

HENRY BRAMMER
Second Interview

Interviewed by:
Rob Moore

Oral History Project
Latah County Museum Society

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I. Index

HENRY BRAMMER

Juliaetta; b. 1881

farmer on Potlatch Ridge

1 hour

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Henry Brammer

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with Rob Moore
August 27, 1973

II. Transcript

On this tape, Henry Brammer recalls early farm techniques and practices. He tells stories of his boyhood on Potlatch Ridge and compares the local effect of the two depressions. As he grew up, he spoke mostly German and this created some problems for him in his community during the First World War. He also talks about Roosevelt's farm program, the IWW, and starting his own farm. The interviewer is Rob Moore.

Mr. Brammer: But they lost all their grain there, see they had it that year.


INTERVIEWER: That was the 1893 one?

MR. BRAMMER: Well, they was headin', they got started, lots of it they hadn't cut when the rain came in August. They had to discontinue and we'd stack it so they'd just dump it in the stack car, just cut the heads off about that far, you know. And that was it. Then they come along with dump tables and forks and fork it on there and then they have to hold down to feed the machine. That's the way it went. So that year, every stack that hadn't been threshed yet, why it just all grew out, there was men and they cut it, they took their knives and cut it open and throwed the stuff all back and they had a little maybe in the center but that wheat was all just black. It just kind of burned, got hot.

INTERVIEWER: Were they letting them dry out?

MR. BRAMMER: No, from the wetness there and so the wheat just looked black but I know we fed it to our chickens. I don't know whether it done 'em any good.(chuckles)

INTERVIEWER: Well how was that 1893 depression to get through anyway? Was that a rough one to get through?

MR. BRAMMER: Oh yes, that was a bad one. Of course we figured that we just forgot about money and stuff and father went out and ^{he} worked. We made a living. We'd get our meats and everything, beans or what they had, garden stuff and so on. And we raised garden stuff, that was good. And flour and stuff, why we'd get it from the farmers we worked for. No money. It'd be something to eat, atleast he kept his family agoin'. And it wasn't only with us, it was everybody was doing the same thing. And of course we had a lot of game; chicken, prairie chickens. They were so thick I used to go out hunting then already, a kid of fourteen years old back then. Well, I guess before that. And I've seen ~~what~~ ^{these} stubblefields that they were in there and they'd go up and you could just see the whole sky was full of 'em, you didn't have to aim, you just pull the trigger and shoot into 'em and down they'd come. (chuckles) So oh there were prairie chickens. Then everybody I guess got to using them ~~and~~ all at once and they were gone. There was none left. The last ones I heard of and I still agree there's a few of 'em over on Cream Ridge they claim, prairie chickens. But I haven't saw any for years. Then the blue grouse, they came in. They was awful thick in here. Well, we finally got rid of all of those.  Disappeared. And of course we had deer and but nobody ever went out hunting. For those once in ^{there} awhile a fella would kill a deer right close to his home because they were busy otherwise but the prairie chicken and grouse we used to and brush pheasants Lots of 'em, which we still have back in the timbers but that was it. We had a, my father had a old muzzle loader; you know what they are? I used to load those things. Now you had that ramrod, you pound down the

uh you put the powder in and then put your wad of paper or stuff on top. You had to pound it down to hard ^{so hard} that the ramrod jumped clear ^{out} on top you see. And when you shot, you just put it in and shove it down loose you see. So I used that gun til I ~~farmed~~. And I had dogs, they had so many dogs then they got in my beans here and the romp all over there. And I got mad at 'em one day and (chuckles) so I grabbed the ^{ol'} /shotgun and I shoved another load into it and there was one in there. And you know, I blazed away at that dog and that gun went clear up in the air and flew clear back twelve feet and it had a crack in it that long there. It's a wonder (chuckles) it didn't explode all together.

INTERVIEWER: Well using those old guns, since the shot was just packed loose, did you tilt the gun down and the shot just roll out?

MR. BRAMMER: Oh no, you put a wad in on top of it.

INTERVIEWER: Oh ^{top of} the shot?

MR. BRAMMER: Yeah, of the shot. And then go ahead and just ~~but~~ but didn't get--if you pound it down like we did that gun would kick something terrific! So a fella had to, my dad, he learned me how to do that. He said not to ever ~~get~~ get that shot down there like that he says, 'It'll kick ya and it'll knock ya clear over!'

INTERVIEWER: Well how do you think the 1893 depression compared to the 1930 depression?

