

WALT BENSCOTER
NORLA CALLISON

Interviewed by:

Rob Moore

Oral History Project

Latah County Museum Society

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WALT BENSCOTER

NORLA CALLISON

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In early Prohibition, Troy and Kendrick were closed by local option. Pat Malone could "take care of most of the whiskey around." Whiskey from the druggist. Jimmy Durbin whiskey: "Don't buy booze if your kids need shoes." Bottle of formaldehyde mistaken for bottle of whiskey.

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American Ridge got its name because everybody got along fine. Charley Jessop cheats a man named Happer out of his land; Hammer broods on it until he dies.

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Homesteaders came for the Promised Land, mostly bachelors. Water was important. Breaking the bunchgrass sod and sunflowers with a footburner. Indian cayuses for \$10 apiece.

(approx. 15 min.)

with Rob Moore
7 December 1973

II. Transcript

NORLA CALLISON: We've had lots of winters here where we never got much snow until Christmas. Well, one thing we can think about, since it started early like this maybe we'll have an early spring. But that got so it don't work.

WALT BENSCOTER: That don't hold true always.

NORLA: It used to. And there's another thing that we used to have that we don't have any more. We had one a year or two ago and that's January thaw.

WALT: January thaw.

NORLA: When I was a kid we would get snow knee deep. And people would say, "Oh well, we'd get the January thaw and take it off" and it was just as sure as death and taxes.

WALT: Yeah.

NORLA: We got that January thaw, it never missed. But we don't get them January thaws. We had one a year two ago, a small one, but that's the first January thaw we've had in years. Our winters are changing. I don't know whether cutting off the timber changed things or not. I know back in the Cedar Creek, the Crescent country, since they cut the timber off there it's not near as frosty in there. It let the air currents in there, it's a lot warmer. But our seasons are changing.

WALT: Listen Bub, don't you think that the whole cockeyed thing is changing?

NORLA: I think so.

WALT: You can remember years ago when we used to farm with horses. We had

to get in the field early in order to get our work done. And we did. We was able to get out there well...

NORLA: Well if it's like it's been now, we had to have to farm with horses. It took a week or so get your horses toughened in or you'd kill 'em.

WALT: That's right.

NORLA: Why you wouldn't get to first base. (No.) Plowing with horses now.

Just about a week now that its fit to work.

WALT: Yeah.

NORLA: It's too wet, and then there's about a week it's fit to work, then it's too dry. When we worked with horses it wasn't that way.

WALT: No it was better. Plow for days.

NORLA: I remember the spring of 1934, why I remember it very distinctly. That was the spring after we bought our first cat, we bought it the fall of '33. It was a mild winter and I plowed this piece of ground right across over here in February. It was warm of an afternoon going along that north slope, and I could look down this way and the ground was covered with cobwebs and there was little gnats. The air was full of 'em and that was in February...

WALT: Just like in the fall of the year.

NORLA: That's right, just like fall of the year. Them cobwebs and them gnats, the air was full of 'em.

ROB MOORE: You'd be plowing that soon, in February?

NORLA: I did that year. And that's the last time I've ever plowed in February, in 1934, the year after I bought the cat. That's why I know it what I bought it in the fall of '33.

WALT: That same spring Bub, I think it was, I'm quite sure it was the same spring, we went to work in February and we never quit until everything is done. We never had a, you know, didn't have any more bad weather or have any winter at all.

NORLA: When I was going to school over here...I finished going to school over here in 1918 and you know there was more than one year when I was going to school over there that the Claus Eichner would seed in February. (Yeah.) 'Course it was early down on that canyon point down there, but I know that happened more than once. The kids would come to school, "Well, dad's seeding." That was in February. 'Course to get to seeding now in February...

ROB: January and February now is usually when...

NORLA: ...when we have weather.

WALT: One of the hardest months. I think the whole thing is changing.

NORLA: I think our weather pattern has changed. (Yeah.) I don't think there's any doubt about it.

ROB: Does that mean a difference in the crops that people put in?

WALT: Well yes and no. We used to be able to grow spring wheat here. We'd grow real good spring wheat. I don't think you could get your money back now if you tried it. It turns so quick and there's no summer moisture.

NORLA: One time, and I can't think of the year but it was after I bought the cat. That was fall of '33. It was after that several years. But I had the Whetstine place in fall wheat and...by golly it was after Mabel and I was married. We got married in the fall of '34. By golly I had that seeded in fall wheat and it winter-killed. Just a piece of standing, it looked like a...well it was a mess. It was just no wheat there.

WALT: Yah, yah. It winter-killed early in the fall I'll betcha.

NORLA: Yes, it did.

WALT: Yeah. I...

NORLA: It was no good at all. And by golly 'course now I was going to turn it over and it turned then and we had a wet spring and I couldn't dig it up. That's all I had to put in to amount to anything. And you know when I got that in? It rained and rained and I just couldn't work, couldn't work, couldn't

work. And finally it quit raining the last of May, and I went over there and dug that mess up and I remember I finished up, I seeded my corners out and it started to rain. Shower, it was wet, too wet to really be seeding, but I had to do it. And that was 5th of June.

WALT: 5th of June.

NORLA: 5th of June. I never forgot that. It was the 5th day of June that I seeded that to Federation wheat. Federation used to be a good spring wheat. (Oh yeah.) I seeded that to Federation and so help me I got forty bushels of spring wheat.

WALT: No fertilizer.

NORLA: Absolutely no fertilizer. Forty bushels, it was nice. I finished up in a shower seeding it. But I can't tell you the year but it was before Mabel and I got married.

WALT: The last spring wheat that I ever grew, and that was pretty good crop too, it was '41. That was the wet fall wasn't it? (Yeah.) '41.

NORLA: That was the year Warney and I went up and helped cut neighbor Cain's wheat up here by the balanced rock. '41. By golly we finished up and that wheat was as soft as mush and it didn't taste like wheat.

WALT: It was chalky.

NORLA: It just tasted chalky and by God poor old Bob was beside himself to get it cut. And Warney and I went up there and worked one day, the two of us. That was big business in them days, two combines in one field. He had the old...I forget what combine he had. I had the old Case. But anyway we finished up along when it was getting pretty in the evening like. And you know it was so wet them combine tracks was that deep, sinking in. Talk about pulling hard!

WALT: Steel wheels.

NORLA: That's right steel wheels. Talk about pulling hard, you get a bulk

tank pretty full of wheat and you could see every one of them tracks right out on the field. And them steel wheels was cutting in just about that deep.

ROB: About three or four inches.

NORLA: When we finished up it was a'showering and that was the last...it rained and there was never another kernel cut around here. But of course the rest of us was done. Bob didn't have a combine. He was at the mercy of the weather. (Yeah.) But it was in October I know that.

WALT: We cut barley, around 28 acres on the Meyer's place and we could only get the bulk tank about half full. The front wheel would slide. And the front wheel on the combine would slide.

NORLA: You take that wet wheat swelled up like that and that chalky stuff, by golly it was so wet it wouldn't hardly run. Remember in the tank? (Yeah.) It just wouldn't run. Like dry wheat will just swish and go on like that.

