

DICK BENGE
Third Interview

Interviewed by:
Sam Schrager

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DICK BENGE

Hatter Creek, Princeton; b. 1894

lumberjack

2.3 hours

minute page

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II. Transcript

DICK BENGE

This conversation with DICK BENGE, took place at his home on Hatter Creek, near Princeton. The interviewer is SAM SCHRAGER. April 12, 1976.

SAM SCHRAGER: Do you remember, were there any winters in the early days that were real odd, like that.

DICK BENGE: Well, the first winter I was here, ^{I come in in '13} that was the latter part of '13 and '14, we never got no snow til Christmas. Well, it started in on Christmas Eve and we got up next morning and hitched on the sleigh and put in ninety days on a loggin' sled. That was quite a winter. (Chuckles) Boy, oh, boy. The snow on the road was half as high as this house, just all froze. ^{The snow was on each side of it and was gone} She was just packed with nothing but ice. Yes, sir! That was something.

SS: In that kind of snow and weather was it hard to get around? Or could you get around pretty easy?

DB: No, we had to keep the road broke. If you didn't break the road out, why, first thing you know you couldn't go unless you shoveled. 'Cause she'd just keep a snowing and settling and snowing and settling; wet you know. Snowin' and settlin', snowin' and settlin'.

SS: Would you just break the road out with a team was that all?

DB: That was all we had them days. We had no Cats in them days.

SS: Did you have to puff 'em a lot, to rest 'em a lot to break the road?

DB: Yeah. Quite a bit, til you got your road. 'Course, it started snowin'; you broke all your road out, that's the first thing you done. You'd break your road out. You'd load light, go clear at the back end of your job and bring everything out as you come. Well, whenever they got done on that road, you're done with. Snow it full, if it wanted to. (Chuckles) Oh, brother! No, we had no Cats, them days, nor nothin', you know. 1913 there was no Cats. The company never got loggin' Cats in here til I believe it was 1918.

SS: Huh.

DB: When they got Cats. They got four of them old Holts.

SS: Huh. I've heard they used one on the Park sleigh haul. They used Cats for that part of the haul.

DB: Well, they were using some of the old-time Cats on that. Well, the Holts, you know, they sold out, and they sold to the Best. Well, then the company that got the Best Cats, well, they used them a couple a years and the Bests sold out to the Caterpillar. Then they was all Cats. All Caterpillars, from then on and are yet, practically.

SS: What was the first ones that they brought in here? Did they work very good, the early ones?

DB: No, they didn't! Orlis Morgan and I, we was sawing ~~for one or two~~.
And they couldn't keep 'em on the tracks, because there was no rock rails or nothin'. Now they got rock rails, run right over ~~top~~ sideways and it won't throw it off. So, I guess they're better now. Yeah, they keep goin'. Yeah, they keep goin' now. Oh, all this speed, you know. The world's traveling fast; too fast. *DON'T YOU SAY?*

SS: Yeah, I agree with you

DB: Just atravelin' so fast that we can't keep up with it. Well, where's it going to stop? Now you and I can go buy an airplane ticket, cross the ocean, go clear around the world in a little bit. What business have we got with that? We're furnishing the money to buy 'em; the taxes. I can't see where we're gainin' anything. Just goin' further behind.

SS: I think you're right, Dick. I think you're right about that.

DB: Yeah. We're not a gainin' anything. It's got to stop. But where? I think we'll be right up agin a wall when it does. Way it looks now

anyhow, unless there's an awful change someplace.

SS: Do you think when you was growing up, back in the early days, were people-- did they want things like they do now?

DB: No. No, they was satisfied with getting along with what they had. They didn't want an automobile, they didn't want this, they didn't want that. If they could afford it, they got one, if they couldn't, they Forgot it. Let it go. Satisfied. But nowadays, you know, this feller he gets something, his neighbor gotta have one just like it, or a little better. Them days, they didn't. What a neighbor got, that was alright with you. Yeah.

SS: It wasn't the kind of envy that they have now?

DB: No. Wasn't-- reach out and grab. Everything's grabby now. They gotta have it. If they don't get it, why, they're not satisfied. Well, you take these young fellers, I don't know what they're gonna do. They come outta college, or they come outta high school, and go get 'em a job. Well, they get their job; on the way back they stop and buy 'em an automobile. Yeah. Let their job pay fer it. Job don't pay fer it, it goes back. Way it keeps agoin', by God, I guess it's alright.

SS: I don't know. You say you didn't care if a neighbor had much more. Do you think everybody was in the same shape, then? Or was there some people that were doing better than others?

DB: That's right.

SS: There was some people better off?

DB: Oh, yes, sure.

SS: There was a real difference?

DB: Yeah, some was better off, you know. They got by a little better, but, them days it didn't take so much to get by. Well, you know you could go to town you ^{could} buy a sack of flour for a dollar and a half, and

buy a slab or meat; big slab of bacon, for four dollars. I don't know how much it weighed. Sack of spuds for fifty cents, or a dollar. You didn't have to have them big wages to make it. And you didn't think nothin' about the big wages. Tell you what I think; I think the working man's a puttin' her on the hog, much as anybody.

SS: Working man is what?

DB: Puttin' the whole country on the hog. Every time living goes up they gotta strike. The unions, they gotta strike. Well, just as quick as they strike, well, then livin'll go up, to meet it. Well, livin'll go up and they'll turn around and strike because they raised livin'. They gotta have more money to make a livin'. Well, they'll turn around and raise the price of groceries again. Yeah.

SS: I always have a hard time with the idea of profits. It seems like the profit is kind of a rake-off, off the working man. Is how I feel.

DB: Yes, it is. I'll tell you, I've worked out most of my life, and I kinda figured out it all starts with the working man. A man's working by the hour is furnishing all the money to keep things goin'. You figure it right out and see if he ain't. And every time he shuts down or strikes, he ties her all up. Well, might be, he's kinda runnin' it! (Chuckles) How did the truck strike come out?

SS: The way I understood it, they went back. Went back to work; it didn't last long. Now, that's what I think. But I don't know if they're all back or not. Last week, my wife and I took a vacation, we kind of dropped out in the middle of it. We heard part of it on the news and then we didn't hear the news for three or four days. So, the last I heard, there was at least a third back, and I haven't heard anything on the news about it lately, so I figure they're all back.

DB: They must be all back now. Anyhow, they got their transportation a-

going, now. Well, it's bad when they strike. I was in a strike in 1917. The IWWs struck. Now, they didn't strike for more money, all they wanted was better conditions. And they got 'em! Yeah, they wanted electric lights; they got that. Bathrooms, washrooms, all such as that. Steel bunks, and they wanted the company to furnish the bedding; and they did. They brung the company to fix 'em there!

(Chuckles) Well, why not? Before you had to carry your sugsens.

And, you didn't have no mattress to put it on when you got to camp.

Old wooden bunks, and bedbugs and greybacks! I know, I slep' in 'em!

(Laughter)

SS: How bad were they, Dick?

DB: Oh, they were bad. I used to get tickled at some of them old 'jacks, you know. They'd be out there working along, you know-- there's something funny about them greybacks, you know-- he'd pick off one, he'd find one, and he'd say, "By God, I got one'll whip yours!" And they'd probably bet a dollar, or a dollar and a half, maybe two dollars. He'd get one and they'd put 'em to fightin'! You take one off me and one off you, and put them two together and they'll fight. It's fun to watch 'em fight! (Laughter) We had lots of fun.

SS: You'd fight 'em like that? Would they really fight?

DB: You bet, them greybacks'd fight to beat hell!! They're just a human louse, off a human. What they call greyback.

SS: There was no way that a man could work in the woods and not get 'em, was there?

DB: Why, no, you couldn't. You couldn't work in the woods and not get 'em. Boy, and when I come home to see Mother and Dad, had to pull your clothes off at the woodshed, take a good hot bath.

SS: Before they'd let you in the house?

- DB: Oh, yes. Oh, you bet. 'Course, they knowed what to expect, so they was prepared. (Chuckles)
- SS: Was there much chance to bathe when you were in the woods then, before they improved the conditions?
- DB: No: You know what we fixed up to bathe up there at Camp 2? We took one of them square, I s'pose you've seen 'em, them five gallon coal oil cans?
- SS: Oh, yes.
- DB: Well, we'd take and punch holes in the bottom of them and we took gunny sacks and built us a kind of a tent around out to the end of one of the bunkhouses; we'd go out there, and one feller he'd stand up above and ^{water}pour in while the other feller took a bath. They'd pull the nails all out of the holes. Oh, boy, we had lots of fun!
- SS: Pull the nails all out of - ?
- DB: The holes, you know.
- SS: Yeah.
- DB: We had holes so the water'd run right on through your can. That's the shower we got.
- SS: When you were the^{re}, then, was the guys complaining about that? That sounds like a hell of a way to live, you know.
- DB: Well, it was, but then we was all used to it, and those old 'jacks had been used to it there from Minnesota, or Wisconsin clear out here it hadn't got any better. That's the way they got used to it. They was used to it.
- SS: It sounds kind of rough.
- DB: Yeah. It is. --- It's a breaking up all time, but it'll be broke up one of these days.
- SS: I'm talking about living without no good showers and bugs on you all

time. Did that make the guys short-tempered, living that way?

DB: Well, they was all short-tempered anyhow. 'Jacks mostly are, a little short-tempered. Don't take much to rile 'em up! (Chuckles)

SS: I wonder why that is? Is it the work that does it to the men?

