

HENRY BRAMMER
First Interview

Interviewed by:
Rob Moore

Oral History Project
Latah County Museum Society

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HENRY GRAMMER

Dulacette: b. 1881

farmer on Potlatch Ridge

1 hour

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Henry Brennan

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11	13	Starting own farm at 21 with \$400. Later, buys 40 acres from parents including 5 acres of prairie and prairie driven. Prices good until 1930 Depression. Many people lost their land through overpopulation. Growing own food in Depression, farmers did better than most. Small farmers have a hard time now. In Depression, Henry tried to pay interest on land mortgage in specie but couldn't. Supplemented income selling cream and turkeys.
20	18	Buildings built by father still standing. Cycle of good and bad times. Advent of red wheat in Kansas and Montana improves farmers' lot.

with Bob Coops
20 August 1977

II. Transcript

Henry Brammer was born in Hanover, Germany and emigrated to Kansas with his parents when he was one year old. He spent ten years growing up in a dugout at Kansas, burning buffalo bones for fuel until drought and hailstorms drove his family to Idaho. He has vivid memories of both the 1893 depression and the hard times of the 1930's. As times changed, Henry helped in many ways to bring improvement to the area. The interviewer is Rob Moore.

RM: How was it that the REA worked?

HB: Well, the government, they went to work and it cost us, I think, I'm pretty sure, five dollars a piece if we was willing to go in on it and make that way. So we had to get so many signers of these farmers here before they would build it. And I worked on that awful hard. And so I got a write-up here on it in one paper, REA paper and my name ^{by} my picture in there and everything.

RM: Yeah. Like you said the farmers would object. You said they wouldn't want to mortgage their farm to the government, why would they think they had to do that?

HB: Well, they figured the government was gonna take over. They was scared of the government to ever get in on this. It was one of the finest things that ever happened that's why we got our electricity and so on and all over in the farms, you see, and that was in 1937 or 8 when in the fall of the year we got it. After we got that all built and we got it started and had it built, then the farmers couldn't get it fast enough, they all wanted to be first. (chuckles) And so we got that built and I think it was one of the finest things we ever had, what we done there. And they still got it, you know, we supposed, at that time they said in twenty years and we would be paid out on it. But that thing never materialized, the government still does it. They lend money out to the REA and so on and put franchise out and so on. Because it was complicated to the farmer because we had farmer lines and phone lines and the, well, you know how they keep it up, brush and everything and long fences and so on. And half of the time we only could get somebody and then we had the centrals, one in Cameron and one in Leland.

RM: Centrals?

HB: Yeah, centrals, you know. Where they had the...

RM: Centrals.

HB: Um hm.

Mrs. Brammer : Well they had people there that if you wanted to move places they had to get 'em from 'em.

HB: You had to call those centrals and in these towns. So that's the way that started out any way. And so of course when this 'lectric line came in, they had to get a metallic system in it, double wires you know and up to date and it all cost us fifty dollars a piece and that was the Hardest. Still some people at Southwick that I couldn't get out in it back toward the mountains there. I'd bag those boys, I'd been over there times and times again, they are all dead now. But they still haven't got their telephones. They've just got the telephone between themselves, that's all. They never did get it. And I tried my darndest to get it in there. It was complicated. And I was in my early years on the mail route, when they delivered our mail to us. Always our post office, Cameron, so on, for awhile and we'd have our mail carriers later on, we didn't have 'em at first, we had to go to the post office to get our mail here. So I was sure that we could rule her out some. And ^{from early day} they thought on that. Most of 'em didn't want it, they wanted to leave everything the way it was. But we finally got it, so our post office went out and we get our mail direct every day and so on. Otherwise it was maybe once or twice a week, some on the upper end of the south end, ^{by Southwick there} they would get it about once a week and so on.

RM: Were you an early mail carrier too?

HB: No, I was no mail carrier. That was just, one there was three of us. There was Roy Salsik and myself and Clark McKeeVer's dad. What was his name? Charlie McKeeVer? Let's see.

Mrs. Brammer: Yeah, his name was Charlie.

