

EUGENE SETTLE
Sixth Interview

Interviewed by:
Sam Schrager

Oral History Project
Latah County Museum Society

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with Sam Schrager
August 9, 1978

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with Sam Schragar
August 9, 1978

This is the sixth conversation with EUGENE SETTLE and took place under the willow tree in his backyard in Moscow on August 9, 1978. The interviewer was SAM SCHRAGER.

SS: And that's something I was thinking maybe you would remember some about since you were over there. I don't know what the difference was that they mean by that they just weren't treated as well. Was it the actual conditions of the camps?

ES: I don't think it was the actual conditions of the camp, but it's- for one thing, for instance, they was- course that might have been happened with lots of white ones, too, there's lots of black troops that went over there and the division ^{that} I was in and the other boys, they sent 'em up ^{front} before they was properly trained. Some of 'em had never been on a rifle range, and take some of these kids, ^{out of the city} they didn't know hardly nothing about a rifle. Of course, I was from the country and I always had a rifle, I don't think out of my hand I don't think ever since I was a little kid. But there was lots of fellow, you know, that didn't know nothing about handling a gun such as that. You take about, I'd say, about 75 or 80 percent of the black troops that went over, they were noncombat, and of course, they had all the- now like the division I was in the 92nd. Now, our engineers were not combat engineers and most of 'em were stationed at Brest, France and what they did, they built a camp there, they built the camp there and then they unloaded the supplies. That was their job, unloading supplies, it takes lots of supplies to support an army, and they stayed there and that's what they did- I don't know what you'd call 'em stevedores or what, but that was their job; they unloaded ships. And then they built- some carpenters they built barracks there, I came in 'em when I came back- when I came home. But when I went there they was just building 'em- building barracks then. We stayed two days, twenty-four hours there- I slept in a little pup

tent out in the mud, wasn't no place for us to stay because there was no barracks. But this black engineering company was building barracks, but seems like the other people was occupying them just as fast as they went up. When we got in there, why, we didn't get any, didn't have no barracks, part of us didn't have no barracks. That's one thing but outside of that they had- of course, you either belonged to a combat or noncombat and if you're noncombat you're just liable to have to do anything, and not only that- but they built the- they had lots of blacks in the GRS- the ^{GRAVE} registration service and those fellows in that, why they- their job was to pick up the- bury the dead. And I know they built the cemetery out at ^{ROMAINES} France. There's lots of blacks out there, troops, they was attached to an engineering outfit but wasn't black engineers, white engineering outfit was head of it and a lot of these black troops was assigned to this engineering troop, that is, that's where they got their mail and that's where they got their money, this engineer company they was assigned to. And this engineering company was building coffins, rough coffins you know, to bury the dead in. And there was a German prison camp there also, and they guard prisoners. After I come out of the Argonne Wood, I was assigned to ^{the GRS} but my job was to go back over the ground- the battle field - the 92nd Division that crossed over and a few others and I was in the Grave Registration Service. And they give you so many numbers- names- of fellows that's supposed to have died in that section. Take that section and go over that and find every little cross- everybody that was killed there had a- was bur- had a little cross at his grave and one of his dog tags on it, see. And our job was to get this dog tag number, name, and turn it in to ^{THIS} headquarters at Grave Registration Service. We had different districts to go in to cover so much - so much to cover, you know and

we was supposed to get the name of everybody that was buried in this district and turn it in to the headquarters, and then of course, then the headquarters, they were to sign when a fellow went out to pick up these bodies, they give 'em numbers and said the districts that they had ^{that we had to} give to them and they'd go out- they had certain ones in that district to pick up, them bodies, and that's the way they kept track of the dead and the government buried 'em. And that wasn't a very pleasant job, of course. The fellows that was doin' it- they wasn't all blacks, but the most of 'em were blacks. But mostly blacks dug the graves. I know they dug great, long trenches, a quarter of a mile long or maybe not that long. That was all did by hand and that was all-did ^{with} black troops. They were what they call Pioneer Infantry or something like that, of course, they're not a combat infantry, but they had rifles, it was either work or fight. You was to fight if you got cornered, but they wasn't supposed to be called up on the front lines.

SS: So, what it amounted to, was that black troops tended to get the more menial work to do and didn't have as much chance to get in the fighting.

ES: Yeah, that's right. Most of the black troops that were sent over in World War I, the most of 'em was- as this fellow says, the most of 'em were noncombat, of course, work troops. Pioneer Infantry or engineers or noncombat engineers, is what most of them ^{were}. But there was one 366 Infantry outfit in the 91st Division- 92nd Division, they were up- they were up twice, they were up in the Argonne Woods ^{UP} in the Vosges Mountains in France the first time then they came out and in towards the last of the war, that's when I went in, they went back in Argonne Woods again, they was in twice. And the 366th Infantry, that's what I was in and we were in the Argonne. And I don't know

of any others, after a while they was any other black troops on any other front except the Argonne or not. You see, we didn't have any engineers and we were backed up by French engineers- I don't mean engineers, infantry-

SS: Troops.

ES: But the French artillery, we didn't have no artillery of our own, we were backed up by French artillery when I was in, and I guess the rest of 'em when they was in the first time. Well, no- the first time they went in- I know they was backed up by American artillery because the 29th Artillery- Harry Truman was a first lieutenant in that was up in it! (Chuckles) Yeah, that was the first time in the Vosages Mountains. I wasn't in then.

SS: Was the American Artillery better?

ES: Well, I don't know whether it was any better, I don't know whether it was any better, I never heard anything whether they was any better or not.

SS: The pup tents in the mud; would you say that was an example of how black troops were treated?

ES: No, that- well that- I figured it was just one of those things, you know. We landed at Brest- well, as I say, there was no barracks there and what there was was occupied and they was building them- they was building the barracks there then, you know for troops. But when we got there, there wasn't room for all of us and some of us- I know I Company- we just slept out in the mud there and I don't know- whether there was any of the rest of 'em- and the second night we got there, we moved into the barracks, that wasn't finished and we carried in the roof- we carried in boards and put 'em down on the mud and we was just getting ready to go to bed and we got orders to move.

- SS: That's right, you told me about that. You said to me that all the officers were white.
- ES: Yeah, all of my officers were white, except noncoms; black noncoms.
- SS: What were these guys like as far as the way that they dealt with their troops? Were they really good officers?
- ES: Well, I would say- I think that as far as the treatment from the officers- I can't say only for my outfit and ^{what} company I was in, they was all right and they was very good. I couldn't see much difficulty. All the officers- in World War I was- look better mostly than they did ⁱⁿ later on. An officer was an officer and that's it. I know some boys that was in World War I, their officers was, in a way ^{was} a little closer to their troops, you know- what I mean is- now, you take - no matter where you met an officers, you ^{better} salute him or you'll get called down about it. And then in World War II they tell me they wasn't so much that way. ¹Them officers, they didn't want you, didn't care about you saluting- that is, off of the Post or something like that. But in World War I, why, they was awful strict about that. But outside of that I think that if you did your job and if you soldiered, why, I think-- Of course, I can't say only for where I was, and I don't know what some of the rest of 'em- they had it a lot tougher than I did, but I didn't have it too rough myself, because I was in so many different places at the time and I got a promotion pretty fast to sergeant. My own, personally, I haven't got no complaints about the officers at all. But I found out, where I was, if you soldier, why, you're alright.
- SS: I think I would feel better about that if there had been black commissioned officers at the time.
- ES: Well, that they should have- I understand now, but I don't know just for sure, I heard that after they first went in- after their first

encounter, then when they come back and ^{went} back into the Argonne, I heard that- you see there was a lot of- originally a lot of regulars I guess it's about the only division over there that I know of ^{heard of} that had regulars in it. Some of the blacks from the old 24th and 25th Infantry- the older men. But I never-

SS: From Before the war, you mean?

ES: Yes. And then they went over with this 92nd Division. But I didn't encounter any of 'em. The only black officers I saw over there were doctors or dentists, outside of the sergeants and such as that. But I never- and I imagine though probably there were some, if I'd been in Brest long enough I'd probably seen some of them down there with this engineer outfit. I imagine they may have been some there.

SS: Do you remember whether the troops did much singing?

ES: What?

SS: Whether the troops did much singing?

ES: Oh, yes, yes. When we went up the first time, I don't know how long it would be we hiked when I was going up to the front line and they'd just march ^{awhile} and then they'd sing a while. They did lots of singing. To keep time, you know, you get pretty leg weary with that pack ^{on your back} and somebody'd start a singing and we'd just walk along and sing and just sing pretty near all the time we was marching.

SS: Were the songs- were they like popular songs, or were they war songs, or some that someone made up?