DB: Work to do and being by theirselves, you know, out away from their folks and everything. Everything kinda goes agin the grain. Yeah.

SS: I was just thinking-- I would think everybody living in the camp-- I'm thinking of what it would be like-- everybody living there together-- you have to bend some.

DB: You've got to bend a little, you know. 'Course, nowadays-- before-- well, how long has it been, Mae, since the families moved into camp? About thirty years ago.

MRS. BENGE: About '36-- when Camp 36 was up there they started.

SS: Who started?

MRS. BENGE: They started to move in.

DB: The families moving in.

MRS. BENGE: And now, then, they have automobiles and they ride into camp.

SS: They started having families living right in the camp?

DB: Right in camp, yeah. The company, they got to putting them up.

MRS. BENGE: How many families lived here? When you built the house? That was in '24.

DB: There was about eight. Eight families lived here. *In wooden shacks.*

SS: They had families here in the camp in '24?

DB: Oh, yeah.

MRS. BENGE: That is, they had *married shacks*. We built this house here, and the camp was over ^a two years.

SS: Well, what was the difference between '24 and '36? For the families?

DB: Well, more. Families now, like me, they got to buying land off the

company, see; building their own house on it. Well, then they had a car and drive to work.

SS: Well, this married shack-- how much space did a family have in something like that?

DB: How big were they? Sixteen foot square, wasn't they? Thereabouts?
feet

MRS. BENGE: Twenty-four [^] long, and twelve feet wide.

DB: Yeah.

MRS. BENGE: Because we bought two of 'em to build this house with.

DB: ^{THEM WASN'T MARRIED SHACKS.}
[^] Some of 'em bunkhouses.

MRS. BENGE: Some of 'em bunkhouses. I don't know about the married shacks, I don't know.

SS: I didn't know they had families living in camp back that far.

DB: Yeah. Yeah. The 'jacks, they got married, and got to buying a little land off the company. And they got helping 'em build up, and one thing and another; the company did. And that way, they got 'em settled up.

SS: Do you think it softened the camps up at all? I mean when they had the families moving in there?

DB: Yeah, it did.

SS: Sounds like maybe it wouldn't be quite as rough a place if you had families.

DB: No. No, it wasn't.

SS: I thought that most of the 'jacks were single men and never did get married in their earlier days.

DB: Yeah, that's right. Well, like everything else, it's changed and they got to getting married, you know. Moving around. With the camps. They'd move right along with the camps.

SS: This short temper-- you say-- once when we was talking to you, you

told me about Dick Farrel taking care of a couple of them lumberjacks. I'm wondering-- do you remember, was there other fights in the woods, that you saw?

DB: Oh, Jesus. Nothing to see two of 'em get into it! Lots more'n there are nowadays. They kind of get along nowadays, but they didn't used to. Yeah, you just had to be careful what you said, and where you **said it.**

SS: What would start one?

DB: Oh, most anything. Politics used to cause a lot of it. Well, they had twelve or fourteen old men-- well, it was election year, and the boss he come to me and he said, "Say, Dick," he said, "I wish you'd take all them old fellers over." And, I said, "What's the matter now?" He said, "More'n I can handle." Well, he had 'em a cutting landings. Well, they'd get into it; politics, politics, arguing. They'd get to fighting. You'd have to take an axe and separate 'em! And get 'em placed. Well, you'd take one over here on this end, they might be a mile apart, and the other'n down there, and it wouldn't be an hour and they'd be together and arguing. ^{arguing} So, we had two that way, and they were the worst. And I went to the boss ^{one time} and I said, "Bob, you're gonna log over across the creek this winter ain't you?" "Yup." I said, "What'd you say we go over and make some landings?" He said, "I don't know. ^{Johnny} What's the idea?" And I told him that I wanted to separate them two men, so we could get some work done. "Fine." So next morning I went out and I stopped one of 'em and three others and I said, "You fellers wait, we're gonna take you over across behind the barn and start making landings over there, before it snows too much, so we can log a little over there this winter." Of course, I didn't tell 'em why. So I took 'em over and put 'em to work, and

they didn't get together. They didn't know where one another was!
Boy, arguing.

SS: Wonder what their argument was about.

DB: Well, politics. One of 'em was a Democrat and the other a Republican.
And that turned it loose. I used to stand out behind a tree and lis-
ten to 'em. And, oh, boy!

SS: Neither one could probably ever convince the other one about a thing.

DB: No. 'Course we had one, Old Abe-- we called him Abraham Lincoln-- he
looked just like Abraham Lincoln-- big, old, tall, rawboned fella.
And he was way the smartest. You know, there was the smartest man
that ever I saw, I believe. He'd take that Spokesman Review, .
paper, you know, he'd come in-- well, we had about, oh, three quarters
of an hour or an hour before supper--and you know, he'd go plumb
through that paper before supper. And we used to try to hem him up
on it, you know. We'd pick out just little scratches here and there
you know, you'd pick out one, and I'd pick out one and we'd read it
and we'd ask him about if he could tell us-- and he knew every word
that was in her, both of 'em! And the Bible, he knowed it upside
down and backwards.

SS: Did he use it? Did he talk it?

DB: You bet. He talked her. Yeah. He moved down here at Princeton.
They shut down that winter, the snow got so deep that they had to shut
down and he moved down^{there} and rented him a little house. They had a
church down there and no minister. So, I was talking to Thomas, and
he said, "We got no minister." I told him about Abe. Well, Abe
lived right there neighbors and I said, "You go see Abe." He went
up and seen him. "Yeah." Well, he'd go down every Sunday and preach
a good sermon for 'em. 'Cause he knowed the Bible and he knowed just

where everything was.

SS: But he didn't really consider himself to be a preacher?

DB: No. But, he believed in it. He was no minister, that is, no preacher but he believed in it; strong, very strong. Never seen him get mad, only politics. He'd get mad at that.

SS: Pretty mad at what?

DB: Politics.

SS: Oh, Abe did?

DB: Yeah, when they'd be arguing.

SS: Was he A Republican?

DB: No, he was a Democrat. Raised in the South. Quite the old feller.

SS: That's funny that he'd just be able to memorize all that stuff. That seems like a--

DB: Well, I'll tell you what-- he grew up in printer's shop.

SS: A printer's shop?

DB: Yeah. His father was a ~~parent~~^{printer}, and when he got old enough, why, he'd have to go over all the papers, see, and see that every word was spelt right. And, boy, if he saw a word in the paper that wasn't spelt right, he'd tell you about it, right now. And it didn't take him all day to find it! (Chuckles) Yeah, we used to laugh. Poor old feller.

SS: Why do you say "poor old feller?"

DB: Well, he didn't have anything. He was just a very, very common working man.

MRS. BENGE: Is he the one ^{Dick} that wouldn't take any money for preaching?

DB: Uh-huh.

SS: He wouldn't take no collection ?

DB: Huh-uh. No, when he talked and spoke out of the Bible, it was all free

with him.

SS: Did you ever have any idea on why he went to the woods? Why he went to the woods, instead of, say, a newspaper?

DB: Well, he was married and he had a boy about sixteen, I guess, sixteen. Between sixteen and seventeen, someplace. And he brung him to the woods with him. That way he could be with him. He was with him all time, to see that he didn't get into trouble and raising him right, see. So that's the reason why they was both in the woods, together. Well, it was a good idea. Very, very nice boy. Well mannered boy. (End cassette A)

Side B SS: You know, if a guy got knocked down he could expect the other guy was going to stomp on him with his cork boots.

DB: Oh, just liable as not, yeah. Yeah, you bet. That's the way they done her.

SS: Would a man hold a grudge very long in the woods?

DB: No, they didn't hold a grudge, ^{very long} whichever whipped, why, he'd whipped. About all there was to it. He was a better man.

SS: I've heard it said that in camp a man would get to be known as a bully of the woods. Is that so, too?

DB: Oh, yeah.

SS: He'd want to take anybody on that would try him?

DB: You bet. But he'd run into some little feller'd take it all out of him, right now. (Laughter) Had one of 'em up there around Bovill. Boy, he was a bully, and he whipped everyone. A little Irishman come in there, and so, I think the Irishman come in just to whip him. He went downtown one night and they got to drinking a little and they got into it. The little Irishman backed off and looked at him and said, "Are you ready?" "Ready for you, anytime." He said,

"Look out, I'm a comin'" And he just give a hop, step and a jump and kicked him right in the face with both feet. Turned a flip-~~up~~ backwards and standing there looking at him waiting for him to get up. ^{He didn't tromp him any} [^] would he kicked him down three times that way. So, that was aplenty! Well, he just couldn't dodge him either. That little feller was-- I never seen a man just as catty as he was on his feet. He never used his fists! But he sure took it out of the bully. Little Irishman, he was bull cook of the woods, there for quite a while! Whatever he said, went.

SS: Little guy too.

DB: They didn't argue.

SS: Did he stay around the woods?

DB: Oh, he was around the woods there for, oh, I don't know, he was around there for, oh I guess, a couple of years. That's all the trouble he ever did have.

SS: They wouldn't take him on then?

DB: Oh, no. They didn't want him.

SS: Hershiel was telling me about some of them guys. Was there guys from-- Austrians in the woods?

DB: Oh, yeah, there was Austrians.

SS: Is that what he called the Bohunks? Or is that the other guys?