HB: Yeah, I think it was. We three was the ones that started out on it. And when ^{we} got up to Cameron, why they was gonna mob us. (chuckles) They thought it was awful for us people to say that we would get the mail out

and tend it everyday. They couldn't figure that out. So, but it progressed you couldn't stop it, just go ahead and we got it finally but it took thirty years. Oh, I always admired the thing on the road business, buildin' that road up here, the Governor Ross that was in at that time of Idaho here. I make three trips to Boise with the delegation. And we were supposed to get a A Number one road up on the the branch of that road now between Kendrick and Southwick. Highway #7. But then these people down here jumped in and they got the **Bear** Ridge Road which they needed more than we did. They had really a rough grade from down in that area. You've never been over that old...

RM: Yes I have.

HB: That used to be twist around and around and you didn't have no turnouts once in awhile and then you happened to be in between turnouts and you didn't know where to go. (chuckles) We had to back up and push our wagons over, or we didn't have cars then. So then they started in and they took the Governor, he came up here and took 'em over that road there and it was ^{rough and} muddy and everything else. And he really saw what they needed so he give that one up there and then we came back again for to build one up there, why they didn't have too much money left and so on. So the first thing they done, the county helped us because we were in bad shape up on Southwick there.

RM: Which county was that?

HB: Well, Nez Perce county and we had a road district see, good road districts like they used to have here. And we had our crossroad and us above the upper end of the county at Southwick. We was on the county. See, there was a friction there. We couldn't do nothing with the lower end here, they ^{wouldn't give us gravel, they} wouldn't do nothing, they said they didn't have no money. Well, they didn't. They was organized too small, didn't have enough variation there, you see. Well then finally we started to cross up at Southwick. We took it out from the town to the crossroad and then we asked if we would donate, we donated

everything we had, we didn't get paid. I hauled rock on that road with four horses for days. And after we got that finished, we said to this district here, "We'll help you gravel this road, so we can get out when it's wet."

Because the cars were in then. I had a car already then. Finally got a truck and everything. So we started and we worked two days and made, oh, quite a stretch down here. You think we got just one out of this district that would help us? Not one. So we all dropped it. We went down to the county

here, and we told 'em what happened. We'd like to have this. So they finally got up the money and they...

RM: Were you still living then in the place you were raised up in Southwick?
Mrs. Brammer: Listen, let me talk a minute. Have you had dinner? RM: Not yet. MS: Well listen, you two can keep on talking. I'm going to fix a little something and then we'll eat...

HB: No, see, I, where I was raised, I was raised in Cameron. And then I farmed

there at Cameron for three years. Then we went to Canada, my brother, and myself. And we bought a half a section of land seventeen miles from ~~Leithbridge~~ ^{Leithbridge}. And then we had a snowstorm the second of September.

RM: What year was that?

HB: In 1906 or 5, or 6. Six, I think it was because in 1906 we pulled out for Montana. And everything snowed under, we didn't get no crop at all. So we pulled out of there, I think I told you this story once. But section we sold after awhile to a real estate man, Noble was his name. And Palmer Noble is on that half section now. The railroad came right through it you see. So if we'd hung onto it maybe we'd been all right. But we didn't. We sold out and homesteaded in Montana. And so we come back here, I did, my brother and I got back here in 1913 we came back. And I bought the ^{farm.} And after awhile I sold that and the First World War was on. And then I bought up at Southwick. A hundred and sixty acres. So I ^{bought} a spread quite a bit, ^{so} ~~thn~~ [^] I could of got a lot more *(sound of dishes)* and so on ^{so} ~~til~~ we made progress here with ~~our~~ own food. There were rough times, hard times, depressions. In 1932 the depression hit there, nobody could work. And farmers, they lost their places. Her brother lost everything he had. My brother, he had lost everything in Montana, you know.

RM: In the depression?

