

WILLA CUMMINGS CARLSON
Sixth Interview

Interviewed by:
Sam Schragar

Oral History Project
Latah County Museum Society

I. Index

II. Transcript

I. Index

WILLA CUMMINGS CARLSON

American Ridge, Troy; b. 1896

school teacher

1.7 hours

(also present: Mavis Lee Utley, daughter)

minute	page	
Side A		
00	1	Attending Chautauqua in Lewiston.
06	3	Father allowed her to go to Lewiston to Normal School if she'd pay her own way, while mother would have had her stay at home. Boys were preferable to girls for their field labor. The family fruit dryer. The cider press – the neighbors came for vinegar. She went to church by herself. He helped poor and neighbors.
23	9	Neighbors pulled his house to new location. He stored seed corn in the house. Neighbors stole and drank his hard cider. Poor families received little sympathy unless they were working farmers. Contributions to a poor family.
Side B		
00	12	Cereal from fresh-ground flour; hand mills.
04	14	They moved to Idaho County because of husband's ambition to own a cattle ranch. He underestimated the problem of caring for children; he wanted her at home, but she needed to teach. Her love of Latah County. Her ambivalent feelings about their place in Idaho County.
12	17	In Idaho County people were on an equal footing in their struggle. Her importance to Idaho County community. Helping out for families on American Ridge. She saved all her money to go to Lewiston School – \$50. Harder work at home. A dinner she didn't want to cook.
20	21	Importance of going to school. Her prayers to leave home. Arrangements to get room-and-board. Her mother wouldn't allow her to pick fruit in Juliaetta; mother never took her measure. Preparation to go.
27	23	Her friendship with Raymond Harland; his encouragement when she started school. Her initial loneliness in Lewiston. Parents sent her exact fare to come home at Thanksgiving.
Side C		
00	25	Work for room and board. Country vs. city: sophistication of the elite. Friendship with the woman she'd previously kept house for. Desire to be knowledgeable. Putting people at ease. Learning in Lewiston.

Willa Cummings Carlson

minute page

Side C (continued)

18 29

Importance of adequate training before teaching. Ability in school made her friends. Schooling and certificates.

Side D

00 38

Children proceeded at their own pace in her one-room schools. Combining subjects.

03 39

She helped the doctor recognize a boy's paralysis as caused by a tick. A drunk neighbor who beat his sons when drunk.

(12 minutes)

with Sam Schrager

January 15, 1976

II. Transcript

W C: ...So, I don't know when ^{those} Chataquas came in to Troy. I don't know.

But, but I went after I got going to school, to high school down in Troy and I don't think they'd been there before. They talked about a Chataqua, I think it was brand new when the Chataqua came around, but I don't know what I was going to say it was, but it was in the early 1900's. In 1900. I don't know if it was early. I never got a chance to get away from home to go to anything before 1910. Well they didn't have them, wait, I'm getting ahead. I went to Lewiston to school and went to summer school in Lewiston and that's the first Chataqua I attended. And that after that there were Chataquas in Troy. I don't believe it did come to small towns before that. I think they hit Lewiston and Moscow, probably. I don't know about Moscow. But I went to them in Lewiston and I thought, "My, how wonderful they were." And they gave the students at the Normal school a special rate for a ticket. It just so happens that I had a chance to help a woman with two card parties, with the refreshments. Don't let that go on the record. But I got money to go. I think it was only a dollar and a half got a season ticket. And we had three or four days. And there were all kinds of speeches. There were speeches for educational reasons and then there were speeches for inspiration. Then of course they were discussed by the teachers from the Normal that were there, and they had pretty good teachers at that time.

SAM: Discussed after?

W C: After we had heard them.

SAM: Discussed in class?

W C: Well, they wouldn't discuss them very much in class as a lesson. But they would mention them and ask us about the highlights and what we liked about them. I can't remember much about them, to be honest with you.

SAM: How were the Chataquas set up?

W C: In tents. In a big Chataqua tent. And they had their people come and I don't know where they stayed. I wasn't looking at the machinery of anything at that time. But I think they stayed in the hotel. And they went right on to

the next place, you know. They weren't traveling in cars then from place to place. Not right then at the first ones. First time I went to Lewiston to school was 1914. In the summer.

SAM: What were they like?

W C: There was music. There was a varied program of lectures and music. The music I remember it was the first time I ever heard the Swiss Yoderlers. There was a group of Swiss yoderlers came and there was a background sketch. And those sketches I loved because they told us something that most of us were shy of to hear about how these people lived. Then there were Scotch Highlanders and they came in their Scot Highlanders, they came in their kilts and their bagpipes. That's where I first heard the bagpipes was ^{at a} Chataqua. And for music, that's what they had. And they had a symphony orchestra and if I had been a little bit more musically inclined or been let's say a little bit more musically talented,

SAM: So they were all apart of the Chataqua.

W C: Oh, it was a program. And you subscribed to the Chataqua. The Chataqua people had their program planned when they came, one after another. On Monday you'd have certain things. And Tuesday and Wednesday. There were three days of it, I remember. And you took the regular program. And they went on from Lewiston, well they went on to the next place. Went on down the river, I suppose, I don't know where they went. But eventually they wound up ^{at} Portland, I suppose. And, but, Idaho, I don't know, they might have gone on to Salt Lake, because Utah has long been on that program. I don't know, ~~at~~ that time. I wasn't so interested. I was interested in getting to the Lewiston Normal and getting some credits so I can get to teaching. And I was interested in that. Very young. And more than young, I was very inexperienced. I didn't know how to find out things.

SAM: Well that was your first time away from American Ridge wasn't it?

W C: Uh huh. It was.

SAM: What was it like to be living in Lewiston on your own?

W C: It certainly wouldn't be typical if I told you what I went through. It would have been very untypical. I went down there, I found out my folks could not pay me, could not pay for my board and they told me that. And my mother wasn't going to allow me to go away from home. She needed me at home. She needed me in the house, she had little children and she didn't see how she was going to be able to do it, and she didn't want me to go. Papa said, "We don't have the money, but if you have found a way to go down there and pay for your board and go to school," he said, "you can go." I won't stop you." He said, "I won't say you can't go." And he said to my mother, "And I don't want you to, either." That's how I got to go. If I'd have listened to my mother, I'd have been on the American Ridge yet, digging away, possibly covering up the graves and things like that. Caring for them. She had no ambition for me. She had personal ambition, but ^{my mother} did not have any for me. But that's neither here nor there. That's not to be on record. I'm sorry I brought such a thing up.

SAM: Well, what I've been interested in lately is what family life was like. Often I get the feeling that kids were not considered important like they are these days.

W C: They didn't come first in the privileges that they extended to them, but they were regarded as another means...

MAVIS O'Leary: Work force.

W C: Yes, they were the labor force. They couldn't hire labor and so here was a labor force. I remember that papa was very disgusted to know that the child next to me was a boy. He was four years younger than I and that was wonderful. ^{There} was a son. And of course he was spoiled as bad as could be. He was given many privileges as a child, even papa gave him privileges, although not as many as my mother extended ^d to him. Then after him there were three girls and everyone of them was a keen disappointment.

SAM: What's the advantage of having a boy?

W C: Field labor. Farm labor. And it was still found upon to put girls out to do ⁱⁿ too much of it. Not many girls went out and worked with horses and machinery. Not many. Some did. I didn't. I was a coward. I was afraid of horses.

SAM: Do you think you could have done it if you'd been willing to do it?

W C: I might have. I might have worked with the horses if I'd a been willing, yes. I had sort of a suspicion I would ~~but I didn't want to~~. But I wouldn't not milk a cow. I made up my mind I would not milk a cow. So I got a mental block. I'd squeeze on the tits and nothing would come. Never did come for me. Never did. I never made any milk come.

SAM: Sounds like you didn't fancy yourself too much of a manual worker.

W C: I didn't realize it then, but I really didn't think of myself as small, but I really was small. I had small hands. ~~I~~ was fat, I got fat, but, ate too much, I suppose. Too much of the wrong thing. We certainly had lots of rich food. That's one thing we had plenty of.

SAM: What did the family eat when you were kids?

W C: We ate everything. We had the finest garden in the world. I've never seen a better garden, a ~~home~~ home garden than what we had. We had a home orchard, we had all kinds of ~~fruit~~. We dried the fruit and we canned fruit. All summer. And it wasn't very long, ^{before} I wasn't too large when they learned how to can vegetables. At first they didn't know how to can vegetables. I can remember when my mother canned corn with a compound she bought, Mrs... well, it wasn't Lydia Pinkham. It was a compound of some sort she bought, and put in the jars. And they were all a little bit afraid to eat it for fear it might be poisonous. It might contaminate the food some way. But it didn't. We ate it, as I remember it and I've lived to a good old age.

NU: Did they dry corn then?

W C: Oh, we dried corn. How I liked dry corn. And to this day, dried corn is

much more tasty to me than canned corn.

MV: It is me too, but I haven't had it for years.

