ARTHUR BJERKE

Interviewed by:

Sam Schrager

Oral History Project

Latah County Museum Society

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ARTHUR BJERKE

Deary; b. 1886

farmer; herder; carpenter; logger

1.5 hours

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with Sam Schrager
August 15, 1973

II. Transcript

Arthur Bjerke is probably the oldest oldtimer still living in the Deary country, and he's still on the family homestead on Brush Creek. He reaches back to very early days and local people, such as the Indian Mox Mox; the Wells', who were black innkeepers; and some of the first groups of settlers. Arthur was one of the cowboys of this country; he tells here of herding cattle from range to range, and trading horses with an Indian.

SAM SCHRAGER: So ya just been sitting around, huh?

ARTHUR BJERKE: Oh, getting around, getting so dang stiff and stumbly that I can't get around much.

SAM: Yeah, I wanted to go back and ask you some things, the way we was talking last time, about the old days. How did your parents come about coming out here and getting the place that they got?

A B: They homesteaded it. You know, we come here in 1890 to Genesee from Dakota. And dad worked on the railroad when they built it through Troy. And he got acquainted with some people that homesteaded down here on Bear Creek, right down below Deary. So we moved up there, and then he come up here and he took this homestead, and we moved up here. And that's about all there is to it. And we moved on the place the 17th day of March, 1891. And our neighbor over here, Martin Olson, he moved on his place the 18th day of March, 1891. He stayed with us 'tils he got the cabin built over there.

SAM: Were there people here at that time?

A B: Oh there was a few. Well, Louie Halseth and M. S. Perry and them up around Helmer was here, and the Lawrences.

SAM: What was the land like then?

A B: Well It was pretty heavy timbered. But the Indians had kept it burnt off so it wasn't much underbrush. You could drive pret'near anywheres you wanted to in the open timber.

SAM: What did they do, your parents, to start homesteading here? What did they do on the land?

A B: Well, they started in cleaning it up a little, and breaking up a little land. Then they slashed down a bunch of timber on the flats here, and burnt off the logs. It was all black pine. And then they grubbed out the brush roots that was, and then seeded it to timothy and cut hay with the scythe to keep a few cows.

SAM: Was it hard? Hard living? Was it hard getting by?

A B: Oh yeah. Well the first year, you know it was pretty hard to get any groceries or anything. We had a few chickens, and by gosh we lived pret'near on bread and eggs. And I got so that I believe it was 30 years before I'd eat an egg after that. And I don't care for an egg now. I can eat an egg, a time or two, and I don't want another egg again.

SAM: You got plenty sick of it.

A B: Well had a few chickens, and they laid awful good.

SAM: What do you remember from when you were a little boy?

A B: Oh, I can remember quite a few things all right. You know, I remember when we was in Dakota. We lived in the cellar back there, that is, in a sod shanty. And there was quite a lot of wolves back there. And I can remember my sister, she got up on the top of the roof on that sod shanty, and sit and barked at the wolves. And she was 97 years the day before yesterday; and she lives in Wenatchee. And then I remember when we come across the mountains, there had been a train wreck, and there was kind of a lake there, and a car wreck, and spilled a bunch of cattle into the lake. They were laying out there floating in the water, I can remember that. And then I can remember when we got to Spokane, it was after the Spokane fire, and Spokane just had a rough lumber shack for a depot.

SAM: What do you remember from when you first come down here?

A B: Oh I can remember it was kind of a rough country. And then, our next neighbor up here that lived up on this place here, their name was Halseth. They had four boys. We went to the first school together. That was I and my sister, and the four Halseth boys, and Hawkin Peterson, and the three nigger kids, that was the first school kids. There was 10 of us. I can remember that.

SAM: Did you work around the house a lot when you were a boy?

A B: Oh yeah. Yeah, I kind of learnt, well, built on the house here a little. And after I got part grown up, a carpenter worked here, and I worked with him and I kind of learnt to be a kind of a carpenter. So after I growed up I done a lot of carpenter work around through the country. Yes, there is houses out on the ridge and in Deary and Bovill and Helmer that I've built.

SAM: You told me a story about a man that your father met who he had known a long time ago. Will you tell me that story?