HB: Well no, it was drought. I still raised a crop in '13 in Montana but I was out here already and I had bought, as I said, a hundred and sixty acres right above his half section. I sold my half section but we were in together on it and we didn't want to sell and we figured we could get more out of it for a thousand dollars an acres. I figured it was a good buy so I sold mine and then bought the state land right north of, no south end, south end ^{his}. In the Three Fork, a hundred and sixty right in the road. So I sold that for forty dollars an acre and I have plowed up half of it, ~~and never~~ ^{got eight} I ~~make~~ a hundred dollars out of it. That was the last crop they raised. And that year I had that crop. ^{his} corn came through there and cut ten foot off of just the corner of my field. Everything down and ^{it went right} ~~could drive~~ straight a half a mile down through my brother's and took everything. ^WNo, he didn't raise nothin' and from there on that was it. So he finally sold out and got three thousand dollars out of it. And then the rest of it never was paid. Shocked, so. So he came here and he bought ^{what} hundred and sixty up there at that time and he still paid his war prices. Twenty thousand dollars for that eighty, oh, hundred and sixty, way out of line. And so he didn't have any money and so I went in with him, I bought half in with him. Well, he said, "I can't keep up my, I haven't got no ~~money~~ anymore." So I bought him out and then the depression struck again. That depression. And those 30's there, from '29 on into the 30's, '34 or 5, those were hard times. There was no money. That's when I sold wheat down here for 21 cents a bushel. Beans wasn't quite a cent a pound. Why you couldn't come out on it, I was farming four hundred acres, I lost seven hundred and twenty dollars, ^{good money} because I was hiring help in the beans. We used to do it the hard way ythen, we'd cut 'em and we'd have a bunch of kids, ten or twelve of 'em piling or hoeing or something, all of that. And, well you just, we didn't have the ^{expense} that they do now, but it was just enough for that whole business they had that it was my expenses. Seven hundred and fifty dollars, it didn't

come out in the crop and couldn't get it. And then wheat of course was sixty cents, fifty, seventy cents, and so on. And we didn't make much money. It just wasn't enough. Then, when the second war ^{things started to} popped up again, we got along pretty good, for awhile that is. And so in '41 we quit, and I had arthritis so bad I couldn't farm anymore. I was only 60 years old, I could have gone on, but she just couldn't make enough. Then we spent quite a little lot so I... But after that, why the thing when it improved and things went ~~down~~, well I made more money by not farming than by farming. So that's the way it worked.

RM: What was it like in Cameron when you were a kid?

HB: My ~~life~~ life? Oh, the only thing, we were living on a five acre tract and we raised all our own garden and so on, and father, he was gone most of the time. Like I said, ~~He~~ went to Genesee and everywhere else, he was a carpenter, building. And there was lots of building going on. He could build, of course, he built cheap there. Now you take our first church. My father built that at Cameron and I think it cost somewhere around oh five or six hundred dollars. Because it was a small church, 24 by, I don't know, by 16, or maybe it was a little bit more. And then the second church was built and we built a pretty good thing. And it was fourteen hundred. And then after that, they built a new one here and this one was built in 1903, that second church, that was fourteen hundred dollars. We go back to Southwick there, there were ^{saw} mills in there, two or three of 'em, little ones and we'd buy ^{lumber} for eight dollars a thousand. And some of it, it was a little off grade, we maybe get it for four or five dollars a thousand. So no wonder we could build cheap. Not big, big church, they build now, why that costs ~~just~~ right around a hundred thousand dollars. Too bad it change, the things from where we came up. Labor, like our ~~children~~ children here. I worked for 25 cents a day, hoeing all day long, the bean fields or we raised lots of flax ^{here} at that time. And us kids, they'd hire a bunch of us kids here, we'd go through there day and night, they had a foreman there and he said, "Go ahead, go ahead." And we got 35 cents a day.

RM: What were you doing in the flax?

HB: Pulling out weeds. Have to weed it out you know, couldn't leave weeds in it. We had lots of wild oats at that time, all over, you know. Pick weeds out and whatever there was. We'd take a strip ^{through} there and maybe 20-30 feet or more, how many kids there was, you know, and go through one and then the other. Up and down til we get a field cleaned and then we go to the next one. So that was our wages. Then after I got older and also my brother, I started to work out by the year, not the year, ^{the month.} The first job I hired out for 9 months for 160 dollars that 9 months. That was through harvest and all. So there was another fella, he was a pal of mine and he hired out to a fella and he gave him 150 for 9 months, and he was awful mad about it. But he ^xsuck it out, he at least ⁺stayed in there. But that was our wages at that time. So of course when '93, yeah, 1893, you asked when we came here when we had that depression, there was no money. Absolutely no money. My father worked out, he never saw the money and so on. We'd get wheat, flour or bacon or something like that was butchered and so on. Just something to eat, that was all. Just ^{barter,} trade ^{you might call it} like. No money. So that ^{then finally improved.} The reservation ^{opened} up here. And part of 'em moved away and moved over on the reservation and the ridge and so on. Most of 'em needed food out there. Some of 'em went broke when that depression hit.

RM: Did the reservation opening up help bring the depression here?