MR. BRAMMER: Well it was a lot harder but in 1930, we had plenty to eat and everything here and there was some money there ^{at least} we could get. It didn't amount to much, just like I told ya, eggs seven cents a dozen and butter. They could go ahead and they just put it up, they didn't have any molds or nothing, they put it up in great big chucks. And the stores were just cut off and what they want from it. So that's the way we used

to put it up but finally then we had to quit it because the law said they didn't allow it anymore. But butter ~~the~~ same way, we wouldn't hardly get anything for it. But we was on the farm there. Well now you take our cream, we milked nine cows there and have a five gallon cream every once in awhile and we send it down with the mail carrier. He could carry that stuff. And we'd get ~~about~~ a dollar and a half to two dollars for a whole can of cream. That was all, well ~~at~~ least we got some money. Now in 1893, we didn't get that, there was no money. They just didn't have any. But those that did have it, why they kept it so tight that it didn't get out in the country. ~~At~~ least the stores I suppose and places, they had to have a little. But we never saw any of it. Of course Thirty, Twenty-nine, Thirty and Thirty-One there, it took a lot of farmers, they went broke. Lost their places and. . . ~~But probably,~~ you take the Potlatch Ridge there when we came here and ^{well} there were all the first settlers. They all disappeared. Every one of 'em sold out for a little or nothin' and they didn't make nothing here. No, I don't think there was hardly a one that stayed here, until the second ones came in and that's the ones that made it. Well it happened the same way in Canada, the same way in Montana, the first ones that got in there. They all went broke. But excepting I didn't, I got out in time and just by hip and tuck. Because we had a cycle in there that we used for good. And then they came--they hadn't gone back in places and some places, they were making all right but you take guy that the last town he was in; they hadn't come back.

INTERVIEWER: That was in Montana?

MR. BRAMMER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Well during the '93 depression, did you quit school or anything to help work and support the family?

MR. BRAMMER: When?

INTERVIEWER: In '93.

MR. BRAMMER: In '93, yeah. I was only a kid, I was, see I was born in '81 so ^{I was about 11, 12 years old} so ^{of course,} I had to help work, sure. We had to do something. Like I told you, we'd be in the flax field pulling weeds or we'd be hoeing beets for some farmer. I worked for two bits all day long and then in that flax, us kids, a whole string, maybe eight or ten kids get in there and they go through that flax field and pull the weeds and we worked from seven o'clock til six at night. That was all. ~~A~~ And we got thirty-five cents a day.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get it in cash or did you get it in . . .

MR. BRAMMER: Well sometimes you'd take a tray, it'd be once a week or maybe something else, fruit that they had, we'd take that. But otherwise we'd get some in cash but we wouldn't see any, ^{us kids.} The par-ents, they take that. We wouldn't know how to spend it. (chuckles) Well we didn't have a chance to spend it. We had a store there; yes, but just a little stuff, little groceries and stuff and a post office. That was all, so, but we didn't know, we always knew about if you could get a little bit of candy and we generally got that when we took the eggs and butter to Leland there and we'd get a nickel's worth of candy. ^{between us} There was two and three of them, the girls and then us two boys. ^{go in, we'd} We'd ~~carried~~ carried the eggs and butter down.

INTERVIEWER: What did you do for fun as a kid?

MR. BRAMMER: Huh?

INTERVIEWER: What did you do for fun in those days?

MR. BRAMMER: There was no fun in our life. We'd get together, just around the immediate neighborhood. Because we had ^{no} way of getting out unless we walked. Sure. But we never mixed with the kids downtown here and so on. Kendrick was a strange ^{TOWN} to us kids. We just didn't get there enough.

If I did get there, why I'd be scared to death, I'd stick right under father's wings. (chuckles) Because I wouldn't mix with no kids. Then in our neighborhood, why we'd visit together, we went all over. And we had a little, oh we played baseball, us bigger kids and so on. And that was fun but getting out, as far as seein' anything, like circuses or shows or something like that, there was no such thing.

INTERVIEWER: Well were you scared to go to Kendrick because it was a rough town or because it was a town at all?

MR. BRAMMER: I didn't like the kids. They knew so much more and they were too smart for me I thought. I just kind of ducked out. You know we didn't mix. If it was in our neighborhood, the ones we know, why we was fine, we'd get along all right. But these kids in town there, I know we went down one time down on the creek, we used to go fishing in Potlatch there. And we got clear into Kendrick and then the kids come in there and boy they got awful smart to us, going to lick us. Well since that time, I wouldn't go near. (chuckles)

INTERVIEWER: Well did they lick you or did you get away?

