

ULYSSES SHOWALTER

Interviewed by:

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Oral History Project

Latah County Museum Society

I. Index

II. Transcript

I. Index

ULYSSES SHOWALTER

Moscow Mountain; b. circa 1886

farmer; cordwood cutter; moonshiner

minute	page	
Side A		
01	2	Cutting cordwood. Ten and a half cords in three days with a crosscut saw. Swapping yarns. Ulysses shows a wise-off kid that there's more to sawing than there seems. How to saw with a crosscut. Showing Stanley that there's more to sawing than filing the saw.
14	6	L.K. Strong had lots of timber and would hire 500 cords cut every winter. Ulysses buys a shack for \$15. \$1 to \$1.25 per cord. Playing mumbletypeg. Logging camps.
22	9	Moving West, looking for the Promised Land. Ulysses' father gets knifed by a mean Tennessean after an argument.
25	11	During the mashing season you could hear steam-whistles blowing all over the countryside. Sack-sewing.
Side B		
01	13	Sack-sewing (continued). Wrestling, tussling, and tricking. Giving a bully his come-uppance.
12	16	Ulysses started moonshining because he liked to drink. Buying a still. Moonshine cured Ulysses of ulcers; fun and profit. Competition. Running moonshine to town and hiding it there. Pinters. Turned in by a stool pigeon. Busted.
22	20	Women took up drinking and smoking during Prohibition. Saloon trade moved into houses. Drinking increased during Prohibition. After Ulysses got out of prison, he found out who really had Christian forgiveness. John Quist says he paved the town paying drunk fines.
25	23	Playing poker with marked cards. Team poker. Poker ethics.

with Rob Moore
4 February 1974

II. Transcript

Ulysses Showalter was raised on the hilly, wooded slopes of Moscow Mountain. His neighbors were mostly Southerners, and Ulysses tells the story of one Tennessean who cut his father open in a fight. He also talks about the life and methods of moonshining, Moscow saloons, crooked pool games, and cutting cordwood.

ULYSSES SHDWALTER: I was livin' down there by DeWitt's. It's about three mile down, you see. He wanted ten cord of wood cut extra. Some of the boys had cut him forty cord, but he'd had that just about hauled away and he wanted a few more cord of wood there. So Dad wanted me to cut it, that ten cord, and of course I was busy as the dickens. But I said to him, "All right." So I took my tools up and started out one morning and cut a three-cord tree, a red fir. Of course, you understand, I wasn't a'piling it, I was just cuttin' it. Sawin' and splittin' it, cuttin' the tall down and cuttin' it up. So the first day I done three cord. He wanted ten, so the next day, I cut another red fir, made about three cord out of that and that made six. Well, that was kind of bad, I had four cord more to cut. So the next morning I went to work over there, and there was three trees: a white fir, and a red fir, and a tamarack. So I started in and by noon I had the two trees cut and figured ~~make~~ they'd make about a cord apiece, all cut and everything. Then I sawed down the tamarack. So I thought, "Well here's something I wanted to do all my life but never got a chance at it." It was to see how long it would take me to cut a cord of wood if I had it all brushed and got ready to saw, marked off and everything ready just so I could start sawing. Saw it and split it, you see. It was big enough so that eight cuts would make a cord on that butt. I had it all fixed and ready and looked at my time and started to work on it. Sawing it and splitting it and you know, I had that cord of wood cut in just an hour. Sawed and split, of course not piled you understand. So I finished the tree on up and I told Dad,

"Well," I says, "I got four cord and a quarter today and I've got ten cord and a quarter cut." So after awhile I seen him after he got it hauled, and he says,

"You know something?"

I said, "No."

He said, "You had ten cord and a half. You cut four cord and a half that day." (Chuckles.)

Of course another fellow, Fliger, he was a good cordwood chopper too, Louie Fliger, and he told me that he'd cut four and a half, but that's where he got it was Dad had told him that I had and he didn't want to be left behind. He said he cut four cord and a half, himself.

ROB MOORE: This was all with a cross-cut saw too, wasn't it?

U S: Cross-cut saw, a sledge and wedge, you know, and splitting wedge. Of course it was an extra good day and extra good timber. See, the three trees made four cord and a half. Them two, then that tamarack it made two cord and a half. Yeah, two cord and a half it made. See the other two made two cord and I cut four cord and half so the tamarack made two cord and a half.

ROB: Did cordwood cutters race against each other very often?

U S: No, they had tales you know. Of course, they were just like everything, you ain't been around where they sewed sacks have you? (No.) On the stationary? Well, it's the same thing about everyplace. Of course, most of 'em they always do a little better than the other fellow. They get a second chance at him. The other fellow tells his story first, why then the fella that tells his tries to outdo him. (Chuckles.)

ROB: Well how about this guy Joe Meeks, Stanley, didn't you kind of race against them?

