story?

AT: They come from Colsta(sp)

OT: Come from a big town.

(End of side A)

AT:...country. And they said, "We have money but we can't buy food." You know, we didn't really have, butter, we always had and we could have little pork, but otherwise each one, I don't know what we did. I think mama...

OT: You probably didn't sell them anything but you probably give them something.

AT: So it wasn't that they were short of food if they just could have bought it.

OT: Short of money,

AT: Ya, I mean short of money. They just could have bought the food. But we never had the experience.

SS: I don't see why they gave everybody too little in the rationing. Didn't they know that they wouldn't have enough to live on?

OT: No. They had to see they all get some.

SS: Everybody gets some, nobody gets enough.

OT: Right. On the ration card, we don't get enough.

SS: Do you know what the government in Sweden at that time was very conservative wasn't it? They didn't have Social Democrats? The king was running things.

OT: There was a democratic government I think there was. And they called Socialist government. At that time, in 1918. So there was trouble. There were to be a revolution there. Well, the people don't get enough to eat, and so and so, and then the people cooled down a little bit. Otherwise there would probably be a revolution there. They were talking about it.

SS: Wasn't that the same time as the Russian revolution?

OT: Ya.

SS: Maybe that's why they thought there was going to be a revolution in Sweden.

OT: Revolution in Russia, started in '17. And they you know, before that, Finland belongs to Russia. Finland get away, you see. Russia was just about out. They

couldn't do any fighting, when they were fighting inside.

SS: So were the people very restless, do you think they were close to revolution?

OT: They were close. The king, he was the head of it, but then he appointed that man.

SS: Branting. I've heard of him.

OT: He was of poor people but he was good education and good head on him, see. Many of them there in the government in Sweden, some come from poor people but they was good head on them, see. Like Per Albert Hanson(?) he was a minister in Sweden for many, many years. Well he was from poor people. And they said that he never drove a car. They had the White House, you can call it here, And he always ride a bus and a street car,

SS: Did, I thought I read when Branting took over, then they got sufferage. People got the right to vote, no matter how much money they had, And the women got the right too,

OT: They got the right too,

SS: That's part of what happened. In 1918,

OT: You seen the scale, hanging right in the cent with one on each end, you see, The big shots in Sweden, that were rich you know, They had 40 votes, you know! Well the poor people can never get 'em out and things like that that have the 40, And then it was there was a cartoon in the papers that he was fat, he was kind of bald, you know. And hewere going up, you know. And there were a bunch of poor people in the other, and they took him and he went up, I remember that so well,

SS: So the rich man could have 40 votes and the poor man has one?

OT: Yes, And the poor man couldn't vote if he didn't pay the taxes. If he don't have money to pay the taxes, he couldn't vote, That's the way it was,

SS: And they changed that?

OT: Oh you bet. They changed it then, There was starting to be trouble, see. They call it (in Swedish), I don't know what it would be in American. You see, he got 40 votes, that man. The other had only one. And they couldn't

vote if they hadn't paid the taxes. That's the way it was. They were pretty rough for people long time ago.

SS: Was your father for Branting?

OT: Oh ya, we was all, all of us working class of people, we were all for him, yes. And I think some of the higher ones was too. They couldn't keep on going like that.

SS: What about labor at the time. Was it very strong in 1918, did it have much power?

OT: No. They don't have so much power. They had a kind of union, but it wasn't very strong at that time. They had some union and I know there was trouble. There was strike, you know.

SS:T I think it was in 1909.

OT: Ya, you remember that's when it was. And they come in from England, there was boats, on the boats, strike.

SS: Strike breakers?

OT: Yes. They come in, strike breakers from England. And you know, there were two or three of them. They have nothing to do with it. They throw the bomb on the boat where the Englishmen were the strike breakers. So they killed some. Well they never expected that they done it for they had nothing to do with it. But one fella told his good friend when they come off, so one was in from 1909 to 1918. Then he get out.

SS: Who did it?

OT: Them three did it.

SS: The three that did it, were they English too?

OT: They were Swedes.

SS: Wwere they Socialist Swedes?

OT: Ya. The English come in with the boat, they were strike breakers, see.

SS: But they broke that whole strike, didn't they? The strike failed.

OT: They broke it. And then they thought there was going to be a revolution at home there then. And one named (?) I read a book about him. But he went in for 9 years and come out 1918 they took him out, you see. And

them other two, they went in, he get more than that. But they get life!

SS: Were they guilty?

OT: Ya, they were guilty. Oh, you bet they were guilty.

SS: I heard that one reason the strike failed was they didn't get the railroad workers to go out on strike. They kept working and they had transportation.

OT: Ya, they were right.

SS: That hurt the chance for the strike to win.

AT: Aren't you lucky that you can read and remember?

OT: They were right. You remember better than I did.

SS: I just read it. A week from now maybe I forget.

OT: In 1909 I was only 8 years old. I remember that there were kind of trouble see, In 1918, then I was 17, you see.

SS: After that, they were afraid to strike again because they didn't think they were strong enough to.

OT: The union was not strong enough, see. No, they right. Then after that the union they got strong.

SS: When did the union get going in the woods where you worked?

OT: The union was in there before I went here in the woods. And so we can work, log cutters and stuff. See, before the teamster had horses, you know, logging, haul the logs to the river, they have to have the log cutting too. And then you know, probably, them log cutters said they're going to have more pay. Well they have hauling, you know, they couldn't hardly pay more, but they have a set price and they have to sign that contract. So much they're going to take out. They had strips, you know, to take. So that was hard for them, you see. But after that, then the company had log cutters, you know. And we get, they took long time before the teamster, you know, get kind of union, you see. But then they get more and more. When that was set up, you know. And long time they wasn't even insuring a man that worked in the woods, they get hurt you have to go to doctor and pay the doctor yourself.

SS: No insurance?

OT: No insurance. I know my brother, he cut his leg, there was probably I think he was around 18 years old. And he cut in here, no it was this side, I think it was. He was 18 weeks he couldn't work, but he didn't get five cents from the company. 18 weeks. And never went to the doctor or nothing when he was out in the woods.

SS: He didn't go to the doctor?

OT: No, my dad, he had some rig, so he pushed it up and try to sew it together. And still he had a big scar.

SS: He sewed it together with needle and thread?

OT: Ya, there was different colored thread, it wasn't really thread that he had, And nothing from the company. He come never to a doctor even,

SS: No money to do that?

OT: Oh, he could have went to the doctor alright, there was money for that. That didn't cost very much. There was over six Swedish miles to the doctor, And if you're going to drive that with a horse, you know, that took days.

SS: How many American miles in a Swedish mile?

OT: Six and a half. So you see, that's what it was.

SS: He just stayed.

OT: Ya. Some had appendicitis, I know two. And they were still farther and they died, before they get into the hospital. But now the buses goes, the taxi, you can call a taxi. And there were many people there who had never been to a doctor. If you get sick, something like that, well, they died. That's all there was.

SS: Was there a much bigger difference between the working people and the rich in Sweden than there is in America?

OT: No, there isn't much difference now.

SS: I mean back then.

OT: Then, Oh my, there was so much difference. A poor people, they could tramp them down, they couldn't have nothing to say, no we were afraid to talk

to them. To the higher people. Yes. We was nothing, But after the union started coming in, you know, there was a little difference, then you had something to say. But look out, before there was nothing. Here it was different, you know. I come here in '27. I could be with them rich people here.

SS: You could be.

OT: You bet. Of course, it was getting better then at home too, you know. But we never was together around rich people like that. You waiting in the bank, you had to take your hat off. And go into the post office too.

SS: You said you had to do that to the minister too.

OT: You bet. He bawled me out for i didn't go in the right door.

SS: Did you have to do that to the politician too?

OT: No.

SS: Government?

OT: Oh, you bet. I know one fellow come off the Swedish-American line, you know. He was a agent for that, and he used to be in the Congress in Stockholm. Well he been here, too. You could talk to him. And they were different. He been here and we were together, and before you know, he was poor, but he had a good head, he studied, see. And he was here in America, he come back, he was in the Congress,

SS: Was he poor to start with?

OT: You bet, Worked in the woods like others, but he was studying.

SS: Studied while he worked?

OT: Yeah, he studied, worked, and he was Democrat Socialist, see. And he went out and talked so he got voted in in the Congress, you see. He was over home and his wife sat out and he must have talked to them, She was kind of a little higher. Them people you cannot talk to.