MR. BRAMMER: No, we got away. There was one of 'em especially, it was the Christisen kid out here that they called him. And he wanted to fight us. He wanted to beat us up. I got scared of him. No, we just didn't-- then anyway, going around, we never had a team of horses til I bought, til I went to farming. And I bought three head of horses. But you couldn't make anything at farming either because slow as it was, with your foot burner you know, you didn't stay on plowed high level ground. I had hay, I had some hay ground. And I seeded that and wild oats practically took the weeds unloaded it and balled it up. And Hauled it to Kendrick for nine dollar-s a ton. Well that was pretty good money in those days. But

you had to pay two dollars or three and a half for a bale. And then your wheat. It went around here from all the way from fifty to seventy cents-- that's about the price we got ^{for it.} We saw worse prices during the depression then. I sold wheat for twenty-one cents.

INTERVIEWER: During the second depression?

MR. BRAMMER: Yeah, in '30. That's when we ~~went~~ went back in the hole. I was farming pretty good in wheat then already and I lost seven hundred and fifty dollars of good money.

INTERVIEWER: How?

MR. BRAMMER: Yeah, that hurt.

INTERVIEWER: How did you lose it?

MR. BRAMMER: Crop didn't pay out. Twenty-one cents wheat and so on. We just have kids hoeing in the beans and we paid those a dollar ^{or a dollar} and a half a day. And so on. We kept agoin', we was startin' along to get along pretty good there from '21 on until the depression hit and then of course it caught lots of farmers short and no price, absolutely nothing. If you'd had a little of this five dollars bushel of wheat now, we'd been all right. But we didn't. I had a big crop. Today, if I'd a sold that crop today that I had there that year, I'd had twenty-five thousand dollars for it. So I run seven hundred and fifty dollars in the hole, ~~it~~ It just didn't work. But ^{it} I made ~~it~~. It's been so long. That's when we, when Delano Roosevelt got in, Franklin D. And he finally put the prices back up pretty well and the farm program got in and I took for that, I worked in that for nine years, in that program. But it got into politics, got away from it, the big men took all of it again. Of course you take the big farmers at that time, good grief, look at the money they got out of the government. But you take us small farmers, why they didn't get much! ^{out of it.} But when politics,

when Washington took over, I finally quit, ^{I think} I quit in '41 or '42. That's all the 142 ^I got cut out of it. And I said it's a recommendation to me, I says, that's the way it looks to me, I says, we're just dictated just exactly what to do and we can't say nothin'. Washington needs a pencil. It went all into politics. That's generally the way it goes ^{through} ^{with}, the government takes over everything. Generally runs in the hole. It's too much money.

INTERVIEWER: Why was it that your folks decided to leave Austria?

MR. Brammer: Huh?

INTERVIEWER: Why was it your folks decided to leave Austria.

MR. BRAMMER: Oh we were in Germany.

INTERVIEWER: Germany.

MR. BRAMMER: Yeah. Well I don't know. I was a year old but I suppose Father saw no chance ^{There, you know,} in Germany at that time and still is that way. If there is a son, the older one inherits the whole place. The rest of 'em got to see how to get along. And that's the way it was there. Well then the rest of 'em, they just have no future there, they have nothing to go on. So they all started for America because it took us fourteen days to get across. We was on the trip fourteen days. And it isn't like today, They start off in the morning there and in London by night, or nothing like that. Well we couldn't figure that out, that anything like that could happen. But it did.

INTERVIEWER: Did your folks ever tell you any stories or do you remember anything about the passage across?

MR. BRAMMER: No, they just told us that they was on fourteen days on the boat and so on. I'll tell ya as far as knowing anything about Germany, they never told us. I don't remember whether my father had any relatives there or not. They just didn't say nothing. Mother had, she had and she

had some sisters and brothers there and she told their names, she use-d to write to those. Well we knew those then. But we never saw 'em, We never. It was quite an undertaking for those there to go into a country that they didn't know or anything, and take off and come over here you know. And so we didn't get the best of it, because we landed in Hanover; I don't know how long we stayed there, I can't remember but I know August my brother was born there.

INTERVIEWER: In where?

MR. BRAMMER: August, my brother.

INTERVIEWER: No, where did you land?

MR. BRAMMER: He's passed on.

INTERVIEWER: WHERE DID YOU LAND?

MR. BRAMMER: In Hanover, Kansas. And I was born in Hanover, ^(Germany) and my brother was born in Hanover, ^{Kansas.}

Same name so I talked to a fella the other day ~~that~~ when I went uptown to have my hair cut. I was sittin' in the car and boy I get lots of company, them old timers. And so he wanted to know, he says, "I heard you landed in Hanover, Kansas." He said, "That was my hometown," and so on. He was there and he wanted to know if I knew anything, I said, I don't know nothing about Hanover, I said, I landed there when I was a year old and I says I think we went ^{out} up in a year or two and so I don't remember anything.

