

GUS DEMUS
Third Interview

Interviewed by:
Sam Schrage

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GUS DEMUS

Potlatch; b. 1892

trimmer in Potlatch mill.

2.5 hrs.

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with Sam Schragger
October 24, 1975

II. Transcript

GUS DEMUS

SAM SCHRAGER: This third interview with Gus Demus took place at his home in Potlatch, Idaho on October 24, 1975. The interviewer is Sam Schrage.

SAM SCHRAGER: About the working conditions in Potlatch when you started to work here; what they were like.

GUS DEMUS: Well, the working conditions there them days were harsh. We worked ten hours a day, and wages were small. Because everything else, it was cheaper. You could have bought a pair of shoes them days for three dollars. Now you have to pay thirteen and fourteen and twenty, you see. But it was adjusted to be fair for the time. As far as other conditions concerned, they didn't have no union. There is no unionize. The boss was the whole thing, he could fire you and hire you at his will.

SS: No protection for your job, really.

GD: Well, no, but you have to tend to your business in order to keep the job. There was nothing like that, no. No union protection, no. ^{Up to} World War I, then they start to unionize. Eight hour day went into effect.

SS: Did the bosses-- were they very understanding?

GD: Yeah, they were understanding if you tend your business, you see. If you do the work, things were all right, but if you ~~are~~ loafing, you wouldn't stay very long on ^{the} ~~A~~ job. But them days everybody was trying to do their best. They had a lot of foreign people and single men down here, because there wasn't very many married men. And that's why you had all this gambling and stuff, you know. As far as gambling concerned, shooting dice here just for fun sometimes, and then pretty soon started to use ^{little} money, you know. And then, of course, from the start, it got a little higher, but not too high to lose all your earnings. And there was poker games, and there was girls coming from Spokane down here, during the early days, up to, oh, I say, ~~after~~ World

War I. Some.

SS: You figure that--

GD: That street down there was for Greeks and Italians and they were all bachelors, very few married men. There was probably two or three families. And Japanese boys, the same way. They had some Japs, had a Japanese boardinghouse. And they had probably twenty-five men and there was only one woman ^{there} cooking for them. Woman and ^{man, that is} married couple.

SS: They had to have women here to keep the men, I would think.

GD: Sometimes, yes. They didn't bother, ^{they could tie that up you see.} ~~It was not within the knowledge of the~~ people, they knew it, but they wasn't sure of it, and they didn't bother to look into that, you see. Because they knew, the single men they have to have their women once in a while. They only bring a girl ^{or two} from Spokane, and they don't bother; let 'it go for a while. 'Course, they don't stay very long. It wasn't regular prostitute house. But ^{in Elk River} they had regular ^{and} in St. Maries, ^{same thing} they had regular whorehouse, in other words. But here, they didn't-- they didn't permit it because it ^{was} company's town, see. And company didn't want anything like that. But they usually-- but weekends, you know, they bring a girl in here and stay over for a night or two. Usually one night, Saturday night, see. Because they worked ten hours a day. They were ^{all} bachelors, most all of 'em. Italians and Greeks. The Greeks are all bachelors because there are no Greek women ^{here} at all. And there wasn't one to be found in Spokane even, ^{them days.} But now, of course, they get married and they brought their families, and it's quite a community, have a Greek church. I noticed the other day over the radio that they were advertising to have an annual bazaar there and sell food and other things for the benefit of the church.

SS: Why was it that none of the women followed from Greece?

- GD: They didn't follow because they had nothing here to support-- you see in order to bring a woman here, you got to have either farm or ~~to~~ ^{have} a steady job. ^{They were all foreign people} They didn't have a steady job. They probably get a job here and pretty soon the boss would tell him, "You are out." ^{or they} shut ^{one shift} down and then you're out. They used to run two shifts here, and of course, when the business go down, why, they shut one shift down.
- SS: So you mean in the early years the jobs that the Greeks and Italians had-- you couldn't consider them a permanent job, or steady job?
- GD: No. No, you could not. Probably it ^{ed} proved to be steady after you live for so long here. But at the first you didn't know if you had a steady job. For instance, you run two shifts now, they shut one shift down, business went down, they shut one shift down, they have to lay you off. Then you have to look for another job. And there was nothing here because this is company town, you see. And you have to leave ~~the~~ town.
- SS: Did that happen during the early years from 1910 to 1920? In there?
- GD: Yes, sure. It did happen. It happened in the summertime, in August. We had a big fire here in 1916, ^I think, '15 or '14, I don't remember when. And when they came back from the fire the business was down ^{a bit} and they shut her when she's down and they ~~laid off~~ ^{laid off} all the men except some skilled, ^{people} that they have to have here, because when they run two shifts they got some skilled and some semiskilled. When they shut one shift down they always keep the skilled people with them in order to have them if the business get better, they got to start again and they got to have them, because they hard to get ahold of. And they kept them in case they have to start the mill again they have them and they get the common laborer ~~er~~ of course they could get them easier

than the others.

SS: What was it that stopped the people like the Italians and Greeks from becoming skilled laborers themselves? How come they were stuck at being common labor.

GD: Some did. I had a cousin ^{here} that was the headsawyer. And that's skilled labor. But not all of them. You know, it's hard to explain to you because-- now was fellows that was skilled-- ^{they were} the fellows that work on the carriage and then pretty soon they start to saw. But the Greeks were -- and Italians-- there was no Italians in the sawmill. They are all Greeks. They were doing work which the others wouldn't do, you see. Americans wouldn't stay on that kind of job, because it's too hard.

SS: Which job was this? Piling--?

GD: It's a-- different jobs than common laborer. And it doesn't pay very much either. Like tailsawing or helping edgerman, or something like that. They had different jobs. Some learned to edge themselves and others didn't. You know, it's a matter of individual. It's some people can learn faster than the others. And some people try to better themselves and others don't. Like me, I worked nine years ^{for} spotting lumber down there and pretty soon I got the job to pull ~~saws~~, was paying a little more money and better job. But it's only one place there, you see.

SS: How long did it take you to move up to pulling saws?

GD: Well, it took me nine years because they were others ahead, you see, and you have to wait til the other fellow gets something better or quit or die or do something, you see, in order to vacate that place.

SS: Tell me this, Gus, do you think it was-- was it harder for guys who were foreigners to get ahead at the mills?

- GD: Yes, it was harder, sure, because of the language, too. Is it a man that don't speak the language, don't understand what you're telling him, he can't learn. You have to talk before you can teach him, you know. And down there ^{that was} no school, you see. (Laughter) ^{to work} That was a place. And he can learn the work, of course, he can see, show him what to do. Lots of times they do show them how to do it, little bit, and then it isn't skilled, ^{you} can go ahead and do the work.
- SS: Well, besides the language, and I know the language had to be a big trouble--
- GD: Yes, it was a handicap because not everybody speak English. And there were many, many men, there were a lot of 'em, most all of 'em that couldn't speak English. Almost all of 'em. Even myself. But ^{you try} to learn as much as possible.
- SS: But, I would wonder what kind of opportunity there'd be. There wouldn't too much chance if you lived ^{with} other people that don't speak English.
- GD: Well, yah. That has a lot to do, because they stuck together, you see, and we spoke our own language and that way you can't learn. I had a man, up to 19---, before I left alone, up to 1955, I think. No-- anyway ^{it was} up to 1900 --'50's, and he finally left and I was the only one. But there was some-- I had a cousin here that married a German girl and he had a good job. He was a sawyer. But there wasn't very many.
- SS: Was language the only barrier? Was that it? Or do you think that-- from what little I could tell, it seems to me like there was some feeling that Americans had to say they didn't want foreigners to get good jobs, that they wanted the jobs.
- GD: That is true. Yes. If they didn't have a good job themselves, they didn't want no Greeks or Italians to have a good job. You work under these conditions, you won't like it. And although you ^{know you} can do the job

but I worked down there with the Americans, after World War I- no- after World War II. And there was a lot of boys they came back from the war and was working down there and they had to work under me, you see. I couldn't hire them or fire them, but I could tell them what to do, and they didn't like it. Because I was running that thing, see. ^{The trimmer} And they expect me, the boss, expect me to do my job, because if I don't I lose my own.

SS: Well, you think they didn't like to be told by you because you spoke with some accent?

GD: Not because of that, but because they are working under me, getting a little less wages than I was getting. And that was the point.

SS: But you had all the experience.