SAM: Was there any special setup they used for drying corn?

W C: Well, not particularly. We had the one. We were particularly lucky. We had a home dryer for prunes. And it was a little shed-like building, built up oh, I don't know how many feet it would be. About six by six, I imagine. I think it was about six by six. And then possibly eight feet tall. And then a roof over it, and [^] raised, elevated underneath it so there was air in there. And then in the middle of that thing was an old heating stove. Pot bellied. But it was an iron stove. Papa wouldn't [^] hve anything else because he wanted, well, safety. He didn't want it to burn down. But, and it was in the orchard, up to this dryer, quite a ways. I romanticized it. I romanticize it now in my memory. But it was very unromantic to look at. ^{to look upon} It wasn't as romantic as it might have been to me, but at the time, because some things did grow up under it. If it wasn't a very noxious weed, Papa didn't mind so much, but any noxious weeds got to growing around there, we had to clean them out, snakes or no snakes. But otherwise, there were enough green things grew up under there, you know, make it look kind of nice, look like carpet under there. And I could imagine all sorts of things. If I remember, there was usually a frog under there. I ^{liked to} chase him out ^{hear} him, holler. But snakes harbored there, you know.

SAM: Right under there?

W C: Sure. It was up on legs. I should have said that. ^{too} For each corner there was a post and we called them legs. ^{sitting up on legs ^} They could have been easily pulled out. I don't know, they sold that dryer to somebody. ^{and take it out.} So somebody did come eventually, [^]

SAM: So there wasn't a whole floor?

W C: There was a whole floor in it, up above that. There was a floor and ^{then} the posts were just at the corner and they went down. Oh, yes, it was well built. Nothing on my father's farm was not well built. The chicken house was

wonderfully built. Neighbors used to come in to see how it was built. Nothing was built sloppily, not there. He wasn't like that.

SAM: In those days did you dry other things besides prunes and corn?

W C: Yes, we dried apples. But the apples didn't dry in there very nicely. Mama did put them in there but she didn't like ^{them} the way they dried. I can't remember what the difference was, but they don't dry the same process as prunes do. ^{But} prunes, you know, you dipped them in lye water and ^{went} through a routine. It was no small job to dry prunes. And that was bad enough, dipping them in lye water. I never had to do that. I had to make cider. A Wallyn was asking about cider the other day. He wanted to get a cider press. And I laughed and said, I wonder what became of our old cider press. And he was horrified to learn that we ^{id} ever had a cider press. And I said, we certainly did and I didn't care to have it. We made it and not for the making of cider, course, we drank a little cider when we first got it made, it was fresh. And brought ¹ the apples down there and had all the washtubs out and I think we borrowed ^a washtubs extra. We had to pick up the apples, shake the tree. Papa would come around and shake the trees, I wasn't big enough to shake them. (Get that cream there).

M U: You want some?

W C: Just a spoonful, make this more tasty for me.

SAM: He would shake the apples off the tree?

W C: Shake the apples and my brother and I would pick them up, bucket after bucket and put them in tubs. And then we drew, I drew the water out of the cistern. My brother wasn't big enough and strong enough ^{yet to draw the water}. I was four years older. I drew the water out of the well. And we carried it out there and poured it over the apples, you were supposed to wash them, and we got a ^{new} broom and we shook them around, I can imagine it wasn't done too well, but oh, a ^o couple of times it was done right. Did that some more. He showed up how. Maybe our dad, he got pretty particular about the cider. And of course

we had to pick out the leaves and throw them out. And then we put them through the grinder. Well, Orville liked to grind, so he ground a lot. He did just about as much, only he got tired of it, whenever he got tired of it, you do it. ^{He WAS} like that. And, but he did pretty well for a little kid, I think. Wish I had him back.

SAM: So the grinding was the main part?

W C: Oh, I don't know. We ground it and it went down into the baskets. And they were made of "cleats" Papa called them. I don't know what they were. Like lathe, pieces like lathe. ^{little thicker than lathe.} And very smooth. They'd been cleaned and everything. Very smooth. And then they were wired from the top. I'm afraid my coffee's going to spill. 'Bout so high, you see. Oh, no, that wasn't the height. This ^{about} was the height. ^{of 'em} And then so ^{far} from the top. And there'd be a wire that went around, and passed over them and was twisted and ^{on there} on to another one and then there was a crack left between them. You get the idea? How these lathes, all around, four walls of them with the cracks in between. And then they were leveled off so the tops and the bottoms were level. And there was a lid that went on the top. And of course, the bottom was left at the bottom. And that fitted into the bottom of this press that held them and it also held the ring that had the grinder, ^{on there} that had the mill on the side of the cider mill. And at the top there was a hopper that we had to put the apples into.

M U: You ground apples then?

W C: We put the plain apples in there.

M U: I see.

W C: In the hopper, to grind them. And then they ground and went down into the stuff. And the juice squeezed out all around ^{among} those cleats. And we were supposed to grind that until we got it down to not very much ^{trash} left in the bottom of it. And then, I don't remember, we had to clean that out. I don't know. Seems to me we had to have help with that.

SAM: Did you make very much cider?

W C: Yes. We made two barrels full at least. And ^{then a lot of} the neighbors would come in and maybe they'd have a gallon or two gallons made. And I rebelled against that, making it for the neighbors. *LAZY things.*

SAM: Then not everybody had a cider press?

W C: ^{it seems} Nobody. ^{near us} Nobody had a cider press. But our vinegar, er, our cider was made with vinegar.

SAM: That's what it was made for?

W C: And when it got to be vinegar, ^{then} the neighbors all came with their gallon buckets to get a gallon of vinegar ⁱⁿ jugs, jars. And all the ^{near} neighbors got it.

SAM: Did your father sell it to them?

W C: I don't think he ever got a cent. My father fed more people than any man on American Ridge. And I just got up and fight any time that I hear how much the church did for people out there. Because the church was good and I love the church, I liked them and they were good to me and they did lots for me. So I never say anything against them, except in so far as saying that the church did so much for people who lived out there and they left papa out 'cause he never had anything to do with the church. He himself never did. He never went to church, but he saw to it that if I wanted to go, I went. I was to go, I was to be free to go, 'cause I walked over a mile to church and back. He didn't hitch up and take me or anything like that not until after I was married and went home to visit and then did I want to go to church, then I could have anything I wanted. ^{Any longer.} And it didn't matter. But that's the way things go. But anyway, he never interfered with my going to church. But somebody starting in the community, so ~~they~~ went around to collect food. And the folks gave, always butchered, we grew up on pork and he butchered the average of eight hogs all together in the winter and then maybe a pig or two, as he called them in the fall, before it got cold enough to keep ^{meat}. And they had for use. Table use. And so besides that,

we consumed quantities of pork.

SAM: The family that was starving...

W C: He gave meat. They get a ham and then they'd get a great big, my mother owned a, how much lard she had to render, what a job that was. That was terrible. They rendered^x on top of the stove and inside the stove. All that grease and stuff. And there were as many cracklins[^] left over, grind up the cracklins, we kids would grind up the cracklins and she'd make soap even out of the cracklins, that weren't burned. But they didn't make such good soap. He'd kill a calf a year. He wouldn't eat meat himself, but my mother liked it and they'd give the neighbors some. And after a while, not during the first years, but after a while, they^{learned to} can the beef. And that made good meat. My that made good meat. And we canned.

SAM: The lard that she rendered, was it mostly used for soap?

W C: No, ^{the} lard was used for cooking, of course. We weren't like the Chinese or ^{like} the Jews who wouldn't use pork. It was used. So if I'm defiled, I'm defiled, 'cause I certainly grew up on pork and on lard. (Pause in tape)

W C:.....back to ^{the} vinegar. Now when, everybody knew we made that cider and we stored it in what we called the old house. We didn't call it the smoke house like other people did. And that old house, I said papa was very particular about everything he had there. Well, he had painted on the outside to make it look a little bit better. But he bought forty acres. Actually eighty acres mostly for pasture and there was a field on top. I think he only got about fifteen acres of good land and an old house on it. And they brought the old house over, oh, the neighbors came over on their horses and so on and pulled it over, course, that's nothing to tell about, it quite a thing...

SAM: Well, it is

W C: A whole day's proceedings.

SAM: Sounds like a whole neighborhood was pulling together to get something done.

W C: It was a community thing. And papa was very popular with his neighbors and they were always ^{glad} to help him out because he always helped them out with everything they did. And he helped them in more ways and they always appreciated. But anyway, they came and helped him with their horses. I don't know how many horses they had out there. Sixteen, I think. And they brought that old house over and stood it in the yard. And that white house ^{out there} on the otherside of the well, you know. We still call it the old house.

SAM: Did they have a party to go along with that? Was there a feed with that?

W C: Yes, I think they did. They came into the house to have something to eat. They didn't come and sit down so I think it was around the table and so on. I don't suppose I was in there. That's why I don't know. We were all out around. But I'm sure they did, 'cause they all ate.