INTERVIEWER: Well was it near Hanover that you lived in the dugout?

MR. BRAMMER: No, that was in Bushton, Kansas. That was where my father homesteaded and took ^a pre-emption, and we could take a half section that way so that's what he did. That's when we lived in the dugout. We had a cellar, chicken house, our own plumbing, ^{all} ~~out~~ dugout. The whole thing right along the bank. So I can remember that. That's when I start to remember things.

INTERVIEWER: When you moved out from Kansas, were there a bunch of people that moved with you at the same time?

MR. BRAMMER: No, no, not--they came out there first. And then, yeah, there was a few of 'em, my father ^{knows}, they came out from Germany too. And they homesteaded out there and then they wanted him to go and that's why we got out there. But I don't remember whether there was any of 'em there. But in Bushton, Kansas, when we moved out of there, and we were there eight years I guess, so then there was lots of those people that asked us to come over in there, they moved out already. They started out. We hung out probably ^{quite} a little bit longer than they did, but her folks moved out, well they was in '90, '92, practically two years before we moved out. But FATHER, they wrote to him to come out ^{here} and ^{sell} his place. He didn't want to, He thought, "I want to see," he said, "I got into a bad mess here, /I'm going to see what it is." So he came out here a year before ^{left} us in Western Kansas, his family. So when he saw what was going on here and ^{everything,} what they could raise here and so on and liked the ^{climate} and every thing, ^(laughter) and so here we come, the next spring. But we didn't like the hills; we was scared of 'em. Mother, she wouldn't go, when she got up on top of ^{the} hill, she says, "I'll never go back to Kendrick." So well after awhile, she ^{wants,} she went many a time. (chuckle) But the first time when we went up on ^{that} Sperry(?) grade there and this other one was washed out, she walked up all the way and us kids did, ^{we} wouldn't ride on the wagon, ^{we} was scared to death.

INTERVIEWER: Well you settled in a colony that was pretty much a German town wasn't it?

MR. BRAMMER: Yeah, it was a German settlement. Same way ⁱⁿ Western Kansas see.

The Germans, always when they came from Germany, it was some of ^{their} relatives, and they all went in a German town. That's why I didn't get any school. Because I couldn't talk ~~any~~ English to amount ~~to~~ to anything ^{when} I was twelve years old. ^{I learnt it} after I got out here, we got to go a month or two to an English school. And that's the way it was with all the Germans, they had their German schools and that we learned, of course, we ~~was~~ in school there. They had more religious instruction than anything else, but we learned the reading and ~~our~~ arithmetic and whatnot. They've had that, you know. No, but I should of known ^{when} I got ^{to be} twenty-one, why it took me til in the 30's or 40's before I'd really catch up with it, you see. Because we had to make our own way, we never got one dollar from our folks, because they were poor. And we had to dig out our own way. So I think we done ^{pretty} good.

INTERVIEWER: ~~Was~~ During the war, did--was there much feeling against the German feeling because of the war with Germany?

MR. BRAMMER: Oh yes, ^{well} first, the German people ~~was~~, that changed the whole thing then. The German schools and whatnot. And children, they start to learn English, they was all talking English correctly then. But there were some of 'em, like her father, why he still stuck to the Germans and he felt that ^{the only way.} ~~was~~ ^{was} They were wrong on that because that year when we had to make our ^{future here} ~~future~~, we should of gone to English school and learned there. But we didn't. ~~Didn't happen~~. But when that World War came, why then they ~~thought~~ thought to preach German or English in our German, what they called the German church, you know. And so it finally went that ~~the~~ Germans were all out, there was no such thing anymore. I believe that a few southern states that we had they say that we don't know about here anymore. And we were pretty well grown up then when they finally all got through the English and we really had to learn it all over. Got mixed with different people, the American

people and we got their ways anyway. I always did fight for it, even when they had nothing but German, I always said you should learn the English. So finally when it did start, oh some of those old Germans, they were huffy. (chuckles) They had good ways, yes, but they should not, when they moved to this country, they shouldn't of stuck up that way for Germany.

INTERVIEWER: Well did anyone ever get into trouble for around the time of the war for sticking up for Germany?