SS: Do you think, why is it that, how did these rich people get their money in Sweden?

OT: Kind of a long time ago, they probably get it. Get to, some they inherit too, you know. Otherwise, you know you worked for the u, they make money on your

work, for they don't pay very much. You were done the work, you probably don't get five cents over.

SS: You don't have...?

OT: Five cents over. If you been working for over five months you probably have nothing over, just the time you worked you get enough to eat.

SS: Before you couldn't you couldn't get money ahead?

OT: No. You couldn't. Nobody could get money ahead at that time.

SS: They just gave you enough to keep you alive and working.

OT: After work was over...that's the way it was.

SS: Do you think that the IWWs was kind of like the union over there?

OT: Well there was two unions. They had the IW too. They had. But that wasn't very strong.

SS: Over in Sweden?

OT: The other union see, the sawmill union we can call it, that was stronger, see,

SS: They had the IWW too?

OT: Ya.

SS: But they weren't as strong.

OT: No. They were not strong.

SS: Do you think they were trying to do the same thing here that the union was trying to do over there?

OT: I suppose. But you know, here, I wasn't here when they said the IW's started in here. But I'll tell you, they think they done pretty good Here you have to have your own packing on the back and go to camp and you sleep together on the ground camp, and they had straw, you know. They were lousy and bed bugs and everything. No place to wash your clothes or to take a bath. When my brother was on the coast, he was around Aberdeen, Hoquiam, in the woods. He said there was nothing there. IW come in there, they was pretty strong, you see.

SS: They were strong. Was he in the IWW's on the coast?

OT: I think he was in with them. Then he took off and went to Seattle, he said he was there four years. He worked in the shipyards. And the war was over. No,

the war was on when they come home and he been home just a month and the war was over.

SS: Do you think the conditions here were worse than in Sweden?

OT: No, they were worse in Sweden. You see, here even if they don't have it nice fixed up and so they sleep together on the straw, but there you have to do your own cooking in the camp. And there were men in the camp it was hard to get close to the stove so you can get something to eat. And now you see they have... (break in tape)

SS: Feeding thr tramps because...?

AT: Oh yeah. If someone comes. They come in and begged. She always said that they should be fed. She said, "Maybe my boys in America are hungry too." But you know, they weren't hungry here. But no, that she really believed in. That they should have something. I can't see that they had to go and beg at home.

OT: You know, that's how it was. They was out of work but they didn't go and beg like they call it, tramp, they work, you know, and then the work was over, they probably drink the money up, then they went and begged for stuff.

AT: I thought sometimes it was really families that went...

OT: That was what they kind of called gypsy, Tartar, they call home. They come in whole families.

SS: Tartars?

OT: They come from Tartar in Russia. Come over to Finland and they come over to Sweden.

SS: They were like gypsies?

OT: Ya, we can't call it gypsies, it is just a little bit different though. And they wouldn't work either. They like to trade things and steal too. We had plenty of 'em at home where I come from. They come around, some of them Tartars. They like to trade, you know.

AT: They were really hungry. Some come, there was one time we had just eaten dinner at home. We had mashed new potatoes and they are good for all of us. And she never said anything til after we have eaten. And mama said that we

we should put plates for her and she said, "Oh God, how good it is," So she must have been hungry.

SS: Was she by herself?

AT: No she had a girl with her. But she didn't say anything when we were eating, til after..

SS: She waited?

AT: Oh yes. She waited til we had eaten. We were eating when she came. Then she said, "Oh God! How good it is." So I guess she must have been real hungry. Because that wasn't any special. Maybe new mashed potatoes tasted good to her anyway, but she was so hungry. No, mama always said that if they come and beg that see that they going to have something to eat.

SS: I thought you said that people who were hungry ground something up for food. That wasn't even food.

AT: Bark.

OT: Bark on the tree, there were different kinds of trees and then inside that, they scrape off inside the bark. It was kind of thin stuff, yoo know. They scrape that.

AT: Did they eat that?

OT: They ground it up.

AT: With the flour, so they could bake more. Mama never had that done, but she said she heard about it when she was young, so she said they ate bark bread.

SS: The song "Harpen," it was about the father that had two children that starved to death.

OT: I think you told it, didn't you?

AT: We had that. It was you that told it.

SS: I was thinking that that song maybe was true, it could have happened to someone.

AT: It was the same song that we were cutting out from a paper or something. And I looked for some pictures, something, not long ago...

OT: My dad used to sing there was that one. And there was, they don't have nothing to eat, and they took bark and then they went to sleep and they died, starved to death.

SS: Your father used to sing that song?

OT: He would sing that song. If I come back home I might get hold of that one yet.

SS: Its written down. But I wondered if it was a song that really happened?

OT: That really happened.

AT: That's one thing that I know is true, because I even know where the place was, it was from where mama come from, this territory where mama come from, I don't know, they had many children, but I don't know why they had no land or anything and it was so hard for them. Well, I don't know what he did, And my uncle, he had mama's home place, he bought that and the girls, mama and her sisters had to go milking in the summer, quite out, they had the cows there. And then my uncle always said, "You go in and pour milk for those people," If they bake, they took bread for them. I know the place. So them it was awful hard for, because they were hungry. They couldn't, mama said the kids couldn't go to school in the winter because they didn't have any shoes. And I don't know what did he do!

OT I don't know.

AT: Anyway, why was it so much harder?

OT: He probably done a littl work for them farmers and it wouldn't be very much to raise a family.

AT: He used to go to the farmers, but you know, they don't hire so much.

OT: They don't pay nothing. Very little.

SS: Do you think many people gave them food and help?

AT: Oh yeah. And my uncle, they walked by there so that was just, that was one thing they were going to go in and pour milk for them there. And mama said, "Always when we baked we took bread with us." So I tell you, that was something mama was raised with. That they should do something for... But it's funny, mama was telling, that the kids got big, And went to America and one by one, and one helped the other to come over and they send home money to the parents. They said that the parents are going to know that they have kids and I would think that the kids should have been really disgusted, because

they were shortage on food. But no, those parents got really good when they got older. Because the kids helped them. I have gone by that place many many times. Because when they have my uncle in the summer, he had that place away quite aways from hom and the girls had to gothere and do the milking.

SS: Was it common to send money back to Sweden? To the parents?

OT: Many did.

AT: The boys did that for mama, mama told that they were so good, those boys,

OT: We~~d~~l many did. And many were married and then they send home money, see. You get three crown and 72 cent. For one dollar you see.

SS: The money was worth a lot more.

OT: Yeah.

AT: They didn't get rich, we know that. But it was so they could buy and have it.

SS: When you came over here did you figure you were coming for good or just to see?

OT: No. I don't know, I think I just went over here because there was more work to do here. Anna's older brother come home and he said, "Oscar, if you like to work in the woods, there's all kind of work around there." And that's why I went, see. And I don't figure either way, to go back or to stay.

SS: You didn't think about that?

OT: No. YOU come over here all new people and you can't talk nothing and that's pretty hard.

AT: It was just nice here so they tried their very best.

OT: You work in the woods and it was a little bit different than home in the woods. There you work alone, but you see, here you had a partner. When I come in, done a lot of work, come in that's Swedish railroad and the company. More and more work.

SS: When you got here, what did you think of it?

OT: Well, you know, I heard about America too and here around Troy from Anna's brother said things like that. And many not from my place, but from

Anna's. And they said there was lot of work here and people were really kind of friendly. More friendly to the poor people. You could mix in with the rich, with the bosses too. you know, That was nice. The ones that come over, they can't talk and you probably don't do the work so right either, but the bosses don't fire you either. They really can't talk to you but they see if they like your work and you do the work, they keep you. I worked with one boss there for many years. His name was Clyde Ratcliff. I worked for him many times. He don't really so much, some other bosses like now you go in to Elk River, from Elk River, the basin we called it, and they were steep ground and they paid more. They really did. That was in 1929 and worked up there, they made more money. That was kind of steep ground to work in. see, We made more money. We really did.

SS: When you got here and saw what it was, was it like you thought it would be? Or different from what you expected?

OT: No, I don't think so. See, I had worked one month in town here. Fixing water pipes. And then I thought I'd go to the woods, I'd make more money. No. And I worked, I think for over five years for the Potlatch Lumber Company, til the depression. Then I worked for gyppose you know, and so on. I think it was real nice, come into camp here, and they come, you change clothes and wash up. And we put up the lunch then in the morning before breakfast, we always did you know.