SAM: So it was a pretty major undertaking.

W C: It took the whole afternoon. I don't believe they came until noon, or afternoon. But they did have lunch. And I don't remember of partaking in the lunch. We kids got in the way, you know, we'd have been shouted out, hurried out to some other place.

SAM: So that's where you stored things?

W C: That's where we had things stored. People had smoke houses to store things in. We had a little bit of a house, we didn't have room to store anything. Papa stored a lot of things he had no business to store in that house. I hated it. Never could make the front room look like anything 'cause he always had seed corn or something drying in back of the stove. And things like that, 'cause it was important to him, that was next years crop. It wasn't important to me. The thing that was important to me was that the house look like something. And I remember how I hated that stuff. But its a good thing he didn't store the vinegar in there. But he couldn't have stood the smell himself if that was there. Well, he locked it up in there, in the old house, because, and he'd send me out after onions and I'd have to take the

key and unlock the house. That was after it got to be vinegar. Because he ^{he} ~~hard~~ that people had said that they were going to come in, they decided to come in and have a party. And they did, sometimes. They'd get in and steal the hard cider. Now I don't know if they were stealing vinegar. I don't ^{remember that} anybody did that. They'd come and ask and get the vinegar. But the hard cider, they said that was a glorious drunk. And I don't doubt it was. They didn't dare get drunk on the place. Papa said, "I'll take ^{the} ~~A~~ shotgun, I got a shotgun that's loaded." *I guess they were afraid of him.*

SAM: So they teased him about it?

W C: Oh, yes. They took some too. I remember that Archie Mare was instrumental in leading the gang.

SAM: This family that was having a hard time, that sounds like what charity was like in those days. Was there charity like that going on?

W C: Sure. There was charity. There weren't very many. But now and then a poor family moved into the neighborhood. And there wasn't a great deal of sympathy ^d ~~expended~~ upon them. If they weren't working farmers, if they just came in and didn't work, I know there was one old man married to a Syrian woman. And she couldn't even speak English but she had come to visit her brother who lived there and he was, he managed to make himself quite an American and took his place among the citizens ^{and it was} ~~alright~~. I remember the man. Very dark and I never knew there was anything the matter with him, he was anything like all other people and he was terribly dark. But here this sister came to visit him and she married this old man. They said he bought her from, well, you know stories, I don't think this was true, but the story did go on that he had bought her from her brother. But anyway, they had a whole mess of children. I don't know. They ^{must} ~~mu~~st have had five or six. And all little youngsters, and they all moved out to a house in the country. Well, he didn't work, he sat around the house. He was an old man when ^{she said he was} ~~he~~ married ~~him~~. And one winter he was sick. [^] Well, I don't know, they

got a doctor for him and he got, I suppose he got better and somebody got a job for him down in Troy and they said he could go down there and stay. His brother-in-law, ^{then} of his, provide him with a shed or some place to stay in and they fed him and got him a job so he could work at it and do something for the family. And then the people down there took food in. They came around collecting. Somebody with a sprained ^{wagon} and the called him a little ^{wagon}, and they have little cars and big cars, you know little pickups and a pickup and a truck, well, they had a little wagon and a big wagon at that time. ^{Couldn't always get the big wagon on the road.} I remember the women came around and picked it up.

SAM: Food for the family?

W C: Picked up food. And papa gave a couple of sacks of potatoes and a sack of cabbage and a lot of squashes and pumpkins and all the winter vegetables.

SAM: Is this the same family that you mentioned before that was starving?

W C: Well, I don't know what I told about before.

SAM: A little while ago when you said church didn't help so much.

W C: Oh, I called them a starving family. I don't think anybody would have let them starve. ^{Somebody} would have been carrying in meals by the meal before they would have starved in ^{that} community. Bread and things like that. But I don't think papa did give flour because other people were giving flour and things like that. And they ground wheat and they took them ground wheat, cereal ^{like to have some myself.} you know, and that's ^{nothing} better ^{than that. I'd}. And I fed my children on it when, and then I had a good neighbor too. I had a mighty good neighbor that ground wheat for me and gave it to me.

(End of side A)

W C: ...but our neighbor had a grinder and he ground the wheat, but it was quite a job because ^{they} had to wash the wheat, you know, and grind it in that hand grinder. And, my goodness, it was good. I've forgotten what they

called that hand grinder, they had kind of a name for it. But it was a little mill. And they ground it for their own home use, but I know that our relatives came to visit and they thought it was the best breakfast cereal they'd ever eaten. ^{And it is} very good. The whole wheat and its nut and my children loved it. So I had the four and they all liked it. Raymond and Lottie both had them. We had two friends that had those mills. Those two kept us supplied while we were on American Ridge with breakfast cereal.

M U: I can remember having that on ^{Burnt} the ridge too. ^{I was thinking Uncle Art did it, but I'm not sure.} Maybe it was Lonnie.

W C: Lonnie. When ^{we} were on Bear Ridge, on Burt Ridge, that was Lonnie.

M U: It was the only kind of hot cereal I could ^{ever} stand.

W C: It was good.

M U: Didn't we call it graham?

W C: Graham, yes. We did. But you can buy graham flour and you can make it but you know it isn't, you don't buy that kind of stuff. You don't buy the real thing.

M U: I don't think you can get that anymore.

W C: Oh, I think you can.

SAM: What made it so good, that it was fresh?

W C: Its whole wheat. They said it was stone cut, on those mills there are stones in them to cut for cutting them someway, and someway it was specially cut.

M U: I think it was less ^{what} fined than you get now.

W C: And you cooked it a long time. I put it to soak the night before. I think I cooked it ^{some} the night before. Then in the morning, got up and poured hot water on it and let it cook ^{or} some more. It had it cook a long time, ^{or} it wasn't soft enough to eat. And then that made sure of you getting the milk that you should have too. On your cereal. And all the children liked it. Never had any trouble having them eat it.

SAM: Sounds like you're talking about rugged living. Was it what you were used to?

W C: No. My husband would certainly not ^{like me} convey^{ing} that impression.

No. We were making the transition, of Idaho county where we had gone absolutely flat broke, you might say. We didn't accept it that way. I went out to teach school. And my husband proceeded to save from the wreckage the cattle. Now I don't like this thing isn't going on that thing, is it?

SAM: I can turn it off. (break in tape)

W C: In the early '30's I was over on American Ridge in '30... I went over there we had typhoid fever in 1929, that was the year when the, the Wall Street crash came in 1929 and that's when it all went down and everything was down around our ears for a few years. And what year was it? 1933, when was Roosevelt elected?

SAM: '33.

W C: '33. He went in in '33 and declared the moratorium. The bank moratorium.

M U: He called it when I came back from California in '33, and you'd already been on American Ridge for a year.

W C: Yeah. That's right. We'd been on American Ridge for a year. And then, but we were still trying to come out of it. And then we lived in the Highland house, no you weren't there in '33. You went down and we had it in '29. And the doctor said that you'd have to go, you should have the summer without the cold, that he didn't know about your legs. And you went down in 1930.

M U: You went down in '30 and back in '31 so....

M U: I was thinking I was born in '29 instead of '27.

SAM: What had made you decide to go to Idaho county in the first place?

W C: Oh, my husband had a great ambition. A ^{dear} lifelong dream that one day he'd own a big cattle ranch. And that he would make his living and have his family and he loved the kids, but ^{of course} he found out that they were more of a handful than he ever thought they would be, because they had to be cared for and they did get sick at times and had to have doctors and we had to have food and we had to have clothing. And he wanted me to teach when

it was convenient for him to have me gone. And when it wasn't he wanted the convenience of me at home taking care of the kids and also me out teaching. And of course, you just couldn't have everything. But finally he decided that he couldn't make the payments on the place any longer. And he went over there and decided that this was a good deal and the man thought he was going broke and he was selling at a sacrifice. Well he wasn't, he was selling before it hit bottom and my husband payed the penalty. He never could pay out. The folks all said that to him, but he did it with the best of intentions. He certainly never intended that anything like that would happen to us. He didn't know he was going to be overcome by so many terrible things. And everything seemed to conspire against him.

SAM: The Depression hit so many people.

W C: Yeah. He was coming back to Latah county, I have always had a feeling, I have a feeling for Latah county, Latah county is my county. I love it. I love Moscow and I like to live here and I like Latah county. I like American Ridge. I like Kendrick and Troy. All these places, they're my home. And out on American Ridge among the old timers if you'd have gone out there, you'd have had a hard time finding a word spoken against me. Course the younger people might have different ideas, but, I don't know about that.

SAM: So you wanted to come back?

W C: I was all ready to come back. I said if I'd go back, they'll understand me and they'll know what I mean, and they'll see. I wasn't going to ask them for help. I won't have to ask them for help. I knew that. But I'll just, they'll understand, they'll understand why I do this and why I do that.