GD: Yes. And some, they did the darnest thing to get you out of there, but, of course, you had the experience, you understand the job, ^{better than they did} and they couldn't do that. I had a lot of trouble with some of them. But when the Depression come in 1930's, we all went to--Nobody was left here, at all, except ^{for} a few old-timers. They kept the married men, you know, ^{that had families} give them two, three days week work down there. And myself, I had lot experience and everything, I had to quit because I wasn't married man. And they let me out.

SS: Where did most of the people go who were let out? Where did most of the Greeks go?

GD: Well, they were scattered all over the country. And then, some went back to the old country. Some that had a little money, you know. They left and went back to the old country and got married. And I guess they try to come back but they didn't. They couldn't, you see. They passed the law then that they establish quota. So many came in ^{that can} come from certain countries. You know that?

- SS: Yeah. You mean that there were guys went back thinking that they could come back to the United States, and then they couldn't?
- GD: No. They couldn't because they establish quota, you see. So many could come from each country ^{every} a year. That was based, I think, on the population that was here in the early days, how many people were here of each country. Now from England, there were more, they couldn't come more from Germany, they could come more ~~from Italy~~ ^{the could come more} from Greece, they could come less. ^{only} One hundred a year, they could come from Greece, because there were not so many Greeks here before-- in certain period of time, I don't know how it was based, I don't know. It was based in the population of that country to this country at that certain period of time. Way back in the--
- SS: You mean, it depended on how many Greeks were here already?
- GD: Yes. In the earlier days, much earlier than the hundreds-- the nineties, somewhere around there. I don't know exactly when they based that. But that's how they establish that quota.
- SS: Well, how come the people hadn't become citizens already? Did they decide to wait? I Mean, they were here from--
- GD: There were some that became citizens, but that didn't make no difference. You mean for the quota to come here?
- SS: If the people were to become an American citizen already, then couldn't they just over and come back? If they were American citizens they couldn't kick 'em out.
- GD: Oh, yeah. That for a certain length of time. Seven years, I think. And then they have to renew their citizenship in order to come here to give some reason why they stay over there for so long.
- SS: Did many of your friends want to-- did they apply to become citizens?
- GD: Some. Some. ^{Roosevelt Administration} During WWII at the ^{they} they applied for citizenship. And

there were many, many, not only Greeks--^{but} the Swedish peoples, the Scandinavians people-- there were a lot of Scandinavians here-- they all started to-- I think, Roosevelt then put in schools, you know, for the Scandinavians, Greeks, Italians and all foreign population to learn to, the English language and to learn how the government functions in this country. I had to learn that myself. And I could tell you everything. *But now...*

SS: You probably learned more about it than I did when I was in school.

GD: Yes, I did, because I make special study, see. I had to. 'Cause when I was-- when I became citizen I had to go to court and there was examiners from Spokane that came here and he asked you the questions. The judge, federal judge, was listening, and if you didn't answer the questions you are rejected and you are told to study little more and go back.

SS: What did they expect a person to know?

GD: *Every*thing about the government. How the government is functioning in the United States. And how many branches of government--executive, legislative and so on and so forth. It's interesting. I got a book on the Constitution of the United States. And I learn the whole business, but now it's been so long, you know. I haven't studied, because I don't have to now, you know.

SS: Well, when did you decide to become a citizen?

GD: I don't remember when, I think it was in the early '20's, and I was here for a long time, then.

SS: Was it a big decision for people to make if they wanted to?

GD: Oh, not too big. ^{decision} You had to go to courthouse, you had to have two witness for the final papers, you know. You take the first declatation of intention, the first ^{PAPERS} then after seven years if you don't

go, why, you have to renew them. But, if you did go, why then you could go ahead. They never reject you, they tell you to study. If you went and didn't know very much they ~~told~~ you to study a little more and go back.

SS: Did the people who were planning to go back to the old country, did they--?

GD: No, they were not planning-- you see, young fellows here, they come here for long time and they never thought of getting American citizenship papers. And when the Depression came here, they had a little money and they're young and they ^{went} back to the old country and they get married, but they found after that they couldn't come back. And some of 'em was through twice, they'd gone there twice. They came the first time, but they couldn't come the second time, because it was different, later. I don't know when that law was passed, I don't even remember. But it was passed later years, and some American citizens, they had a hard time to get back. But they were American citizens and they went back and got married, and they tried to get back here but they couldn't. I don't know the reason. And now, in the Second World War some came for reasons that they were displaced persons, see, they didn't have no place to live over there. In other words, they were men without a country. They couldn't come here because of the law and they couldn't stay there because they were displaced person. You see, they didn't have no country.

SS: Well, do you think that in the years that people that you knew here, the ones that stayed for a number of years, did many of them get attached to this town and want to remain a part of it? Or did they always feel like they might be leaving any time?

GD: No. No, they didn't. They didn't because they didn't learn the langu-

age. And it's pretty hard for men that don't even learn the language to go alone in a bunch of fellows, you know-

(END of Side A)

- GD: Like me for instance, I wouldn't have stayed here if I was alone and I didn't have nothing to do. But I joined the Masonic Lodge and that kept me here, otherwise I would have probably went to Spokane, because there's a lot of Greeks in Spokane, you know, and I would have had communication with them, you know, and go to church or go to some other places with them. ^{by join a lodge.} They have the lodge over there, their own lodge over there too. But I like it here and I stay.
- SS: But you think most of the people didn't get any strong attachment here in this place?
- GD: That's right.
- SS: And it was because they lived in a group and they didn't really mix that much?
- GD: No. They live in a group and they like to stay in that group, you see. 'Course my case there came gradually, I didn't leave right away I stayed here, as long as I was working, then when I retired-- Well I had to stay because this here, we had no transportation here at all. The railroad went out, the bus service went out, that's why I bought a car. I had to get out and go to Spokane to the doctor sometimes or some other business, you know in Moscow or someplace, and I didn't have no way. I call one of the men I was riding with, he was taking me around, he says, "I'm going to go hunting today." And it was an emergency, I wanted to go ^{to} that place, so I decided then that I'm going to buy a car, ^{I couldn't either} I never did drove, because from here to sawmill it wasn't very much and we had no use for a car, you see. Young people could come in ten minutes-- not ten minutes, but five

minutes. We could come home and go back to work and you didn't need the car because it was close, close into the job. So I decided to stay here, and ^{said I'm going to have to learn to} drive the car, so I went ^{up} to Spokane got, went to school. I went to school to learn to drive. Driving school.

I had quite an experience. One time they give me woman-- there was woman there that teach you, you know, and I go over there in the morning and I get only one hour or sometimes two hours, but that was five dollars an hour and it was pretty expensive. They gave me woman one time, and she was more nervous than I was, and she said- was crossing a street there-- and she said, "Hurry up because ^{car coming}"-- "Oh," I says, "they got a brake here." But, she was right. Because that wasn't a stop sign there, it was to go through, and you had to go ahead.

SS: When you retired from working at the mill, were you the only Greek that was still working from the old days?

GD: There was another one who died here. He was married to some woman up in Onaway and he was living up there, I hardly ever saw him. ^{I never communicated, I mean} I didn't care for him anyway.

SS: When did you join the Masonic-- go into the Masonic Lodge?

GD: 1945. I'm thirty years in lodge now. Some people are fifty, but I didn't get to do that. Oh, yes, ^{I took interest} Masonic Lodge, it's a good one. ^{It's a good organization.} It's a good brotherhood. Oh, you'll find some in Masonic-- as you do in any other, that are no good, but most of 'em are living to standards and those that are not so good, why, they stay away. ^{They don't come to lodge.} They don't take part.

SS: When the people were here from Greece in the early days, was it mostly like two guys to a house? How did it work?

GD: Oh, yeah, there was three, four, five, six. Depend on the size of the house they had. And depended on how they get along. Yeah, there

were four, five in house and they bach. And they kept track of the groceries, you know and everything. See, it's like the army. You have to cook tomorrow, the other fellow had to cook the other day. Each day, each one of you take part of the cooking. Well, ~~I~~ was lucky that I had two brothers down there in one of them places, and one of 'em, he was pretty good cook, and he did all the cooking, and we washed dishes. I and his younger brother and another fellow. There was four of us. But that's the way they worked.

SS: Were you related to those two brothers?

GD: No relation, but we come from the same town. ^{He-Hi} And one of 'em still living, when I went back there I met one of 'em. The other was in different town, and I didn't go there.

