

ELMER FLODIN
First Interview

Interviewed by:
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Oral History Project
Latah County Museum Society

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I. Index

ELMER FLODIN

Dry Ridge; b. 1899

farmer

1 hour

minute

page

Side A

- 01 1 Father comes to America from Sweden and worked out to Idaho in the early 1880's hewing timber for bridges on the railroad for the Northern Pacific. He left his homestead cabin in spring and walked out to Plummer to work on the railroad. He knew Henry and August Anderson, two of the earliest homesteaders in the area, in Minnesota; many of the early homesteaders in Dry Ridge country worked their way out together on the railroad. They cleared a plot around their cabins in spring so that they would be protected when the Indians burnt off the land in summer. The Indians took better care of the land than whites, because burning kept the brush down. Big yellow pine with four foot stumps.
- 07 3 Early sheep grazing and corrals in the area. The men walked to Moscow and back for groceries with a pack on their backs. In winter he cut his timber and burned it to clear land. Early sawmills.
- 15 5 Kids had a better time growing up then than now, with get togethers on the ridge. The fishing and hunting was great; blue grouse. Troy's Midsummer Picnic. Dry Ridge School. He followed a footburner plow; clearing the place.
- 26 8 Hard on horses hauling to Troy. The neighbors took turns hauling cream to Troy, and father went once a week. Storekeepers gave kids free candy. Troy was not a tough town. Dance entertainment in Troy, on Big Bear Ridge and in Helmer.

Side B

- 00 10 IWW. Elmer started working in the woods at Camp 6 in 1918, in early springs and late falls. The IWW's came in and got clean camps. He joined up after a representative explained how they wanted to improve conditions. Fires in Genesee fields, caused by red smut, were blamed on the IWW to turn farmers against them, so they wouldn't join the union. If they had, farmers would have more say now. Ole Bohman made a speech against the IWW outside of the bank in Troy. Elmer's father came home believing it, so Elmer threw his membership card on the table to show him. Many local men carved their initials and "IWW" on the old bridge across Dry Creek.

Elmer Flodin

minute

Side B (continued)

11	13	Conditions in old railroad camps. Getting rid of bedbugs and greybacks; carrying a little bottle of quicksilver worked well for his father. Using horses on the farm.
16	15	Chuck Wells was the strongest man Elmer remembers in the woods; he used to break peavey handles rolling logs onto decks. Local strong men. Big Anderson: his strength and frightening appearance, his perpetual motion machine, his cancerous leg. Big told how he threw a camel over backwards when he was being bothered about smuggling Turkish cigars on ship. He regularly threw four foot long chunks of wood over his shoulder and hiked up to his cabin with them.
23	17	Cougar Jack got his name by breaking the back of a threatening cougar with a fence post.
25	17	Lots of local moonshiners. Where people went for moonshine as Prohibition grew.
28	18	Old Pat Malone sat in his chair and slept. He never made arrests. If you gave him a bottle, you better not have too much whiskey in it. He was good for Bovill, well liked, and always talked to people he knew.

with Sam Schrager
June 25, 1974

II. Transcript

ELMER FLODIN: When he come here, a fellow by the name of Nastrum, there in Minnesota, he knew him. And he wrote to this old couple and he got *through*, finish up his military training there in Sweden. And then he wrote to them and then they told about the United States, so he went to Minnesota to them. And then he started working on the railroad. That's what he was in Sweden. There was working in timber and he was a great *hero* with a broadaxe and so then he got a job *h^wing* timber for the bridges on the railroad.

SAM SCHRAGER: Was that Northern Pacific?

EF: Un huh. Yeah, he went to Northern Pacific *Rockford*, in Minnesota to Moscow. You see, awhile there, at one ways you go the Canadian Pacific. That's North Pacific that goes into Canada and called Canadian Pacific in there.

SS: So he wound up coming to Moscow because he was working on the railroad.

EF: Yeah. Well before they got there, it was way up north there. Because they'd walk. He had his log cabin here. He'd spend the winter when they wasn't working *and they were* at home. Then they had walk all the way from Plummer. That's where they were, they catch a train to Plummer. Take their pack on their back and *go* *the way* to Plummer.

SS: Do you know how he wound up coming to Dry Ridge country?

EF: That I don't know. I think one reason was Henry and *August* Anderson, they were *in* here. And he got acquainted with them, *probably*, back east. See, Henry Anderson, he homesteaded this *Hilliard* place up here. And *August* Anderson, he homestead on a big farm down there below what is now Dan McKenzie's place.