ROB: Wheat like that wouldn't be worth much to sell would it?

NORLA: There isn't hardly no food value in it. After wheat gets wet so many times it takes all the food value out of it.

WALT: Well hell, a lot of it sprouted, sprouted right in the head. No, I fed a whole bunch of hogs that winter...

NORLA: They just stand around and squeal at it.

WALT: They just didn't do nothing.

NORLA: Everytime you'd go out there the hogs would be at the feeder there or at the fence looking up at you squealing. There's no food value to it.

WALT: You can feed them all you want to. I feed mine with a self-feeder that never did run out, but no growth.

NORLA: No they won't grow.

WALT: I had three old sows farrow the next spring. And they farrowed 31 pigs, the three of them, and I saved just one. The rest of them was either born dead or died just shortly after they were born.

NORLA: The mother wasn't getting the right minerals.

WALT: Nope she didn't. If I'd a known, if I'd a had any idea, but I'd never fed any of that kind of feed before.

NORLA: That was the same year that George Davidson had this piece over here at Bob's, you know, across the draw. (Yeah.)

NORLA: It corners over there where Harley's and you and I all corner up. He had that Virginia Club wheat and that was one of the best fields of Virginia Club I ever saw before it all fell down. It hit George at the chin. Boy, that was good wheat. It got wet and rained and they thrashed and harvested and he had a mess of pigs there, and you know them pigs never done nothing. And before spring they all got sick, you remember? (Yeah.) And they had pigs die like flies.

WALT: They just shipped 'em in there from Montana.

NORLA: Yeah, they brought in some disease. If he didn't have one mess. And then feeding that crappy wheat with no food value in it and he got disease from them Montanas mixed in with his pigs and he just lost hogs like...they died like flies.

ROB: I heard from a woman down in Genesee that the way her grandfather saved himself in the wet harvest of 1893 was that he turned his hogs loose in the stacks. In the wheat stacks. And that's the only way the he managed to make anything out of it.

NORLA: I've heard of people just turning them out in the field. You know John Woody used to turn his hogs out every fall, 'course that was a good fall. They'd run and pick up every head and they'd fatten up man them pigs...

WALT: No, I'll differ with you. The Meyer place was hog-tied. I thought I had it made.

NORLA: Well, John used to run his on his and his wasn't hog-tied. Run over the canyon-side and everywhere.

WALT: Well by damn I tried her and I don't think they gained five pounds all fall.

NORLA: Remember Sam Bigham used to always turn his pigs out. (Yeah.) Every fall Sam...

WALT: Bub, they just run. You know what I mean they just...they run so much that they don't...

NORLA: They run their legs off looking for 'em.

WALT: Well, I'll tell you it was little different when they used to shock because the heads would all be around the shock.

NORLA: Around the shock.

WALT: But when you combining it was a different story.

NORLA: Well, I'm speaking about thrashing with a stationary. I know John Woody and Sam Bigham, they pretty much had their places all fenced except along the canyon. There was nothing down there and they wouldn't go down in there anyway. They'd turn the hogs out and pick up all the heads and them hogs would come out fat.

WALT: You remember how it used to be around the schock, it was all a bunch of heads. But with a combine it was a different story, they had to hunt for it.

NORLA: If you were binding a bundle, there was always a few heads that got away from you on the ground, you know.

WALT: The hogs had a wonderful time they enjoyed it immensely but...(Laughs.)

NORLA: They were happy hogs. (Laughs.)

WALT: ...they didn't gain any weight.

NORLA: They were happy hogs.

(Not transcribed.)

NORLA: My grandmother used to make the best bean soup out of split beans.

(Yeah.) Oh, she could really make good bean soup.

ROB: In the early days, did people usually take their crops in and then buy them back after they were processed, or did they process them themselves?

Like peas, would they...

NORLA: They kept enough at home. Like beans and stuff like that, we always kept beans enough to last all winter.

WALT: Oh, you mean before they was processed?

NORLA: Yeah, we didn't process them we just kept a few beans at home. We didn't buy any.

ROB: How would you clean them out?

NORLA: We just run 'em through the fanning mill or take 'em out and spread the tarp down on the ground. We used to clean that way and wind them.

WALT: Everybody...

NORLA: You can do a good job when you wind them.

WALT: Everybody used to have a fanning mill.

NORLA: Oh, that fanning mill...

WALT: Everybody had a fanning mill and cleaned their own seed grain. (Yeah.) Any more that don't take place.

ROB: That's like winnowing?

WALT: Yeah, the regular screen and air. You do a real good job...

NORLA: You put hay in there and it goes around and the fan blows out and the crap blows out the back end. We used to have dusters, treated our own wheat. Everybody got so lazy now that they don't do that. Easier to take it to town...

WALT: Yeah. Buy all the seed wheat in town.

NORLA: No, we used to...I'll tell you, the farmer pret'near everything years ago come off'n the farm. (That's right.) We had our own milk and butter, cheese

and eggs, cured meat and raised our own vegetables and had our own beans, apples.

WALT: Prunes.

NORLA: Prunes, had dried...there used to be several prune dryers on the ridge here.

WALT: Yeah, there was three at one time wasn't there? Meyer, Johnson, and Russell.

NORLA: Old A. J. Russell. You remember when this place over here that George farmed, the old Grandma Keene place, that was all apple trees at one time. (Yeah.) That packing house, you know there. (Yeah.) The old Taylor place. (Yeah.) It was a packing plant there in the back.

WALT: It was apples.

NORLA: The last apples I remember over here on this piece of Grandma Keene's was in that draw that goes up where it goes into the old Carter place, goes up in that cove, you know on the hillside. Oh they was the best apples, they was Gravensteins. I used to go to school and there'd be three or four trees, go by there and the Brocke kids and I would go up and get them apples. Boy there was the snappiest, they was just fall apples. (Yeah.) Boy they were good.

ROB: Did you both go to school at the schoolhouse that Frankie lives in now?

WALT: Yeah. Well, not that building. Same place, but it was a different building.

NORLA: It was little further down the hill.

WALT: Yeah. Just about the width of the thing down the hill.

NORLA: That's right. We used to play baseball on the upper side of the schoolhouse right where his house sets now. That's about where the baseball diamond was. We used the back of the school as a backstop. (Laughs.)

ROB: Did you break a few windows that way?

NORLA: No, there was no window on that back end, there was no windows on that end.

ROB: Were there quite a few sports and games and things played in school those days?

NORLA: Well, everyone of these ridges had a baseball team...

WALT: ...at one time.

NORLA: ...at one time there. Every part of this ridge had a baseball team.

Bear Ridge, Cameron, Leland, Southwick, and every town of course.

ROB: Would you go out and play each other?

NORLA: Oh yeah, we'd play on Sunday afternoon. They used to play over here over by the red barn didn't they. Right there in the flat.

WALT: Yeah. That was before my time.

NORLA: It was before my time but Wade Keene told me about it. (Yeah.) They played in that flat...