HB: No, well, yes. That helped quite a lot. Seet that was all new buildings going up in there, every farm had buildings and so on. And these people were here, have their homes, we had to haul 'em over. I hauled many a loads a four horse team load over from Cameron to Gifford, I'd go down this Clear-water hill through Leland and then down off of the point and then of course I'd roll just a little this way on around. Then there was places to go on steep and people go down there the dry grade. So I roughlocked my load and so on, so the brakes wouldn't hold it, I was afraid. Then with the

fourhorse team, down I go. Straight down off the edge and I hauled a good many loads over there, that way. So it gave us work there and that was the ways money circulated then, that was a little maybe. Well it wouldn't be much, it'd be a dollar. Just like I did those hauls there of course, that wasn't much, that was small, I would think. I was only fifteen. I drove those hogs over here, it took us two or three days and then have to stay there a whole week and he gave me a 6 or 8 bits.

RM: That was when you drove some hogs to Nez Perce?

HB: Yeah.

RM: How many hogs did you take over there?

HB: Fourteen. And we had butchered fourteen. See, he, they traded in smoked hams and bacon and so on and he hauled those over there but didn't keep it behind over there. Because that was the farthest reservation opened. But nevertheless, people were getting ready, they know it was going to open in a year or so. They was getting ready and picking out their land already so they could know where they would go and they file on it see? But they'd get in first, whoever got in first, why he was it because lots of times they have fellas figured they had a place there and go in and try to file on it and it was ^{gone} on already. That's the way it worked. That's about the life we went through here in Cameron.

RM: What was that little rhyme you told me about Cameron during the '93 depression? Do you remember?

HB: Oh yeah, that one of Cameron there. It said, "Cameron town, the grimmest street. And the Royalty Hotel and nothin' to eat." I've got to take a drink of water.

RM: How would your dad get from, you said he was building in Genessee, how would he get over to Genessee from Cameron?

HB: Well, we didn't have a chance til somebody go over the team and it was most horseback. The roads, they was poor and at someplace there was no roads, you might call it. And these grades here, why oh they were just

so you could get by. Because if you meet somebody lots of times, why you had to sit your rig over or down off of the hillside to keep from hitting and our hubs would rub together and if we happened to see one another and we had to turn out, why we'd turn out and stop so the other fellow come go by. That's the way it was. But we walked, now my daddy and myself, I walked over with him many times, carried, we'd come down here and stop here for dinner. Then maybe spend the afternnon and we'd walk over. Boy when I'd get over there and then see the town of Genesee, was I glad by that time!

RM: Were you carrying his tools over too?

HB: Oh yes, had his tools. Because we had a sack and we put the tools in there. When we built our home in Cameron, that was a second home, that was the last home we had, that building is still there. And it's been moved though. It was sold. And it's been moved but it's still there. Just about the way we built it. And as far as nails and stuff, we had to get hard stuff, whatever it was, we walked downtown and carried it home and I'd help out, nails and what have you. And we'd put it on our shoulders and away we'd go.

RM: That was sort of different than when you were in Kansas. Because there wasn't much wood to build with there.

HB: No, in Kansas, that was prairie. The only place that was on along the little streams and so on, and it was poplar. Poplar and ^{willow,} some ^{willow}

Where the water was, but the prairie was absoutely prairie. Buffalo trails. And the buffalos that roamed there, they had trails from there clear into Canada. I follwed them clear up into Candada. We used to go up there back and forth from Montana and western Kansas and I know we went clear up to the Dakotas and in there. Buffa;o trails all along. And then the Hudson Bay came in there from the north, they was after the fur. And that was all the Indians, they had their hunt there, you know, had that meat and so on. And it was all right, They come in there and ^{they} slaughtered them by the thousands to get their fur.

RM: Do you remember those times when they were slaughtering buffalo?

HB: Well...

RM: Were you there then?

HB: No, the buffalo were all gone by that time, ^{when} we got in there. So then when we got in there, what we saw of it, you could look over the prairie when the sun was shining and the white bones were just glittering all over ^{where} they'd ^{been} slaughtered. And we had no wood. We had that as our firewood. We'd pick up those bones and burn them in the winter and the buffalo chips. That was our...

RM: Buffalo bones burned?

HB: Oh yeah, they burned. If you had these buffalo chips in with it, you see. Then you could put them together and they burned. You bet your life. That was all we had. And maybe we, sometimes a fellow that had a team out there then, why he'd bring a load of these willow and stuff ⁱⁿ you know, and so on. Pick up along the creek, we'd have the little, no those weren't...