M U: Didn't daddy have a heart attack in 1929?^{too}

W C: Oh, yes, he had a heart attack. That was another thing. He was sick before. He had a bad heart when we went over, he'd had a bad heart. He bought the place in 1922, I guess it was, '21. He didn't bargain for it^{it} And didn't take me down to see it. And of course, his father always blamed me for that and said

it was partly your fault. I think it was. If I'd have gone over there and seen that horrible place I don't think I ever would have gone. I would have said no, let's don't, I don't want to go in on this. But as it was, I said, you're going to make the living. Yes, he wasn't going to have me teaching school any more. That's just out of the question. I was going to stay home and take care of the kids. And he didn't want that. And we bought a home, I had to live in ^{a rat hole}. Well, that's neither here nor there. But anyway, it was a kind of a bad side of the dream. It, dreams don't always turn out, you know. But yet, there were many good things about that place. I think back ^{to that} timbered ^{forty} that we looked out upon and I think back to the woods down below the place. I used to go there on Sundays with the children. We used to gather in a little spot that Paul called, "our park". Our clover park. The only thing that spoiled it, we had those women cattle roaming around, we never knew when a bull was coming around to visit us.

MU: I remember the park and I loved the park.

W C: I did too, I did too. There were many things about that place that I loved. I just simple loved. I even loved the spring where we went to get the water. I thought that was beautiful. But it wasn't nice to go down there and carry two heavy buckets of water. Which the doctor said contributed to my getting the way I was when I got ^{typhoid}. Well anyway...

SAM: This park was a flat area with trees?

W C: No, it wasn't. It was a little flat spot. I wouldn't call it an area, it was such a small area. But it was a flat spot on this hillside, and it was gently sloping. It gently sloped. It wasn't a real flat place. But it was a gentle slope. And somehow Dutch clover had been seeded on the place in some field and some of it ^{had been spilled} or something or a wind blown or something, so this Dutch clover had come in there and choked out the native grasses and mostly ^{it} was that clover. And the bees hung around. They got so used to us

being there, we were never harmed by a bee in that particular park, and none ~~of~~ the children were ever stung there that I can remember. Later on Bruce was adventurous and got stung. Only stung by yellowjackets, but not by the bees.

SAM: You kids would play there?

W C: Oh, my yes, they played in that clover and how they loved it. And I'd go on Sunday afternoons with them. I didn't dare let them go down there alone. I forbade them to do that. And especially let the little ones go, I didn't dare to on account of the cattle.

M U: Bruce and I went all the time.

W C: Well, you went with somebody else. Paul.

M V: We had Keith, he's just ^{three} years older than me but he was always considered an adult. So if he was taking care of us, we were in pretty good hands.

W C: He was pretty good at taking care of you as far as that was concerned. He always had an idea. He always had some idea about how to do it. Oh, yes, yes. There was good things about that place. And it was a community. I used to say it seemed godforsaken. The children were hungry to know something about the hereafter. They asked me questions at school. I taught there three and a half years. And I like the children.

SAM: The kids wanted to know about spirituality?

W C: Yes. They were very much concerned. And I sent and got old stories of the East, old stories of the East, and I read them to them. I read all those stories. About Deborah about Bale, about false gods, explain something to them about gods, about false gods. And the one God. Christians.

SAM: Where many of the families struggling that were on Harris Ridge?

W C: Well they were all struggling. They were all struggling, but they were very happy in their struggles. Their houses didn't amount to anything. They didn't have nice carpets, they didn't have nice furniture, but nobody else had.

So there was no jealousy among them or anything like that. Sign of anybody getting sick, I would think, I did all kinds of things, but now that I got older, I'm in Idaho county.

SAM: Well that's alright.

W C: I was important over in Idaho county, maybe I like that, I don't know. I'd never been called upon in American Ridge. Imagining some ^{body} calling up and saying to me, somebody is sick, can you come ^{and help} take care of them. Well, I did go once in a while, places. I know, I went one time where a man had died and they wanted somebody to stay the night with the family and I said, papa, you don't need to, papa was going to go, mama couldn't go, she was unable to go. ^{places} And ^I said, no, I'll go. I went to do some of those things. But never, to take care of something. But still, I worked for a couple of women when they had babies. And I took care of the babies.

SAM: On American Ridge?

W C: Yes. When I was sixteen. ^{The summer} I was sixteen I took care of a couple of babies. Washed them and gave them a bath every day. ^{great big tall woman.} Roberta Clem, she's a ^{I told her brother down in the doctor's office there in town once.} I worked for your mother when your sister Roberta was born. And I took care of her. And he said, "You did?" Oh, you surely didn't." Yes I did. I was only sixteen, but I took care of her.

SAM: Was it hard to do that at that age?

W C: Oh sure it was hard. I was afraid I would do the wrong things. I was terribly afraid of that, but I did it. I watched her family. She had a father and a brother staying there. And then I went to a place, named, they had a hired man staying ^{at} ^{house} there. What in the world was their name? Frank. Frank and Rachel were the names of the man and wife. Elder. And I took care of them when I was sixteen. And heavens, I had an awful lot to do. Five dollars a week and I had to do everything. Big washings, take care of the baby.

SAM: Did you have to cook too?

W C: Yes. Three square meals a day.

SAM: Were they sick or something?

W C: Well, she wasn't exactly well, and she had the baby. But nobody else was sick. But they were farmers and they had to work outside. They had all, they had their hands full. I remember ^{that} I got panicky one Sunday. I was going to have it easy and she had said, we ~~had~~ ^{just} take it easy. Baked a cake and we're going to have cake and then we're going to have a fruit and something else. I was going to make a salad, I was great on salads. Even then. And, oh yes, my kids look at me, they think I can't cook. Bruce out here was the worst one of the bunch. He entertained Blake I remember one time, by telling him that mother didn't cook, she didn't know how to cook this, she didn't know how to cook that.

SAM: But you did.

W C: Well, I seemed to have gotten by with it anyway, whether I could or not. Anyway, I was considered a good cook at that time. And among the young people, the young women. And then I saved my money, I wanted a dress, I wanted a dress like the other girls. I wanted a coat. I hadn't had a coat for several years and I had a coat that looked like Sam Scratch. But I didn't get it. I closed my eyes and ears. I must go to Lewiston Normal School. And I went. On fifty dollars. That's what I had. Well, I had fifty two dollars. And I've forgotten exactly how I came by the two dollars, but papa filled it out and I bought my ticket. The two dollars. That's all it cost to go to Lewiston in those days. And I bought my ticket and I had fifty dollars wrapped up in a handkerchief and stowed away in some safe place.

SAM: Had you saved for that for a long time?

W C: Yes. I made part of the money, five dollars a week working for, well four dollars a week for the ^{first} place 'cause mama said I could go for four dollars a week cause where this Clems were. I could go for four dollars a week 'cause I'd never had any experience working out for anybody else. Lord knows, I'd had experience. And had experience taking care of kids, too.

SAM: Where did you get experience?

W C: At home. And that was strenuous, I assure you. More strenuous than I ever had working for others.

SAM: Well, who set the price, your mother?

W C: Well, It was set by her and the woman for whom I was going to work.

M U: There was a set going wage for that kind of work.

W C: Yes. Girls weren't working for four dollars and five dollars, those who'd had any experience, ^{began} to get five dollars. Then when I went to these Elders, I got the five dollars.

SAM: What did you start to say about the Sunday you had together?

W C: These people came in, a family. Man and his wife, and oh, I'd heard about what a wonderful housekeeper she was. And what a wonderful cook. ^I I'd tasted some of her cakes she'd taken to some of these socials and things, you know. And here they had come and were staying for supper. Oh, Frank Elder came out and he said, "I'll help you, but Rachel has asked them to supper." He said, "I hope you don't mind." Well, I do mind. 'I said "I have a notion ^{to} run off", "I said, "Tonight for the first time, I have a notion to run ^{AWAY."} I said "I don't want to get dinner for Mrs. Chandler." He said, "Well, I'll help you. What can I do?" "Get out in the garden and dig some new potatoes and then clean them and get them in here, when you get them in here." And bring in some onions," I said. And I don't remember what else, but I do remember telling him to dig some potatoes. ^{Green onions} He did and he cleaned them. Helped a little. Stood around ^{like most men would}. But they had two cute little boys. I think back to them yet. Frankie and Cecil, their names were. And they were the cutest little boys. They were about ^{like} Harold Paul about that age, you know. Two little boys and then they'd had a girl. Her name was Hazel.

SAM: How long did you stay there?

W C: Four weeks exactly. Twenty dollar bill he ^{paid} me. That was probably a twenty dollar bill. Believe me, I didn't break it either. And I had this

money from, every now and then I did things for other people. And, but after I'd had a year at Lewiston, I was a different person.

SAM: Why did you decide that you wanted to go to Lewiston?

