

EUGENE SETTLE  
First Interview

Interviewed by:  
Sam Schrager

Oral History Project  
Latah County Museum Society

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# I. Index

## EUGENE SETTLE

rural Moscow; b. 1894

farmer; warehouse superintendent for county grain growers 1.8 hours

minute page

## Side A

- 01 1 Parents met in Mississippi. Grandmother's claim to homestead in Oklahoma Indian territory. Father worked as a teamster at Fort Smith, Arkansas, while they lived in Oklahoma.
- 07 3 Father's employer persuaded him to come West after seeing the open land in Washington on a trip to Seattle. Other young men with stock came too. Bound for Moscow, Washington, father stops at Moscow, Idaho, where people told him he was going to hard country. A man (Crissman) offered to rent him a farm, but he decided to go on.
- 15 6 After trying to live on Crab Creek, near present Bluestem, Washington, father decided to come back to Moscow, Idaho. Play on the homestead. Codfish was a main food, kept in a pan where the spring ran into the house.
- 25 10 When train stopped at Pendleton, father talked to the Indians, who were dressed in regalia. Grandfather's cabin in Mississippi--his banjo hung unused on the wall because he had accepted Christ.
- 29 12 Crissman, the man who rented to his father, was the only black businessman in Moscow. His daughter was the first black student to graduate from the University of Idaho. (cont.)

## Side B

- 00 12 (cont) Crissman family.
- 03 14 Father rented and bought land near Joel. Getting horses and equipment. Father got a bad case of rheumatism for two winters; one winter Eugene Settle had to stay home from school to do the work. In spring all the neighbors came and donated a day's work to plow his field. Farming different places.
- 20 19 Going to Aspendale school. Playing Crack the Whip and Cricket. Small sized farms meant many kids in school. School a community center. Literary and debate; Christmas.
- 30 22 The boys used an abandoned house for a clubhouse, and took turns reading Rover Boy books aloud. (cont.)

Eugene Settle

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## Side C

- 00 23 Taking chickens for mulligan stew at the clubhouse. Ringling Brothers was the biggest circus to come to Moscow.
- 04 24 Mother did almost no work outside the house--not even gardening.
- 05 25 Father was a good man, so had little trouble because he was black. He came West in part because there was less racial prejudice. Hay baling and hunting were family activities.
- 10 26 The Kane family, black homesteaders at Tensed.
- 11 27 The Wells family were hard workers and could have been prosperous, but they drank and threw their money away. Lou was very nice, and Joe had a big heart; they were married in the South. Mr. Settle swamped for Joe when he gypped; he had a big operation, with horses as good as Potlatch's. Joe sent money to Spokane for Chuck and Roy, after they blew \$500 apiece over the weekend. Roy herded sheep.
- 26 33 Father sold berries and other produce in Moscow.
- 27 33 Mr. Settle's education and desire for college. His wife persuaded him to farm.

## Side D

- 00 34 Cornwall Fourth of July.
- 01 34 Ball games were great sport. They drew many neighbors who used them as a chance to get together. Any ball that went over the plate was a strike.
- 07 36 Weekly auctions after harvest. Tractor farmers could do much more land, and pushed horse farmers out of rented land; tractors spelled the end of small farms. Switching to tractors--resistance of some oldtimers. Tremendous investment in equipment. Only big farmers make money.

(18 min.)

with Sam Schragger  
June 3, 1975

## II. Transcript

EUGENE SETTLE

This first conversation with Eugene Settle was recorded at his home in Moscow on June 3, 1975..

SAM SCHRAGER: I wanted to know something about your family background and I want to know something about your grandparents, where they came from.

EUGENE SETTLE: Well, of course, my grandparents, I never did know my grandfather on my father's side, he passed away before I was born and I don't remember my grandmother on my father's side. She was alive and with us when I was born, but I don't remember her, she passed away. But my mother's parents they lived in Mississippi, right on the Tennessee border, Mississippi and Tennessee. But my father's parents lived in North Carolina that's where he was born in North Carolina. They left North Carolina and came to Mississippi, and that's where my mother and father met.

They were in school together-- they wasn't in school together-- my father went to one district and my mother went to another. Where my dad went to school he had a little longer school there and when school was out in my mother's district, her and her-- my mother was the oldest one of the children, her and the next sister, they went over in the other district where my dad was going to school then; that's where my dad and mother met, whatever the length of the term was, for a month or just to get in more schooling. I guess in those days they never had school only three or four months out of the year. 'Course, here in Idaho, then I lived on a farm when we came here, six and seven months was all we went to school, too, when I was a kid here in Idaho, in the country schools. Very seldom-- every once in a while we'd have seven months, but not very often, for a long time. Of course in later years we did, but in my early school years. Till I was in the eighth grade, I guess, or seventh-- or six or seventh grade we never went to

school but five-six months a year, that was all the school we had in the country schools.

SS: What were your parent's parents doing in Mississippi to get by when they were there?

ES: Well, my parents, when they got married, I guess they was farmin' there, I don't know. After my sister was born, they went out to Indian Territory. My sister is two years older than I am and she was born in Mississippi, I don't know-- what married life they spent in Mississippi, I <sup>really</sup> don't know just what my father-- I know he had a team. I suppose he was farming .

SS: Was it your mother's mother or your father's mother who was Indian?

ES: My father's mother.

SS: And that meant that she had-- she got land in Oklahoma?

ES: Yeah, that's right. You see after the Civil War the government decided to move all the Indians off of the East Coast, and they set aside so many acres of land in the Oklahoma Territory. And they was gonna give 'em so much land-- I don't remember now whether it was twenty or forty-- I don't remember just which it was. And they started to move 'em out, resettling <sup>out there</sup> them on forty acres. Well, they <sup>got</sup> pretty near all of 'em out til they got <sup>down</sup> to Louisiana, and then course the--

SS: There was the Seminoles.

ES: The Seminoles, they never did make no treaty with the Seminoles. And at that time, my grandmother, she was married to my <sup>grandfather</sup> -- and they moved out to Mississippi, when this came up, <sup>see</sup> And so, therefore, she didn't have to leave, and it didn't interfere with her <sup>anyway</sup> then after they lived in Mississippi, raised a family, why then she decided to put in for her claim out in <sup>the</sup> Indian territory. And <sup>finally</sup> she got it, as I say, I don't remember whether it was forty acres or twenty-- seems like it



was forty, although I won't say for sure on that. And then when she got this forty acres, her and my grandfather went out there, built them a little home on this forty acres, and then he passed away shortly after that, about a year or two after they got there. And by that time my father was married and he went out there with his mother on this forty acres, and that's where I was born. And shortly after I was born-- why then-- it was mostly rock, this forty or twenty, whatever it was, was mostly rock, "shale" rock, my dad called it. Whatever shale rock is, but I know they talk about making oil or gas out of shale rock. But anyway, there was very little farm land on it, so he had a good and outfit, team, so he took off to find work, to make a living, make a living for his family. So somebody told him about Fort Smith, Arkansas, so it's not too far overland, so he and another fellow got in the wagon and left my mother out there, and us kids with his mother, and he went to Fort Smith Arkansas and he got a job there. And that's where he worked most of the time when we was in Oklahoma, 'course he left the family in Oklahoma. And then that's where he heard about the Great Northwest. fellow that he worked for, he and his wife ran <sup>the</sup> big store there in Fort Smith, Arkansas, and the railroad was completed then to the Coast and he and his wife took a trip from Fort Smith, Arkansas to Seattle. And he was so amazed about the open spaces across the state of Washington, the open land for homesteading, you know. And so he told my dad that being a young man like he was and raising a family he thought that if he was as young as he was, that's where he would go. And so, my dad he liked to hunt, and this fellow told him they'd seen lots of wild game from the train, they didn't say what it was. And my dad he thought, "That's the place for me."

SS: He took your father aside to tell him all about the --

ES: Yeah, my dad was hauling freight for him. Dad was using his team hauling freight from the depot up to the big store. And he come back there where <sup>my dad</sup> was unloading freight there <sup>in the</sup> back in the store; and he came back there while dad was working, and he told him <sup>he</sup> says, "When you get through I want to talk to you." So they set there and <sup>talked</sup> till Dad got through, and that's what he was telling about, about this trip he'd just got through making from Fort Smith to Seattle and what he saw on the trip and what he thought of the country and all that, and what a great chance <sup>that</sup> he thought it was for a young man <sup>out here to make a living</sup> there was so much land to be picked up for homesteading.