SS: The two went back there and stayed?

GD: Yeah. The older one was a married man.

SS: Would a group like that stick together very long? I mean, did you live with guys for a long time?

GD: Oh, yeah. I lived them as long as they were here. For long time. I don't remember how long. Oh, yes, they stay together. And if they get in trouble, why, they move from one house to the other, if they don't get along.

SS: Sounds like when I was in school, and the guys would get together. I lived with three other guys one year and four guys another year.

GD: Yeah.

SS: Similar. Were these guys your closest friends?

GD: Good friends, yeah. They're from the same town. ^{Back there} And, of course, I was young then. I do anything-- I didn't care much. They was doing the cooking and I was washing dishes. I did what they tell me anyway. ^{One of the older men.} ~~It~~ WAS like in Army. Because now they got a different-- they have

what they call KP and so on and so forth. But that's the way it was you had to have some who had to-- and you had to be able to get along. If you didn't get along, why you had to move the other place, and if you didn't get along in the other place, you go to the other and so on. But in long run, you had to get along, because, if you didn't, you be all alone.

SS: Sounds like you had three, four, five guys living in a small house, you had to get along, living in such a small place.

GD: Yeah. The house ^{was} pretty small. It had no living room at all, those houses down there, when I first come over here. As I told you in the preceding job there, you know, I told you how-- did you put it down?

SS: Yes.

GD: I guess you have.

SS: I think so.

GD: ^{How} Those houses ^{were} over there. But when we come up here after the fire, after they burned them down. Well, houses are like this, temporary houses. Well, they were not exactly like this, they were single wall, you know--

SS: Flimsy.

GD: Yeah. Temporary, they called them. And they did build them temporary for the people that come here first, but then they found that they could rent 'em and they kept them until after World War I-- World War II they sold 'em-- One fellow got a contract and he hauled 'em away; hauled 'em'round to the farms for different things, for stock or even for houses.

SS: Were the temporary houses pretty good houses?

GD: Oh, pretty fair. Yeah, they were good, but not like this, you know.

And this here it cost me a lot of money to remodel it. This was like a temporary houses, but it cost me about five thousand dollars at that time. Now probably it cost more.

SS: When you lived in temporary houses, they didn't have a living room? The living room was a bedroom?

GD: No, the living room was a kitchen and dining room combined. You had one table there and one stove; it was a kitchen and a-- well, it was kitchen and dining room together, and you had the bedrooms on the side. Kitchen and dining room, you had the stove here-- no, the stove over there and ^{like} the table ^{h. d. g. e. n.} over here. You see. And the rooms, were like this here.

SS: And the other rooms were all bedrooms?

GD: Bedrooms, two; two bedrooms in each one. And two men in each room. And sometimes four if it was necessary. They had a double bed. But they had no water inside, you have to get the water ^{when you} ~~were~~ outside. And in the wintertime it's terrible. The water didn't ^{froze}, because they had it pretty well down, but didn't freeze in the winter, kept it running, you see. And if it did freeze, it freeze on the top; you see and you could always--

SS: You mean, you kept the faucet on during the winter?

GD: Yeah.

SS: Was it terrible because it was hard to get the water---

GD: I didn't stay ~~th~~ here very long because they burned down, and I'm glad that it did.

SS: Are you talking about the--?

GD: I stay here a couple of years, I think down there.

SS: The old places---

GD: Down on the flat they had separate place, you see. Which now is--

they dumping logs there now; they're piling logs.

SS: You said that place down there, that was pretty bad? It wasn't very good living conditions?

GD: No. And them days it was-- they had a ball park over there next to ~~the~~ ball park, way down there. It was flat. But now they pile logs all over the places, you don't see nothing. And there's no-- They had a barn for horses, I don't know how many horses-- they used to use horses in the planer and ⁱⁿ the greenchain and all over them days to pull the trucks, loaded with lumber, you see. Now, they have this machines like-- with motors, see. But them days they had-- I don't know how many horses they had there. And out in the yard, the same way.

SS: Was it right by the old horsebarn, the old buildings?

GD: Well, yeah, it was west ^{from} it. But in order to go to the sawmill you could go by the barns.

SS: What made that such a bad place to live, down there?

GD: Well, it was swamp; pretty near swamp. From the place where we lived in order to come to town, you had to go-- they had a bridge, ^{build} a bridge you know, and there was water standing there, ~~it~~ was like swamp ~~water~~. It wasn't the river, because the ^{river} is running, but this water wasn't running, you see. ^{It was flooded.} That's what made it bad. But I'm glad that that that fellow burned 'em down anyway.

SS: You sure it wasn't a mistake, he burned 'em down? You sure it was a mistake that he burned them down?

GD: Oh, yes, it was mistake, of course, it wasn't intentional, no. Because he didn't understand. This fellow come from the old country where they don't have no stoves, nothing. They burn wood, not the heavy wood like this, they burn small wood, you know, in a fireplace and that's where they cook and ^{they} do everything, over there. And, he

thought it was the same way over there. But, when the fire started in the box, he put the hot ashes in the box and left 'em there for all night, and the other fellows they didn't see it, you know the fellows that knew about it, they didn't see it and pretty soon the hot ashes caught fire-- and the box they put 'em in caught fire, and the floor caught fire and then pretty soon the ceiling caught fire and the whole business was burned down.

SS: This bridge-- you could walk over the bridge, you didn't have to walk through the muck? Or did you have to walk through the muck, too?

GD: No, you have to walk ^{through} the bridge to come to town, come to sawmill. You had to walk ^{through} that bridge because there was no road there. In other words, it was separated from the Americans altogether. But when we come up here, was still separated, but, you know, we could go to town from-- it was down below this pit, you see, first, you see ^{still} goes by the same name.

SS: Well, I just really wonder how the people felt about that, because to me, it doesn't seem very American to have the different groups of people separated.

GD: (Laughter) It doesn't seem all right to you, yeah, but the Scandinavians were among the Americans. You know Swedes and Norwegians and so on, they were ^{there} up that way. But there were many of them that were married. You see, they brought their wives from the old country, and those that didn't, they got married here. They were more people to learn quicker-- I don't know, the language is similar to the the English language or not, but they do have some English words in their language, and that way they, it seems to me, they learn quicker than other nationalities.

SS: Do you think that ---?

- GD: Sundberg's father and grandfather was Scandivanian.
- SS: Did the Italians and Greeks, Did some of them mind that? Did they just accept it or did they feel that it was fair at all?
- GD: Well, they didn't feel that way, but they didn't mind it, because they knew that they didn't have ~~the~~ ability to mix, you see. Because they didn't understand the language. And that way they talked their own language and they got along alright. The only thing was that they had some trouble, you know, that was serious-- well, like the fellow that died-- I told you one time, didn't I?
- SS: When you went to see Laird?
- GD: Yeah. Like the fellow that got killed in the fire-- well, I couldn't understand Laird and of course, he had to send to Spokane get somebody that understood, and he had to go in court to-- well, not to the court-- well, yeah, he had to go to court. ^{He went through the court.} He had the power of attorney from his sister. And in that case I couldn't do anything, because I didn't understand enough English. And, I still don't understand.
- SS: You got no trouble understanding what I say!
- GD: (Chuckles) No, but all the same in a case like that, you don't, you hire a lawyer.
- SS: Yeah. That's true. You got to do that anyway nowadays, no matter how much English you know. One thing about this swamp-- I was wondering-- did that breed mosquitos? Was it a pretty bad place that way?
- GD: Yeah. It was. That brought mosquitos, but they didn't care. Who cared ^{what} the Greeks, let 'em be out there! ^{In summertime, yeah,} ~~that brought~~ mosquitos.
- SS: How much swamp was it right around the camp?
- GD: Oh, not very much. Just a strip, you know. They had to build a

bridge in order to cross, you know. Temporary bridge, it wasn't very strong, either. But we managed to cross from there to the depot. Where the depot is now. And we come up to the store. Store and post office.

SS: Now, you said didn't make much money, but things were cheaper. Well, how much money did---

GD: Two dollars a day. Ten hours. Ten cents an hour. Ain't it?

SS: Two dollars-- no twenty cents an hour-- twenty cents an hour for ten hours, two dollars.

GD: Some get little more than two. The common laborer ^I worked for two dollars a day. I worked for less in the railroads, so this was a fair wage for that time.

SS: What did it cost to live on? When you get done with the expenses of the rent and the food, did you have anything left?