(End of side B)

OT: Used to live in Deary, I worked for him many times. He was not a Swede. He was nice, really nice though.

SS: Were there still many of the old time lumberjacks when you came here?

OT: No. There isn't many left. Well, if they the same age I am, then there might be some.

SS: In those days, a lot of them were gone by then?

OT: Oy ya, well see, when I come over here, may was 50 years old and so you see, they're dead. I know in Spokane, we'd be sitting around the table of the International Hotel there, round the table there in the lobby, there was a whole

bunch of us used to work up here. That I know who I'm talking to. Probably a few months after, I come up there, most of them are dying off. I don't think I can see one. Probably one was in Spokane there but he might be probably a couple years older than me. And I was up there, I asked a lady about one fella and she said he died. He was a little bit older than me, see.

SS: Did you know Malker Anderson?

OT: Yeah, I worked with him. I worked with his brother Axel too.

AT: Have you seen Arthur Anderson lately?

OT: Malker Anderson.

SS: I saw Arthru Anderson last summer.

AT: He's old, but my, how happy.

SS: I saw Axel Anderson in Spokane.

OT: I ussupose he still live.

SS: Were Axel and Malker very different from each other?

OT: Malker, he paid more than his brother did. And he goet out probably more logs too.

AT: I thought they had to pay what the company wanted them to pay?

OT: No, we were gyppoing you see. But I know worked for Malker, I said to him just a strip, you get strips, you see. I asked him, "How much you going to pay now after here?" "Well, " he said, "how much do you have?" I was supposed to have a dollar twenty five. "Oh, I'll give you a dollar forty from the start," he said. We were just about done with to the strip. He raised it fifteen cents a thousand right there. Then we have a sawboss, I know him from the camp around here, he was up there. He said, "You don't get so good timber now. I'm going to pay more." "How much you gonna pay?" "I pay a dollar gorty." "Did you have dollar forty?" "Yes, Malker said we were going to get dollar forty." "Well if he said he's going to give you a dollar forty, I give you dollar forty and I guve you eight hours a day extra." That would be four dollars, fifty cents an hour.

SS: Eight hours a day extra?

OT: Ya. It was four dollars, fifty cents an hour. Then we get a dollar forty for a thousand for a strip. He was good, real good.

SS: What did you think of Malker as a foreman?

OT: He was a good foreman, and the company liked to have him. Only thing with him, he started to drink. He drink with the working man, see. And some of us took whiskey into him, you know. And that keep on and he get fired 1932. I was up in the camp then. Well, 1934 the superintendent hired him back, And that went good. He was married to a sister of...

SS: Charlie Jelleberg.

OT: Yes he was, and Nogel was superintendent and told Charlie, "Go talk to him, he started drinking now again," and it's no good you know, to drink with the working man. He could drink weekend. There was no bottle but he couldn't drink in the week. But he was stubborn too. Charle told me, I said, "You shoulda told him, you shoulda told Malker about it that he gonna get fired," "Hell, he probably get mad if I." "Ya, even if he get mad you coulda told him that he get fired if he keep on." And he get fired.

SS: Charlie tell him he was gonna get fired?

OT: No. He never did. I said to Charlie, "You should have told Malker, your brother-in-law that if he keep on, he gonna get fired again."

SS: Why didn't he tell him?

OT: I don't know, he said, "I should have done it." "Ya, you should have done it," I said, "so he don't get fired." And then he get fired, you see, and then he have to work, like others, you know. But he was too good a man to go do common work though. But he did. Then here in 1942 or '41 then they hired him back. There was a new superintendent. Well they get him to be the cat boss, you know, for them cats. Well he knew everything there. Then they took him to the camp boss again. But there was a different superintendent, Nogel, he died. Well it went pretty good at first, you know, but he was drinking again. And it was out of Clarkia, at Camp 40, well, he was drinking so he never signed them checks, even. Camp boss signed them checks, you see. So his brother Axel had to go sign

them see. And he got fired then. And I asked one fella his name was Charlie Sandborn, I think it was, "Was he drunk?" No, he was rummed up from drinking.

SS: He was what?

OT: Rummed up, he didn't know nothing what he could do, He don't know, see.

SS: That means he wasn't drinking?

OT: No, he wasn't drunk, but his mind don't work right, So he never signed them checks.

SS: Was that because he had drunk too much?

OT: Yes, he'd been drinking probably everyday, And I saw him in Elk River I work here, I work north there, in Camp 38, I worked, And I was up in Elk River there, they took us up there to fix up for to stay, you know, I was with one from Sweden. He died not long ago here in the fall. He was in a rest home in...

SS: Hagbaum?

OT: Yeah, and Albert Norlen his name was, we was shooting stumps and rock, And then I talked to one fella that come into camp, "Was he drunk?" "No, he wasn't too drunk," he said, "he was rummed up," he said, Then we get down there and they have a sent to Elk River and fix up where we could stay, And I saw Malcker there and I talked to him a little bit in that kind of tavern there. He don't like to talk, and then right after, he killed himself.

SS: Did he say anything to you?

OT: He answe me. You bet.

SS: Did he seem depressed to you?

OT: Yes, He did, He really did, And he was looking down you see,

AT: I guess that drinking...

OT: I think he couldn't quit, I think he drink too much and he couldn't quit. But I talked to one another up there, Lee Mallory, he used to live in Deary, he was a kind a road boss, he was a road boss, To go out to the roads and things, But then he killed himself.

SS: I heard that Malcker really knew how to get the work done in the woods.

OT: Oh you be. He know. And he paid too, you know, get the men to work. He had the most Swedes work, see. He had some road boss he went out to the roads and had a crew with to make roads. It was steep, you had to have the ^{kind of} roads so the horses could get into the woods, see.

SS: When you were working for him in the '20's did he drink every day?

OT: No. That time he don't drink. No, I never see him drunk. They don't have no whiskey in the camp, either.

SS: You said he drank with the working man.

OT: He did. He drank with the working man.

SS: When he started drinking, would he drink all the time?

OT: Oh, I think he did, he keep on. But I know in Camp 14, up in Park, you go through Park up there, was in 1932, work a little bit up there, work a month up there. Well you know, they were drinking so bad them teamsters had took a jug of whiskey, there was moonshine at that time. Well, they had a big fire and they lay behind the windfall and Nogel, the superintendent, come and they were so drunk so they hauled them in with a truck. Took the team in, Well, then whole bunch goet fired and Malcker get fired the same time.

SS: Was he drinking with them?

T: Ya. But he had two, I remember one morning, we used to eat, you know. He took off by the camp, you know, the cookhouse and head for a jug in the woods for he had to have a drink before he could eat. That was no good though.

SS: When the teamsters were drinking, was Malcker right there with them drinking?

OT: I don't think so. The sawboss and then Nogel. And Nogel was there nearly every day. He was watching.

SS: Watching Malcker?

OT: Ya. So them drinking men too, you know. Couldn't get no logs out and drinking so bad. I was up thee and ask for wor, and I don't see Malcker. And he said "I think Malcker like to have some more men here," and so the next morning I get one with me from here and we went up and I talked to Malcker. "You was the one that was up here?" "Ya, I was the one that was up here." Well then he come

in after supper, He did, he know Nogel was around the, you see. So it was too bad, too bad that a good man like him...Axel too, he was a boss for many many years. Til he retired.

SS: Axel was kind of an overall boss, wasn't he?

OT: Ya, he was kind of walking boss. He was over us, see. He were closer to superintendent.

SS: What was he like as a boss?

OT: Oh, he was okay. He didn't pay so much as Malker did. And then he, Axel at Camp C see are up there in the basin, he had a whole bunch up of day workers, you know, older people. Well he couldn't pay thm too much, work by the day. And Malker's you know, they was all gypos, and young Swedes and Norwegians, Up and down the hills you know.

SS: What was the work that you mostly did in the woods here?

OT: I cut logs in the winter. Then in the summertime, in 1928, they made railroads for Potlatch, they build kind of north from here. Camp 38 they called it. And then after that, the depression come, I used to work for one fellow, Dahmen there, in Moscow and Rauch, had a sawmill there in Troy, And then I worked for East Fork, Albert Lewis, he had a sawmill there. Worked on the greenchain. And I load out lumber, and I pile lumber, sometimes,

AT: Did you know Albert Lewis[?]

SS: No.

OT: He died in Spokane.

AT: He didn't have a big business?