A B: Yeah. Well, dad went over from Norway to Sweden and went to work in the timber up there. And there was an English outfit that bought a bunch of timber in Sweden. Of course they'd have to log out to the small creeks. And the timber was shipped down to the ocean and loaded on the boat and shipped to England and sawed there. The biggest timber he took out up there and they sawed--and they made a lot of square timber--and the biggest square timber he took out was a 14 by 14, 76 feet long. That takes quite a stick of timber to make that kind of timber! Then, of course they couldn't log in the summer when it was dry; and then they worked around for the farmers there, and cleared land and one thing another, just to keep the horses busy. And he worked for a fella by the name Sahlin up there, and broke some land for him. He wasn't married and dad wasn't neither. And dad worked up there ten years, and he went back to Norway and he got married, and Sahlin is married a widow, and she had a boy, his name was Wallner. And they come to this country, and this Wallner started a dry goods store in Troy. Well, there was a lot of Swedes and Norweigans in Troy and around on this side, and of course they all went to Wallner's to trade. And dad was in there one day, and a Swede come in there, and he talks Swede to beat the dickens. And dad says to him, he says, "I hear you are from Jämtland,"

The fella straightened up and he says, "Have you been in Jämtland?"

Dad says, "Yes." He says he was out there 10 year. Well this fella

wanted to know what he'd done out there. Well, dad says in the winters they worked for the Dixon Timber Company there, logging, and in the summer, when they couldn't log, they'd work for the farmers around there, clear land, break land, and one thing another. And this fella, he straightened up and he said, "It surely wasn't you that broke my plow?"

Well, dad says, "I don't know whether I broke your plow or not," but he says, "I know I broke my own quite a few time." They got to talking, and by god dad has broke land for this Sahlin in Jämtland, Sweden, 40 years before, and they come and met here in Troy! Isn't that something?

SAM: It sure is.

A B: Well, Magnuson, he homesteaded down here, and then there was another fella by the name of Eric Larson that homesteaded down there. But then they couldn't get money, you know--like Eric Larson and Ben Lee--so they could file on that land at a certain time. And that's went back and been state land. But Magnuson bought that Eric Larson's land, so Ed Magnuson has got that. And he sold it to Carlson from down here by Troy, so they have got it now. And Eric Larson, he made a mistake. He come up here to hunt, and he slipped and fell on a log and shot himself accidently. He had them high cuffs with brass buttons in. Well it blowed off half of his arm and tore one of them buttons out of his cuff, and that hit him in the mustache and it stopped back and out of the eye. And that was a brass button, and that killed him.

And then the Lawrences up here, at the old post office where Jansville was, they homesteaded up there about in the 90's. And Louie Halseth and M. S. Perry come in about '98. And Andrew Berg and the Erickson up there on the meadows, they come in about '89.

SAM: Did the different homesteaders visit each other very much?

A B: Oh yeah, they visited quite a lot together. By god they were more sociable then than they are now. By god you'd meet a neighbor on the road--there

was all horse and wagon--they'd pull in under a shady spot somewheres and sit there and visit for an hour or so. And first I could remember--well hell, it was way up into the '30's you know--by god, pret'near every place pret'near every Saturday night, there would be a dance in some of the old cabins, and they'd all be there. And there was always somebody that could play. They'd play, and the women'd bring a lunch, and they'd have a big midnight lunch and maybe they'd dance 'til daylight and have a good time. But now, by god you don't see one another anymore.

There was a fella down the other night--well it was the 13th he was down--that used to work for me on the thrashing machine. He worked for me about six years straight. And his sister was down. Well, this fella and his wife live down in Oregon around Salem somewheres, and his sister lives up here in this side of Deary. She fell here a year ago and broke her hip so she can't get around very good; she is pret'near my age. And they used to be along too on the parties. Well hell, there was parties all over. And even the niggers was along.

SAM: You mean Joe Wells and his children?

A B: Well, that is the younger part of them, that is Chuck and Mary and them. Roy didn't dance.

SAM: How well did those kids fit in? Did they get teased a lot about being Negroes?

A B: No, hell no, they got along good with the white. And they associated with the white right along. Goddamit, if it was a party with the whites, the niggers was right along. Hell I've danced with them niggers lots of times. And by god they were good dancers too.

SAM: What was Joe Wells like? Do you remember?

A B: Oh, he was a pretty good size nigger. But his wife was pretty light colored. I think she was kind of a mulatto. Oh year, I remember them. You know I can

remember the first time I seen them niggers, I was just a kid. Boy I was scared to death of them. But it didn't take me long to get over that, when we started to go to school.