ES: Most of 'em was war songs. Got a ^{song} book here somewhere I forget now where it is, but I got it, most of 'em was just come up during the war.

SS: Was there any difference in benefits for white and black troops when they got back home after the war was over?

ES: Not that I know of, no. Only thing I did hear though, now, was- worst thing I heard about the war- of course, there was discrimination of

blacks and whites- but I heard, after some of the- now my dad was- my mother was from Mississippi and they went back, now that was in 1919, I believe, it was the first year I was home- no the second year- and my dad said they told him that down in Clarke, Mississippi, that's where my mother's folks- mother was born, and she said that when the black boys come from the army and when they got off the train they made them get out of their uniforms. And my dad told me that's what they told him down in Mississippi. And worse than that that I heard, I remember reading and heard it when I got on home, there was so many of those boys that were sick or disabled was getting hospitalization there was no place for them to go to be cared for. They wouldn't take them where they were segregated, you know, they wouldn't take 'em in a regular hospital and no veterans' hospital. I heard that.

SS: You mean when they got back to the United States?

ES: Yes, when they got back to the United States, yeah. And I was in Virginia first in '60, I have a brother teaching down there, Petersburg, Virginia about thirty-five miles from Richmond and I had had a stroke here when I retired and I was supposed to have a checkup every so often so I went down there and it come time for a checkup and so I told my brother, wanted to take me up to Richmond, there was a

Vet's Hospital up there, and he says, "You don't have to go up there," says, "I can get you through the hospital right here on the campus, they'll give you a checkup. They'll take you in there." "No," I says, "I want to go to this hospital, I just want to go in there and see for myself if the Blakks- he isn't treated any different than anybody else. I want to know - to see how they treat me, to go in there and see how severe the segregation is in the Veterans' Hospitals up there." I'd heard so much about it after the war. So I went up there and I never was treated any better in my life than I

was in that hospital up there. I was only up there, just stayed over night. I was up there about two days- all I was there for was just for a checkup, that's all I went in for. And I was never treated any better in any Veterans' Hospital and I've been in four, I was in Boise, and I've been in Oakland, California and I've been in Spokane about four times and I've never been treated any better than I was treated down there, at Mc Guire Hospital.

SS: When you said they had to take their uniforms off, you mean, before they could get off the train?

ES: No, when they got off they made 'em take 'em off.

SS: When they got off?

ES: Yeah, they didn't want 'em parading around in a government uniform.

SS: Do you remember what they called the race riots that took place after the war was over in some of the big cities? It was right around 1919 and 1920, I think, there were some riots. It was largely the whites rioting against the black people-

ES: Yes. Right after the war?

SS: Yes.

ES: No, I really don't remember any. All I remember is all this race trouble they had in the '60's. Only thing I remember is the trouble- the World War I soldiers when they made that march on Washington, D.C. on this bonus business. And, now, let's see,- and they drove 'em out of town and all that stuff. But any race riot right after the war, now I don't - I really don't know.

SS: I'm not sure, it might have been a few years, it might have been in the beginning of the '20's. But, anyway, I've read about it.

ES: I really don't remember it. As I say, I don't recall only in the early '60's along through there when they was having so much trouble. Anything before that I ^{really} don't recall it. I won't say they didn't have

but-

- SS: The guy that was the first black heavyweight champion- that was
- ES: Jack Johnson, uh-huh.
- SS: When did he come in- become champion? Were you just a little boy then?
- ES: Yeah, I was just a little boy, then, yeah, I was just a little boy then. Why I remember so well, we had a Fourth of July celebration here in Moscow and Dad had us kids, we was here with him. Did he become champion on the Fourth of July? Or right around that time, I forget.
- SS: I don't know, He had a big fight.
- ES: Yes, I remember that, but anyway, Wright had up a concession down here on Third Street there, the Bell Tower is there now, right there where by the City Hall is now, on that block there, big Bell Tower and there was some kind of concession up there and they had a big canvas stretched up and a hole in it and a black guy had his head thru there and he was hollering, "Hit Jack Johnson." And they was throwing balls at him. (Laughter) I remember that, and that's when Jack Johnson became champion, when he won the championship, but I don't remember whether it was on the Fourth of July or around there, but I know- I remember well this guy- he had a canvas he had up there and had a hole in it and the black guy had his head in there, and he had so many balls that he sold for so much and this black guy was hollerin', "Hit Jack Johnson!"
- SS: Well, you were- and your brothers were quite a hand with the gloves, you told me, you liked to spar around.
- ES: Yes, we did.
- SS: Did you pay attention to Jack Johnson's career?
- ES: No, we didn't get the idea from Jack Johnson.
- SS: I didn't imagine you did, but just-
- ES: No, I'll tell you how this glove business came in; Now, one Christmas

there was a fellow that he was a black man, he'd been around this part ^{of} country at that time, he was just a laborer and he had a little place up at Deer Park out of Spokane, Deer Park. Well, he came down one Christmas after he'd been down and worked for my dad through haying one time, and he came down ^{CHRISTMAS} and he brought us a pair of boxing gloves. Give to us kids, you know, a pair for all four of us boys and so that's where the boxing started in our family. And the first thing that Dad told us after we got those gloves, he says, "I don't care how much you box among yourselves as long as you don't get mad. And another thing, any time I hear of your going out picking onto somebody or some other kid trying to show your skill, either one of those things ^{I hear about,} those boxing gloves goes in the stove." And my dad, when he give an order, he wasn't just whistling Dixie, he meant it! (Chuckles) And that's where the boxing started in our family. We had boxing gloves on the back porch and boxing gloves in the barn and we had ^a saying among us, we got kids to say something and the others one'll dispute him about something, don't agree with him and if we got caught with something like that, why, we wasn't angry about it, just that way, one say something, say, "No, you're wrong." And say, "Alright, go get the gloves." That's the way we settled our arguments. We'd settle the argument with the gloves, there was no hard feelings there, just the way we did it. And we got pretty good, and fighting is a good sport and we did it, and about every Sunday, why, the barnyard was full of kids up there ^{WE WAS} all boxing but nobody got hurt and nobody didn't lose their temper, so that's why boxing got started in the Settle boys' family.

SS: This man that gave you the gloves, was he much of a friend of the family?

ES: Yes, he'd worked for my dad there one or two seasons, we knew him

pretty well I guess. And he came down Christmas and he brought us all presents and the best he brought us boys ^{WAS} those boxing gloves.

SS: Do you know how he got connected up with your dad?

ES: I don't know, he was a Spanish-American War veteran, for one thing and I think he was down in this country looking for work, I think, this same fellow worked for my wife's folks down at Pomeroy in early days, when he was a young man. And I think it was through him, I'm not sure, that it was through this fellow that we heard about this other black family ^{farming} down at Pomeroy, and that was my wife's folks. I don't know, I won't say for sure if that was him, but he knew them and I don't think he was the first because when I was a kid, the young men up here that worked, ~~f~~ farm labor, they would go down in the lower country around the Pomeroy country and Walla Walla country every spring about in January because the work started quicker down there, you know than up around here, and I think that's where we first heard of some fellows from here going down and working down in that country. Then this fellow, he worked down there ^{he's an old army man,}

SS: You know, when you talk about going to church up on Spokane and Mr. Wiggins, Reverend Wiggins, he asked me what denomination that church was, and I didn't know.

ES: I went to the Methodist.

SS: Was it a black congregation?

ES: Yes, uh-huh.

SS: Was it very big?

ES: No, it wasn't- well, it was a pretty good sized church. I wouldn't say what size the congregation was, what the number, but it was a pretty good sized church. Of course, I don't think it was as big as the one they have up there now, in a big city, but it was a pretty fair sized of a little church.