GD: I don't know, didn't have very much, no. It cost about, oh, thirty dollars a month. It all depends-- depending on the cook- if he was getting good meat, why, I think it cost that, but if he get cheap meat, maybe fifteen dollars. In one place-- in Ephrata, this side Ephrata, we was working railroad, and we used to get ^{lot of} rabbits. Jackrabbits and sometimes small ones and they were good meat. And we got along for about seven, eight dollars a month. Of course, we got a lot of meat from them cottontail rabbits, you know. They were good.

SS: Shoot them? How did you get them, trap them or shoot them?

GD: No, shoot 'em. We had a section foreman, boss, you know, he was American, and he had a twenty-two rifle and he liked to shoot 'em. So when we were going on the railroad ^{over time} with speed-car-- not speed-car-- handcar-- have you seen them?- and he just stop it when he'd

see one of them, he used to stop and shoot 'em and I'd go get 'em. He was pretty good shot, too. Never miss. Yes, it was quite an experience.

SS: Well, in the mill-- did you ever see any bad accidents?

GD: Yes. Not in the mill, no. On the railroad, I did.

SS: On the railroad? What did you see there?

GD: I see- I saw the train-^{engine of a} passenger train, got in the mud and all you could see was the chimney. And the fireman and the engineer was caught between the tanker and the engine, and the fireman apparently tried to jump and he was caught under the rail and he was cut in the ~~back~~, you know-- spreading back in the car. ^{I did see them because} The engineer, you could see nothing but the head. The tanker and the engine was ^{connected} together and apparently he was trying to stop the train, the engine, and I don't know how it happened, but they thought that the switch was open, either open or half open, and hit the rails and went over. And when they ^{went over, the} engine went down, he was going pretty good speed, too, probably sixty, seventy miles an hour or more.

SS: The engine went in the mud?

GD: No mud, it was dirt. Well, it was flat country. It was the other side of Yakima. Selah, they call it.

SS: The engineer was killed, too?

GD: The engineer and the fireman, and the baggageman broke his arm and leg. And another baggageman, I guess, was hurt. But no other accident happen then, except with those four fellows. Two got killed and two were hurt. I saw here in the mill many accidents, but they're minor; cutting fingers and so on on the saw. And I saw another accident in the mill, he was stripped from his clothes, altogether. He got caught in the rollers and I don't know how he got caught, but it ^{took} all his clothes off. And even ^{cut} his socks, even

with the shoe.

- SS: It took all that, but it didn't--? (END of side B)
- GD: He wasn't hurt.
- SS: This guy you just told me about, didn't get killed, how he could lose his clothes and not get pulled in himself.
- GD: No. In the rollers, ^{the action that bring them round} he was caught, and he hold onto to them rollers--
- SS: Caught the bottom of his shirt?
- GD: Yeah, the whole shirt and everything, everything. He was stripped.
- SS: Did people think that was pretty funny? (Laughter)
- GD: I thought he was dead, but they stop, of course, they stop the rollers, to stop the rollers, of course, you had to stop the whole mill, you know to get him out, you see. Because they are not separate rollers, and to stop them, stop the whole sawmill. Them days, they didn't ^{have} the setting business they have now, you see. And, in order to stop the rollers, you had to stop the whole sawmill. But now they have them separate, you see, with motors, and you can stop any-- In them days, they had only one big engine and a belt that brought the-- that turn the mill around and you couldn't stop certain places-- certain places you could stop but other places you couldn't. So, couldn't stop that and he had to be stripped-- and of course they stopped ^{it afterwards,} but it was too late. And the millwright took a ^{up there} jumper or something ^{and} put it over him and they took him over to the doctor, and doctor sent him to the hospital. The hospital in Palouse. They had a hospital in Palouse, them days.
- SS: Then he didn't get hurt badly at all?
- GD: No, not bad at all.
- SS: It's really what you call hanging on for dear life!!
- GD: Well, he was, I don't know, he hung on. He was a young man. But he

stood it pretty good. And another fella got cut on his leg, and he cut his leg off here. The underwear and the pants. He was pretty strong man, that fella, and he put his foot down, it didn't took him in, see, there was a board there that held him from going in under ~~that~~, and if he did went under, why, he would have been smashed.

SS: Well, now, it took his leg off, though?

GD: No. No.

SS: It took his foot off, or what?

GD: No.

SS: Just his clothes.

GD: Yes.

SS: Oh, I see.

GD: But he so mad 'cause it took his clothes, ^{he didn't get hurt either.} And, a lot of times, you know, there were accidents there, small accidents. Maybe get caught in machinery of some kind, and they'd lose probably a sweater or something. One fella that caught his sweater and he just threw it off, he was quick enough to throw the sweater, and the sweater was running ^{round} the ~~over~~, and it bring the rollers around. But he was pretty quick, that fella. 'Course he didn't have it buttoned, if he had it buttoned, but he had it loose and he threw it off.

SS: How dangerous do you think it was to work in the mill?

GD: It was dangerous, them days, because they didn't have the safety devices that they have now. But still, now, just the other day, maybe a year ago, one fella run into a resaw and got caught, ^{he was bleeding, too.} Young fellow, too. He was eighteen years old. ^{Yeah, maybe two years ago.}

SS: Do you remember people getting killed in the mill when you worked there, even if you didn't see it?

GD: Yes. I remember one in the engine room. The engine turns the whole mill them days. They used to have a belt, four-foot belt, and I

don't know how many cows it took to make that belt! But it took very many, because it was pretty wide, four, five foot belt that turn the whole mill. And, of course, they had some other belts to turn other machinery, but they were connected with the other one. That was the main belt and the other one was the belt to run the ^{grade}saw. And one fella in the engine room, I don't know what happened, I wasn't there, but they told me that he got killed. The engine, itself, has some balls there that go around, I don't know what they do, what they are for, but, anyway, it broke loose and one of the things hit him in the head and he died. He died right there instantly. I didn't see him, because it was out of my department then, I was working in different part of the mill, and he was in the engine room.

SS: What was the work that you were doing in the mill. It was on the edger?

GD: No, trimmer.

SS: On the trimmer. What was the work that you had to do?

GD: Well, I was in a cage, like a monkey, and pulling saws. You see, the trimmer has a saw in every two feet, and I had to trim the lumber accordingly, and the saw caught in the piece of lumber and probably that's why I got these eyes ruined. I had to watch every piece of lumber that went through there, and there were millions of pieces that went through. I had to watch for grade to trim the defects of lumber and to leave the good lumber to go out on greenchain and from there they hauled it to the yard, them days. Now they got the stackers and they dry it in the kilns.

SS: How much would you trim off of the lumber when it came to you?

GD: Well that depend on whether they needed trimming or not.

If there is some of 'em that doesn't need trimming, you let 'em go. Whichever is needed to be trimmed, why, you have to understand that, you see.

SS: What kind of defects would there be in the lumber?

GD: Would be rotten or it has a bad knot and the other one is select, you have to cut that off. You've got to go according to the grade. You got to understand, ^{it's} semiskilled work, well, it should be skilled if you're a good one, but they called it semiskilled.

SS: Is that what you did when you started in the sawmill?

GD: Oh, no, no, when I started I throw lumber on the top; spot lumber for the trimmer, and I had to work nine years before I got that job. So it was hard work. 'Course, the other work, it wasn't too hard. You had to watch it and do good job.

SS: You mean pulling the saws wasn't as hard as the--?

GD: No, it wasn't hard. But now in the last days, before I retired they changed them. Used to be manual pulling, and now they got a air pull, they got buttons, and you push the button and the saw comes on. It works by air. And them days they work by-- you have pull it. But, of course, they adjust the saw, they wouldn't pull so hard and they ducked quick enough to clear the lumber, you see. It was manual, and this other it's, well, it's the machinery that does the work, but you have to pull.

SS: When you pulled the saws; I'm trying to picture what it was. Did you change the dimension of the lumber, when you trimmed it?

GD: No, you don't change the dimension, it's thickness, isn't it?

SS: Okay, you didn't change the thickness. Did you change the length? Is that what you did?

GD: Yes. Yes. Naturally. You change the length, you trimmed accordingly,

If the board-- you get a sixteen feet or a twenty feet lumber, and one piece from ten feet up to twenty, it's got knots, and the other one is clear, why you *got it in* the two, why, you manufacture the outside, you see, you do it in the middle, and it's cheaper. Because if you don't, why they have to cut it out there anyway in order to grade it, you see. And if you don't count it, the grader will pull it off, and mark it. Oh, I had a lot of trouble there with some graders, who didn't understand their business. *We made it right.*

SS: Where would the disagreement--?