OT: He sold out the Potlatch. He had a lot of money. Somebody said he was pretty near broke when he died.

SS: I Heard that you were strong.

OT: (laughs)At one time I probably was.

SS: That's what I heard.

AT: I don't doubt it. He was young then and he was heavy then,

OT: I get work.

SS: Do you remember any bad accidents in the woods?

OT: Ya. I hooiked for Rauch, had a sawmill, you know. Once I was driving log truck. And he get killed right here, a log hit him in the head, and killed him right there. And they be bad to Ralph Payne, somebody on the road there, he was kind of road boss. He had to go to Put Parson in Deary and ask him what you going to do, and things like that. That was his dad, you know. There there was a Oregon in 1932 and that was nephew to the superintendent, he get killed. It happened more there, though, see. A young boy, he was 20 years old. I saw him on the railroad car. Took him into the camp. Sent him to Astoria, he was a little guy, and they called Portland to get the special man, specialist. They couldn't do nothing. And I was home in '70, that superintendent's name was Julius Johnson, and he was in a hospital in there. He died there. And my brother wrote if I knew he was there. I could have went to see him. I worked for him in Oregon. So, he died. He was married and he had six boys. And they went in logging too. They went to California, I see his wife, So he told me in the camp, "You come over home in the evening we can sit and talk," And then she had coffee and cookies. She had many to cook for. He used to work in the same camps as my brother. He was in. He know him,

AT: Do you know why that lumberjack name come? He don't know and I don't know,

SS: Well, a jack means like a jill. A jack is a man and a jill is a woman.

So lumberjack would be a jack working in the lumber,

OT: Jack of all trades.

AT: He's a jack.

OT: A long time ago, the lumberjacks shipped out from Spokane, probably Lewiston but now they're home people that work in the woods, There's not really any lumberjacks.

SS: What did you think of the money you were getting here working in the woods?

Did you think the pay was good?

OT: I think they paid pretty good. They really did.

AT: Of course, the money here was much more than money in Sweden. If you figure it in...

OT: But we couldn't switch it into Swedish money so long as you were here.

AT: But I mean, you figure you had so many dollars and made it into Swedish dollars, it was a good feeling, it was quite a bit,

OT: Many did, you know, they saved up money and they went home, and they could buy a place and things like that. And most of them lumberjacks, even married and single, they come into town and then they hollered "Timber!" In the tavern and drink like to beat the band,

SS: Like what?

OT: Drink to beat the band. Drink so long as they had money. Then they went back to the camp, you know. Oh, that feel so good. Then they were alright, Then they worked til they get a little money. Then they started kicking about the grub. About the food, there was nothing right, (laughs) And they took off for Spokane. They come back, then they were so quiet, everything was alright. Thousand dollars for them, that was probably one week, or two, That was all. They don't drink it up, they steal from them.

SS: They steal from each other?

OT: No. They mix up with some other bootleggers, at the time they had moonshine, and tavern man and probably some girls too. And they get broke. And then they come back and they feel so good. And they asked them, how they, "Oh, we had a good time." (laughs)

SS: Married men would do this too?

OT: Oh yeah. They done that. They had a wife in Sweden, and probably in Norway too, and they drink up the money, They send some home, Many went back, though,

SS: They really did. Back to the old country?

OT: Ya. Save up money here and they sent home and they went home,

SS: Did you save the money?

OT: I didn't drink it up. See I went over here I have to loan money, I had some from her brother. And then in '28 I sent for here and the girl, I didn't have

no money, I had two trips to pay for. And then the depression come, we made it here, same place. We bought the place.

SS: What year did you buy the place?

OT: In 1931. Put a bid on it, see. And I was the only bidder.

AT: They told me all kinds of stories, the ones that knew what America was. When he went here.

SS: What do you mean, all kinds of stories?

OT: They go see girls, you know.

AT: Ya. What the men do when they come to this country.

OT: They might be in big cities, see. Go and drink you know.

AT: Go and drinking, but other things, They run around with women, I know.

SS: They ere teasing you?

AT: I don't know. I think they warned me. I think they did, some of my friends.

OT: Warned me..I work all the time.

AT: But I didn't take that so serious, because I had to...

OT: That was only the ladies that had been here.

AT: I have that song about the kids that starved here. And I, but it's in Swedish, that's the trouble.

OT: No, but there was lot of work. All I do is work.

AT: Anyway, I come to this country and I liked America.

SS: Did you like it right away?

AT: Uh huh, I wanted to come to America. I don't know why, because I guess it was right in us kids, because there was so many of us went here. Like...

OT: And there was things too, you know. Them working class of people back home long time, there was't much. The bigger ones, the shots, rich people. You work and they don't pay much you know.

SS: You say you kind of grew up with the idea of America?

AT: Yeah. I don't know, the boys, for one thing, my dad was there and the boys was here and I think it was to me like I liked to come here and I liked it.

So, I guess that was good for me, otherwise I could have had it pretty tough here if I should have if I have had in my mind that I should have everything, because I was in America and all that, and I never...

SS: You didn't really believe that?

AT: No I didn't, I didn't expect that.

SS: When you came over here, were there still a lot of people coming from Sweden or had it trickled off?

AT: Oh yes, it wasn't many that I knew, No.

OT: I don't know the ones that come over here to Troy, except me, Torfin Vein, but he come in '48, he's a Norwegian, Only some had been coming over here, They been coming here from 1880 and up to 18 and...

AT: Axel Flodin came then, didn't he?

OT: No, I think he was here before then, then he come, No, he work around here a little bit, then he went to Klamath Falls, And I think he's still there,

SS: So most everybody had come already?

OT: Oh yeah, most of them had come, see. And when they come in 1886 and so on homestead.

SS: When you came, did you think you might go back? When you first came, or did you think it was for keeps?

AT: I didn't mean for keeps, but it never dawned on me that I was going back, I mean, felt that I should go back, either. I don't know, No, Jalmar, my oldest brother, Troy was his way of life. Poor thing,

OT: He went back and forth all the time,

AT: Yes, and Troy. Wne someone could tell him about Troy, that was his life,

OT: In '23 it was a different state, home and work, And there was many that had been here in America in the camp, They were married and they been back and forth. Well they went home then and they start in getting old, they were buying a place, and they had a family. And there were many of them,

SS: In Sweden?

OT: In that camp I was.

SS: Working for logging?

OT: Yeah. I talked to one that was kind of real old, and he'd been here many years. So he probably had someone, I don't know. Long time ago, you couldn't make so much though.

SS: So you must have heard people talk about America all the time?

OT: They talk about America in the camp all the time. I heard that. They wrote home, this one here.

AT: Ya, but when I come here, my one brother lived in Troy, but if I had gotten a place in Troy to live, then in town, it would have been difference, but I didn't. Oscar had talked to Eric Nelson so I could live in the old house there, out in the country. If I should have sat there alone, but then Hilda and Eric lived in the new house. It worked out just beautiful, Because they lived there.

OT: But you know here: If we'd been buying a house in Troy and the depression come, we'd been starving. Who was gonna give us? They was working WPA, they work around here. They took them from Troy up in a truck and they give them a dollar a day. Then you have to feed yourself. I wasn't a citizen here, I couldn't get that work. What are you going to live on? They'd been sending us back to Sweden.

SS: What happened when the depression came?

OT: We were here and we had cattle, we had pigs, we had chickens, so we wouldn't starve. And then I cut wood and had some to help me so in the fall I sold wood to Ghesee farmers, see.

SS: So that's how you got by in the depression, you sold wood, Yould couldn't work in the woods then.

OT: There wasn't work in the woods in the winter, Little bit in the summertime.

SS: I can see you would have had a rough time if you didn't have the land to live on.

OT: You bet. If we were living in town then I don't know how we could have made it. They get work if they were citizens, but I was no citizen then. The money we had probably I'd been buying the house.

AT: Rent, it was so cheap, Everything then.

OT: If you had work and you had a few dollars, it didn't last, All we talk about one time is we buy a house in Troy. So the woman, there was mother to Mrs. Berkquist, and she was an old lady, to see if she want to sell the house, Right after your brother Axel, see. Then Ole Bohman, the president, he called up and but she won't sell. And that was good thing,

SS: What did you get this place for when you bid on it?

OT: 3500.

AT: See, that was depression.

SS: Was the 160 acres and house?