SS: Did he decide pretty soon after to come?

ES: Yeah, he made up his mind then, as soon as he could get enough money together he was gonna come. He would come West. And then in the meantime there was another family by the name of Hampton, I think that married some relation to this store man. And they decided to come too, they were young fellows. And this man that was running the store he said he was gonna try to induce his son to come out there and pick up some of that land, 'course they had no money. And this other family that was kinda related to this old man by marriage, they had some boys, and they'd got acquainted with my dad. In fact, my dad leased some land down on Arkansas River just out of town down there, just pasture land, and he leased it while he was working for this old feller and he had this team and he could take 'em down there on weekends and turn 'em out in the pasture. And so this party, they had quite a few stock and so when my dad got this land they got him to pasture some stock for them. And <sup>so</sup> that was just why he got acquainted with 'em. And Dad told 'em what he was figuring on doing, he was coming West, and so they got quite excited about it. So they went in and talked

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to this old man to see what he thought about it. And he told him just what he'd told my dad that he thought it was a great place for a young man. And these were young fellers, they weren't married, <sup>they were</sup> just young fellows, <sup>weren't</sup> they married at that time. And so they went back their folkses had quite a holding, they were farmers-- and they talked their folks into letting them come out West, and pick up some of this open land. And so of course, they had lots of stock, horses and mules and such as that. And <sup>so</sup> their old dad told 'em-- the best way-- he just give 'em some horses, I <sup>believe it</sup> was four head of horses and I believe it was a cow. And so they decided to ship out here, and of course, my dad he just had the one team and wagon. So he (sold his sheep and) kept the team, kept his horses, he was working them anyway. But when they decided to ship <sup>a</sup> car they told my dad if he wanted -- "why don't you just go in and we'll ship together?" And so Dad he had to sell his team, wanted to sell it, he sold it anyway so he'd have more money to get out here, and he sold his outfit. But he did go back up into <sup>the</sup> Indian Territory and he loaded up the whole family and furniture and everything we had and <sup>boxed it up and</sup> we shipped that out here. Put it in <sup>the</sup> car <sup>with</sup> theirs and shipped that out here, up to Bluestem, Washington. And I guess it was pretty nearly a year later, I wasn't here, I really don't know just how long a time it was, but anyway it was quite a little while after that because, we went from there on up to Mississippi to wait for my younger brother to be born, my mother was, so she could make the trip. So we went from Fort <sup>Smith</sup> up to Mississippi there, I don't know how long we were there, but we was in there quite a little while, several months anyway before we got started out here, before we got to go the rest of our way. And then we came up here, as I was saying before, we got shipped out to Moscow, Washington and when we got off the train

we was in Moscow, Idaho. And we stayed here three or four days, and some people tried to get my dad to stay here, they told him that he couldn't make it up-- that it would be awful hard for a man that's from the South that's been used to farming they way they do down there and to come up here and try to make it up there but wild horses and jack-rabbits and sagebrush. And so there was a fellow that ran a restaurant down here, about where the Chinese restaurant is now, there on Main Street, down there, right in there someplace, I believe it's the same place, I won't say for sure, but it was right in there, one of those places. And he told Father that he had a couple of nephews that had a place rented out from town here. He rented the place for them and they lived in Spokane. And he had those nephews up there, big, husky kids, fellows and so to get 'em out of town he rented this place, rented it for them to farm. He said in about another year they'd probably give up the place, they didn't like it anyway, and maybe he could get it--maybe my dad could rent it if they gave it up. Well, my dad he wasn't much interested in that, he wanted to get his own place. But, anyway, after we started to go back up to Moscow, he got this fellow's address so he could write to him if he did decide to get the place. And, of course, this old fellow he wanted to know, he was anxious to know how my dad was getting along, how he was making it up here anyway, you know. And so we went up there and Father found us a homestead cabin out on Crab Creek, it was out I don't know how many miles it was from Bluestem or Moscow at that time. But our stuff that was shipped out, our furniture, bedding and everything was there; it'd been there for a long time, it was there. So we got this cabin out on Crab Creek and moved us out there and got all our stuff and unpacked it.

SS: Was it a homestead?

ES: Well, it had been. I think somebody had homesteaded and then abandoned it. It had a nice little house on it. <sup>It</sup> Wasn't very big but we made out in it alright. Had the water running piped down from the side hill, running water went right through the house from the spring. And just about the time we got settled-- my dad did a little getting around as much as he could. He didn't have nothing to ride, he had no way of traveling, but he'd inquire around, looking around to find out what there was, And finally in his travels he ran onto a cattleman by the name of Warwick. He gave him a job, in fact it was Warwick that owned-- had picked up the option on this house where we lived in. This homestead-- He run a bunch of cattle through there, had a lot of land, some of it was his and a lot of it was just open country. And so Dad went to work for him. And he got a horse, to look around. <sup>what he found to homestead--</sup> At that time <sup>^</sup> what somebody hadn't got was far out, and there was very few families. No school and my sister was getting about ready for school and I was not too far off, I guess my sister was ready. And so he took that all <sup>under</sup> consideration. And then finally this fellow wrote to him told him about-- we got sick with smallpox and we got over that. And of course, my dad he was a little bit discouraged over that but <sup>still</sup> we all came through it OK.

SS: Do you remember having the smallpox?

ES: Yeah-- I don't remember having it <sup>myself,</sup> but I remember my little brother-- that we waited to be born to come out here-- I remember his face was all blistered-- I remember seeing him. I don't remember how I looked or felt either (Chuckles) But I remember my little brother <sup>more than anybody,</sup> because he was just a little-- six months old, a little nursing baby and he had blisters on his face, I remember that. Anyway, he got to looking around <sup>some</sup> all the land and no school, and then he got a letter from this fellow down here, this fellow wrote <sup>to him</sup> and told him that the boys was going to give up the place and if he thought he was interested why he

would talk to the fellow that owned it and maybe he could get it. So he did that. Dad wrote back and told him, well if he could lease the place why he thought we'd come back to Moscow. So finally he got a letter from this man--<sup>that told him</sup> talked to the man, the fellow that owned it and he'd give Dad a chance on it.

SS: Do you know why your father decided not to stay here in the first place? Why he wanted to push on?

ES: Well, he wanted to homestead, he wanted to get a place of his own. And of course he didn't have no more up there than he did here either, as far as that's concerned, but he'd heard so much about this country up there and he wanted to go back up there and get himself a homestead. And he figured that there'd be some way of making it.

SS: But it turned out to be harder than he thought.

ES: Yes, After he got up there and he went to work for this fellow to see the country and see what it was-- it was exactly like they told him, it was nothing but sagebrush and lots of wild horses and stuff like that there. And it was a rather dry country.

SS: Do you remember how many neighbors you had up there?

ES: Well, where we were at, we didn't have any neighbors. Not until you got to Moscow, the little village, we wasn't too many miles off in this cabin we were in. It wasn't too many miles out from this little town Bluestem, or Moscow then, but up and down the creek where we lived there wasn't any neighbors around there, that I know of. 'Course there might have been some around that I didn't see, but, <sup>there was</sup> no houses in sight of where we lived, I know.

SS: Now this was in 1898? Is that right?

ES: Yeah, about 1898 or '99. Well, must have been about '98, 'cause we come down here in '99, we come down here, <sup>or</sup> 1900, I'm not sure of the

date, but right in there, somewhere.

SS: Can you remember yourself, anything about living there? You must have been about five.

ES: Yeah, yeah, I was. Yeah, I remember it, <sup>I'll say I remember it.</sup> My sister and I we used to get sticks and make fish hooks out of pins and go down on Crab Creek and try to fish. And I remember I caught a crawfish and I got him out of water and he fell off the pin and I was sure glad to see him go!  
 (Chuckles) You know all those big claws they have <sup>!!</sup> Then out there on the flat <sup>along</sup> the creek there, we had bird nests and we'd watch these bird nests and watch the little ones go and one thing and another. I remember that real well. My sister and I, we just had a ball while we was there. Running around, 'Course Mother watched us <sup>there was so many cattle,</sup> afraid some wild cattle'd take after us, worried her to death, but we had a lot of fun.