W C: I had made up my mind that I was going to school or die in the attempt. And that if I didn't go to school, I would die. I would not live out there on a farm and that I would leave home. I had made up my mind to that. And I prayed about it. And "Dear Lord" I just can't take it any longer. I just can't take it any longer. Show me the way to get out. So a woman came in to teach the school. A girl I should say, but she was a woman grown and she said, "Well I work for my board and went to Lewiston Normal and I didn't have any where near the start that you've had of going to school and re-learning stuff. I'd gone back to school and I had a teacher that was a wonderful teacher and she'd given me several courses, really I cashed out on some of them ^{Afterward} by reviewing them in a real class and then taking an examination in them. Rhetoric for example, which was really really grammar. And I was good in it.

SAM: Is this Mr. Mushlets?

W C: Yes.

SAM: So you were well prepared to go.

W C: Oh, in a way. And in a way I didn't know anything. And I had nothing and I dressed, you know, like a ragamuffin from the streets of New York, like the Arabs. But anyway, I made up my mind. And Stella Harlan, she was Stella Buckley was her name. She told me she worked for her board. Well, I said, how did you find out about it, and she said, well she told me some friend that had worked for her board and went to Lewiston and she told her to come right down to the Dean of Women and see if she could get a job working for someone for her board. Board and room, of course. And she did and she got a place. And these people were very nice to her and she stayed with them for three years. And she went all five years. She hadn't been to

high school or anything. And she went all five years to Lewiston. At that time you could do that at the Normal. They had what was known as the academic department, which was high school the first three years and two years of professional. That's the way they divided it. They called it academic and professional. And the professional was, there was two years of that. When you graduated, you had a life diploma. Well eventually I graduated, but I didn't do like Stella. She went down and just stayed there the five years. And then in the summertime she'd already, she live up on Cedar Creek and there was a family of girls living up there that had come up there from Juliaetta. And every summer they went down on the river to pack fruit. And there was good money in packing fruit. And she went down on the river to pack fruit. But my mother, she ^{went up in the air}. I wasn't to be allowed to go down to the river to pack fruit, or go away. My goodness, nothing but toughs down there and that would just ruin me. I'd come back and I'd just wouldn't be anything. And she didn't consider how I come to be what I was and how I made up my mind to go to school and I had that all in mind. My mother never took my measure, she never did. And therein lay unhappiness for both her and for me. She could have been much happier if she'd have had a different attitude. But then, that's neither here nor there either.

SAM: Stella Harland was the person that got you on to going to school?

W C: Well, she was the one that told me that it could be done. And she presented a way. And I asked her who the Dean of Women was because I didn't know. And she told me what her name was. So I wrote to the Dean of Women and asked her if it was possible, and told her that it had been my lifelong dream that I get to come and this woman told me she had worked for her board. And was it possible to get a place, and that I would like to come to Lewiston and go to school. Well, I got a lovely letter back from her, the Dean of Women. She became a very good friend of mine. Anna Webster

Little was her name.

SAM: Little?

W C: Little. L-I-T-L-E. Anna Webster Little. She always spelled her full name. She lived with her parents. She was what most country people would have called an old maid I guess, but she was a spinster lady. But a very good looking woman. She was a regal looking woman, you know. She had a queenly bearing. Looked regal and very good looking. *But she wasn't young.*

SAM: Did she tell you it was possible?

W C: She wrote me and it was and, yes. She looked up a place for me she thought I'd like. The person was a very warm hearted person and there were children there. *there were* girls and she thought it would be a nice place for me. Willa Stacy's. So I went there, oh yes, and she told me, I, *contact* her again and told her I expected to come and she would make the arrangements with Mrs. Stacy and if I could come down a couple of days early to get acquainted with the family, it would be good. But I got some work of some kind, I can't remember what it was, anyway, I took every bit of work *that* I could get. I remember doing something for a dollar a day. Oh, it was picking fruit down at the fruit ranch. And it lasted a little longer and I helped cook *for* the thrashers *at* another place and I got payed a dollar a day for that. Oh, that was a fortune. That's where I got the rest of the fifty dollars. And I had to have shoes. *I had* to have a few things. Well, at last, I embarked. *thought I had*. And I remember that Raymond Harland was going with Stella Buckley and Raymond was my hero anyhow. He'd been to Lewiston Normal and played ball down there and the coach was a very good friend. I liked Raymond he was a neighbor boy and he played basketball on the Lewiston Normal team and he had his picture in the paper. And I just thought the world of Raymond. Of course, he had been grown up for a little while, you know. I was a little girl. *I think* Stella always *resented* me a little. I realized that she did when I taught school out on American Ridge because Raymond and I were such awful

good friends. We were always were talking about, so many things. Nothing in the world, goodness sakes alive, I'd always been the little girl from next door and he'd always been the hero, the neighborhood hero to me. So it was nothing in the world between us other than that. She just resented me a little. Because, until he died we were friends. *Good friends.*

SAM: So he went down with you?

W C: No, he didn't intend to go down with me, that was accidental, entirely. But he got on the same train that I ^{went} down to Lewiston, ^{on} he was on the train to go see her and she had taught school at Myrtle that year, she wasn't teaching up at our school. And he got off there. So he came and sat with me and he told me how to do, and not to let this bother me and not to let that bother me. And he said, "You know you know things." And he said "I'm not a bit afraid after you get started down there, that you won't get along." He says, "You'll get along. Because you know that you know things. So you just simply," he ^{told} me a lot of things about how I should get along. And but remember that there would be a lot of rooting for me. They knew I'd come along. He said, "You'll get lonesome I think first. But don't you let it get you down," he said. That was his family's, they were traditionally pretty smart people, but they all started to school and all came home. All but Raymond. All the rest of them did. They all gave up and came home. They just couldn't stay away from home. ^{But they had a nice home and a good place to go.} And so he shook hands with me and said good luck to me and I felt pretty lonesome when he left, when he got off the train. But I went down all by myself. And when I got there I was met by a couple of girls who belonged to a new YWCA that Miss Lytle, the Dean of Women had organized down at Lewiston and got the older girls in and they were out to meet the new incoming students. So they walked up to Stacy's with me. Carried my suitcase for me. I had an awful old suitcase. I remember my uncle had given me a suitcase. It didn't look too terribly bad, I wasn't too ashamed of it.

That was a help. But I didn't have much in it. And I was awful lonesome there for a while. Mrs. Stacy was a musician and she had some musical friends over that night and they had a kind of a musical downstairs. She said, you'll probably want to go up to your room. And unpack and set out things. You'll probably want to," she said, "We'll have the friends downstairs." Well, the kids, her kids stayed downstairs and I went upstairs. I felt isolated and alone, but I made out and we all got to be very good friends. Well, her mother lived over in Clarkston and she got sick and died. And Mrs. Stacy had to be away from home a lot. So when I was home Thanksgiving vacation she decided that she had to have a girl, a regular girl and when I got back down ^{after} being home for vacation, by the way, the folks got anxious enough to see me, I said, I can't come home, I can't spend my money. They sent me train fare to come home on.

SAM: For Thanksgiving?

W C: To the penny, To the penny I got money to come home on and to go back on.

S AM: That was Thanksgiving vacation?

W C: Yeah.

(End of side B)

SAM: You had to make your room and board while you were going to school?

W C: Uh huh.

SAM: Was that difficult?

W C: No. I had lovely people. Mrs. Stacy was a lovely person. And I worked, and the girls were nice and she did a lot of things for me. She helped me and she saw ^{that} I hadn't been out a great deal and she realized I was a lonesome country girl. But she also took into consideration, I wouldn't like to have this advertized either, but actually she did take into consideration that I was a sensitive girl and that I was worth doing something about. And so she was very nice to me. Very nice to me. And she naturally nice.

And I got along very nicely after her mother got sick. ~~She~~ ^{she} decided she had to have a girl for all the year and she got me another place and I stayed with a friend of hers for a while, that is I mean, who needed a girl for a shorttime. And then at Christmas time when it was a break in the semester, I went to another place and that was a terrible place. To me. I just lived and existed and did my work as well as I could and got along and waited for the year to be over.

SAM: What was the difference?

W C: The difference was people. And they were good people, she was a good person. Some people are born to be nice. We used to have an expression that they were born ladies and other people were not. But that is the distinction. But some people by birth know how to get along with other people. And some people don't. ^{And} they are critical and selfish and that sort of thing.

SAM: Were there a lot of demands made on you at this place?

W C: Well, I had harder work to do but the work was harder because there was less good feeling. And no matter how well I tried to do the thing, there was no appreciation shown. But of course, there was plenty of fault finding. But then to tell anybody what the difference is it's very hard to do and especially if you're not wanting to really blacken anybody's character.

SAM: We don't need to use any names.

W C: But it didn't work out as well.

SAM: They weren't as considerate of you?

W C: ~~I~~ ^{by the time} was very glad when the year was over. Although I must say, ^{by the time} the year was over I was getting along better. I think she genuinely hated to see me go, really. I was beginning to do the work she wanted done, I suppose, maybe. There was two sides to it. I suppose I was doing it more the way she wanted it done. She ^{sort of} liked that better. Maybe that was the reason. I believe she genuinely ^{sort of} hated to see me go.