OT: Ya. I think I get that if I sell in now.(laughs)

AT: But it isn't when you think about it, this isn't much land, or wasn't much to a house there. But I mean, no, even with that little amount of land,,,

OT: Many would like to buy it.

SS: Sure.

OT: Like to get away from town, They're paying awful price,

AT: I was glad to move to my own home. Yes, It was nice with ERic's it couldn't be better when I lived in the little old house there because for me to come and couldn't talk or anything, I was alone, he was always in the camp, it would have been pretty rough, But we lived in the little house and they build a big house and we went back and forth. So that, that was really the best for me,

OT: I worked in the summertime.

SS: How often did you get to see him during those first years?

AT: When he decide to come home.

OT: We was home, I was grading with the railroad north of here, we quit noon Saturday, All the time. We were gyppoing. And then they work a half an hour and the five days, you know. Then Saturday we went home at noon so we never eat even, there whee we boarded. We went home.

SS: You'd naye to be back Sunday night?

OT: Ya, we went back Sunday night. One time we went back in the morning, so we

come kind of late so they went to the woods already.

AT: I know that was one morning.

OT: We made pretty good, railroading. Was more than to cut logs. Paid more. There were eight of us together.

SS: Did you find that you were lonely sometimes?

AT: No. Not exactly lonely, no. They said some people cried and everything, but no. But if I should have sat there all by myself and Eric haven't lived there nobody have lived there, I don't know what I should have done. Because when Eric took the team and went to town, either I went with him and I got what I needed for grocery too and Hilda and I...

OT: They couldn't buy it, and Saturday afternoon when I get home.. We bought a Model T car.

SS: You had a Model T?

OT: Ya.

SS: It looks like it was good for you to become friends with the Nelsons.

OT: They are related to her.

AT: It couldn't have been better, 'cause like I say, that I and Ingrid had sat there all by ourself, I think I been scared. To be alone-

SS: How were you related to them?

AT: I hear so poor. It is distant on mama's side. I can't explain.

SS: It's not too close?

AT: Oh ho. It isn't close. I think maybe my mother and maybe Eric's parents or something was cousins or something. It wasn't close.

SS: How long did it take before you started to feel like you could...

(End of side C)

AT: ...not every word of it, but kind of maybe what they talk about. That doesn't take too long.

OT: Then Ingrid, the girl started talking.

AT: You should hear her.

OT: She started to talk when she was two years old. The girl you know, she was

with somebody and she talk like,,,

AT: Emil Pierson's girl and Ingrid met. And Ruth was older, Ingrid wasn't a bit afraid what it sounded like, she ramble and talk and I guess they didn't understand, but she wasn't afraid, they learn faster when they're kids.

SS: Could she speak English pretty good as a child, or did she learn?

AT: After she met those kids around her she learned, but I don't say it was the best, but she...

OT: She talk just as good as those who's born here that talk Swede, they don't talk real good. They went to school you know, they had no trouble. Many of them they talk to you know, they said, "We start to school, we don't know no English. We don't understand it."

AT: They were home and parents never talk American.

OT: Talk Swede all the time.

AT: But Ingrid's teacher was telling me that they went down to Bear Creek, and she come one morning, kind of excited, after Vernon was born. And she said, "Do you know," she said, "I can talk better English and my brother and he's born here." He couldn't, all he could was scream. (laughs) Her teacher told me that not so long ago, Ruth Olson, you know, Margaret Olson was the teacher. She told me that not so long ago.

SS: I heard that a lot of the old timers from the cold country who had come over, especially the wives that didn't have a chance to get out and mix much, they never did learn to speak English?

AT: No. That's the way it is when no Lois, Vernon's wife, she went to Swedish school in Spokane, it come right to her. It's nothing for her,

OT: Ingrid been talking up Swede in Spokane too. She said, "I thought I know Sweden, but that was different."

AT: She talk like we do, you see, that isn't good Swedish,

SS: That's not good Swedish?

AT: Oh no, that isn't perfect, like we read it in school, we had... (pause in tape)

SS: About Chuck Wells. You knew Chuck Wells.

OT: Yes, I knew him

SS: What do you remember about him?

OT: You know, I probably told you before.

SS: I don't know. If you did, tell me again.

OT: We went, we were down over here, north of highway. He went to Elk River and fix up where we stay, and Chuck Wells, he was with, you know. At noon we put together so we bought a quart of whiskey. And we drink a little bit, then, and when we gave to Chuck Wells, (gruffly) "I have an awful cold." When we went home, we bought one more The boss was with us, so he put money in too. So we gave him, you know, he drink, oh, you bet he did.

SS: The boss?

OT: No, Chuck. (laughs) "Oh yes, I have an awful cold," he said.

SS: Chuck didn't put any money in?

OT: No. (laughs) He never put no money in. Well, he live other side Deary. Go go Helmer and that'd be on the west side of the highway. I think it would be. On the north of the highway it would be. And he walk up there and he had a lunch bucket in his hand. He walked like that, all over the road. (laughs)

SS: He weaved around.

OT: We laughed you know. Then he started to sing. He started to sing Swede. Yes. You bet, he started sing Swede and talk Swede.

SS: Could he do that good?

OT: He done pretty good. So in Deary there, my son-in-law was with, you know, and I started talk Swede to him. And don't you think he answered me. And my son-in-law was with, you know, and I started talk Swede to him. And don't you think he answered me. And my son-in-law said, "That's the first time I heard a nigger talk Swede."

AT: He said, "But now it goes too far," he said. (laughs)

SS: Was Chuck, do you think he stood up for himself and his rights?

I wonder if he thought he got much pr^ejudice?

OT: I don't know, I never heard him said nothing, but he come over here in the west, he worked for them people. And they name him Wells, you know. And he took the name, they gave him the name. They must be pretty nice people he worked for. They were white people I suppose. And that way see, so you have to read a book about him. Have you?

SS: I read The Trees Grew Tall.

OT: He's in on that.

AT: I think it's a good book.

OT: Two brothers, Roy and Chuck and Mary, the girl, they were right there, see. He was a nice.

AT: The King family, they said, I wasn't here then, I wouldn't have been, but they said the King family that lived in Deary. People, they were just like, they were all the same people. And the boy, Billy, they said, he went to school and the girls danced with him.

OT: That was Mary's kid, she was married to one by the name of King. And he in the first Worl War, he went to France to the war. Never come back. They don't know what happened, if he get killed in the war and he done something, they killed him. He never come back.

AT: I don't know, but I heard that they were treated nice.

OT: Oh yeah, they were nice people.

AT: There was a family from Deary. Mrs. Berglund she the one that died first? You know, we were in Nora church at the funeral and the colored people came and was at the funeral.

SS: Was that for Mary?

OT: I don't know who the funeral was.

AT: I thought it was Mrs. Berglund.

OT: Could be.

AT: I think it was Mrs. Berglund. They were Deary people and they come,

OT: I seen some white people in...

AT: I remember because we were there in the church.

OT: But they pretty near had to learn Swede for there was all Swedes and Norwegians living around. And they talk it you see, they couldn't talk English anyway. First when they came over, you see. So they were nice people.

SS: When you first came over, how did you think the neighborhood/community compared to when you were in Sweden?

AT: I thought people here was as nice as they could be.

OT: That way...

AT: But they were more, at home they were more, you have that scare when you were nothing.

OT: Rich people.

SS: Over there, you mean?

OT: Over in Sweden. But you know there the people live close together. Here it's so far between, have more land here, you see. Like Anna come from, they were pretty close, where you come from.

AT: Sure.

OT: Neighbors you know. Here, they were kind of closer here too when we come over here. They say now there's a big farmer in...

SS: Did you feel as at home here, that people were as friendly here as they were there?

AT: Yes, they were. Oh, they were friendly here, I thought. Because I expect, I was in America and it would be so high and mighty so they wouldn't talk to me. No, I thought, and I liked America from the beginning, because people were nice and friendly. Oh, they were nice and friendly, So, I liked, no.

OT: They were closer neighbors.

SS: Do you think it was similar here to the way it was back there? I'm wondering about how being in America changed the Swedes who had been here for a while. Were they very different for having lived here three or four years? Had they changed?

AT: I don't think people, I don't know how they would be from the beginning, the American people, I don't know that. But I couldn't see that they could be any difference, but of course we were among the Swedish bunch there, They talked Swedish, it was just like home.

SS: I'm thinking is here these people had left Sweden maybe 30-40 years before you did. I'm wondering how being in America changed them? As compared to what the people were like in Sweden.