- SS: How did you get to meet the daughter of the reverend? You said that you were going with her.
- ES: Well, I'll tell you, ^{how I happened to do that.} Her sister was going to school over here at Pullman and there was a black boy here going to the University of Idaho, he had a little one-chair barbershop up there on the campus, up across ~~the~~ called the Oriole Nest just as you go up on the campus there, he had a barbershop there, kind of working his way through school, and then he got acquainted with this girl's sister over in Pullman, and so he brought her over here and brought her out to our house for dinner one time, so that's why I got to know her sister, and that's how I happened to meet her sister is through her. Told me when I come to Spokane, why, come out to see 'em, so ^I went out to see her folks and that's how I met 'em.
- SS: The people that went to church there in Spokane, the Methodist Church, were they more or less a community of their own or did they come from all over Spokane?
- ES: All over Spokane, all over in Spokane. See, there was a Baptist Church and a Methodist Church up there, black, and I believe that this girl, now her dad he was a minister himself but he was a Congregationalist ~~or~~ something like that, but he didn't have no church there in Spokane, they attended the Methodist. But the Baptist Church was quite a bit larger than the Methodist in Spokane, there was more Baptists than there was Methodists.
- SS: Did you become acquainted with many people up there?
- ES: Huh?
- SS: Did you become acquainted with many other people up there in Spokane?
- ES: No, I didn't. I never had very much association with black people outside of my family, ^{very little} until after I went in the army, because, now, you take my folks had a few black friends in Spokane that came down

and visit 'em, and they went up there -

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ES: I went to Spokane quite a little bit and after I met this girl I used to go up there on Sundays, we'd go out together. And I went- and then after the war- just before the war, just before the war, my wife's brother, she had two brothers they lived up at Oakesdale then, and they came up there and they had a black fellow working for 'em, they came up there and this fellow that was working for 'em he had an aunt up there and this aunt of his gave a party for the boys out of town, and of course, she didn't know I was in town, so I didn't get no invite, but through this girl I was going with, she had asked her to come over- so she called up and told her she had a date, so she told her to bring me- said to bring me on out, so I went out there and that's the only party I was ever to, young black people up there. And, of course, when I was in the service I met quite a few of the boys from Spokane at Camp Lewis, because we all went there, all the first from Spokane and went to Camp Lewis there and we didn't get separated until we went to Kansas City and then we got separated and there wasn't any Spokane boys in my outfit that I knew of.

SS: Your folks' friends that they had from up there, were they friends of their's of long-standing?

ES: No, they just met 'em-

BS: Through the church?

ES: Through the church, well, not too much through the church but just- well, I guess how they got started how they got acquainted in Spokane, the black people in Spokane up there, mostly through that people that worked up- blacks that worked on the campus from Spokane. Come down here and worked and through them. ^{I got it} And then my sister, she was in
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Spokane for- she went to Spokane quite a little bit and through her- and they used to visit back and forth. But our family, we never did have too much-very ^{lot} association with ^{black} people. Course, in those days that was really before automobile time and transportation was pretty slow. And then when I came back from the army ^{the year I came back from the army} that is, ^{army} the first black graduate of the University of Idaho, her son entered school down here. She was from Spokane. Well, I guess probably in some of these other- I told you in some of these other conversations that - we landed in Moscow, we wasn't coming to Moscow, Idaho until we landed here. When we ^{landed} here we was going to Moscow, Washington and we landed here and we got here there was two businesses in Moscow. One family ran a restaurant and another family - and another fellow had a barbershop. Now, I don't remember whether they was all in the same building or not, but I know ^{that the} fellow by the name of Mc Rae, they ran a restaurant that was quite a hang-out for the college students and then a fellow by the name of Crissman, he had a barbershop downtown. And his daughter was the first black graduate from the University of Idaho, and she just about started- when they started Idaho, too, but along about that time, it was pretty early. And she was the first- I don't know whether she was the first graduation class or the second one, somewhere along there, it was pretty soon after the school was started. And he went to- they lived in Spokane- ~~their~~ home was in Spokane and they went to Spokane and this girl married a fellow-I don't know- he was from somewhere back East whether it was Chicago or what- he was running on the railroad and he bought- that was when gold was discovered up north you know, there was lots of mining- and he bought- he bought a bunch of shares in some mine up there, you know and they eventually became pretty well off. Paid off for him, you know. And then, anyway when her son graduated

and she wanted him to go ^{to college,} ~~to~~ sent him down here to Idaho. And he went the first semester then he went home and come back for the second semester, got the flu, and died down here. That was the second year the flu was so bad.

SS: Right after the war.

ES: ^{Right} After the war, uh-huh.

SS: So you knew Crissman's daughter.

ES: No I didn't know Crissman's daughter. I didn't know the daughter. I met this kid's mother, after he passed ^a ~~away~~ she came down and I met her here, ^{then} but I didn't know the ^{CRISSMAN} daughter.

SS: Then there was the family around Tensed that you mentioned.

ES: Yeah, Kaness.

SS: And in fact I guess they're still there.

ES: Yeah, part of 'em are still there, yeah.

SS: Did you know them at all?

ES: Yeah, I met the Kanessboy when I was at Camp Lewis, that's when I met him. That's when I met him; the Kane boy at Camp Lewis. And we were friends until we got separated and then we got together afterwards and he was a fellow- He was in a different outfit than I ^{had} and I think he had a little rougher time than I did, but I don't know how bad. That family, too, was kind of like ours- there was the Old Man and one, three- I think they had six- I think there were six children- seven kids. I think there was three girls and four boys. The youngest girl, she's still alive and the oldest boy, and the next to the oldest boy- there's two of the boys left, and the youngest girl is all that's left up there now. Well, the girl isn't there, she's in kind of an old folks' home, rest home up in Spokane. And the boys- the next to the oldest boy and his wife are there, and he was in here- I seen him here this fall- this summer, rather. He just

got out of the hospital in Spokane and was going back and they brought his wife down here and she's out here in one of these rest homes here. She was not very good, she was going to stay out there until he got back, but I haven't heard from 'em- whether she's out there or not.

SS: Well, what did he say to you about what happened in his experience in the war that makes you think he had a rough time?

ES: Well, he didn't have too good a time. He was in the Pioneer Infantry work outfit, he got into that. And so, anyway, he helped build this cemetery out ^{there} at Romans^e, France, and he was one of the fellows dug the graves, helped dig the graves out there. I mean, he worked just like a common laborer more than anything else, he was in the army but he put in a lot of his time with a pick and a shovel, and I didn't. My hardest work was packin'- hiking and packing a heavy pack, that was my hardest. Anyway, ^{so} he don't think much of his army experience. But as far as any mistreatment from the officers, I don't know as- I don't think - I never heard him say anything about that.

SS: That Kane, is that spelled K-a-n-e or K-i-n-g?

ES: King. K-i-n-g.

SS: You know when we talked about socializing when you were growing up and the dances and that sort of thing. You said that you'd have to dance with one of your sisters- only your sister. You had one sister that did.

ES: Yeah.

SS: And I know, like what the Wells- like some of the stories the people tell about the Wells family out in Deary, was that was a mark of how well they were accepted. You know, it didn't matter at all. Because they all danced with the- it didn't matter.

ES: Oh, yeah.

- SS: The dances. But in your family most of the kids didn't dance.
- ES: They didn't dance. Well, really, I think that- well, I know, too, the young- some of the younger- the Wells did. Now maybe they did, I don't know, I won't say for sure. I think that most of the dancing they did ^{though} was mostly these house party dances. I wouldn't say so, but I know that when the grandson ^{I know that} he used to go to dances up there at Deary and Troy, too. But the older ones, I think that- the pioneer days the olden days, well, I think they give, you know these house dances- parties- such as that- I could be mistaken on that one, as I say, I didn't know them.
- SS: That's probably true that was in the pioneer times.
- ES: I think ^{so} that's mostly get together and have a party and then dance with somebody- somebody could play Turkey in the Straw on the violin. (Chuckles) Yeah, that's what I kind of think. I wouldn't say that's true.
- SS: Yeah, but in the case of your family though- how come that your sister did and the rest of you didn't?
- ES: Well, as I told you, she was- she went to Spokane more than the rest of us and got dancing with the young people up there and she danced up there. And it was just like down here with us kids- young people- we'd have neighborhood party or something like that and somebody'd- and sometimes some of 'em'd dance and that's where she got her start to dance. I never favored dancing, I never did dance, and I had one brother ^{next to me} that he danced a little bit, but dancing didn't take to us boys for some reason or other.
- SS: But you guys would go to a party or a neighborhood get-together, anyway, but you just wouldn't dance?
- ES: No, we didn't dance. Like my wife and I after we were first married down in the country there, we used to have parties there and play

cards a while and then they'd dance a while. I never did fancy dancing. But I always envied anybody that was a good dancer, I liked dances that way, but I just - I'm one of those guys that's got two left feet!! No, the family, that's something that's very funny about the Settle family. There's very few black families I know of that there wasn't some of 'em in that group was musical inclined or could sing. Now, you take the Settle kids, my sister, she played the organ^{a little} and the piano a little bit, but us boys, we- was none of us could sing. I've thought about it lots of times, I've told my wife lots of times- if us kids could have been- had talent⁺ could sing and got up a quartet, Settle Brothers Quartet, we'd a been, but it just WASN'T in us. Our ⁿhythm, I guess we just got it^{Natural}

My dad's folks some of them was musical, but my mother- my grandmother's dad he was a reed banjo picker and after he got married the first child was born he- he hung that old banjo up on the wall and it hung there 'til the day he died- 'til Dad went down there in 1919 and tore the old house down and built for Grandma ? . I remember when we was coming out here we went up through there, and coming back West we stopped there at Grandma's and we tried to get Grandpa to play that- to play for us, but he never would do it. Never took that thing down.