SS: So...

EF: *LINUS* Anderson, he, that's the place that *Ted Krept* got. That was *LINUS*. There were three brothers here. At the time.

SS: So he probably came out here and found this land open. Had it been surveyed?

- EF: ^{Yeah} . They surveyed it. Hammond, they used to live on the west 80 right across the creek. You know, coming down from Little Bear Ridge, you know, when you come, you see that little place on the flat down there. Well that used to be the old Hammond place. He ~~was~~ the surveyor. Him and Ed surveyed through this country. Ed Sandberg up here, Dan Tallson, ^{he homesteaded} the place just across the road, a hundred sixty east and west. And Sandberg and Alfred Johnson, he's the one, you know, where they tore down this house. Well, that was my dad's first brother in law. His wife passed away. In '96. And all ~~them~~ them come together. They all worked the railroad.
- SS: So they all took up the land here about the same time.
- EF: They all took up land here together. Homestead in here. And then Olsons, they come in. Emil ~~wasn't~~ certain, they would talk a lot. Carl, did he ever tell you what time...?
- SS: I think he said it was the late '80's, but it was close to '90, maybe '88.
- EF: I know they come in late to that.
- SS: What's this about he worked out on the railroad when he was first homesteading. He had built a cabin and he would leave it?
- EF: Built the cabin so he'd have a home. You see, you had to build on it. You had to make an improvement and you had to spend so ~~many~~ ^{three months} months ^{out of the year} you had to spend ^d on the land. To file your, to put your claim in.
- SS: So when would he leave to go work on the railroad?
- EF: Well that would been in the spring of the year when they broke up so they could go to work again. See, that was all done like grading, all done with horses. And they had to have it when it was tall ground, not too wet. ^{When they went back.}
- SS: He just left the place here?
- EF: I guess so. When they left in the spring of the year, they'd work

a plot around the ^{ir}cabin. Get all grass and that away. Safe for fire. Come home the fall, why the Indians had all burnt over . So they kept, took better care of their land then the white men ^{are} doing. There was no brush, all ^{you} found was just a big yellow pines. No little timber in between. Dad had trees out there that was better than four foot on the stump but he sawed down and burnt for to make field. And he could stand on the top of the hill over there and the line ^{facing} ^{you could see the} ^{back} the field there, he could look right through the trees, ^{see about} the whole farm. That's little better than half a mile. Just open pine country. And then there was some sheep men come in here too, and late I think, come in here with their sheep. Down on the creek bottom: down here in the 40, that used to be a big sheep corral. And there used to be a sheep corral up on Olson's place. I heard they come up from Washington with their sheep.

SS: Yeah, I know there were some guys I know, from around the big Bend country that were grazers. They just came through here and used it as they wanted to. Was there any trouble with the sheep eating up the land?

EF: Well, you see, there was no population. It was just grass. It was free, open range. All over. They could go ^{clean} up to Elk River, they could go any place they wanted to, you see. That's what they did. They went back in there and all back of Helmer. You see you come where that shop is there east of Helmer. Well you go ^{right} down straight there to Potlatch and there used to be a ^{sheep} corral. That I remember not so far back when we used to go fishing, you could still see that ^{old} sheep corral there. And old cabin.

SS: Did your father actually have to walk out to get to Plummer?

EF: They didn't have no horses. No transportation, no railroad. ^{No nothing.} They just had to walk. ^{Then} that bunch that went together like ^{and them} Dan Tallson, Sandberg, they all figured when they were ready to go to

work, why, they'd all hit out for Plummer. And when they wanted groceries they would walk. Walk out. After Moscow got started, why then they just take a pack on their back and pack it home. He said he packed more than one sack of flour from Moscow out.

SS: Must have taken him a day or two to get any where walking.

EF: It took him a couple of days. A good day to come in and back. They said they had to put the packs, they had a sack of flour on the^r back and they had some coffee and stuff, ^{why then} they needed to pack out. Then after a few, I forget what year he said it was, he said he was working for Tomer^{up} there in Moscow and he bought him a little saddle horse. ^{so then} He had a saddle horse to ride.

SS: And there was no Troy then.

EF: No Moscow. At first. ^{There was nothin'.} Lewiston, I see the picture of Lewiston, it just was a square front like the old building^s ^{were} That's the picture of Lewiston. That picture there told where they file on the land. Land Office. That's where they all had to go to file on their land, ^{to} was Lewiston.