DB: Well, anything that come across, ^{that wasn't very plain,} [^] couldn't talk very plain, he called him Bohunk. But, them Austrians-- now, we worked-- Hershiel worked ~~trucking~~ and I was scaling there at camp ⁵ -- oh, let's see, oh, yes-- that was Camp 5. Then went over to Camp 10. Hershiel and I, we got to figuring, ^{there} one day, one Sunday, ^{we was just sitting there,} -- there was eighteen or nineteen, I think Pivaches; none of 'em related. All from Austria. ^{All} [^] Austrians. And there was a while there that they had John Pivach, he was inter-

prefer^{for corn}. Boy, would he cuss them up one side and down the other. He wanted to make 'em talk our language. And if he happened to step in a bunkhouse and they was jabbering away at their language, boy, it didn't take 'em long to shut up. He says, "You feller's is in the United States now, you talk American!" He said, "These fellers may think you're talking about 'em and one of 'em'll get up and swat you^{directly}. They can't understand our language, don't do it." And he got 'em all pretty well broke. But I used to^{get tickled at} 'em eating', some of them fellers that was just over from the old country, you know. They'd get the fork handle in this hand and the knife handle in this hand, get 'em this way, and they'd eat with their hands. They^{didn't} know what that knife and fork were for. I don't know, I was gonna ask John a few times if they had 'em in the old country-- and, oh, I suppose they did, yes. And I didn't want to embarrass him either, 'cause he was a very nice sort of--

- SS: Would they just eat off the knife?
- DB: No. They wouldn't use the knife and fork, they'd hold the handles in their hand this way-- hold the meat down on the handles, and they'd eat it this way-- like watermelon.
- SS: I see, they'd use the knife and fork just to hold the meat.
- DB: Yeah. (Chuckles)
- SS: Like those things you use on the end of corn?
- DB: Yeah.
- SS: Did those guys, you think, they had a rougher time than the American lumberjacks did? What was it like for them?
- DB: Oh, they was good guys. They was all good guys. Give 'em all jobs. They worked under an Austrian, one that could talk United States, you know. And they'd put him out with 'em, that way he^{could} train 'em and

learn 'em, what they wanted done. Yeah, there was some awful good ones. There was one of 'em, what was it they called him? Stoutest man I ever seen. He was a short, heavysset, and he was bowlegged. And, you know, a bull block on a ground liner , weighs seven hundred pounds. And we was moving a ground liner one day, ^{And we was talking,} and we didn't know he was so stout, we'd never seen him lift any, and he come along-- what was his name?-- I can't think of it now. And he said, to him, "Can you pick up that bull block today?" "Yes, sir," he said, "I can." So, he got a straddle of it and took a peavey handle and run through the yoke-- he picked her off the ground! Now, that's pretty good lifting! You know, if he'd a got hold of a man, he'd just a crushed him, ^{wouldn't he,} or could, if he'd wanted to.

SS: He did that by himself?

DB: All by hisself, yeah. It generally took three men to move it. Of course, now, he didn't pack it, he just picked it up off the ground. And he got a straddle of it to do it, but then, that was something. But that's what they weighed, seven hundred pounds, the yoke and shiv and the whole thing.

SS: Boy, they must have had a lot of respect for him.

DB: The best humored man you ever saw. Always had a grin on his face and I never seen him no other way, but a grin on his face. Say anything to him and he'd probably grin before he'd answer you. Always had that grin there.

SS: I guess he didn't take no special pride in it. Didn't go around showing it off or anything?

DB: No. No, he didn't. We didn't know he could do that til one of the boys come along and worked with him for a while and wanted to know if he could do it.

MRS BENGE: Ask him why he doesn't like garlic.

SS: Mae said to ask you why you don't like garlic.

DB: The cook, I was working in the kitchen for a while, and garlic is quite a hand to mix with the meats and stuff, you know. So he sent me a whole case of it. Well, the storeroom was right next to the office and the storeroom was between the office and the diningroom. Jesus, they got into the garlic, them fellers found that, and they got into the garlic there of a night before breakfast. And I got sick. I was waiting tables and I had to go outdoors, just smelling their breaths.

SS: Now you mean, this was the Austrian fellows?

DB: Oh, boy, they'd just peel that garlic and they eat it like we do onions. They said that they raised lots of it there in Austria.

SS: I wonder if they thought it was good for 'em, or if they just done it-

DB: Because they liked it? I'll never know. I didn't think enough of it to ask 'em.

SS: you really couldn't hardly take it; the smell?

DB: Oh, ^{I couldn't take the smell of} their breaths.

MRS. BENGE: What did you do with the garlic?

DB: Well, sir, I took it between the diningroom and the wareroom-- it was all set on cars, you know, railroad cars--and the snow was, oh, about six, seven feet deep around-- I just throwed it off between the cars and jumped out on it. I guess it's there yet!! (Chuckles) He come along one day and he said, "Dick, do you know where the garlic's at?" "Yeah. You bet you." "Where is it?" I says, "It's out there between the diningroom and the wareroom." He said, "Who put it there?" I said, "I did." And he said, "What did you do that for?" And, he said, "That cost a lot of money." And, I said, "I don't give a damn what it cost, I can't smell it." So, he just laughed and said, "I

thank you for doing what you did." (Chuckles)

SS: Did you say there was snow on the ground?

DB: Oh, boy, about five feet around there. Got rid of the garlic.

SS: Did you have any friends among them guys?

DB: Oh, yeah. You know, I went into camp and went in to work in the kitchen, and the second night I was there-- I went in where-- they was all great hands to play poker. Well, I went in where they was playing poker, and of course, they seen me there at the table and they got acquainted with me, and so they wanted me to play poker. And, I said, "I don't know how. Ain't got no money." "We'll loan you the money." Well, that's just the way they was.

SS: Did you know how to play poker?

DB: Yes, I knowed how, but I wasn't gonna get in with them fellas playing poker.

SS: Did you?

DB: No. Never did. They was too good for me. Boy, they was some real poker players among them. Well, that's the only way they got to spend their money. Some of them old 'jacks. Maybe they wouldn't go out to town, you know, for three months, four months. Maybe a whole year before they'd ever go to town. Well, they had to spend their money and pass the^{ir} time some way. So that's the way they did it: Playing poker.

SS: Pretty good sums turn over?

DB: Some of 'em was good at it. One of 'em-- him and a Swede-- a Norwegian-- and one of the best three best poker players there was in camp-- they always wound up with the money, some way or ^{AN} other. The Swede, he worked in the kitchen a little now and then. If we run short of help, ^{why} we'd always get him in there. He was good help in the

kitchen. And, boy! could he play poker. He lived over here in Moscow. So him and his brother'd come in there and saw. Well, he had a pretty good way to work that, he'd come in about, oh, four, five days before payday. ^{HE'D STAY + IN + PAYDAY,} He'd get their money, well, he'd stay two more months; two more paydays, him and his brother sawing logs. Then he'd clean up on 'em and he'd go. He come in there after ^{been} helping in the kitchen there and he said, "Anything you fellers want from town?" It had rained for five days straight and the boys never left the bunkhouse, all they done was play poker. Day and night. So Jess he come in, and he said, "Anything you fellers want from town?" "No." I said, "You going to town?" And he said, "yes, I gotta go to town." "Come on back in the wareroom," he said, "and I'll show you something." So, we went back there and he had fifteen of the boys' checks!! And he had a roll of bills- well, I couldn't reach around! And, he said, "I got to go to town and put this in the bank." And his brother was with him, and he didn't know what a deck of cards was. He couldn't play poker.

SS: His brother?

DB: Yeah. So Old Jess- boy, he ^{you} knowed how to play poker. Last I knowed of him is in Durkin's.

SS: Oh, yes, in Spokane.

DB: Jimmy Durkin. He was a dealin' in there in a card game was the last I heard of Jess.

SS: Well, I gotta ask you something about this: If a guy was a sharp and and he come into camp, now, he knew how to gamble, he was better than the rest of them-- How could he keep getting away with it? I mean, I think maybe it'd work once, but, I would never get in a game with a guy who I knew was gonna finish me off in one way or the other.

- here's the idea*
- DB: No. But, here's the ^{SE} ~~A~~ lumberjacks, and they're bullheaded. And they think, "Maybe, I can beat him this time." Play it out with him.
- 'Course, now, you take them good card players, they're onto to that too. They let 'em have a hand now and then, you know, And, of course, this one, this Jess-- I seen him get six hundred dollars one time on a pair of jacks! Now that takes guts!! Don't it?
- SS: Yeah, that takes a real bluffing power.
- DB: Well, that's what he had. Well, he'd bluff a time or two and they'd catch him up on it, and he'd laugh it off with 'em. Jesus Christ, ~~they want to look out or~~ the next time ~~A~~ he might have 'em! Yeah. You want to look out. I seen him get six hundred dollars. He threwed his hand down, and the feller that bet agin him said, "Where's your openers?" "By God," he said, "I never showed 'em to you," he said, "it's a pair of jacks." That's all it takes, you know, to open the pot. So he got down and got in his hand, and turned his jacks over and that's all he had to do, was show 'em. He didn't show the rest of his cards. That's all he had in his hand. Bluffed 'er all the way through. So, that's the way he got by! And sometimes, I've seen him throw down a good hand. He'd throw down a good hand sometimes, *Well, that's good.* And what the other feller had, I don't know, but I wouldn't be surprised if he had him beat. But, he couldn't take every hand. No. That's the way he had of getting by with it, you see. Keep apullin' the boys on.
- SS: Now, you, yourself-- did it make any difference to you before you was married-- were you willing to spend money gambling then and take a chance on it then?
- DB: Well, there was four of us; five of us drove four horses down here one winter to the lower camp. ^{ON RAISE,} ~~A~~ And we had a penny-ante game, two bits was all you could bet, that was the limit. And we played all winter.