SS: Religion.

ES: Huh?

SS: He got religion?

ES: Yeah, oh, yes. Oh, he used to play for dances you know, and go out and dance and drink, but when he got married he cut it all out and hung up his banjo and that was it.

SS: So, in other words- the fact that you didn't dance around here- you could have if you'd have wanted to?

- ES: Oh, yes, shoot, I had a chance to dance lots when I went to high school, I had lots of chances to dance if I'd a wanted to dance, but I just didn't.
- SS: What were these parties that you had after you got married? Would they just be-
- ES: Social parties, we'd play pinochle, play cards, you know and have lunch and dances. Usually somebody- maybe we had one or two guys in the neighborhood that had violin- could play violin and they'd dance and then they'd dance and play cards and fact of the matter, some of 'em danced and some of 'em- practically every night danced and some of 'em didn't want to dance, play cards.
- SS: Would this be at a person's house?
- ES: Oh, yeah, just the houses.
- SS: How many couples would go get together?
- ES: Oh, gosh, we used to have- we probably used to have twelve, fifteen.
- SS: Couples?
- ES: Oh, not, not couples, people.
- SS: There's a farmer friend of mine- I don't know if you know the Gilders at all. The Gilder family.
- ES: Gilder?
- SS: Yeah.
- SS: He grew up around Harvard.
- ES: Harvard- Gilder, yeah.
- SS: But he lives- Glen Gilder is his name, he lives near Troy now. Anyway he used to be my neighbor out there when I lived out there.
- ES: Yeah, I know the name, but I don't really know-
- SS: Well, he kind of got me talking to people in the first place and it was partly his idea- mainly his idea- anyway, he taught me how to play pinochle not too long ago, yeah. (Chuckles)

- SS: And my wife and I went out there, oh, it must have been about a month ago after he taught us how and there were four couples in there including us; eight people. And gosh, it seemed like we played pinochle half way through the night. I mean we-
- ES: Yeah, they did. We played- used to play-- *parties.*
- I know we had- Stella and I had one- we had a big house and had a party there one night and I don't know how many- a houseful and come a big snow storm-
- SS: Come a what? Big snow storm?
- ES: Snow storm and ^{the} snow ^{blowed} and four of 'em- two couples stayed all night and left the next morning. The post master's dad and his wife, they was one couple that stayed there and this fellow that runs the travel service- Neely Travel Service, his mother-in-law and father-in-law they stayed. Those four stayed.
- SS: Who's the post master?
- ES: Buchanan. Howard Buchanan.
- SS: Buchanan, oh, yeah.
- So a pinochle get-to-gether it could go for - could be a long- and usually people had eats.
- ES: Oh, yeah. That was one of the main things; eats.
- SS: Would people talk first; would they socialize first and then play pinochle after they'd been there for a while?
- ES: We usually played pinochle to start with and then we served some kind of a lunch, you know, and then after the lunch, why then, that's when somebody'd get out the old violin and some of 'em would want to dance and they would dance and the others play pinochle and some of 'em do a little of both. Course, you could have so many playing pinochle at that time that sometimes there wouldn't be enough for a table. But that's the way they did it. They always had dancing

and pinochle. They kind of had their choice.

SS: Would this be mostly in the winter or would folks do it in the summer?

ES: No, that was in the wintertime. No, not in the summertime. We had no parties in the summertime.

SS: Too busy?

ES: Too busy. But the wintertime, that was in the wintertime.

SS: How often would they be? Say in the winter?

ES: Well, when we was first married there's one every week. Probably be at our house this week and some of the rest of 'em next week. Kind of go around and back and forth until spring work, or 'til the snow went off ^{so} we couldn't go in our sleds or something like that and then they'd break up.

SS: Was it pretty much just right in the neighborhood?

ES: In the neighborhood, yes.

SS: Your near neighbors?

ES: Oh, we took in quite a bit of territory. Some of us- well, I'll say, now- we lived- I guess our place, we ^{was just} about at the end of the neighborhood on the east then I think they must have went west about five or six miles. Probably about a ten mile square. Something like that. *Probably that big.*

SS: Were the other couples young couples like yourselves or were they-

ES: There were some older; some older. There was, now, let's see- there was Stella and I and Cliff and Martha, Ben *Johan* and his wife. Well, they was about- there was four couple about like Stella and I, young married people and the rest of 'em were all older people. Some of 'em were quite a bit older.

SS: I tell you, it seems to me like really a lot of fun.

ES: Yeah, we had lots of fun.

SS: I wish I had learned how to play years ago.

ES: Then in our neighborhood- the school marm, she boarded in the neighborhood and of course- if she stayed there over the weekend, she'd have her boyfriend and he'd be there and that would be another young couple. They followed 'em pretty close, if they didn't have some else special to do. It helped the winter to go faster. We always had some ^{Party or two} little_A. We were out about ten or twelve miles from Moscow. And fifty years ago there wasn't so many automobiles, either! We all had cars, you know, but in those days we usually run our cars in the shed in the wintertime and blocked it up and it sit there until spring, but now ^{they} drive ^{'em} all the time. I know the first two years that Stella and I were married, we didn't-- well, one winter we stored our car in Moscow here. And then one winter we put it in the shed and blocked it up and then after that, why, we'd start driving it all winter every place. Chain 'em up and drive 'em when we could and when we couldn't we took the team. Always had it ready to drive when I could drive, we drove it. We used to you know ^{when} winter ^{come}, you'd jack the car up and put it on blocks and let it sit there 'til spring, but now, no matter how bad it is they drive 'em all winter.

SS: Was that the main form of socialalizing at the time?

ES: Huh?

SS: Was that the main way you got together?

ES: Yeah, that was the main way of socializing.

SS: What about the schools? Did the school get much use for socialalizing, too back then?

ES: Of course, the schools- the country schools, they had quite a little bit. Now, like at Christmas time they has a Christmas tree, you know and a program, and such as that, you know, and different holidays the kids would have a celebration. But they always had a big Christmas tree at Christmastime and everybody went and has a good time then. And every so often-sometimes they'd want to raise some money for something, and they'd have a basket social, you know and such things as that. Kids had quite a bit of social life among themselves.

SS: But say for- they weren't really dances there at the schoolhouse?

ES: No: No, they had no dances in school.

SS: Some places, I know they did use them for that. It sounds to me like pinochle was by far the most popular card game, too.

ES: Yeah, that's kind of an old-timers game, was pinochle^{cards}. No, as long as I remember- as long as I went to a country school, and as long as I've been in the country I never remember the young people having a dance in the schoolhouse or anybody else. Now, like where we lived- we lived down in the Leville country then down in there, there was an old store down there that used to be a school there when I was a kid and that was a great entertainment center down in there. They had big dances down there in that old school^{about} every Saturday night every so often down there. That was a big gathering place for young and old people.

SS: Was it still being used as a store, or was it abandoned?

ES: It was abandoned. The building was still there and that's what they used it for, was a store. And the schoolhouse, right next to us, when they abandoned ^{that}, they ^{made a} kind of a community center out of it. But they didn't have any dances down there I don't think. Well, I'll tell you at that time automobiles got so plentiful they didn't dance out in the country, they went somewhere else. They went to Spokane

Or Lewiston or Genesee ^{somewhere} that was too close to home to stop there and dance, they got out of the country. All they used it for was to just have parties to give people and wedding anniversaries.

SS: You say parties for people?

ES: Huh?

SS: You say parties for people?

ES: Oh, yeah, wedding anniversaries ^{or} something like that. And then, of course, the women they had a kind of sewing club or some kind of club and they met there, but I never heard of 'em havin' a dance in there. They might have, because I left down there.

SS: Were you guys really so busy during the summertime that you didn't have time to socialize at all, or would you on a weekend or something like that get together with another couple or something?

ES: Well, I'll tell you, in our household, after I got home from the army and we got an automobile, my brother next to me and my sister, they socialized quite a bit. They'd go to Spokane to parties and something like that and one thing and another quite a bit. But the rest of us boys, we didn't too much and we never socialized too much. And the same way with this other black family ^{up} at Deary, the Kings, up there, well, we never socialized with them- quite a little bit, not very much. The Wellses, I meant to say.

SS: The Wellses.