SAM: Was there a lot of joking about them being Negroes instead of whites?

A B: No, not much. Old Joe, you know, he used to say he was the only white man up around here, the rest of them was Swedes. Old Joe he used to say, "I like my whiskey, but Lou likes her tabacco." Well, the second house they had up there, it was an old lumber floor, and knotholes had fell out of the lumber. And by god, you know, she'd chew tobacco, and she'd sit there, and by god she could spit through them knotholes just as good as anybody. Well finally she died, and of course Joe kept a-drinkin', and whiskey went out of fashion, so that it was all moonshine; and he got too much of that moonshine, and that killed him. He come out with the Wells boys from Carolina. And about the first settlers in around down below Deary was Carolinians. Well, really the first bunch that settled up in here was seven Germans, but they left pretty quick, biggest part of them. One of them was Mike Tebor and one, his name was Albert Riggs. And down below here, they started in calling this the Seven Devil's Country, on account of them seven Germans.

SAM: But they didn't stay.

A B: They didn't stay. They just stayed a year or two and they left.

SAM: Who were these South Carolinians?

A B: Well there was Frank Wells and Crom Wells, and a fella by the name of Cole, and Mark Rogers and Bert Rogers...

SAM: Well, you got most of 'em.

A B: And Charlie Burlinghouse, and Frank and Mace McCoy, and Frank Ellis and Terry Ellis and old Hinchley...

SAM: Did they all come out together from Carolina?

A B: They come pretty well all together.

SAM: So you think they knew each other back there?

A B: Oh yeah, a lot of them did. Well, Cole and the Wells boys and Mark Rogers and them, they knew one another, they come right from the same place.

SAM: Do you know anything about the Indians that were here in the old days? Did you used to see them?

A B: Oh, we used to see them quite a lot. They used to pass by here quite often. There used to be quite a lot of huckleberries here. And there always used to be a bunch of Indians stop up there. A lot of times they'd stop right down in the yard here and get water here. There was one Indian that come along one time, and he's broke his wagon tongue, and he stopped, and he wanted to know...

(End of Side A)

A B: ...And he wanted to know if I had any haywire, because he broke his wagon tongue. I took a look at it and I says, "Hell, you don't want any haywire for that." Because I've learnt so I was a pretty fair blacksmith. Well I went down in the shop, and I had a tongue just like it. So I took the irons off from that that I'd built, and put on it to brace it. And I took them up, and a couple, three, four bolts, and I drilled some holes; knocked the bolts out of the holes, and I put this iron on top, and put it on, and fixed his wagon tongue. It was a heavy hack he had. Well you know, I never been thanked so much in all of my life as I was from that Indian. Well there was years afterwards, every time he'd come by, he'd always stop, and he always wanted to know if I remember when I fixed the wagon tongue for him. There was a bunch of trees along the road out here, and they'd always stop there and have lunch.

Oh yeah, they used to be quite a few Indians here. I remember, you know, they used to stop, well I was just a little bit of a kid, you know.

And they were telling around that Indians stole kids, you know. God, when them Indians come along, you know, mother was scared to death that the Indians would steal me. Well I wasn't afraid of the Indians. The only ones I was afraid of was the nigger kids. I always wanted to get out with the Indians when they'd stop and have lunch outside!

Well, when I growed up, I herded cattle for a fella down there by Moscow. He lived out on that catty-corner road that went across from Viola to Palouse. He was raised on the same place that dad was in Norway. And you know, there, they went by the name of the place; so he was the same name that dad was. His name was Ivor, and he had a brother by the name Henry; and there was one more of 'em, I can't think of his first name, and a horse kicked him to death. He had a few cattle, and he brought 'em up here, and I took care of his cattle for a year or two. And then finally, him and Hooker was raised in the same place in Norway, they put their cattle together, so it made about 400 head. Well, I was about 16, 17. So they got me to herd them. And they had the Smith Meadow leased back of the Cherry Butte there. And those days, you know, you could keep the sheep off two miles from leased land, so they couldn't move in. We'd move the cattle up there in the spring. And then they had the Horse Ranch leased. And we'd keep 'em up there in the Smith Meadow for awhile; then we'd move up there on the Horse Ranch. Then they had the Shattuck's and Hughes' Meadow--at that big meadow on this side of Elk River where the road crosses the meadow there--they had <u>that</u> leased. So when we'd keep 'em on the Horse Ranch awhile, so the grass would get short, we'd move 'em over on the Shattuck's and Hughes Meadow, and keep 'em there 'tils it was pret'near time to move out.