SS: Do you know when he stopped going out to work and just stayed here? Was it a long time?

EF: Yes, he worked out for quite a few years. While he was clearing land.

Now, like in the wintertime when he was home, then he fall timber and ^{clearin^g} land.

SS: Did that timber get to the sawmills or was that before there were mills?

EF: Burnt it. Burnt all them big wood. No sawmills. I forget what year that there Bohman mill started. ^{But} Pere Johanson, he started the first mill right there where Bendel's Meat Market meats is? On the creek bottom. That's where they hauled their first logs. And that Bohman, he started a sawmill right, you know where they took out that big cut down there ^{where} that house is ^{as you come up from} Bendel's, they fixed up on that new road there? On the left if you look, it still kind of shows where the millpond was. ^{that was Ole} Bohman started that. That was Bohman's mill.

SS: Did these other's come in about the same time too? What about O.K. Olson?

EF: Oh, that come way later. Yeah, that come in later than that. That did, it was after 1900 when O.K. got in here, I guess. Little after in 1900.

SS: What about right around here? Where were mills in this area around Dry Creek?

EF: Well, Troy Lumber Company, they had one mill right ^{down} here where you made the turn. That was Standard Mill. Then they had the White Pine mill and the Old White Pine. And then Ole Bohman had one mill on Big Bear Ridge.

SS: Was there a mill called the Dry Creek or the Dry Ridge mill?

EF: Dry ^{Creek}? Uh huh. That was up there, right back up Guntag up there where the stock pile is, rock. That was the Dry Creek mill.

SS: Did it take him a long time to clear up the land?

EF: Oh yes.

SS: Real slow?

EF: Yeah. Yeah, they didn't have much feed for quite a while. You see, they had to get work^{ed} up so they'd have enough so they could afford to feed a team of horses. ^{at first} And there wasn't much, very big horses. ^{eleven} Hundred pound cayuses to break up the land with. I remember the first team he had. That was 22, 24 years old. ^{when} I remember them.

SS: What was it like for you as a kid growing up out here?

EF: Great. Better than, we had more fun and better times than ^{what have} they ^{now}.

You can talk to any of ^{of} em like Carl Olson. They'll tell you that the kids ^{of} today, they don't have the enjoyment ^{that} we did. We'd all get together and always have ridge parties. ^{school parties} Schoolhouse dances. So we didn't have like they have nowadays, ^{strange} wherever they go. Take the car and take off.

No, we had, I'll say, ^{and that} we had a lot of fun as kids. And one thing you don't have, what we had then ^{is} good hunting and fishing I know. All I had to, ^{do} go down here to pasture and in an ^{hour} Come back with 18-20 fish.

Nice trout. And if we went down to Bear Creek, we just ^{go} down to the old mine up here and go ^{on} down Bear Creek, ^{up Dry Creek and} come home with over a hundred fish. No limit, those days. ^{in the fields} You see a lot there, and blue grouse, by the hundred. Great, big bunches of 'em. ⁱⁿ I never knew how, the mountain grouse get up

like that. You catch them up to 6-8 pounders. I 'mem ber, after dad got me the first .22, we had a lot of birds, ^{then a fter} ^{wards}, My brother bought a 16 guage shotgun and after that we had to get bird meat to eat all through the summer. So.

SS: Now you got to hunt for anything.

EF: You can't find blue grouse.No.

SS: Was a lot of the food that you ate wild?

EF: Oh yeah. I'll tell you, that blue grouse, that's good meat. Some like the Chinese pheasant.(Pause in tape) And then they always had a stand set up, a stand was right over here. Had the choir singing, had a piano always took the church organ there.Had the minister and sermons. Yah.

SS: Was that a custom from Sweden to have a minister?

EF: It was a custom. Sweden, they never, they wouldn't think about working on Midsummer day.

SS: You couldn't have been more than 9 or 10 in that picture.

EF: No, I wasn't too old there.

SS: What was the school like in that schoolhouse?

EF: Well, it was ^{just} about ^{what} the same ^{as} you go to ridge. Only thing, you had one teacher for all grades. From the first through eight. But, I believe we learned just as much, if not more in them old schools than they do nowadays. You take my eight grade. Arithmetic...

Mrs. Flodin: Here's a picture of the school up there.