ES: No not quite a bit, their boys worked for us- worked for Dad quite a bit. But the only Settles - my sister and brother, they socialized with them more than of the rest of 'em. I worked for 'em up there one winter- the first winter I was back from the army I worked- their woods work- I worked for 'em- the old man he was a gyppo up there in the logging and I worked there one winter. But they were a little

faster set than the Settles. (Chuckles)

SS: You know what I really had in mind- you said it was out to have pin-ochle parties in the summer and I figured the reason you were saying that was because they worked so hard- people didn't have time to sit around and spend half the night you know, playing cards. But, what I was wondering about was- if people had time to socialize even during the summer but it was a different kind of getting together- would get together after dinner or something like that with a neighbor- or how that used to be.

ES: Our socializing then was a little bit different ^{sometimes} like- Stella and I, ^{when} we were ^{younger} we always had some- oh, one or two close friends and we'd always get together weekends and go way up above on the Clearwater on a fishing trip and such like that. Camp out, you know and fish and fish and stuff like that. That was our socializing when we were on the farm. If we had any time to spare we'd- us and another couple- two couple, three couple'd get together and go on a fishing trip or out on an outing of that kind. But, of course, dancing and other parties we never-

SS: Were these close firnedds of yours the same as your pinochle partners or were they-

ES: Yeha, yeah.

SS: I mean, they were the same people?

ES: Yes, some of the same people.

SS: You sound like from what you're saying- and this is something I've Heard before, that when the cars came in the people went out, and it sort of hurt, or made less close the neighborliness.

ES: Yes, ^{SAM} ^{I'll} tell you: Before the cars came in you knew your neighbor, but after the cars came in, you don't hardly know your neighbor, there's not enough social ^{izing} what I'm trying to tell you, there

wasn't so much socializing among the neighborhood. Instead of socializing in the neighborhood they'd get in the car and go to Spokane or go to Moscow or somewhere else to some movie ~~or~~ some other kind of entertainment ^{that ways.} That's the way. The car- they just broke up the country socially- social life in the country. Well, you take today, the kids they don't hardly know their neighbors, they always go somewhere else, they want to go somewhere-

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ES: -- also, that's out- neighborhood dances, that's all out, neighborhood parties, that's out. Yessir the cars just broke that all to pieces- in those days it was horseback- go horseback.

SS: It's too bad, because it seems like for all the benefits of having a car there's something-

EB: Yes, that's right. ^{The cars just broke it.} Now you take when Stella and I was first married, out there in the country, the neighbors'd get together and of course, in those days, why, we always butchered our own meat- hogs, you know. Every family- every farmer, he always buthcered from one to three or four hogs, every year for his own meat. Well, maybe, they'd go over here, go over- this day go over Monday or Tuesday and help Gene and Stella butcher their pigs. Oh, alright, here come a bunch of- a man and his wife and help us butcher and have a big dinner and then probably chew the fat a while, then probably in a day or two or something we'd go over to the other man and help him butcher. But now, we don't have no hogs- the farmers don't have no hogs anymore! To butcher. So the farm social life is just- between automobiles and a tractor, there just is no social life on the farm anymore, ^{you might say.}

SS: When we talked about depression- you told me about the economics of it, I mean why- how into the depression in the late '20's, how the tractor had come in and the horse went out.

- ES: Yes, yes.
- SS: But what about socially? I was thinking what life was like for people on the farm.
- ES: Well, I tell you- when the tractor came in and the horses went out- as I said a while ago, told about butchering hogs- the hogs left the ranch; the chickens left the ranch; and all they had was a tractor and probably a milk cow, and that's about all there was to it- and they wanted to go somewhere, you turn off the tractor, go to the house, ^{get} the old lady to get ready and get in their car and go to town or somewhere else. Because there was nothing to do, they didn't have any animals- horses to take care of. They had no other livestock to take care of, so they had time on their hands. They turn that tractor off, they didn't have to take it to the barn and feed it and curry it. No sir, it would sit there.
- SS: They could leave for a couple of days and never notice the difference.
- ES: That's right.
- SS: But during the Depression, when money was scarce and they didn't want to spend it on the gas and that kind of thing. Did people get closer again?
- ES: Well, that was long about Stella and my time, when we were married, see we were married during the Depression.
- SS: What year were you married?
- ES: We were married in '24, and so that was why- ^{it's so easy} to have these parties and get a big crowd out because the fellers that had cars couldn't drive- wouldn't drive ^{'em} in the wintertime, you know. Snowed in and stuff, where we lived there'd be times, you'd get snowed in over there for two, three days at a time, until you'd get the road

plowed out. We didn't have all this equipment then to keep the roads plowed out. The school buses, they wasn't running, and now they got to keep the roads plowed on account of the school buses and the guys can drive their cars all winter, but over there where we lived, we had the country school and there wasn't no school buses running, so you'd hook up the team and take ^{your} kids to school or they'd ride horseback or break your own trail. But the farm social ^{life} is gone.

SS: When did her folks come to live with you?

ES: Well, that was in- see we were married in '24 and I guess it was '26 that they came. They give up their farmin' and come to live with us.

SS: Did they remain alive very long?

ES: Yeah, well, let's see. See, that was in '26 and her dad died in '34, I believe. And her mother passed away in - her mother passed away in '40.

SS: I was just thinking about that- it wasn't too long ago that I was thinking, you know, I thought of my folks if they wanted to come and live with me, why I think it would be maybe easier now that I've been married for quite a few years and not married just a couple. Was there being there- did that make it at all harder for you guys?

ES: Well, it made it harder on us, of course they didn't live right in the same house with us, I had a place rented, another place rented and they lived in the house there. Not until- they lived in the house with us one winter, I believe, and then after her father died, then her mother lived with us until she passed away. But the both of 'em, they lived in the same house with us one winter.

SS: Did you help them get by?

ES: Yeah, yes, we helped 'em. We helped 'em. That was quite a worry on my wife. Of course, after her father died, then her mother, she kind of- like ^{a lot of} old people, she got kind of feeble minded, you know.

And, she couldn't- she wasn't satisfied living with us, she wanted- after he left, why then, she always wanted to go home, she said. And she figured she was just visiting with us, so she wanted to go home, and then she'd run off and it made it pretty tough ^{on} my wife then for a while. The latter part of her life.

SS: What about your folks, when they were getting older, did they stay at the place that they-

ES: Yeah, they lived out- see, they lived out on ^{the} farm out there til they got old, and then my mother died and my father, he stayed out there until the house he was living in burned down and then he went- then he went down to Portland and lived with my sister. And I guess he was down there about three or four years before he passed away.

SS: There's something, you know, I wanted to ask you about- you told me about your brother who taught at college in Virginia-

ES: Yeah.

SS: But I don't really know much about what the life stories are of your other brothers and sisters.

ES: Well, my younger- my youngest brother, he died at the age of twenty-one, so he was still at home; working for my dad. ^{He ran a hay baler} He worked at home and he did a little farm work. He didn't go to school after he got through high school, ^{he} didn't go any further than that. And then my other brother, Jess,- he... Right after I got married, he- well my next brother, a year or two after that, he got married and he was married only two or three years then he separated- then they separated. Then he went to teaming. He just did team work around town here and over at Pullman; Pullman, mostly, he did team work over there. He worked ^{over} at Pullman quite a little while and then he died over at Pullman. He died a pretty young man-

SS: So, there was Jess- that was Jess?

- ES: Jess, yes.
- SS: And then your youngest brother-
- ES: Booker.
- SS: And your older- the next brother-
- ES: John.
- SS: He was the one that went to Virginia?
- ES: He was the one- he was the one of the Settle boys that went on and got his education. He was the only one of us out of the four that finished college.
- SS: So, Jess, passed his whole life in the area here, he stayed.
- ES: Yeah, he was here. Jess never finished high school. Jess never got any further than the eighth grade. He *went to the eighth grade.*
- SS: That was about par for the time?
- ES: Yeah. So he didn't go to school. And my sister didn't go to high school either. We lived out in the country then, and she wanted to go. She *wanted* to go to Spokane to business college and they couldn't send her and the folks couldn't hardly afford to send her up there and she wanted to go up- she wanted to go to Spokane and get her a job and work when she went to school, and they folks, they wouldn't go for that. Didn't want her to go up there by herself, *to work* and they didn't want-
- SS: Didn't want her to do that?
- ES: Didn't want her to do that. Just country kid, you know. Course she knew quite a few people in Spokane at that time. But they didn't like that idea. She took a correspondence course, and she got *married young pretty* got her a job. She got a job at the university up there.
- SS: Where? Here?
- ES: Yeah, here in town.
- SS: What was she doing?