SS: What about getting by? You talk about how hard it is for people pioneering. Was it really hard for your father to keep meat on the table?

ES: Well, I'll tell you, seems like-- I don't think we was that hungry-- but seemed like we practically lived on codfish. You'd get it in these boxes, you know and Mother'd cook it, <sup>I</sup> I know we ate lots of that. That must have been about the cheapest thing you could buy, I know we ate a lot of it. Lots of codfish. As I tell you, that spring, the water run right through the house, they had kind of a-- it wasn't a tub but just kind of a big pan in there, it run into that and then <sup>on out</sup> it run under the house and on down to the creek, you see, and you'd put a stopper in this pan and let it get full of water, and I remember that's where we put the codfish, they put it in this pan here and let the water run down on it to keep it cool, <sup>to</sup> save it.

That was our refrigerator!! (Chuckles) I don't remember--

I know we had plenty to eat, but I do remember though after we came to Idaho here, I know there was times that there wasn't very much on the table. It was just about as bad as homesteading, I imagine.

SS: Was there any water problem? Did that spring provide you with all the water you needed?

ES: Oh, yeah, it ran all the time we was there. I think one of the fellows that my dad worked for down there, he <sup>up there</sup> came and did some work on it one time. I don't know what he did, but I don't remember <sup>it</sup> ever stopping us from the water. I <sup>remember</sup> we was up to the spring lots of times, my sister and I. I don't know how far it was up on the hill from the house there in some willows, <sup>a place up there</sup> just a thing dug out, kind of rocked up, wasn't cemented, just rocked up. And if I remember right, there wasn't even any fence around it. I guess the cattle could go and drink out of it if they wanted to, if I remember right, but just seemed like it was a basin all rocked up and the water piped out of it.

SS: You said too, that you remembered being at Pendleton, on your way.

ES: Yeah. I remember that better than anything else. It was kind of a division point at Pendleton, and we was over there quite a little while and around the station there, there was lots of Indians and they was in their Indian regalia, you know, feathers and all that. I don't know whether you remember the carts like they have on the platform of the station where they pushed the luggage around with-- I remember my dad was <sup>of</sup> leaning up agin <sup>them</sup> and sitting on them and talking <sup>we was there quite a</sup> to those <sup>while</sup> Indian boys. <sup>talking</sup>

SS: Wonder what your dad was talking about?

ES: I just wonder. I don't know.

SS: Maybe what the country was like?

ES: Yeah, I imagine.



- SS: Well, you said the Indians in Oklahoma didn't have any regalia like these?
- ES: I never did see any in Oklahoma. 'Course, I don't remember. But that's the first time I can remember that they had all the regalia, feathers and all that on. I don't remember seeing any in Oklahoma, but I suppose they probably did.
- SS: Did they seem like a real different kind of people than the people in Oklahoma?
- ES: Well, I'll tell you, I don't know anything about the people in Oklahoma. I don't remember. I don't remember a thing in Oklahoma. I was just too young when I left there. [--- interruption by Mrs. Settle coming in---] He had a little gray horse that he rode when he went to town. My sister laughed and said, "Oh no." That wasn't in Oklahoma, that was in Arkansas!!" (Chuckles) <sup>So that left me out.</sup> I don't remember nothing about Oklahoma!!
- SS: Probably not about Mississippi either, that was a short time.
- ES: No. A short time. 'Course I remember a little more about Mississippi while we was there <sup>waiting for my brother to be born. They</sup> lived in a log house and did most of the cooking on the fireplace. And my grandfather had a banjo hanging up on the wall there and I used to beg him to play it but he never would. And after I got any size my mother told me why he didn't play it. He said when he was a young man he used to play the banjo and go to dances and raise cane. Then he got married and accepted Christ and hung the banjo up and asked him never to touch it again and he didn't. As long as she remembered he never did touch it again. Never touched it again, but before that time when he was young he'd go to-- he was a musician and he'd there <sup>and he'd</sup> to go to places and have dances and raise cane all night <sup>long</sup> but he got married and accepted Christ and hung his banjo up and that was it!! My dad went back down there in 1919,

it was the winter of 1919, I guess it was when I got out of the service. I think he and Mother went down there and he got down there and he spent the winter down there and my mother was still living in the old house, and he tore it down, anyway he built another little house down there-- I never thought to ask him about the banjo, I <sup>suppose it's</sup> still hanging there. (Chuckles) I know my sister and I, we used to see it there, and we used to try and get him him to play it for us.

SS: He kept it as a token of his early days?

ES: I guess so.

SS: Whereabouts in Mississippi?  
Corinth

ES: It was pretty much on the Tennessee border.

SS: Now then when your father decided to come back to Moscow, Idaho here-- one thing about that I was wondering-- did you ever know why this man was so good to your father? Why he <sup>didn't</sup> really know?

ES: Well, he was a Negro man, he run a restaurant there, and he was the only black businessman in town, There was some Chinese, there was quite a few Chinese at Moscow at that time. But he run a little restaurant down there where I said it was, and that's why this feller took so much interest in my dad, and my dad was young then and he had three or four little kids.

SS: What was his name? Do you remember?

ES: Crissman. His daughter was the first black student that ever graduated from the University of Idaho, she wasn't in the first class, but she must have been in the second class <sup>that ever</sup> graduated up here on the hill from the University of Idaho. (end of cassette)

-- He was running from Chicago to Spokane, I don't know whether he was a sleeping car porter or what, but anyway he was a railroad man.

And while he was in Spokane he picked up some mining stock up here-- the Coeur d'Alene mines, some of the mining stock and eventually got to be pretty wealthy. Her son, in 1919 when I came back from the army-- she had a son that finished high school and she sent him down here to go to the University of Idaho where she went. He come down here and went one first semester and then the second semester started and he got sick and died. That was in 1919. Kinda lost track of 'em after that, so don't know whatever became of 'em. I know they're all dead now. I don't know whether she had any more children or not.

was down south.  
'course we met her, she came down here. That was the winter my family,

So we met her when she come after the body.

SS: What kind of a store did Mr. Chrissman have?

ES: He ran a restaurant.

SS: Do you know when he came?

ES: No, I don't know. He was here when we came, I don't know how long he'd been here before we got here.

SS: But he was here for quite a while afterwards?

ES: Yeah, I don't remember that, I was just a little kid, I know he was here when we got here and I remember the boys that farmed the place, two big husky lads, but when they left I don't know long he left-- whether he left that next year or not. I don't remember how long it was, but I've heard fellows say that it was years after he'd gone that the old icebox-- he had his homemade one in the back of that building and it was in that building for years after he left here. That old icebox was still in there. I guess it's tore out now, but they talk about that. But whether he left right after we got here or not-- I think that he was around here a year or two after we got here.

SS: Was his daughter much older than you?

- Es: I don't know, I never did see her, the daughter. I never did see any of 'em. I saw him. I know he drove a nice horse to a single buggy. I see him, and then his nephews, two big husky lads, they were out on the place when we got here, and after we got here they left and I never did see them any more. And I don't remember, I might have seen Crissman a time or two, but I was little, I don't remember.
- SS: Where was that place? The place where you lived and rented?
- ES: It was over here on the Little Potlatch, it belonged to the postmaster's grandfather, Bill Buchanan. That's the first place we rented; he farmed that for two or three years and then he got a chance to buy-- there's a young man that was renting quite a bit of land, two different places, and he had about a hundred and some acres of fall wheat-- he was a bachelor and he had a housekeeper, someone to keep house for him, and he got her in trouble and so they got to making it hot for him and he wanted to get out of the country and so he finally sold his lease to my dad. My dad just went all over the country, <sup>he was a stranger here,</sup> he hadn't been here very long, and he wanted to buy this fellow out, you know, he thought it was a good deal. And finally some guy, came to his rescue and let him have the money to buy this fellow out. And so he had a good crop the next year.
- SS: Where was this place?
- ES: This was out over in the same country, south of Joel. And he made money, paid all of his debts and bought eighty acres of timber, there was about fifteen acres of it farm land. There was no buildings on it though. And then that winter he came down with rheumatism and for two winters after that he was in bed with rheumatism, so that set him back. But he kept agoing. And renting land.
- SS: Do you remember about that place or do you know how much it would have

cost in those days, the eighty acres?