U S: Well, they was going to but Joe Meeks wouldn't race. Of course if he had of wanted to take his money, I bet ya he would have beat him because he really

> put a dash
 could saw where Stanley couldn't. But Stanley could outfile him by far. He let Stanley know how close he come to it when he seen me saw, you know. He found out. I think it was Stanley that I beat a whole minute and my brother fifty-five seconds.

ROB; Well, Stanley thought he was pretty good at one time there, didn't he?

U S: Yeah, well he was good. You see, he didn't understand that there was so much difference in one man's sawing. He was just like a fella that had this sawmill over there. He'd come from California, this kid there, he was a big husky kid. He come along and I was sawing logs. He wanted to saw a little bit. I don't know what year this was, '19 or '20. And he took ahold of that saw and run it for all the speed he had, gonna and a'coming. He said,

"Boy," he said, "if a fellow could run a saw like that all day, he'd sure cut some logs wouldn't he?"

I says, "Yep."

But he never let it go at that. He wanted some more, you know, getting his brag on I guess. And he mentioned it again. Well I says,

"Do you think you was sawing faster than I was?" (See, when he come up, I was just sawing right along, but I wasn't speedin' anyway.)

"No," he says, "I was sawing a lot faster than you."

"Well," I said "no," I said, "You let your brother time us here."

There was a long butt there. Had the long butted off, but it was solid, good wood. So had his brother to time us. I told him,

"You run it just as fast as you want to, and I'll not run it near that fast and I'll way under beat you off."

He couldn't believe it but sure enough, I showed him that. I just about pert'near doubled up on him. And I don't know, I hurt his feelings, and he peat'near cried about it. And he says,

"That ain't according to Popular Science." That book you read.

I says, "I don't care whether the books says it or not," I says, "I showed you didn't I?" And he couldn't hardly believe that it was so. (Chuckles.)

But you see, it was the way I put the saw through. I wasn't in no hurry none but I gave it a full stroke each time and I fed it each time. You've seen them saws, of course, the handle I had was one with the old clasp, only it hooked over a little bit. They used to have 'em first, they'd go down through a hole here you know, kinda solid in there. And this one here, why I took the frame of one of these other handles and fastened it on to that, and I had this here nice hook below the saw and then on top. And now you see I'd pull this way: push with that hand and this one pull, and I'd shove that down in there and I'd bring it back, and I'd be a'cuttin' both ways.

ROB: Oh I see, you'd push on the top with the handle and it'd push the saw down into it.

U S: Um-hm, that and pull on the bottom of it. And that made it sing, put it down, you see. That old darn Stanley, he couldn't believe his ears, but that kid, why he was almost sick. He thought just the faster you run it, why the faster you'd cut the ^ucat off. But it wouldn't do it. It was all in the way you fed it and that was where Meeks had it. Meeks would have had Stanley, beat him, because he fed it going and a'coming, you see.

ROB: Stanley thought it was all in the filing, didn't he?

U S: Yeah, he thought it was all in the filing. I let him think that for quite awhile til I got sorry for him, you know, because I knew he was a good filer and he knew he was a good filer. He was down there and he thought he would get it so he could cut me off some day. But he never did til I showed him why.

ROB: How did you show him that it wasn't all in the filing?

U S: Oh I showed him by beating him. Taking his saw, don't you remember I told you? He said,

"I wish I could file a saw to get it to cut like you do, like your saw does." I said, "If you take my saw and I'll take yours, I'll do the same thing with your saw and you with mine as I've done you with your saw and me with mine."

Of course, when he found out...you see, it was something that a fellow knewed. He knew that he could file that saw. Then to have it all took away from him, why it made him feel bad. Then when he found out that was in the sawing, why he was just a kid with a new pup. (Laughter.) Tickled as he could be you know. I think that was the reason he had to bring my brother along, They were sawing, it was a few days after that. They come over and I had this other tree down all ready, and he sawed first. He was cutting, he got this one. And of course, the further up we got, it got a little bit bigger. My brother had a little bit bigger than he did and he beat him five seconds. And then I sawed mine off. It was bigger than any of them and I beat my brother fifty-five seconds and Stanley an even minute. And he says he'd never saw with me only me take the back of the saw. (Laughter.)

ROB: You'd cut with the back of the saw, huh?

U S: Yeah.

ROB: He figured that would be fair.

U S: That would be fair enough for him anyway. That was quite a thing. I used to enjoy it, getting but there in the morning. Of course, L. K. Strong he had all that timber back in there quite a bit. He was a fella from Wisconsin, I believe, or Michigan. He was buying it up as an investment. He'd hire about five hundred cord of wood cut every winter, and that made it kind of nice for the boys around there. They could have something to do. It was nice to get up in the morning. We always got out and got to work by the time you could see good. (Chuckles.) And but we'd get up you know and stand around there and listen to them wedges a'tinkling, you know, and the tree a'falling. It

was quite a thing. Of course you'd go home probably in the dark. Most the time you could be walking a half a mile or three quarters of a mile each way, going and a'coming.