- ES: She was a maid up there at the Ridenbaugh Hall; girls' hall there. She was better contented. Worked at that a few years and then got married.
- SS: Where did she ^{meet} her husband [?]. Where was he from? Was he local?
- ES: No, he was out- I believe that he was originally from Kansas City. He was just a- oh, you might say, he was just a transient. And she had two sons. ^{And} they finally separated.
- SS: She and her husband?
- ES: Yeah, she and her husband, they separated.
- SS: Was she in Moscow all this time?
- ES: Oh, no, she didn't live in Moscow. No, she didn't live in Moscow hardly at all after she was married. She lived in Seattle a while. I guess after they lived in Seattle, that's where they separated, in Seattle. ^{Then} she came to Portland and the folks- they had two boys- and the folks took the kids and she worked there in Portland for years. And then she married a guy that was a railway mail clerk. And she did pretty good then. Then she took the kids and they built a home and she took the boys. And ^{so} her and the boys are still down there.
- SS: What's her name?
- ES: Reed.
- SS: Oh, I mean her first name?
- ES: Cleola.
- SS: Cleola, huh?
- ES: Uh-huh.
- SS: And her sons are still living in Portland?
- ES: Yeah, they're there. Well, one of 'em lived in Pullman and the other one's in Portland. One of 'em ran a gas station down there for years. ^{He's retired.}
- SS: She's still there then? Is she older than you?

- ES: Yes, she's older than I am.
- SS: She's the oldest?
- ES: Yeah, the only two Settle kids left. The two oldest ones. ^{SS:} So, did she work very much when she was in Portland?
- ES: Yeah, she worked quite a little bit until she got married and after her husband died- she- well, her health wasn't so good, she had lots of chances to work but she didn't want to never work after that. She worked some but not very much. She was telling me the last time I saw her- she had lots of good chances and lots of good job offers but isn't able to take 'em. Her health isn't very good any more. She's getting pretty well up in age.
- SS: Did Jess ever get married?
- ES: No, he never did get married.
- SS: But your brother, John-
- ES: Yeah, he got married, he has one son down in Richmond, Virginia. He's a veterianary down there.
- SS: Did he meet his wife back there?
- ES: Huh?
- SS: Did he meet his wife back there?
- ES: Yes. Yeah, oh, yes, yes. He met his wife the first year he went down there to teach, he met her. She was teaching. They was both teaching at Virginia State.
- SS: After you grew up, was the family really scattered? Did they try to get together at all back here at the folkses place?
- ES: No. Our family ^{kind of} got scattered after John left and Booker and I and my sister left, why, our family never- After John went East, the whole family never got together very much after that. And then my mother died and they broke up pretty fast after John left home. And he wasn't gone too many years, then my mother passed away.

- SS: John's the one that you said was a pretty gutsy guy as a young man? What was it about him- I don't know that you ever really explained to me why- what he was like. But I thought he was the sort of guy that would fight.
- ES: Yeah-
- SS: Didn't have any fear of anything.
- ES: No, he was- (Chuckles) He was one of the Settle boys- cross him, why, he would fight. He wasn't so much- he never had any trouble here when he was going through school. When he first went back there, went to teaching in Virginia, he had a little trouble a time or two with the different professors.
- SS: With the different what?
- ES: Different professors. (Chuckles) He kinda got- he said he kinda got out a line- and he got in some other professor's territory. Some other young professor that figured- he said, ^{he'd been there and} they kind of figured they had kind of a- ring? on the young women, teachers up there- and then he went down there and of course, he wanted to get a date with some of the women, he was ^{ALWAYS} stepping on some other professor's toes, you know. (Chuckles)
- SS: Kind of like having a new boy on the block.
- ES: That's right, that's right. And of course, he was from the North, And I tell you, you take these Northerners go down South, I don't care whether you're black or white, the black and the white either one, didn't care too much for 'em! And so they called his hand on him and ^{SOON AS} they got too tough for him he'd slap 'em. he didn't back up.
- SS: I wonder if being a Northerner, too, he had- and growing up around here you know, he might have had less of a notion of like knowing his place or something like that. He might have been much more independent.

ES: Yeah, I don't know, but he just felt like that- well, just like any-
 If
 body else would- I feel the same way. I went down there and went to
 teaching school, if I saw a young lady teacher that wasn't engaged
 or anything, why, I'd- and I was looking for a date, why, I'd ask
 her and if she accepted, why I'd take her out. So that's what he did.
 There was some other guy that had been dating her and he didn't take
 to that, especially this young punk coming down there. That's where
 John had his trouble.

SS: You know, you mentioned that after after you got out of farming that
 during the war you went to Portland and you worked-

ES: ^{I worked}
 in a foundry down there.

SS: Well, what was that like? for you leaving and going down?

ES: Well, it was quite a different change for me, but of course, I went
 to school for a while before I went down there; took a welding course
 and went down there and welded. It was a good change because we
 were in debt and I worked awful hard. I worked at the foundry-
 swing shift at the Foundry and then I worked at a garage from nine
 o'clock until- ^{time for} me to go to work down there at a garage
 and so I burned the candle at both ends there until I just couldn't
 take it. And, of course, we got out of debt.

SS: You mean you held two jobs at once?

ES: Yeah. I held two jobs at once, so working the swing shift give me
 quite a little bit of time in a way, and then didn't give me too
 much sleep time either, so I worked the two jobs there for- oh, I
 guess I worked for pretty near a month though before I had to give up
 the garage job. And when I first ^{worked} in the foundry, I could work
 as many hours as I wanted to. And I worked there and they finally
 cut me down there, and then I got this other job.

SS:

- SS: When we talked about- I asked you before about prejudice around here and you said that, well, you would never notice it being local born.
- ES: Well, I'll tell you, it's a little different between- with me and the Settle family, see, we were from the rural district, you know, but as far as we know about Moscow, we didn't know much about city life until after we moved over ^{here} and started to school here, now that's the first I know. I know they was afraid of us here, alright. I know that black people have ^{been} come here and I've known- a fellow came here, what was he doing now?
- SS: Was this the guy who had the boys working for him?
- ES: Yes, yes.
- SS: You told me they went after the restaurant here.
- ES: Uh-huh, yes.
- SS: See, I was wondering about whether you ran into that in Portland at all? Whether you ever ran into that in Portland when you were working?
- ES: No, I didn't, because I ^a boarded with my sister, but I never ran into any ^{down there}. Fact of the matter, I didn't go nowhere, either. I was just back and forth to work. As far as kind of socializing to amount to anything I didn't do any, and so I never ran into any because I didn't go nowhere to run into it.
- SS: But you figure it was probably there in Portland?
- ES: Yeah, as I say in Portland, in fact of the matter, it didn't happen to me but just from what I would hear about other people, it was pretty prevalent, too, because that was the time the shipyards ^{there} and there was so many blacks from the South and others come there to work, you know, and there was quite a lot of prejudice there. Places you can get- places to stay and one thing and another. I think after a while- I think there was one hotel there, an older hotel there, I

think, now, I won't say for sure, but I don't know who did it, or how it came about, but anyway, but, ^{what I'm trying to} I say, who made it possible but there was one hotel there that I think the blacks took it over, got it, and they had lots of them staying there and then they had these, trailer camps in different places. I know I went out to visit a friend of mine out over at Swan Island, and they was in a little two-by-four ^{looked} about like a trailer house, they just lived in that house for housing. They were white and they was living there. And, of course, they didn't hire any black welders at the shipyards. Course I knew that before I went down there. And so when I went down there I went to the employment office and that's why I got on at the- I just was lucky. You can't get in down at the foundry, but I didn't get in there as a welder ^{right at the} start down there, I went down there, I had another job.

SS: What was that? What did you start as?

ES: I started- I was a crane man's helper. What I mean by that- they'd mold these big- cast these big pieces of steel for the ships and ^{then they'd} take the mold off of 'em and the fella that run the crane he'd pick 'em up and set 'em over out of the way so the government could examine 'em for any flaws and something, and ^{that was} my job was- I was down on the ground and I hooked the chain- I hooked the chains on these molds to pull 'em up, set 'em over. That was the first job I had. I forget what you call it now, they don't call 'em crane man's helper. I worked at that for - oh, I guess I musta worked at that a month, and maybe more than that.

SS: And then there was an opening or-?