RM: What was your house built of?

HB: Out of a dugout, dug into the hillside. And then you could pile that buffalo grass up and you had the finest sods, you know. They stick together and build up in front just with the sod here. All we had, we had door on the ^(house) one way and two little windows. The rest of it was all dark. And then in winter...

(End of side A)

RM: The place was down in the draw?

HB: And it was in the draw ^{we}, and then lots of snow would drift right over it. We always had a big scoop shovel right on the inside and the door opened to the inside so ^{it would be} outside and then we had to shovel out. It was solid, drifted full, see. Dad always had a big shovel in there.

Came out into Montana in the logging camps and when some fellas from there the east there, they got in there and they wanted to use that timber in Montana. But there was no railroad in there. We had to drive in and it was 30 miles by land and 20 some odd miles by water. And we got in there and we had 12 foot of snow. And it was in the mountains. We stayed on the

lake.

RM: This was in Canada?

HB: No this was Montana, we were in Canada. We were still living in Canada.

There was no work in the prairie and the farming community there. No work. So we went out to this logging camp. We stayed in there six months. Never got out, never went out, there was ten men ^{went} in there with us. Into a tent, shoveled out the snow and so on and pitched our tent. Put an old ^{fuel} stove in the center and that's where we were sleeping then. And then we cut logs and stuff and built us the bunk house and cook house and everything else and 'em quite a building. And then we got that all done and finished up. We made our own roofing. Cut planks, oh six, four, six feet of poles and we hewed them out and we turned 'em upside down you know, and so we laid 'em on the roof there. So we got that in there and then we got to cutting timber, logs. And from the lakes, you couldn't get out, you had 12 feet of snow. ^{But} It wasn't too far out, we had some timber, it wasn't good, that dry timber, we cut that right off on top of that snow. So next spring we had stumps 12 feet high. And the other ones we had to shovel out, we had to cut 'em down low. So we kept cutting and the idea I didn't like because we had no horses, we had nothing to drag those logs out. So we went to work and we sold our trees either across Montana but we never trimmed 'em up. We cut our saw lengths and there they be. The next spring they had all that mess to cleanup after the snow. And so we got out of there in May sometime, I don't remember what day, we got out. And when we got out off of the lake and got out on the prairie, we saw cattle that came up and they were around the sluice there, the ponds, there were sluice where the water was. They were laying just thick, you could jump from one all day. And there was a bunch of fellas that came up from Texas, big ranches and drove those cattle in there, in that time of the year, I don't know why it was, but I think it was, they figured it was early in the spring. I know they had come in there and then they got this big snowstorm and

cold weather you see and everything froze, there was no water or nothing and the cattle all got cold so bad. Yeah, and so I went out of there, my brother and myself, we pulled out in the spring. And a new company took over then. And they cleaned up that mess. I was on one drive to drive these logs down 23 miles from the, first we had 6 miles of river and we floated 'em down into a great big boom and we closed that boom, put a little motor-boat onto it and then drive 'em down.

RM: Across the lake?

HB: Across the lake. Then, the mill was down on the Yellow River, there a ways and whenever we got to the end there to the river, it was too swift, we wouldn't go ahead with the boat so we were supposed to open the boom and then take our boom and drag it down to the mill and cut 'em off you see so the logs would stop. But we got too close, the fella that was greenhorns I guess. They got too close to the river and we didn't get our boom out and ^{our} logs got out first and we couldn't get the boat in there and we couldn't get our boom down and everything went down the river and they lost that whole thing. So (Chuckles) I heard after ^{wards} that some of 'em drifted to the side and they hauled 'em back for miles with the wagon to get those out of there.

RM: Now, he was, was it you pushed the logs out, did they leave 'em floating in the lake there while you took the boom down?

HB: No. The boom, you see, the logs were all in the boom. And then we were supposed to open that boom, see there were long logs and then holes bored through it and then chains put together, you see. And we just opened the boom and leave our logs up in the lake. But he got too close where the suction was too...

RM: Right, you leave the logs in the lake while you take the boom logs out?

