

ARTHUR SUNDBERG

Second Interview

Interviewed by:

Sam Schragger

Oral History Project

Latah County Museum Society

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# I. Index

## ARTHUR SUNDBERG

Potlatch; b. 1899

maintenance foreman and lead man at Potlatch mill.

2.5 hours

minute page

## Side A

01 1 Potlatch becomes millsite because Palouse wants to make a profit. Changing course of the Palouse River for the mill. "Limitless" supply of timber, used in building town's plank road.

07 4 The mill blueprints were extremely detailed. Operation of the head rigs (carriages with big band saws). Using a drag saw in the millpond. Gang saw operation (beginning in 1910), with 54 saws 4½ feet long. The edgers. Appearance of double-cut band saws in the thirties.

25 46 Reliance on finger language in the mill. No facilities for men in mill until late twenties. Frozen lunch, coffee in the winter. (continued)

## Side B

00 48 Working at the mill in the freezing cold. Men had nowhere to eat but in the mill; machinery shut down during lunch. The planing mill, loading docks and yard areas were especially cold. Deafness from sawmill work. No safety devices. The belt and pulley system to transmit power from the Corliss engine was entirely exposed. The oiler's job had dangers.

22 55 No training for men starting a new job in the mill - example of a new edging picker. Some men enjoyed playing jokes or even seeing somebody get hurt. Throwing pine knots at people in the mill.

## Side C

00 58 Practical jokes were very common, to get a reaction from the victim. Nailing feet on the floor in the box factory, grease in gloves. Moving lumber in and out of the planer mill. Discovering who was stealing lunches by the use of croton oil in a pie.

12 62 Not much fighting in the mills. European origins for woods workers, especially Swedes. Irish were usually foremen in the Midwest; there was much more fighting in the woods there than here, where Scandinavians were often foremen and crews. Foremen fired men who fought in camp here; presence of local men was also a stabilizing factor.

Arthur Sundberg

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Side C (continued)		
27	67	Foreign nationalities – Japanese, Italians and Greeks – were housed in the original Potlatch buildings that were used while building the mill.
Side D		
01	69	Living quarters separated foreign nationalities from rest of town. Japanese bathed daily in a huge tub of water. Italians always sent a little money home because of the poverty there.
07	71	A man went back to Europe for his sweetheart, and found she had become fat, and was living in total poverty. The village believed he was a millionaire, being American. He tried to teach them to can fruit.
13	73	The foreigners lived separately by their own choice, partly because they could understand each other. Cultural animosity in the U.S., expressed especially in derogatory nicknames, lack of intermingling outside of work; it was their own choice, although they didn't feel wanted. No Italians went to the Catholic Church. Few foreigners were married.
26	76	Suspicious of Potlatch Japanese before the <b>S</b> econd war were probably unfounded. Greeks tended to mix more because they batched in small groups.
Side E		
00	78	Greeks worked in the sawmill, Italians loaded and piled, and the Japanese worked in the box factory. The skill required to pile green lumber.
07	80	Rumor that an Italian who transacted business for his countrymen took the money entrusted to him. Power of the Japanese contractor from Seattle.
13	82	Japanese diet – tiny fish shipped in in tubs. Japanese table settings and floors. Isolation of Japanese from Americans. They were hard workers. Japanese girls got along well in school. Rumor that a mill worker was a high-ranking officer in the Japanese Army.
22	85	Very little fraternization with these nationalities outside of work. Most couples had only a few close friends anyway. Greeks forced each other to learn to speak English, but many others barely learned.

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Side E (continued)

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More about hand language as the form of  
communications in the mill.

with Sam Schrage  
July 17, 1975

## II. Transcript

ARTHUR SUNDBERG

SECOND INTERVIEW

SAM SCHRAGER: This second interview with Arthur Sundberg is recorded at his home in Potlatch on July 18, 1975.

AS: Of course, it's a pretty well-known story, I think-- you see when they come out here they bought-- there was already a lumbermill down here in Palouse-- pretty good sized mill. But their timber holdings, I guess were very limited. They would buy from individual homesteaders and so on, but they had logdrives on this river, at that time I guess they had a lot of water. And in the spring they would drive the logs down to Palouse and some of them to Colfax. They had a mill in Colfax, it was a Todd Lumber Company at that time. But, anyway, Potlatch, when they moved out here, 'course they owned this timber land for quite a few years before that-- but, anyway, they did figure on building a big sawmill-- this big sawmill in Palouse, and tearing down that little one they had down there. But the story goes that the merchants and the Chamber of Commerce, if they had such a thing at that time, I guess they got together and said, "Well, uh-huh, this is a good chance, there's a big outfit come in and we're gonna make some money off of 'em." See. Well, Old Bill Deary, he was the general manager at that time, he seen just what was up, you know, so he told 'em, he told these bankers and big shots down there at Palouse there, he said, "We'll make the grass grow clear up to your shoulders, right in your main streets here in Palouse." And he did, too! So they just moved ten miles up the creek and found this little spot down here. And they had to buy out a homesteader down there and there was a little cabin, I think you probably saw a picture of it in this other book, this little log cabin. Well,

that's an actual picture of the cabin that was sitting down there. Well, anyway, at that time, the river used to follow along the edge of this hill around this way, you know, just about where the highway runs now? Well, that was the riverbed at that time. And so they-- there was a little piece of high ground, you might call it an island out there, and so that's where they started to excavating and started building their sawmill. Then they changed the river channel around to the mill and <sup>then</sup> from the mill and on out. Then they had a lot of low ground, <sup>then</sup> so after they started running the mill, then they started filling in a lot of this low ground, the old river channel and so on, with sawdust and slabs and anything, you know, to fill it up because they wanted to keep that river channel over into the log pond. And, you know they had a lot of timber -- and those days, you know, it just seemed like everybody thought that they could travel for so many miles and there was nothing but timber that there was no end to it, <sup>you</sup> see, it would last forever-- So when they would log, they would take these great big high trees and they'd take two or three logs off'n ~~em~~ from the butt end up. <sup>it</sup> And when they got up to where ~~there~~ was a lot of branches they'd leave all that, they'd just go off and leave it. They just took the good stuff. Well, as I say, they had a lot of this low ground so from the entrance to the planing mill down there and past the sawmill and around and up <sup>through</sup> past the depot and from there up the hill past the store and bank and then another branch turned and went up the hill up to this ~~K~~ Nob Hill area, where all the brass lived, and another one went up the first street in town is Pine Street, up to-- it run about three blocks up as far as the boardinghouse, that was all planked--it was a plank road all of that area was a plank road, four inch by twelve inch plank, twenty feet long, so we had about a twenty foot wide road-

way. So you can imagine how many plank it would take to build all that roadway. <sup>Now</sup> That's how cheap lumber was at that time, you see. I can still <sup>hear</sup> them horses agoin' over them plank roads and after while, you know, the spikes would get loosened up some and them planks would rattle as <sup>they</sup> went by. You take a team trotting in the wagon, and them plank'd rattle and you could hear 'em all over!!

SS: Did Deary plan the building of the mill?

AS: Well, of course, he was the general manager at that time, and, of course, he-- the engineer that drew the plans was a fellow by the name of Wilkinson. And, of course, he was from Minneapolis. And I don't know whether-- Lee Gayle-- he lives out here just out of town. You probably know him. Well he was the last one to hold the job as an engineer down here at the plant-- <sup>that is,</sup> steam engineer. He was the head of the power plant and so on. So-- I think maybe that he salvaged some of the blueprints-- but the blueprints were so <sup>badly</sup> ~~badly~~ abused it was just a crime, but if you could just see the penmanship on the blueprints and his writing and the descriptions and stuff-- they were just beautiful, you know. They were just really the thing to see. But I'd handled those blueprints a good many times myself looking up details on certain things because I done the engineering and <sup>drew the</sup> ~~view~~ plans for a lot of the additions and alterations and so on down there for several years and I was in charge of the maintenance and construction there for a good <sup>just</sup> many years <sup>just</sup> down at the plant. And so sometimes we'd have to look up some of these old prints, you know, to get some details off from it, but it was really something to see.

SS: They were complete and well drawn drawings?

AS: Oh, yea. There was hundreds of 'em, you know. There'd be a schematic drawing of the entire floor plan and then, of course, you had all these

deatil drawings. And, of course, the whole plant wasn't engineered and built at the beginning. You see, when this plant first started operating they had four headrigs, now headrigs, that's the carriages and the big bandsaws that sawed the lumber, and they were single cut-- in other words, these bandsaws just had teeth on one edge, now-a-days a bandsaw has teeth on both edges, they cut in both directions, you see, but those <sup>days they</sup> didn't. And then, of course, each headrig had a sawyer, he was the man that operated this rig back and forth, and he was the one that had to make a decision as to what dimension they would cut. Well then, there was two men that was riding on this carriage, one was a setter and the other was a dogger. And they would set these dogs-- they had these levers here on these dogs <sup>would</sup> that come down into the log and hold the log in place while they were sawing it. Well, they would cut off a slab and then the sawyer would read-- 'course this had to be done instantaneously, he would read the face of that log after the slab was taken off, see, and determine whether that was a select board or if it was a number one, two or three, four common lumber, see. And he would give the signal by finger, because it was so noisy you couldn't talk, and they had a lot of finger language in a sawmill. Well, he would signal this to the setter on the carriage, what the next cut was to be, whether it was a four quarter board or eight quarter-- eight quarter, that'd be two inch, you see. And in those days and for a good many years they cut an awful lot of pattern material and match stock. Now, of course, this is all-- match stock and pattern lumber was all cut out of white pine, because it was easy to work. Well, the pattern lumber and match stock was generally three or four inches in thickness. But, anyway, this carriage, it traveled pretty fast, up and down the track, you see, it wasn't so fast going through the saw,

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but then going back

but then going back, he just'd really shoot back there, see, and then, of course, this fellow he had to index that log ahead then, you see, had what they called a set works on there, you know, and he had a lever that he could set for whatever dimension he wanted.