GD: Yes, I disagree with the head grader, too. (Chuckles) Lots of times I was right and lots of times I was wrong.

SS: The grader looked at it after you did, right?

GD: Yes, the grader would-- you see, when it goes over, the *trimmer* it falls over on the table and there is a grader, and marks it, see. And some grader, they don't mark it right, they pull it off for trimming and don't need trimming. And, I don't trim it, I let it go again. And he look at it again and I says, "You let it go." But he push it off, he's stubborn, he push it off anyway. (Chuckles)

SS: Is it just a question of judgement or--?

GD: Yes, a question of judgement. Good judgement, too. He either use good judgement of bad judgement. I had quite a thing with some graders, but some of 'em were pretty good, they understand their business. Old-timers, you know.

SS: Is it something that takes a long-- a lot of years to learn?

GD: Well, yes, takes some time. *It isn't easy to learn right away.* It take some time.

SS: Well, these nine years that you were throwing the lumber, or spotting; were you learning how to trim, too?

GD: Sure, I was learning, because you see how he trimmed it, you see.

At first, you don't pay attention, you try to do your work, but

when you work there for so long, it's easy. You watch how he's trimming it, and you do the same. Because I was changing around once in a while, with the saw puller. And when he needed to do some exercise, himself, why, he'd get tired up there, he come down and work in-- spot lumber, and I go up there. It take a lot of time, and ^{experience,} it's not a job to do in a day. But, experience make it possible to do good job.

Okay, now let's talk about something else.

SS: There's one more thing I'm think about there; and that's the nine years that it took you to--

GD: It don't take that long to learn, ⁺ but, nine years it took me to get that job steady, you see, because that fella that was there, he belonged there and you couldn't take him off. But it happen that after nine years that he went to a different place. They took him from the sawmill and put him in the planer. They was doing the same kind of work, you see, and that's how I got the job.

SS: Were ^{you} the next in line for the job anyway? How did they know that you were the next in line? How does that work?

GD: The boss knows it. The foreman knows it. And there was another fella went ahead of me, and the boss didn't know it, but when he found out in check, you know, he got his check just same as the spotter, he went over there to ask him, he says, "What are you doing?" He says, "You pulling saws?" He thought that I was changing around with him. He says, "You don't belong there, you belong on the spotting lumber. Gus is ^{belonging} over there." He was trying to get the job, you know, but it didn't work, he was a good man, the boss, the foreman. ^{But I was dummy,} And I let him go ahead, you see, but it didn't work.

SS: After you waited so many years, you still let the guy go ahead?

GD: Yeah. Well, I thought the boss told him to.

SS: Oh, I see.

GD: But the boss didn't say nothing to him, he thought that I was supposed to be there anyway. And when he went over there to sign his check out, he says, "You don't belong there, what the heck are you doing here? Get out." And he gave him the same pay as spotter. And he gave me the sawpuller's^s job. That is, the check, too.

SS: Was this guy doing the pulling for that period of time, before he got his check, or were you doing the pulling?

GD: No, he was doing, and I was helping him, that is, when he wants to get out there, I'd go up there. But the boss thought that the I was the steady puller there. He never pay attention. He saw him up there sometimes, so he says, Gus[?] probably let him work here for a while. I used to go down there and work, you know, change around with him. But I didn't have to.

SS: What job had this guy come from doing before he got--?

GD: ^{He WAS} Spotting. He WAS down there.

SS: What I was going to ask, was; how important was it to have a good foreman? Was there a big difference between foremen? Some good, some bad?

GD: Yes. Sure he's a good foreman, he'll give you what you want. Now like that foreman there, if he was some crooked man, and this other fella told him that, "I am pulling saws," he let him go. Let him pull saws. But he told him he was ^{MAN, he WAS upright man} right, and he says, "No, you don't belong there. He's ahead of you." And he told him, "No, you don't get no pay either." So, you see the difference. [?] And he was American, too, but that doesn't make any difference, ^{to him} I was doing the work

better than he. And that didn't make any difference, see, to the boss. If he's entitled to that job, he'll give it to him. So there you are, it's much difference in running the business. ^{He WAS AN UPRIGHT MAN.} He was a good man. Old German.

SS: Do you think the foremen were closer to the men, working men, or to the management? As far as where they looked--

GD: The foreman?

SS: Yeah. Were they more like the working man, or were they more like management?

GD: Well, the foreman ^{he's} the head man in the mill, and you must obey him. Management has nothing to say, up in office, they don't know what you're doing there. Like Laird and the other fellas they were up in office and the foreman there, why, he was the boss of the mill. And, of course, he was a company's man, but he was a just man, he gave a man, the right that he had coming to him. Old John Myers. He was a good man. He was talking to himself sometimes, because that job got on his nerves, and they finally let him off. Some make a good foreman, and some no good. We had one son of a gun there, and he tried to-- he couldn't fire me-- but he was trying to get me into trouble with the other fellas to fire me, but he didn't succeed. And he finally got retired. Oh, it wasn't all easy down there.

SS: Why would this foreman be doing that? Somebody else he favored? Or did he have a reason for it?

GD: Yeah, he was trying to get somebody else the job, because he thought I had too much money, you see, and he was his friend, the other fella. He was-- I don't know what he was doing. But it didn't work.

SS: There was more than one foreman in the mill, isn't there?

GD: No.

- SS: Just one foreman for the whole mill?
- GD: One for the sawmill. And one for the planer. And assistant ^{head grader:} foreman.
- SS: Oh, he's and assistant, and foreman?
- GD: Assistant foreman, is big job. ^{similar} But down there it's the foreman they had the assistant foreman to look after the smaller things, you know.
- SS: Are the assistant foreman like crew foreman? Did they have a crew underneath them?
- GD: Well, yes. No, they had the whole crew, but is something that the head foreman can't do, why, he probably assist the foreman in order to see it all, you know. Because, the head foreman sometimes is in different places, see, look ^{around} for other things. And then this other fella, this assistant foreman, he looks into the planer or sawmill-- they don't have assistant foreman in sawmill-- they have only one foreman and that's all. And, of course, it's out there in the pond, where they put the logs up, there's a foreman there, he's got a crew of his own.
- SS: How big was the sawmill crew?
- GD: Not very big now.
- SS: I mean then?
- GD: Then?
- SS: Yeah. *With the foreman.*
- GD: Oh, let's see-- about seventy-five people.
- SS: One foreman for all them guys?
- GD: Yeah. And now, is about five. You see the machinery, yet?
- SS: Is that good, all that automation?
- GD: Yes. Where there were three men, ^{it's} only one now.
- SS: What do you think about that? It seems that you can put a lot of

people out of work.

GD: Oh, yes. 'Course, they don't put the lumber they did them days, now. Big logs, and the quantity. The quality's cut down. They cut only dimension, they cut heavy lumber. They don't cut one inch.

SS: But, Gus, you're saying that there was just one foreman for seventy-five men?

GD: Yes. And lath mill--I don't know how many, whether there was seventy or five or seventy, but there was. There was seventy, anyway. And probably ten others work down in lath mill; which is included in sawmill, you see, because the lath mill is separate because-- you know what lath is?

SS: Yes.

GD: Well, they were making lath, now they don't make lath.

SS: Well, what is lath? Tell me.

GD: Lath, it's a quarter of an inch thick and about two inches wide, and about four feet long. And they were making them laths ^{they were nailing them} between the walls and put plaster on them. And that is lath. They didn't plane 'em, or anything, they were rough. They were under the surface of the wall. They were plastered walls, them days. Lot of the houses there were plaster, and they put lath in order to hold the plaster. And that is lath, they called it. Put about forty thousand bundles. They tied them into bundles.

SS: That was separate from the sawmill, the lathmill?

GD: It was separate, yes. It was a fella that was contract , and he was hiring his own men. But sometime they change 'em. That is, if the sawmill men needed one man, he loan him. If he was short of men, you know, he loan him one, for a short time. Yeah, they don't make those anymore, because they have different, they have the plasterboard

now, and it's nothing to it.

SS: How noisy was it in the mill?

GD: Pretty noisy, sometime. Not sometime, but all the time. And I wonder how I got through-- you see most of the fellas that work down there they get deaf. They can't hear. I can't hear very good either, now. But I hear ordinary voice, I can't hear very good in the hall, in lodge hall, you know, in Masonic Hall, sometimes I can't hear.