WALT: That's when Uncle Wallace lived there.

NORLA: Yeah, they played right across road there where George has got that patch he put in oats. (Yeah.) Across the road and the creek there where the highway is now. (Yeah.) That was the baseball diamond. (Yeah.) Wade Keene put me straight on that. They was playing baseball the afternoon I was born. (Yeah.) Wade said I was born and they was playing baseball over there.

WALT: I remember one time and that time I think they played up there at Keene's, out south of the building there.

NORLA: Out south of George's garage there.

WALT: I remember one time the Carlson boys came over here from Fix Ridge, and I suppose it would be the Fix Ridge team or...no, couldn't be Fix Ridge...

NORLA: Little Bear Ridge.

WALT: Little Bear. Yeah, that's where the Carlson's place was, wasn't it?

NORLA: Right across the street from...

WALT: Burnt Ridge.

NORLA: Burnt Ridge. It's between Bear Creek and Burnt Creek. Some people call

it Camp Creek now. That's right, Burnt Ridge.

WALT: Yeah. They used to come over here and...

NORLA: Yeah, that old Carlson place was the house with the barn that set right on the edge of the canyon there. (Yeah.) Jim Trout lives there now. You know I haven't been there for years and years and years and one day last fall, Mabel and I had been to Moscow and she's always wanting to see Burnt Ridge, she's been as far down as the cemetery. (Yeah.) So we went down and looked at the cemetery and I said let's go clear down to the end, clear down to Jim's place, the old Carlson place. It must be three miles from there on down to the end of the ridge. That's a nice laying ridge, the ground's beautiful. Pret'near level. We drove down there and turned around there by Jim's house and went back.

ROB: In these baseball games and stuff was there a lot of competition between the ridges?

NORLA: Well, I think baseball is the only game they played.

WALT: Baseball is the only game people played.

NORLA: They all played baseball. They didn't have any practice. They didn't practice they just got their practice while they was playing.

ROB: (Laughs.) Would one team walk over to another ridge and play there or what?

WALT: Well, usually horseback or team and buggy.

NORLA: That's before cars happened.

WALT: Practically everybody rode horseback those days. (Yeah.) Instead of having a motorcycle or a car you had a horse.

NORLA: Women and kids would go in the hack, and the young bucks, the baseball players, would have a horse. (That's right.) A saddle horse.

ROB: What was it like in the one room school? I know like when you watch a T. V. show or something about those days the kids are always playing tricks like

slipping a frog in teachers desk or something like that. Did that kind of stuff happen lot or was it a lot calmer than they showed it?

WALT: I'd say there was very little of it because the teachers seemed to always have eyes in the back of her head.

NORLA: They wouldn't stand for that stuff.

WALT: They didn't stand for it. We had one old girl down there, you probably remember, that had a buggy whip. She used it on the kids.

NORLA: I remember Sarah Sweeney, you remember she stayed with your folks. No, she boarded over here at the Jacobus' (Yeah.) I remember she had a cut-off broomstick. She just cut the broom off and just had that stick. I'll tell you that was a very effective message. (Laughs.) She'd just reach out and wham you with that thing. I saw her one time hit a kid right upside the head with it.

WALT: You never went to school with Eliza Dallas did you?

NORLA: No, but I heard about her.

WALT: Boy, she knocked all the papers off my desk one time whipping old Frank Mortimer. (Laughs.) Scared? I was just a little peter. Boy, I was so damn scared I...(Stops, laughing.)

NORLA: I imagine you wasn't the only one scared you probably could have heard a pin drop.

WALT: Yeah. She sure give old Frank a going-over. (Laughs.) Hell, she had a twisted rawhide. Yeah, a twisted rawhide whip. Boy I'm a telling you when that come down it was really meant something.

NORLA: You betcha.

ROB: Some of the boys would be really old wouldn't they? Sixteen, seventeen, around in there?

WALT: We got pictures in here. We got pictures someplace of kids going to school. They look like a buncha grown men.

NORLA: They worn mustaches. Big long flowing mustaches. (Yeah.) We got one up home there: George Davidson, and dad, and Jess Ball.

WALT: Some of the Brillhearts, I suppose.

NORLA: A Brillheart, and George Basher, and they all had big...grown men.

ROB: Wouldn't she have a hard time keeping them in line?

NORLA: None of these guys were...they were all good guys. They never gave any trouble.

WALT: Now the Basher boys they all, I think they all became physicians, didn't they?

NORLA: I think they were. I think they were.

ROB: So they must have gotten some pretty good schooling those years...

NORLA: It was those two that I remember dad speaking of. There was George and Lester Basher. And whether there was any more than that I don't know.

WALT: I think there was three of 'em.

NORLA: They lived on the Woody place. (Yeah.) That was the old Basher place.

WALT: One of the boys came back, that was when Pete was still alive, and stopped and talked, but I can't remember which one it was.

NORLA: You see, if they was still alive the youngest of 'em would be a hundred years old.

WALT: Yeah. One of 'em was a noted surgeon. Had a big name in California. I forget now what town he was in.

NORLA: I think he left here and went to California.

WALT: Oh, I'll tell you. There was some good people come out of the country schools. You know what I mean? Educated people.

NORLA: Someways I think the kids in the country schools did a lot.

WALT: I think, I honestly think, that it was the worst mistake that the state ever made when they consolidated the schools. I know it was the worst mistake financally.

NORLA: They told us it was going to be less, but anybody if he had any sense at all knew that it couldn't be cheaper.

WALT: That's right. Taxes have done nothing but go up, school taxes.

NORLA: You're hiring a teacher, and you're hiring a bus driver, and you got a bus.

WALT: Then you got maintenance on the bus.

NORLA: You got maintenance and everything and it just can't be cheaper. And another thing, the kids in the country...I know you went to it, we all went to it. One teacher to eight grades. And I'll tell you she didn't have time to spend much time on anybody. Just a few minutes to each class.

ROB: Would the older kids help out with the younger kids sometimes?

NORLA: No, they were usually paddling their own canoe, getting their own lessons. But the kids down the line, that's where I think the country school had it on the other. You take a kid in the fifth grade. He'd set there and he'd listen. He'd get his work done or maybe he was just listening, picking daisies, should have been a'studying but he'd listen. And he'd hear the kids in the seventh and eighth grade reciting. (Yeah.) And he'd hear that before he ever got there. And when he got up there why he knew a lot of that stuff. That's where I think a lot of country schools by golly had it on the others. They could sit there and listen.

WALT: Why you probably remember when the state used to give eighth grade examinations...

NORLA: I took one of 'em.

WALT: ...and nine times out of ten it would be a country school that got the highest grades. Some kid in the country school would come up with the highest grade.

ROB: How long would a teacher usually stay on in a country school? I know a lot of school teachers came out, they were young women and they'd marry pretty soon.

WALT: Well, it varied a lot. Now Sweeney, how long was she here? She was here about...

NORLA: Two years.

WALT: Two? I thought it was three.

NORLA: No, I had her in the fifth and sixth and Ann Deobald in the seventh and eighth.