SS: This was the setter?

AS: The setter on the carriage. This was all steam operated.

SS: He took it from the sawyer?

AS: He got the signal from the sawyer as to what to set up. Well, he would set up-- index ahead ~~there~~ <sup>then</sup> for one inch or two inch or three or four inch, or six inch, whatever the sawyer called for.

SS: And then what would the dogger do?

AS: He would just ride his dog lever. After he'd dogged it he'd just sit down on the lever and he'd just ride back and forth until they went to turn the log. Then, of course, <sup>just</sup> instantaneously, it had to be synchronized, you know, so there was no lost motion at all-- that carriage would come back like this--- and it just wouldn't hardly get stopped until that nigger-- ~~the~~ <sup>is</sup> sawyer operated the nigger-- with one hand and the carriage with the other hand, and then, of course, he would give these signals with his fingers-- like this-- as to what he wanted. He would signal for to turn that log and as he did, why, they would release these dogs -- this dogger had two levers, one here and one over here-- he'd release those and of course he had to ride braced, like that, you know, because the thrust of this carriage--

SS: What did he brace against?

AS: Just on the floor, but, boy, he really dug his heels in and brace himself!! They generally had a little ~~bevel~~ <sup>bevel</sup> cleat, with a little bevel on it to brace against-- and release these dogs and of course, the setter, he had one dog he had to release, and then the dogger had two. Well, that nigger would come up out of the hole just like that, and hit that

log and flip it over and they'd dog it that quick and it was gone again. You know the whole operation was just like the bat of an eye! If you'd blink twice you'd miss it, see!! It was that fast. Well, anyway, this mill, they had four headrigs, single cut, and, of course, starting in the logs were down in the water in a pond, and down there they had a steam dragsaw . These pond logmen would hold this log up against a boom-- they had a platform about four feet wide, a boom-- that they walked on, and they would hold that up there and gauge it the right length, then they had this steam driven dragsaw-- like this, you know, and they would let it down with a winch, slow, and they'd cut that log off whatever length they wanted, see, before they sent it up into the mill. Well, that's the way they operated then until-- in 1910 they put in a fifty-four saw gang-- gangsaw-- you know what a gangsaw is?

SS: Tell me.

AS: Well, it's just a huge steel and cast-iron frame and in that frame there's fifty-four saws that's <sup>keyed</sup> in there, and these saw blades were about four and a half feet long with a tab on each end, and they would fit into a slot down there and then up here, and <sup>then</sup> they would get 'em all in well, then they'd take this hammer and drive these <sup>key</sup> wedges in to tighten them saws, you see, these wedges went in and it'd raise 'em up until it tightened 'em up til they were just like fiddle strings. Well, you couldn't change the spacing on those saws, you see, they were put in there, well, that's the way they would be. Well, then the headrig they would saw cants-- they would saw these <sup>fitches</sup> four inches thick, six inches thick, eight inches, ten inches, twelve thick, see. Whatever the log would make, <sup>and they would</sup> flip them over into this area-- had chains that carried 'em over there, then they had men that stacked these up and made up these loads ahead of time. Well, you can imagine then, they had

these stacked up where they could stack 'em up fourteen inches high. You could have, say an eight inch cant <sup>with</sup> a six inch cant on top of it. Or you could have a ten inch with a four inch cant on top of it. Anyway, 'td make up a load about fourteen inches high and fifty-four inches wide. Well, <sup>then</sup> of course, they had these power rolls that carried them up. They come up to this gang saw just before they come up to the saws that was-- these saws were just relly going fast, see, up and down. Well, then they had these power rolls that is, rolls with a steam cylinder up above that come down on top of this load and hold 'em, see. Otherwise the load would jump up and down. Then these power rolls would carry this load forward through these saws, and of course, they had power rolls on the other side to hold 'em as they was coming out of the saw, and as that load cleared they'd raise these rolls and bring the next load in. So they sawed a tremendous amount of wood on this gang saw. Well, that wasn't put in until 1910, so you see, the mill had been operating then for approximately four years before they put in that gang saw.

SS: What did they do before then-- before they had the gang saw?

AS: They had to saw it all up on the headrig. But they-- they would more than double their production over the four headrigs with the installation of that gang saw.

SS: What came out of the gang saw? What kind of shape was it in? That was cut?

AS: It was all four-squared lumber, because the carriage had taken the slab off'n the log on this side, turned it over, taken it off'n the other side with maybe a couple of cuts, then they'd throwed the rest of this over, and of course, they'd be two sides ~~that~~ would have probably bark on it, you see. But there was two sides that was flat, top and bottom,

was flat. Well then, as it come out of the gang, <sup>there</sup> they had two edgers one on each side, one edger would take this whole load and the next load went up <sup>next</sup> to the other edger. And they way they transported this load over there, was, that they had some arms that'd come up between these rolls, and they would come up like this-- well, then that load'd lay on a slant and they just keep breaking it down onto the edger, and the boards that didn't need edging they'd just send them through, you know, lap 'em over and send 'em through, and then those that needed edging, why, of course, they'd have to adjust their saws and edge 'em to whatever dimension they would make. But, on the other edgers for the headrigs it was a one man deal. You see this one man would receive these ~~these~~ boards coming from the headrig and run 'em through the edger, but on the gang <sup>it</sup> ~~there~~ was two men on each one, because of the volume of lumber coming, this edgerman had to have a helper to break this stuff down to get it through.

SS: How many men ran the gangsaw?

AS: Well, actually <sup>there was</sup> the sawyer and the tailsawyer and then one man out in the middle helping stack these cants. So it was only about a three man deal, and they would produce just about double what these headrigs could produce in lumber. So, you see, it was really a profitable proposition. Then these double cut saws, they didn't come into play until in the early '30's, after the so-called Depression in the '30's. And after that was when these doublecut bandsaws were started being used. And they weren't used in all the mills, but then as the mills tried to modernize and upgrade their production, <sup>well</sup> then they put in these doublecut bands, and they could use them on the same equipment that they had with the exception of just a few minor changes.

SS: I wanted to ask you about that finger language. Was that used very extensively in the mill?

AS: All over in the mill. They would tell stories and they would joke and they would swear and they'd do everything, you know, with their fingers!!  
 That is,  
 Fingers and hands, you know. I never got very pro<sup>U</sup> efficient at it because my work always was where I could talk, but then when I'd get up in the area where they was sawing, there was all this noise, well, then of course, I would make a few signs if I wanted to to some individual. But it was really fun to watch some of 'em, you know. They was characters that worked there that they carried on a conversation all day long! Just with their hands, you know!!

SS: I'm just trying to feature how you can do that. I guess I can't know because I've never had to work in that kind of noisy environment.

AS: Well, of course, I've forgotten a lot of it, but, of course, that was one, naturally, (apparently is illustrating as he talks ) That's one and a half.

SS: What's that? One finger out and <sup>the thumb</sup> ~~one~~ up?

AS: Yes. one and a half, well, that'd be a six-quarter, see. They cut a lot of six-quarter. Then, of course, two, three, four, five, six-

SS: Six is the fist.

AS: Double fist is six. Well, then, of course, This doubled and then like that, that was ten. That was twice five, that was ten. And four fingers down would be eight, and all that stuff. And, of course, they done that so fast, and they done it with both hands, you know. And, of course, they'd rub their head and they'd rub their belly and they'd do all kinds of things, you know. And if there was some joker that was kidding some guy over there about the gal he was out with last night, well, of course, this'd be-- this girl that he was out with, or something like that you know. It was fun to watch 'em.

SS: Did this mean food?

AS: Well, yeah.

SS: It could mean a lot of things.

AS: That's right, too. You know they'd rub their belly, you'd know that it was time to eat or something like that, you know. And, of course, if they was going to sneak a smoke--

SS: Two fingers--

AS: There wasn't any smoking allowed on the plant at all until, -- it was about 1926 when they built a lunch room <sup>then</sup> for the men and they had that steamheated, and, of course, they could smoke in there. But before that-- Of course, they done a lot of sneaking, you know. They would-- Fact of the matter is, there wasn't any modern toilet facilities around the plant. Take from the time it started until, oh, up until in the middle '20's and early '30's did they even have water piped, you know <sup>for</sup> to drink-- drinking water. They had water buckets and dippers all over, everybody drank out of the same dipper, you know. And for toilet facilities, they just had a building here and another building out there, you know and a hole dug in the ground and you'd sit on a two-by-four. And that's the way it was run until, well-- up, you might say, <sup>around</sup> between 1925 and '30.

SS: What did the guys do for eating lunch and taking breaks?

AS: They didn't take no breaks. There was no such thing as a break. You had ten hours work and that was ten hours work!! And the only break you got was if you had to go to the john. And if you went there too often, you got that slip. You went and got your time and you was done!! There was no such thing as breaks. And as far as lunch is concerned,-- You know the modern thermos bottle, it didn't come into existence until oh, about the time of the First World War; right after the First World War. But up until that time, pretty near all the men that carried a

lunchbox, it would be just a big tin rectangular bucket with a tray on the top with what looked like a chimney, and this tray held their coffee, or whatever they used, and then, of course, this looked like a chimney, that was a cup. You'd pull that off and then you would pour your liquid out of this <sup>thing</sup> into this cup. You've probably seen pictures of dinnerbuckets like that. Well, in wintertime those of us that carried coffee, or if you had milk or any other liquid, why, that would freeze solid. <sup>in there</sup> Well, there was a few places around the plant where they had -- steamtraps would discharge, you know, into a barrel and of course that water was boiling hot all the time, well, when that noon whistle'd blow-- well, first of all, you had to get in line to punch the time-clock, you had to punch in at seven in the morning, <sup>(End of side A)</sup> you had to punch these timeclocks.

SS: Seven in the morning; twelve noon; one and then six at night.