HB: Right, we was taking the boom down and that was our plan. So he got ⁱⁿ too close, this fella, he was the head man, we, none of us was rough loggers. We was just common fellas. He said, "Now open your boom and take your boom down." So we opened the boom and we started out and those logs kept

acomin' faster than the boom did and away they went. So they got in there so thick in the river, the logs, that we couldn't begin to move 'em. So we just lost the whole boom. But they hauled some of 'em back I heard. But they went broke. ^{finally} So afterwards I heard that they went broke. We never went back in there. But that was quite an experince in there. I'll tell you, with that much snow, to get up in that and not a thing, not a thing built or anything, just in a tent. And it was pretty rough with all that snow in there.

RM: When did you first start to farm on your own?

HB: When I was 21 years old. When I became 21 years. I had worked ^{out} before and the money I had I paid off on the folks' place in Cameron there. I helped 'em pay off four hundred dollars I had. Because I told you, these 9 months where I worked for a hundred and sixty dollars, I had a hundred and sixty-five dollars left from that. 9 months work. *Of course mother, I say* she patch up our clothes and so on and help us out a little bit, but that money I put into the place there, my folks and helped them pay off their bill. Well, then during that time when I started in farming at 21, I was only 16 years old when I had that big deal to work for a hundred and sixty dollars for 9 months. ^{I was 16 years old} So when I became 21, they went to work. They'd made enough money too so they gave me the 400 dollars for starting and that's what I started on. So I bought me a team of horses. And I bought two horses. And a plow, harrow, disc ~~what~~ I need, second handed stuff I could pick up. And that's what I started with. So I farmed three years here, rented a farm and then we took off for Canada. I quit and I sold out and when I got through those three years, why I had 400 dollars left. (chuckles) So I got my money back and that was all. Well you go down here to the warehouse. Good grief! With no price you couldn't come out with it, because we sold wheat there for, oh, fifty cents and when it got up ^{that's a lot of money, see. Didn't make any sense} to seventy, land, _n. At least I didn't. And I just saw it wouldn't work, by renting land and farming that whole part of land. More than I should have for the outfit I had. And that was in 1903 to 1904. The fall of 1904 I went up to Montana. So

that's settled it for here. And then of course we were gone in 1913 and I come back and got started here. Well in Montana I made good, I done well with my brother.

RM: Did you go back to wheat farming when you came back here ^{from} Montana?

HB: Yeah, at first I bought the place on the 30 acres they had nice buildings and I gave him five thousand dollars for it and that had a prune orchard and so on and that had quite a little money in that and that had big dryer on it, you know, and dried prunes. And improved business and...

RM: How did big prune dryers work?

HB: Well you had to get wood and have a big ^{furnace}, big fireplace under it and on top you had trays. I've got some trays laying out here, a couple of 'em there. And you shut those in, just like this together with a little tray in there where they dry fruit and oh I don't know how many trays were in there. I never counted 'em. I think there were ten in ^a load and there were one, two, three, four, five, fifty, there ^{must} have ^{be} over a hundred trays in it, in the dryer. And then you had to pick your prunes. Go ahead ^{have a tub} and you put some lye, strong lye water and have a fire under that to keep the water hot. Then we had a big dipper with the screens on it. And the rope and pulley that went upstairs so we'd dip 'em down in there so the hide would crack so they dry, you see. And then you came upstairs and ^{bake} them in...

RM: In the lye water?

HB: Oh yeah, yeah, in the lye.

RM: Did you wash 'em off after you ^{put} 'em in the water?

HB: Well yeah, you'd rinse 'em off. You'd dip 'em in cold water then and that was all we did to 'em. Just rinse 'em off. You dip 'em first two or three dips in that lye water and got hot and the lye water would crack 'em see.

^{The} hide all would be cracked. And then dump 'em right into the cold water ^{to} rinse 'em off and so on. Go on upstairs and they put them on the trays and in the dryer. So, oh, first years there wasn't, I didn't get too ^{much} for 'em. I think I sold 'em for six and eight cents a pound. But then the