MR. BRAMMER: Oh no, no, the people they knew ^{better} then, they all shut up. We kids, we wasn't in trouble, oh there were some of 'em, they were rough to us, yes, they'd talk awful nasty about it but we never had anything bad happen there. They did tear down the American flag up at Cameron there that we had on our school there and it was tore down there and promptly tore to pieces in the mud and they blamed it to be ^{these} Germans. ^{on it} Well, they didn't do it. I know who practically done it. ^{They found out.} They did such things to get 'em into trouble. And then about liberty bonds, they got pretty nasty about that. It wasn't liberty bonds, ^{it was} they forced it on to us, that was it. (End of Side A)

INTERVIEWER: What do you mean, they forced liberty bonds on you?

MR. BRAMMER: Well, they'd just tell you, you had to buy so many. So I had bought some; before I got through with all of it, ^{before the war got through.} I had twelve hundred dollars worth of liberty bonds. And they told you that you had to buy so many; that's your problem and if you don't, ^{why} the government will take yo^uur clothes and your property and everything else. So some of 'em came around that way. I didn't get scared of 'em, and I went to work and I talked with the judges and to the people down there and "what about that?" They says, "There's no such thing, don't listen to those people." They says, "They're just trying to make trouble." So I got out of it but I took some liberty bonds. But then after we had our liberty bonds and cashed them in afterwards, you got

eighty percent, see. The government trimmed 'em right down. We didn't get our money back. That was wrong too.

INTERVIEWER: That was the first world war or the second?

MR. BRAMMER: First world war. And the First World War, that was the one that done that. I went to work and I traded in ~~twenty~~-two hundred and fifty dollars in Montana on the oil business, they were digging for oil there. So I held those about six months and I made double on those, I got double back on those so I thought that was a pretty good deal. So a fella told me, he knew a mine, I trusted him and I had known him for a long time and bought land with him and so he says, "I know you can make money on this," so I've ^{the whole thing} invested [^] and went in debt again. I lost 'em.

INTERVIEWER: Another mine?

MR. BRAMMER: Yeah, digging an oil well. So I lost it, because it didn't turn out. So I didn't gain anything there.

INTERVIEWER: When you set yourself up in farming, what did you do? How did you go about it?

MR. BRAMMER: About what?

INTERVIEWER: How did you go about setting yourself up in farming when you started farming here? You had some money from your land investment?

MR. BRAMMER: Well, I didn't have ^{any} money myself. But I had borrowed money, or given to me, I didn't borrow it, I didn't draw any, but four hundred dollars of it, ^I worked [^] out. I paid off on the help, I helped pay off on the place there. So by the time I got ready to farm, I had this four hundred dollars for the folks and when I owned a farm, they set me up, they paid me the money back you see, so I could buy that and that's where I bought my horses and my machinery. And that's the way I got started.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of machinery did you buy?

MR. BRAMMER: Well, just walking plow and harrow and a disc and whathaveyou, a wagon and a buggy. And I don't know what else. there was. But we didn't have too much machinery there then, to harvest with. I had a mower and I had a binder. I bought me a binder—a second-handed one. Well it was all practically second-hand. So that's the way I got started but it's just like I told~~ya~~, I think I told ya once before, it was three or four years before I went to Canada then. And I just came out even. I didn't make no money all those four years. Not, no gain, whatsoever. But I was in the business. That was like the Nigger on the Missouri River, he'd pay so much for hay on one side of the river and then he ferried it across and sold it for the same thing and the fella said, "you can't make money that way." "No, but I'm in business." (laughter) So that was about the way it was with me. . . So in Montana, we stayed the first winter, we stayed at Moore, Montana. And we homesteaded just forty miles out north of Moore. And we built us a car-roof house, twelve by fourteen or sixteen, what it was. Just for the car roof. And--

INTERVIEWER: A roof of a car on it?

MR. BRAMMER: Yeah, just like a car you know. These round, say he put a twobysix across there and ^{then} he put a three-eight, or ten in the center and bend your board too you see. And then put tar paper over it. That's the house we had. So when we was ready to move out on the homestead, I had bought between my brother and myself, we bought four head of horses, five. Took a front wagon and a couple of big poles and set that house on there, that old shack and let the poles, they was dragging behind, I only had it on the front wheels put the four horses on and away on across the prairie. Forty miles. I didn't make it the first day, I had to camp on the road.

I had everything, a little feed and everything in the house so I could feed the horses. And when I got there at the homestead, there was a little snow had fallen that night. And I didn't know exactly where to go, where it was. So I pulled in there and I ~~set~~ that thing down and I said "this must be it... right in here somewhere." And you know after we moved out there and after I saw it, I got three feet over the line off of my homestead. If I had left with two or four feet the other way, I'd have been on the other side. (chuckles)

INTERVIEWER: When you were farming here in the early days, what would a usual workday be like?