ES: No, I know it wasn't very much. I don't imagine it was over--'cause it was what they call part of a school section land, I don't imagine it cost over about-- I doubt if it cost twenty dollars an acre, maybe, I don't know-- maybe twenty, twenty-five dollars an acre probably. I know it wasn't nothing compared to what it is now. (Chuckles) 'Course in those days twenty dollars was money.

SS: So your father had to make the money to pay the place off by the money that he made by renting other land? Now where did you live then while-- there wasn't any place on the eighty?

ES: We still lived on the Buchanan place. He was still farming the Buchanan place when he bought this eighty. And then after he bought this eighty though, then he rented another place that joined this eighty, see, and we moved on that. That was over in the same country but was about four miles from the Buchanan place, and that's where we was there for a long time. We lived there on that place for quite a long time.

SS: What kind of an outfit did he have?

ES: Well, I'll tell you. He didn't have nothing when we came here, we didn't have livestock at all, but he just-- there was a big fellow lived over the Blaine across the mountain in-- you know where <sup>^</sup> country <sup>^</sup> over there? A man by the name of Lynn he had quite a bit of land over there and he had a lot of cattle and ~~they~~ run that whole country where we were-- a lot of it wasn't fenced-- and he <sup>had</sup> more stock than anybody in the country. And he run over there where we lived and he had a lot of horses, cayuses, <sup>running lose</sup> and he had a son about the age of my dad. (noisy) he got to be <sup>a millionaire</sup> one of the Lynn boys was a railroad contractor, building railroads.

And they had these wild horses, unbroke horses. This fellow that was about the same age as my dad, he owned the farm and he kind of liked

my dad, they both liked this hunting  
I think dad<sup>finally</sup> traded him out of five head of those <sup>wild horses, unbroke,</sup> cayuses, <sup>they was</sup>  
range horses. And that's where he got his start, he broke those horses  
and that's where he got his start in the horse business.

SS: He traded your dad.

ES: Yeah, my dad traded. He traded around. Anyway dad got five head of  
those mustangs.

SS: He had to break 'em?

ES: Oh, yes, he had to break 'em. Of course, before he got these mustangs  
though he had got a team from this-- I guess these Crissmans, they had  
a team, their boys had a team. I think he got their team. <sup>I'm sure he did.</sup> And he got  
their team, so he had one team. Then he got these five mustangs and  
got them broke. Yeah, my dad he was quite a trader, he liked to trade  
around. Wasn't long before he had horses and I don't remember <sup>where</sup> he  
got aholt of his first cattle. I don't remember <sup>where</sup> he got them. I  
know that he and I one Sunday got on a horse to go over across the hill  
over here. Rev. Daniel Gamble had a place on this side of the <sup>Blaine</sup> Hill  
over there and we went over to his place looking at cattle. But we  
never got any from him. And I don't remember where he got his first  
cows. After we left the Buchanan place it wasn't long before we had==  
he had quite a bunch of cattle.

SS: Did he have farming equipment, too?

ES: Oh, yes, he bought-- when he bought this other place over there he  
ought this crop over there then he had to buy machinery-- he bought  
a binder to cut the grain, and then that fall he paid up. And then he  
rented this other place--- Buchanan was coming back on the place him-  
self, you know. He was a deputy marshall at that time and he got out  
of job and he was coming back-- moving back on his own farm. And

then Dad rented this other place over there. But he made pretty good that fall and paid up and he bought a binder and he bought him a plow and other farming equipment. So he was in pretty good shape then, as far as farming equipment goes, and horses. And, as I say, he'd accumulated quite a herd of cattle. <sup>it wasn't long before</sup> ^

SS: About how long do you think it took before he had the place paid off?

ES: Well, he never did pay the place off. You see some of the farm land was on this place that we moved onto, and of course, he had that to farm. He had that to farm; rented it, and that was on this <sup>place</sup> ^ was in that; and when he got rheumatism he had to let the place go back. Yeah, I was about seven years old, and that one winter I didn't go to school all winter. I stayed home and took care of the stock, <sup>helped</sup> mother.

SS: Was that hard for you?

ES: Yes it was hard for me.

SS: You had a man's responsibilities.

ES: Yeah, I did <sup>fall</sup> the work, <sup>and</sup> ^ did the plowing. I started in the field pretty young. And then the next year he rented a hundred and sixty right in there south of-- no, east of Blaine. And then the next winter he got rheumatism again and when spring come he wasn't able to do no work and he had a lot of that place to put in, spring crop, you know it wasn't even plowed. And then the neighbors all over the country came in with teams and plows and gave him a day's work there <sup>they</sup> ^ and pretty near put that place in in that one day, <sup>there was</sup> ^ so many fellows come over to help him. But after they left, anyway, he got a fellow to drive his team and they finished it. We had a neighbor by the name of Hammond. He went around to all the neighbors <sup>all</sup> around the country and he got 'em to come over and give my dad a day's work on that place over <sup>did</sup> there to get his crop in, so they. They come over, there was teams from

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all over. And that night when they left, there wasn't much left to do with his team; he got somebody to drive his team he got the crop in and did pretty well. And we farmed over there for years. Farmed over on that side of the mountain until 1911. Then he leased a place over here south of the cemetery from a fellow by the name of Besse, owned it out there. And he farmed that two years, then he bought twenty acres out here northeast of Moscow. And I owned that until I guess about three years ago I sold it. That's where us kids grew up and went to school.

SS: Northeast of town?

ES: Yeah, northeast of town. You know where Bendel's hatchery is out there? Well, it's just north of that. You see a house up there in the trees, that's our place up there, our old home place.

SS: Well, when he had rheumatism, was it just in the winter?

ES: It seems like there was two winters that he was flat on his back all winter with rheumatism. When he bought this land-- this crop I was telling you about, where he made his start, he harvested it and he hauled by himself, he was young wheat. He hauled all the sacks off and worked his head off, and I think that's what started it. Anyway for two winters he laid flat on his back all winter with rheumatism.

SS: You had a sister and your brother was younger. Were you the oldest boy?

ES: I was the oldest boy, my sister was older and I was next and then there's three years difference between me and my next brother.

SS: Your sister was how much older?

ES: Two years older than I.

SS: Did she help in the work that you did?

ES: No she didn't do too much.

SS: So it all fell on you pretty much?



ES: Yeah.

SS: How much <sup>could</sup> a seven year old boy do?

ES: Well, I did all the plowing. Tell you what we had, we had five horses-- I drove five horses abreast on a gangplow.

SS: I'm surprised that you could even handle them.

ES: Yeah, I handled them.

SS: Had you watched your father work much before.

ES: Oh, yeah, yeah, sure, sure. \*Course he told me what to do and how to do it from his bed. But I didn't do no feeding because I couldn't lift the grain up and put it in the drill <sup>sox</sup> ~~ow~~. But plowing and harrowing and such as that, why I could do that.

SS: Well I've heard before about boys starting to do a man's work when they were about ten. But it sounds like you got started a little young.

ES: Yeah, <sup>worst of it</sup> and the <sup>with me</sup> I was always so small for my age. But in those days though, kids-- it wasn't unusual to see little kids driving the team and such as that. They grow up on a farm you know and they learn fast. Yes. Just like now-a-days, young kids driving these big tractors.

SS: Do you remember much about school?

ES: School? Yes I remember quite a little bit about school. First school I went to was this Aspendale Schoolhouse, this side of Lanville, down in that country there. There <sup>was</sup> ~~rad~~ about eighty-five kids went to that one room school. One teacher. And about 1934, I guess it was, my daughter went to the same school. Started to the same school.

SS: Eighty-five kids and one teacher. How could you learn anything?

ES: Well, as I say, they didn't have too many months of school. And usually a kid was about seventeen or eighteen <sup>years old</sup> before he got through the eighth grade, because those days the boys had to stay home and help farm.

That's one reason they had the short year in school because they had to work on the farm in the fall, work on the farm in spring and so therefore way they didn't get in much schooling. When I went to school down there there was fellers going to school, <sup>that</sup> was just as big or bigger than my father. Well, they <sup>were</sup> <sup>men,</sup> <sup>you might say</sup> seventeen or eighteen years old.

SS: Did you learn much in school? Or was it hard to learn with so many kids?