AS: <sup>six at night.</sup> Ten hour day. Well, twelve o'clock noon-- if you happened to get quite a ways back in line for this time clock and your coffee was froze solid well then by the time you got over to this barrel of hot water, there'd be a lineup there, and then you had to wait your turn to get up there and hold this tray, this container of coffee down in this hot water, to where you could thaw it and heat it, to where you'd like to have it. Well then, you didn't have much time left, <sup>then</sup> you see to eat your lunch. And, of course, there was no way to thaw your sandwiches, you know, and there was a few spots around where they could set their lunchboxes so <sup>that</sup> it wouldn't freeze, you know.

SS: The men were working in below freezing temperatures, then?

AS: Oh, yes, Shaw, a man-- You know if these pantywaists now-a-days-- you can't even describe what working conditions were. You had to be tough and take it or die. There was no alternative at all. It was just either-- wear plenty of clothes-- and everybody wore lots of wool--

wool underear, wool socks, wool mittens, wool shirts, wool pants, and cover your ears up <sup>the</sup> best you could. And, of course where you handled lumber, you'd have wool mittens inside of leather mittens, you see. And even then, your finger'd just pretty near freeze , because that lumber was cold as could be, just like handling ice. But they had two power plants here; the powerplant that's in operation <sup>there</sup> still and then they had one that run the planing mill. Well, there was a few men that would make a dash for <sup>in</sup> the boilerroom, where it was always pretty warm, and they would sit in there and eat their lunch. But these firemen, they'd bellyache like everything about that because they got so many men in there that they'd interfere with their work. And-- but anyway, there'd be quite a few of 'em that'd pile up in the boilerroom. But there was an awful lot of the men that didn't have anywhere else to go, if they carried their lunch they'd just sit down on a cold stack of lumber and eat a frozen sandwich, and if they had some liquid, coffee, tea, milk, or whatever it was, why, they'd try to get that thawed out and otherwise they just ate -- gnawed on a cold sandwich.

SS: Was the mill more or less quiet during that lunch hour?

AS: Oh, yeah, yeah. Everything was shut down. You see they had <sup>this</sup> big Corliss engine that drove the sawmill, twelve hundred horsepower, and then they had a eight hundred horsepower engine that drove the planing mill. And, of course, when they'd shut that engine down, well then everything-- there was nothing moved, <sup>then</sup> because now-a-days they have individual power on each unit, they can start and stop any unit, but then you either run everything or you didn't, that was it. 'Course, they had, as I say, they would run everything, you could still stop units and start units through a clutch system, but it was all duct driven, and you could throw in a clutch and start a unit or you could throw a clutch out and

stop a unit. But when they did stop for the noonhour or at the end of the shift, well, then, of course, everything was stopped. You didn't move anything, because you couldn't move anything unless that engine was running.

SS: So it was quiet and the men could sit down and talk to each other.

AS: Oh, yes, sure. Of course, now, the only place where you couldn't talk to each other during the workday would be inside of the sawmill itself, and inside of the planer. Of course there, they talked to each other, too, but they would have to get their lips right up to a man's ear in order to talk to him, you see. But there'd be-- oh, now you take<sup>now</sup> about one-third of the loading dock where they unloaded the cars would be in this planing mill area, and there it was too noisy, but the other two-thirds of the loading dock was out where you could talk normally.

SS: What happened when the temperature got down as it does sometimes to below zero in Potlatch? Would the men be able to change at all, or would they just have to stand it?

AS: You had to stand it. I don't exaggerate at all when I say that I've seen it below forty degrees below zero. Now that's cold!! And they'd show some leniency, but I have seen it<sup>too</sup> in cases where in extreme cold if a man didn't report for work why he just lost his job!! Because, the operation had to keep on going, and if you couldn't take it, well then, they didn't need you any more, see? So, more or less ~~people had to be~~ tough, and you had to dress for it. And you take ten hours out there in that cold weather-- I think the planing mill at that time was probably the most severe place to be. They had twenty-two machines in the planer, so that was a pretty long building, and it had a sheet metal roof on it, but it was open on the sides, and it had a big overhanging roof, you know, so that everybody stayed pretty much in the dry, but that wind could go right through it, you know. And then, of course, each

machine had these, well, we'll call 'em blow pipes, but they were suction pipes, you know that sucked all these shavings away from the machine, you know and up through the system. Of course, that in itself would create an awful lot of movement of air. Well, each one of these planers, there was two men, one man would feed the machine and the other one would take away from it, you see. And the man that took away from <sup>the machine</sup> <sub>^</sub> was usually a lumber grader, and these boards come out of the machine, he would have to grade that lumber as it come out, you know and put it on grade, so that it had it be accurate. And he would have one narrow gauge railroad car on this side of his bench-- that is it come out onto a bench and all the lumber that was on grade on this order, you see, would go onto this <sup>one</sup> <sub>^</sub> over here and all the 'outs', that is everything that was other than this grade would go onto this unit over here. So he just stood there, the only way he could even move his feet to help the circulation in his feet would be to stand there and tap dance or something <sup>you know</sup> <sub>^</sub> like that. And he just stood in one place and handled these boards over this way and this way, you know. Well, you do this for ten hours a day in freezing weather and I'll tell you, you take an awful beating.

SS: Wouldn't that be true for a lot of the guys in the mill as compared to the guys working in the woods? I would think that in the early days days in the woods they'd be naturally moving a lot.

AS: Oh, yeah, yeah. They'd be moving, they'd be walking and sawing and there was lots of movement, but, then, of course, <sup>now</sup> <sub>^</sub> you take in the sawmill itself, ~~it~~ was always fairly warm in the sawmill because it was entirely enclosed, and then, of course, everything in the sawmill was operated by steam, so there was a lot of radiation there, you see, and in this particular mill they had awful high ceilings, for one thing, <sup>there</sup> <sub>^</sub> was twenty feet from the floor, bottom floor, up to the saw floor.

So that would be a high ceiling on the lower level, well, then the upper level, well then, that was open up to the roof area, and of course that roof was sloping so there was no ceiling in there, you know. But they had a double row of ventilators, windows that would open up the full length of the building to give 'em ventilation in there and relieve some of that heat. So it was usually pretty warm in the sawmill. But it was the men in the planing mill and the loading docks and the lumber yard that was really subjected to this cold in the wintertime, you know.

SS: Sounds like the people in the planing mill had it both ways, 'cause the noise being so high as well as it being so cold.

AS: Yeah, there was a lot of men that worked in the planer all their lives that lost their hearing, you know, on account of that high-pitched noise and, of course, there was a lot of men that it didn't affect that bad. <sup>depend</sup> It'dn. There's a difference in human beings, you know, as to just what these different organs can take, but there was some of 'em that would just go stone deaf, you know, from the noise. Well, now-a-days it's state <sup>ow-a-days</sup> and federal law that any work area that has any noise at all, well, then they got to wear earplugs or ear protection, you know. they wear these muffs, you know.

SS: But there wasn't back there then?

AS: Oh, no. 'Course they never heard tell or even thought about any safety practices, you know. You take even the really high risk area in the industrial plants, they never even thought about building any guards or anything else. It was up to you to watch where you were stepping and where you put your hands and your head and so on. Fact of the matter is, <sup>they</sup> didn't see <sup>m</sup> like they were responsible, you were responsible yourself.

SS: Where were the high danger spots?

AS: Anywhere where there was machinery running. They had the sawmill, the planing mill, <sup>and a</sup> box factory. 'Course that box factory, it wasn't built until about 1912. But in the box factory they had ever so many cutoff saws and rip saws and all that stuff, you know. And <sup>men</sup>, every once in a while you'd hear about some guy losing his fingers, you know. And, of course, everything was belt driven, and of course, there was quite a hazard there, you know; getting wound up in a belt. It's kinda hard to get someone to realize the proportions that they used in putting up a plant like that, <sup>like</sup> ~~that~~ they had here. For instance, now, I say, this big Corliss engine that drove the mill, it had a flywheel on it that was five feet across the face of the flywheel, and it was twenty-four feet in diameter; all heavy cast iron. And, of course, that was all put together in sections, you know, bolted together. But anyway this huge flywheel-- and this belt that was on this big wheel, it went from there into the sawmill-- it took three thousand cow hides to make that one belt. So you can get some idea of the proportions that was used. Now, of course, when you say a cow hide, that was just the backs, they don't take the flanks or nothing, because they just use that back of the cow hide. But, anyway, it was three hides thick. The belt was about so thick, you see, and five feet wide.

SS: How long about was the belt?

AS: Well, approximately a hundred and fifty feet, I'd say. I can't give you the exact length of it. You'd have to take half the diameter of that flywheel and then from the center of that flywheel to the center line of the shaft in the sawmill was about, I'd say, around fifty or sixty feet. And, then, of course, the driven pulley in the sawmill, it was about approximately six feet in diameter, something like that. So, of course you see, that would increase your speed ratio see, from this big flywheel to the smaller one.

AS: Well, then the main drag shaft in the sawmill come off'n this big engine there-- that shaft was seven inches in diameter. And then, of course, from that shaft, well then there was several countershafts, there would be big belts that would drive over onto a countershaft and then that shaft probably would drive onto another countershaft, so it was quite an intricate layout of transmission of power in order to power that whole mill from this one power unit, you know, off'n this one engine.

SS: And it was laid out in such a way that it was all in the open and a man could get tangled up in it pretty easy if they didn't watch themselves?

