

GEORGE TORGERSON

Park, Elk River; b. 1892

ran dray line; road maintenance

2 hours

minute page

Side A

- 00 Early morning chores. Father grew up in the timber and wanted to stay there.
- 04 Many at Park sold their homesteads to Potlatch for little and moved out. Land ownership at Park. The bad roads for cars: building the old road. Parents worked hard; life spans were shorter. Most was grown; little was bought in stores.
- 13 Neighbors who met on the road always stopped and talked. Very few pioneers left the country. Father had a threshing machine which they used on the ridges.
- 17 Learning English; school terms. The Park Church was ruined by not getting reroofed. The minister came from Deary.
- 23 Their house burnt down at Park in January; neighbors helped. He ~~own~~ed Deary bank for a while. Family ran store and post office in Park.

Side B

- 00 Potlatch didn't bring much money in because people who sold left; some worked for the company. Low farm prices. Bad conditions in the camps; necessity of IWW strike, although he was against striking. Bad situation with rising prices now. Pay wasn't enough to get ahead much.
- 09 Parents could make a living at Park; but he couldn't get ahead, so joined his brother in Elk River. Father had a meadow seven miles towards Elk River.
- 12 The Trumballs, moneyed people, ran post office at site of Elk River and bought up surrounding homesteads. The Torgersons put homesteaders up on their way to Elk River. Trumball looked out for himself. Selling hay when mill started up.
- 22 Joe Wells' story to the new Potlatch crew. He was completely accepted by local people. He died by drinking the wrong bottle. He said when he scrubbed that he was still as black as ever. Drinking has always been common for many.
- 30 At Elk River credit would always be paid up at the end of the month at their business. (continued)

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Side C

00

Reliability of Elk River people. They helped each other out when needed. He and his brother were stuck with houses when the mill went down all of a sudden. The social life was most enjoyable - circulation of the latest stories. Comparison of Park's independence with Elk River's money and fun; people were as close in Elk River as Park. Judgement of new people at Elk River; the bad ones were forced to leave. He always handled Mrs. Bloom's trunk.

09

His dray line hauled supplies for moonshiners, and he wouldn't give information to town sheriff. Moonshiner camps. A black moonshiner made the best in the area. Few were caught in the area. He supported prohibition at the polls, but made a mistake.

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At first Elk River houses were company-owned; they sold them to the public shortly before they shut down. His dislike of the mill in Lewiston. In winter they told the people they'd open in spring. He stayed with the business until then despite his inclinations because he'd been doing so well. The town went down the drain. The brothers tried mining with J.P. Jones, but there were too many people involved.

24

No more life in town. He worked for the Clearwater Highway District and the state for fourteen years. Finally he quit because the state wouldn't supply materials to fix the road. Mr. Birchneyer asked him to work for him in Moscow and he continued as streets superintendent for twenty years.

Side D

00

Having to leave for Moscow. The dray business in Elk River. People's predicament when the company pulled out; the company's lack of concern.

09

Outstanding Japanese pool player at Elk River. Picking up bad-smelling shipments of food from China. The children spoke fondly of China. Three Chinese families - the women and one man worked in a laundry, the other two men in the mill.

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Social events before the mill went out. The various nationalities mixed freely; it made no difference. Elk River was hard on bad people; "deadbeats" had a miserable time.

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Side D (continued)
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Outdoors activities around Elk River. The old road to Elk River from Kendrick. Elk River businessmen moved out. The mill was modern. They were never told why the mill went out, and got no warning. Extra equipment was smashed with a sledge hammer and sold as scrap.

with Sam Schrager

May 17, 1976