ROB: You didn't live in the camps then?

U S: No, we had shacks. This shack that I lived in, that Stanley he'd got married. Well, he met me when I was fifteen I believe, yeah. He was thirty-two. And we took, we were like a couple of pups. He was crazy about guns and so was I. He'd gotten married. He'd built this house just out of boards and lumber, you know, he covered it with lumber. So then he moved over and was a'farming a little bit in another place and he sold it to me for fifteen, and I was in it three winters I think.

ROB: Sold it to you for how much?

U S: Fifteen dollars.

ROB: Fifteen dollars! That's pretty cheap!

U S: Yeah. Pretty cheap. It wasn't too good a house but you had plenty of wood them days and you could keep it warm. Some of the darndest icicles come down on there when you built a fire in there. It'd snow on there and run down and freeze. And some of them icicles were, oh gee, that big (making a football size with his hands) next to the roof and probably eight, or ten foot long. On the north side where it had room it could get way down before it hit the ground, snow. That was quite a thing.

ROB: How much would you get for a cordwood?

U S: Well, then a'cuttin' it you mean? Well, most the time it was a dollar. A dollar and a quarter, that's when that Strong got in there. See, I was fifteen or sixteen years old when he first come in. And for a quite a while some of 'em would hire it cut for eighty-five cents a cord. Cut fifty cord. When the snow'd go off the fellows would feel kind a playful, and once in awhile they'd get a mumble-peg game. Play mumble-peg for a game or two and they go

back to work again. You've played mumble-peg haven't you?

ROB: Yeah. That's where you flip knives isn't it?

U S: Yeah, and have to in turn. You usually had a knife with a little blade in it. You just start--let's see, with your hand I think. It's done different ways. That way, you see with your fingers. (Going through the motions of the game.) Then change fingers and then flip it again, and again and again. Hold your ear. And change hands, flip it again. Off your nose and your chin and your mouth and your forehead and one thing and another. I don't know how many darn holds there was. You lost your turn, if you missed a throw. The other fellow got the next one, got up next you know.

ROB: How would you win a game of mumblety-peg?

U S: Well, the one got through first. You had so many of them things to go through. Everytime you missed one, why the other fella took on there, and then it come your turn when it come around to you again. And the fellow that got out, all them tricks done, why he was the fella that won. (Chuckles.) Some of 'em got pretty good throwin' them knives. Sometimes some fellow wouldn't get very far along and the others would beat 'em quite a ways. Of course there was no money that I ever seen put up on it.

ROB: Was there much gambling of other sorts that went on in those camps?

U S: Later on, yeah, in the loggin' camps there was. But not in a wood camp like that where it wouldn't be so quick. But in the loggin' camps, when they had a big camp why they'd have a poker game about every night until nine o'clock, and quit. You know that was one thing, they always quit on time. Nine o'clock was the time to quit.

ROB: What kind of things would the early homesteaders do for entertainment?

U S: Well, darn little of anything at all, I guess. Some of 'em sing and of course in the logging camp why some of 'em would be reading a book, some of 'em playing poker and one thing and another. Yessir, there was some pretty

good singers there in that whole bunch. Some of 'em, Tennesseans and different fellas had a rhythm to their singin'. It was pretty nice, some of it. You know they got a pretty good rhythm all the time you know. They were pretty good.

ROB: What kind--How would you describe the early homesteaders, the first people who came in?

U S: Well, darned if I know, they wasn't much different than anybody else. Only they was not too smart and full of muscle. (Chuckles.) Oh they were smart too, I just said that for fun. (Chuckles.)

ROB: Well why did they come out here, why did your father come out here?

U S: Well, I'll tell ya. I think it was because he drank. His folks were all Christians and he wanted to get away from them so that he could drink, I guess. That is the only thing that I can figure. When he got out here he had some money from when he sold out there. Back there in Virginia, he was born and raised in Virginia. He raised tobacco and I don't know how many acres he said he had of tobacco that he was raising. He made good money and sold out to his brother-in-law, who married his older sister. Well, somebody'd come along and told him where he could get cheap land in Missouri and that they could raise good tobacco there, too. He took their word for it and sold his brother-in-law that on time and of course he had some money coming every month, or every so often. I don't know how many payments it was, every year, every month, or what. But anyway, he got out there and he found out that you could buy the land cheap and you could grow tobacco on it but it wasn't what he called fat. The tobacco wasn't fat. It didn't sell like it should, you see. So he stayed there long enough, that I was born there in Missouri and sold out and come to Oregon. He worked at a brickyard down here at Athena, Oregon. Well, close there anyway. I think it was ten or fifteen miles from Pendleton at Athena. He worked at a brickyard there and I believe he did a

little bit of farming on the sie. Said he raised potatoes there and some wheat or something that he planted. And he said he got potatoes off of there without ever cultivatin' 'em that weighed four pounds, some of 'em. Not all of 'em though. (Chuckles.)