SAM: What kind of work were you expected to do for room and board?

W C: Oh, get up and get breakfast. At that place I got up and went down in the basement and started the fire going. Stirred up the fire and got the fire going. Went upstairs and got the breakfast, that is, started the cereal cooking. And usually I set the breakfast table and got things all ready. But they hadn't gotten up to eat yet, I usually went to school before they did. But sometimes he got up to eat and I had to have his breakfast on the table - toast and his egg and so on. They were particular about how it was cooked, which was all right. I learned to be particular about things from them. And then I got started on the day's what ever it was. If the washing had been done the day before, I saw to it - well, I did that at night - rolled it up for the ironing - got it all ready for the washerwoman. But if she was going to iron, she would come early and she was usually there. And she was an awful nice old lady and she felt sorry for me and she'd say, "I'll take care of that. I'll take care of that." She was always saying that to me but I didn't leave much for her to do. If there was anything to - if there was any mess made, or anything, why I had to clean that up. And I had the fire going. And then they had a fire in the upstairs stove, I mean, and when I went up to dress, get ready, I was suppose to - but they had kindling and Mr. Warren laid that, he'd taken care of that the night before. He always did that, always did that and something. And I'd ^{then} start ^{a little} fire in that stove so it'd be warm when the children came up. They weren't out yet when I went.

SAM: Did you have much work to do when you got home from school?

W C: Oh, lord, yes! I had different things.

SAM: Were you suppose to make supper? Do the dishes and all that business.

W C: Yes, yes, all the dishes. All the dishes. And usually what dishes were left from breakfast. ^{They} might be left from breakfast but she sometimes washed them up.

SAM: Well, did you have much time to study ?

W C: Well, after dinner was over why I had the evening free and, of course, I babysat

sometimes, but she always put the kids to bed. They went to bed early and she put the kids to bed and I watched 'em, of course. And only once in a while did they bother me. Once in a while something was the matter with one of 'em and I'd have to go and see to them. But their father would be there many times and he'd do the looking after and ~~Z~~I never went into their room. But...

SAM: You, know, you said just a little bit ago that you were an awkward country girl when you first came to town. When you think about it, what was it that you lacked or what was it that made you an awkward country girl - I mean, how did it work to be in town - ?

W C: I think it was mainly ^{that} I didn't know how to get along with those people. I'd been around people that I understood - the people that were out in the country, they were more or less like me. And I didn't feel that they were any different. But when I went down to Lewiston among the people who had girls working for their board, they were people who I felt that they were different. Now I don't know if they did, but I think that probably the difference was in me. That I felt this that they were so different and they were looking upon me that way. So I felt very - I was self-conscious.

SAM: What was the difference that you perceived? What'd you think the difference was between town people and country people?

W C: Oh, they were...

SAM: Were they more sophisticated?

W C : Oh, yes, of course they were, they are yet. That is, that class of people. Not the ordinary class of people but you take the so called "elite", they adopt a little more sophisticated airs. Of course, after you get to knowing them, then you get on to their little ways of doing things, it doesn't terrify you anymore because you see ^{through} them. You know what they are. And then you can be like Kipling, "you can walk with kings nor ^{lose} your virtue". Or "you can walk with crowds and not ^{lose} your virtue; or

talk with kings ~~and not~~ ^{lose} the common touch." But you have to be above it yourself and you have to lift out of that and you don't come out of the country bean fields or cornfield or anything like that and know it right at first. You have to live through it and that takes time.

SAM: What were some of the little, the airs – the ways – that the elite had in the towns, in Lewiston...?

W C : Oh, they had better manners. They had manners of eating. They had more formal meals. More sophistication about it. ^{there was} ~~they had~~ a style that was kept up. And they spent a lot more time keeping their houses up. What was spent out in the country, if the house got all torn up – well, like I let mine go here. But not so in town. They had to be kept up ^{nicely} all the time.

SAM: Did they spend money on appearances? The townspeople, on clothing and ...?

W C : Oh, they had better clothes, of course. And they dressed up usually and some places they dressed for dinner. ^{In} the evening and they called it "dinner". And out in the farm they called it "supper" and you ate in the same old clothes you had on all day and all that stuff. Oh, there was a vast difference – you know there is a vast difference. You've certainly heard that from a lot of other people too.

SAM: No, what I'm curious about is the difference between town and country back then, you know, in the early years of the century. And just what the supposed difference in status was that... I mean, I've heard a couple of times that city people were – especially those that had some money and thought of themselves as "elite" were really – some of them were very much showy, you know. And I don't know. I've heard different things about it.

W C : ^{I think} There was a big difference; there was a big difference. Well, I think some were. But I think, for the most part, that the difference existed in the mind of the – of me and of people from the country. It wasn't very long. Now if I went to – knowing what I do now, or what I learned in five years' time after I had been there, when I

went to Lewiston I did go down and I worked for my board one year after I had taught, just so I'd save the money. I didn't have much money and I was going to go to summer school and I thought I needed more money at summer school. We didn't get such very great wages then. And I thought I'd save money and so I asked for a place for the last quarter. And I didn't feel as I did the first time when I went in. And I went in and said that I had come to work for my board and she was surprised that I had taught school. And she talked with me very nicely and she introduced me to her husband and – on an equal footing. And we were equal. I never felt anything else. And never did feel anything else but ^{that} we were equals. And when I went back to Lewiston afterwards, I certainly didn't want to work for my board because I wanted to have the time. She wanted me to come and stay at her house. She says, "You don't have to do anything. You don't have to anything for your board, I've got a girl doing that. But come on over, we can visit and we can do something else." And I went over and sewed evenings for an hour or two for the boys. She was getting some of their clothes made up. And I sewed or if her girl was off for the evening, why ^{I'd} always say to her, "Well, you go out, I'm not going out tonight now. I'll keep the boys." And so on. And we were just very frank about it. But that was afterwards. Now if I had keep the household clean and all, you know, it's.....It's like in Shakespeare, who knows everything. You can either go to the Bible or Shakespeare and you can find it all. Knowledgeable people. That's the kind of people I like. That's what I always wanted to be, was a knowledgeable person. One who knew things. Because if you know things, you understand things. You know how people feel. You can put them at ease. Now I like – I enjoy being with that kind of person. And I don't want to see people feeling out of place. And they don't with me. I see to it they don't. I know what's ailing people who are feeling awkward and not at home. Child comes like that into my school room, I immediately spot him and immediately do something about it. And in two or three days he's like

all the others. It doesn't take long. But if the learning to do, all of it, has to come through experience, and that experience has to come to the newcomer himself, it takes a much longer time and there's much more pain involved in the operation.

SAM: And that's what happened to you in Lewiston?

W C : Yes.

SAM: It took you learning it yourself.

W C : Yes.

SAM: Well, did you – what do you think it was that you learned? That those people were no different than you?

W C : Oh, no. I didn't learn that so much. They weren't so much different but I learned, of course, that the environment – I'd learned, I'd read about the environment versus heredity and that stuff – and I knew that why heredity counted for a lot and certainly was not to be discounted, That environment gave us different backgrounds. And that from different backgrounds we had misunderstandings. I soon learned. I learned rapidly. I was a rapid learner.

SAM: Was Lewiston, when you were first down there, was it a real big place to you? Was it really out of the kind of...?

W C : It wasn't really awfully big. It was bigger than anything ^{I'd been used to.} ~~I was used to.~~ I was kept on the farm most of the time. I only went to Troy once in a while. Troy seemed like quite a little town to me and to come up to Moscow – I remember I came up to Moscow to see Roosevelt when he spoke here in 1909. I believe it was 1909.

Goodness, I would have been during that year – he was here in February – but I would have been 13. No. Yes, I would have been 13 that year. I didn't think I was that old. But I hadn't been out to see anything. And I remember that I went with Mr. Helm over to see him. He was one of our neighbors down home. And we stood up there, that is Mr. Helm and I, we were more adventurous than the rest of our

crowd. And we pushed our way up to the ropes that went around as a fence around the wheat pile that he stood on. I looked at him. I still had an awful lot of gawkiness, I know that. And I wasn't sure of myself. It took me a long time to be sure of myself. And then they had trained their children. They talked better. They used better English. But, of course, now you can't tell the difference. To talk lazily and slovenly, seems to be the ideal. And we all talk that way. There isn't the difference now that there used to be.

SAM: Well, what happened to you when you were in Lewiston? Did you change a great deal?

W C : Oh, of course I did. I learned. I learned a lot of things. Of course, I changed. I'm a different person to what I was when I was a child. In some ways I understand people and I - I've lost some of my naivete, a lot of it. And I suppose I've lost some other things along with it.

SAM: Well, you know, what I was thinking of was the experience of being away from home and going to school and getting teacher training.