EF: See, we had algebra in the eighth grade. You don't find that now. We had a good there. Yeah, that's old schoolhouse. That's sitting up there by Kenneth's house now. Ken Hawkins.He had it right there where he got his grain bins. And he pulled it up there. Use for a shop. I remember when we had 32 children going to that school. ^{up here} That schoolhouse was crowded. ^{that was} Ellen Gourd was our teacher. ^{that time} Our teacher there, that's Christie Robinson.

SS: Did you start working around the house when you were pretty young?

EF: When I was fourteen I ^{started} following a foot burner. You know what a foot-

burner is? Walking plow? Three horses.

SS: Is that right after you quit school?

EF: ^{No} Before. You see, then ^{re} we all had school certain times of the year. And you had spring break so you'd be able to help. I followed *one*.

I had walked this way.

SS: What do you mean?

EF: I was short, you see.

SS: You were short.

EF: I got it sitting down there beside the old house. The old plow.

SS: By then, was your father just making a living farming?

EF: ^{Farming and} cattle. That's what we did. In those days *everyone around here milked* a lot of cows and sold cream. Now here, 8 to 12 cows to milk. *You can see there were a* lot of cattle. This barn here was about 24 feet. In them days without *this* was back over. ~~That~~ *helped. Room for* about that many.

SS: When you ~~were~~ a kid, what did it look like around here? Was it cleared up by then? Did it still have timber mostly around the place?

EF: Yes. You could see all that, that white fence, ^{it's still where} ~~over there~~ the timber is. Well I broke up a strip over there. You take a look at that: that's the field over there. That ~~back~~ end, I broke that. And then, you take over here, east, 30 acres up there, I broke.

SS: With the walking plow?

EF: Three horses. The last, the last 15 acres ^{plow} ~~probably~~, then I had a cat and big breaking. But the biggest part was done with three horses. Now here, I tell you about that first year.

SS: Yeah. That's them?

EF: Here's them and this one here. That's his first team ^{of} horses. He was old when this picture was taken. That's, this was cold. And that's when dad marked this.

SS: He had that same team for 20 years?

EF: This one here, he was 20, I think this one was 23 years old when he killed

her.

SS: It's something that they could work so many years. That's tough work.

EF: Well, ^{I know} he used them on the wagon. He used them to haul grain into town ^{there}.

SS: Would he take his grain to Troy?

EF: All the way to Troy in a sack. Had a sack.

That was rough on horses, 'cause ~~them~~ rocks were tall, have to pull over rocks. Hit a rock and it'd toss back and forth and hit ^{the} horses.

SS: How often would you go into Troy? When you had the wagon?

EF: Oh, twice a week. Now, like when we was selling cream, Sandberg would take 'em one day, ^{Martin} take one day, dad take it one day. Well, it was every other day. ^{he used to go} So once a week. ^{ANYWAY} Always once a week, to town.

SS: Did you get to go into Troy much when you were a kid?

EF: Yeah, you bet. I always went in, when he went to town, I always went when he went to town. In those days kid come into town, why it was, go find a big paper sack and fill her up with candy. You come home with a great big paper sack full.

SS: The storekeepers would give you the candy?

EF: ^{All kids} Any little kid come in, why old ^{Pere} Johanson or ?

SS: Sounds like a pretty good deal.

EF: Yeah. Of course, for ten cents, you got more candy than you can buy for four bits now. And cookies, they had it in 30 to 50 gallon drums. Wooden barrels. He's going to take it, add it up when you want and he ^{weigh} it out for ya. Package like you get now. You know a grocery sack that big. That high. That would be two bits for the ginger snaps, ^{the} old time ginger snaps. Buy just two package is what you buy now.

SS: Did you have kids that you got to be friends with in Troy that you'd play with? When you were in town?

EF: A few. ^{Like the} Peterson kids. They used to come out, go over here to church, their folks did, and ^{then} they used to come over here after church for dinner. So

So I had the Petersons. And different kids that way. ^{I knew} Those days you got acquainted with people ^{easier} than you do nowadays. If they wanted to mix. They're friendly, friendly people.

SS: You think that Troy was a pretty tough town? Back in the early days?

EF: Troy really was not a tough town. Neyer. I think you'll find nowadays, like Moscow, there, they're tougher towns today than Troy was when I was a kid. Never seen much trouble around town. I tell you, people, ^{thought} more of getting together in those days than ^{what} they do nowadays. Now like you have a dance at ^{the Oddfellow} hall there in Troy or out at the Bowery out on Randle Flat, peaceful, never seen a punch. Good music, and then up there, as you come in from Moscow up here, above Rauch's Mill, Randle Flat, outfit up here...