WALT: I went to school with Sweeney I think two years. Do you know what Tom Green told me when he was down at Milton-Freewater? He had more or less discipline trouble you know, in the school. And he said the country kids were by far the best kids. The kids that came in out of the country. That's after they'd consolidated. He said they were the best students and caused him the least trouble.

NORLA: Well, I think a lot of that, Walt, the kids in the country had something to do.

WALT: Well, he said they'd go home at night and they all had chores to do, they all had work to do.

NORLA: They all had responsibility.

WALT: The other kids would run around town and raise hell.

NORLA: Well they'd get a candy bar and two or three kids get together and do nothing. (Yeah.) Why the country kids would get through school, they didn't have school buses, you'd get on the cayuse and go home. And he had to milk some cows night and morning, and he had chores to do, he had something to do. (That's right.) Unemployment didn't bother him a bit when he had things to do. He didn't have time to get into trouble. 'Course on Halloween, well sometimes he'd upset a privy or something. (Laughs.) But that's excuseable on Halloween, you know.

ROB: I heard about other Halloween tricks like taking apart buggies and things and putting them inside the schoolhouse. Did they do that kind of stuff out here?

WALT: Yeah, they even put a cow inside the schoolhouse down here one time.

(Laughs.) A steer. Did you ever know who did that? (Laughs.) I won't tell 'til they're all dead. (Laughs.) I wasn't in the prank, I wasn't even there.

NORLA: But you heard about it.

WALT: Yeah, I heard about it.

ROB: I don't anybody would mind these days.

WALT: That was what you might call a shitty trick. (Laughs.)

NORLA: No, that wasn't very nice.

ROB: Seems like most of tricks people played in those days really were a lot more fun and a lot less mean, you know. They were more to make people laugh than to hurt people.

NORLA: Well I'll tell you I think the kids in them days, by golly, really I think they really really enjoyed themselves much...

(End of Side A)

NORLA: Once in awhile we'd ski a little bit, but they mostly skated and...

WALT: Coasting.

NORLA: Coasting, you know, and then it would end up and we'd go to somebody's house from when the party broke up, you know. Go up to the house and have oyster stew.

ROB: Was this when you were little kids or...

NORLA: We were kids going to school.

WALT: Most all the grades. I don't think the real little kids ever turned out.

NORLA: First and second grade didn't, you know. 'Course we had kids here in them days. I went over here when there was forty-five, and my dad went when there was sixty. (Yeah.) You get a bunch like that and you can have a pretty nice time of skating or coasting and all go up to the house and have an oyster feed, oyster stew you know.

WALT: Do you remember those old barrel staves that we used to go coasting on? Just take a barrel stave and put a block on it (laughing) and set on top of the block about like a milking stool and try setting on...(Laughs.)

NORLA: You couldn't control it one bit you know.

WALT: (Laughing) I'll tell you, you got quite a thrill at times.

NORLA: And they used to have sleigh-ride parties, you remember that?

WALT: Yeah. Toboggans. You remember when we used to ride over here on Deobald's cove?

NORLA: It's right over here where that big tree is, straight off that steep cove right over there.

WALT: It used to drift, the snow would drift up to the top of the hill six to eight feet high.

NORLA: You'd jump off that higher than your head.

WALT: Yeah. High as your head or higher. Come down over that thing, boy I'll tell you when you hit the ground. (Laughs.)

NORLA: You just nearly was flying.

WALT: Yep. That old board would crack like a rifle. That there, you had to be careful or it would take your breath away, going that fast.

ROB: When you started to get older, how did courtship and dating work in the country in the early days? What kind of things did you do then?

WALT: I think you just took your girl walking.

NORLA: You'd use the shank-pony. You used to go to church, you know, and the young fella would walk the gal home from church. (Yeah.) Sometimes it would take quite a little while.

WALT: If you was lucky you'd have a team.

NORLA: That's right. They didn't hurry going home, you know, they had lots of time. And them sleigh-ride parties. You'd take a big old bobsled and put some straw in there. If you're lucky enough to have a foot warmer to

try to keep your feet warm, you know. Blankets, the horse blankets, you know. The horses with sleigh bells across the hames, you know. The skinner he was the driver, and the rest of 'em back in there of course bundled up to try to keep from freezing. 'Course the boys couldn't let the girls get cold.

ROB: Of course not.

WALT: I remember one time we went to Troy. I forget how many there was of us but I remember Nettie May was along. She was older than the rest of us. And coming home and I just had old Shorty and Tricks. There wasn't too many of us but there was enough for a sleigh ride anyway. I can't remember whether we went to a dance or where we went to. Anyway, coming home I got sleepy. I tied up the lines and crawled down under the covers and went to sleep. And Nettie May said we met two rigs in Bethel Gulch up there and the team turned out for 'em, but I knew nothing about it. But she was older and she stayed awake.

NORLA: They'd turn out and let them go by. One time Harry and Ernie and I went to Randall Flat to a dance. You've been out to Randall Flat haven't you? (Oh yeah.) One of the coldest places ever around to be, you know.

WALT: That's north of Troy.

NORLA: Northwest. (Yeah.) Out there northwest. Well we went up there Harry and I. Ernie had one pretty good horse and Harry had a pretty good one. So I come down, and Ernie and I went over. Harry had a sled. I harnessed up the team, Harry's horse and Ernie's horse, and we went to Randall Flat to a dance. Man it was below zero. I'll tell you we came awful near freezing to death. By golly, went up there and danced with those Swede gals you know. We used to have some fine times there. Once in awhile some rascal would bring in a little moonshine too you know. (Laughs.) Oh, it would crop in. And Auntie... 'course she was a sleeping in that bedroom right over there... by

golly it got time for us to come home and we weren't home. Boy, she spent an awful night. It was broad daylight and she was getting worried and she kept a'looking and she just knew something would happen to them guys. And she said it was broad daylight and she said I looked out and here come Ernie and I leading the old mare (laughs) walking home with that there horse and sled on it. Harry in there, we come in there in broad daylight. Cutting across the field. Oh shucks, that's what you call young and irresponsible.

ROB: When a man kinda decided on a woman he thought he might like to marry would the courtship take quite awhile?

NORLA: (Laughs.) That depends.

WALT: I'll tell you, in our time we didn't get married very young. I think I was 28. How old were you Bub?

NORLA: Going on 32. Do you remember the Harvest Balls they used to have down here at the Temple? They used to have a Harvest Ball every Fall. (Oh yeah.)

NORLA: Boy, that was some dance. (Yeah.) They'd decorate the hall up with pumpkin and corn stalk or shocks of corn, you know. Mann Brothers, you remember them? That was a good orchestra. (Yeah.) After they outgrew Lewiston here, they played big time. They played Seattle and San Francisco and places like that in the big hotels. They were tops. Yeah, Mann Brothers played there and then there was another after Mann Brothers went into the big circuit. Why then there was Kaufman's. That was a good orchestra, you know. Kaufman's used to come up here. We used to have the best times down there, you know, in the fall. The harvest was all done and they'd have a big harvest ball. Man, I don't know why it didn't fall down. (Laughs.) I look at it now, the way the crowds used to get in there. They had some wonderful times there.

