

MAHLON FOLLETT

Genesee; b. 1896

ran general store

2 hours

minute page

Side A

00

Running away to the neighbor's as a child. His uncle went into dentistry to get out of farming; he found it to be isolated. Father hiked in from Lewiston; there was no fence on his route. Father came home with news of McKinley's shooting.

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Early activity in Genesee. Many more people lived in the surrounding area. Beginning of Follett store in 1896. A historical shoe invoice. Four general stores in Genesee. Six or seven worked in Follett's store. Saturday night business. Barber shop baths for hired men.

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He attended Northwestern Business College in Spokane and worked in banks in Spokane and Genesee. Serving in the army in New York City. They were treated very well; he enlisted with friends from Spokane. Solid support for First World War.

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He decided that working for his uncle's store would get him ahead more quickly than the bank. Good roads and automobiles hurt the small town.

Side B

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Decline of store began in twenties, intensified in depression; it recovered somewhat when there was less competition. What people bought at the store. Dripping of bulk molasses; careful handling of kerosene. Trading eggs. Mixed quality of butter - they threw some out after they bought it.

09

Carrying farmers from year to year. Credit was the small town merchant's biggest headache. Money on books from the depression. Discounts from quick payment to merchandisers offset bank borrowing. Most people were trustworthy; it was hard to collect if they couldn't pay. Changing population in town. Some bought with the intention of never paying. In the depression people paid up better than they had before, while they bought less.

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Failure of Genesee bank in the depression. Popularity of Troy bank in Genesee. Store's problem with paying creditors after bank closed.

Mahlon Follett

minute	page	
Side B		
27		The older Rosensteins didn't mingle with other townspeople very much. Cooperation with other grocers; there was more rivalry in the earlier days. Some customers cited lower prices elsewhere.
Side C		
00		Putting up orders. Threshing outfits came from Troy. High school kids "hung out" at Smolts. In the early days the women would stay around the store. Indian trade: they bought one item at a time.
10		Social life – revival meetings were rather radical; dances in town and country. Visiting was similar in town and country. Different groups and churches didn't associate until recently. Community activities – horse show, ball games. Few farming families appeared to be "country people."
29		Genesee's decline as business town may come from its position between Lewiston and Moscow. Follett's tried to carry ready-to-wear clothes.
Side D		
00		Revivals had little effect on most people's habits. A baseball playing minister got people to be broader minded. Most moonshine was brought in; there was more drinking during prohibition because it was illegal. Political speakers drew crowds because there wasn't much else to do.
09		Vollmer's bank in Genesee didn't do much business because people didn't like Vollmer.
12		Moving Genesee from "old town" to new. Rosenstein would not have held the railroad up, as is often claimed, because he had to move his store.
17		Genesee as a thriving young town.
22		Hobo jungle at Genesee – dependability of men varied. Gradual decline of Genesee. He sold out business for a year, then bought it back.

with Sam Schrager

May 3, 1976