I think I come out a dollar and six bits ahead. Yeah, we played all winter and I had a dollar and six bits when I counted up.

SS: What do you think? Was it just because you didn't have that gambling instinct that you didn't want to---

DB: I didn't want to get interested too heavy in it. 'Cause, here's the idea-- I've seen so many, you know. There was two went up there and they worked there at Camp 6. They was gypping there. Je~~ez~~^{ez}, they paid 'em off, and they got-- what was it? Pretty close to four thousand dollars apiece; they got down there in camp and set right down and played it all away. And they both had families. And I knowed ^{WAS ONE OF 'EM AND HE CAME TO ME AND} their families could use it. And they come to me, Charley Hawkins, and said, "Could I get in a card game here?" And I said, "Yeah," I said, "listen Charley, I'm your friend. I'm gonna tell you something--" I said, "there's two of 'em here that-- leave alone." And he said, "Why?" And, I said, "They'll git ya." I said, "They don't do it together. They just outplay you." I said, "You're not good enough for 'em." Aw, he'd play with 'em. I said, "It's your money." I said, "Listen, Charley, your family needs it." "Yeah," he said, "I guess that's right." Goddam, if he didn't set right there for-- took him two days and a night, or two nights and a day, I don't know which it was, to get rid of it. But he got it. Sit right there and played it all away.

SS: He come into the camp with all that money?

DB: Well, right there's where they paid him off.

SS: He had all that money coming to him, and he gambled it away?

DB: Yeah. And he just gamled her away. He made it aloggin' all that winter, you know.

SS: Those two guys got it?

- DB: Them two guys got it. I don't know which one got the most.
- SS: How could a man go home to his wife?
- DB: That's it. That's what I wondered. I've seen so much of that happen. And that's one thing that kinda broke me from playin'. I didn't want to keep on playin' and get the fever. But you take a penny-ante game, and you can take ten dollars and play all winter on that.
- SS: Now you was telling me about Potlatch Joe sometime before.
- DB: Yeah.
- SS: And I was thinking about him-- Was he just a kind of a---?
- DB: He was an old Austrian.
- SS: Was he a smart fellow?
- DB: No.
- SS: He was not too strong?
- DB: All he could think about playing poker. He worked for Tom Telley-- I worked for ^{Telley} quite a bit-- and about every so often, why, Tom he'd go out and get in a check or two. He'd go into Spokane spend it and come back. ^{for work} The old feller got so he'd slip in, see, wouldn't stay on the job til quitting time.
- SS: He'd slip in-- he wouldn't go to Spokane?
- DB: No, he'd just slip into camp. And then the boss he'd go get a couple ^{there for him} or three checks-- he had sixteen checks at one time. So, he took a couple of 'em out and give 'em to him and he said, "You take these and go to Spokane." Well, he had me go down and get Potlatch Joe and bring him up to the office. Well, it was just the time for the loggers to move out, go load logs, and they were going down to Deary and Telley told him, "You go down to Deary and catch the train out of there at noon." Well, the old feller he didn't do that, he rode the

train out. Well, they went to Deary and then they went on down to Harsh's camp to load logs up. He went down there and got him a job and played his checks away.

SS: Well, why wouldn't he go to Spokane? Just wanted to gamble in the camp instead?

DB: He wanted to stay in camp.

SS: Was Tiley looking out for him?

DB: Well, in a way. Old Tom could get more outta him than anybody.

(equipment turned off for a while)

SS: The men'd make 'em?

DB: Yes. They'd send and get their posts and the rockers, and that's all they bought. Had to go out down along the creek to the willows. And they'd pick out just what they want, the right size and all. Well, they'd get what they wanted for here and then they could build up as they went along. Save the little stuff for the top.

SS: Would they be able actually to make some money selling them?

DB: Oh, you bet. Well, I don't know whether they made much money, but they made a living.

SS: For the winter's work.

DB: Yeah. Sure. They'd work them all winter and they'd have fifteen, twenty of 'em. ^{From working} They'd get what they wanted apiece. It wasn't too much.

SS: Would they sell 'em right local, or would they ship 'em?

DB: Well, most of 'em, they'd just take a team and an old hack and go round and sell 'em, and go around and deliver 'em. And go around and sell 'em. And that's the way they went.

SS: That sounds like a real craft.

DB: Well, it was a nice job.

SS: When did you first start to play a violin?

DB: Well, I don't remember. Dad played one before me. I used to get it out ^{AND SO ON} now and then. ^{AND BEFORE.} Started in. Of course, he showed me a lot about-- He tuned my violin for me. For a while, that was ^{TO HAVE THEM DAMN THINGS.} the main thing. Boy, they're hard to tune. You don't do it; you get onto it; nothing to it. Well, I think a violin is the prettiest music there ^{is}. You can take a violin and they haven't invented a piece yet, that you couldn't play on it. Somebody could play it on it. Yah.

SS: It's real good music. It sounds so good. So pretty.

DB: Yeah.

SS: Did you learn from him? Did he teach you how to play?

DB: What?

SS: Did your father teach you how to play?

DB: Well, no, he didn't teach me how. I used to just watch him. And then, of course, he just played by ear all time, you know. Old-timer. Yup. That's the worst ^{trouble}, a fellow learning to play a violin, is getting to tune it. That's the hardest part of it. ^{IS TO} Get it to tune. Four strings, it looks like it'd be easy, don't it?

SS: It really isn't though?

DB: No.

SS: Well, did you start playing a violin when you was still a boy?

DB: Oh, yeah. I think I was ^{about thirteen, fourteen, when I took off,} about thirteen, fourteen, when I took off, ^{he sold his, or traded it off, or something, I don't know.}

SS: Was that the one you got in Spokane?

DB: No, it's the one I got now. He bought one ^{I DON'T KNOW HAPPENED.} I think the kids got ahold of it, the grandkids, got it down one day off of the wall and nobody there; and they got to playin' it and they busted it. And we never did get it fixed, and I was in Spokane one time and I ^{WANTED ONE. SO}

I bought me one of my own.

SS: What kind of stuff did you play?

- DB: Oh, just old dance music. Just the old-time dance music. And I didn't know one note from another, that is, on paper. Nope, I never learnt one note from another. Well, I got started and then there was a feller there, he used to come to our place lots, and he was pretty good on one and he told me, "Dick, you never shoulda learned to play by ear." "Why?" He said, "You'll never learn to play by note." So, I found out he was right, I never tried it.
- SS: Well, if you could play what you wanted to play, what's the difference?
- DB: Well, here's the idea: lots of 'em you know, they was a little higher up, you know, and lots of 'em, they want this note stuff. Well, if you can't play it, ^{well} that throws you outta their class. Yeah. ^{so} That didn't matter to me a bit. } Didn't figure I wanted to go up that high anyhow!
- (Chuckles)
- SS: Well, the main thing to you, when you were playing music, wouldn't it be mostly at parties and dances?
- DB: Yeah. Sure.
- SS: Just be local folks having a good time. Right?
- DB: Why, yeah, that was all, you know. Just a havin' a good time around in the country. Here all during the Depression, there was four of us in here, we could all play the violin, and there was-- they had two sisters and I had one sister, and all of us could chord on an organ. And boy, we'd go to these dances, you know, sometimes they'd take up a collection for the bunch of us, and all we wanted was just money enough to buy strings. And we got money enough to buy strings all winter. And that was just about all we got! Well, we didn't want any more!!
- SS: The dances, Dick, would they be at your house and at their house?
- DB: Yeah, they used to come here and dance.

- SS: How many folks would come at a time? *there, I don't know. There was about*
- DB: Well, there was a whole neighborhood. [^] Oh, I'd say there was twelve, fifteen families all hung together, you know, and if we had any flour the women'd bake a cake. If we didn't, we'd go without it!! That was during the Depression, you know. Well, we all went and had a good time. Depression didn't bother us that way; from havin' a good time you know.
- SS: How close do you think the neighborhood was? I mean, families were one to another?
- DB: Oh, they was awful close then. ^{close} [^] Very close, you know. But the families nowadays is not that close. Scattered out. ^{you} [^] Got automobiles. Now if you want to see your neighbor, you've got to go to Lewiston or Spokane.
- SS: But in those days, I mean-- I'm trying to think of what it was like. That was before my time. What was it that made it that close?
- DB: Well, no money. You couldn't go no place. And they had to get up their own amusement, you know. Well, that's the way it was. They just had to make their own amusement, you know, right at home; what little there was. (Chuckles) But nowadays, you know, you gotta go to Spokane or Lewiston, take in one of them big somethin'. Yup.
- SS: Would you say that-- Did that mean that you knew the neighbors better?
- DB: You know'd everybody. Yeah, you knowed everybody, them days, you know. Now, these folks live down there in this trailer house, they've been in there for five or six months now and I've ^{never} [^] met 'em. Well, that wouldn't a happened in them times. They'd a all went down-- three or four families woulda went down there some night and got acquainted with 'em. ^{Yeah} [^] But not nowadays, huh-uh. Nowadays you'd go down there and they wouldn't be to home. Yeah, ~~they~~ ^{may be} be in the car and gone.