I was with the cattle all the time. Had a tent I lived in. I had a little black dog, and by god he was a dandy. And those days, you know, you could buy .22 cartridges for 10 cents a box, that is, the .22 short or three

boxes for 25 cents. And .22 longs, 15 cents a box, or two for a quarter. Well all I was doing, I had a .22, I'd shoot and practice every day. Hell, I wouldn't think of shooting at a bird's body. If I couldn't shoot his head off from the horse's back I wasn't hitting. I'd take a bunch of .22 cartridges and set 'em up on 50 feet, and if I couldn't knock them empty shells off in 50 feet, nine out of ten, I wasn't shooting. Well Hooker's partner, he had a .22 Winchester, they were about a 25 caliber. So he kept at it up there at my camp; and every time he'd come up, every week or two, of course we'd have a shooting match, a penny a shot. But we never could get but a penny or two ahead, because he was a damn good shot too.

Well that dog I had, I hardly took him with me in the woods. He'd stay right there at the camp, because there was quite a few bears around, and by god he'd keep the bear out of the camp. And that dog, he'd always lay right at the foot of my bed every night, and nothing could get in that camp. But he was a damn good cattle dog. And he was a good hunting dog too.

Well, when we'd move the cattle, Andy'd come up. And I'd have them pretty well bunched, 50, 60, 70 head to the bunch, and I'd know pret'near where I had every cattle. And we'd gather 'em one day, and next day we'd move 'em. Well, we'd move 'em down to the Horse Ranch, and then next day we'd take 'em down here. Then we'd divide them here. Then maybe Hooker would be up, and Andy and Hooker'd take their cattle down that way. And Ivor Bjerke would come from down there, and he'd be up here, and we'd take his cattle to Moscow. I've drove a herd of cattle right down the main street in Moscow in the early day. They'd be surprised now if they'd see a herd of cattle coming down Main Street.

SAM: Did you ever have trouble with rustlers?

A B: No. I was up there on the Horse Ranch one time. I always had two horses.

I used one, and I'd ride the other one. I'd get up just about four o'clock in the morning, and go around every bunch of cattle, and if some of 'em was a-gettin' too far back up, I'd turn 'em back, so they wouldn't get too far out. And one morning I saddled up a horse. And I haven't put up the rope; I just turned the horses loose with the long rope that they'd drag around in the field there, I generally had a chunk that they'd drag so they wouldn't go too far. This morning an Indian come along. He stopped. And he could talk pretty fair, and finally he says, "You want to trade horses?"

"No, I don't want to trade horses."

He set there quite a little while. He says, "Trade horses?"

"No," I says, "I've got a pretty good horse." He had an awful nice looking horse. I had a kind of an old saddle on my horse, it was been used quite a lot.

He set there a little and finally he says, "How you trade horses, saddle, the whole business?" Well he had a damn good saddle on the horse. I stood and I looked at him. I was just kind of a-wondering. I kind of thought maybe he stold that horse, but it was no brand on it. Finally I traded with him. He got off and and he get onto my horse. I get onto his horse. I rode out and the horse was all right. I made my trip and come in, and stopped awhile for lunch and went out again.

That night I put a rope on him, and I tied him up to a stump out there on the meadow. Next morning I went out there, I thought I'd get him and saddle him. He acted pretty damn spooky. And I went to saddle him, and by god he throwed the saddle off a couple times before I got it cinched. Finally I got my saddle on. And those days I could ride pret'near anything that had hair on it. I got onto him and say boy, if you ever seen a horse that could buck, that sonofabitch did! Buck? But it didn't last long, when he seen he could throw me, he quit. But you know, I had to break him every morning.

Well, there was a fella by the name Josh Lamphear down there in the Hog Meadow. He was quite a horse trader. One day I rode the horse down there. I says to Josh Lamphear. I says, "I've got a horse here I'd like to trade for a horse." I says, "He's kind of a mean horse to ride. I don't like one that's kind of mean to ride in the morning. Because a fella up there in the woods all alone, you never know what's liable to happen, you might get hurt, and nobody come along for a week or two."

"Well," he says, "I got two, three horses here. I'll trade you for one of 'em." So finally I traded. I got a pretty fair looking horse from him. And the horse was nice and gentle. I put the saddle on the horse and went back up there. I got along fine with the horse.