ES: I don't know, it was just like now, if you want to learn <sup>why</sup> you got what you put into it. I can't say that I was such a good student, I guess I was an average, but my sister, she was a good student. And there was a few others in the class, who were as I say, there's good students and there's -- I know kids down there who were in my class when I started to school that looked like they were fifteen--sixteen year old kids-- big kids, ~~only we was~~ in the second and third grade.

SS: What about play? What did you do to have fun? When you were kids.

ES: Oh, they used to play-- the play that I remember the most is Crack the Whip. You know a bunch of guys, with all the big guys up on one end and they got to go for this string and ~~then~~ then run and then they'd brace theirself and hang on there and if you're on the end, <sup>it'd</sup> <sup>about</sup> <sup>just</sup> <sup>bust</sup> you wide open. Used to play that and then we used to play Run Sheep Run. ~~Well,~~ We played baseball and cricket.

SS: Cricket?

ES: Well, we-- dig a little hole in the ground about half a foot long and about three or four inches deep, let's see now-- then you lay a stick across this hole, about so long, then take another stick and throw it and whoever kid caught the stick, you have to lay your -- the big stick you threw that with, lay it across this hole there, and this kid that caught the stick, he'd throw it and if he could hit the stick that you

tossed the little stick out with, well then it was his turn to throw the stick, see?

SS: Do you think most of the kids liked the school? Liked school pretty well?

ES: I think they did. I think they liked school pretty well. I think they did.

SS: Those games were school games? You played them at school?

ES: Yes, they played 'em at school. Yeah, take it down in those days, in the morning about nine o'clock, you could look up the road or down the road this way; north, south, east, west, you'd see kids coming over the hill with their dinnerbucket, coming to school. <sup>In those days</sup> Lots of families lived on eighty acres farms, and forty acre farms. A three hundred and twenty acre farm was a big farm in those days. Lots of eighty acre farms. On this Buchanan place I think there was a hundred and sixty, I believe a little over a hundred and sixty, of course it wasn't all in cultivation. And the place my dad-- we lived on a long time after we left the Buchanan place that was a hundred and sixty. And I think there was about eighty acres of that-- about eighty acres of farm land, was about all there was on it, most of it was timber.

SS: Did this schoolhouse get a lot of use for socializing?

ES: Yes, that old Aspendale Schoolhouse, when <sup>they</sup> consolidated, it was the second year my daughter went to school. She went to school there her first year. Then the next year they consolidated with Genesee and then she went to Genesee <sup>for a year or two, as long as we lived down there.</sup> And instead of letting the old schoolhouse go to rot like they did in most of the districts-- rural districts. The families they got together and fixed it up, painted it and used it for kind of a community center, you know. Different socials there and everything. They had a gun club there for quite a while. I don't think they have that any more. We were down

there, <sup>it's</sup> been about four years ago I guess since we was down there. Went down there to one of the couples in the community was celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary down there. They were young married people the same time we were down there.

SS: Did you tell me they were mostly Irish down there?

ES: Yes, all the fellows down around the L<sup>l</sup>enville country, that's Irish settlement. In over there where we were, through there, across the mountain, that's mostly Scandinavian.

SS: Oh, I see. Now where was Aspendale located now from L<sup>l</sup>enville?

ES: Well, this side of L<sup>l</sup>enville. It's the first school this side of L<sup>l</sup>enville was Aspendale District. There's a schoolhouse right in L<sup>l</sup>enville and you come on this way towards Moscow and then there was Aspendale District, then you come on up, before the mountains to come this way there, they formed another district and that was the Ferndale District, then you cross the mountain on over here before you get to Moscow, that was the Mt. Tomer District over there, in Moscow.

SS: Well, when you were going to school there in Aspendale did they have a lot of community get-to-gathers?

ES: Oh, yeah. We had <sup>them</sup> mostly in the wintertime. In the wintertime we had Literary, you know. We'd have programs and every Saturday night, I think it was about every Saturday night we gathered down to the schoolhouse and had Literary. <sup>The</sup> kids'd speak pieces and we had debate teams or debate or something going on, on Saturday nights. 'Course, Christmas was always a big deal. In those days everybody knew his neighbor. <sup>I</sup> know there was one vacant house down there in our district and there was quite a few kids, <sup>and my brother and I</sup> eight and nine, ten years old something like that, and so we made a club out of this house. We just used this old house for a club. And, believe it or not, we'd go down there at nights in the wintertime

and build a fire and read books. Maybe you remember about the Rover Boys Series, boys' books. We always had a bunch of Rover Boys books, and they took turns about reading. (End of Side B)

SS: Did you read a book a night?

ES: A book a night, yeah, we'd just pass it around. I'd read a while and I passed it over to the next one and he'd read a while and then just kept it agoing, you know. And we had one kid there, he was a pretty good tall kid, he was kind of crosseyed- and he was a pretty good cook, and what we'd do-- probably tonight-- one night we were up to my folks' place and go to the chickenhouse and get a old hen (Laughter) and, of course, those days then everybody had carrots and rutabegas buried for fall. They'd dig them out of the <sup>garden</sup> in the fall, they'd just dig a hole and put straw in it and cover 'em up, you know and they'd keep all winter. You'd go out there in the wintertime or early spring and dig a hole in there and reach in there and you'd get a potato, rutabega or whatever was in there, apple. So we'd go <sup>to the pits</sup> and get carrots and stuff and he'd always make a mulligan, and we'd call it, and we'd eat and go on all <sup>winter</sup>. And probably the next time the other guy'd -- they'd go up to one of the other guys' houses and get a chicken-

SS: Did you tell your folks you were taking the chicken?

ES: I think we told 'em after it was all over with. I think <sup>kind of</sup> it got out that we was eating down there, and of course they naturally wanted to know-- <sup>where</sup> they knew none of us didn't have no money, so they wanted to know where we got the chicken. I think it probably got out, they found it out.

SS: It sounds like pretty good, clean fun.

ES: Yes, it was, it was for a fact.

SS: Did you call yourselves a club?

ES: No. No we just called it our clubhouse, we didn't have no name for the club or <sup>nothing</sup> <sub>^</sub> Just gathered down there. And then in the summertime we had our little Aspendale ball team. We played ball against Cornwall, and Leville. We had lots of fun when I was a kid, out there in the country. Of course we very seldom came to town. The only time I came to town-- we come to town was, a circus come to town, that was usually about once a year, the circus come to town and then we got money enough to come to the circus.

SS: Do you remember what circuses were like here when you were young?

ES: I remember, the biggest one that was ever here was Ringling Brothers. Then there was Barnum and Bailey. But Ringling Brothers was the big circus here. And some times after we got a little older, after us kids were a little older, everybody had a saddle horse, a horse to ride, anyway. Then there was times that we used to ride to Moscow and ride up Main Street and back and then go on back home. <sup>we thought</sup> <sub>^</sub> we had a lot of fun.

She did no work outside of taking care of her family. <sup>Fact of the matter,</sup> <sub>^</sub> My mother hardly ever worked-- she very little work in the garden, my father did that. Her work was-- of course she had four boys and my sister <sup>to take</sup> <sub>^</sub> care of. <sup>of</sup> <sub>^</sub> She did very little work outside, my mother did. And we always had lots of flowers, and it seems like my dad he had a flower bed. Oh, she appreciated him and would be out there with him a lot of time, but she did very little work outside of in the house.

SS: Did the same go for your sister, too?

ES: Yeah. She didn't do too much outside work. Oh, she'd get out and-- <sup>shoes with</sup> <sub>^</sub> pitchhorse <sup>us kids'</sup> <sub>^</sub> and everything like that. She rode horseback a little bit, but she was mostly at the house.

SS: Do you think that your father got a hard time very much because he was

black?

ES: No. I don't hardly think he did. I think that-- I really don't think my father did. He wasn't that type of a man, seems like if he-- he was a likeable man and he was a kind man, he was a good man, he was an honest man. His word was good as gold. And so it just seemed like he blended in with the neighbors, the people he traded with. Of course, like I say, when he was trying to raise money to buy <sup>that crop</sup> this fella out, buy from this fellow, why he had a pretty hard time agetting that, because the people they didn't <sup>know him, they wouldn't</sup> trust him, they didn't know whether he was good or not. But finally somebody took a chance on him <sup>and did</sup>. After they got to know my dad <sup>why it seemed like his color didn't hold him back much.</sup> 'Course I imagine there was times that it <sup>would</sup> have <sup>been</sup> better if he would have been another color, but-- For years, after us boys got pretty good size, why he run a hay baler and he baled hay all over the country, and he always had all he could do.