SS: Used to be what?

EF: Round hall. There they had dancing and roller skating.

SS: Sounds like there were a lot of different places to go for entertainment. More than nowadays.

EF: Yes, and then you had community hall on Big Bear Ridge. And then you had ^{the} big round hall and pavillion for skating and dancing ^{right} in Helmer.

SS: Could you go from one place to another and not feel like an outsider?

EF: Pret'near the same bunch. You all running in the same bunch.

SS: Up around Princeton and Harvard people have told me there used to be a fair amount of fighting. At dances. And the group from Harvard might go down to Potlatch and mix it up some. It doesn't sound like, it was different around here.

EF: Out at Big Bear Ridge, I always had a nice time out there. ^{We used to go up there to Helmer.} Just kids fights. Get it out or something, but it wasn't much fighting up at Helmer. And out ^{there} at Byers flourey on Randle Flat. That was always peaceful. And Byers, they really kept order. ?

SS: Did you have much time for this stuff? What it just be on the weekends?

EF: We would go to Big Bear Ridge, Friday night. Saturday night we would go

out there to Byers. And then there'd be schoolhouse dances in between. Like after school, ^{started} around Christmas and New Year. School closed and they always had the school parties.

SS: About how old were you at this time? Teenager?

EF: Teenager, yeah. Like you seen the picture here, used to ^{be} get together on Sunday. Then when I was older, about 10, 12 years old, we had our church...

(End of side A)

EF: ...SWANSON over here?

SS: Yeah.

EF: Well as you go out to the highway, you just go past Eddy's, where he's got the fence, and then make a little turn, it's that road. And that is now the Lion's Club in Troy.

SS: Was that the church for everybody around Dry Ridge?

EF: Uhhuh. Bear Creek, ~~came over across~~ ^{to that church} Bear Creek and went [^]. They had quite a Sunday School. That church used to ^{be} pretty well filled on Sunday. ^{they had} five and six classes in the church.

SS: Did you like Sunday School pretty well?

EF: Sure. It was a custom to go to Sunday School. Folks all went to church every Sunday. We kids to Sunday School.

SS: When did you start working in the woods?

EF: Eighteen. 1918.

SS: That's when the World War started. Where did you start in at?

EF: ^{Up at} Helmer. Up at Camp Six. That was my first. And then from there on went to different camps. Over at ^{here} Fourteen, I worked at Camp Five and I worked at Camp 8 at Elk River. I work early in the spring of the year and then after they ~~through~~ the fall, working the fall, why then, I'd go to the woods to work.

SS: What was the camps like? What was the living like?

EF: Well, that's when the IWW's come^{IN} and change it so the clean camps, railroad cars and some was^{ON MARION} jacks. It was clean. You had your bath and nice

accommodations, good kitchen, nice, clean kitchen.

SS: When you first started it was like that?

EF: Well that's the way it was more or less here. ^{When} You got up into the *Gold Rig* and them other camps up north, that was different. You had to carry your bedroll. But then, after the IWW's got in, ^{when} then, you got rid of the bedroll.

SS: What do you know about the IWW's coming in? You told me that you and some other guys joined up because you thought it was a good bunch.

EF: Well, ^{it WAS} they wanted to get rid of the bedrolls and get clean accommodations in the camp. That's what they went for. ^{At first}

SS: How did they organize?

EF: Well, something like the CIO and AFofL is today. They had ^a man come around organizing the men. Sign up for ^{a UNION}. That's the way it was when I joined up with them down at, when I was at *Horse's* camp.

SS: What happened when a guy came in? Did he explain?

EF: He explained to you what this was, what they wanted. If he asked for clean bedrooms, no bedrolls. Wanted sheets on the beds. Course, that we didn't get, ^{good} clean blankets.

SS: What about all this stuff they spread against the IWW? Have you heard that?

EF: No. That was just propaganda I guess, ^{IWW}. That was just trying to break it up. 'Cause they wanted ^{the farmer to go in with} the working class, because they were nothing but working class themselves. And then, politicians talked against it.

SS: You told me about Ole Bohman gave a speech against it. Would you tell me about that one?