- SS: Would that mean like in them days, that the families would look out for the neighbors and the neighbors'd look out for them?
- DB: They just wanted to get acquainted. Consolidate with one another, you know. Get together. Be together. But not nowadays, uh-huh. Not nowadays, no, well, I don't know. The world has changed, is all I can say. And a big change.
- SS: When you was growing up, more of the family would take care of you?
- DB: Yeah, right. Well, them days, you know, you got sick, ^{why} you called a doctor and he'd come out. And the neighbors knew that you was sick, they'd come over and see what they could do. Well, if they could do anything, they woulda done it. And any medicine to give at night, ^{they'd} two'd come tonight and two tomorrow night. And in that way they'd give you your medicine. But now, you gotta go to the hospital! No wonder they're livin' longer. But, they're charging you for it, too.
- SS: That's for sure.
- DB: We're payin' for all of it.
- SS: You know like I was thinking, too-- like when you were working in the woods-- and you and Hershie, you worked together a fair bit, didn't you?
- DB: Well, Hershie and I run together for-- well, ^{down there} where one was the other was. Working, you know. Working together. And then he went to the navy and I couldn't go. I didn't pass, I had a hernia. And that was about all the time we's separated, from the time we come here til the present. Always worked together.
- SS: Was that common for guys around here to work with a relative?
- DB: Well, no, he wasn't my relative, then. We was just chums.
- SS: That was before he married Ola?

- DB: Yeah, that was before he married. And then his brother, Shorty, he was a cook, and I worked for him there in Camp three years, one time. I flunkied and then I done second work for him, a while there. So, we always got along pretty good.
- SS: I wonder why you and Hershiel hit it off so good. Why you got to be good friends.
- DB: We come here, I'll tell you, ^{we come here} and we bought the place where they lived. So we moved on that, and they went down just across the road and bought another place off of the company. Well, that put us close neighbors, see, and we've been close neighbors every since. Yeah, that's the way we got to be close.
- SS: What did you think of flunking in the camp? Did you like that work?
- DB: I didn't like to work inside. Wasn't too bad in the wintertime, but Lord, in the summertime! Hot! Grease run out of ya! ≤ 0 , it wasn't so good. But I was working ⁱⁿ there when I went to take the examination for World War I, I weighed a hundred and eighty-nine pounds, so I gained a little weight in there. (Chuckles) That was something peculiar. They took ^{what was it} three hundred and some over here at Moscow one day for examination, and there was eleven of us ^{they} didn't pass. So, they kept us in Moscow from Friday evening til Monday night, and then they shipped us, the eleven of us to Lewiston. And they had eleven doctors down there Monday night; give us a goin' over. They all passed ~~but~~ me. I never passed. So I was the last one going through the chute, and he said, "What do you think about it?" And I said, "Well, you only got once to die. ^{I guess} Just ~~about~~ get killed in the war as anyplace." (Chuckles) He said, "You're taking it pretty good natured, ain't you?"
- DB: And I said, "Yup." "Well " he said, "I ain't a going to examine you very close. I know what's the matter. And if they run too short of

men, I'm gonna put you in Special Limited Service No. 1-A." He said, "Now you can go in the Spruce Division, over on the coast." In airplanes, see. Well, I was working in the woods, so they took a notion up there then in there at old Camp 10, where I was, boy, they had some beautiful white pine in there-- so we got out five, six cars airplane stock for the government. Well, I went and helped picked it out. And we had to chop into every tree and see if it was good straight grain, vertical grain, before they'd take it. Well, if it was vertical grain, ^{we} marked it, and then we had to take saw gangs around and saw it. And I took a donkey, an old steam donkey, and drug her in, down to the landing. You couldn't handle a set of tongs in it; you couldn't stick a peavey in it. And to skid it, we had to put chains around it. We didn't darsn't use a tongs, 'cause it would scar it up. ^{we had quite a time} We finally got it out and got it loaded. 'Course, we made good money. Uncle Sam ~~was~~ paying us for that. So, I got a letter from 'em to be to Moscow, I believe it was Wednesday morning, and catch the train out of there for Seattle, if I wanted to go over to this Spruce Division. Or, if I didn't want to, they was gonna get out some ^{up} there at Bovill, and I was a working right there, and just stay there and help 'em. So that's how I got a job there. So I just stayed there. I was scaling logs at the time. And they put me and one of the cruisers picking it out.

SS: So you never went over there for the Spruce Division?

DB: No. ^I Never went to the Spruce Division. I kinda wished several times I hadda.

SS: Why so?

DB: Well, I learned their ways of logging ^{in the woods} ~~over there~~ on the coast; and we log a little different here than they did. So, I learned something

else there.

SS: But did you feel-- did you care at the time whether you went in or not? Did you want to go in the army then?

DB: Well, it didn't make no difference. I figured this way, you only got once to die, anyhow, ^{if you're going to go.} If you're born to be shot in the army, you're born to be shot in the army. And, if you're not, well, you're out of it. That's the way I looked at it. (Chuckles) So, I didn't go.

SS: Did all them guys, like the Austrians, did a lot of them go back to the old country, then, during that World War?

DB: Uh-huh. Lot of 'em went to the army.

SS: They went to the army?

DB: Oh, you bet. ^{for} The United States. They didn't like Austria. ^{Uh-uh} Little too strict over there for 'em. They couldn't make the money, you know, they wanted to. No way to make it. 'Cause she was pretty thickly settled there, I guess then, the way they talked. From what I gathered.

SS: They were real poor over there, weren't they?

DB: Oh, yeah. Boy, you know, -- come over here a bunch of them-- send over a bunch, you know; maybe thirty-five, forty in one herd. Boy, the way they would eat for a few days! Boy, you couldn't keep enough on the table. Get 'em filled up, ^{is} alright! (Chuckles) Boy, I felt sorry for 'em. ^{Yes, I did.} Just the way they et, you knowed they had to be hungry, or they wouldn't a et that way.

SS: I've heard some things about those guys that aren't too kind, nor too complimentary. Like they were stupid. And I don't know why they would be different from anybody else. Some guy told me that they were probably the worst bunch from that part of Europe. They were trying to get rid of them, so they came over here. Is that true?

DB: I guess they were pretty rough over there. I guess their government

is pretty rough on 'em. The way I gathered it, I didn't come right out and ask any of 'em to find out, but I just gathered they way they talked, the time that they'd had over there trying to live, and the government that they had was pretty close on 'em. And I think they was, a little too close.

SS: Did you ever hear-- I don't know if you did or not-- but there was one story about Big Red getting killed in Elk River.

DB: It was kept pretty quiet. ^{cause} The old 'jacks they didn't want to get tangled up in it. They never said much about it. If they didn't talk about it, they couldn't get mixed up in it. Yeah, this country's all changed, ^{whole} lot.

SS: Did you ever hear stuff about guys getting killed?

DB: Oh, yeah. Right out here, well just north of Enhouse, used to be when I come here-- the cabin is there yet-- Well now, what done it, money or what, but anyhow the feller that owned the cabin, he was shot through the window one night. Why they knowed it was after night, because the coal oil light had burnt dry, lamp. And he was killed, shot through the window. Well, I asked all I could, and couldn't find out nothin', so here after I built the house-- well the ground out there was still, ^{was a} dugout for the doghouse-- was still there, ^{their home} And one Sunday there was a couple, ^{married couple, young folks} ^{there}, had a kid with 'em, oh I suppose she was five or six year old and she said, "Where did that log cabin used to stand?" And I said, "Right there." We was only about twenty feet from it, and she said, "Where was that leaning pine tree?" I said, "The stump of its right there." And she said, "Yeah. Looks alright." And she was from Canada, and said ^{that one there.} that was her uncle's homestead cabin. [^] So it must have been her uncle got killed. Now, she didn't say, and I didn't ask her.

- SS: Was you here when ^{the} a man got killed?
- DB: No.
- SS: It was before?
- DB: That was before my time, quite a bit. All I got was heresay and rumor.
- SS: Was there heresay about who might have done it?
- DB: Never heard. ^{Warrenstaff} And [^] place up here, why, I don't know how many times it's been sold. My son-in-law's got it now. The Warrenstaff place. And this Warrenstaff, he sold some timber or stumpage or something and he had about, oh, twenty-eight, twenty-nine hundred dollars, something like that on him, ^{that's} All. They never found the money but they found him down here on the main road, oh, about, that would be two mile and a half from here. His horse come home, but he wasn't on it. They went right down the road looking for him, and they found him alayin' there, where he'd been shot. But there was no money on him. So, some feller cleaned him, ^{you know.}
- SS: This is like this story I've heard about Bovill burning down Fourth of July, I think 1914. The story about that was a man had gotten quite a bit of money out of the bank and the fellow killed him and stole the money and set the fire in the hotel to cover it up. Burned the whole street; Main Street.
- DB: Yep. Well, he started quite a fire ^{here}. I was here that year. Yep, he started quite a fire when he burnt that. Well, one thing now, they don't have the fires they used to have. Used to have some good ones! Fires. I know there in '14, ^{of} T.P. Jones, he was superintendent, and he loaded, I think, three flatcar load of us and went up the Milwaukee track, north of Bovill. So, he ordered us all off. Well, some of 'em got off, and some of us didn't. We could see the fire coming over the hill, and boy, she was just aboilin'. And first thing we

knowed, we looked across the track on the other hill and the fire was burning over there. So, we all didn't get off the train. God, Old T.P. ^{he} got mad, oh, glory, he got mad! So, Old Bill Helmer come along and he said, "What's the matter, T.P.?" He said, "I ordered 'em off and they won't get off!" He said, "I ordered 'em to stay on." "By, God," he said, "I'm running this." He said, "You may be running part of it," he said, "but, by God, you ain't running it all." He said, "I ain't gonna turn a crew loose here and get 'em burnt up!" *Hell,* He said, "In half an hour that fire'll be clear across the railroad track there, right with us." "Oh, no." "Well, alright," he said, "stand here, but I'm moving this damned train out of here, men and all." Old T.P. he chewed his tongue, but he had to get on the train or stay! (Chuckles) Oh, that burnt the old feller up, because he was woods superintendent, you know.