MR. BRAMMER: Oh, We worked almost any ^{time} of the day. We had no hours like they use now you know. ^{The working was not organized like he is now, you know.} Because if you take a farmer, if you hire for a farmer--I hired out here at Genessee, German town to a farmer for twenty dollars a month and actually _____ that man would stir you ~~at~~ out at four o'clock and would let you get in that field and ^{he} make you stay with it til seven, eight o'clock, if you didn't stop. Well, I worked many time for twelve, thirteen hours a day. We had no rules and regulations and that was the way the farmers wanted it and you should abide by it. ^{course}

I didn't stay with 'em too long, I guess I worked there from the early end of spring til harvest time. And then I worked for his brother on the thrash^{ing} machine. He had a thrash^{ing} machine there. So I worked for him. And then afterwards, I worked for him, ^{general farm work,} ~~John~~ _____ the whole year around. But that man was just different that his brother. When six o'clock came, he said, "you throw those tugs there, don't you go around another field." He was just the opposite, he wouldn't let ya get out there til about seven o'clock and at six, he'd quit. So I liked him so much better, But his brother, oh he worked an outlaw for that. (chuckles)

INTERVIEWER: Did they ever try to organize the farm workers around here?

MR. BRAMMER: Oh no, it would never happen to us, I'll tell you, the first organization that came in ^{to it}, why that was when the big factories and like the cars and railroads and so on, they started that. Farmers absolutely, they hadn't got any organization to speak of. Because they tried it but still they --it's too much money, the farmer does not hire. With these modern machineries and that, you know, he can do ~~so~~ much more work than we used to. Well, they had to hire, well they won't now. Some of 'em just hire a year around, big farmers, but smaller farmers, they just can't afford to have a hired man. They can now with their prices they've got, I think.

INTERVIEWER: Well I was told in some parts of the county, the IWW's came in and tried to organize some of the farm workers.

MR. BRAMMER: Oh yeah, they tried awful hard. That was quite a layout there then. ~~When~~ they came in. So when Roosevelt came in, why he started the CCC camps. Well, I don't think they were paying 'em too much but they did stay, they had a little work and could live. But they--I remember, I remember here in the woods, they tried to organize, you'd find ~~gangs~~ on the road there and they'd stop ya. It was gettin' up where we were gettin' cars you know and things. And you went to work and they'd stop you on the road and wanted to know where you were going or what you're going to do and so on. And they want you to join 'em. And so I never paid much attention, it really ^{it} never was in the farmin' community, they couldn't get in there, it was out in the ~~big~~ bigger outfits where they were. Railroads and so on. I remember, see, I was in Colorado one year, two, that was when I was a kid, eighteen years old. And I went out there and they told me I could make ~~lots of~~ ^{lots of} money out there, work for wages and so on. So I went out there and when I got there, there was a hundred and sixty men to one job. (chuckles) We almost

we worked all winter. I finally got a place on a ranch there and worked out for twenty dollars a month. And so then I went, after I quit: there I was going up get in the railroad from Mainline to Ca Cowin, Colorado, the sugar factory in there and they had a twenty or thirty mile road to build so I went up in there and got here and I worked on that railroad. And I had, my mother gave me blankets and quilts and stuff you know for and bedding, ^{we} and I had to carry that, and we'd roll it up and away we'd go on our ~~bike~~, ^{back,} and ^{walk} ~~work~~ up and down the railroad tracks. So I worked for that railroad camp there, got in there and I worked there one week and I got a lousy as a pet soon. We had to turn our blankets over every night to search so they wouldn't catch you right away, those bugs. Well ^{I was just as} ~~had a~~ lousy as could be, I had a friend there, he was that way. I left all my coats, ^{my} blankets, ^{that I had and I throwed everything out} and clothes and ~~folded up everything else~~ and I went to town and took a bath and washed and bought all new stuff. And throwed everything away. And it took me about two months to get rid of ^{it} ~~em~~ though. Yeah, ^{that} I say was that the laboring men ^{should} organize because it was, ^{why} ~~well~~ they didn't treat you HUMAN. That's the way the railroad was at that time. Well I say, when these automobiles factories and everything came in it was ^{time} ~~fine~~ for them to, or they take a dVANTAGE of that you.

INTERVIEWER: But the labor troubles then, never really hit this part of the county then?

MR. BRAMMER: Huh?

INTERVIEWER: The labor troubles never really hit this part of the county?