AS: Oh, yeah. I can recall when-- Now in the <sup>wooden</sup> structure of the mill itself-- the wooden structure-- 'course they had these wooden columns, you know, that ~~are~~ <sup>were</sup> sixteen inches square, these columns, and then, of course, they had these big timbers that went between the columns-- they were called bridge trees, is what they were called-- well, anyway, they were about twenty-four feet apart, and of course there was a great big bearing on each one of those for this shaft to lay in, you see. Well, the man, now say, that was the oiler, why for a long time he'd carry a ladder with him and he'd go up here and oil this bearing then he'd move over and he'd oil another bearing, so what did they do then <sup>just</sup> after a while, they just laid a plank, a single plank, maybe four inches thick but anyway it was a single plank, from this bridge tree over to that bridge tree, twenty-four foot span there, and then from that one to the next one, so he would just walk along that plank and he'd oil this bearing and then he'd walk around and he'd oil the next one and so on. Well, of course, where these big pulleys were this plank had to run through-- past the face of that pulley-- well <sup>then</sup> from this plank, he would just walk on that bridge tree over to the bearing, which would

probably be some places, maybe he'd have to step over there four or five feet, maybe in other places it'd be ten or twelve feet. <sup>over</sup> But, when he was walking over there here was this pulley running right alongside of him here all in the open, see. So if he would lose his balance he could fall right into that pulley. So, you see, a man had to watch what he was doing all the time. 'Course they wouldn't even think about letting a plant even start up now-a-days in conditions like that, if everything wasn't guarded before they even started, they wouldn't let 'em start. But they didn't know any better and everybody was happy!

SS: Were they? The men didn't think twice about it?

AS: Oh, no, no. Fact of the matter is, you take this oiling job, that was sort of a premium job, you know, they always paid probably five cents an hour above common, and, of course, you wasn't tied down to one spot you know and you had more freedom. And a fellow would be kind of tickled to get a job oiling, you know.

SS: Did the people think of it as a dangerous job? As compared to the others?

AS: Oh, you know, the average person, in fact you might say everyone, when you first go into this sawmill it would scare you to death; the noise and all the movement going on in there. But, what are you going to do? By golly, if you're looking for a job; you ask for a job, and you're willing to take anything to get a job because you've got to support yourself and your family, if you've got a family, so what do you do? You just grit your teeth!! Well, now-a-days they won't even think about putting a person on a production job until he's had some job training. That's one of the things that's required now-a-days, is you've got to give every man job training. But those days, they didn't. If you'd

never been inside of a sawmill in your life, you didn't have any idea of what it looked like in there, and you went over and you asked the foreman for a job and it so happened that he needed a fellow, say for instance, to pick edgings. Now when I say pick edgings, that's behind the edger. Down here they had double edgers, that is, one machine took care of two headrigs, and <sup>it</sup> there was two men feeding it. Well, then just beyond this edger, right in this roll case, these rolls are just traveling like made, you know, they had an area that was opened up between two rolls and they had a platform there for a man to stand on, well as these boards come out of the edger, this man had to flip the edgings off, probably two sides of that board down onto the this transfer that carried the edgings away, see. And, then, of course, he had to go over here and <sup>he'd</sup> flip these boards off of that side, see. He had a space in there about six feet, he'd have to go this way and go that way. Well, now, you're a new man, never been in a sawmill in your life, and he'd say "Yeah, I need an edgings picker. You can go to work up there." He'd say, "Well, alright." You didn't even know what an edging picker was. So, you'd go up there and he'd have some man in there <sup>say</sup> temporarily until they could find a new man doing this job, and he'd probably let you stand there for five minutes and watch that fellow, what he was doing. And then he'd probably give the edgerman the highsign to hold up for a minute, long enough for that fellow to jump out and you jump in, and then you started doing it. That's the training you got. Well, now, these boards come out of there-- if you didn't keep a keen eye, maybe one of them board's come along and hit you just about above the knee, <sup>they'd</sup> you see, and boy, they could hit you hard. Fact of the matter is, there has been fellows that was hit hard enough that it'd boost 'em clear out of that pit and down onto the roll

case. But it's up to you to keep a keen eye. Well, these edgers they had four moveable saws on this end of the shaft and they had four moveable saws on this end of the shaft. Well, there was a space in between here of about three feet where there wasn't any saws. Well, this lumber coming, if that board didn't have to be edged they just shoved it down through the middle there because it didn't have to be edged. Well, here you're standing in that pit over there with boards coming at you two sides, but then this joker on the edger he sends one down through the middle, so where are you going to go? The only thing you can do is to jump out of there!! Try to get out of the way!! 'Course you got to do that real quick!! It was tricky work. And, you know, it wasn't at all called for that anything like that should ever happen, but there was individuals that got a big kick out of trying to see somebody scramble, you know. And they even got a kick out of it if they see somebody got hurt!! You know, there was just kind of a bloodthirsty bunch of people. 'Course, I'd say the majority of them were all real kind people, but there was a few-- you'd always find some individual, some joker in the crowd, you know, that's got to do something like that.

SS: Do you think guys like that would do something like that because they were just frustrated in their work? Or do you think they were just mean?

AS: Well, of course, you know if they were psychoanalyzed you could probably find a lot of answers as to why they done those things. But why would a guy just walk up behind you with a cold glass of water and pour it down the back of your neck? They might do that today, you know, if you was down here, say at the swimming hole and probably sitting there on a bench watching the kids swim and maybe some joker'd come up behind you with a cold bottle of pop and pour it down the back of

your neck! Why would they do that? It's kind of hard to answer why people do some of these things.

SS: But it's one thing to play a practical joke on someone and it's another thing to see somebody get hurt.

AS: Yes, but there's some people too, that doesn't realize what a practical joke will do, and how far it might carry, you see.

You know, they used to cut a lot of yellow pine lumber here. And this yellow pine, there was a lot of knots'd fall out, particularly one inch board, big knots, you know, why maybe the knot'd fall out-- well, there was always a lot of knots on the floor in these areas wherever the lumber was transferred there'd be knots fall out. Well, you take in an area where it's so noisy and a man is concentrating on his own work, and all of a sudden here comes a knot flying through the air and it takes him in the back of the head, or in your back or maybe in front and you look around and to see who threw that knot, and, of course, everybody's got a long face and doing his job, see, because some joker picked up a knot and wheeled it down through there and then, of course turned right around to his work, so you can't see where it come from! But why does people do that, see? Oh, they used to do an awful lot of throwing knots, and, you know, you could get hurt. You take a-- a knot is-- it isn't round and smooth like a ball would be, a knot has got sharp edges on it, and a knot can cut, it can cut like a knife.

And there's been lots of 'em, the blood'd run where a knot hit 'em.  
(End of Side B)

SS: A matter of trying to see if somebody could take it, or somebody they thought was soft and try to get rid of 'em?

AS: Naw, I think they just try to get a reaction out of <sup>a person</sup> 'em. And, of course, the more you react to a practical joke the more you'd be subject to practical jokes. Because they say, "We'll get a raise out of that guy. You watch now. See how he acts." And then they'll pull some

joke on him. And, of course, if you can just laugh it off and don't overreact, well then, they'll leave you alone.

SS: Was there a difference between the kind of practical jokes that hurt you with a knot thrown in your back and the other kind?

AS: Oh, yeah. Fact of the matter is, you take practical jokes, that was very common. Seems like they was inventing new ones every day. But most of 'em were harmless, it was just something to irritate somebody. At least try to irritate somebody. And, of course, some people are more sensitive than others, you know, and some of 'em'd really get riled up over it, and then, of course, they'd whoop and holler and laugh and poke fun at him after they get him mad, you know!! (chuckles)

SS: Do you remember what kinds what kinds of ways they jobbed people then?

AS: Oh, it's kind of hard to recall just all of 'em. They had so darn many of 'em. I know one thing that now it seems kind of funny, and at the time it could have probably hurt somebody. But this box factory that they had here, they built that in 1912, and for the first couple of years or so there, why, they nailed all their boxes by hand. Of course they had power saws to cut all these pieces, crates and so on, you know, and ripped them to thin boards and all that stuff, but then the nailing part was all done by hand. They had several big long rows of benches where these men would, I say "men", kids and men, they had ~~there~~ <sup>here</sup> nailing up boxes, and they got, oh, I can remember, they got thirty-five cents a hundred boxes for nailing boxes. You nailed up a hundred boxes and you got thirty-five cents. And, of course, some of these guys were strong and they'd developed a good arm for handling-- they done the nailing with these shingler's hatchets, they didn't use a hammer. And so of course, if you swing them all day long you develop quite an arm. But, anyway, with all these saws running and all this

hammering and banging going on, there was an awful lot of noise. And I can recall several times where ~~be~~ some practical joker'd sneak up behind a guy and he was standing there working like everything, and this guy would take one of these nails and he'd just go down through the sole of his shoe, you know, sticking out from his shoe, and he'd nail his shoe down to the floor, and he'd turn to get some more cleats or boards or pieces for the box and boy, he'd fall flat on his face 'cause he couldn't move his foot!! (Chuckles) But of course, you know, you could break a man's leg, I suppose, too that way, if he turned right. But they never did that I ever heard of. But stuff like that, that's a real practical joke, you know. And then possibly oh, some really harmless thing, that is, irritating like everything-- a guy'd lay his gloves down and when he'd come back, why, he'd go to pick up his gloves and stick his hand in there and maybe some guy'd put a bunch of grease or something down inside his glove and he'd stick his hand into that, you know. But there was thousands of different things that was done. Seemed like most everybody had a pretty good sense of humor. And if you would play a joke on me, well then, I'd probably lay awake nights for a month trying to figure out some way where I could get back and play a joke on you. See?

SS: If I'd knew you'd done it.

AS: Well, yeah or even had a--

SS: Suspicion.

AS: Suspicion.

SS: By the look on the guy's face.