OT: I think they changed some, you know. They did. Those that come 30,40,50 60 years ago ahead of us, they were thinking that Sweden was exactly the same way as the time they left there. But there was difference. They went up and up, the things, and changed a lot of things. And they done it here too. And they come from here, home, and we see it, you know. The people over there, they could see that they been in America. They could always see that.

AT: They could always see they come from America.

OT: They doj't walk the same as back home in Sweden.

SS: How was it different?

OT: In one way, they walk faster here. If they go places you can see right on the sidewalk here, in town they go fast. There they don't. Eric Nelson's brother was here in '59 and was in Moscow there and I walk. He said, "You walk so fast, I can't keep up with you."

AT: Eric Nelson's brother was old when he come to this country.

OT: They more rush over here, the same with work and everything.

AT: How old was Ole-when...?

OT: I think he was 69.

AT: And Eric, he talked Swedish, but he forgot, he said neighbors.

OT: Neighborhood, he said.

AT: The neighbors. And Ole, he couldn't get that. "Neighbors," He didn't know what it was, he said. Now he say, I never heard that word." That neighborhood,

OT: Eric said, "neighborhood," you see. He said, "Come with that word again," he said, "Neverhoe?" (laughs)

SS: Once they'd been in America, were they more independent?

OT: I think they was, yes. More independent, see. And more to go ahead. Over there, being home there all the time, they haven't been out. It is not like those that come from here. They have a little different, see.

AT: But people...

OT: They go and travel too, those days.

AT: People long ago come from home and come here and took homestead and all that they had to be kind of get up in them too, Otherwise they couldn't have gotten anything.

OT: They had to work,

AT: They had to kind of try with the language and everything to make it. I never thought about it because when I come here, because we never had taken anything. But like Eric, when he came here and took that land there, I wonder how he did it?

OT: Huh?

AT: I wonder how Eric Nelson did it? When he came here and took that land,

OT: He bought the land.

AT: He bought the land.

OT: At first, he was around Omak. He was in Missoula first, and then he was around Omak, Republic he was. That was close to the Canadian border. And then he come around here, see. And they styed in Moscow first where he had an uncle there. Nostrom was there. And then he come here and he bought, I think they paid \$460 for it(laughs)

SS: But you say they thought things hadn't changed in Sweden since they'd been there?

OT: They were thinking the same way, them old fellows that left, they thought it was the same over here.

SS: But things were changing in Sweden too?

OT: O they was. You bet. I think they was about the same, you know. Anna's brother

we go home in '70, he was just about 81 years old, and he thought that Troy was the same. "No" I said, "if you come over there, you probably don't know nobody, and you don't know them fields even. The difference. The big farmers, and many houses are down, you'd be surprised. You don't even know the highway, The new highway." And when they talked it was the same. But he'd like to be over here again, he was back and forth all the time, you see,

AT: America was his life.

OT: He seen Troy, but I said, "You'd be surprised, if you go back,"

AT: In, he fought for America too,

SS: In the war?

AT: Oh yeah.

OT: He was in France,

SS: And his wife didn't want to live here?

OT: No, she didn't like it.

AT: She didn't want to come.

SS: I can't figure out why she didn't want to come here?

AT: I can't figure that out either.

OT: He had money, he could have bought a little farm here.

SS: You didn't mind coming. Why should somebody mind coming?

AT: I felt it was what I should do. And all that. I never thought about that, No I felt sorry for him, They said, they wrote and said that if they told them when he got older and even forgetful, but then if they start talking about Troy, then he woke up. Oh yes, when they mentioned Troy. And he was here so much around here. But anyway, he never forgot that.

OT: He was younger he came over. Kind of raised with the other boys here and things like that.

SS: Do you think he tried pretty hard to persuade her to come?

OT: I don't know.

AT: That I don't know.

OT: He went back here, the last time he went back in 1931, in the spring. He was

here a couple of years the last time. He was married then,

SS: You think she was afraid?

AT: I don't know.

SS: Did she ever come to try it?

OT: No, I don't think so. Her mother was living and she wouldn't leave her, I suppose.

AT: But they had the neighbor girl there you see, her parent was, that girl was born here even, in this country. I tell you it was really hard. That mother had all she had was her dad at home in Sweden. He had a little house, few acres around it and all that and he wrote and said, "When I just have one child and they don't come to me." He just kept on like that. And she felt bad about that too, because she was needed to go and see her dad and she did and there they had three kids, Elsa and Dorothy and Elmer. They come here, you know, there was no money in that, it was pretty hard for her, she had cows too and all that. There was no income from that. Little place her dad had. But she said she can't leave him or go back because for one thing, he was old and she knew he eventually will die and all that, but it was pretty rough.

SS: That's Jalmar's wife?

AT: Jalmar's wife's mother.

AT: That was the neighbor girl I was going to tell you.

SS: The neighbor girl.

AT: Elsa, she was when Jalmar was oldest, she was crazy. But ya, she had it all planned for Jalmar. "We go, we take a plane and we go and then we come over this place." Of course they come to visit us. Then the airplane go right down! Then the airplane come right down. Oh, that Elsa was so crazy, you can't imagine. That helped Jalmar quite a bit.

SS: Just knowing that he might come back?

AT: She talked like that.

SS: She had been to America?

AT: She was born here, that girl was born here.

OT: She was back here too. Both the girls,

SS: Did she ever get to come back here?

OT: Not the mother, never come, but he went back, he come back here and work.

AT: He went back, the father. It was just that dad of Elsa's mother. It just made her feel so bad, because she kept on writing and writing and all that, and they lived back east.

OT: In Waukegan, out of Chicago.

AT: And finally they thought they should go home. Ya, they come home, there was no money there. That old man had no money and that little place wasn't any income. The only thing was they got a cow so they had milk and things like that. And you know that the kids began to get, it took quite a bit even and food was different. Ya the kids wanted so and so like they had here. It was pretty rough for Marie, and she thought she couldn't leave her dad. But Gust her husband went back to make money.

SS: To America?

AT: Oh yeah, come back here.

SS: She and Jalmar used to talk about America?

AT: I tell you, that was life. That crazy Elsa, but that helped liven him up too. Because Troy, that was his life. It was really too bad that they couldn't be here. They were so good to them. There wasn't any hardship on them. But he was too much in Troy.

SS: What was Jalmar's wife's name?

AT: Marie.

SS: Was she very close to her mother?

OT: Ya, I think she was home all the time.

AT: I tell you, of course she was home all the time. And if I tell you, it's crazy, Jalmar built a new home for her, because he bought a place. And then Marie, his wife, hse couldn't move to her own home, new built home because it would be too lonesome to leave where she lived before. And you could see the smoke!(laughs)If you were here you could see the smoke a little ways away.

It was close.

SS: If she couldn't move a quarter of a mile I can see why she couldn't move to the U.S.

AT: You can see that. Because it wasn't more than a quarter of a mile. So that would have been, oh, she told me when I was there to visit, oh, it was so lonesome to move over here and it was a new home. It was so lonesome to leave home.

OT: She didn't come over here, you know, she hadn't been here anyway.

SS: She'd never been here?

OT: No. If she'd been coming over here, she'd been going back. You bet she wouldn't stayed here. I can bet anything she'd been going back.

AT: It was hard for Jalmar in one way. He didn't complain, but America was his life. That's for sure.

SS: How old was Jalmar the first time he came?

AT: I think maybe was 18 years old. Maybe or so. Jalmar?

OT: When he come here first time?

AT: Ya.

OT: First time it was 1905.

SS: How old would he be?

OT: In 1905 and he was 87 when he died. And you can see...

AT: But he asked how old he was when he come here.

OT: We have to figure out then.

SS: What year did he die in?

OT: He died last year.

SS: And he was 87.

OT: Then he come here, 1905. (break)

SS: So then he would have been 18.

AT: I thought it was about that.

SS: I wanted to ask you Oscar, why it was that you had to go to Norway to work in the logging. Why couldn't you work in Sweden?

OT: Well sometimes we didn't have work, and here was other thing: I liked to get

away from home and I was more free then, see. And I think the Norwegian bosses was a little better. They like to have Swedes to work because they was harder workers than the Norwegians. We worked 1920, way out in the woods, they have to pack food to us. And there were Nor^wegian boys that worked, well, they went home around Saturday morning, come back Monday, sometimes they had girls with them that stayed all week you know. Well, they wouldn't work. And we'd stay there all the time. I remember one time it rained so bad so we couldn't work for two days. Then my brother and I, we went and worked Sunday?