SS: You say a lot of the guys lost their hearing?

GD: Yes. This one guy up here, he's still working, but he can't hear very good either. ^(END of side C) He's next to the saw, and some of them saws them days, they're whistling. You couldn't stop 'em. But now, they got a way to stop them.

SS: So when you were spotting lumber?

GD: Yes, ^{when I was} spotting lumber, was next to the saw, you see, and I could hear that, and that whistling is still in my ears now. ^{what} I can hear, but the nerve is dead. Is not very good. I can hear in the telephone. I can hear better in the telephone than I can hear without.

SS: After the day's work was over, would you hear it ringing in your ears, still?

GD: Yeah. It's funny, but it does now. **R**inging. But don't bother me. You know, you get used to it and you don't pay attention.

SS: Will you tell me some of what that sign language was like? What was some of the things that people would say to each other-- they would say in sign language?

GD: There is no rule to that. They just make signs, and if you understand 'em, alright, and if you don't, alright. I could talk to them in signs when I was down there, but ^{not} now, not necessary. Depended ^{on} what you

talking about, see. If you get in the subject, why, you understand the subject, then you can go ahead and talk about it. Or you talk about somebody ^{that} is crazy or deaf or dumb or whatever, you can talk-- "Well, that fella ^{is} crazy!" Do like this--

SS: Yes, run your finger around your ear.

GD: ^{finger around the ears,} And that fella is dumb--

SS: Stick your fingers in your ears..

GD: Is dumb, he don't hear nothing, don't understand ~~the~~ talk. Many, many things, you know, that you can talk about. Any subject. You take a subject, and then you get started, you can carry on conversation. (Chuckles) You have to have a start, you know, to understand who you're talking about or what.

SS: It's just hard to believe that you can carry on a whole conversation without using words.

GD: Well, you don't exactly carry on the conversation without words, but pretty near. You understand each other.

SS: Did that help you when you couldn't talk English very good, to be able to talk that way?

GD: Oh, yes, that was pretty nice. I could ^{rather} talk that, than I could talk English. Sometimes the fellas come over, you know when I was talking and they thought I could speak English, as well, but when they come 'cross there, I couldn't talk the English language. ^{I rather talk the} But after ^{sign} I learn the sign language, it's only when you can't talk to people. You see, I was far from them, maybe twelve, fifteen feet up in cage, and they ^{were} down there spotting and they can't talk because it's too noisy, you can't hear anyway if you talk, and to make sign if they didn't spot the lumber right you tell 'em to pull two feet or whatever it needs. And many times, you get into trouble with them because

the fella that spots he thinks that you are wrong and you think you're right and there is the confusion. (Chuckles) But you have to do it just the same because you run the thing, and you're responsible. One time there's a fella spotting lumber there and there ^{was} a broken piece and he tried to cut it or throw it away, ^{or cut it up} and I says, "No, you put it down there." And he says, "What for?" He says, "If you let that go, I'm gonna eat that." And he pulled her out and showed it to the grader. It was pretty loose lumber, you know, ^{split} all the pieces, but them days, they let that stuff out and you don't think what they use it for. They use it for places where it is muck or wet and they want to pile stacks or something there that is not supposed to be wet, and just leave them down there in the ground to keep the moisture from coming up. They were no good for lumber, but they were good for ^{something}, and they had use for that them days, and let 'em go. Well, that fella didn't think, "Is that piece there? No, yes."

SS: So what did the grader say?

GD: The grader?

SS: Yes.

GD: He knew, because he had orders from the head ^{graders}.

SS: So, did he try to eat the board?

GD: (Chuckles) He ^{pulled it out and} showed it to the head grader when he come around, he say, "Yeah, that's alright." And, he told him, he explained to him what they were using them for. ^{He didn't think it should go out that way.} He thought it should be cut up. It's a lot of fun. Lot of fun and ^{trouble}, if you don't understand it; the lumber.

SS: What would happen in cases where two guys working on the same job didn't get along very good? Like if the spotter and the trimmer didn't get along very good, would the foreman move one of them? Or would

they just have to deal with each other?

GD: No. No. No. He don't move him-- unless he complained and go to the foreman and tell him that-- Oh, I had a lot of complaints. Them fellas, they went over to the foreman and told him that I was stopping the chain too long, and it pile up. And the foreman he says, "You do as ^{he tell you}, he's responsible for that." I told them that too, before the foreman was there. I says, "You pull that lumber and put it where I tell you." One fella went over there and told him about that, and I told him there was a reason for every ^{time}. I ~~stop~~ . And he says, "Not every time." "Well, you didn't understand." I says, "That's why." No, they don't move him, unless he complain continuously. But you can come to disagreement with ^{lot of} people down there quite often. And some, they get mad, but others don't because they can see that you're right. And, of course, sometimes they get mad but is nothing you can do about it.

SS: Do you ever know about people fighting over at the mill?

GD: You can fight anytime ^{here}. That place there, you can fight anytime. I had one fella he says, "You're a damn liar!" He threw his gloves down; he took his gloves off and he ready to fight, and I says, "It's alright," I says, "You go ahead and spot lumber." I could fight many, many, many times. They get madder'n heck. But I didn't want to fight because if I do fight: why, I'm gonna lose my job. And I don't want to fight them crazy fools. ^{I don't know what I told him, but} He says, "You ^a damn liar." and he pulled his gloves, and he says, "Come on." And, I says, "No."

SS: As a rule, if the guys fight, they get canned? Or not?

GD: Huh?

SS: Is it the rule that if guys fight in the mill they get canned?

GD: Not always. But they don't want it. They don't want it to happen.

GD: I avoided it as much as possible. That same guy he was a crazy any way he was fighting^{in it} all the time. And he fought with somebody else and he knock^{ed} him out. He fought with another fella there. He come over there and told him something about lumber on the edger there, he said, "You're missing too much." And word by word they got in a fight, and he knocked him out. And, of course, if the boss is there and see it, why, he might fire one or both. Oh, yeah, you can fight anytime you want. But I never did, I never had no serious trouble. I fight with once, I talked to him, tried to make him understand.

SS: I've heard that there was quite a lot of joking-- practical jokes that went on down in the mill.

GD: Sometime. Sometime they joking, but with the sign language. And sometimes that sign language brings bad results, you know. And because you can do signs easier than you can talk and the other fellow takes them serious, why, there is where you get in a fight. But I never did, all my years down there I always tried to avoid trouble. Not that I was afraid, but I didn't want to fight there because many times, they respect me too, because, they start something, ^{probably will} have hard time to finish it. But, I never did. I pushed one feller one time, shoved him away, and he didn't come back.

SS: You're talking about the sign language. You mean like people would misunderstand what the signs meant?

GD: Yeah, sometimes. Sometimes-- One fellow bit the ear off of the other fellow, through them signs. But he said-- they said down there that ~~that~~ fellow was pretty hongry to chew his ear. Chew it right off. Not all his ear, but part of it. They were talking with the signs about the old country, you know, and one of that fellow had two sisters, two good looking girls. And, I don't know, I guess he misunderstood the signs and he thought he was talking about his sisters

you know, that he wanted to know something, I don't know. And that fellow got mad, and he got over there and he chewed his ear, and he left, he went out, he left the mill. I don't remember now whether they fired him or what they did. I believe they did fire him, yeah. He chewed the other fella's ear, you know. And he asked him what's the matter and he said something that didn't go right with him, you know about his two sisters and ^{his} sisters were back in the old country, back in Greece. And they were crazy in them days, you know.

SS: Crazy.

GD: Well, he had no business talking to him, about his sisters and ^{of course} his sisters weren't here anyway. But he knew them, you see. He was from same town.

SS: Was there a lot of talk, that's something I was thinking about, a lot of talk about the old country? And the hometowns?

GD: Them days, yeah. Because they were all newcomers, see, they ^{were} not very long here, about two, three years, four, five. Oh, yeah, there was quite a bit of talking about them and they didn't have nothing else talk about. They talk about what they did over there, mostly. Course over here it was different.

SS: Did they keep up on the news from back there, and what was going on in the town?

GD: Yeah. Yes. They keep corresponding. All did. Except me, I didn't correspond ^{too} much. But I did correspond some. I had a sister back there and two brothers, who were killed in the war.

SS: Which one? The first or the second?

GD: Both.

SS: I mean war.