And it was only a week or two after that. This fella's nephew that lived over here, they kind of had an outlaw horse they couldn't drive worth a damn, he was balky. So he went up there and traded for a horse. He got this outlaw, and he wanted to know if they could break him all right. "Well," Josh says, "I don't know if you can ride him or not. Arthur drove him, rode him when he brought him in." And Ole went to get on the horse, and he got on the horse, and just as he landed on his back, he landed about 15 feet ahead of the horse in the road. (Laughs.) Well, he got up and they caught the horse again, and let the horse down. Hell, they couldn't no more drive that horse than they could fly! So finally they had take him up there, pay a little to boot and get another horse. And I don't know what Josh ever done with him, because that Josh was quite a horse trader.

SAM: Can you remember any other run-ins that you had with Indians?

A B: No, nothing else, just visited with 'em. Visited with Mox Mox a few times. He was a pretty good Indian. Yeah, there was lot of horses down there--they'd go down and buy horses from him. Old Mox Mox was a good Indian. He used to come up, and he didn't like to see that they sold the timber to the

company. "No," he says, "they spoil the country," which they did. Oh in the early days there used to be a lot of Indians come by here. But there ain't too many Indians left anymore.

SAM: What was Mox Mox like?

A B: Oh, he was a pretty tall Indian. He wasn't a bad looking Indian. And he could talk pretty good too. No, when they first started Bovill, you know, the town up there, old Mox Mox used to come up there quite a little. And he told Bovill that "They're spoiling the country now," he said. He wasn't coming back no more.

Well when we settled out here, this flat over on this side used to be kind of a slough, and we drained it out; and when we went to break it out, we struck rocks once in awhile. There was quite a lot of flat rocks. They claim that the Indians has used them to grind camas for flour. Well one place down here, we struck a place, it was a bunch of rocks; they were built in a straight line and out that way and out that way about 30 inches wide, and about six and a half feet long, and you know, they were dug down in the ground that deep. We dug 'em out, and we kept a-lookin', and dad says, "I'll bet maybe we'll find some bones off from an old Indian in here." But we never found none. But it's been something in way early days that the Indians has had there.

And then it used to be places, round like that, that grass wouldn't grow. And right in the middle the grass would grow. And that spot'd be bare. I think it's been where there's been teepees and hides put down to sleep on, and it's killed the ground. I think that's what it's been. They all said it'd been war dances, but I don't think so. But you see lots of them places. Used to be a lot of 'em when we first come here, but now of course grass is growed over 'em.

SAM: So that's all that's left of the Indians here.

A B: Yeah. Oh, we used to find a few arrowheads once in awhile, and one thing another. We used to find quite a few of them but never took care of them. I'm kind of sorry of that. (Walks to a table:) Look at them. They claim the Indians used them as a mill grind camas with. I had quite a few of them out here, sitting out here, but they all disappeared, somebody'd pick them up.

SAM: Would you say it's about a foot long, maybe a little less, sharp pointed, thick?

A B: (Picking up another piece:) That's quite a rock.

SAM: Crystal.

A B: (And another:) That's a kind of a flint, I believe.

(End of Side B)

A B: I wish to Christ here five, six years ago that I would have took a summer off and went back to Denmark and Sweden and Norway. Because I could have spoke to all of them. Oh heck, I could read Swede just as good as I could Norweigan or American as far as that go. Our neighbor over here was a Swede. Well, dad was in Sweden for 10 years, you know. So he learned it, and he could talk just as good as any Swede, and he could read Swede. Well this fella over here, he had Swedish paper. When I was a kid I always went after the mail, so I'd bring his paper here. He had the Swedish-American Post. Well dad'd have to read that, and of course I'd read it, so I got so I could read it good. And Denmark and Norway, that used to be one country at one time, so they used the same language, but they pronounce different. But they used the same book, same Bible and everything. Well I could've went to Denmark, and then I could have went right across that little piece of the ocean that stick in there, and over to Malmö, Sweden. That used to belong to Denmark in the early day, but during the war Sweden took Skanör away from

Demark, so it belongs to Sweden now.

SAM: Did your family, did they speak Norweigan when you were a boy at home? Did you have to learn English in school?

A B: Why yes, they spoke at home, but the girls has learnt it on the outside, and when they were home, so I learnt it from them pretty well.

SAM: Did your parents learn to speak English good?

A B: No, not very good. Pretty broken.