SS: So, he was higher up than Old Helmer was?

DB: Well, he thought he was. (Laughter) *Old Helmer showed him, By God, he wasn't.*

SS: Was that the same fire that almost burned Bovill up?

DB: Yeah. That's the same one. Where we went out north of Bovill that afternoon. We see the fire coming across over the hill, and she was acomin'! So, that Old Bill Helmer, you know, he was the head of Old T.P. when it come to knowing things in the woods. And he's level-headed. He had a reason to him. Jones had no bit more reason to him than that dog! Not a bit.

SS: How would Jones get to be head of the woods when he didn't know about it?

DB: Old Jones, he'd take them Goddam crazy spells. He went there to old Camp 11, one time and he was gonna show 'em how to log. And he logged there one day and went back down the next morning and Old Tom

Mallady he was running camp, and the boys was standing around, and the horses was standing around with their head down, and Old T.P. said, "Tom, what's the matter?" He said, "They ain't adoin' much." "That damn fool come out from town yesterday and tried to show 'em how to log, and they ain't able to log today." (Chuckles) Oh, he'd get told every now and then. But he was just snappy that way. ^{you know}

SS: They wasn't logging because they was logging his way, was that it?

DB: Oh, he didn't know-- crazy spells. Just nudging everything to go his way.

SS: Did you ever hear the story about him helping burn down Gus Verdun's place? In Bovill.

DB: Well, I read it.

SS: Yeah, I've heard it. I wondered about it.

DB: I think he did. He didn't like that place. He figured that they worked ag in him all ^{the} time. Yeah, I guess they did, in a way. 'Cause what made him mad over them, you know, why, when the Wobblies struck, IWW, why Old Gus, he protected 'em. Gee, that made Old T.P. mad. ^{According to Gus} Gus he had that business there, reckon he had a right to run it to suit hisself, didn't he? Even if it was in Bovill.

SS: What do you think it was he did? He gave 'em a place to meet?

DB: Oh, they all got in there at Guses' and they'd play pool and one thing and another, you know-- (End side C)

Side D Yes, I think so, I think that's the whole trouble. But it's in the book. I got that-- WHERE THE TREES GREW TALL.

SS: Yeah, and a fellow at Bovill told me the same thing-- the same story, the guy that told it to Miller. He knew at the time that he didn't like Verdun at all. You know that.

DB: Yeah, I know that. Well, ^{you know} we used to go to town and we'd get pretty

full, some of us, and Old Gus he'd take us in and put us to bed. Boy, that made Old T.P. mad. He didn't like that. He thought we'd ought to get out on the job. Well, maybe we should have. Damn poor shape to work, the way we was.

SS: Where would you guys do most of the drinking then, when there was moonshine? I mean, you couldn't drink right in the saloon in town, because they didn't have it.

DB: They didn't have saloons, you know. Oh, they'd git behind the buildings or someplace. Now, Old Pat Malone, up there, you know, he didn't help it any, because he didn't care. Now one time-- Old Pat and I were pretty good chums--and I was pretty drunk there one time, and we was going up the street, ^{And there was} one on each side of me, kinda steadying me, see, Old Pat said, "Take him up and put him to bed."

SS: One on each side? Cop?

DB: No, just lumberjacks, helping me along. Well, that was alright, so I got by that time alright. Downtown about a week after that-- Old Pat, you know, he was a bachelor and he stayed there at the hotel all ^{the} time. So, I was across the street, and Old Pat said, "Hey, Dick, come over here. ^{Just} Bought some new furniture, want you to go up and look at it." Went up, and the old feller had a case of Canadian Club that had never been opened. So, we pretty well went down on one bottle, and I told him, "By God, Pat, I gotta get outta here. It's too hot in here now." "Yeah," he said, "I think we both better go." So, you take a cop like that, ^{Why} he's alright with the jacks. He didn't want to pinch no lumberjack. ^(?) But I can tell you one thing; the old feller told you to do something, you'd better start doing it. If you didn't, by God, he'd see that you did! (Chuckles) Awful good old cop. He come down here to Princeton one night. I was coming down, I laid off two weeks.

Had a big dance while I was here, and geez, here come-- I think there was four cops and him from Moscow. Deputy sheriffs and sheriff and all of 'em. So, Pat he kept sidling around to me and sidling around to me, and I figured I knowed what he wanted. So, pretty soon he got up close to me and says, "Say, Dick, ^{by God,} ain't it cold tonight?" And, I said, "Christ, a man freeze to death and not have to be on ice either." He said, "Don't know where a man could get a drink?" "Sure," I said, "know where you could get a drink." So, we go across to one of my chums there, he said, "Come on let's go get a drink." We got about half way down the steps and he nudged me and pulled back on ^{my} arm, and he says, "You know that feller's wearing a star?" I said, "I don't give a damn if he's got on two of 'em." And he said, "Do you know him?" And I said, "Oh, yeah. That's Old Pat out of Bovill. I'm better acquainted with him than I am with you." So, he said, "Jesus Christ, I don't know." I said, "Let's go take a chance." So we went down. So, we give the old feller a drink and I give ~~him~~ a drink, and took one myself. I asked Pat to take another one before he went back, but, Geez it was stout stuff. Shoulda run through the still three or four more times. They just made it to sell. ~~Boy~~, that was the powerfulest stuff that ever I drunk. But we got by with it. Old Pat he drank it and smacked his lips and never frown a bit! You know I run into a feller that worked in the woods with him there from Wisconsin-- Minnesota-- and he knowed Old Pat back there, and he said "I knowed Old Pat," he said, "before he ever got to be sheriff." And he told me then, he said, "I can tell you a ^{whole} lot about Old Pat." He said the niggers got into it there one time and they killed a couple of 'em, the niggers theirselves, and they sent for-- pinned a star on Old Pat and told him to go up and git 'em. "By God," he said, "he

went up and got 'em." Said, "He's wore a star ever since, I've knowed him; ever since. But, if he told you to do anything, you'd better do it." That's just what he meant. *Quite the old boy.*

SS: Speaking of negroes; did you ever know the Wells family?

DB: Who?

SS: The Wells family.

DB: The niggers? Hell, yes. I knowed 'em. Chuck and-- what was the other boy's name?

SS: Roy.

DB: Huh?

SS: Roy.

DB: Roy and Chuck.

SS: And then Joe was their father.

DB: Joe was the old man.

SS: What were they like?

DB: Very nice people. Nice people you ever seen. Yeah. I've et in their house. And she was as good a cook as ever I et after ^{out there}. See, Joe, he used to log all ^{the} time. Well, I was scaling up there at 6, and Joe he was logging between Deary and Camp 6, so I wandered off my job one day and went up where Joe was loggin', just lookin' around. And Old Joe said, "Jesus Christ, Dick," he said, "time to eat. Let's go eat." We wasn't too far from the house, and I went over and had lunch with 'em. Cougar Jack used to be there in Deary, and I was just trying to think of his name-- did you ever get ahold of his name?

SS: Yeah. I've heard different things about him. Some say he was a real strong man.

DB: Oh, by God, he was. You betcha he was strong. And Cougar Jack and Chuck got drunk in Deary one day. Well, they were going down the

street and Joe, he had one arm around Old Jack and Jack had his one arm around Old Chuck and they was tryin' to hold one another up-- or Old Nigger Joe--^{and get by} so, they got down to the end of the street and Old Joe he stopped and looked up and down the street, "By God," he said, "they ain't but two white men in Deary!" (Laughter) That was him and Old Cougar Jack. (Chuckles)

SS: Did you get to know Chuck and Roy, the brothers, at all, working in the woods?

DB: No, I never worked with them. But they worked in the store there at Helmer. I think they owned one. That's where I got acquainted with 'em. I don't know, I guess they don't run the store there anymore.

SS: I don't know if it's open at all there now. I thought they sold gas there a couple of years ago; maybe it's shut down since. They're not in it anymore. They're all gone.

DB: Yeah.

SS: So, Old Jones was really a bag of wind!

DB: Oh, he's a--

SS: You know, I've heard he had a lot of ideas about how everybody should do things, and morals, and all that. He had a funny idea about being strict with the men, and that kind of thing.

DB: Yes.

SS: Did you ever know Laird?

DB: Who?

SS: Laird?

DB: Oh, yeah, he was here at Potlatch.

SS: What do you think of him?