W C : Oh, I got - sure I got ^{through} that. That came along right away. By the end of the year I was well acclimated to that sort of thing. When I went home, I fully intended to go back to Lewiston Normal for a second year. And, of course, I had in mind going to teaching and that's what they talked to me at home and friends had talked to me. And take this rural school program and teach in a rural school. And you could go and go down there - I'd go ^{the} one year and then go back/another year and get a certificate and teach. But that would be a short course, and I'd get to teaching. It would just get me eighteen and I could teach then. That was my ideal. Well, they talked to me different down there, the teachers did. "Oh, don't let yourself do that. First thing you know you'll get bogged down. Maybe you'll marry some farmer kid ^{some} ₇ kid farmer." One of the teachers I ~~know~~ said to me. "And that'll be the end of you. Don't even do that. Set your sights higher." Well, I did that. I did that. I did that.

impossible and I hated awful bad to

SAM: What did they want you to set your sights for? What was the higher...?

W C : Well, they wanted a higher education and a better education before I went to work, and they were right. Dead right! Nobody should go out and teach on that. Thank God they came down on me to do it and that I didn't get to on that short course. Those people that went out and taught, the children that they taught were only half taught. And I know now with what I do know about teaching and with some of the things that I have been privileged to accomplish in my teaching, I know that I was not a teacher at that time. I hadn't become that yet.

SAM: Had you had - you had had your high school?

W C : Of course not. I had went from an eighth grade in the school, ⁱⁿ a country school. The longest ^{school} term that I had was the last one, and that one was - we had seven months of school. And that was the first one. Otherwise-five and six month terms. Oh certainly it was a good thing. And my sights should be higher than that.

SAM: So what happened? Did you go back and keep...?

W C : I didn't go back to Lewiston. The folks were thinking about going to ^{back to} Michigan to visit my mother's people and I thought it ^{would be} was wonderful for them.

(Break)

W C : I had passed the eighth grade the year ^{that} I was twelve in March and I had passed in February. So I passed the eighth grade. But I went back to that country school and I had gone to that last seven month term of school and the next one was a six one. And I think for two or three years, they had six month terms.

SAM: Was this on American Ridge?

W C : It's on American Ridge. A little school out on American Ridge. Been torn down

a long time.

SAM: Didn't you go to school in Troy also at some point?

W C : Well, I just got – I was getting around to that. That was the year my folks wanted to go to – that was my second year of going to school, and I had already learned that I could get high school subjects in any high school and that's what I got in to take another subject the academic in Lewiston except that they didn't have anyplace for me/and they let me have the first year I was down there I told them I was going to take this rural short course, so they had sort of had that in mind when they made up my a little bit curriculum, and I was kind a fouled up/there. And I got a professional health and physiology course – Health and Sanitation they called it. Well, this was right up my alley and I'd had that a couple of three times in going back to school. And I just loved it. So I could get up and trace the blood without ever having to learn it. I was a wonder there among some of these professional girls. They'd never learned it when they went to school and they thought it was terrible to have to get in and learn it now. How did I know it? And they just kept wanting my notebook and everything else. Funny. And as I say, I would have had an awful time with the Normal but I did know – and this going back to school had given me leverage so ^{that} I could get along because of it. And some of these girls that were very snippy and certainly up to date, ^{and} very stylish, they'd say, "I don't see how you do. I don't ^{see} see how you do it," they'd say to me. They wouldn't snub me because I knew things. So I might say, that my brains helped me a little. You know? And funny enough, I struck up some very peculiar friendships there among people that wouldn't have seen me otherwise, that couldn't have seen me. Not in my inconspicuous outfits, or conspicuous for the wrong reasons.

So I went to Troy. I felt I could – as I say, I had delved around and found out I could do that. So I said to the folks, "You go on and I'll stay in Troy. And then I can't go back and forth but I can come home on the weekend." By that time the

roads were getting better and I figured I could come out on the weekend. They could come and get me. My brother was old enough that he could come in with the horses and I could ride home if necessary. Come out on Friday night and stay till Sunday night and help the kids. I was making a little more money packing fruit and cooking for harvest hands and things of that sort. I didn't work anymore for weekly wages. And I got a job at the telephone office ~~then~~ as the assistant in the little telephone office and that gave me a monthly wage. And I was so far ahead of any of the high school kids in Troy even though I'd only had a freshman year - I had a little more than a freshman year at the Lewiston Normal because they allowed you to make high school in four years. And as I say, I'd had that one professional subject the first part of the year and I had a second one, I've forgotten what it was the second half of the year. And I knew how to make capital of it. And I'd had this rhetoric and - but it just hadn't come to me that I was to make it all come into my life and use it. And Miss Little was a masterful English teacher. And she would come into the classes and lecture occasionally. She didn't teach - teach 'em - but she lectured occasionally. And showed how I did. And I took everything to heart, and I took Latin one year, one year of Latin, and I made that one year of Latin pay. And I learned a lot. And I learned a lot more even than ^{what} I could get credit for. And I also took German, a half year of German, but it was the last half. And by taking the last half, when it came down to it - I wanted to sign up for a course in German then and they let me take the second year. And they said, "Well, if you ^{goodness, gracious,} took the second year of German and passed in it, it means you knew the first year." "Well," I said, "I only know what I went over, when I went over it myself." "Well, you must have done a good job." "Well," I said, "I read it." So they gave me credit and I got credit for a year I never took.

SAM: What happened - how long did you stay in Troy?

W C : Oh, a year and a half. I finished in a year and a half.

SAM: Finished high school?

W C : I finished high school in a year and a half.

SAM: And then what did you do? Then did you go back..?

W C : Well, then I went to summer school and took it and got a state certificate. I got a second grade certificate but it was written on it, it was good for one year because – until I had taught a year to get one. Well, the next year I took a country school and it was out in six months, or seven months. I had a seven months term of school. They were all about seven months that year. But I got a seven month term instead of ^{getting} an eight because I wanted to go the last quarter to Normal. I went down to Normal and got the professional work for the last quarter and I bilked them into letting me take an extra subject. And stayed on for summer school. That gave me two quarters. I'd been to summer school the year before. That gave me three quarters. And I took night school and got a credit or two. And I had plenty of credits for one year's work so I applied for a Normal School certificate, second grade. Well, my state certificate, second grade, was good. I had taught one year and sent in my recommendations from the school board. They were glad to give me ~~their~~ recommendation, they thought I was a wonderful teacher. It was a Norwegian neighborhood and I loved the kids and they loved me. They taught me Norwegian and I taught them lots of things. And they gave me a good recommendation.

SAM: This year of teaching now – this one year of teaching that you did, ^{in between,} when did this come? After you had been in Troy or Lewiston?

W C : After I had graduated high school. I didn't do that until I got a certificate. I got into my head that I had to do it the right way and I did it the right way. I went to high school, finished it, and went to summer school. And took the examination – a state examination for a state certificate, not a Normal school certificate. Then by the next spring, I'd already completed my three units of – no, I hadn't completed a third

unit, by the spring. But by the time the summer was over I'd completed the three units. So when I put in my – so I got my state certificate, made good, for second grade state certificate. And they told me if I went up and took an examination in Physical Geography, Rhet^Dric, and – what's the third thing? – oh, what they called Ped^Aogy, at that time – later on it was Principles of Teaching. If I'd got up and take an examination of those three subjects, that I could be in line for a first grade certificate. Well, I had a notion to do it, but I would have had to of taken a little time to review them in school because I didn't know/^{just} exactly what they wanted for Ped^Aogy. But I'd sent in my requirements that I had for it – for taking the exam, so I could have taken the exam. I was to be admitted for it. But ^{then} in the meantime I had qualified for a first grade Normal certificate. But at the end of the first quarter, they looked at my records – well, I had taught a year and got my credits for it because my school board had sent in such a glowing account, bless their hearts – they weren't asked to do it either. But they sent a good account of me and I had that and I had two summer schools and that's all. And they sent me a second grade Normal Certificate, because they knew I had taught school on that state certificate. So I said I got three new certificates in a year and oh, I didn't want that Normal certificate. I took it up and I said, "I don't want this." And they said that "you're the first person that every came in here and told me – and told us you didn't want a certificate." "Well, I don't want this," I said. "I want a first grade certificate at the end of the year. You don't grant two certificates in one year." And they said, "well, they were afraid they might hafta loosen up on me and let me have it. "Alright," I said, "If you'll let me have it, that's fine. But I'm going to put in my application for a first grade certificate." So I got a first grade certificate from the state, a first grade certificate from the Normal, as well as the second grade from the Normal which I hadn't had before. I had them all that year.

SAM: What was your first year of teaching like? What did you think of teaching when you

finally got in the classroom and did it?

W C : I loved it. I knew what ^{I'd be like} ~~it'd be like~~. I'd taught - I'd substituted in high school whenever there was a teacher out for being sick, I was sent down to teach it. And I'd ^{had} ~~some~~ extra training like that.

SAM: What was it - was it much of a drawback ^{do you think} ~~to~~ having to teach all the kids in one room, and different grades?