GD: Oh, the second, yes. The Hitler's war. Oh, he done a lot of damage,

that fella. Yeah, he set the world on fire. Especially in Greece, you know, when they conquer it. The Italians went in first, but they didn't do very much, but when the Germans went in they did terrible things. They killed men for nothing, you know. ^{If you tell 'em something.} They even burned vil-
lages, the whole business.

SS: Where were your brothers when they got killed? Were they in their own town? Were they in the fighting?

GD: No, they were in the war. Defending the country. But then the Ger-
mans were ^{pretty,} they did terrible things. They suffer a lot; ^{them people there} men
and women, both. Both physically and financially. They put out mon-
ey ^{which} was no good after he ^{left} there, you see. They lost all
that money.

SS: Did many of the men here know each other's families back there?
Did many of the men know the families of their friends here? That
were back there? I mean, did they know each other's families?

GD: Oh, yeah. Most of them were from the same town.

SS: You said most of the Greeks here were from Dedemah. Right?

GD: Uh-huh. Yeah, from same town. Oh, of course, there was a lot of
'em from different towns. Not all of them from Dedemah, they were
from ^{Argos} and other places. But from ^{Dedemah} there must be about
thirty, thirty-five people here. And then just as many from the
other places. And we lived separate down there, too.

SS: Oh, the ones from Dedemah lived together?

GD: ^{Yeah.} Sometimes they agree, if they had no room, you know, they agree to go
to stay with them. But as a rule, if they have room they-- Dedemah
and ^{Argos (???)}, ^{is the chief town} over there. There are a few of them
here-

SS: From ^{Argos?}

- GD: Not very many, but there are a few.
- SS: How far away from Dedemah?
- GD: Oh, about ten miles-- or less. Now there is a bus running from there to ~~Kalamazoo~~ and then goes to ~~part of Michigan (?)~~
- SS: From any other towns, too, or just a couple of others?
- GD: Oh, well, they were from ~~Kalamazoo~~ ^{I guess} there were about half a dozen, down there and they ^{live} with us. Or by themselves, you know, they had houses by themselves.
- SS: And they were from other towns, too?
- GD: Oh, yes. ^{They were} From other towns.
- SS: Were they near Dedemah as well, or were they far away?
- GD: Oh, yeah, they were far from Dedemah. Oh, they were from Tripoli and other places. All different places, you know and they were ^{all} living together with the other people. You know, they mix.
- SS: How many altogether did you think there was?
- GD: Oh, ^{I'd say} about thirty, thirty-five from Dedemah, and maybe thirty, thirty-five from other places. ^{Bring them} about sixty men.
- SS: Altogether?
- GD: Yeah.
- SS: So that most were from Dedemah, one place.
- GD: Lot of 'em were, but them days, you see, they run two shifts you see, they were a lot of 'em on the night shift and many on the day shift. And it took a lot of men then. Days in the mill, they had tailsawyers, ^{trimmer} men, slasher and helpers in the edger. They had all kinds. Lot of work you see. There were a lot of men working up in the mill. Now the mill is nothing, ^{it's} four, five men I guess. ^{maybe} nine men altogether, I think. I haven't been down there since I retired, I don't know. I know I've been down there after I retire, when I came from

Greece; cousin ^{here that} want to show me the mill and I went down.

SS: I had some questions, I wanted to ask you.

GD: Yeah, go ahead.

SS: One of the things I had here was-- were many of the men that were here from Dedemah and around there-- did many men feel disappointed by what they found here, compared to what they looked for?

GD: No. No, what they found here, ^{they were} not disappointed, because if they were disappointed, they would leave. But this place here was better than the places where they ^{worked} before, you see, like me. You see I came here from the railroad, and the railroad wasn't paying very much and you was moving from place to place, you see, and when I came here I stayed here, you see. And the work was better and the wages was better. They ^{were} not disappointed because, they couldn't find anything better. And that's why they stay here. Course, after they got few dollars, maybe they went back to the old country and got married; some of them young fellas. And the others, the ones that were already married, they went back to their families. Those that were married, they ^{kept} their money.

SS: Was the money that they made here worth a lot more in Greece?

GD: At that time, yes. Yes, there was difference, much difference, up to now, up to maybe ten years ago when I went back to Greece, I notice that all the prices in the stores, they were just the same as they were over here. And they had to pay with the dracma that they got there, it was pretty cheap. They had thirty dracmas to a dollar. But in order to buy all ^{of} those things, you had to pay quite a few dracmas to buy the things you wanted. And over here, little bit different alright, because you could buy little cheaper there, but not very much. And now, I think, I think the ^{inflation}, it's worldwide.

They have to pay lot of money over there to get good^s they want, just same as they do here. Not exactly, but pretty close. And I think still the dollar is worth thirty dollars of their own. (END of Side D)

- SS: ---Well, to go back to Greece and have a good grubstake, in those days.
- GD: Oh, in those days?
- SS: Yeah. In the early days.
- GD: Well, in the early days, if you had two, three thousand dollars, was enough to go over^{there} and live. That is, in 1910, '11, '12, '13 and '14 and '15. After World War I, it was little bit different. You had to have more. But then, the dracma was five dollars. One dollar would buy five of them.
- SS: One dollar was five dracma?
- GD: Yeah. And the dracma was worth lot them days. See.
- SS: So what would the men do?
- GD: So it was beneficial for them to have dollars and then turn it into dracmas- they have five to one. And they buy over there things they want, you see. Because things over there were cheaper than this country. Because the things^{that} they imported, they imported from France and England and their exchange was not as the dollar, was different. The English pound, I don't know what it was then,^{but} it wasn't as it is now, you see. The English pound was, oh, about three dollars, wasn't it?
- SS: I don't know.
- GD: Yeah, anyway, they had the English pound and the francs- because the things they bought in Greece were bought from either France or English.
- SS: Let's say, three thousand dollars here-- a man would go back there--

What could he do? Did he have enough money to buy himself a farm and go into farming?

GD: Yes. Yes.

SS: Or set up a business?

GD: Yes, yes. Three, four thousand dollars in them days was alright. But now, you have to have fifteen, twenty thousand. ^{There not enough. You have} Twenty thousand you can probably go into business or buy farm.

SS: Was that rare though for a man to have that much? Or was that really common, for a man to go back there with that much money?

GD: Well, those that kept the money; they make probably three, four thousand dollars. They get it, three, four thousand dollars. Lot of those fellas, even fellas with a family, they come here and they didn't care. Forgot all about their families, and they were having good time here. So, those, they just discard them.

SS: What was the feeling about guys like that? Did other guys dislike them?

GD: They dislike 'em, sure, but there was nothing they could do. There was many of them that came here and forgot all their families. They don't write or anything. Not too many, but ^{there's} a few. And some got a good job over here, too, but they didn't do nothing for their families. One fella, particularly I knew, he got a job in the sugar factory in Denver, I guess, Colorado, ^{or somewhere.} where they raise lot of sugar beets-- what is that place? Anyway, he got ^a good job, he was a foreman over there, and he never look at his family, never got married here. ^{either} He was just spending his money foolishly. He was no good. It was not Colorado, I think it was some other place. ^{Some stayed back there.}

SS: Did many men send money back to their families.

GD: Most of 'em, yeah. Those that had families and they were here. They

all did send some. 'Course, they had to keep some for themselves, you know, because they didn't know what was going to happen to 'em

SS: Do you think that many of the people miss the old kind of life? The old society? I don't know what it was like for people growing up in the old country, but **I** would guess that maybe it was a lot more close knit. I mean, they were all families that knew each other and had lived in the same place for a long time. Over here, everything was so new and it seems like a lot of the people from the old country didn't know the new people, so it wouldn't be the same kind of closeknit family life, and that sort of thing. Closeknit communities like they had over there.

GD: Yeah, well, they're not close. Because, here is different. In this and country, we have houses, wheels and they move lot, not now, but from the beginning, they used to move. They move from place to place. And over there, they don't. They are born there and they die there. Because there's no other place to move to. And here, it's ^{many} opportunities, different, big country. You go out from here and get a better job, or something like that; or sometimes ^{may} be ^{get} worse, but still you are on the move. And this is a nation on wheels. It's different here, altogether, than it is over there, because the country, it's a wide country, they don't move so much now as they did before. For instance a lot of men are floating men, you know, they ^{move} from one place to the other, they don't want to stay in one place. Even single men move around very much. But over there, they don't move because there is no other place to go, and they try to stay with the community here. Sometimes they don't like each other from the long period of time, but they have to take it. There is some that move ^{try to} for better position, such as the teachers and things like that, you know, but not

farmers. Because the farm, is all taken.