WALT: It's a wonder that that old temple didn't cave in. I saw that floor covered with people. (That's right.) They condemned it. Why it didn't break

down I don't know. (I don't know.) Still condemned I guess isn't it?

NORLA: Well they got some steel posts in down below there. It's pretty good now.

ROB: I've been hearing something about after people got married their neighbors would throw a shivaree for them. Did that happen much up here?

NORLA: Oh, it never failed. We always had a shivaree, you know. You just figure on buying treats.

WALT: Shotguns and the works.

ROB: What would a shivaree be? What would people do in a shivaree?

WALT: Oh just make all the cockeyed noise you can make. That's was all the... what it really should have been is music, you know. What would you call it?

NORLA: Just kinda serenade 'em.

WALT: Serenade. It wasn't a serenade. It was just a bunch of noise.

ROB: Was that the night they got married or anytime...

WALT: Well, first night you caught 'em home.

NORLA: When they got home from their homeymoon, you know. Why the couple always knew they was coming. And they'd have candy bars, you know, and apples and different things for treats, you know, and coffee. And they'd move in. The crowd, they always liked to wait till they got in bed if they could. Wait late, you know. Sneak in, you know, and that noise would turn loose outside. There was always some rascal or two would have his shotgun. Get right beside the house and shoot right up in the air like that. Tin cans and stuff. Remember that old horsefiddle you used to have? That old rig you they turned with a crank they called a horsefiddle.

WALT: Do you know...?

NORLA: Bump, Bump, Bump, Bump. It was a cog. It run on a cog like that. Oh, it was the noisest thing.

WALT: I think I still got it.

NORLA: You have!

WALT: I think it's up there in this old shed.

NORLA: It is!

WALT: I think so.

NORLA: By god you oughta hang on to that. That thing will be something. That made the awfulest noise. And they'd turn that thing and crank and there was a thing that run on a cog and jumped from on cog to another. Oh brother, talk about noise. They'd get 'em up out of bed, you know, and they'd invite 'em in, you know. That was the main idea, to get 'em up. Then they'd set around, you know, and visit and eat candy bars and apples. Just have a nice evening.

WALT: Well I didn't remember...my memory ain't so good any more...but Kyle Anderson told me the other day, you know when we were shivareed. I don't know whether you came or not.

NORLA: Well, I imagine.

WALT: The Woody boys was there and Kyle and I can't remember who all. But anyway he knew we weren't prepared for 'em. So he came and told me.

(Laughs.)

NORLA: You better get something, huh?

WALT: So I went to town and got some cigars and candy bars and got prepared for the shivaree. It took place all right.

NORLA: Got the treats.

WALT: We had ice cream and cake.

NORLA: I don't know. In them days the people was happy. (Oh yeah.) In some ways I think they was happier than they are now.

WALT: Oh, happier.

NORLA: People got so much now that they should be happy but they just got so much that they...I know one thing, we used to visit a lot more.

WALT: Oh, have pinochle parties.

NORLA: Oh, they'd have parties you know. People would go to church and their neighbor would invite 'em home for dinner, and we'd invite somebody home to our place. People visited. And they had parties you know, and literary. You remember when we used to have literary when we was going to school.

WALT: Literary!

NORLA: Programs and by golly, now you never see your neighbor. Well, you wave at him across the draw or across the fence. He's on one tractor and you're on the other, and wave at him going or coming from town. (Yeah.) But actually as far as going over to a neighbor and visit and spend the day and eat dinner with him it's pret'near unheard of. (Yeah.) They get in the car and drive fifty or a hundred miles somewhere to visit somebody.

WALT: That went out when the cars came in.

NORLA: That's right. But when they had horses and the old buggy or the hack, boy you didn't get too far away from home.

ROB: Did they used to have those kitchen sweats out here?

NORLA: Oh sure. We'd get together and dance in the kitchen. Boys would be dressed in overalls, you know. And just one guy would play the squeezebox and the other play the fiddle. That's why it's called kitchen sweat.

ROB: Because everybody gets in there and sweats.

NORLA: Well, they were in that place and they is so thick in there, get hot, and they'd get up a sweat, you know. That's pretty good exercise. (Laughs.) But they had a lot of fun. I don't know maybe they enjoyed it better than we do now. It didn't take so much them days to make people happy. People's got so now it takes an awful lot to make them happy. You could have a good time at a kitchen sweat in a pair of overalls. In fact, that's about all they ever wore. The men just wore new washed pair of overalls. (Yeah.) Clean shirts, you know. No admission I don't think was ever charged. Maybe

they passed the hat to pay the fiddler and the guy playing the squeezebox. Remember, they used to have a dance over at Sam Bigham's over at the... (Oh yeah.) ...Boy I can see that old fiddler...(Old granary) I can see that old fiddler setting up there yet. I was just a kid. Dad and mother used to go. Just as plain as can be I can see. It was a pretty good size hall. (Yeah.) That was a lot bigger than the kitchen. They could really call quite a dance there.

WALT: I wonder if the old building still stands. I think it does.

NORLA: Yeah. It's still standing. Don't look in too bad of shape either.

WALT: And barn dances...we used to have barn dance once in awhile. Remember they had quite a series of barn dances down there where Sneider Brammer lives. Do you remember that?

NORLA: They turned that into quite a dance business.

WALT: Were you there the night the floor broke through? (No.) One night the floor broke through. I don't know if they had any more after that or not. I'll tell you who was living there it was...Compton.

NORLA: Stuart.

WALT: Stuart Compton.

NORLA: He was always out to making a dollar, you know. (Yeah.) He turned it into a dance pavilion.

(Not transcribed.)

ROB: Would there be big parties and things too, after they finished thrashing at one farm? Would there be a party there to celebrate that?

NORLA: No, they just moved to another farm.

ROB: How many thrashing rigs were there on this end of the ridge?

WALT: What was that?

ROB: How many thrashing rigs...

NORLA: How many thrashing machines were there?

WALT: One year, maybe more than one year, there was only one. Old Chris Meyer, you remember. (Yeah.) The fall the grain got wet. He thrashed the whole ridge that year. But the next year, that was when the company machine was...

NORLA: Well then before the company machine you remember George Clem used to thrash up here. (Yeah. George Clem.) He thrashed for us a number of years. Warney May used to thrash. (Yeah.) And Jess Ball.

WALT: But Wareny used to go over on the Genesee country too.

NORLA: Yeah. He used pull up and go over there, too.

WALT: They'd get bigger run over there.

NORLA: He thrashed a time or two for dad. (Yeah.) But George Clem thrashed for us several years. And then way back, as the Indian says, a long time ago, Martin Thomas run the machine.

WALT: Martin used to thrash the lower end of the ridge.

NORLA: Yeah, he used to thrash for us. I remember more than once. (Yeah.) He thrashed for us up there. By golly, he never whistled. He always said that he had a thrashing machine not a whistling machine.