SS: Tent?

OT: No, we had a house, a kind of cabin. Used to come in with the cattle in the summertime, lady, girl come and took care of them, but there wasn't mone in that there. And there was girls and older ladies and took care of cattle there, see. So, and the boss called up, the big boss, you know. He said, "We can't let them boys go. For then there would be nothing done here."

SS: You say you had more freedom to get away from home. What do you mean?

OT: When we come down with the work, we stay, eating in hotel or cafe. And there we had the boards bought probaby a big meal a day. And then we had a little lunch that we bought in the store, some bread and cheese and stuff and things like that, and then we sometimes we went and bought... That way it was, you see, more free. And then it was out more too. My brothers and I used to be here. He was older. But then I had a Nor^wegian partner, just about the same age, he was probably a year older. So we were together.

SS: Did you work in Norway as much as you did in Sweden?

OT: I think I did. I was there '17, '18, '19 and then I work afterward. I was there '20, '21, '23 and '24.

SS: In Norway?

OT: Yes, in Norway.

SS: How long would the season be you would work?

- OT: In 1920 I went in there in the spring and I worked til Christmas, I was home once, I think it was. Then I went back after Christmas, then I work in the woods. I work in the summertime too in the woods. And last part of October, 1920, we went in and worked close to Oslo. So I went to Oslo one time...
- SS: When you were in the woods there, was it like a lumber camp? Like here? Or were there fewer people?
- OT: There were fewer of us and we done our own cooking.
- SS: How many in one place?
- OT: That cabin, we stayed, there were around five of us.
- SS: Was that the only cabin there or were there more cabins?
- OT: No, there were more cabins that others stayed in too, you see. Then there was, we called, go in in the summertime, the cattle, you know. There were one or two more empty ones that those who worked in the woods stayed in.
- AT: You know the way they lived, they had that fire here and they cooked over the open fire. They cooked there and there were so many. It was hot many times.
- OT: 1921, ther were so many in the camp. Had a little stove, it was kind of hard to get something to cook, you know. And you were wet too, you know, dry your clothes.
- AT: Where did all of you sleep there then, wasn't one room?
- OT: There was one room and we made kind of a brace what we called, made of, I think we had lumber that time. We made three, four of us sleep on that you know. And the there was top bunks. And we'd get lousy too. There was awful, they'd work on the night on us. (laughs) I think there was a Swede from home he had them with, I'm pretty sure it was.
- SS: What?
- OT: I think there were ones from home here, had a horse and they drove. He had two and he was home. I think he get the louse with him, and all of us, he get it, you know.
- SS: But you still figured it was more freedom than staying at home would be?

OT: There was freedom, there really was. But I could have went back close to Oslo and work all winter, the boss told me, "You come back and you can work here all winter." I never did. And I went out in Norway anyway. In logging camp, you know.

SS: You mean you didn't work in the winter too?

OT: Yeah.

SS: You did.

OT: I work in the winter.

SS: Do you think you worked as hard in Norway as you did in America? In the woods?

OT: Well, I think I did. There was no difference. Except here, you don't have to peel them. Like you did there. You had a spud.

SS: Why did you have to peel them there?

OT: They dried you know, and they had the log drive. And you see some that you can go to the bottom and if you peel them, you know they dried then. We done that in Sweden too. But now there was home, they never peel 'em anymore. They haul them to the road and they take them with a truck now. Same as here. Use chain saw.

(End of side D)

OT: ...eat you know, all kinds of good food and you don't have to wash dishes or cook, you know.

AT: I know Oscar was out working, where he was I can't say. He had his dishes with him from home. And that was all coal black except for a piece here where he had his mouth. So if that was the dishwashing, I don't think...

OT: Sometimes we washed dishes, you know.

AT: The cup was black and here was that spot there when he had his lop.

OT: Sunday, you know, we had to wash some clothes and then, not in the wintertime in the summertime we did. And then we fixed up the tools, sharpened them up, you know. Things like that. So you work. There was a difference. But you have to sharpen your tools here, except your saw. They had a saw filer here. But the axe, you have to sharpen the axe.

- SS: What about the smuggling that you did across the border? You mentioned that to me before. Was that tobacco mostly that you smuggled?
- OT: No, it was soap, you know. Hand soap, and paper. You could buy that in Norway.
- AT: Paper, they had paper.
- OT: In Sweden it was hard to get that in the wartime. And here in 1918 and then we took snuff back to Norway. And they don't have snuff there. That way we traded see.
- SS: How careful did you have to be not to get caught?
- AT: It wouldn't have been nice if you got caught,
- OT: Oh, you went over in night. (laughs) If we go way over to the Swedish side, you know, it was alright. When we went over to Norway, they didn't bother us. They liked to have that snuff. (laughs)
- SS: How did you go? Did you have to cross over in the countryside some place?
- OT: Yes we did. We went over in the countryside. Trails in the woods.
- SS: Did you say you skied?
- OT: Yes, at one time we did. In the wintertime, skied over, Six Swedish miles. And left 7:30 the Norwegian side, went over big lake and come out on Swedish side, you see. Good skiing.
- SS: Was that, did you think that was dangerous at the time or did you think it was fun?
- OT: That wasn't dangerous. One way that were kind of fun, you know. We don't need much, though. Tried a lot of things. One time I remember, my brother, I went with me, and we wait on the Norwegian side to let the custom inspector go to sleep, so you can see the lights, see. And I went to sleep, it was in the fall, you know. So he wake me up and said, "We better go now. The man went to sleep. The man turned the light off." We had a lot of fun.
- SS: I've heard people say around here that there's competition between Swedes and Norwegians. Little competitiveness. I wonder if that was true back there?
- OT: Well I don't know.
- SS: Maybe that's not the right word.
- OT: There was a time when the Swedes and Norwegians were competing for the

drunk and they fight a little bit. Otherwis^e, at home they never did. We were raised right at the border, see, and Norwegians come over home and we went over there. It was the same people then. And they come in further in, you know. That can happen, see. I was at the dances there and I had nothing happen. I think there was some of the, well, you always know when they're drunk, some Norwegian, Swede kind of get kind of (into it.) That can happen here too.

AT: In '48 when we were home, we went in to Norway, I was going to buy something for, a gift for our son and I wanted a ski sweater. I went there, we were in there and I understood this clerk. He was so nice.

OT: I was in there now when they were home too. I was there in 1920.

AT: But you see, the money wasn't much different in Norway, and American money more, and in Sweden, and American. I wrote to Ingrid, I said I went into Norway, so I bought things. I bought a ski sweater for Roger because they were cheaper there. They were hundred and so many and I bet she fell over a hundred, but that was the Norwegian and American...

OT: It is 74 crowns Swedish money.

AT: I did it just purposely, I knew it was a surprise.

OT: So many goes over there and buys, her brother was over there. Oscar and we, he went in special in there and bought stuff. Send it right over here.

AT: I could understand that man. He talked good. That's the way in Sweden. Out in the country they talk so poor Swedish, I guess maybe it was slang in Norway too. And he talked so nice Norwegian, this cler.

OT: He was over there, we were home in '70 and Vernon, my son was there and I went into other place and Roger and girls. Vernon's wife. And it was kind of warm there, happen to see a sign up selling beer. I told my brother, we go in there and see, buy us a glass of beer. We have two glasses. We have to pay a dollar a piece for them. For a glass of beer. It coast us two dollars and they made over seven Norw^egian crowns. I told the girl that was high priced, I said, I

I talked Swede to her. And in America, that's two bits twenty five cents,
She don't like it, I could see that!

AT: Did you say that?

OT: No. And in the other room there was Norwegians sitting , she carried beer for
'em all the time. I can't see how you can sit and drink and pay seven crowns,
Norwegian.

SS: You think she was charging you more?

OT: I thought that was an awful price to give a whole dollar for a glass of beer,

AT: You couldn't expect her to like that when you say it like that,

OT: I said, "I'll give you fifty cents." I had to laugh .

SS: I want^ed to ask you: I've heard it said that in the old country, the women
didn't have much freedom. They were expected to work for the men. Do you think
that was true?

OT: You ask her.

AT: For the women to work?

SS: Did they have much say about things?

AT: Yeah. That I didn't have very much experience with, because I was young and
the kids didn't have much to say in the home, I say the kids,

OT: You weren't that young when you come over here.