SS: Do you think that if you move around a lot-- do you think there is a trouble with making ties that last. ⁷ If you are always moving around and changing I don't know how you get to know people for a long time, and get to have good friendships.

GD: By moving around?

SS: Yeah. Well, maybe. Maybe, but not over there. You make a lot of friends here, but they don't last very long, because you move around you see. Forget 'em, make other friends until you settle down, then, of course, you're like the old fellas, you know, some old fellas they got tired moving 'round, and they settle down, you know in place. There are old fellas here in Potlatch and every place, that live ^{for} for a long time. Particularly in the rural areas, where it's farming, like Genesee and places like that, you know. You find men in Genesee, they have the farm of their great grandfather, they, ^{probably} some of them, they are still probably on their homesteads, and they stay there for generations.

SS: Do you think there was much homesickness here, among the men that---?

GD: Not very much, no. Because they found better place here to work and to save a little money. And I don't think it's much-- but of course, before the Depression, they all happy, but after the Depression, they either had to go to the old country or scatter around the country here. And they didn't come back because there's no job for them. ^{Over here,}

SS: Did you know any of the Japanese people that were here very well?

GD: No, not here. Not here or anyplace else. They used to be Japanese here. Lot of young students, you know, that go to University of-- especially in Pullman. They were working in the box factory here, but the box factory is out now. They don't make boxes for long time you see. They took that down to Lewiston. And they were going to

school. They worked in the box factory and they went to school. I don't know when they went to school, but they had some schooling anyway. And the older people that were in the Japanese boardinghouse, oh, one fella work on the railroad and the other fella ^{never} farmed across the river there, and the other fella work on the greenchain. They had jobs here, steady, you know. But then fellas that went to school they worked in the box factory, and I don't know whether they worked steady or how they worked there. But there were quite a few young fellas, all students. And when the war broke out, and Pearl Harbor, then the Japanese boys go-- there was one good fella here, he's nice, nice, good man- . But O'Conner went down there, O'Conner was the general manager here--when they tell him that they afraid that somebody gonna hurt him, you know-- the war broke out. And he asked him to leave before they had trouble. He was a a good man, though.

SS: Was he the janitor? At the store?

GD: No. The other fella was the janitor. He left. The janitor, they thought, ^{that} he was taking pictures from all places. He was spy. But I don't know whether that didn't prove right or not.

SS: What did this other guy do?

GD: Oh, he worked down there in the lumber. He was loading ^{lumber in the} cars. He was a good man.

SS: Do you know what became of him?

GD: They went to Spokane. He had two grandsons, boys.

SS: Is he still alive?

GD: I don't know. I don't know if he's living or not, but his boy died I think when he was here. When he was young, and the girls, one of 'em got married and was in the Philippine Islands, or I don't know exactly where, but she got married, and I suppose the other one got

married, here in Spokane. And I don't know about the old lady. She was washing my laundry ^{She was good woman.} Hand wash, too, hand laundry. And stitch, too, anything that's ripped or anything like that, why, she mend 'em.

SS: I've gotten the feeling that the Japanese didn't ^{have} too easy a time here because they weren't white. Did you have that feeling?

GD: That is natural, you see with the people. Now them Japanese, they're oriental and they live by themselves, you see. 'Course the Greeks and Italians, are pretty near alike. But the language differ . . . altogether. And we are more to mix with Italians than any other people, you see. So, when they were here, I told you ^{that} they were playing that ball over here and having a lot of fun, and they were drinking, too, sometimes. And, I don't know, that game they played in Greece, they had a little ball and they throw that little ball and ^{whoever} that gets closer to that with their big balls, is winning. You got to have a lot of practice to do that, you know. And sometimes they hit that ball there-- they were cussing in Italian, I couldn't understand what they were saying, but they were cussing.

SS: But the Japanese didn't mix at all?

GD: They didn't mix with the Greeks or Italians, at all. Only one, one old fella, he wanted to play, he was a gambler. He just came over to play dice with us. But not very much. Sometimes ^{And says, "what the heck!"} he get mad.

SS: I want to ask you about management a little bit, too. I was wondering if you think that the company made much money from running this town? Do you think they made good money by running the town and renting houses, or not?

GD: I don't know. I don't think they were making much money. And probably in the later years, that probably was the reason that they sold

these houses and wanted to get out and stay out, you see. I don't think they were making very much money, because the houses were old, and they had to modernize all them-- all these houses because they weren't modern. All they had here, where my bathroom is over there now, ^{it} was pantry. They used to have pantry, them days, you know, to keep their stuff, their groceries and things. They didn't have no refrigerators or anything like that. And the ^{boxes} for the ^{house,} the garage over there was a woodshed, they were burning wood them days. And the wood they bought from the company. Maybe they were making money when they first come here, but I guess the state or the government must have put pressure on them and that's why they started to sell the houses because they were not modern and they had to modernize them ^{house} in order to keep the people in. And that would cost them a lot of money. That's why they sold 'em. And they got incorporated town here, see? When they incorporated you are required to make a modern house or get out or seal it. (Pause in tape)

SS: You really don't know if they made that much in the early years?

GD: In the early years, they did, because--

SS: They did make some money then?

GD: Oh, yeah, and it was company's town. They had everything. The store here was making big money because they were supplying all the goods for the logging camps, you know. And it was different then. The houses were not modern, and they didn't have to spend much money to-- they just build a-- There were few houses modernized on Nob Hill, they called it, up there. And some down in this ^{Street}, I think, one, two, three houses modernized. The hospital over there used to be boardinghouse, that was modern, and that's all. The other houses were all with the box, you know.

- SS: Do you think a company town like this has a lot of advantages for the people that live in it? Or do you think they'd be as well off or better off, to just have an ordinary town?
- GD: The company?
- SS: No. The men.
- GD: Well, I think for the men, is better to have an open town, and not the company's town, because, you know, anybody can come here and do business. They run any kind of business, you know. Start any kind of business and when it's company's town, they can't do it. They have to rent the place from the company and pay rent. Or the company itself run it. So, you see that's not very good for the men. It's alright for the company; it was alright for the company then. But I don't think that now-- that is, when this come ^{up here that} they had to modernize all the houses, they got rid of 'em. Because they won't pay.
- SS: Do you think many of the people that you knew would have tried to start businesses in this town if they could have in the early days?
- GD: Well, yes, they would have start business, sure. Same as in Elk River. Elk River is much smaller town than this, but they had business of their own; individual, you know. It isn't company's town. There was one Greek fella that had a business there for years, a saloon. And I don't know how many others. I haven't been to Elk River for long time. ^{now} But Elk River and Bovill-- Bovill it's open town. 'Course, they don't have a sawmill up there, but they ^{have} logging operations. Used to be lot of logs ^{were} going through there in early days.
- SS: Do you think that the company did set it's policies and ran things -- Do you think they took the welfare of the people-- do you think that was important to them or do you think that profit was about the only

thing that really mattered?

GD: No. Yes, they make profit, yes. Because the people were paying rent, you know.

SS: I don't just mean for the town, but I mean their policies alround for the-- in the mill and in the woods; hiring and firing and all that.

GD: Well, they made money in the woods. It's a business. And they were in the business for money, they weren't in the business for ^{the} pleasure. And if they didn't make money, why, they couldn't exist. They made money in the woods, they made money in the store here; ^{they made money} in all places that they run. The sawmill-- the sawmill was making money for them, Until they change, I think; this was Laird and Norton-- the sawmill was ^{belonging to} Laird and Norton, but they didn't have no timber. You see Weyerhaeuser had all the timber here and there was fight between the two of them and Laird and Norton lost out. Laird died poor, I think. During the Depression, I think, he had few stock, you know, I don't know ^{it} amount^{ed} ^{to} around maybe eighty thousand. But the Weyerhaeusers-- and now it's cincorporateded- this business, you know is incorporated. Big business; ^{P.F.E} is not only here, but they got mills all over the country. And, yes, they're making money, because they sell stocks, you can buy stocks from the-- on the stock exchange-- of the Potlatch, ^{Forest} Inc. I don't know what they worth now, but they're making money. They didn't build this mill to help the people. They build to make money. It isn't charity, it's a business. You know.

END OF TAPE

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