ROB: The whistle was to stop work?

NORLA: Well, any kind of signal or anything, you'd always whistle. You'd stop, blow the whistle for noon. They toot it a little different when they stopped, you know. Some guys moving along the road and see somebody, they'd pull the whistle and toot at him. Martin said he had a thrashing machine. Now they was setting there thrashing at home. The engine was setting just about where Bob's corral is. Except it didn't go as far as that stack bottom there, and dad was doing the milking, him and I. I was just a little shaver, I think I milked one cow or two. We were doing the milking and the guys went in the

house to eat breakfast. When we got through milking, dad says, "We're gonna hear that whistle." Dad got up and pulled the whistle back and tied it.

WALT: Oh no! (Everybody laughing.)

NORLA: Tied it down. By golly, mother said...Martin see was mother's brother...

(Yeah I know he was.) ...if it had been anybody else but dad he'd have killed him. (Laughs.) Hard to clean up on his brother-in-law. And mother said Martin just set, that big old mustache of his, you know, pulling food in. He just sneezed and snorted but he never got up from his breakfast. But she said the minute he got through, God help it he went out and unwired that whistle. (Laughs.)

WALT: He lowered the steam didn't he?

NORLA: He sure did. Yeah. He just tied her down. Pulled her back and wrapped the wire around the lever, let her go. Yeah, he'd have killed if it had been anybody but his brother-in-law. (Laughs.) Yeah, most of the time there was two machines on the ridge.

WALT: Yeah. I don't know maybe there was only one year that this Chris Meyer thrashed...

NORLA: One time there were three. There was Chris Meyer, and the Company machine, and then that little company rig that Perry...

WALT: Oh yeah. I remember that.

NORLA: ...and Hal and them were in on. At one time there were three thrashing machines.

WALT: That was right at the end of thrashing.

NORLA: That's right.

WALT: The next thing was combines.

NORLA: Yeah. That was just before combine come in.

ROB: Would it work that somebody would just go out and buy a thrashing machine and then rent it out to help pay it off or what?

NORLA: Well, they just bought it and they went out and cut, and what they made...

WALT: I don't think anybody ever went busted here with a thrashing machine if that's what you mean.

NORLA: No, people here was pretty good about paying the thrash bill. (Yeah.)

Some thrashermen would go broke if they didn't pay their bills.

WALT: Yeah. They'd go broke in a hurry if they couldn't collect their...

NORLA: People here, you know, paid their thrash bills. Before the combine there was three thrashing machines. Two company rigs.

ROB: Those company rigs worked that you bought in shares on the machines?

NORLA: There was six of 'em in our rig. It started out Byard Davidson and Wade Keene, Walt Bigham, George and Frank Roberts, and dad. And when Wade quit he sold to Ira. (Oh, to Ira!) Ira Haven. And Bigham sold to Emil Olson. You remember when Bigham had to go to the army? He sold to Emil, and Byard, I don't know whether he sold or what the arrangement was, but anyway Cliff come up. (Yeah.) He wound up in the rig. But that was the original six was the one's I named first. Dad and Frank and George, they were in it all the time. From the start to the finish. Bought that old machine the fall of '16. I'll never forget that. Granddad and I went to Elk River on a fishing trip with the old Maxwell. There was an old Altman-Taylor Thrasher, a 27-inch Altman-Taylor, pretty good old machine that was. And that old International tractor that burnt distillate, you remember? (Yeah.) The pistons was down this way. (Yeah.) George run the separator and Leslie run main. They got that machine while we was at Elk River fishing with the old Maxwell for a couple of days. When we come home, why the old man Guy, remember had that place down there...(Yeah.)...on the grade... (Yeah.)...and had it in wheat, good piece of wheat about 50 acres of it. And he prevailed on the boys to thrash his wheat while they was coming up the grade, bringing it home. And they pulled in there and thrashed there

first. First thrashing they done was that piece on the Guy place. And they come on up on the hill and stayed there for the rest of the time.

WALT: That was the first bulking too that was ever done.

NORLA: That's right. That's what introduced bulk wheat to this country.

(Yeah.) Each company man furnished a bundle wagon and a tank to haul the wheat.

WALT: That was a big saving.

NORLA: Yeah, each company owner had a bundle wagon and hauled the wheat. And they traded, you know. There was six of 'em and they each had a tank and four or five horses on a wagon. They just run under the spout and hauled it bulk, you know. And at the end of the year they got the weights, set down and had a grand and glorious settling-up some night down at George Davidson's. They figured out what their expenses was and how much it was going to cost. And each man was assessed that much according to the amount of wheat he had. A man that had 2000 bushels of wheat would pay more than a man that had 1200 bushels. They figured out on that basis, just as fair as they could be. (Why sure it was.) What their expenses was against what amount he had thrashed. And then the difference in the bundle wagon, why that was trade-work, back and forth.

WALT: A fella who had a small crop would come out long on the hauling...(That's right.)...he'd get paid for hauling.

NORLA: He hauled more for the other guy than they did for him, you see? Say one guy had 1500 bushels of wheat and the neighbor over here had 3000. Well, when they traded why he'd get a little back. (Yeah.) On the bundle wagon hauling they paid so much for wagon and team to haul bundles. Well, they say it was four or five dollars a day. I remember when it got five dollars that was a awful price.

WALT: Yeah. Four dollars was...

NORLA: Let's say I worked for Walt three days, I hauled bundle for him for three days. Well he hauled for me two and a half days. I owe him a half a day, see? That's the way it figured out. It wasn't hard to figure out.

WALT: I think four dollars was the going wages for a man, a team, and a bundle wagon.

NORLA: I remember when it got up to five dollars. Lester Crocker was pitching that year. We thought that was awful, **five** dollars for a pitcher. He pitched bundles one year, five dollars a day.

WALT: That was after things started to pick up. (That's right.) That was war days. (That's right.)

ROB: In the days before this company machine came in and people traded work around thrashing time, did people ever take advantage of that or was everybody pretty straight with their neighbors. Would some people be difficult to settle up with?

WALT: I don't ever remember having trouble with anybody.

NORLA: These people here were all honest. We didn't have any...

WALT: Up until the time that old Perry Huddleston moved over here on the corner nobody ever locked anything. There was nothing ever locked up.

NORLA: You didn't ever have to worry about anybody bothering anything.

WALT: You didn't worry because nobody took anything. But then it started. They started coming in. Stealing started taking place and nowadays it ain't too good.

NORLA: Yeah, about that time...you know every once in awhile you'd loose a ham or a side or two of bacon. Things started moving around. (Yep.) But the people lived here, the old original settlers, you didn't have to worry a thing about. They was just as honest as they could be. You didn't have to worry about a thing.

ROB: I've heard stories about how up in the Princeton country say like a ham

would disappear or something and if the people would know who it was they'd go and take care of it themselves. How did it work around here?

WALT: We never taken care of old Perry but he should have been taken care of.

(Laughs.)