AS: You know I can recall one incident down there in the planer. The whole plant was covered with these narrow gauge railroads, they moved all their lumber on these little railroad cars, and so, in the planer, there was twenty-two machines in there and each machine had a switch and a

rail coming in to the machine, you see, and then, of course, there was two sets of rails going out from each machine, out onto the loading dock area-- but, anyway, all this lumber was transported by horsepower. They had one horse and the driver and he would hook a chain onto this unit of lumber and there would probably be several cars here and he'd go back five or six cars back, and hook onto that and as he started up, <sup>they'd</sup> move this whole bunch down this track. But in this planer area, they had electric locomotives that brought all the lumber -- that took all the green lumber out to the lumberyard, and then they brought all the dry lumber from the lumberyard back into the planer. And they had, I think they had seven of these electric locomotives. But then, of course, they would lead this whole string of loads in on this main line there, and then this man with the horse, he would pull these loads into the different machines, wherever they were supposed to go into the planer. Well, there was a fellow by the name of Carney that drove this horse back there, and he was the nicest fellow in the world. Everybody liked him. He was a pleasant sort of a guy. And so it come to a time there when, by golly, men would pick up their lunchboxes at noon, by gosh, you know, they knew that their wife had made a nice pie and they really expected a piece of pie in their lunch, and it wasn't there. And when they'd come home they'd ask their wife, "How come you didn't give me some of that pie?" "Well," she says, "I did." "I put some in there." "Well, it wasn't there!" Well, maybe the next guy, his wife had made a nice cake or something extra, you know to put in, and of course when lunchtime come it wasn't there!! Well, everybody just would set their lunch box down here or there. This building was all steel structure-- steel girders and columns and everything, and then, of course it was sheetiron covered. And, of course, wherever there'd be a steel beam

orsomething there, they'd set their lunchbox down and didn't pay any attention to it until noon. So everybody got to suspicioning somebody else around there, you know, "Who was stealing their lunch?" But they never could catch ~~him~~ or anybody. So there was one guy that said, by gosh he was gonna find out. So he had his wife to make an exceptionally nice pie and then he went to the drugstore and he got some croton oil and so after she'd cut this nice wedge of pie, why he put some croton oil in it and had it right on top of his lunch, you know. And when noon come, here that pie was gone!! So then he figured, well, we'll soon find out who had that pie!! Well, it just turned out that poor old Carney, the guy that was driving the horse, the nicest guy in the whole plant was the guy that was stealing the lunch!! And, you know, he pertty near died running to the john!! He got such a diarrhea from that croton oil that, gosh, he was <sup>pret'near over done it,</sup> ~~was~~ But that's the way the guy found out. Well, that was a practical joke. Of course, stealing these lunches, you know, and that went on-- that was quite a period of time. And there was a lot of the fellows that complained too, they could see that somebody had been in their lunchbox but there was nothing taken. He'd go along and he'd look at each one, and he'd go back to the one that had whatever he wanted, you see.

SS: What happened to that guy? Did he leave or did he stay?

AS: Oh, as I remember, <sup>I think</sup> he stayed. But then it cured him of this stealing. And the knowledge of who it was, it didn't really get too widespread. They kind of felt sorry for him afterwards, you know.

SS: Did you ever see fights in the mill?

AS: Well, I actually only saw about two, I guess, maybe all the years I was there, but <sup>then</sup> there was more, but then I didn't really get to see 'em. But I did get to see a couple of 'em. And, of course, they-- those that I saw, and I guess the others too, they really didn't last too long, or

didn't amount to too much. Maybe one guy'd get knocked down and he'd quit and that'd be the end of it. It wasn't like the loggers, you know, and I don't think the loggers out in this area ever got anywhere near as tough as they were back in the Midwest. Seemed like the loggers all got along pretty good out in this part of the country.

SS: Do you know why that would be? The difference?

AS: Yeah. I think so. It was-- you might say, it was the nationality of the people that worked in the woods. Now you take back in the Midwest they had Canadian Frenchmen and they had a few Irish--

SS: And the Finns. You mentioned them.

AS: The Finns and the Swedes. Now, the Poles never worked in the woods. Poles always used to work around the sawmill unit and their work usually consisted of piling slabwood or some job where it didn't take a brain to do anything, you know. And I never seen or heard tell of one of 'em ever learning to grade lumber or anything like that. But the people from the Scandivanian Peninsula, they were the natural lumbermen, loggers. Lumbermen, because that was-- well, that was an industry that they'd carried on for hundreds and hundreds of years over there before they ever started over here. You take this one sawmill over there in Sweden that has been in continuous operation for over seven hundred years. And, in a sense, I guess, it's about the biggest sawmill operation in the world. You wonder how such a small country could produce that much timber. But, of course, they don't. They produce a lot of timber because, you might say, every time they cut down a tree they have to plant a tree. But they ship their timber in across the water from Finland and from Latvia and Estonia and some of those countries that belong to Russia now, you know. There was lots of timber and that was all shipped over to Sweden. So, you see, these Swedes

they come by this logging and lumbering more or less naturally, because they were brought up with it. Now the Norwegians were different, they had some but from what I can find out, why, they wasn't very well supplied with timber in Norway, 'cause that was such a mountainous country, you know and craigs and rocks, and that was more or less of a fishing industry in Norway.

SS: Well, how does this go with how they got along in the woods?

AS: Well, You take, <sup>where you</sup> have--- <sup>like</sup> back there you had French Canadians and Finns and Swedes and Irish, and you get conglomered like that, you're bound to have a lot of friction, lot of trouble. Fact of the matter is, maybe that can start, and probably, usually starts by one guy poking fun at this other guy because he didn't speak good English. Oh, it's like I said <sup>here</sup> the other day, it seems like the Irish were arrogant. They were terribly arrogant in their behavior, and that didn't set good with some of these others, you know. You see, back in the logging area there, you'd see an Irishman, you see <sup>a</sup> a man that his aspirations was to be a foreman. And how he got to be a foreman was because he could whip every man in the crew. That was the only qualification he needed!! He didn't need to know anything about logging or lumbering or anything else. The only way to be a foreman was to be able to whip every man in the crew!! Well, maybe he did whip a guy, but then when Saturday night come and they got down to the saloon, he took a beating because maybe one guy ~~wouldn't~~ take him but maybe four or five of 'em would, see. And they'd tromp him right into the ground!! But that was one reason. And there was a lot of different reasons, you know, that could bring it about, but anyway, --

SS: But out here there was more similarity in nationality amongst the lumberjacks?

AS: Oh, yeah, yeah.

SS: More Swedes and--?

AS: Yeah. Of course there was a lot of men working in the woods here, too that wasn't of <sup>the</sup> Scandivanian descent, but then there was an awful lot of 'em that was. You take like Old Axel Anderson and some of those guys. Well, they had the choice of hiring and firing. Well, you know as well as I know that if a Swede come up to Axel Anderson, probably couldn't speak a word of English, see, but he's looking for a job, Axel'd give him a job. So, consequently this camp would be pretty well made up of a bunch of Swedes, you know. And, of course, there'd be others too, you know that was, you might say, American born of different nationalities that they'd be working there, too, but they were all men that were pretty easy to get along with. They wasn't high tempered and hot-blooded like you found back in the Midwest.

SS: Were most of the camp foremen Scandivanian out here?

AS: Well, I'd say most of 'em-- no, I wouldn't say that, but, a lot of 'em were.

SS: Back there in the Midwest, they were mostly Irish?

AS: Mostly, yeah. And, as I say, the reason for that was because they could-- they were fighting men. Irishmen have been known for fighting men for hundreds of years back, because-- where the Swedes, all they knew was to cut logs and make lumber and farm. The Irish, all they knew was to fight!! And get drunk!! (I know that's going on tape,) <sup>nevertheless</sup> But <sup>^</sup>that's a natural heritage!!) And it prevails right to this day as far as that goes.

SS: I'm very interested in this difference, because I read about the fighting that went on in the Midwest. And I've talked to lots of loggers out here, and I haven't heard much about fights in the lumber camps,

anything like what I've heard about back there. So, that to me, I believe there is a strong difference between here and there and I really wondered about it and why.

AS: And, of course, in order to get the lumber industry moving in this part of the ~~world~~, you had to bring people from back there out here as a nucleus to build this thing up. But the people that come out here, wasn't of that type. I believe I told you the other day, that these people migrated out here when they heard that they was building this plant, or building some plant in Sandpoint or somewhere else-- these French Canadians, they didn't come out here. If they run out of a job, say in Wisconsin, where'd they go? They went back to Quebec. And then most of the Irish; there was a few that come out, but they were in such a minority that they didn't cause trouble. Most of them, they wanted to stay back there in the, you might say, the more populated part of the country. And there was reasons for migration, you know. The majority <sup>of them</sup> that come out in this part of the country, they come out here because there was more money; they got paid more. And living conditions were better. And then others come out here because they wanted eventually to get some land. They wanted a home. There was some that come out here, you know, that the job at the mill was their livelihood, but, they bought a stump ranch because they wanted a piece of ground. And just any number of reasons why people come out, here, you know.

SS: Would you agree that there was some fighting in lumber camps here, but just not very much?

AS: Oh, there was some. There's bound to be. But, of course, in this Potlatch area, I think one reason that held the fighting down a lot was that liquor wasn't quite as available as it was back in the Midwest. But- I think too, that here there was a good many cases I believe, where

two men would have a difference that would bring them to the point of fighting if it was in the camp area itself, I think there was a good many times where they were both given their time and packed down the road. "You just get out of here, we don't want any fighting men around here at all!" And I think that held it down a lot, too, because, word will get out, you know, that, "Boy, if you go to work for that guy in that camp, you'd better not start any fights, because if you do you're done."

SS: Do you think that the presence in the camps of a lot of men who were local people, stump farmers who were working there for part of the year, working there to clear up their place, that that had a settling influence on the camps, too?

AS: Oh, yeah. I think that men are not going to jeopardize their job by letting their tempers get the best of 'em, <sup>providing</sup> that is, if the loss of their job is going to mean the loss of their home, and having to move to another locality or move their family to another locality. It's a stabilizing factor, you know.

SS: What about some of these different nationalities that were in Potlatch? I understand that especially for common labor, that large numbers of Japanese and large numbers of Greeks were brought here in the early years.