World War came on, things peopped up and I gt 18 cents a pound then and I made a little money. So of course. Then the time they ended the war, ended ⁱⁿ 1918, why I says, fella a neighbor to me there, he built him over on a piece and he wanted to buy mine. He had land all around. And I had this place up at Southwick already. So I says to him, "I'll trade. I'll trade with you and I'll stay here ~~and~~ you give me your land." And he says, "I won't do that. I want to buy yours." He says, "What do you want for it?" I says, "Nine thousand dollars." He said he could farm. He says, "I'll give you eighty-five hundred ^{cash}." "Well that was enough. So ^{I made 3500 on the place.} I put that all on this upper place and I bought my brother out then. And he couldn't make it so I took the place all by myself. But then were hard times. If these depressions hadn't hit, he'd made it all right. But I was lucky at that time. I had prunes in '17 and '18 and '19. We put up to two dollars and twenty four cents a bushel. And I went to work, I had a ~~thirt~~ty acres maybe that time. And I sold for two dollars and twenty four cents. So when my neighbor came over and he says to me, "Will you let me have five thousand dollars?" I says "For what?" He says, "I'm gonna buy that place over there." So I says to him, "Why don't you sell your wheat?" He had ten thousand bushels of wheat. I says, "Two and a half, boy, you're clear and you've got money ahead." I says, "Don't do that." I say, "Sell, we're not going to get this price ^{all the time}." So finally I talked him into it and he left. And darn if it wasn't towards evening, he came back. He says, "I Changed my mind. I want to borrow this money." So he did. I let him have it. And then he went to work and hard times come, he sold his wheat for ninety eight cents a bushel. And so when that happened, well, he didn't come out. So he put the second mortgage on that same place, borrowed from another fella. ^{So} I was sitting pretty, I had the first come up. But he lost it, he lost everything he had. He had different land.

RM: He was trying to hold onto his wheat?

HB: Yeah. Well there were others ^{done} the same way. But they figured they wanted

a dollar and two dollars and twenty five cents. Now what was one penny to 'em. There was people on the reservation, on Nez Perce prairie done the same way. They lost everything they had just on account of holding over and then the depression hit.

RM: Well how did you manage to support yourself through the depression?

HB: Well we farmers, we done all right. We raised everything. I had hogs, I butchered my own hogs, I butchered my beef and I had plenty of cattle and hogs and plenty of chickens and probably raise, we had big gardens and so on. We was living all right as far as living was concerned. Why when that first World War was on and in meat prices you see, they had to have quotas on it. We could only buy so much of it and so on. Well, these town people, they hollered their heads off. I gave lots of my, what do you call 'em? So you could buy meat you had to have tickets of something like that and I gave 'em away to those town people because I didn't need any.

RM: Ration tickets?

HB: Yeah, ration tickets. So we ^{farmers} we lived good because we weren't bothered with nothing like that. With use we just had our own stuff, They couldn't tell us we can't do this and we can't do that. We had our liberty on that, we grew our own. Nowdays, you can't butcher your own beef or anything, ^{ANY MORE}. And so on. No, the farmers didn't suffer excepting those that lost their places. It was too bad but it was their own fault. But you know people will do that. Now you take this, we've got it right now; if they don't watch out there'll be lots of 'em go broke in this crash, you see. Because now, I read a piece in the Sunday paper, ^{here} the farmers they do their own business. The government's ~~the~~ only ones that's getting out of it all together. It's one good thing they do; I never approved. Because they've got the family farm, they figure on, they want to get rid of. Now this Earl Butz we've got, this agriculture man, he's working for it. And those people, they've got all the money. The government dishes out to 'em and so on, and these other smaller farmers, they just don't hardly get anything. So you have to farm big or you don't make anything. Well

there was people drawing a hundred thousand more than that, two hundred thousand dollars out of the government, you see. Well that wasn't right. Now we set the limit on that. This law that just went through lately, twenty thousand dollars, that's the highest they can get now. But they're out now so next year, now this ^{COMING} year, [^] they can plant all the wheat they want.

RM: That's good.

HB: If we don't get ~~nothing out~~ ^{another drought}, we may make it all right, but ~~if we have~~ ^{say it happened we had} another year like this, we wouldn't raise much here, because we no ^(incredible) and we wouldn't get any more snow and any more rain and another year like that and we'd have a disaster on our hands.

RM: You said during the depression, you lost seven hundred and fifty dollars in farming?

HB: I lost seven hundred and fifty dollars in good money. I told my people I was farming four hundred acres

RM: You lost that money, what did you do to make it up?

HB: Well, I didn't pay interest on my, I had a, oh I don't know just exactly how many thousand dollars, I must of had either nine thousand dollars left on the place to pay, you see. I didn't pay out when all of my wheat *was good*.

But nevertheless, I had some laying in the bank, I had so much property And I says, "Take it." "No, we don't want it, it don't pay off." So of course I had to sell and I sold it for the and it didn't pay off. I didn't make enough. So all my expense and everything I had I lost seven hundred and fifty dollars, short. And that's when they tumbled like bees in places, the farmers. They lost everything. I ~~had~~ ^{at least didn't lose} my place.