NORLA: We knew where it was a'going. Remember when they found those hams over there on the wood pile over there on the Jennings place? (No. I don't know.) Did you hear about that? (No.) I supposed you knew about it. It was about the time that they were losing meat. I forget who it was that went over there, cutting wood, and they found a ham or two cached away in a pile where they pile limb wood up, where they'd been making wood you know. (Yeah.) They found it next spring. It was rotten. Pretty good idea who put it there. It got pretty tight you see, pretty hot. They just left it there.

ROB: How did people try to enforce the law...

WALT: Oh hell, I never remember a time when we didn't have a sheriff.

ROB: What would people do then in case something went wrong?

NORLA: I don't know.

ROB: In case there was some kind of fight you know.

NORLA: We never had any trouble like that.

WALT: We never had any trouble here on the ridge.

NORLA: You remember the time old Perry got into Wade Keene's cellar under the house where George lived?

WALT: Yeah, but you know he had that trap set for him.

NORLA: By golly, you know when Wade and them were going to Moscow...

WALT: Decoration Day wasn't it?

NORLA: Decoration Day and he rigged up a shotgun in there. By golly, who was it that was plowing out there with a walking plow on that place that Dick farms.

WALT: I don't think there was anybody. I was planting beans.

NORLA: Somebody, maybe it was you, and they heard the gun go off.

WALT: I heard the gun go off but I thought...the wind was blowing like the devil and I thought it was a board blew off you know and come down flat. I never even looked, I just kept on planting beans.

NORLA: Well anyway, when Wade and them come home that afternoon, the first thing by god Wade thought of was go down to see how his trap had worked. He opened the door and there stood Perry. (Laughs.) He had him. He couldn't get out see.

ROB: If the gun had already gone off why couldn't he get out?

NORLA: It set the trap. The gun went off, by golly, and closed the door and he couldn't get it open.

ROB: Without setting the gun off again.

NORLA: Well, unless you opened it from the outside. Wade said, "I opened the door and there be set, blinking his eyes in the dark, blinking his eyes looking at me. 'What are you doing here in my cellar?'"

ROB: What did he say?

NORLA: I don't know. I imagine he said quite a bit.

WALT: Wade came down and asked me if I heard that gun go off, and I scratched my head awhile and I told him no. I said I thought I heard a board blow off of something...

NORLA: You heard something slap.

WALT: Yeah. But you know I knew they were gone. (Yeah.) If Wade had come and told me. I would have been a looking for it. I'd been a'looking.

NORLA: How did Perry get up there? Did he wait until you got on the other side of the hill?

WALT: He must of waited 'til I got over the hill.

NORLA: You was on the road side.

WALT: I was going back and forth like this.

NORLA: You was on the other side of the field where you couldn't see him and he

sneaked up there.

WALT: Yeah. And he just slip on the road there. He knew old Wade was gone.

NORLA: Why sure. He had to go by his place, you see, to go to Moscow.

ROB: How would people handle something like that? I mean would he just let him go, or turn him over to the sheriff in town?

NORLA: No he just...

WALT: I think Wade just kicked his ass. (Laughs.)

NORLA: I think he just opened up a boot shop (laughs) and let it go at that.

No, they never got anything.

WALT: They didn't have anything.

NORLA: Poor as Job's turkey.

WALT: A whole bunch of kids.

NORLA: Yeah, several children.

WALT: At least he let old Perry know that...

NORLA: We never had trouble like that.

WALT: You couldn't do stuff like that.

NORLA: People never had trouble anything like that very much.

(Not transcribed.)

ROB: Was it a pretty religious community in those times?

WALT: Oh it was about fifty-fifty.

NORLA: Yeah, there used to be two churches here, Catholic and one on the hill.

WALT: There were two churches here at one time.

ROB: A Catholic Church and a Luthern Church?

NORLA: No it was the Nazerenes and the Methodists.

WALT: The church was built for a community church, but the Methodists took it over and they wouldn't let the other people use their church, so they fixed

up an old packing house that it used to stand over here.

NORLA: You know that was pretty small at that.

WALT: Oh small, Norla that was terrible. They should have bent over backwards but they didn't do it.

NORLA: The people built it for a community church.

WALT: That was absolutely built for a community church. (Yep.)

(End of Side B)

(Not transcribed.)

WALT: Closed, they were all closed. I know I went up to Clarkia one time the fourth of July. I had an uncle living up there and booze was around on the table. I guess you would call it a cafe at that time, and they was playing cards and there was booze on the table. And everything was closed up down here.

ROB: Did the town itself vote on whether it wanted to be open or closed ?

WALT: Oh it was state wasn't it?

NORLA: Yeah, it was local option they called it.

WALT: Well, anyway you see Bovill's in Latah Country, and Latah County kept a sheriff there in Bovill practically all the time although there was a lot of whiskey floating around when the sheriff was there.

ROB: That was Pat Malone wasn't it?

WALT: Yeah.

NORLA: He was as big as a horse. (Yeah. That's right.) Remember Pat always wore that big overcoat and he always had a pint in it. (Yeah.) He could take care of most of the whiskey there was up there. He used to come down to the dances when they had the dance halls, Pat would.

NORLA: Here in Prohibition, you know, why you could always get a bottle of

whiskey. They'd call local option. They'd get it down at the druggist here. Dad used to go in there. I imagine a pint of whiskey would last Dad for years. (Yeah.) He'd just set it on the medicine shelf for when he would want a little cough syrup, you know, a little pint of whiskey. You could get Jimmy Durbin Whiskey. He's the one that had on the bottle "Don't Buy Booze If Your Kids Need Shoes." You remember that Walt? (Yeah.) And dad would go down here to Albert Moskoff the druggist, and he'd get that from Albert.

ROB: Was that made around here or was that shipped in from some place?

WALT: Oh no, it was bonded whiskey.

NORLA: It was bonded whiskey, it wasn't moonshine.

WALT: There was lots of moonshine flowed into Kendrick and just where it came from I don't know.

NORLA: It got here anyway.

WALT: It came in. One time you could buy it without any trouble. I kind of think...who in the devil was it. Old Archie May went into the drug store and got a bottle of formaldehyde and took it across the street and and put it in his buggy, (laughs) in the back of his buggy. Somebody saw him and he supposed it was whiskey. And so he went over and slipped the bottle out and took a big snort. I can't think of who in the devil it was.

NORLA: It's a wonder it didn't kill him.

WALT: Who in the hell was that who took the snort of formaldehyde? I'll ask Frankie someday.

NORLA: He used it treating wheat you know. If you got a little too much in there it would kill the wheat. I wouldn't germinate.

WALT: I don't imagine the guy could take more than one swallow (laughs).

I don't know if he could even swallow it or not. You got it in your mouth it would...

NORLA: It would burn like fire.

ROB: Up further north up on the ridge and down in Troy there was some hard feelings between the Swedish people and the Norwegians. Was that a problem down in this area too?

WALT: Oh no, no problem at all.

NORLA: That's why they called it American Ridge down here. Few problems at all here. Everybody got along fine.

ROB: It's pretty remarkable because it seems like most of the places in the county had some problems.