AT: But I guess it was more, a long time ago. They said it was just awful. The
women had nothing to say.

OT: The women a long time ago, they couldn't even inherit even money.

AT: That was really long time ago.

OT: The oldest boy in the family, he gets pretty near all, That's the way it was.
And the women, ~~they~~ were nothing.

AT: No, the women...

OT: They took care of the cattle, all that.

AT: And the farming.

SS: I also heard that women did heavier farm work,

OT: They did.

AT: We did, always that, the women.

- SS: When you were growing up, what was it like?
- AT: It was hard work.
- OT: You can tell him what you work. You can tell how you have to work.
- AT: Ya, I say I can't tell step for step, I don't remember.
- OT: Took care of the cattle, oh ya, and took care of the house, Oh sure. Was out in the field. Oh yes. Done all the milking that's in. Cleaned the house. Ya, sew for the kids. It was all that!
- AT: Oh it was lots hard work. Really it was. But I would be out and spread manure in the fields.
- SSL But then did the women have much say on how things should be done?
- AT: No, not how things should be done. That I can't say. Of course, I never had anything at home. I mean, when I was home, I just was the daughter of the house.
- OT: No, that was the men that said how it should be done.
- AT: That was too bad. But I had an awful good dad, so he was so good to mama and all.
- OT: That's why you have to work.
- AT: Oh yeah.
- SS: Why?
- OT: She don't work.
- AT: Oh yeah, we sure had to work. No. But I have worked since I come here too. Been out in the fields and in thw barn. That was easy for me because I was used to that. people that hasn't been used to it, it would have been harder.
- OT: Take a young girl here and take them to the barn and milk. Can you milk?
- SS: UN UN. Never had to. Never had a cow. But was it very different here, the position that women had in the family?
- AT: I come to Eric Nelson's and Hilda went out in the barn. She wasn't out in the fields, but it was just like home. She had to be in the barn and milk. So of course, it wasn't all places here.

OT: A lot of women here, then kind of Swedish women and Norwegian women, they work in the barn too you know, milking.

SS: What if you were going to decide how something was going to be done? Was that a decision the husband and wife would make together? Or did the husband make the decision all by himself?

OT: I don't know, I don't think the husband won't decide all by himself, They (would) talk it over.

AT: Eric Nelson was impossible too, Hilda never liked that he went to sales and bought all kinds of junk and all that, But he did it and she didn't know til he got someone to haul home.

SS: What kind of things would he buy?

AT: He bought, if it was a farm sale and it was things he didn't need either, He wanted something. Oh, she was so disgusted too, she couldn't be worse, but I never said that to people, relatives around here, She used to say that, "I have rode against the stream so many years," (laughs) She talked to me about it. We were so good friends, her and I and I never have mentioned it. No, he was, of course, if it has been useful things, but I can't know if it was that he bought at those sales.

OT: He bought a lot of stuff, but he bought some good stuff that they had to have for farming too, Plows and things like that.

SS: When did you have this place paid off?

OT: It took me eleven years, In 1942, I paid down 1800 there was 17 left. But the hard time come, well, you know, you have to buy stuff when you move here, cattle, you know, and things like that, chickens and didn't pay very much that way, And I thought that with 1700 left it wouldn't take long to pay if I made pretty good in the woods, Well, the depression come, there wasn't no work, Then there was nothing paid, either.

SS: Did you have to rent this place out to farm it or did you farm it yourself?

OT: No, when we first lived here, that was Guy Kidd, he farm it one year after I

bought it. In 1932 we moved in,

SS: Then you farmed it?

OT: '32, no, he farmed it in '33 I think. And one year after he moved out.

AT: But he asked if you farmed it?

OT: Ya, then I started farming. Then I have to buy horses.

SS: Did you work in the woods too, or did you stop working?

OT: There was no work. The work in the summertime, the spring work, and things like that. There wasn't too much work,

SS: What happened in '36 when the woods started opening up again? Did you keep farming or did you go to the woods?

OT: No, I keep farming. I was farming here. To 1958.

SS: So that pretty much stopped your work in the woods?

OT: I work in the woods, some, you see, and then I had to quit. And then in 1958 that soil bank come in, you could put it in, government paid, see. And that was in for eight or ten years, in '68, and then I rent it out to Dan McKenzie. And then I got rid of them horses and I bought a tractor. So.

AT: It wasn't much different to come from Sweden over here. But I like America of course. I always have. When I was in Sweden I liked it there too.

OT: Yes, but here was a little bit difference too. You know here. We moved here nad we workd for ourselves. We tried to make it, see. There it's different. You work home there and you help them, mother and dad, There you see. And take care of them. And here we tried to make it and pay for the place, Little bit different to work for yourself,

SS: That's a big difference.

OT: Yes, it is.

SS: I think you're talking about the people too. I mean, the life itself was kind of similar. Here and there.

AT: Like I say, I guess maybe I shouldn't. I come to this country, but I'm glad I did. I wanted to go and I went.

OT: Lot of work here, but the same thing in Sweden. Some were born here, and they work in the barn and things. Help, you know. So many of them Swedes have 10,11 kids. And twelve kids, they had. If they been living in town, they never could support twelve kids. And they have to be on the farm.

SS: You mean if they had that many kids here?

OT: No.

SS: Back in Sweden?

OT: No, I mean here.

SS: In Sweden they had smaller families, didn't they?

OT: Well, they had up to eight kids. Here had up to twelve.

AT: A long time ago, but now they hardly have any kids in later years. In Sweden.

OT: No, not in Sweden.

SS: But they had bigger families here than in Sweden in the early days.

OT: Well they that them, Swedes that come over and took homesteads, they had kind of big families.

AT: Unless it's differant now. But when we come home in '48, we were really surprised. Course, in my home, we were eight kids. We were eight kids.

OT: Here there were ten, eleven, twelve. And they made it! You know, get the land for nothing and its all brush land and you want to raise a family, 10,11 kids and 12, I don't think you can make it.

AT: What it was they said...

OT: And then yoiu had a breaking plow and 2,3 horses to break little by little.

AT: But of course the women was out, they said, help breaking and all that.

OT: They helped. Som had to saw down big timber and burn it up, for they couldn't sell no logs.

AT: I guess it was the Swedish men that had their wife out, I don't know if the American men had, I don't know.

OT: You see, to saw down them big trees you know, there was a cross cut saw, there, pref'near have to be one on each end. Otherwise you couldn't hardly get

'em down. Family that lived over here, to get 40 acres they cleared 40 acres.
Friedman and his wife.

AT: Ya, but who did they get that land from?

OT: You get land from I think, probably that was Hawkinson. They clear the land
40 acres for Flodin, so they could get forty acres.

AT: And then they got 40.

OT: I think that's what it was. And the work, I don't know how much the work they
done some, over at Hilgarde there to get a wagon. I tell you that wasn't so
good.

AT: I remember when we come here and I remember we had a time to get a shovel or
whatever it was. Because we didn't have any money. We got it, but I mean, we
had to figure...

OT: I worked out a litte bit and made some extra money and then sold wood.

AT: But that is rewarding, though, when it is really hard to get things, and we
get it, can make it. That means more than if you take the money and go buy it!
We were so happy then.

OT: You work hard, you know and you try to make it, you see, there was a lot of
difference. Many that get money a thousand for nothing. They don't appreciate
it, either. I f you work and you can get money, you appreciate it, you worked
for that money.

AT: When we come home, if everything goes alright, we get to see Elsa. Oh yeah,
that is life. That one that lived up Jalmar all the time, they were going to
come in the plane and drop down here and she said, "We tell them, Jalmar, we
do that." He didn't believe that.

SS: We tell them we're coming?

AT: To just drop down here so they didn't have to bother to have any, they flew
right past where they were going to lift off. Oh, that Elsa is so full of
craziness.

OT: But she is in a wheel chair, I think she had a stroke.

AT: Poor Elsa.

OT: A stroke.

SS: She's still living?

AT: Yes, She's a lot younger than I am. And when Ingrid was little, she tried to have Ingrid, 'cause Ingrid was so good, to talk to, when she was little. And she taught her to say the first word there was. And her mother was so mad at her, she could hit her with anything, "You can't talk that!" Elsa didn't care, she thought Ingrid was so little, she didn't understand what it was. But I surely didn't like it and I told her. Oh and then she had so much fun, you can't imagine, she got her to say. Honestly.

SS: I should probably get going...

(End of tape)