AS: Yeah. Well, I don't know as they were brought in, but then they come in, because of the same factors that brought other people in here. And, of course, there might have been a lot of 'em that were contracted, you know from the Coast or someplace and they contracted 'em to come over here. But, as I was saying here at the beginning when we started talking about the lay of the land when they built that plant-- this little more or less of an island down there, <sup>that is</sup> they created an island by diverting the river around, you see, because the original riverbed ran right around the foothill here, well, out on that island there they built the

sawmill and <sup>then</sup> at this southern end of it here, they built this great big barn for their horses. And then, right next to the barn they had a wagon corral-- that's something else too that reverts back into the old times too, was a wagon corral-- you've <sup>probably</sup> heard tell of it-- but it was a board fence that was about eight feet high and the boards were perpendicular; twelve inch boards, and they were laid tight together so it was a solid fence. The only way you could see in there would be to find a knothole to see inside. And, then 'course they had this big gate for to open it up and they'd drive their wagons in, and all their wagons were put in there at night. That was a wagon corral. Well, that was right next to the <sup>bulk of the</sup> horsebarn, and right next to that was the baseball park. They had a really good baseball park here and it had a eight-foot board fence all around it, too. The entire park, and you had to find a knothole to see in there too, unless you paid your way in. But, there was a little strip of this island here back of this barn and alongside this baseball park where they had some buildings that was the original buildings that they put up when they first started construction, that is, they had their store-- well, it was a commissary, you might say, and bunkhouses and so on, so these construction crews lived down there. Well, after they got the houses built here in town-- what finally was the town-- well, then they still had these buildings down there, and that's where they had one big building there that was a Jap camp. All the Japs lived there. Then they had some of these other buildings that had been bunkhouses and so on, where all the Italians lived. And then there was just a few of 'em there where all the Greeks lived. There wasn't any of the Greeks or Italians or the Japs that lived in the town itself. They all lived down there, until, oh,

(End of Side C)

about 1918, then they built this big boardinghouse here on the hillside just above the Standard Oil tank station down here for the Japs. And then they had one street there that the entire street was all Italians and Greeks.

SS: So even after 1918 when they built those, they were still segregated, separated from the rest of the community?

AS: Yeah, but then that was <sup>you might say</sup> their own choice. Now, of course, the Japs wanted to live by themselves because of their mode of living. As I say they had this big boardinghouse, and, of course, there was a few Jap families that had little houses, but they was still on that lower street there where the Greeks and Italians were. But these Japs, most of them were single, and, of course, most of the Japs worked in the box factory. But they had a cook, and this cook would heat up a great big tub of water; this tub was a big wooden tub and, oh, I guess it stood three and a half feet high, or such a matter, and it was about between eight and ten feet in diameter, I guess, and it was full of water, and then, of course, they had a firebox underneath <sup>of</sup> that thing. It had a steel bottom in it and this cook, he would build up a fire and soak that up and get this huge tub of water heated up-- well, then, soon as their shift was over with the Japs come home-- that's one thing about a Jap, I don't care where he lives or if he lives in the jungle or in the sawmill, he takes a bath every day. But I don't think they ever care too much about changing the water long as they take a bath!! And they all pile into that tub, as many as could get in there at one time, and they'd jabber and talk and go on. And, of course, as soon as they wash off a little bit in that tub, they'd jump out and <sup>then</sup> maybe the rest of 'em would jump in. But anyway, they didn't have that many people there but what maybe two jumps would---

SS: How many could get in that tub at once?

AS: Oh, probably fifteen or twenty get in there at one time. They'd stand up in there, you know and slosh around. And I don't know if they ever changed the water. They probably did, but anyway, it's just like a racoon washing his food in it--he might have a clean carrot, as clean as can be, but he'll slosh it around in a mud puddle to wash it before he'll eat it. So that's the way those fellows were. But then the Italians and the Greeks, of course, they all spoke their own language and they wanted to be together and the Japs, they talked Japanese and a few of 'em could talk just a few-- little bit of the American language, enough to get by, and they would talk for the rest of them, and the same with the Italians. There'd be maybe thirty or forty Italians and maybe two or three of 'em were married, but one of 'em done the business for all of 'em, you see!!

SS: You mean each of these <sup>groups</sup> Greeks had it's leader who took care of business?

AS: Yeah. Yeah. That is, -- you take the Italians especially, their people over in the old country were so poor that a dollar would be pretty near like a million to anybody else. Well, these fellows working here, every payday they would send a little bit of money back to the old country. It seemed like they didn't know-- it might be that they didn't have enough education to write their name, or to make out a money order, so they would designate one person -- he would take all this money to the post office and he would send so much to this one and so much to that one. It's kind of strange when you look into the background of people. We're living in a so-called modern time, but we're not too far removed from the primitive, as far as that's concerned. There was one family, 'course everybody thought he was an Italian but he was Austrian, he

come from Austria. And he was really a nice fellow. He run one of these big Corliss steam engines down here at the plant for a good many years. And they had a fellow that boarded with them for a good many years. This engineer, he had a wife and he had one boy. But, anyway, there was a fellow that boarded with them for years, and years, and years, and he was an awful nice sort of fellow. But it seemed like when this guy that was boarding with this other family, when he left the old country, he had a sweetheart back there and she was just a little slim, slip of a girl, you know, real pretty, and so he promised her that he'd come to America and then soon as he could he'd send for her. And so she agreed, so he come over here. And so he tried time and again, you know, to get her to come over. Well, she wouldn't come by herself, she was scared to go by herself. So consequently, he was up pretty well in middle age when he finally decided, <sup>that he was going</sup> to honor his commitment, you know, that he had promised her that he would marry her and she was still waiting for him back there. So he finally went back there and was going to marry her and bring her back here. When he got back there he found that his sweetheart was a huge, fat woman, barefooted-- she had never had a pair of shoes in her life!! And this whole village where they lived-- there was one person in the whole village that could read or write, so whenever they would receive a letter they would have to take this letter over to this person and have them read it for them, and if there was going to be a reply, why then they would tell that person what they'd like to write. That person would write the letter and mail it to them. And that's the way they lived over in that country. Well, this guy said that, gosh, when he come over there, why of course, he had on nice clothes. And, 'course the people in that part of the world even right today, they think that

all Americans are millionaires, you know. When you come over to America, all you have to do if you need money is ~~to~~ to go out here ~~to~~ <sup>on</sup> the bush and pick it right off the bush, you see. That's what they believe. So they all thought he was a millionaire. And he said that there was just any number of real young, real good-looking girls and women that wanted him to marry them, bring them over here, but, of course he had committed himself to this other woman. So, he said that it was in the summertime when he went back there and they would dry their fruit, they had lots of apricots and that sort of fruit, you know, and they would dry them. He asked them why they didn't can them; they looked at him, they didn't even know what he was talking about!! So he tried to explain to 'em about getting these glass jars and preserving their fruit that way, it would have more natural flavor to it when they'd eat it. They had never heard tell of it, they'd never even seen it, you know. 'Course, I guess they'd seen some canned ~~fruit~~ <sup>fruit</sup> in tin cans, you know, that was shipped in there. So he said that he was going to go down to the store and get some jars and show 'em how to can some of this fruit, store it. This little store there they didn't know what it was either. They said that they could get him some bottles. He said no, he didn't want bottles, he wanted fruit jars. They didn't have any. So he had to go to another larger town, he said it was about, I dunno, about fifty or sixty miles away to another town that was bigger. And he did get some fruit jars and brought 'em back and showed 'em how to put up some of this fruit. Well, anyway, in the meantime he was getting ready to marry this woman, and, of course he had to get her a pair of shoes; they pretty near killed her, <sup>trying to wear shoes</sup> she had never worn shoes in her life. And the, of course, he married her and he brought her over here. And he built a house over here in Onaway. But that woman could neither

read ~~nor~~ write. Nobody in the whole village could read or write except that one person. And I think that person was a priest. But that's one reason why when they come here to work they wanted to stay pretty much together. It kind of looked like the people in the town didn't want them living intermingled with the rest of the town, but I don't believe that was the case, at all. I think it was a case that they lived that way of their own choice, because they could jabber and talk in their own language and they were happy that way. I think the Japs<sup>they</sup> had better education, but it was in the Japanese education, and, of course, their mode of writing and so on, their script is so much different from ours that they couldn't, most of them,<sup>couldn't</sup> read or write our language, but still they'd been educated in their own country.

SS: Do you think the Japanese kept a lot of their old country customs here?

AS: I think they kept 'em all. Of course they didn't have any temples or anything like that, but still I think each Japanese family has a shrine right in their own home. And they have idols and images and whatever ~~they~~ worship, so I think they carried on all their own traditions wherever they go.

SS: I know that the Chinese had a very hard time of it in the early days in the mining camps and around there. They mined the tailings and they were the heavy laborers. And I know that the old miners say, and I've read and people feel that the Chinese were just downtrodden, almost like animals.

AS: Well--

SS: I'm wondering if it was that way with the Japanese, too?

AS: Well, they were. I'm not going to deny that. And, of course, you take-- it's a funny thing-- United States is made up and is populated with just a conglomerate of every race and creed in the world, you know-- makes up the population of the United States. But, nevertheless, it

seems like, oh-- it always was very common-- you'd hear somebody would make a derogatory remark about, "oh, that dumb Swede. That stupid Swede. That dang Swede." And all that sort of thing, see. Well, whenever they'd talk about the Italians it was always "That Dago." For years and years you never heard tell of anybody saying Italian, it was always a Dago or a Wop. They'd refer to 'em as a Wop. And, of course, there was some people that probably didn't have two cents to their name, that if an Italian family was gonna move in next door, they'd feel really put out about it because they didn't want that Dago living next door to 'em. Well, that so-called Dago that <sup>probably</sup> moved next door would probably financially and every other way be much better off than this person was that was <sup>over</sup> here. But that's the way people are.