DB: There was a reasonable man. Laird. He reasoned; reason anything right out with you. If he was ^{he thought, if you was the fault,} to fault ^{he'd} he'd get the two hardies to-

gether and then he'd talk it over with you. And that's what I call a man. The first experience we ever had with him, we had a two year old colt and we turned it out on the range and then they run it on a trestle up there at Flat Creek; killed it. Well, section foreman come up that night and told us what had happened. They'd been up and buried it that day. He told us that was not our brand on it. Well, Dad went down and seen Laird, and seen him about it. "Well," he said, "I don't know." "Mr. Benge," he said, "you was a pasturing our land, wasn't you?" "Yeah." He said, "You bought some off us, why don't you fence it and pasture that?" "Well," Dad said, "you brung up a good question." He said, "Why don't you fence your damn railroad track?" "Yes," he said, "you've got a point there." And laughed, you know; took it all good-natured. So, he said, "Well, how would thirty-five dollars be for the horse?" 'Course, horses at that time wasn't worth much. Dad said, "Yes, I'll take thirty-five dollars, and call it square." And everything was settled up. So he wrote him out a check for thirty-five dollars for the colt. No arguing; no nothin'. Just come to terms. Well, you know, a man like that can run something, and get by with it. Poor Old Jones, he'da blowed up!! Yeah, I know him.

SS: Well, I've heard some people say that Laird was kind of an arrogant man. I mean, that he was-- considered himself way above most of the people.

DB: Well, I never figured him that way, and I've talked to him lots. He'd come out and talk to you right on the job; and I never figured him that way. He'd come out and ask you, and ask you how your job was and all that. What could you do to help it? You know, he'd get everybody's idea. He didn't just take off: "Well, I know!" He'd go ahead and get all the ideas. Had one down there, Jim O'Connell, -Boy

he run things, and he whether they run right or not, he run 'em! He'd make some of the damndest mistakes, tryin' to run it. He took me up the river one time, he wanted to put in a catwalk and run the logs down into the hot pond, and I told him, "Alright, Jim." Well, he went up the river; I'd took the piledriver up the day before. He told me where to leave it and I left it there. So we went on about our business. And the next day I was sluicing logs up there and he come up and he brought a new man with him and he said, "I'll put these two men here." And I drove the piling for catwalks to run the logs into hot pond. Well, we went ^{up} and looked it over and I told him about where he'd have to put it if he wanted to run the logs into the hot pond. Well, he wouldn't put it there. ^{YδC Kε10εω} He put it down the river about a hundred feet. Well, hell, he got it so fur down all the logs were going the wrong way, didn't even hit the sluicing gap.

SS: Hit the what?

DB: Sluicing gap. Hit the sluicing gap crossways. Well, you couldn't get a log through it crossways. So, he brung this new man up and he said, "I wish you'd go down and see how many logs you can get through there." I went down and I worked, not too hard, but I worked about twenty minutes, I guess, and I guess I got four logs through. He said, "You got a peavey?" I said, "Yes, sir, it's sticking in the ground right behind you." He said, "You just as well come get it and cut them catwalks." So I went over and he said, "Let's set down on this log and rest." So we did and talked. He said, "I wish now I'd a listened to ya." "Well," I said, "Jim, you wouldn't listen to reason, when I tried to point it out to you where to put it." I said, "You've got it about a hundred feet too damn fur down the river. The logs all

hittin that sluicing dam crossways." I said, "You cain't put a sixteen foot log through a eight foot hole. You got to get 'em through endways." Well, they just came down there crossways, and hold 'em all back.

SS: Sounds like he wouldn't listen to advice.

DB: He wouldn't listen. He knowed.

SS: What you call straw boss.

DB: Huh?

SS: Sounds like a straw boss.

DB: He wasn't a straw boss! (Chuckles) Oh, boy!

SS: Yeah, I think you told me a story about him once before.

DB: Well, you couldn't tell him nothing. He'd ask you; you try to explain it to him, and he wouldn't listen, he was goin' someplace else. Well, what's the use in asking a man if you ain't gonna get his idea and kinda put your^{idea} and his together? No use a asking him.

SS: That's bad if you know more than he does about logging stuff-- it's even worse, because I don't imagine a guy like that-- he couldn't like you for knowing more than he did.

DB: No. He wouldn't give up. I was upriver breaking in logs and it got too much. I got ^{old east (?)} broke in and had one big roll away there-- I could shake her, but I couldn't roll it around. Boy, I went, just at lunch there one day and got up and here was Jim with two college students; had two new peaveys and two new pikepoles and, boy, they didn't have on cork shoes-- 'course, they didn't need 'em, I guess. ^{Had no intention of using them.} So, anyhow, Jim, he said, "I brung up some help for you." ^{I was settin' there.} We got down in the front of the rollway; Jesus, we looked up there and she was about oh, forty feet over our heads, the face of her, and I could shake it but I just couldn't get her up. So, I said, "Did you fellas ever work

on a rollway like this?" "No.". "Well," I said, "I'll tell ya. You're in a damn poor place if you never did. Well," I said, "I'll tell ya what we'll do. Each one of you get on-- you get on that end and you get on that end over there and take your peaveys and we'll roll this log out." "Now," I said, "when we roll it out, the whole damn thing is a comin', and," I said, "all you can do is ride her out. It'll shove you ^{heavily} across the river, but ride her out." I said, "Don't go back facin' them logs." Well, I don't know where they went, I know where I went. I went nearly across the river. When she broke in she just shoved me, logs and all, right out. And well, when we went out, of course, those logs come up ^{All the time} and that's what you had to watch. So, I went nearly to the railroad track there, across the river. I had to before I could--watching myself-- I didn't know where the other fellas went. Went and looked and I couldn't see neither one, I didn't know whether they went in the river or where. So, I got back- the logs had shoved me just about across the river, and when it ^{finally} quit rolling, I started back ^{on 'em,} and of course, they're still a comin' out, you know. I got over there and I seen they's all right, they hadn't got caught. So, I said, -- never ask 'em a damn question. I knowed what'd happened, they'd both-- one'd went off this end and one went off a the other end, what they shouldn't a done; faced them logs. And Jim, he was standing there and he turned kinda white; he was white any ^{how,} and I seen one of 'em had had a close call, or both of 'em. And Jim said, "You got any logs you can roll in yourself this afternoon?" And I said, "No, I think I got about all the loose ones ^{I can} get, Jim, up and down the river." "Well," he said, "I'm takin' these two fellers back to town." And, I looked at him, and I knowed then what had happened. One of 'em damn near got caught. So that was al-

right. He shoulda knowed better. Running them two fellers up there and turnin' 'em loose with me. He's supposed to be a logger. So, he said, "Dick," he said, "if you can find any to work on this afternoon, go ahead, and if you cain't, walk up and down the river and look her over." "Fine, I'll do that. You bet." And, he said, "I'll send someone up here to help you early in the morning." So, Old Bronk he was loggin' up there. He had a loggin' camp up there, had a lot of them old jacks outta Coeur d'Alene, that'd drove logs, you know, working for him up there. So, I went up the next morning and there were eleven of 'em to help me. And one of 'em ^{he} come up and said, "Well, I guess you're boss." "Well," I said, "listen here, tell you something right now- you know just as damn much about it as I do. There's the job, just help yourself." And he kinda laughed. And he said, "We'll make 'er." (Chuckles) There's no use tryin' to tell one of them old-timers anything, you know. I wouldn't undertake it. So, we got along fine. They stayed there til we got all those logs rolled in just ~~fine~~ fine.

- SS: Were there some foremen, Dick, that did it like you did, and took that attitude? "You men know what to do. Just go ahead and do it."
- DB: Well, not very many. There was so damn many ^{I'll tell you, there was so many} that wanted ~~me~~ they was under me. ^{They wanted the say. Well, here was the ideas.} I worked in the woods a long time. You could learn sometimes- sometimes you could stand and watch the work-- you learn something off a some damn kid that just started work that morning that you didn't know, in the woods. Someway to take advantage of something. If you'd watch 'em. Well, that made it pretty handy. Learn something and never let on. Keep agoin'!
- SS: Did you learn something new all the time?
- DB: Well, you'd learn something if you'd just watch your crew. You might learn something every day. Yeah. Someway to take the advantage of

something.

SS: Is that because the work was always different? Was the thing you had to face, would it be a new problem?

DB: Yeah. You expect that every day in the woods with the logs. Some way to get him out; easy. Some new hold to take on 'em. Or something. If you'd just watch 'em, you'd learn a lot.

SS: What did the old-timers think of the young lumberjacks, these fellas that were just greenhorns?

DB: Well, it's all on how the kids was. I laughed one time, Down at the lower camp, I had a lower bunk. I was driving four horses and, of course, I had a lower bunk. So, there was four of 'em come up from Palouse, they were gyping. By God, they'd come in every night and handle every log over. They'd skidded all day. This'n and that'n. And so, settin' there one night-- I'd just come down from the barn. Took care of my horses, curried 'em off', put 'em to bed, went in and Old Sparkplug Mc Ginnis, he was settin' there, and I said, "Say, don't want to rent that lower bunk?" What'll you give me for it, Jack?" "Well," he said, "we figured up after you was gone we can give you twenty dollars fer it." "What in the hell is goin' on here?" "Well," he said, "these fellers is handling every goddam log that they've skidded and swamped all day, every night after supper, while you fellers are doing your horses. We thought maybe we could buy your bunk there, we'll move the bed out ~~and out a~~ landing." So, I said, "Yes." By God, they all give me five dollars apiece!! 'Course, I gave it back to 'em!

SS: Did that make the point?

DB: Oh, I never hear 'em handle any more logs after supper. Got all the loggin' wanted ^I out in the woods in the daytime.