W C : No. No, un-uh. No, I wouldn't ~~take~~ anything in the world for that experience. I did some of my best teaching right out in the rural school.

SAM: What about the kids' learning?

W C : Oh, kids just lapped it up. I've had some fine students.

SAM: Well, you see, what I'm wondering about, of course, is the difficulty of having, you know, having to have kids from all the different grades in - and teaching them at once instead of the way they ...

END SIDE C

W C : For the most part there are disadvantages, I know that. For the most part, they ^{just} are disadvantaged. I always talked about ~~having~~ one grade and how great it would be. But having them all together had its - I made combinations whenever possible. The truth of the matter is, the extra ordinary ~~x~~ - the extrodinary pupil - he who was a plus pupil in the grades was allowed to go on. I f I had some child who very good in arithmetic and he was down here in the fourth grade and he was doing six grade arithmetic, I just winked at that fifth year arithmetic and let him go whenever we had that subject, that particular portion of the arithmetic. Let him have the problems of the sixth grade. And usually by the end of the year he was doing the sixth grade arithmetic. He was doing other things. If they were interested in geography, I did somewhat the same. And there was an awful lot of repetition.

They were given – down in the lower grades – they were given the lower version in geography. They had what they called the little geography and the big geography, and the big geography was just an extension of the little one and had the same countries. Well, I just combined them and let them have projects. And some of the lower class pupils did better work and got better facts than the older ones because some of the older ones had been passed on without knowing the material.

SAM: It's interesting. It sounds like in a way there was more individualization possible then in the rural classroom.

W C : Oh, there was! There was the way they used to be taught. Of course, now, and in the later years when I taught in school and we were beginning to individualize and take out and add. Then it didn't happen so much. But in those days there was no individualization except through the teacher. And the teacher organizing. And some teachers didn't like to bother. They'd think, "Oh, well, it's better to have 'em in their steps." So they went step by step and step by step. I never paid any attention to it. If the child (phone rings)

SAM: It's probably my wife.

W C : Well, why don't you see.

SAM: Oh, hi, you're back. (Break)

W C : The rural school entirely. And of course, Mr. Mushlet was the kind of teacher that I tried to become. Let 'em go ahead if they know more, and that's what I did.

SAM: You were saying before that on Harris Ridge there you were called upon to do things that you never did. But you didn't describe them to me, except that I do remember that once before when we talked you did describe to me the time you had to prepare the baby that died for burial. But were there other things that you were called upon to do too?

W.C.: Oh, yes. They would call and ask me if somebody was sick, you know, and different

alone and her husband worked up in the woods. That was a common thing to happen over there. And oh, she said, she didn't know what in the world it was. She tried to describe the way the child was. And actually my husband, ^{said} you know that kid plays out' - that was the way he talked - that kid plays out in the woods over there with sheep all the time, maybe he's got a sheep tick on him - or a tick." And I said, "Oh, my goodness. Yes, he could have." But he said, "Do you suppose ~~she'd~~ see it?" And I said, "Yes, I think she would. She would see it. She'd bath him and so on." (Excuse me, I'm sorry. My nose is certainly stopped up. And I think Mavis' smoking did it, has something to do with it. It happens every time I'm around tabacco. It just stops up. My nose was as open as could be before). And he ~~said~~ - or anyway I called her or I called up, and he had gotten home - she had gotten word to him someway up in the woods, in the forest, the forest service, he worked in the summer - and so I said, "Well, you know, has Mrs. Matson looked over him for ticks?" "Ticks?" he said. "Yes," I said, "You know the Rocky Mountain ticks. We do have them up here." And I said, "Harold plays, my husband mentioned he plays with the sheep alot. And the sheep do carry them." And I said, "They're in the forest up here." "Oh, my gosh," he said, "I know what ^{that} is," he said, "Rocky Mountain Fever. That's terrible." Well, I said, "She said he's getting paralyzed. and can't move and it seems to me his arms and I believe it was the leg, I can't remember. So I said I wondered if it could be that. And I said, "Now, I'd like to see him." Well, he said, "I wish you'd come over. I wish you could come over." Well I said, "I'd like to see him but I can't very well ^{come} now, I have the children here and the baby. But if he doesn't get better, I'll get somebody to stay here with the baby and I'll come over." "Oh, I don't know that I can do any more." Well he said, "I'll tell you, I'm going to go see." And pretty soon he called up again. Oh, I did say, "Well, listen, if you should take out that tick, now, you be sure you do something to -" burn it or what do you call it? I can't even talk.

SAM: You want to get that head out.

W C : But anyway, you want to keep it sterilized. That's what I was trying -- you have to sterilize your needle or what ever you use." And so when he called up and he said, "Well, I did. I sterilized my knife in boiling water. And I looked over that child and," he said, "right between his shoulder blades." And I said to the woman, "What in the world? Didn't you wash him?" And she said, "Yes, all over. But every time I turned him on that side he screamed. And fought me." And so she said, "I didn't wash that side." So he says, she let it go and there he sat, great big tick and he said it was as big -- oh, my -- it was so big "that when I got it out on the table, it burst." And he said it was so full of blood, it was as big as a choke cherry. But he said, "I cut it out." And he said, "You know, the kid's already better." He said, "I can't thank you enough for calling up." Well, I said, "My husband put me in mind of it. " I said, "He reminded me." I don't know, I guess I would have thought about the tick because I was thinking about ticks causing something on the children. And we'd all been talking about ticks. But I hadn't said anything to her about it. And I would have hesitated to say, "Look all over the body," because she that she'd looked all over his body. She'd washed his hair. I said, "Did you look all over his head and behind the ears and everywhere to see if anything is attached to him, on him?" She said, "I've looked at his head, and his ears." She said, "He's awful hard to take care of." He was a terribly obstinate boy and he was about ten or eleven; a big boy, a big strong boy. She had quite a time with him. And, well, I said, "He'll be all right." I asked him if he had any iodine and he asked her and she said yes. They had iodine. And I said, "Well, you can treat it with iodine. It's perfectly safe now that you have the thing out." And so he did and called the doctor and he said, "Well, sir, a neighbor called up the doctor. They tried to get him out there but the doctor -- there was a woman in town having a baby and he couldn't leave her. But he said now, as soon as he was through he would come out. So Mr. Matson

called the doctor. And he said, "Who did you say called?" And he said, "Mrs. Carlson." "Oh, well," he said, "You tell Dr. Carlson that I'm very glad to know I've got an assistant." And he never got through teasing me about that. 'Next time a kid gets a tick on him', he said, 'Up here, all I've got to do is call you.'

SAM: You know, I wanted to ask you about something which is a little off the subject, but I really wanted to try to ask you about it before I go, because I'm sure Mavis - she'll probably be here soon.

W C : Yes, she will.

SAM: And that was about prohibition and the drinking problem. Was drinking much of a problem in - during those years? I mean, was the moonshine causing much of a problem?

W C : There was moonshine out around in the country here but there wasn't a great deal of it and I didn't hear very much of it. And I'd never seen a drunk man. We had a neighbor named Comton, Ab^b Comton. And he didn't live very far from us, about a mile and a half on a side road. And he used to get drunk and the story was that he would tie the - he had a kind of a , one of these little wagons, spring wagon, and he raised garden vegetables. And he'd take 'em to town and sell a whole load of vegetable products. He was a very good gardener and he gardened for people. And he'd take these whole load to town and sell them and then spend the money on drink. And some home drunker than our lord. And he'd tie the lines around the dashboard and let the horses find their way home. And he'd sit in the seat and yell, I guess, they said as long as he could. And then finally he'd fall down and sometimes go to sleep in the bottom of the wagon. But then he'd come to a bump and wake up again and he'd yell and cuss and everything else. And I'd hear that. "Oh, my goodness, Ab^b Comton is coming." And I was always scared to death of this Ab^b Comton. Well he was a very meek man when you saw him, really. And I knew the family. And I

remember we had one of the boys working for us once. A boy named Elmer and he told about how mad they were when he came but he said he always used to come in and be so mad that he'd give all the boys a whipping. And the girls would hide. They'd go and hide or they'd start singing a little song, get out under a tree and that ^{their} ~~they're~~ dad would leave them alone. And he never touched the mother but the boys he gave every one of 'em a whipping. That is if he could get to them. So they saw to it that he couldn't get to them. And so he said, oh lots of times they had to sit ^{for} ~~two~~ or three hours up in a tree. And they used to climb up in the fruit trees to keep away from their father. Oh, he told all kinds of things they did. And ^{I've no} ~~don't~~ doubt they did, because that's the kind of family they were. But I remember being afraid of him. Now that was - now I saw him from our house to the road in a shadowy way because he never came home until the middle of the night. But he woke up everybody along the way, so everybody'd talk about him the next day.

SAM: This was on American Ridge?

W C : This was on American Ridge, yes. Only person on American Ridge that I know of that ever got drunk.

SAM: Ah, here we are.

W C : Yes, sir.

End of side D

typed and transcribed by Karen Purtee