SS: Was their mixing between the Greeks and, let's say, the Italians and Japanese population of Potlatch? Was that really kept to a minimum? Was it minimal, or was it---

AS: Well, I tell you, I don't believe there was any friction between the races at all, because, oh, it seemed like each one respected the other one, and each one more or less stayed in their own compound. They didn't intermingle too much, although on the job they'd probably work right side by side on the job and just get along <sup>just</sup> fine. But, while it always seemed to me, at least, if there was any prejudice, it seemed to me like it was probably more on the other side, because these minority groups, they didn't want to mingle with the others. That's what it seemed to me like. The reason for it might have been that they might have felt that they were out of place, they wasn't wanted, or something like that. Now you take, if they had a public doing of some kind, maybe you'd say for instance, they had-- in the early days they used to have these ice cream socials and basket socials and one thing another-- well those people could have come and they would have ac-

cepted their money like anybody else's, but they didn't come because they just felt that they was out of place. You know, it was their own choice that they didn't come. I know for a fact, 'course we don't belong to the Catholic Church, but then I know that they've had a Catholic Church here, you might say, ever since the town started, and you take all of these Italians and the Austrians that were here from bordering onto Italy, they were all Catholics-- you know that was a Catholic stronghold for two thousand years, but you'd never see one of 'em go to the Catholic Church. The reason they didn't go was because these other snooty women that went to church there, they didn't want to mingle with 'em, <sup>but that is</sup> at least, they thought that was the case, so they didn't go.

SS: Were most of them single men? Were there many women, many wives?

AS: There was some. Yeah, there was a few, but <sup>then, I say</sup> most of them were single men. I think I told you the other day about the approximate number of people in this town that kept boarders. Well, you take about three fourths of the houses in town would keep anywhere from two to five or six boarders besides the hotel being full and the big hotel annex and that big boardinghouse and the big boardinghouse annex, full of rooms, all single men, besides all these people that was keeping boarders-- you can see a big percentage of them were single men, <sup>there</sup> at least men that were not living with their families. You know a man might be considered single but still he might have a wife and family somewhere else. So you take among the Japs that were here; I think I knew of just three families, that is, there was three that had wives and children, and the rest were all single <sup>people</sup>. But among the Italians there was a few more that were married. And amongst the Greeks that were here there was only, I believe there was only one Greek that was married, and he mar-

ried an American born German girl. But there was never any Greek women here.

SS: Do you think most of these folks were thinking more about making money and going back to the old country?

AS: Yeah. I think that was their main purpose in being here, was to accumulate all they could and then eventually going back. And that's what most of 'em done, too. Of course, now you take with the Japs, why, of course they started thinning out--- well, about the time that the country went into that depression in the early '30's-- well, then the Japs all dissipated. And when World War II broke out there was just one Jap here; a single man, and he was a janitor.

SS: In the store?

AS: Yeah, ~~that's~~.

SS: Yeah, I've heard of him.

AS: He was the only Jap left here at the beginning of the second World War.

SS: Someone has told me that there was some suspicion about him. Did you hear about that?

AS: Oh, yeah, yeah. But you know they had this big Japanese concentration camp down here at Tule Lake, California where they had thousands and thousands of Japanese, like say, Japanese-Americans interned there during the war. And they never could find one incident where any of 'em was disloyal to this country, but still they put 'em all in the pen, you see. Of course, I suppose they thought they had to do that because you can't tell just by looking at a person what their intentions are. But this one that was here; we heard a lot of stories about him, but there was none of 'em that was ever proven correct. Because, it seems like that's just a favorite American pastime, you know, is to concoct some yarn about somebody or something, you know!

SS: Did you know any of the Japanese workers?

AS: Oh, yeah. I knew quite a few of 'em personally. In fact, I worked in the same area and so on, and we'd meet on the street; we'd speak, you know. That is, we'd say "hello" or something. We didn't really stop and carry on any conversations, but-- oh, yeah. Well, most of the Japs and all of the Italians and Greeks, far as I was concerned, I was friendly with all of them.

SS: There is one other thing I was thinking of--Were the Japanese the least accepted of the nationalities, because they weren't white?

AS: No, I wouldn't say the least accepted. I think they were probably on a par with the Italians and the Greeks, as far as that goes. But the Greeks were a little bit more sociable inclined than the Japanese or the Italians, seemed to me. Of course, that's mostly <sup>I think</sup> because of the fact they were all single men and they all bached, you know, two or three of 'em'd have a little house and they done their own cooking and housekeeping and all that sort of thing. And so, consequently, why, they would go down to the poolhall or go someplace to spend some of their time. And that way they hobnobbed with other people more. The Italians -- their social life it seems that they <sup>would</sup> more or less get together amongst themselves and they didn't spread out and fraternize with the rest of the town quite as much as the Greeks did.

SS: These married women; would they live right in with the men there?

AS: In the group?

SS: Yeah.

AS: No, no, no. Wherever there was a married couple, they had their own house. The Japanese as well as the Italians, you know. Those as well as the Italians, you know. Those that were married, they had their own house.

SS: Did they do, these groups, different labor than the average people

did in the mill? Did they have a special common labor that they did?

AS: No, not necessarily, but it seemed like the Greeks, they all more or less centered in on the sawmill part of the plant. And they were darn good sawmill men, all those Greeks. <sup>(End of Side D)</sup> These two men would ride the carriage, you know, the headrig, where they sawed the logs up. Well, there'd be maybe three fourths of the men-- you see on the four carriages there'd be eight men riding the carriage, two on each rig. And there'd be maybe half of those men were Greeks. They were real catty on their feet, you know. Seemed like they got along good with this motion. And then others were edgermen, trimmermen, and they all carried on work that had quite a lot of skill to it. But in the sawmill unit, you never seen the Greeks out there loading boxcars or piling lumber in the lumberyard or anything else. But, there's where you'd see Italians. They'd pile green lumber out in the lumberyard and they'd pile slabwood in the woodyard and all that kind of work, you see. The Italians here, they done pretty much the same work as <sup>the</sup> Poles did back in the Midwest. And, then, of course, the Japs they all seemed to concentrate in the box factory, because the average Jap was quite a bit smaller in stature than the average man, and they were quick and nimble and quick with their hands and all that, and they seemed to fit into that. <sup>one</sup> So it seemed like it was sort of a natural area for 'em to fall into, see.

SS: But you couldn't characterize that by saying that they did the common labor.

AS: Oh, no, no, no. I'd say that there was quite a lot of skill in all of it. Now you take, for instance, piling green lumber in the lumberyard of course, most of that was done by Swedes. I'd say eighty percent of it was done by Swedes. But then there was some Italians there, too.

And you'd say that that was just absolutely common, grunt labor, but it isn't. There's a lot of skill in piling green lumber, and doing it right. Now, you take those alleys in the lumberyard, they were-- probably two thousand feet long in that area, and there was two sets of track<sup>s</sup> going down each alley, and then, of course, there was piles on each side, you see, from this side of the track they piled on this side and this track they piled on this side. Well, these piles were built up on a sloping foundation, that is the foundation, they were just some bunks, heavy timber,<sup>permanent</sup> but the piles had to be sloped so that any weather would run off'n the pile, you see. And, of course, the boards had to be laid on there in courses across. The width of the pile was usually determined by<sup>about</sup> the length of the lumber they was piling. But, anyway they would have-- regardless of the dimension of the lumber that they piled, they used one-by-four<sup>boards</sup> as strips, stickers across there, you see. Every course they'd have a strip<sup>here</sup> in front and then possibly two<sup>in</sup> through the center part, spaces equally and then one at the back. But, the pile was sloping this way, but the face of the pile was-- it wasn't straight up and down, it was just a little bit in from the perpendicular, see at the top. So that'd be about the shape of the pile. Well you can imagine, you stand at one end of that alley and you look down that alley for two thousand feet and every pile is just the same. You wouldn't find a variation of an inch in the length of that thing! And, of course, that was all done, you might say, automatically, them fellers would slap that lumber down-- One man down below there that had a steel bar that he'd put in the pile and<sup>he'd</sup> put these boards up on here and jack that up, you know, boost it up there, and that fellow would take it and pull it up and pile it and them piles were high, they were-- if the board, say, was sixteen feet long, that pile was probably at least twenty feet high or higher, because the man at the bottom'd

push it up and the fellow on the top'd just get ahold of it, he'd pull it up. But then to see the shape of those piles, it takes skill. So now, what you do-- it requires some skill no matter what your job is--

SS: What about these men that were the head men of the groups? The guys that took care of the money and that sort of thing? Did they also work at the same time?

AS: Oh, yeah, yeah. You know, there's always some scuttlebutt, you know that goes around, and I don't know as you could ever prove anything, because there's nobody ever tried to prove anything. But there was one family here and it seemed like the wife was the sharp one, the husband in that family, all he ever done was drive a horse hauling slabwood in from the plant out to the slabyard and lath and that sort of thing. He drove this one horse. So he had about the least skill of anybody, but still he was the fellow that took care of all these financial transactions, you see. And, oh, it seems like the scuttlebutt was that he got to be fairly well fixed financially, because a lot of this money that was supposed to be shipped to the old country never got there. Fact of the matter is, it never was sent!! (Chuckles) And so-- but as I say, though, that was rumor.

SS: Well, it would seem that these guys would have a lot of power in a way, they're acting as the intermediary between their men and the management.

AS: Well, as far as the job part was concerned, it seems like each individual would take care of himself as far as the job was concerned, but any handling of finances and correspondence is concerned, why, -- I would say that they were pretty near a hundred percent illiterate. This guy would have a payday and he wanted to send ten dollars over to the old country to his family or his people over there, so he'd give this guy the ten dollars and told him to send it over there. Well, he could probably show him a receipt, the money order receipt, but he'd look a

at it and he didn't know whether he was looking at a laundry coupon or what he was looking at because he couldn't read. He couldn't even write his ~~own~~ name!! He didn't know whether that receipt was his or whose it was you see. And he didn't know whether by looking at that receipt that it went to the individual over there that he wanted it to go to or <sup>if</sup> it went to Sears Roebuck!! Because he could at that and he couldn't tell what it was.

SS: They depended on him.

AS: It's pretty easy to flim-flam somebody that <sup>is that</sup> illiterate, you know.