ROB: That's a pretty good spud.

U S: A big spud, yeah. Of course I imagine where he found one maybe four pound he'd find a hundred that wouldn't weigh over two pounds. But you know, too, back there where Dad's homestead was, til he got to manurin' it, why he planted potatoes there, and you'd clear up a patch and plant your potatoes, and they'd be just little darn things like that you know.

ROB: The size of your thumb?

U S: Yeah. There'd be about a dozen of them little fellas in a hill, pret'near eat 'em with a spoon. Anyway, and after he got to fertilizin' (you know horse manure is the best fertilizer) well, that raised pretty good potatoes. Cabbages and everything was pretty good after you got the turpentine out of your ground.

ROB: Was there a lot of drinking and fighting in the early days with the different homesteaders?

USS: Not too much. Later on at the dances there'd be a fight now and then, once in awhile when they'd get a few too many drinks. Somebody would swipe the other feller's girl and he'd be jealous of him and pick a fight. There wasn't too many fights though.

ROB: You told me your dad had some trouble one time with that Tennessean.

U S: Yeah, that Tennessean, That was about the school elections here. This here Tennessean, you see, he'd took...oh what was that doggone thing they took, you know, when they'd get in debt? When they get in debt why they'd take something. What was that they called that?

ROB: I'm not sure I know what you mean.

U S: Well, to beat it, you see, they'd file a...

ROB: Bankruptcy?

U S: Yeah, bankruptcy. He done that see and...

ROB: Your dad had? Or...

U S: No, Guy had and then...

ROB: This was Lee Guy?

U S: Yeah. And Dad thought that in order to be a school trustee, they should be honest you know. Which is the truth too. So they had an argument and they got up a fight. And of course, Dad, he was built about like I am and strong as an ox, and old Guy, he was built heavier but he was strong as an ox, too. But dad was much faster with his fists than old Guy, so he was a-peckin' at old Guy, you know. Guy had another fella there that he was riding with and he told him he says,

"Come on, stop." And he says, "Let's go home."

And he quit and about the time they quit this old Guy got his knife out and Dad grabbed the wagon stake. Guy made at him and he hit him. He said he thought when he hit him that he'd better not hit him on the head, he might kill him. He had a wife and two children at home, see, so he hit him on the shoulder and knocked him down. This fellow that was with 'em he said,

"Well, come on," he says, "let's put up your stake and knife and let's go home." And the fellow said that, "Put up your knife" and "put up your stake." And Dad stuck his stake in and that old Guy had the knife and jumped onto him behind him and went to cuttin' around here, you know. Cut it out, cut his insides out. They come clear out. You know, by luck he didn't happen to cut one of his insides, his entrails or nothing. So there was an old German Switzer there, and he was driving dad's team and they put him on the wagon and took him to the hospital. Gritman sewed him up and didn't think he'd live til nine o'clock the next morning, but he got well.

ROB: He was lucky.

U S: Yeah, he sure was.

ROB: What were you starting to tell me about the thrashing? I didn't really hear what you were saying.

U S: Well, just thrashing, we'd have bundles and things, you've never seen any of that, huh? See, this whole country, everywhere around, it'd be in harvest time, you know, and when it got ripe enough why you'd have it cut in bundles. Probably you'd get up in the morning and stretch, and the whistle would blow. There'd be whistles a'blowin' all over the country. Those that had a thrashing machine, they'd blow the whistles for the men to get up. They'd put in about fourteen hours a day. Hauled in a wagon, it was something like a hayrack you know, only it wouldn't be such high sides. They'd round out thataway. You've seen 'em haul bundled hay haven't ya? They do that so they'll not have so much of a rack to pitch over. And they'd haul to the machine. The first one that I worked on hauling bundles, they had a place where...you see, the cylinder was right here in the machine. It wasn't a very big machine and it had a side board on each side. You'd throw the bundle on there and there'd be a fellow there with a knife, a sickle blade riveted into a piece of wood and a string around his wrist, and he'd pull that, cut the binding string. Then he pushed it towards the feeder. There was a fella in here, he'd reach down there with one hand or the other. And everytime the bandcutter on each side would be cutting them bands and shoving them over towards the feeder. The feeder'd throw 'em in. By