- SS: Did you ever work with Mal~~k~~ er Anderson?
- DB: Mal~~k~~er? Well, yes, -- the last work I done- I think that he-- by God, yes-- he brung a halftrack down to Potlatch for me. They run there one winter. They decked logs with it. And he stayed there and helped me; he set her up and we got her all-- He used to be walking boss. He got hurt. Wasn't it him that got hurt off'n the snowplow? Went off the end of the--?
- SS: No, I think that was Axel. His brother.
- DB: I know one of 'em got hurt.
- SS: Yeah.
- DB: Well, Axel was an awful nice feller. Axel, you know he used to be walker down here and he used to come down on the snowplow. They wasn't supposed to pick anybody up with that snowplow. So, my wife she walked downtown one day, and so they overtook her down here, Axel did, with the snowplow. He stopped and ^{had} her to get on. He said, "Now listen, I'm not ~~s~~posed to do this. You're on your own. If it jumps the track and ^{kills you}, you're dead." ^{you'll die riding it.} So, he come on up to the woods, I was working up in the woods, and he told me about givin' May a ride. Well, lots of 'em wouldn't do that, you know. He took that on his own hook, and got by with it.
- SS: When did you start working at Potlatch? At the mill there, instead of out in the woods?

Transcribed from reel #0173-B- Frances Rawlins on August 3, 1976

Balance of the interview , which follows is on reel #0277-A Sp. 0010- 0357

DB: Oh, it was- during the Depression.

SS: During the Depression?

DB: Just when the Depression was over. I'll tell you, it was when they started trucking logs in there. That was in '33, '34? '35, '36? I don't know. Old Nogle, you know, he was superintendent. And I was working on WPA parttime, and I went down to sign up and run ^{see} into Old Nogle and he said, "Say, you son of a bitch, you're just the man I'm looking for." "What's the matter?" Said, "My landings man's ^{quit} ~~ing~~ at Harvard," and, he said, "I want you to go up and load trucks for me." "Alright." So, I had a job and he said, "Now listen, in about ten days, two weeks, we're going to be hauling in-- "

(End of the cassette)

Side E DB: Worked there for five years, I guess; four or five. Five years. As long as the trucks were in there, and then when they quit truckin' why, -- well, in the meantime, after we got done truckin'- go down and put tongs on the Marion while they decked. We ^{un}loaded right off the car-- railroad car and decked 'em. Well, Old Jim and Nogle they didn't like that. I heard Nogle standin' right there and tell Jim what to do. And Old Nogle was there that morning when he ~~took~~ me down and Jim come out. Said, "Got a man to unload logs? From this truck?" I said, "I think so." Said, "We'll try him out and see how it works." And that was all that was said for a little bit, and Nogle said, "Now, listen, I want to tell you something. They're going to be loggin' in here several years on trucks." And, he says, "I'm supposed to unload the logs." And he said, "I want this feller kept here to unload logs," And, he said, "I want you to have a job for him in the wintertime." And, he said, "You'll have him here next spring. Won't have to go hunt a man." If you monkey around ^{this year} and was out of

a man-- Well, Old Jim, he come out there. Oh, God, he was tight, he come out there and he said, "I guess they'll be done logging tomorrow noon." He said, "Right after dinner." He said, "I don't know, whether I got anything for you or not." I thought, "Alright, Old Boy, ^{if} Nogle comes along, by God, you'll find out." So Nogle come down that afternoon, and I told Nogle what he said. "Well," he said, "Dick, if he ain't got a job for you, I always have." He said, "If he don't want you," said, "I'll take you back to the woods." "Alright." So, that was that. So, we looked up and here come Old Jim. So Nogle said, "Just stand there and wait a minute, and we'll visit when he comes up here." Old Jim, he just come up aprancin'. So he said to me, "When is the last load acomin' in?" I said, "Tomorrow afternoon, I guess. What they tell me." And Nogle turned around to Jim and he said, "Well, what you gonna have Dick to do?" "Oh," he said, "I don't know as I got anything now." "By God," he said, "you'd better have." Said, "If you don't, I'm gonna take him with me." So Jim said, "Why you doin' that for?" He said, "I want a man I can depend on down here for next year." He said, "I can always depend on him." Old Jim he come a stumping in, and never said nothin'. He never give up, nor neither did Nogle. So they was talkin' when I left. ^{So I come home.} So, Old Crawford sent a man up that afternoon and he said, "Would you clean up under the backend of the mill the rest of the winter?" "Yeah." "Well," he said, "Come down in the morning. Steady job." I went down there with ~~my~~ ^{any} job, ^{LONG AS I HAD WORK, THEN-TIMES, YOU KNOW.} cleaning up. I didn't give a darn, what I done. ^{A little better} So I got by til spring. So, then then when it got ^{A little better} and it quit freezing so bad, they took me out and put me on the pond, out there and here comes Nogle. He said, "What did you do with that tools you had last fall?" I said, "I took em out to camp and left 'em." "God," he said, "I didn't know that."

And I said, "Yes, I did. That's where they belonged. That's where I got 'em. You sent 'em down." So, he said, "Well, we'll go over to the warehouse and I'll get a new set." And he said there'd be a load of logs in ⁺here in about thirty minutes. So I went to unloading logs that year and the next year. Well, the second year, then, they got the big truck. That way then they had to build A-frames to unload them. No peavey work.

SS: At that time, would you have rather stayed there in the mill than go out in the woods?

DB: No.

SS: You didn't care?

DB: Well, I'd get more money that way. Unloading logs, from the time I started to work I got paid for ^{lunch hour and all} _^well in the mill, when the whistle blowed, you had to quit. Well, you know, I only got forty-nine cents an hour working on the landing, but lots of days get in twelve or thirteen hours. Well, that boosted my check up.

SS: When did you start to be friendly with Nogle? Where did he get an idea that you were a good man in the woods?

DB: Oh, I don't know. When him and I got acquainted, he was a conductor on one of them loggers, in the woods. We always got along pretty good then. He put me to drivin' team in the woods. And, well, I don't know whether I was any better with horses than anybody else, but he'd go buy extra teams, new ones, bring 'em up there. And Johnny Mc Cloud and I'd have to break them in the woods. Well, it takes lots of patience to break a team to skid logs in the woods. Well, I always got by so good; Old Nogle, you know'd fetch 'em up there and we'd break 'em.

SS: So you done a lot of team breaking, then?

over there

DB: Oh, yes, I done a lot of horse breaking. And, he'd treat me right,
 Had one horse ~~that~~ I broke up there-- well, I didn't have no trouble
 with him, but I worked til eleven o'clock to get the harness on the
 son of a bitch, the first morning I harnessed him. Go in front of
 him and he'd strike at me; go behind ~~me~~ and he'd kick at me, and there
 we was. I worked him the second day before I found out what was
 wrong, and the other team come out with a log ahead of us, had a limb
 eight, ten foot long, I just walked along beside him, and called
 him by name and patted him and he turned his nose back at me, and I
 petted him on the nose. So, I figured out then what had done it. I
 picked up this brush ~~he made~~ ^{for me} and them old ears laid back and his mouth
 opened and his eyes red, and I said, "Alright, old boy, I know what's
 the matter with you now. They tried to whip break you and you whip-
 ped them." So, I told 'em that night in there, I told John, Johnny
 Mc Cloud, him and I worked together all ^{the} time-- I told him, that's
 what happened. So, I come down home in a week or so, when I was here.
 I come down Saturday afternoon and went back Sunday. And I was tel-
 ling a neighbor down here about it. He knowed the horse and knowed
 where he'd got him, down there by-- well, it was down there in that
 horse country-- and that's the way they broke all their's. But this
 feller, they never did break. So, had him around ^{the} camp, and ~~pretty~~
^{they} seen ~~to~~ ^{they} took him out of camp, took him around Bovill, and they couldn't
 get nothin' out of him down there. Jeez, he'd whip 'em all. So
 Nogle he come down one day and he said, "Want a new job?" "----?"
 He said, "By God, we can't find anybody to work old Prince." He said,
 "Will you work him?" I said, "I never did have much trouble with him."
 He said, "You're the only man whoever skidded a log with him yet."
 And, he said, "I'm bringing him down." He said, "Keep this under your

hat." He said, "I'll give you what logs you can skid with the old son of a bitch, and take a day's wages besides, to work him. He ain't no good to us, he's a detriment." "Bring him down." Nogle was there that night they fetched him in. They had ^{their} a top skinner, he fetched him down, Red Lucas from Palouse, and he fetched him down. And he said, "I got a team out there in the barn for you to work." I said, "What's their names?" He said, "Old ^{CAP} and Prince." Sounds like 'em. He says, "The harness is on old Prince yet." I said, "My God, didn't you unharness him?" "No," said, ^I "didn't." "Why not," I said, "you're supposed to be a better skinner than I am." He said, "I wouldn't unharness that son of a bitch for anything." "Well," I said, "quick as we eat our supper I'll go up and show you how to take the harness off of him." So, after supper we went up and I rubbed the old feller and played with him a while and he nuzzled me all over. What he was huntin' was sugar. Always fed the old feller sugar. Keep on the good side of him.

So, I rubbed him and played with him a while and went in 'tween him and the manger and I rubbed the other side of him a little while, and unbuckled the harness and took them off and went back and got the collar. And everything was fine and dandy. So, he paid me there for three months; give me wages for drivin' that team; what logs I could skid with him.

END OF THE INTERVIEW WITH DICK BENGE- Reel #0277-A 0010- 0394

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