NORLA: No trouble at all. About the best neighborhood you could ever ask to be in.

WALT: Before our time Bub, there was some trouble. Old Charley Jessop he was an ornery old devil.

NORLA: That's right. He was very religious too.

WALT: Oh yes. I'm trying to think of one that...there was a place and it would be Jessop's south forty.

NORLA: That's the one next to the Dougharty place.

WALT: Yeah. Some guy lived down there, who was it? Was his name Hammer?

NORLA: I don't know if that's the name but there was a man by the name of Hammer that lived here. But I don't know where he lived. I remember Dad speaking of Hammer. But I don't know where he lived at.

WALT: Anyhow, I think that was the place, and he and Charley were talking. He had to go to Moscow to prove up up on his place, you know, to sign the final papezs or something. I don't know just what the deal was, but Charley convinced him there was no need for him to go, because he had to go and he'd take care of it. And he went out and he took care of it. But he wound up with the forty.

ROB: How could he do something like that?

WALT: I don't know. I just don't know. And whoever told me was in the know

and I can't remember now who in the devil it was that told me. He said it killed the old boy, he brooded over it and...

NORLA: Sure didn't kill Charley.

WALT: No, it didn't hurt Charley a bit. And there's another one old Charley pulled. He pulled some good ones.

ROB: What were the early homesteader like? Why did they come out here?

NORLA: The promised land.

WALT: Yeah, that's right. It was the promised land.

NORLA: Most of 'em that come here was bachelors. Homesteaded and proved up and if they had a family they brought the family out in a few years. Some might have met some girl and got married. They were pretty much...all of them that I remember come here in the first...there was George Dougharty, and John Roberts, Sam Bigam, Frank May, Martin Thomas, and all them. They were all bachelors.

WALT: Was old Frank a bachelor?

NORLA: When he first come here I think he was. They was all bachelors. You see John Roberts, and Sam Bigam, George Dougharty come here together. I remember we was thrashing wheat one time down at the ranch there, and George come out and climbed up on my truck. And I said to him I said,

"Mr. Dougharty" I said, "just when did you come here?"

He said, "We come in the fall of '77." I remember it was 101 years after the Declaration of Independence.

I said, "Who come?"

He said, "Sam Bigam, and John right up here, and myself." And he said, "We settled right here joining each other."

ROB: Did they know each other when they came?

NORLA: Oh yeah, they come together. They come here together, the three bachelors. They settled right here together and he said, "The reason I took this place

here, it was awful steep ground" he said, "I took it on account of water."

Sam he had a spring over there where he settled.

WALT: Yeah. He had water.

NORLA: He had water. I don't know about John. John wasn't very far from George, maybe he had a spring up there. I don't know. (No, I don't...) George told me he says, "That's why I settled here was on account of the water. There was water every where." They come here together. And then Martin, I don't know Martin come here a year or two after that and Frank May come the next fall. He said, "We was here one year before Frank May." That wasn't exactly the way Mays said it when they had that piece. (No.) It wasn't exactly like what George Dougharty said, but I think George had it right.

WALT: George had it right. He was as honest as the day is long.

NORLA: There wasn't a honester man living than George Dougharty. He said, "We come the year before Frank May."

WALT: Well, Martin had some land over at Genesee, didn't he?

NORLA: That's right.

WALT: Didn't he have a place over there?

NORLA: He homesteaded over there. It was between Genesee and Uniontown.

WALT: How did he do that? Did he sell that and buy this over here?

NORLA: He sold that and come over here (Yeah?) That's how he come over here. It was two or three years after George and Sam and John come. He sold his homestead and he come over and bought that land down there and he took that on account of water. Water every where you look there, you know.

WALT: He got oodles of water. And Dougharty got plenty of water. And Bigam got plenty of water, but Bigam's water run out. (Yeah.) Had to drill a well. (Yeah.) Water table's lowering.

NORLA: Bigam used to have water in the basement of the house, you remember?

WALT: Oh yeah. Had a pump right in the kitchen.

NORLA: Had a pump right in the kitchen.

WALT: Pump in the kitchen pumped it right up...

NORLA: Pump 'er right out of the basement of the house.

WALT: Pumped 'er out of the basement.

NORLA: The water level went down.

WALT: An old pitcher pump. I remember that.

ROB: Did you ever talk to Dougharty or any or those folks about what the land was like and what the work was like the first few years they were here?

NORLA: It was all bunchgrass prairies down where they were. Bunchgrass here on the south slope, but these draws all had timber in 'em.

ROB: They didn't have to clear anything then...

WALT: Bunchgrass and road brush. (That's right.) And I'll tell you something else that was quite prevalent was sunflowers.

NORLA: Oh yeah. Sunflowers all over, growing in the bunchgrass.

WALT: Your dad told me...

NORLA: They had stalk has big as my wrist.

WALT: Your dad told me he said, "It took a good team to pull a plow through a sunflower stalk." Yeah, they were great big, heavy, tough...

NORLA: Was you over there at the cemetery here a number of years ago when we worked that cemetery over? And remember Harley had one of these little John Deere two cylinder crawler rigs, you remember that? (Yeah.) I'll never forget that. We moved the stones all off, of course had a plot of the cemetery, and there were trees in that and bushes in that 20 feet high. Pulled 'em and hauled 'em down there south on that rock side hill. I remember there was a big old sunflower there and that sunflower stuck that little tractor. It would set there and spin the tracks. It had a blade on it. Them things were tough. He had a plow, it would pull a two-bottom plow you

know. By golly, he had a blade and he was going to bulldoze it out with that blade and he just set and spin his tracks! Them old sunflowers are tough. They were all over the south slopes in the bunchgrass, bunchgrass sod prairie.

ROB: Did they have to break and turn the sod when they first started?

WALT: I don't think bunchgrass was very soddy. (No, no.) It's just what it says it is, bunchgrass you know, it don't build sod up...

NORLA: Just a bunch here and a bunch there, you know.

WALT: Grows in bunches.

NORLA: About so far apart (indicating one to two feet).

WALT: Yeah, they used three horese on a breaking plow.

NORLA: Three horses and a footburner.

WALT: I don't know how big the plow was, probably 14-inch.

NORLA: I believe it was 14-inch. (Yeah.) I know Dad said he broke all this place up except for about ten acres with three Indian cayuses. He used to go down to get Indian cayuses from Indians, get them for ten dollars a piece. Broke it up with a footburner and three cayuses.

WALT: Your dad broke up most of this place, didn't he? Yeah, I think he did. I think he broke this up too. How did...Geer had this before Frank Roberts got it.

NORLA: Well granddad bought it from Tom Geer.

WALT: Oh, he bought it from Tom Geer.

NORLA: Geer, you see, proved up on it. (Oh well...) Then he left here and granddad bought him out.

WALT: Geer built the barn. (Yes.) Because Frank told me that.

NORLA: Geer built the barn.

WALT: Well this place must have been broke up then.

NORLA: It must have been. I know granddad broke ours up all but about ten acres.

Transcribed and typed by Sherrie Fields