By gosh you know, you wouldn't believe it but down here, between here and Pullman, (see there was a warehouse there see, and what did they call it?) but anyway, there was some Catholics in there. They had a homestead, Devine was their name. And that was only a little twenty-seven inch cylinder that machine. It didn't have a blower on it then, it had a stacker that would go 'round this away then turn and come back thisaway. It had slats and just

carry that straw out after it had the wheat all knocked out in the machine. Just keep it rotatin'. And then of course the stackers, you know if they wanted to save it why they'd stack it so that it would turn water pretty good. And otherwise, if they didn't want it stacked why they'd use what they call... well let's see, a big heavy board with about three runners on it. It was sharp, and tapered up a little. But they'd have a horse on each end of it and two drivers, one on each end, drivin' the horse. They'd bundle it way out there out of the way, and they'd turn their horses and pull it right out from under it again and come bac²k and get another bundle. It'd be piling up everytime they was out with a load, why they was piling up another load. It was quite a thing. When they stacked it though for winter feed, well there'd be two on there, the same two wouldn't need the horses though. Well, the old fella there, the old German there, he was an oldtimer from up there, he had a pipe that he'd be smokin' on there, but it had a cover. You've seen them I suppose. But shut the lid, there'd be smoke all around there. I don't know. But anyway, then he'd take it alone one trip and then the other fella would take it alone and then come back and so on til they got to the top and then the old German would top it out. Well that was quite a thing.

You can get a tailwind sometimes. I got sewing sacks later on. And I'd swear I'd never sew another sack. You'd get a tailwind, you know, blow that chaff and stuff down your shirt and all over you. But by golly, a month before harvest come the next year I'd get to figurin'...

(End of Side A)

ROB: Would you get more money for sewing sacks than you would for hauling bundles?

U S: Yes, oh yes, we got two dollars and a quarter for hauling bundles.

ROB: A day?

U S: Yeah. It was Dad's team and I got two and a quarter and he got a dollar. But

of course he got all the money anyway. (Laughter.) Well, we did get thirty dollars that first year. I worked 44 days and a half, and I did get thirty dollars out of it. I guess the most I ever got was six fifty for sewing sacks, but most of the time it was four dollars.

ROB: That's quite a bit more.

U S: Than six fifty, yeah. But I was kind of a high-tempered fella, and the owner wanted the Swedes to sew sacks, you know, had a friend and wanted us to quit. So everytime he got a chance he'd give us a bum set. We'd get the tailwind. So this time one day at noon there we got into a barley set and he gave us a tailwind. I said, "You set us up like that and there'll be a big German going down the pike." Him and the boss they were both Swedes. They had a big laugh and that made me mad and I went and quit. Heck, I should of worked on there, I'd a made four or five hundred dollars. Well I quit there and got a job again and then I went back and done more work for five dollars than I was doing there for six and a half.

That oldtimer, Whitmore, he was the first feller I ever thrashed with you know. I was a darn kid I was fifteen years old. I was always raring for a scuffle. Kids, you know. Of course the youngest besides me was seventeen. He was one of the bandcutters. He was jealous of me you see. I could throw him too. There was one sacksewer that was the toughest one I had, and it was a little bit too much for me but I give him a pretty good tussle. The old boss, he wasn't very good but he'd been a scuffling little rascal, you know. And boy, he just thought I was a swell kid.

But that fellow, he got the best of me that year. He done a dirty trick there, too. One time, he and I was playing leapfrog, you know, down the hill? He raised up the wrong time, on purpose to throw me on my head. Didn't happen to hurt me but I held it against him anyway. So the next year, the first time it rained, there was an old shack down there, old barn, and we all

went down there. Then the first thing I done, I figured I was way ahead of what I was the year before, and I dared him to rassle and I put him down about six times and he never won once. That was the last he'd ever rassle with me. I don't know how come. It seemed like he'd lost all of his ambition to rassle. And I was just coming into mine. (Chuckles.) I used to be a husky darn kid, you know, and quick fightin'.

ROB: Well did people usually wrestle instead of fightin' with their fists?

U S: Yeah, we'd rassle. We wouldn't be fightin', we'd just be rassling to see who could throw the other one down.

LOVISA SHOWALTER: Well usually when they'd start fightin' with their fists, they really pert'near knocked 'em out every time. (Laughter.) Expecially a guy like him. He was a pretty powerful hitter.

U S: Me?

L S: Um-hm.

U S: Yeah. I hit the ground pretty hard. (Chuckles.)

L S: It wasn't just hitting the ground, you could hit with that fist pretty heavy, too.

U S: Yeah, I could but I didn't have very many fights. I got licked most of the time. There'd be some darn kids probably three and four and five years older than me that wouldn't be any bigger than I was but had more experience. They'd black my eyes sometimes. After I got older why that was a different thing. (Laughter.)

ROB: The shoe was on the other foot.

U S: Yeah.

ROB: Do you want to tell me some more, or tell me again about your moonshining days?

U S: Oh. Well, let's see now.

ROB: Well, first off, why did you decide to start moonshing?