SS: In this case the rumor was that it was more the guy's wife that was doing it?

AS: Yeah. She was sharp. The husband he was just more or less of a big okey guy that, he'd drive that horse, then he'd come home and have a little vino, but his wife she was just upon her toes all the time. She was full of vim and vinegar! And, of course, she was always manipulating him as to what he should do, you know. <sup>It was</sup> Quite a deal.

SS: Somebody told me that these Japanese contractor that they worked through he really did have a fairly tight hand with this man that they bought groceries through him.

AS: That's right. But, of course, he wasn't a resident here. Now, I don't know, I think he lived in Seattle, and I had seen him a time or two, and he was a great big fellow. He was as big as two of these other Japs put together. He was a big man. And he'd come here, you know, and I know, they'd have some kind of a meeting and he'd straighten out, what this had to be done and what that had to be done. And I suppose in a week, We used to hear that these fellows had to pay a percent of their wages, had to go to him every month, and if that was the case with Japs scattered in the canneries and everything else up and down the

coast and all around, he probably made a lot of money. But, of course, that was some of the feudal system that was brought over from the old country. But that wasn't the case <sup>though</sup> amongst the Italians, but it was with the Japs. And take as far as their food was concerned, they bought some of their food locally at the store here. But the major part of their food was shipped in by rail. And, of course if you've ever been in a Jap home or in a Jap camp, boy, it'd just about turn your stomach soon as you step inside the door. 'Course it probably is still the same way. You've seen a lot of these split bamboo tubs, maybe so big in diameter and so deep, you know, with the bamboo hoops *you know* on 'em. Well, they ship fish in those and these little fish are about an inch long. Little tiny things, they're just about like you see these little trout just after they're hatched you know, you see those little trout in the fisheries, little fellows. Well, that's the way these fish are. And there's hundred of thousands of them in one tub and they're preserved or pickled or something, but stink!! My <sup>gosh</sup> *bless you,* it's just about knock you down. Well, I've been in that Jap boarding-house that they had here. Fact of the matter is, when I worked at the mercantile company delivery the groceries, why, I used to make deliveries up there. And in the Jap camp they never <sup>have</sup> *had* any kind of floor covering at all, it was just the boards, but scrubbed clean, never painted either, just scrubbed clean right down to the white boards. And then their tables <sup>were</sup> *the same way.* You never see any covering on their table, just boards. And <sup>then</sup> *at* each place setting along there where each man would sit, was just a round bowl about five inches in diameter and maybe three inches deep, or something like that. And then a couple of chopsticks. And that was the entire placesetting, was this bowl and a couple of chopsticks. Well, of course, they lived on rice and then

these fish. And, of course, they had some kind of a soy sauce or something, too to go with it, I don't know what it was. Anyway, as far as their cooking was concerned it was pretty common and pretty plain. There wasn't much frills in Japanese cooking. But, anyway, you'd go in there, and I don't know whether they cooked them fish; I never seen how they fixed 'em, or if they just eat 'em the way they come out of the tub. They probably did. But the head, tail, <sup>and all,</sup> ~~fish~~ the entire fish wasn't only about an inch long. Little, tiny, slim things, like if you'd break off a match about an inch long. But, they'd get some of them, you know, and this bowl of rice and they'd hook that right up here under their chin and these chopsticks'd just fly.

SS: Were those folks very friendly? I know the Japanese have a reputation for being very polite.

AS: They are very polite, but they're not friendly. That is, they would be if you knew 'em that well, you know. But how you gonna get to know 'em that well? Of course now, you take the Japanese-Americans that you run into now, born and bred in this country, you know, they're altogether different breed. But you take fifty-sixty years ago these Japs had come from over in Japan, come over here to work, they didn't want to fraternize with any of the so-called white people. They come over here <sup>and they</sup> ~~worked~~ and they worked hard, too. And that's one thing about 'em-- about a Jap now, whatever his job was you could depend it was done, and it was ~~done~~ right. He was a good worker. I never did see a Jap that ever tried to drag his feet or dog it, or anything like that. He was always a good worker.

SS: Somebody told me that there was some move to run them out at some point here. Do you know what they're talking about?

AS: Welll, I don't think there was any particular move on that part. Of

course, at the beginning of the second World War, I said that there was just one left, well, it got down to one, but there was three or four here, but they were men with wives and families. Nobody run 'em out but they seen that there was a tension building and so they just voluntarily moved out. I don't know where. Never did find out where they went. But I know there was one Japanese family that lived here that had a couple of girls that went to school and they went all the way through school. I don't believe they graduated because I think they left before they graduated from high school, but, anyway, those girls, it seemed like all the girls in school just thought the world of them and just as much as they possibly could they wanted to be with them. So they got along good that way. 'Course there was two of the Japs that loaded cars down on the loading dock and one of those Japs; the rumor was that he was a colonel or a major-general or something in the Japanese army and was sent over here to find out what he could and all that, but then he lived here for quite a few years and he had a family. And that could have been true and it might not, I wouldn't have any way of knowing. But whether or not somebody just dreamed that up or whether it was true that he was a well educated man and high up in the military. But I do know one thing, that from the very beginning that the Japs come into this area on their leisure time, where ever you seen a Jap you seen a camera. They took pictures of everything, I don't care if it was a stump or anything else, they took pictures of it. Now, maybe it was because they liked pictures; maybe they sent those pictures over to Japan. They took pictures of everything. Inside of buildings and outside of buildings and everything else.

SS: That makes me wonder about one thing-- even if these different groups of other nationalities did keep pretty much to themselves, didn't mix

a lot with people, do you think there was a number of pretty strong individual friendships that they formed with a particular person or a particular family in Potlatch, that there was bonds like that?

AS: With some people other than their own <sup>ethnic</sup> group?

SS: No. No, I don't think there was.

SS: So, for example, even though you knew a lot of them, you didn't ever--

AS: You never fraternized with them.

SS: That's what I mean.

AS: You knew 'em on the job and you knew that his name was *Sheega*, or you knew his name was Harry. You knew that much, but, that's all you did know. And, you know, they'd probably work in the same department where you worked at the mill and you probably passed by each other any number of times during the day, but each one concentrated on his own job and all that. If there was any reason to speak, why they spoke ~~whoever~~ <sup>whatever</sup> it was, to transfer some information about the job or something. But that was it!! If they happened to meet in the store, say after work, they might say, "Well, hello." Something. But that was it. They didn't say, "Well, come over this evening and we'll just have a little visit. Bring ~~your~~ <sup>the</sup> wife." Nothing like that ever happened. And, of course, that holds pretty true with, not only those so-called minorities, but the rest of them, too. People will form their own little group of friends, they do that right today, too, you know. You and your wife have got four or five couples that you are pretty close friends with. And you say, "Come on over and we'll have a barbecue in the back yard." Or the other one'll say, "Come on over and we'll run some home movies." or some other thing. But it's still held in pretty small groups, even right now, isn't it? Don't you think so?

SS: Sure is. Is it less likely that you would get to know some of these

folks well than somebody else?

AS: Well, yes. I think that was probably more of their choosing than it probably would be of yours. I don't know if anybody ever did, but then you might feel real friendly toward one of those guys and say, "Well, why don't you bring your wife and come on over this evening?" And he'd find some excuse not to come, see? Might be because they felt inferior, it's hard to tell why. They just didn't want to get too close, I guess.

SS: Do you think most of 'em learned to speak English pretty well while they're here? Or just enough to barely get by?

AS: Well, you take the Greeks, they spoke real good English. I don't know they taught one another, you know. And I know personally cases where one Greek would say, mispronounce a word in English, and the other Greek would just chew him out and just give him the devil, <sup>because</sup> "You've got to say it this way!" But then, some of the other groups, they didn't care. It was more or less what you might call Pidgin English, you know, they'd make signs and one thing and another. Anyway to make themselves known as to what they wanted, <sup>or something</sup> And they were happy with that. But the Greeks weren't. They would really tie into one another, you know. "If you're going to live here, you're going to <sup>learn</sup> speak this language, and you're going to learn to speak it right!" And that was one thing you could say about them. And all the Greeks that I knew of that was here, they all had some education over in the old country before they come here. Now how much education they had is hard to say, but they had enough education to where they all could read and write. And from what I've talked to some of 'em, why, their education would be about what we would find in our grade school here, and that would take in what is now-a-days is <sup>you get</sup> junior high, grade school up through the eighth grade. But you take with the Italians, there was an awful lot of illiteracy there. It was

it was very few of them that could read or write.

SS: I want to ask you a little bit more about that sign language in the mill. This is really interesting to me. Did the sign <sup>always</sup> mean the same thing, I'm not talking about the numbers, the fingers for numbers, because I'm sure they would. I mean other kinds of signs that you use to express yourself, or would it just depend on the situation what they were talking about?

AS: Of course, it's like I said a while ago, I never have got very fluent with it, because it wasn't necessary, you know, for me to be able to communicate <sup>much</sup> with my hands, because I was never confined to one of those areas where you had to use the sign language too much. I was in and out of those areas, <sup>and of course</sup> passing through or even working in there, why, I would use some, but not as much as these men that was confined to the area and working in it all the time, but some of the signs, were, you might say were basic, <sup>that is, they</sup> became basic. For instance that (indicates sign) you know, that's, you're crazy, and of course that's all wrong. There's lots of different signs. I used to <sup>just</sup> get amused and chuckle to myself just to watch some of these fellows communicate across, you know quite a wide area in the mill. And, gosh, they would be making all kinds of signs, and gosh, you know, their hands would just be going like everything, <sup>you know like</sup> something. And I don't believe any of 'em was any standard hand language, you know. Something that was more or less made up and each one knew what the other one was trying to convey, you know and they'd laugh and <sup>go on and</sup> tell jokes or something between one another, it was really funny.

SS: Well, it's about time for me to go, it's about your lunchtime.

AS: Well, we've had a lot of fun just talking.

SS: Oh, yeah, so've I..