MR. BRAMMER: No, we never, we never really had trouble here. The farmers really didn't. They never did at all. It was for these big companies to organize. And they had a right to. They didn't ^{treat} 'em right because the railroad I know for one, it was bad. ^{one you take} when this road washed out here, at

the railraod, they got a bunch of men in there. And they were all a bunch of winos, the whole bunch of 'em. And you know they ^{'d} worked those people, ^{why} well it wasn't human the way they treated 'em. They ~~didn't~~ get much for it and so on. And then I guess all they wanted was if they could get a little wine and that was all. And ^{until} they got organized up at _____ and it was a good thing ^{that labor stuck up for them,} they did, ~~they had little respect for the _____.~~ But that's all gone now. ^{for me} I say ~~we've gone too far on the other~~ ~~want to farm on the riverside~~ too. ^{At least} I see it that way.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever hear about an organization around here called the Farmer's Union?

MR. BRAMMER: Well, there was unions, the farmer unions and different things. But you know, the farmer, never, never got organized. They tab one of the farmer's grain and so on. Well they really don't accomplish too much. It's more of a social get-to-gether to my notion because we just never got too far on that. They want me to join the grange, ^{but my boys did} I didn't. ^I But as far as improving the labor, I don't think they helped much. And the farmer's Union, ~~_____~~ It was a small group, they never, never got anywhere.

INTERVIEWER: Well, the way I heard the Farmer's Union, was one of the things they did was they kind of a, they had a store that they ran where you could exchange stuff, you could get good prices on stuff.

MR. BRAMMER: Yeah, well they do buy, they still have, My boys, both of 'em are working in on the sto-re down there at Snake River down there now. Where they buy it cheaper, they had a kickback on it. So that's about all but as far as labor on the farm, there is no such thing. Because you can't go ahead and have labor work eight hours a day and says "I'm through, I quit." The farmer can't stand that, when he's got his crop there, he worked for all year, whether it's twelve hour work or whether it's fourteen,

you've got to get in and work. That's why he does it himself with that big machinery they've got now and they can't use organized labor like that. I know. I had boys, when I stacked my beans, I was thrashing, one Saturday night up there. And then they said they had an organization to do everything. And so when six o'clock came, I had a bottom of a piece there. ^{Just left. It} They couldn't take over an hour or so. ^{Stuck} ~~Set~~ down their fork and quit. Of course, they were only kids. I told 'em, I said Boys, go ahead, it looks like rain and I says, It'll all be a mess, ^{so do this.} ~~so~~ ^{move this.} But they wouldn't move. So one of the brothers came over, he was going to get that boy home that Saturday night and boy if he didn't go out and he made both of 'em work til they got that cleaned up. So he knew what farming was. But them two kids, they just figured, well that's it. So that's the only trouble I ever had with fellas. That one time. And they were boys, I guess ^{maybe} they just wanted to show their authority but they didn't ^{go through with it.} (chuckels) That brother of ^{his} he was an older boy already and when he came, he said, "You kids can too." And he says, You take that fork there and put ^{those} things ^{there.} ^{He says "I'll run that fork through you!"} So they went right to work, cleaned up the leaves. That's the only trouble I ever had with labor.

INTERVIEWER: When you were out in Colorado, did you run across many hobos, you said that time you were sort of a hobo yourself?

BRAMMER: Oh yes, there was hobos everywhere carrying their bedding and so on. And I tell you, it was pretty rough there.

INTERVIEWER: In what way?

MR. BRAMMER: Well, you just couldn't get work and shucks, if you didn't have anything or didn't--I happened to get in with a family there that figured it was home for them you know and they took care of me mostly. Otherwise, I'd have starved to death, unless somebody helped me. Because I was only eighteen

years old and I went down to Walla Walla and started harvesting down there, they were earlier, Then came up here to Colfax and finally came over to Pullman and harvest and then I figured on coming home. And so a fella, he was from Colorado and he said to me, "You come on to Colorado, there's good jobs over there. I've been over there." So I took his word for it but shuck-s, there wasn't none. The first job we went to was on a rock quarry out in Moore Montana--no, what was the name, I forgot. At least it was up there on the mountains and when I got there why I looked like a young kid and he says "This work is too heavy for ya and you can't do it, we can't use ya." And so they kicked me out And I went to Denver that night and so the next day I was sitting in the park there. I got out and looked around the park and here come a fellow from --he had a ranch out there seven miles from Denver and he said, "Are you looking for work?" And I said yes. He says, "I can use ya." Twenty dollars a month. Well, so I went out there, I worked that winter and I got along fine but the next spring when I figured I was going out and make more money why shucks, I couldn't do it. Just too many men. Finally I went to Longmont, Montana and got into the brick yard. And we had to make five thousand bricks a day and I was out there drying in the fields you see. I had three molds, what you call molds, three brick what they mold into it, they ^{mud, they} just slap it in and cut it with a wire and then I carried it on to the field and dump it and have rows there and let the sun dry 'em and then put 'em into the kiln and then we had to burn 'em. So I made good there, I got three dollars and a half a day. So that was good money at that time. And I got enough money to get home again and I hit for home. (chuckles) But there was no organization of labor at all. Maybe in the great big cities back East, I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: That was during a kind of during the depression time wasn't it or was it between depression?