U S: Well, I'll tell ya. The first moonshine I ever made, I wanted to drink it. I was up here at Moscow and I had a brother down at Kahlotus. My brother was working down there, him and (Oran) Herron. They was orking for this (Ralph) Watson and there was this fella by the name of Bob McChesney, he was as Irish-man and loved to drink. So he was selling these stills, you see, and they bought one. I think a four-gallon still, a boiler about so tall. And they'd have a little stove and they'd take about three of 'em and hook 'em up around outside and burn oil to heat it. Have water, cold water to come through and the moonshine would come out. They made up, I don't know, twenty-five or thirty gallon before harvest and so that harvest we had moonshine all harvest. Of course we wouldn't drink when we were working, but when we was done why we'd drink. Get up in the morning, why we'd drink a big snort or two. Then that winter I was way back up here on the mountain, not too far above where her and I lived. There was an old shack up there. They was cuttin' wood for a fella there, Jacksha, and so we decided to have a little drink. My brother, he'd found out to get these...let's see, what did they call 'em? I don't remember what they called but they was copper and they hold six gallons.

ROB: Oh, a double boiler?

U S: No, they were a single boiler. But it got up here and then it tapered this way. See, you cut a hole here and make a little spout, and then you hang your coil on there and run it through your water. Get it aboilin' you see. When it'd hit that cold water it'd turn into alcohol, whiskey. We made fifteen or twenty gallon. Well, we damped it and "Aw the heck with it." That was enough to get drunk there, you know. You could get like you feel pretty good. Well then when the hard times hi-t me why by gosh...well I had an ulcer at the same time you know and couldn't cut wood. It would play me out and I couldn't stand it. It was right down in here, in my stomach...so then I got to making moonshine. I got well of that ulcer and made a little money too.

Well, then I went up to Sacheen lake I don't suppose you was ever up there were you? (No.) That's--up you know where, let's see, what was that darn lake up by Newport there? Diamond Lake?

Well you go up to that side of the road where, that Sacheen Lake was. And I got fooling around there, I was single then, and I got kinda stuck on a gal there and I guess she kind of fell for me. Well, maybe that's not important. And so we decided...there was no work you know. You could make a little wood in there, but come so much snow you couldn't make wood in the winter, so we moved down here. I had to pay up on Dad's place you know, pay the debts that he'd left.

So we got to makin' moonshine too, down there. Selling it, doing well. Well, I've been a'figuring on that too. See this one darn fella, he was jealous of it. He'd sell his moonshine for four dollars and I'd sell mine for five dollars. They'd leave his set and come buy mine. So he didn't like that. Of course I made a lot better booze than he did. That darn stuff, I made it the right strength and double-run it. He'd only single-run it, and when he put his'n in the barrel, why he didn't burn the barrel out. You burn all around inside and char it. Of course after he'd runned it, a few barrels of it in that same barrel, why you could taste that wood. But where you charred that barrel why it never got any of that. It was clear and was good to taste. So I done pretty well until that fella caught me.

ROB: You said your moonshine was made of bran?

U S: Yeah. Bran instead of grain. I did fine. The feller, he come along and heard me in there. He said,

"How you doin'?" And I told him,

"I was doin' pretty well until you come." (Laughter.)

ROB: Well, that was when you got caught, right?

U S: Yeah.

ROB: Why don't you tell me again about how you would sell it.

U S: Oh, I'd just take it in there to my son and hide it. We had kind of a cubbyhole there in his house and we'd stick it in there. Then whenever I wanted to sell a gallon or anything, or somebody would come to him to get it, why he could give 'em a gallon or I'd go over there and get it and take it back to 'em. In town it was easy.

ROB: Then you just sold it by the gallon?

U S: Well, I did, yeah. He panted out some, take a gallon and sell it out. I'd sell it to him for four dollars a gallon and then he'd make ten pints out of it and sell it for a dollar a pint. And he'd make a living that way, too.

ROB: Well when you hauled it to town, would you hide it under a load of hay or something like that?

U S: Well I'd just hide it. I had a place there behind the seat, it was a coupe. Stick it in the trunk and sometimes right in front there, have clothes over it or something between the seats. That first one had two seats and then I changed to a coupe and had to put it in the trunk. We had a quite a time.

There was always a family there, an old man and two boys, that always wanted to ride to town with me. (Laughter.) I thought "Well I'll fool you this time." So they were where the old lady's got the goats there. I turned off south there, you see. They lived down the road there on past the school-house. They came foolin' along to catch me and I come along there and this time I thought "Well I'll fool you boys this time." So I took off there and I hit to the other road over there and went on through. By golly I got down ther^e just in time as they got along there. (Chuckles.) So I give 'em a ride. Didn't want to turn 'em down, you know, they was good friendly people, but I didn't know how much they would talk if they ever saw it. 'Cause they couldn't help it when I had it between the seats there you know, just covered over. Their feet could tell it was jugs or something. I guess everybody

knowed anyway.

ROB: Did you have any close calls with the revenuers before they finally caught you?