SS: I ran into Mr. Johnson, who lives down at Juliaetta-

ES: Johnson?

SS: Johnson, I think that's his name. He lived at Lewville country. He told me that he knew you and that I should say "hello" to you for him.

ES: Johnson?--

SS: He said that you and your father baled hay for him.

ES: So many Johnsons in the country I wouldn't know who it was. My father baled hay all over the country from clear up around Palouse up here clear down to the top of the Lewiston grade and back along the Snake River. He was down <sup>to Union</sup> town and Genesee. I left the baler and went in the service and come back and started in right where we left off, they was baling when I come out. A lot of hard work.

SS: Well, one thing I was thinking was, I don't know if it's true, but seems like in a pioneer setting it's easier maybe for a man to be judged just by for what he was <sup>worth</sup> what he does, not what his nationality was or

his color. And I was wondering if you feel that way, too. Whether this kind of country in the West would be a better place for a man looking for opportunity than maybe other places.

ES: Well, ~~now~~ I'll tell you, <sup>now</sup> that is one reason that brought my father out West. 'Cause this old man that he worked for there in Fort Smith, <sup>Ark.</sup> he told my dad in their conversation, he said, "I think that'd be a good place for you. You're a young man, you're raising a family and as far as I could see when I was out there, there's very little prejudice <sup>out</sup> in that part of the country. Racial prejudice." He says to my dad, as far as he could see there seemed to be less racial prejudice, not like it is down there in the South. And that's one reason that <sup>prompted him to</sup> he come West besides that he wanted to get out. <sup>another thing,</sup> And he thought that there's lots of game out here. And I guess that's part of his Indian blood in him - he liked to hunt. And that's the way he did with us kids, <sup>we were little kids,</sup> seven or eight years old, we used to walk <sup>these mountains up here.</sup> He got him some hounds and hunt coyotes. Every weekend <sup>around</sup> instead of going downtown, <sup>used to</sup> why we'd get our guns and go to the hills. That's the way we spent our weekends, <sup>until we were grown.</sup> And <sup>over the years</sup> we never did have no accidents, either, the four of us together. Sometimes there'd be as high as six of us kids together, us boys and some of the neighbor kids, roving the hills all with guns, and we never did have no accidents, either.

SS: Did you--- your father know of any other black families around anywheres in this inland country?

ES: No. When we come here there was one more black family that was in here was up here at Deary by the name of Wells. They was in here when we came here. And he was the only one. And then after in about 1910-'12 there was another black family that settled in up here at Tensed. Up <sup>Coeur d' Alene</sup> there they was farmers. They homesteaded up on that <sup>reservation up</sup>



there, and there's some of 'em still up there; some of the boys. The girl and one of the boys <sup>live</sup> there-- there's two boys and a girl up there yet. The girl lives on the old home place and the two boys have got places of their own up there.

SS: What's their name?

ES: Kane.

SS: Did you know the Wells?

ES: Yeah, I knew the Wells. I knew 'em. I went up there-- when I got out of the army I went up there and worked for Old Man Wells. I know he was gyppo logging up there <sup>for</sup> at Potlatch and I worked for the old fellow up there for about a month, I guess. I went up there in December and worked for him for a month. I worked up there for about a couple of months up there in the winter.

SS: Was his wife, Lou, still alive then?

ES: Yes. She was still alive then.

SS: What do you remember about them? I've heard a lot about them in Deary.

ES: Well, I'll tell you. They were a different type of people than my folks. They were hard workers and they were hard drinkers. And my family wasn't that type. They made good money and they threwed it away. Anyway <sup>Any</sup> way-- he had a chance of being a rich outfit, but they just blew it.

SS: Why was that?

ES: Well, they made good money and they could have bought good land cheap at that time when they was in there, you know, good farm out on the <sup>some of</sup> ridge, the best land it ever rained on. But they stayed in the woods. They made good money in the woods if they'd have saved it. But they made it and they spent it.

SS: I've heard that Joe was real close to Frank and Crom Wells.

- ES: Well, here's the way I heard it-- that Frank and Crom Wells owned Joe's parents in slavery, I don't know. I've heard that. And, of course, Frank and Crom and Joe, they knew each other when they was kids you see. And when Frank and Crom came out here they are the ones that sent for Joe. Got him out here. Now that's the way I heard it, how much truth it is, I can't swear to it. But that's what I've heard.
- SS: Do you think that it would have been Frank and Crom's parents that owned Joe's?
- ES: Yeah, yeah, that's what I heard, and 'course-- that owned Joe's parents, see? And Joe was born on their place and of course Frank and Crom was kids, too, all kids together there on the same plantation. Frank and Crom's parents owned the plantation and owned the slaves. Now, that's what I heard.
- SS: I've heard the same thing. I've heard that they were just like brothers.
- ES: Yeah, yeah, they were, you bet they were. That's one thing that they had the advantage of my dad when he come out here. 'Cause these Wells', they had money, you see. They helped Old Joe. Well, my dad, he came out here, he didn't have no money. I think when he landed here he had about as many kids as he had dollars!! (Chuckles)
- SS: You know, funny thing about Joe Wells, is that he's got a heck of a reputation in Deary as being a-- and Lou too, as being a great family. They have a lot of respect in that area.
- ES: Yes, they liked Old Joe, sure they do. Well, I guess he had a heart as big as a hotel, as far as that part's concerned. And Old Lou, she was just a good old soul, I liked Old Lou.
- SS: Do you remember her pretty well?
- ES: Oh, I remember her well. 'Course I boarded with 'em when I worked up there. I knew her pretty well. I liked her. She was the only one I cared for, is Old Lady Wells. I liked Old Lady Wells.

SS: Was she still cooking?

ES: Oh, yeah, ya.

SS: I've heard tell that her cooking was really special.

ES: Yeah, yeah. (Chuckles) Yeah, she was a good cook, alright.

SS: They kept <sup>the</sup> cabin and a lot of people stopped.

ES: Yes, that was kind of a halfway house for <sup>the</sup> homesteaders up in Bovill and up in that country. They called it a halfway house there. They had a big house at that time, and people going up in the white pine district <sup>would</sup> stay all night there or stopped there and get a meal, in the early days. Old Wells was known far and wide. He helped build some of these brick buildings here in Moscow <sup>and</sup> in Colfax, too <sup>when he first come out here.</sup> I don't know when they came here, but I know they were here when we came here. They must have come probably in the early part of the '90's. I don't know.

SS: Do you know if Lou and Joe had been married back East before they came?

ES: Yeah, yeah, they was married before they came out here. Yeah, <sup>he</sup> was married, uh-huh.

SS: 'Cause I didn't know if he met her out here or back there.

ES: No. They was married back there. Old Joe come out here-- I heard him tell it himself-- he came out here, the Wells boys brought him out here. And I don't know how many of Joe's kids was born back there, anyway, he come out here and then he sent the money back to her to come. He sent for her after he came out here.

SS: She died first, didn't she?

ES: Yeah, she was the first one to die.

SS: I remember people have said that she was an especially nice person, really kind.

ES: Yes she was. Yes Mrs. Wells was a pretty nice old lady. I liked her. As I say, I liked her better than I did any of <sup>them</sup>.

SS: Were Chuck and Roy older than you?