SAM: Did it ever give them a hard time that they couldn't speak English?

A B: Oh, not too bad. Well dad, it didn't bother him so much. But mother, it bothered her a little. Well after dad sold the timber here, he bought 40 acres down there on the ridge. And of course we raised quite a little hay here. And we baled the hay here, and that 40 acres was all cleared up, and there was a lot a hay down there. So we'd bring the cattle down there and keep them down there in the winter, and then we'd bring 'em up here and keep 'em here in the summer. Well, next to where we lived, there was a bunch of Germans around there. There was an old German, his name was Heck, he'd pret'near always come up to the place, every other night anyway. And he spoke awful broken English, so I learnt so I could get along pretty well with the German. So you could say there was four languages I could understand pretty good.

SAM: Can you tell me what your father was like? Tell me what kind of a guy he was?

A B: Well that's his picture right there. When he was a kid, you know, there used to be a lot of them Russian wolves come over there, and I guess they were pretty vicious. That was in early days, you know, they used kind of them muzzle loaders and flintlocks. And they saved all the ashes out of stove and everything they could, and burnt potash out of it to make lye. Well, he was about 22, 21 or 2, and he was sitting up burning potash, and he

heard the wolves. They had a hired man, and he got the hired man, and they went out to wolf hunt. They'd put a goat on the sled see, and them goddamn wolves would come right in on the sled. And dad put the swan screw in and pulled the charge out of the gun, because it's been laying out in the shop there where they were burning potash, so they figured it was maybe damp. And they poured in new powder, and put in a new flint, and they went out. And he's put in too much powder, and he blowed the gun to pieces, and the screw in the back end blowed out and went in under his eye and broke the cheekbone. I guess they operated on him six times. And those days they didn't use chloroform, you used to have to take it awake. They took out over 20 pieces of bone out of his face on that one side. That's <u>why</u> he's got the face turned so the picture is just from one side of the face.

SAM: Did you say that your mother had a harder time because she couldn't speak English very well?

A B: Well, it bothered her more, but of course there was always somebody around. And dad got blood poison and gangrene in his legs, so he died. And got the banker from Deary to come out, he wanted his will made. They wanted to deed the place to me. Dad say, "If you'll take care of mother as long as she live, we'll deed the place to you."

"Well," I says, "that's all right, but we'll see what the girls has got to say about that." Well the girls, they both said that they didn't want nothing, so they deeded the place to me. Then mother got what little money they had, and she had that.

And when dad died, I and my sister went into town, you know, there was no undertaker around here. But the fella that had the store in there, he carried caskets and one thing another. He had several caskets in there. And we was upstairs looking at the caskets, and here he come up. And we was looking at one casket, it was a pretty nice looking casket, about the

same as the rest of them was a-usin', 40 dollars for a casket those day. Well, he had one there that was marked 80 dollars. That was a nice casket. He come up, he says, "You don't want that'n, you want this'n over here." That was a bigger casket.

"Yeah," I says, "a pretty big nice casket, and quite a lot of price." And you know, 40 dollars was a lot of money those days.

"Well," he says, "you take that'n," he says, "you'll have that'n for 40 dollars." Well by god, you know, the neighbors around here, that've had people die and used that 40 dollars casket, so they went pret'near crazy over that, that I could buy that nice casket. I never told them that I paid only 40 for that.

SAM: Why do you think he gave it to you for 40?

A B: Well, I always traded with him. And he was kind of a funny fella. I don't know. Some people couldn't get along with him at all, and others again he got along with pretty good. There was another store in there that was kind of a-buckin' him too. But they couldn't do nothing with him because this fella that had the casket, by god he had the money! And he bought a lot of stuff by the carload lot, so he could sell cheaper than the rest of them, and make money. I know one time one fella brought in a bunch of hay-wire, that is bailing wire, and he started in selling it cheaper than anywheres else. And by gosh old Jorgeson shipped in a carload, and by god he started in selling it for two and a half a spool, instead of three and a half at the other place. He was funny. But finally he sold out and he went down to Seattle.

(He had two boys and two girls; and the oldest one of the girls died afterwards, but two of the boys I kind of think is alive, and one of the girls. They are down around Seattle. Well, the oldest boy come up here, oh it must be five, six years ago, and he come to Deary and visited 'em

and by gosh nobody knew him. And one of the Andersons finally told them who he was. They come out to visit me. And I was a-workin' out here, and Victor says to me, he says "You know who this fella is?" I said, "Well just wait a minute, let me think." I looked at him and I said, "By god," I says, "he's got all the map of old U. C. Jorgeson all over his face." That was Johnny Jorgeson. So we had quite a visit. Well, I ain't seen him for 40 years.)