U S: No. 'Course had some stool pigeon around that got a sale on me. One of the oldtimers that was raised right back in behind there, I thought he was alright, and he made me acquainted with a fella that wanted a gallon. Told me where to take it to go to him. Give it to him and he paid me for it. I thought though that I was stuck, that I was a set up. Boy, a fella wouldn't a'thought that. I'd been raised with that kid. Well you know Mandel Erickson do you? It was a cousin of his'n. Of course old Mandel he wouldn't have done anything like that 'cause he was a swell guy. But this fellow...I guess his oldest brother wouldn't of done it but this young one, why he'd do anything to get a quarter. I guess maybe he got a dollar. Or two dollars. He probably got the whiskey, part of it, and part of it for evidence.

They didn't need it, I didn't make 'em furnish no evidence. I pleaded guilty for the whole thing. He read me my riot act and that was it. But one of them fellas that had the lawyer appointed him, well the judge asked him questions and then get done with it, he'd make him out a liar. So there was a CC camp over there and the fellow that caught me said that I'd been selling it to them. So when he asked me all about it, why I pleaded ^g guilty to the whole works. So there was a fella that I have known ever since I was a youth. And he says,

"Where you made your mistake, you sold it to the CC camp!"

So I said, "Heck. I never sold no booze to the CC boys."

"Well, why didn't you tell 'em?"

I said, "Was you there?" He was there you know. Listened to it all. And I said, "That fellow just ask 'em questions, why done this or done that, and they'd tell 'em and he'd make 'em out a liar." And I said, "He wouldn't

have to make me out a liar if I wasn't gonna tell 'em nothing." Just pled
quilty, nothing to it. That guy, he tried to get me to say something and I
wouldn't say nothing. I pled guilty and that was all I had to do.

ROB: Before Prohibition there were a lot of saloons in Moscow, weren't there?

U S: Yeah, before Prohibition there was plenty of 'em. There was three on
Third Street.

ROB: Well, what happened to them after Prohibition? The saloons had to close
but where did people go?

U S: That was running it?

ROB: No, where did the people go if they wanted to have some good times or
have a drink?

U S: That's where the moonshine started. They started making moonshine so they'd
have whiskey. Used to be that before Prohibition, you never hardly ever seen
a woman unless she was a prostitute take a drink. Or anything, even smoke
a cigarette. Once in awhile there was an old lady that would smoke on an old
corncob pipe about three times a day was all the smokin' you hardly ever seen.
Then maybe the old lady, you know, somebody would come along with a bottle
and want her to take a drink. Some of them old ladies would take a little
sup, not a spoonful, and that was about all the drinking the women done. Out-
side of the prostitutes and...

L S: Very few women done any drinking in the olden times.

U S: No. Then you see, they got to making the moonshine and then they'd have
them wild parties. You've heard about them, maybe you've been to 'em?

ROB: Well, I don't think so.

U S: Well then they'd meet at somebody's house. They'd get a gallon of moon and
they'd be maybe two or three women and two or three men. They'd run around
and dance or sing or anything and make a party out of it.

ROB: Uh-huh. But it happened mostly at people's houses huh?

U S: Yeah.

ROB: Were there things like speakeasies around here? Like little clubs?

U S: Well once in awhile, there'd be some of them, a speakeasy, but most of the time there wouldn't. They'd just go to their house to get together and get a gallon of whiskey or a half a gallon of moonshine and have a party. Drink it and have a big time, they'd think. (Chuckles.) I guess they enjoyed it.

ROB: Do you think Moscow was a better town with the saloons or during Prohibition?

U S: Well, it was better when the saloons was there. Of course there'd be a drunk now and then but he'd get throwed in and that'd be all there would be to it. But you see, when we got Prohibition, pert'near everybody was drinking. You take a city for instance like Troy. Well, usually a fella's gonna have their moonshine. There'd be snow and they'd go along there and want to hide it. The sheriff was looking for moonshiners or anybody else, if they caught you with a bottle why they'd put ya in jail, maybe fine you fifty dollars or something like that, more than that. But if you'd go down the street, on Saturday nights especially, you'd see a hole in the snow there and you'd reach in there and get you a bottle, usually, unless someone had already beat you to it. (Laughter.) And kids and everything would be boozed up. It was funny, there was one old fella there that went to church all the time. Of course, I ain't got nothin' against church. I go to a church myself and belong to it and believe in it but them days it was different. And this old feller he was tellin' me about him and some other fella tore down a woodshed. And if they seen you take a drink or smelled it on ya, why heck, you was in for it, if you wasn't a friend of the sheriff. I wasn't afraid of our sheriff, I'd give 'em a drink.

ROB: What sheriff was that? Was it Summerfield?

U S: Yeah. Anyway that was what a lot of 'em done.

ROB: What happened to these guys that were tearing down the woodshed?

U S: Oh yeah. They found a pint of moonshine you know, about half full. He was very religious, this old feller, and so he said they took a drink and boy it made him feel good! (Chuckles.) And after I got caught I went up to Troy to this friend there where I'd left my guns, to take care of 'em. So I was standing there on the street after I got out of the penitentiary. He always had a big devilin' smile on his face you know just walkin' and a'smilin'. He was coming up the street there, a big smile on his face, and he seen me and oops! (frowns) like that and went right along and never even looked up (chuckles) at me at all.