- ES: Yeah, they <sup>were</sup> older than me. Sure had a lot of fine horses, Old Man Wells did. He had some good horses up there in the woods, when <sup>they</sup> was logging up there. Well, Potlatch did, too, but he had horses just as good as the Potlatch. He had four head of nice horses; weigh<sup>ed</sup> close to a ton apiece.
- SS: That's saying quite a bit. The Potlatch had good horses.
- ES: Yeah, that's when they did all the logging with horses, you know. Did all the skidding with horses.
- SS: How did it work when you were working for him? Did he just get contracts to log?
- ES: Yeah, he was gypping. See the Potlatch would let small tracts of timber out on a gyppo job. Lots of gyppo loggers up there. Old Joe and Chuck, he stayed up there. Roy he was a sheepman. He used to herd sheep, <sup>in</sup> he wasn't there in the summertime, he was out with the sheep. But Chuck and his dad, they did the gypping for Potlatch. I don't know why the Potlatch did it, but they'd have a patch, whether it was <sup>with their outfit</sup> too small for them to fool with, or what, but they'd let it out to the gyppo loggers. They logged for Potlatch and they did pretty good.
- SS: I heard Joe had a pretty big operation, too, I mean for that time.
- ES: Yeah, I guess he did. He did. As I say, they made good money. They made good money. <sup>Those kids can</sup> ~~Those~~ <sup>fact</sup> I remember Old Joe telling it himself that Chuck and Roy'd work and get five hundred dollars apiece and go to Spokane and spend a weekend and Old Joe <sup>would</sup> have to send 'em enough money to come home on! (Laughter)
- SS: That's the old lumberjack ways----- is what that is. (Chuckles) I've heard that story many times.
- ES: Old Joe said, they'd go to Spokane with five hundred dollars apiece in their pocket and, by golly, <sup>he'd have</sup> Then ~~na~~ to send money up for a ticket to

come home on. They blowed a lot of good money, that outfit did!! But--

SS: He had one daughter, Mary.

ES: Yeah, uh-huh.

SS: I heard that Mary was the valedictorian at Deary. That's what someone said; that she was a good student there.

ES: Well, she might have been, I don't know. She had a daughter that was pretty bright. Pretty smart girl. 'Course, when I knew 'em they were all grown. I was grown, too, but-- The only time our families was-- the two families was together, that's when Lou died. Our whole family went up to the funeral, when she passed away. But outside of that we never saw too much of each other. I think Chuck worked for my dad on the hay baler some, when he got to be an old man, (the father).

SS: Did Roy stay in the country here, when he was herding sheep?

ES: No, Roy wasn't around there very much--only in the wintertime he was there quite a little bit, but in the spring, some big sheepman down here river, he'd go down there, on the railroad-- he worked with sheep all the time.

SS: I've heard stories about both Roy and -

ES: Mary had a boy, and he took after his Uncle Roy. He went to sheep, too he's down in Arizona, down there. After Roy had passed away, I heard that's what he was doing in Arizona there, he was working with sheep.

SS: I've heard stories about what a strong man Joe was.

ES: He was a strong man.

SS: He wasn't very big, though.

ES: No. He was a small man. He was a good man. Chuck was a husky man for his size, but Old Joe, he was a strong man. He was a good worker, too. better  
If he'd just had a little management he'd a been a rich man.

SS: I heard one story about Chuck, that he was so strong, that he'd just break peavy handle after peavy handle on the logs.

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- ES: He probably could. I know there's a certain way you handle 'em -- they break pretty easy. I know that's why they had a hard time with me. They was always hollerin' at me the way I handled the peavy.
- SS: Is that what you did when you were working for 'em?
- ES: Swamping was my job. Swamping, but I got a chance to handle a peavy some too. Swamping was my job.
- SS: How big was the crew when you were there?
- ES: Oh, there wasn't much of a crew. I think there was two fellows doing the sawing, and I think there was myself and another guy most of the time was doing the swamping. I swamped steady, and there was another feller that swamped part of the time, when they got in where the timber-- when they did lots of falling. And old Chuck and Joe they did the skidding. There was about six of us together, worked together all time-- two sawyers, and two on the swamping. Part time Chuck and Joe, they did the skidding. And then the one guy worked out on the landing there quite a little bit, and when he wasn't helping me swamp, he worked down there. There was a crew of about six.
- SS: Were they using horses?
- ES: Oh, yeah, they used horses.
- SS: How far would they have to go with their timber? Just get on the landing?
- ES: Yes, just on the landing. I imagine some of them had to skid a quarter of a mile. Maybe longer than that.
- SS: You didn't stay at that work too long?
- ES: No. No, I stayed at it 'til, oh, about the latter part of December, I think, and then that's when my mother and dad went South--My dad built the house for my grandmother. My dad said for me to come home.
- SS: Your dad went back South to live?

ES: No, he went back down there to spend the winter. He built the home for my grandmother and helped his sis<sup>ter-in-law</sup> and one thing and another. They spent most of the winter down there. About two months or better, anyway.

SS: You said that your father sold vegetables in Moscow?

ES: Yeah. Out here-- they bought twenty acres out here, and he had lots of berries and he always had a big garden and different kinds of berries; raspberries and strawberries. And that's what he sold mostly around town, to different stores around here, strawberries and raspberries. And, of course, after people knew he had 'em, they'd <sup>at home out here</sup> call up and order 'em. And that's <sup>the</sup> one time when my mother worked outside, more than anything else, was <sup>at</sup> ~~at the berry patch~~ <sup>usually</sup> ~~the~~ berry patch. She worked out in the berries, getting the berries ready. The kids picked 'em and she'd get the crates ready, <sup>stuff</sup> ~~stuffing~~ like that.

SS: Did you stay in school until you got through the eighth grade?

ES: Huh?

SS: How long did you stay in school?

ES: 'Til my junior year. The first year I went to-- I graduated from the business department of the Moscow High School in 1914. And then I decided to go on. I went through my junior year. I figured ~~to want~~ to go on after I finished the first year from business-- business course-- then I decided to go on to high school long enough to pick up enough credits so I could get in college---Most likely I could have got twenty-eight credits and I could have got in college. I got started in high school kind of late because I lived out in the country when I finished the eighth grade. It was two years after I finished the eighth grade before I got to ~~come in to high school~~ <sup>come in to high school</sup>, so I was getting pretty well up in age myself. And the war broke out, so that kind of ended it. When I got out of the army I could have finished, but instead of that I took a correspondence course and decided to go into civil service. Railway clerk is what I had in mind. And when I got my cabl--I

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took the examination- and I got my call, why, my wife and I were going to get married and she didn't like the idea. You go into a mail clerk, I'd be gone away from home <sup>the</sup> all time, and she thought it would be better if we just went to farming, so that's what we did. (end cassette) kid.

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Cornwall was quite a little place 'til when I was a There was two stores there and a blacksmith shop and a flourmill.

SS: What were the Fourth of Julys like over there?

ES: Oh, we had horseraces and naturally a baseball game and footraces for the kids and stuff like that, you know. It was fun.

SS: Did they have speeches?

ES: I don't remember 'em-- too many speeches. Seems like the last one they had out there, I think it was about the time World War I broke out-- there was somebody give a big speech that time, I don't remember who it was now. That just slipped my mind. We had somebody give a talk.

SS: This baseball-- was it a league, or just informal?

ES: Just the kids from different localities get together. There was a lot of kids around Aspendale, in that district. Same way with Cornwall, 'course Cornwall, they had a little bit more drawing power than most of them, but they didn't have any better team than we did, I don't believe.

SS: And there'd be really quite a few people come watch the games?

ES: Oh, yes, I'll say so. You bet-- just like I say-- just like it was a big league game. Some of those old farmer boys played pretty good ball too. 'Course, you take over here like at Blaine and <sup>Thorn Creek</sup> in there. They had baseball teams too, but they were men, grownups, they had some good teams. But Cornwall and <sup>Len</sup>ville and Aspendale, we were just teenager kids. <sup>playing</sup> We had some pretty good players on both teams.

SS: What position did you play?

ES: Shortstop.



- ES: I played a little bit at first base, but I was pretty short for first base. I liked first base the best, I liked to play first base. Short-stop is where I played most of the time.
- SS: Were the rules pretty much the same way as they are now?
- ES: Oh yes, 'course we didn't have no bat zone-- <sup>the umpire</sup> (laughter) If it was as high as your head and it went across the plate, why he called it a strike! (Laughter) If it was right on the ground and it didn't hit on the ground and bounce over the catcher's head, why, and he caught it, that was a strike, too!! But as long as you got 'em over the plate that was a strike!! <sup>high or low, it didn't matter too much.</sup> But it worked the same with both sides, guess we can't kick.
- SS: Were games pretty wild and woolly, were they high scoring games? Do you remember?
- ES: Oh, no, they wasn't too high a scoring games. Very seldom wey got a homerun. Sometimes a kid'd get up there and knock a homerun. Most of the time get out there in the weeds and lose the ball!! (Laughter) 'Course we had some of 'em pretty good.
- SS: What kind of a ball would you use? You didn't have hard balls, did you?
- ES: Yeah, yeah. That was before softball came into the picture. No we wasn't playing with a soft ball. I've played some softball, but that was after I came to town here. But those days, we played hardball.
- SS: What about gloves?
- ES: Well, we had all kinds of gloves. We had gloves, some of 'em wasn't very good. And we had a hard time akeepin' a mask. We had a mask, but I don't think so much of the time I don't think we had a chest protector. And we played some games--- I remember when we didn't have a mask, and nobody seemed to get hurt.
- SS: So you figured you had good crowds, 'cause there wasn't anyplace else

to go.