RM: Did you supplement your income by selling milk or anything?

HB: Oh yeah, we sold cream and we raised quite a few turkeys and so on. And our taxes was paid out of the barnyard lot. That's where we got our taxes. On our interest, I let it slip by for ^{the year.} [^] Then it was a year or two afterwards the prices came up again a little bit and so on and I had an awful big crop of beans that one year and we used to get three and four sacks of

beans to an acre. I had eight that year. It happened to be a perfect year for beans. And we was getting pretty good price so I had six thousand dollars worth of beans. Well, that was just like dropping a rock in a brown sea. Whoom! It couldn't pay off. (chuckles) So that helped. So from there on I had pretty good *sailing* .

RM: Who was it that caused your dad to move here from Germany?

HB: It was people. They came out here and different ones, there were different ones out here ^{already} from western Canada that lost their places they had on account of the ^{drought} and moved out and they came out here and then of course, corresponding together and they wanted him to come out and see it and so he came out in 1891. A year ahead of us. And he worked here but it's still, the old church is still standing there and of course myself and *Whitman* there, we built an *addition* until we made eighty-eight haul out of it and we had the sales and so on. But the old building ^{is still standing} ~~itself~~ ^{there}, I don't know how long it will last (chuckles) But that's old. Excepting what we built on. But that's a different. At first when he came back the first year, ^{to it.} ~~We built an addition.~~ ^{in Leland that's still} ~~Then there's several houses~~ ^{ing, and several of} ~~stand~~ ^{are fore} ~~they served 'em~~ down. And I suppose some of 'em over at Genesee. I know there's one on that rock there and couple of plates. That's *still* standing. Reed Madary remodeled it though. It's in the same shape here and just on the outside so I can get on the inside here or something and that house is still standing. And there are several barns that are still standing. And there's still a barn on her brother's place that her father built. That's still there. Oh and there's Wilkins, Harmon Wilkins, he's got a grainery and that's the first thing they built there, they couldn't afford a house and ^{that} had an upstairs to it and that's what they lived in. And they had twelve children.

RM: Upstairs in a grainery?

HB: In the grainery. And that's where they lived til they got read to build a new house and that house is still standing up there. It's been remodeled you know, and so on. So one of our nieces married, that's how it's Wilkins

now, and she lives in that house.

RM: He left Kansas because of the drought there, because the home situation just fell apart in Kansas or what?

HB: Oh yes. Everything fell apart. They went broke there. The first generation all went out. Just like Montana where we were in the basin, through this basin, where we were. Had big crops there and so on. And ^{then} after I got out of there, everything went to pieces. See, that runs in cycles there. We had about a seven year cycle over there and we had plenty of rain in there. And things worked out perfect. Now I really thought they'd be a year in there. And then from '13 on, it just says BOOM! All the settlers there then, these people that bought ^{anything} in this country from Minnesota, Iowa and farms and everything, sold all their stuff back east and went in there. There wasn't one of 'em left on a farm. They were all gone. Of course that generation, ^{most of 'em} is dead now. But then the second generation came and then this tractor business started and they got to raisin' this turkey red wheat, and hauled wheat. And their land, they could farm better and they started this stripfarming and so on. They made good money. They done all right. And western Kansas was the same way. Cattlemen bought it. ^{practically} Oh, they'd buy a piece of homestead that would go broke and so on for little or nothin'. So they had five, six thousand acres, you know, for their grain. Then the farmers got in there and started in after that and ^{raising} this turkey red wheat. The winter wheat. It's the biggest wheat country there in in Kansas. They made it. But with us it was an experiment. We didn't know what, ^{what we done}, we planted sod corn and stuff but it just didn't make it.

RM: Your father wasn't really much of a farmer either?

HB: No, no, he was no farmer. Everything he had done, why he had it plowed and so on and his work was carpentry, see. And he'd hire and have a patch put up, it didn't cost much then. But nevertheless, he just didn't know how to farm and he didn't like farming. And so when he came here, why he wouldn't farm the land. He just bought land here and came out and help

four hundred dollars for that half section they had there. That was a pretty big building and water and windmill and everything on it. And that's all he got, because the other four hundred; he sold for eight hundred, but he didn't get that because of drought and this fellow couldn't make it. His wife died within a year or so. He was getting older too, so he pulled out.

(End of tape)