So his wife, they was old, I don't know whether they had any kids grown or not but they was old enough to have grown kids. She was a nice old lady too. And I thought that that old man was gonna smile that devil old smile he had all the time, he was the Christian of the two. Well, I met her on the street and she says, "Hello Ulysses, how are you?" And she looked kind at me and talked and talked and talked and showed me it didn't make a bit of difference to her what I'd done. She would be nice. (Chuckles.) Showed me who was the Christian of them two.

But you see, if the sheriff would of caught him taking that drink why he'd a probably got three months in jail. You know they don't think about what they do but if the other fella does it why he's...

ROB: He's a sinner or a criminal.

U S: (Chuckles.) Yes. You bet.

ROB: So do you think there was less problem with crime and everything in Moscow when there were saloons and houses and things?

U S: Yeah, it seems to me like there was. You know they'd get full and walk up the street and wobble a little, duck into another place if they thought maybe a sheriff or a cop was looking at 'em. Get down off of the street. Of course once in awhile they'd be a little bit funny and they'd think they could defy

the law and wouldn't get off but they'd get it if they didn't. Ol' John Quist, (chuckles) he paved the town for 'em, payin' fines.

ROB: Paying drunk fines?

U S: (Chuckles.) That's what he said. Then he went over to Palouse and I don't know whether he quite drinking or not, but he died over there at Palouse. He got him a catalogue wife. Raised him a family. Pretty nice kids too. She was awful nice. I think he quit drinking. 'Course he left here and I didn't keep in touch with him and didn't know whether he quit drinking or not.

ROB: Well was there much problem in the saloon days? Did the marshal or the sheriff have much problem enforcing the law or did that come in later?

U S: No, they never had no trouble at all to amount to anything. If somebody was out on the street and talkin' loud why the cop would get ahold of 'em and tell 'em to get out of the street. Nothin' to it. Of course once in awhile they'd pinch 'em and fine 'em. They had to have that town paved. (Laughter.) Yeah. No, that was kind of a funny thing, there wasn't really. Once in awhile... there's pert'near always a bully. You know in any town there's somebody they'd take 'em all in and clean 'em, if they couldn't pick a fight out of 'em. This fella had a reputation of being quite a scrapper and if there was a bully in there why he wanted to try 'em out and see if he could whip a scrapper or not. And some way this fella, three of 'em I guess that come from Missouri, three brothers and one of 'em married and got him a homestead, tried to play poker. These other two, they played poker. This fella he'd lose his money, his brothers would give it back to him. They wouldn't let him know that they was cheatin'. Had marked cards, you see. But if they'd told him they was cheatin' he'd have told everybody in the country. Well, when he found it out, he did tell everybody. (Chuckles.) They marked cards, but they finally run up against a snag. There was a fellow there, his name was McBride. And he had it on them someway. I always figured out what they told me about his

this one feller, that he could read the backs of marked cards as good as he could see the front of 'em. Win money, knew just how to play it to win too. But anyway, when he finally told everybody they couldn't get anybody to play with 'em. So they got so they'd took and bought some decks from the drugstore. Took 'em out and marked 'em and sealed 'em up and give 'em to him back. They paid him for 'em and let him sell 'em and get the price twice out of 'em. Then when he seen one of them at the window outside, everytime they're after a deck, they'd get one of them marked decks. Well this McBride, I don't know but I figured that the drugstore fellow had doublecrossed them fellas and told that fellow about it, that he'd been playing marked cards. And of course now that's just my guess to why he beat 'em. Beat the two fellas with their marked cards. And had a sandstone, too. Say, have you ever played poker?

ROB: Yeah, oh yeah.

U S: Well you know it was stud mostly. Say for instance, they was playing away and you can see what was coming up you know and gonna make something out of it. He'd bet ten cents or fifteen cents or thirty-five cents or twenty-five, on uneven numbers. One of the other fellas would raise you see. Bet thirty-five cents and get the other fella in the game, your partner, to raise when it got to him. He knowed what he was doing you see, giving him the sign to raise. And then of course they'd make it. But anyway this fella, this fella that was so good at it told me, he said, "I figured he just bet that money so hard that they couldn't stand it, too much." Of course there'd be probably a hundred or a hundred and fifty, two hundred dollars in the pot. So I figured that was what they done. This drugstore fella had told this McBride about it and let him in on it, let him take the deck and mark it himself. He'd have different marks, see. All they had was the size, is what they marked with was the size. And chances are, I figure that he marked the size and the color

and everything. So that would be quite an advantage. Of course, too, another thing, he could probably go second or bottom pretty good and everything. By gosh, he broke 'em off gamblin'.

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