MR. BRAMMER: No, that was--we was out of the depression and everything, it was a normal year. But uh it was that way. WE had hobos all the time. Now we had hobos when we came down here in '41 where the boys lived, where they lives now. Why we had hobos practically every day coming and in and asking for a sandwich or somthing. Carrying their little bundle, bedding and so on. They were people just shifting around all the time. Of course we got into the war then, the Second World War, you see and ~~then~~ ^{then} things perked up again. We got 'em pretty good but I had quit farming and, one of us was farmin'. Ernie had to go to war. He went in the Navy for ~~over~~ over four years.

INTERVIEWER: Well was it the war that kind of brought the country out of that depression do you think?

MR. BRAMMER: Well, the--~~in~~ the first place, when the war was on, we got pretty good prices. We had come out of it again. You could farm, it wasn't too big. It wasn't nothing like the first world war. But at least--

INTERVIEWER: Were there real good prices in the first world war?

MR. BRAMMER: Oh yes, yes, there was good prices. Well the way things went up, we couldn't believe it you know. But ~~we~~ we was selling hogs for two and a half an-d three cents a pound, live weight. Well we got six, ~~eight~~ eight cents, well we thought that was something terrific. Well it was. But not what we had been used to. And beans, they got up to ten, twelve cents, that ~~seems~~ Well ; Wheat got up to couple dollars a bushel. And then of course after the war, everything went phooey. After, let's see, 1890, no, it was 1918 when the war quit and uh then gradually ran down ^{struck here.} until the depression ⁿ. And then we were ~~in~~ trouble again. Because ^s I worked for, I don't know about

this one, if it ever does crash, it's going to be rough. Because we're out of line with everything, such things as five dollars a bushel for wheat and so on. And the labor, the way it is, you'd get one of 'em here for say plumber or electrician or something like that. It's outrageous. You just can't afford it. The common people can't afford it. It's too much money. I always say they can't earn it. Now you take plumbers, I suppose they charge five or six dollars an hour.

INTERVIEWER: They charge more than that.

MR. BRAMMER: Yeah. Well maybe more than that, so that's ^{out of line} we're gonna be like Germany I feel. That our money won't be worth anything anymore. ; That's what's going to happen and then look out. Then the times will be hard. And we're not going to get anybody to help us like Germany did. WE went over there and we helped them out. ^{right away} And I look for it, I hope I won't see it anymore.

It's out of line, everything is out of line. But I say it for the old folks, the Social Security, it's been an awful boost for the old folks otherwise. There have been old folks here that absolutely couldn't make it because nowadays the children, they will not take care like they used to. The old folks, they used to stay in, where the daughter was, if she got married, ^{or so on} then the mother or father, whoever passed on, why the one that stayed there, why he'd take care of ^{the} home. And my mother, she was thirty three years with her daughter. And she didn't have no money, she couldn't go nowhere. She never went to a hos-pital and I don't think she--I don't know how often she had a doctor there. Hardly any.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think families in general, were a lot tighter in communities and groups and things were a lot more cooperative ^{in a} in these days.

MR. BRAMMER: Oh yes, you take ^{in a} any community, now you take my father, died in 1913, he didn't have an undertaker. There were no such things. Mother

did, she died in '46. Well, she had an undertaker, we saw to that. But it wasn't quite as rough as it is now. NOWdays, good grief! It costs you an awful lot for a funeral. But still, the law itself, is not, you can go ahead and don't have to you, If you've got a doctor ^{to} ~~that~~ says that that person is dead, you can go ahead and bury 'em wherever you want to, whether it's on your own land or ^{what} ~~not~~. Because the law can't stop ya. ^{from doing it.} Now we used to--there's two children right in our place that we found up there. Two children layin' right on top of the hill, we don't know their graves anymore. ^{We work over 'em, you see} there used to be picket fences around for a longtime. But we find ^{lots of} ~~out~~ the people that had been buried-over here.

(END OF INTERVIEW)

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