ES: No place to go, you know, they just-- the farmers they'd hook up the old hack and team and come over and watched the kids play ball. And they'd get a chance to visit with all the neighbors, too. They had about as much fun out of it as we did.

SS: Would it be mostly during summer?

ES: Yeah. During the summer after school was out. Between school time and harvest.

SS: How about betting? Did you bet on the games?

ES: No, I don't remember doing much betting on the games.

SS: Well, not of you guys that played-- I was thinking-farmers-

ES: No, we didn't. We didn't do much gambling on the games.

SS: They didn't fight over-- when one **side lost?**

ES: No. No. No. No.

SS: Up in Princeton and Harvard-- they used to come to blows.

ES: Get up there and those wood rats, you know, and they'd get up there and they'd get their baseball and moonshine mixed together there and they'd get in some pretty wild times sometimes!

SS: In the fall did they have a lot of auctions?

ES: Yeah. We <sup>to have</sup> used lots of auction sales in the fall.

SS: I was wondering if that wasn't the same kind of thing-- it'd be a place where people'd get together.

ES: Yeah, they did. You take after harvest time, seemed like every weekend there was an auction sale on some farm around somewhere in the country. And there were billboards you'd see that would have auction sale on it, they'd have an auction sale. Some farmer had lost his lease or something and was selling out.

SS: Maybe retiring?

ES: Retiring.

ES: And then after the tractors started coming in, some farmer'd get a tractor. Then everybody in the neighborhood that owned land <sup>and</sup> had a renter on it farming with horses, why then he'd want the tractor to farm his place and then <sup>the fella with</sup> horses'd have to get off, <sup>is to it,</sup> and that's all there where <sup>^</sup> That's how the big farms got started. And that was the end of the old farmer, when the tractors started coming in.

SS: Why? Just because the tractors'd do so much more?

ES: Yeah, Faster.

SS: Was there lots of turnover of renters then?

ES: Yeah, there was. Lots of turn over. As I said while ago, <sup>before</sup> when tractors came in there was lots of hundred and sixty and eighty and forty acre <sup>the families lived on.</sup> But tractors come in-farms. They're all gone now. This kid that I went to school with, his older sister's down at the Aspendale school, that <sup>Bertyl Spence,</sup> Bertyl Spence, you might know 'em, lived down at the Aspendale District. He started on a hundred and ~~sixty~~ and now he's got, right there in that neighborhood, there was two of 'em had tractors, but they got old and they-- now he's got fourteen <sup>hundred</sup> acres down there. 'Course there was two of the fellows, they got old and they retired, and they let him have their farm, Ray Campbell and Ben Johan.

SS: Did most people go to tractors really quick, or did the horses hold out for very long?

ES: Well, they didn't hold out too long. See I started farming in '24, and the tractors were just coming in, just coming in then. And I quit farming in, I believe it was '35, and about ten years from that time, there was just very few horses. Very few horse farmers. The farms were getting bigger all the time. Now I farmed with horses. I had two hundred and forty in one place and then <sup>I rented place</sup> in another a hundred and sixty, only about seventy of it in cultivation. I farmed with horses, and I was a pretty good sized farmer.

I couldn't keep it though. The fell<sup>ows</sup> with tractors got it. And then I got a tracotr. Before I got a tractor then I'd lost the ground until I didn't have too much. And then another thing these tractor farmers, they started buying land, too. You take my neighbor down there close to the farm we had, Westberg Brothers, there was four boys of them, they lost their father. They had a good stand in with the First Bank of Troy down there, and he -- Old Brocke backed 'em. And they had tractors and they started buying land. And I don't know how much land they have got down there now. The Westberg brothers. Big farmers.

SS: Well, having the tractors, that just gave 'em a real jump on farming with horses?

ES: Oh, yes, it did, just give 'em all kinds of jump on the fellow that had horses, because if you had a tractor it was no trouble for you to rent land. And first thing you know, you had a big spread. And the little guy-- you got the <sup>advantage of</sup> the little guy, as I say, if a fellow was renting a hundred and sixty, and he's <sup>and he's</sup> farming with horses, and you come in there the fellow with a big tractor and doing <sup>the in</sup> working. A third of the time that the fellow was putting in with <sup>horses. Why naturally you'd want to</sup> you'd lease your place <sup>your place</sup> to the fellow with the tractor. And then it seems like in later years, the seasons started getting shorter, too. We used to farm with horses you know, we used to get out there in the spring and we'd start in March and it'd be way up to the first of May before we'd get the crop in. <sup>on a</sup> But now, That's one hundred and sixty, But you take now with a tractor, why shoot, these farmers don't make no difference how much they're farming, give 'em about ten days and they're <sup>They've got the big equipment</sup> through. Just like Beryl Spence, he'd got say a farm of about fourteen hundred acres, but he's got two of those great big <sup>wheel</sup> tractors, you know, I think he <sup>he told me</sup> pulls forty foot of springtooth harrow behind one of 'em. You know if he goes taking forty foot swaths

around a hundred and sixty acres, you don't make many swaths! (Laughs)  
 The same way with your drills. I imagine he pulls four drills. Well that's another forty foot swath. And I guess he can just pull all he can hook together in harrowing. When you put in your spring crop, you don't sit out there all summer.

SS: What kind of an investment was it for a guy to go to a tractor from a horse team?

ES: Well, to start with, now most of the fellows that went to tractors very big, why the tractor company -- lots of times they bought a lot of their horses. Took the horses in on 'em. There was one outfit in Genesee-Lewiston down there-- they'd take your horses in on a tractor. Now what they did with 'em from there, I don't know. And lots of times a fellow'd go buy him a tractor and then he'd have an auction sale and sell off his horses. You could buy good horses for little or nothing.

SS: How much would tractors run in those days? Do you remember?

ES: Yes, my neighbor down there, one of my neighbors bought a diesel, first diesel that I know of, in there, and he gave about forty-five hundred for it. And another neighbor bought a '30 caterpillar, and he gave about three thousand for it. And these big diesels, like Spender's got, those big high wheeled rig, they run about forty-five thousand. He was telling me, "Gene," he says, -- how much money he had invested in machinery, says, "Gene, if I had 'em paid for and could get the money I got into them," he says, "I could retire." I don't know how many hundreds of thousands he figured he had in them-- just in machinery alone. And now this fellow bought this first diesel down there, he give close to five thousand dollars for it-- forty some hundred dollars for it, I guess it was. And at that time he could have bought -- the hundred and sixty that my wife and I had there, he give five-- I think it was forty-five hundred, I think he give for his tractor, and we bought this hundred and sixty for

five thousand. There's about a hundred acres of it in cultivation. About thirty-five or forty acres in timber, scab timber.

SS: I've heard that some of the old timers, guys that had been at it for a long time, just didn't want to go to tractors from horses.

ES: Oh, there's lots of 'em, just the same way about combines. There's a lot of these when combines that came out, "Oh, no, they'll just scatter <sup>wheat</sup> seeds all over and I don't want nothing to do with 'em." But it wasn't long before they had 'em. They come out when they pulled 'em by horses, They wouldn't have a combine on their place. The same way with tractors, they didn't like the way they turned the dirt, <sup>turned it</sup> too fast or something. They was kicking agin it, but they all come around to it.

SS: I'm sure you've heard the story about the guy that was on a tractor and the first time he tried to stop it, he hollered, "Whoa!Whoa."

ES: Yeah. (Laughter) Yeah, the small farmer don't have a chance now-a-days. Well, in fact, that's about the only <sup>fellas</sup> one that's making any money, is the big farmer. Now this ~~best~~ Burtell down there, he's got all that land and he bought these steel tanks and he's got his own farm storage here and he's getting hisself in pretty good shape.

SS: But you think the beginning of the end of the small farming was when the wheel tractors came in?

ES: Yeah, when the tractors started coming in. It was along about the first part of the '20's.

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END OF FIRST INTERVIEW

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