EF: Well, that one figured that the IWW was putting matches in the wheat straw, in the grain shocks out in Genesee and burning thrashing machines. But there was no IWW had anything like that. I never heard any of the IWW speak about that. What it was ^{was} that there red smut. Was set lots of fires

even after IWW went out. Was the talk.

SS: Ole Bohman gave a speech in town saying that they were no good?

EF: Yeah, that they were doing this and that ^{they were} against the farmer and what are we doing setting them fires? Because he knew, he was a banker, he knew that the IWW tried to organize the farmers in with the labor party. Which was the biggest mistake the farmers ever done. ^{When they didn't join up there.}

SS: When they didn't join up with the IWW?

EF: Yes.

SS: Why do you think that's so?

EF: Well, I tell you, if it had been that, he would have had more to say for himself. It would have been one thing, you wouldn't have to go to town and just be asked what you give me for this and what you want for that. They have more to say. It'd been better for the market.

SS: ^{Do} you think the IWW wanted the farmers to join?

EF: Yes. ^{They did.} Because, the feller come around ^{and spoke} to us, what he said about it. I even brought that to my brother and dad. What, that ^{would} be for their better. It would have been a big union. Been the labor and the farmer.

SS: It would have been strong.

EF: It would have been a strong union, yes.

SS: You told me that your father believed what Ole Bohman said?

EF: Yes he did, because he didn't know that, what it was. What they was doing. He knew that there was thrashing machines ^{were} burning. But he didn't know the truth of it.

SS: What was it you told me about, you said he came home and he was telling you how bad they were?

EF: He'd been to town on Saturday and that's the day that Bohman made that speech there ^{in front} of the bank. And then I come home from camp on Saturday ^{evening} and he's telling me about. And he got to talking about how bad they were.

I disagreed with him on this and that, I didn't think that the working classes that bad a people or anything. And then also that you couldn't

trust IWW's, but they might attack you around your home. So then after he got through with his speech and I had to talk to him. I ^{threw} my card ^{in front} of him on the table and asked him what he think now. I said, IWW in your house. Well, there used to be an old bridge down here, across Dry Creek. Our old road just go right straight up across. And there was their names, carved their names, IWW's carved all over that whole bridge.

SS: You mean the guys that were in it?

EF: Uh huh. ^{Those} ~~Justly~~ men working in Troy, walking home or driving home from camp on Saturday evenings. Stopped there and carved their name on that. Carve your initials and IWW. That bridge had a lot of carvings on it.

SS: You say that most of the guys that worked in the woods around here got in it?

EF: Yeah. They did. Quite a few from Troy. They were IWW's.

SS: What did your father think then? Did you persuade him?

EF: Well sure, that persuaded him that ^{there} was nothing like it. Because there was, you might say, they were not strangers out the country, most of them lived around in Troy and surrounding, Deary, around the country. That belonged to the union.

SS: ^Uo you think they kept it quiet or they didn't care who knew? That they were for the union. Seems like so many were against the IWW.

EF: That's what you hear. But it's one thing. Now, my dad was telling me about how dirty the camps were, ^{them} railroad camps. Lousy and dirty and you had to carry your own blanket roll. Didn't have no bathe or anything in the camps. That's one thing that IWW got out. Now when Marble Creek was running, ^{there} they had them old log buildings and you had to carry your blankets.

SS: What did the guys do about bedbogs in the camps? Was there anything that they did?

EF: There was powders they used. They were using that. ^But still you couldn't

get rid of them. Them old log buildings with cracks in logs are full of 'em. And not only that, ^{but} there are greybacks in camps. You had to watch out for them.

SS: What are greybacks?

EF: ^{That's real,} human louse. That's what they were. And dad said in the railroad camps, them camps were full of 'em. There's a ^{salve}, they used to call it grey salve, I don't know what's in it. Smear that on your body, that would drive them off.

SS: Did you tell me that your dad believed in quicksilver?

EF: We had a little bottle of it, about that big. About that square. Just a little bottle. And there was quicksilver in that. And that's what he was told to carry on him when he crossed the ocean, because them boats that they come on, they were buggy. And so he carried that and then when my brother come here, he had him carry too.

SS: Did it work?

EF: Well, that's what dad claimed. ^{that} worked. Dad carried that in his bedroll, in his bed in the railroad camps. He carried that bottle with him. And dad said that he never had any trouble, keeping clean.

SS: Did you work for a long time in the camps?