ES: Yeah, anyway, they burnt up a furnace- that ain't what they call 'em either- where they melt the iron anyway, and you had to crawl under 'em, and there was just about that much under there to weld it and

the fella that was welding- one of the fellas that was welding- the head welder there, why, he was trying to fix it and it was hot and he tried that a time or two and it was so tight, he was a big man, too, you know, and he just about passed out, and I was working the swing shift down there, and of course my foreman knew- I asked for a welding job- I tried to get on there as welder when I went

there, so he said, "Say, Settle, do you think you can get under there?" He says, "Can you weld?" And I said, "I can give it a try." And he says, "Okay. Get your gear." so, I went and got my helmet, it was already down there, and I welded the darn thing. And it wasn't long after that before- I don't know why, in a ^{day} or two I don't know whether him and the boss- foreman- had any words or what, I don't know why, but in the next two or three days, why this head welder called up and quit and I got the job! (Chuckles) I know she wasn't only about two, three days after that and he blew up and quit or something happened, anyway I got the job. But, I think though to start with he was supposed to-- something ^{was} wrong with him. I know when the foreman come to me ^{and told me} that I would be welding for a few days, and wanted to know if I wanted to weld for them 'til what-his-name got back, and I told him "Yeah, ^{I'll try it}" So, I went in there, and of course, I didn't think I'd be in there only two or three days 'til he got back and he never did get back.

SS: So you became the head welder then?

ES: Yeah. Uh-huh.

SS: Did you stay for long at the job then?

ES: Yeah, I stayed down there until they started talking about going out on strike and I got harvest leave to come home.

SS: Yeah, that's when you got the job working for the Grain Growers.

ES: Yeah.

SS: You'd been there for how long? Years?

ES: I'd been down just a little over a year, down in Portland. And I never went back. But I had a good job to go back to, if I'd a went back.

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ES: --feel that way about it. So I stayed here and good thing I did, I got this job with the Grain Growers.

SS: Didn't want to get in one of these- guilty of striking in wartime.

ES: Yeah. So I put in a harvest and worked that fall in the harvest field here combining and in the fall after that I got a job with the Grain Growers and so I stayed there, didn't go back.

SS: This foundry and the shipyard were separate?

ES: Oh, yes, they were separate, yeah, uh-huh.

SS: Was this all private or was it government?

ES: The government had control of the foundry, it was all government, all government; government had control of it.

SS: So the foundry was casting for the shipyard?

ES: Well, for the shipyard, yes, that's right.

SS: And they wouldn't let blacks weld in the shipyard?

ES: No, no. Seemed like they had some trouble of some kind down there before I went down there, because I knew ^{that} I couldn't get in the shipyard there, as a welder.

SS: What kind of course was it here that you got that you learned welding?

ES: Just a welding course, they had it over here where the old store was, there used to be a kind of a factory, little old combines over there and they had a great, big building over there and they was teaching welding over there and I was working for another feller ^{here} in town and I'd go down there at night and take welding lessons.

- SS: Who were you working for?
- ES: I worked for Washburn-Wilson, the seed company here.
- SS: I wonder- I think Helmer Ringsage told me- I don't know if you know him, but he's on the edge of town here, but he got some kind of training and he went down to Portland.
- ES: Yes, that's probably where he went to welding, that's where he went. There's a lot of Moscow people went down there.
- SS: So that was a really useful skill.
- ES: Yes, it was, sure helped me out. I went down there and got this welding job and made some good money and got myself out of debt.
- SS: Well, I have to go pretty quick, but there's a couple things I want to ask you before I leave, and one of them is about what the old-time Fourth of July used to be like. I was wondering what the celebration used to be like, say like- did they used to have celebrations out at Lenville for the Fourth?
- ES: Well, now, let me see- we went down there- yeah, we went out there. No, I don't believe I ever was- but I was ^{right} out here at Cornwall.
- SS: Cornwall?
- ES: Cornwall used to have a Fourth of July celebration out there. Used to be two stores and a blacksmith shop out there at Cornwall, and I went to a celebration there. They had horse racing and I went to one at Lenville, too, that was after I left the farm, though, when I went down there to a celebration down there. I used to play on the ball team down there- not at Lenville, but up there, this school I told you was close where I lived, Aspendale. I played there, played on the ball team down there. Went down there after- that was after- I guess I was in high school. I played ball down there one Fourth of July and then they had horse races.
- SS: Was there horse races at picnics? Was there speeches, too?

- ES: No, there wasn't no speaker at all, just that they had foot races for the young people, you know and they had horse races, jusst common cayuses. The Lenville guys played the Cornwall guys in a baseball game and that's about all there was to it. Course, they had a big dance that night.
- SS: Would people stay out there instead of coming into Moscow?
- ES: Well, there wasn't no celebration in Moscow that Fourth of July when it was out there. When they had a celebration in Moscow these little towns didn't have no celebration, but ^{then} when Moscow didn't celebrate then that give them a chance to have their own little private celebration. Moscow used to have some big celebrations here at Fourth of July. Some good ones. Course, those were the horse days and they used to have horse shows, you know. The farmers show off their horses. And they had horse races. And they always had, of course they always had a big carnival here at that time, too, you know. They used to have a big time. When I was a little kid that's about the only time we'd get to come to Moscow, was on a Fourth of July, or whenever they had a circus here Dad would bring us to town. We never knew much about city life until after we moved over here. That's why my folks wouldn't hear to it when my sister wanted to go to Spokane to get her job and go to school.
- SS: Do you remember hearing about Marcus Garvey?
- ES: Marcus Garvey?
- SS: Yeah. I think he's the "Back to Africa" man.
- ES: Yeah, I remember his name.
- SS: That's what I think he was big on that. I don't even know what part of the country he was operating out of.
- ES: I know who he was since you mentioned it. ^{I remember it.} He was a fellow who was trying to encourage the blacks to go back to Africa. I remember read-

ing or hearing about him- that he was the man who did that. ^{Marcus Garvey.} I guess that was the name. I had forgotten about that. I know there was a man long years ago when I was a little kid or before I was born, anyway there was a guy that was trying- he was trying to get the blacks to go back to Africa to colonize. Marcus Garvey, I guess that was the name. Well, let me see now- who was the guy that did so much with the peanut?

SS: Washington. Booker T. Washington, right?

ES: No. Booker T. Washington, he built the first colored school.

SS: Right. Right.

ES: But this fellow that-

SS: Was it Burbank?

ES: No. That did so much with the peanut. Was that Marcus Garvey? No, that wasn't- wasn't like his name, either- what the deuce was his name? Did so much with the peanut. Oil of peanut and all this stuff. Now, ain't that something!

SS: I can't think of it either. I was wondering if there were any figures when you were growing up, any guys that were kind of heroes to the kids, you and your brothers. I was thinking maybe Booker T. Washington or somebody like that might have been. If it was me, I imagine it would have been Jack Johnson! (Chuckles) Or Joe Louis, you know.

ES: Of course, Booker T. Washington- now that's who my youngest brother was named after. And he named himself. Mother was cutting Booker T. Washington's picture out of a paper and of course the- telling about him, what he had did and what he was doing and then my little brother he decided that should be his name, so that's the name he picked. ^{He named himself.} Up until that time, "Babe" was all the name he had, was "Babe".

SS: So he was just a little kid at the time?

ES: My youngest brother.

- SS: He was just a child?
- ES: Oh, yeah, he was just a child about two or three years old. Of, course I know he wasn't named, they just called him "Babe". Until Mother cut Booker T. Washington's picture out of a paper and she was talking about what a ^{great} man he was and what he did, then he took the name; and that was his name 'til he died; Booker T.. And when I started high school up here I was the only black in the school- in high school- and they tried to pin that name on me; Booker T.! (Chuckles) Yeah, they used to keep trying to call me Booker T., but they found out I already had a brother by the name of Booker T. so it didn't hang too good.
- SS: Did you ever hear of that guy Dubois?
- ES: Huh?
- SS: Dubois- W. E. B. Dubois?
- ES: Dubois?
- SS: Dubois, yes.
- ES: Yes, uh-huh. Dubois, yes, he was quite- well what would you call him? A radical- I can't think of what- of just what he did. I know he was quite a- anyway, he was the man that was outspoken on- but I'm like the fellow with the peanut now, I can't--
- SS: I know he was a noted- he was noted as a real good thinker.
- ES: Yes, he had a pretty good brain, but he was- wasn't he kind of a left-winger?
- SS: Yes. Yeah, he was.
- ES: That's what I was thinking, seems like he was kind of off center there.
- SS: Yeah.
- ES: Pretty outspoken. But he was a pretty smart cookie, I know that. But he was kind- but he was quite a ways to the left.