SAM: I wanted to ask you what you did after you took care of the cattle. What was the next job that you worked on after that?

A B: Well, I think about the next job I worked on then was around the place, and then when they started in building the railroad, I worked on the railroad gang some, driving team.

SAM: What do you remember about the building of that railroad?

A B: Well, I remember when they put the cut through in Deary there. They had a big kind of a steam outfit, kind of a plow, and they plowed the hardpan. And then they had a rig that run right alongside of it that plowed the dirt up on a kind of a scraper. And that went up, and the dirt fell in dump wagons, then they'd haul it out and dump it. They claim, that fill through Deary, that there is a dago buried in that fill there. And they claim there is another one buried in that fill up there at Cornell. You know, there was mostly dagos and that stuff on the shovel gang. And one'd get in that the rest of 'em didn't like, they'd hit him in the head, and just bury him in the dirt. Then cover him up.

SAM: Did you know about that back then, when they were building the railroad, that there were a couple of guys missing?

A B: Well the bosses knew it all right, but what in hell did they care? Maybe these fellas had a couple, three hundred dollars coming in railroad work. Well, them fellas missing, they didn't have to pay 'em. See, that was money in the contractor's pocket.

And when I drove team up there at Cornell, they blasted the whole damn cut there. It was wide, they were going to put in side tracks in there. And they had dump cars that run out with the dirt. And then they kind of had a bridge there we'd drive up on, and the dump cars run in under it, and a square hole; and we'd dump them slip scrapers so the dirt would go into the dump car. And when you'd get a dump car full, just start it, and then a fella would ride out on it, and brake it to a stop. Then they'd empty it, empty the car, and straighten up the car, and then a horse'd bring it back.

One morning it was cold, and the fellas out there at the dump a kind of a-levelin', they were cold. They went down and set a fire to a big brush-pile. Got it burning pretty good, and they got up onto the dump to dump a car that's come out. And by god some of the fellas that had been shooting left a box of powder in that brushpile. And by god that went off, and boy, there were sticks and logs and everything lying all over the country! Well there was a white man out there and a dago on the dump, boy they sure went a-runnin'. But nobody got hurt.

Well I worked there 'til they got through with the team work. And I come home and stayed home awhile. There were a-buildin' a trestle, they called it High Grouse Trestle. So I went over there. They got up pretty high with it. And it didn't make any difference to me how high I went, I didn't get dizzy. The boss says, "Do you think you can stand it to walk on them timbers up there?" And that trestle was 97 feet high, you know. Well I got up there and I run back and forth on the timbers up there, and it didn't bother me. And so I got a job all right there, so I stayed there about a month during the winter. There was a fella from the old country that stayed here with the folks, and he done the chores here. Helped the folks do the chores, so I didn't have to stay at home.

Well then, when we got through up there, the boss says, he says, "I

wish to god," he says, "we had some more trestles to build." He says, "I'd like to have you went along, because you are about the fastest man on the trestle I've had." The rest of them were older man, and they were slower and more careful. Well, you know, them square timbers, they'd have to be bored and bolted together. And you take getting 97 feet high walking on 2 by 12's. You take, the stringers was 2 by 12's bolted together, so they'd make 12 by 12's. And you are a long ways up in the air when you get up there 90 feet to run across on them.

SAM: Do you remember what the dago's where like? Did you have much to do with them?

A B: Well, they were Italians and Bohemians. Oh, some of them was damn nice fellas. There was one outfit staying up here that always got eggs an butter and meat from us. The boss's name was Pedro. He went back to Italy. And hell there's quite a few of them Italians that stayed here. You can't tell they're Italians now anymore. Hell they were just, some of 'em in one part of Italy, you know, some of them Italians was just as light as any of 'em. But the south part of Italy, they were pretty dark. And there was on Bohemian that used to live up there on the Hog Meadow, he turned out to be quite a logger. By god, you know, he was always making a little money; And by gosh, you know, when it got right hard times, quite a few fellas would go up there and work for him. And he always seemed to be able to have a little money. Well he had a nephew there that was kind of half foolish, and by god, you know, when he died...

Transcribed and typed by Sherrie Fields