EF: Off and on in the springs and falls. I did that probably ^{along}, five years. And then me and my brother, we rented a farm from dad, went to farming together. Course, then too, when we got through, first few years, I'd go out to the camp in the fall every year ^{the woods,} when there wasn't nothing to do.

SS: What was your farming operation like? When you started what did you use?

EF: ^{Horse power,} Just horses. Til 1928, when dad bought a tractor. First tractor. Course we had horses then too. We always kept five, six set of horses after we had our tractor.

SS: Would you just use it [?] for riding or farmwork?

EF: They were big horses. I had one team there weighed sixteen hundred a piece.

My brother had a team that weighed over seventeen hundred a piece. They were all big draft horses. ^{Purchase} and Belgian horses. No, we used them, like I'd do the plowing with the tractor and heavy, like the discing went to, and then my brother, he used them for like the mass cultivation and the seeding with ^{the} horses. He followed up behind me. With the horses.

SS: Were there any guys in the camps when you were working that were really strong men? I hear that there were some big drinkers or heavy workers in the camps.

EF: There was some pretty husky men. The strongest man that I know of was Joe Wells. Negro. Up at, he lived just east of Deary, ^{Helmer.} Because they always ^{had} him roll down, skid 'em with horses and roll into decks on the landing. And he'd break peavy handle after peavy handle. That man was strong. And he wasn't too big a man. He had strength. And there was lots of big lumberjacks, I tell you, there was lots of them up there. Over two hundred pounders. We was working back of Avon once here for Charley Masey and then there was one steep side hill that they couldn't log with horses. So he wanted someone to roll them down. ^{Well then} There was a big fella by the name of Bill Greenwood. ^{he was there} So he took the job and he asked me if I wanted to go with him and we log that side hill. So him and I hand logged that with peavys. I was about 19 years old then.

SS: And he did the heavy work?

EF: We both had to work on a log, roll together, something to get ^{it} going. ^{Keep} That man had power. There was strength in old Bill.

SS: What about, what do you remember about Big Anderson? Did you know him?

EF: Yeah, he was an old sailor. Retired down there. His legs ^{were} bad. He had varicose veins. It must have turned cancer, because he had big sores on his legs. But that was a big man. There was quite a few big ones around. You take Gus Sandberg up here. That was a big man. Strong man. And young Carl Olson up here. Big Carl they called him. That was a strong man. And there was quite a few up north ^{there} up in Pleasant Hill area. Some pretty

husky men up in there. Like old man ^{Swanborg}, Charley ^{Swanborg} . ^{that was}
strong man.

SS: What was this about Big Anderson's invention?

EF: ^{yes.} He was working on, he said a machine that was supposed to run forever on
^{its} own . He had all kinds of gadgets on that thing. I really couldn't
explain just how he had it built, but I seen it. It was a round rig. Made
something like a barrel. Had all kinds of propellers and different things
on that.

SS: It was supposed to be perpetual motion?

EF: Yes, it was supposed to be perpetual motion. But he never got it going,
til he passed away.

SS: I'd heard he was a pretty frightening looking guy for some of the kids.
He looked something like a monster, with his big beard and his canes.

EF: Yes, he was a monster. And he had ^{them} bad legs and he had two, long canes
when he walked to town. He walked to Troy. Once in awhile. Had two long
sticks there. He was better than six feet. I figure him six three. And
he was ^{well built,} broad shouldered, big man. Not fat, but just big boned man.

SS: His legs never healed up?

EF: No. And they smelled. They had a bad odor to them sores. Always had to
have 'em wrapped. And when he'd take that off, why you'd see the pus on
his bandages. We ^{was} down there visiting, see, ^{August} Andersons, they
lived just across ^{Bear} Creek from them, wasn't too far to go. We'd go
down there on Sundays and we'd go and visit him. My dad always went over
and us kids would go with him.

SS: Did he used to talk about his sailing days?

EF: Not too much. He didn't say too much. Only thing he was telling about,
when he was a sailor he always used to smuggle Turkish cigars around the
different places. And I know it was Turkey, he would come to Arab country
and raised camels and then they were going to arrest him there for smuggling
cigars and they had a camel there that was loaded, ready to go and he

grabbed it by the front legs and tipped it over backwards and after that scared them and they left him alone. That's the only thing he ever told about his strength. How he kicked that camel over.

SS: But he was a real strong man.