- ES: It was Mc Garver, wasn't it- he's the one that did so much-
- SS: Maybe that's-
- ES: Yeah, Mc Garver.
- SS: When you were raising your daughter-
- ES: Huh?
- SS: When you were raising your daughter, when she was just a kid and growing up, did you ever try to explain to her the black-white relations and the prejudice and how that operated? I imagine you must have talked to her some, because you told me she never experienced that.
- ES: No. I-
- SS: I was wondering what-
- ES: No, I never- of course, she had her own experiences, little experiences, but I never did just sit down and tried to tell her that she was black and so you'd better keep in your place ^{or} stuff like that. I never did preach that to you.
- SS: That would have been pretty bad preaching.
- ES: Yes, but that's just like my younger brother, you know, Booker and I- when he was a kid, he didn't know he was black and he got away with it pretty good. Seems like it never did bother him. Us older kids, of course- our parents were raised in the South and they hadn't been away from there too long when we came long, and of course we heard a lot about segregation and the wrongs and what kind of a treatment the blacks was given and all that. It was very much alive in our family when I was coming up.
- SS: For your daughter growing up, do you believe that she really did never ever have any experiences any places until she left here. I mean, I know you said it was never bad.
- ES: Oh, no,- well, now, let me see now, seems like- it seems to me like

that when she was a little kid and she started going to school here, going to school here in town, seems like that- I won't say, but it seems like she kind of ran into the color barrier in some home here, I won't say for sure now, I'd have to see my wife about that. She joined the ^{Brownie} Scout Troop and seemed like that there was some woman here in town that more or less objected to it or something, I don't remember ^{who} it was now. Anyway, that she was- they met at her home, or she was at this home, and my little daughter, she was pretty upset about it and come home and told her mother about it. That's the only time I ever heard her complain. I don't just remember what that was, but she had joined a Brownie troop and seemed like this- there was some kind of party or something at ^{some} lady's house and somebody made some kind of remark to let her know that she was black. I forget what it was now, but anyway.

SS: Do you think that her consciousness of say, being black and black culture and that has grown a lot after she has been an adult and been in Berkeley and California?

ES: Well, -

SS: Or do you think she had when she was growing up?

ES: I don't know, now you take- now, you take it- ~~of~~ course when she went to college-she said that when she finished the eighth grade that she wanted to finish college and work for two years and then she was thinking about getting married. Well, what happened, she married on her sophomore year here in Moscow. She got married and she married a white boy and he was from- I guess I told you this before- he was from Pennsylvania - Pennsylvania Dutch, I guess. And they were together here her junior year and he graduated and he studied mining and he worked up here in the mines ^{during} the summer months, ^{so} after he graduated here, he was going to go to school and take further study over at

WSU. And, of course, they married and he was up in the mines and she went up there and lived with him, lived up there in the mines that summer and then he come back down the first of September, just before school started to go to Pullman and register and as soon as he he got over there; they had dropped the course that he wanted, see, they told him there wasn't enough interest there so they just discontinued it and so he said, "Nothing to do now but go back home." So they went back to Pennsylvania and he went to Penn State and went on and she went to Penn State. She put in her junior year at Penn State- part of her senior year at Penn State and it was a good experience for her, she got to go to a large college, which she found out was a whole lot different from going to Idaho. Then after they finished school back there- that was the idea now- and when she wanted to get married I tried to talk 'em out of it, I tried to talk 'em out of it. I talked to 'em and talked to 'em, I told 'em that I didn't really think they should, that they would probably find that there ^{were} different barriers that wouldn't be so good. And I said, "Further, on top of that, I didn't get a chance to get my degree, but I want ^{'em both} to finish college." Wanted her to get a degree. Well, they said they'd talk that over, too. And ^{when} he got through school, he'd get a job and then then he'd send Lois to school, so ^{Lois'd} get her degree. Well, so I shut up. So it turned out the way that they had to go to Pennsylvania to go to school back there. She went to school and she tried to work and go to school to help out because there wasn't much money- he didn't have much coming and they was depending on us to keep 'em, but she couldn't do it, she found out it took all her time for her books so she had to give it up. Anyway, after he got his degree they got a job - I believe it was out of, I ^{correctly now,} remember somewhere in Kansas and he worked there for a while, about six months or maybe

not quite a year, I don't believe, I know they was thinking about buying a home there, but they didn't. Then he got this job with this big copper mining company down here in Utah- Kennicott- something like that, anyway he got a job out here in Salt Lake with this copper mining company, so they moved to Salt Lake. And then a year after they moved to Salt Lake, why, my granddaughter was born and just about the time she was born, why, he got a job down here in Arizona. They sent him down to Arizona. And of course when he got to Arizona there was no place out there in the desert to move a family and so- ~~I~~ don't know- they decided to store their furniture in Salt Lake City and Lois would come ^{on} up home and stay with us until he got- they thought they was going to build some- get a housing down there at the mine- 'til he got sufficient place for ^{em}. Well, she come on- she send the little baby and come on home here and she got here just before summer school started. And she thought as long as she was going to be here a while, she'd be just as well to go to summer school so we paid her tuition so she could go to summer school and got her a car to drive back and forth. And she started to summer school. Well, that was alright with her husband, that was alright, because that wouldn't last long. And then after she got through summer school - I don't just ^{remember} now how it happened, but I think- I don't believe- or did she finish up? I ^{guess} she finished. Anyway, oh, it was the next year that she finished. I won't say, but anyway, ^{I know that} he came up to her graduation.

SS: So, she stayed for a while and kept going to school?

ES: Yes, uh-huh. And then after her graduation she got a job here in Moscow as student teacher for training up here at Moscow; started teaching and that's when- he wanted 'em to come on home, come on down there and stay out there. And she told him no. She said, she was

going ahead and finish up, as long as she had gone this far. That was in the agreement anyway that she'd finish up and he got pretty hostile and he wrote to her and he called to her and she called, you know. And she kept insisting that she wanted to finish up so she could teach if she had to. And he got tired of it, so he called her up one time- so he got mad and on his highhorse and told her, "Well," he says, "if you're going to stay up there it would be just as well to get a divorce." And she made up her mind, "Well, I'll just do that. I'm through college now and I've got where I can teach and make my own way." And so, she just went down and filed for divorce. She got the divorce and hadn't turned around and so he was here. But she wouldn't change her mind. She says, "No, you asked for it, so I'm going to give it to you." And so they argued around here for a day or two. I felt sorry for the guy, but she wouldn't give in, so she went and got a divorce. And she got a job- She went to California and got her a job teaching and he came over there and he told her if she wanted to teach, he'd come to California and go to Cal to summer school and take up something so that he could teach, too. Anyway, he made all kinds of propositions, but they didn't, she didn't. She didn't change her mind. She taught for ten years there and then she got a job at college and she got her ^{master's} degree. She's working on her doctor now.

SS: She is now?

ES: Yeah. She finally got her masters and she didn't stop she just kept a going, she said she was trying for a doctor.

SS: Did she ever remarry?

ES: Huh?

SS: Did she ever remarry?

ES: Not yet, no. Quite a girl. And so, what I was going to say now, she

was telling her mother here this summer that he finally got married again, but she had told him that, if she'd take him back, why, he would divorce the woman he married. She kind of laughed that off.

SS: Well, he must have really liked her to follow her around like that.

ES: Yes, he did, he thought plenty of her.

SS: Well, do you think that you were right that they had trouble because of the color difference?

ES: No, it wasn't color difference.

SS: It didn't sound like it. But when you were telling them not to get married, is that what you were thinking? Or was it just the college?

ES: Well, I was thinking more of the college, but I felt this way; if they wanted to take their chance on that and they thought they could get along, I figured that was their privilege. That's the way I felt about that. Take for myself, I wouldn't want to marry out of my color but if a man did or a woman did, I figured that's their privilege, of course, they got other certain various things. Of course, they'd have to understand that. I figured if they wanted to, why, that's their privilege.

SS: Your objection was to the fact that-

ES: I wanted her to have an education, is what I wanted her to do, because I lost out on mine and I wanted her to go ahead and finish school. Yeah, she finished and it's a good thing she did because I tell you right now shed' had a pretty rough sledding. If she hadn't a had that college degree so she could teach.

(subject changes abruptly-after a blank space.

ES: ---Methodist church, when she was a little kid- she and he and some other girls they left their church, the one they belonged to and they joined the Unitarian Church- their segregation- you know, they didn't have any. I can't explain. It wasn't much, but I know they

--(noisy) Other than that, why, I don't think, to my knowledge anyway she never belonged to anything else.

SS: You had told me that she saw things really differently after she left.

ES: Yes, that's right, she changed, she saw different. And she was very outspoken. But as far as doing anything I don't know of any, and I don't think she did. (noisy)

SS: Well, Gene, I should go, I've stayed a long time, it's getting along towards dinnertime.

ES: Well, Sam, I enjoyed- and I'm glad you came over.

SS: I really enjoyed coming and seeing you again.

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Frances Rawlins, December 11, 1978