EF: Oh he was strong, you bet. No doubt. That man was strong^{even} in his old age. He'd make his own wood down there, around the trees^{there}. Take wood, say, 20 inches through,^{three,} four footer and he just take that up and throw it on his shoulder and walk to his cabin with it. So he had strength.

SS: He could walk without the canes when he was working?

EF: He could. But when he went off to walking, ^{a distance} he always carried to rest himself on, his canes. His legs were bad.

SS: There were a couple other guys, I think you mentioned one of 'em, I can't remember. There was one guy out by Deary that you mentioned. He was an old character. Did you know Wild Bill?

EF: ^{No.} Cougar Jack. Jack Stremmen. That was a big, strong man.

SS: Do you know why Cougar Jack?

EF: It was one cold, bad winter, about four feet of snow, and he's walking home^{out} to Texas Ridge there. And he met a cougar, and the cougar faced him, in the fence right next to, and he broke a fence post^{off} there, hit the cougar across the back and broke his back and he got the name Cougar Jack. Cougar wasn't going to get away from him. Nice friendly man, Cougar was. I knew him when I started working in the woods.

SS: What about the moonshining that went on around here? Was there a lot of it?

EF: Yes, there was a lot of it. Here, there and all over.

SS: Was there any guys that were big operators?

EF: Sam McKin, he was a big operator. He had a big setup up in White Pine country. And there was^{several} you take, lots of 'em up in north there, Pleasant Hill and Spring Valley country up in there. There was lots of moonshining going on. Lots of it around Deary. Helmer. Bovill too.

SS: Was there a lot of difference in the stuff, some of it good and some of

not?

EF: Different. Different how they kept the^{ir} coils and that clean. Used to be some out^{around} Little Bear Ridge. Old McLumber he done quite a bit of it. Cecil Emmett.

SS: Did guys have to be pretty careful not to get caught ?

EF: Yeah. They had to be careful. Oh, Sam McKin, he operated for many years and he never got caught, he was careful.

SS: That's one law that seemed crazy.

EF: No.

SS: What's a point of having a law that no one listens to?

EF: Well you see, there was prohibition at that time and for a long time they could go into Washington and get it and then Washington went dry and then they'd go to Montana or ship it out from Montana. And after Montana went dry, why then they were getting it out of Canada.

SS: There was always a place to get it.

EF: ~~At~~ the same time there was a lot of moonshining^{ing} going on around.

SS: Did you know about any guys getting caught?

EF: Oh, quite a few. Quite a few that were caught.

SS: Did you know Pat Malone at all? From Bovill?

EF: Sure did. Old Pat. He'd sit in his chair in the hotel ^{up} there in the lobby and sleep. And the only thing is, Pat, he liked his whiskey as well as any^{body} else. He never made no arrests. He'd find somebody with a bottle, why, he'd just ask, "Have you got a drink?" But if you handed Pat a bottle with a pint of whiskey, you might make sure you'd take your drink first, otherwise you wouldn't get any. I seen that happen more than once at a Fourth of July celebration^{up there}. He'd see somebody with a bottle and he'd sneak up behind 'em. Oh, Pat would get drunk, go to his room and ^{lay down and} sleep it off.

SS: He sounds like quite a guy to have for sheriff.

EF: Well, you take the Moscow ^{sheriff}, they had to have a deputy up there.

And Pat was one that he kept good order, people listened. They liked him.

And he got along well with the people, So whenever there was anything at the ~~sheriff~~, Pat got the job.

SS: Whenever there was what?

EF: Change in the ~~sheriff~~ offices. New sheriff coming in, they'd ^{always} elect, didn't make no difference if he was Democrat or Republican party come in, why Pat Malone always got that job, you know.

SS: I hear that people really liked him.

EF: He was liked, yes, he was liked. All, not only in Bovill, but surrounding community, Pat was liked.

SS: Did you ever hear any stories about him going after people?

EF: No.

SS: There seems to be a lot of stories about him around.

EF: There could be lots, people that know quite a bit about him. As far as me, I didn't know, I knew Pat. Working in the camps up there, I would see Pat around talking.

SS: From the camps you'd see him.

EF: When I'd come in, to Bovill, you'd catch Pat, he'd always stop and talk to you if he knew you, he'd always stop and talk.

SS: You hadn't been farming many years yourself when that depression came along.

EF: I started farming in '21, '22. When I started farming. We bought the stock and outfit, I bought dad out and went to farming then.

(End of tape)